

*Support for an Independent South
Among Contemporary White Southerners*

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In this brief paper we explore the extent to which contemporary white Southerners favor an independent South. Using recent data from the University of North Carolina's Southern Focus Poll we show that ten percent of white Southerners think that the South would be better off as an independent nation. Given that there are 70 million whites in the South today, this means that the region is home to about seven million people who support, at least to some degree, Southern independence. Compared to other Southern whites, these separatists tend to be less educated, less well off financially, younger, and more rural. They also tend to be more conservative racially and morally, more sympathetic toward the Confederacy, and more likely to feel that Northerners have contempt for Southerners. We speculate on the potential influence of these Southern nationalists.

The number of separatist movements around the globe has exploded in recent decades. Governments in dozens of countries, from Canada to the Philippines, face serious subnationalist challenges. In some cases, such as Eritrea's recent independence from Ethiopia, partition is complete, but in many others separatist tensions persist, structuring domestic politics, sapping resources, and, in some places, costing lives. Against this backdrop of growing separatism, it is curious that the United States, one of the world's most diverse nations, remains largely free of subnationalist movements. To be sure, black nationalism has pockets of support and there are occasional white militant actions against the government, such as the tragic Oklahoma City bombing, but for the most part the contemporary United States has escaped acute subnationalism. America, the depository of so many different cultures and ideas, seems to be managing the disputes these differences create through normal political channels rather than resorting to subnationalist rhetoric and action. This, of course, has not always been the case. One hundred and forty years ago the nation fought a bloody war when the Southern states seceded over the issues of slavery and state's rights. Although the union was ultimately preserved, tensions between the North and South have persisted to the present, sometimes escalating, as during the civil rights era, into heated political battles. Given that separatist movements are increasing in intensity and number throughout the world, should we be alert to a possible rise in separatist activity in the American South? Put more generally,

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The American Review of Politics, Vol. 24, Winter, 2003: 307-320
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what is the status of Southern nationalism at the dawn of the new millennium? The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which present day white Southerners harbor secessionist sympathies.

Subnationalism Literature

It has long been recognized that people divide themselves readily into in-groups and out-groups based on all manner of criteria. At the small group level, social psychologists have shown repeatedly that hostile feelings between groups are very easy to trigger and very difficult to alleviate (Coser 1956; Miller and Bugelski 1952; Tajfel 1970). Moreover, members of losing groups in experimental situations almost always want the opportunity to compete again (Rabbie and Horowitz 1969; Sherif and Sherif 1953). Separatist movements around the globe exhibit much the same behavior. Competition over values or resources frequently forges strong “us versus them” feelings that lead to tensions, open conflict, and the desire to separate (Gurr 2000; Horowitz 1987; Spencer 1998). While most modern subnationalist struggles are between ethnic groups, other bases for conflict, such as language and religion, are common, as well (Vanhanen 1999).

Some scholars trace the recent rise in separatist tensions to the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, many subnational rivalries in nations such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were supplanted by the larger bilateral conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Much like small group research that shows rival groups allying in the face of a formidable common threat (Rabbie and Horowitz 1969; Sherif and Sherif 1953), competing ethnic and religious groups in many nations were preoccupied with supporting one side or the other in the Cold War (Desch 1996). With the fall of communism, the Cold War no longer structured group loyalties, thus freeing old subnationalist identities to intensify once again (Herachlides 1990; Larrabee 1990).

Another explanation for the increase in separatist movements contends that the recent globalization in economics and culture has worked to shift loyalties from the nation-state to “local communities, ethnic subgroups, or even tribal bands” (Dombrowski and Rice 2000, 84). According to this view, globalization liberates people from thinking and acting in terms of their nation, opening the door for other loyalties to flourish (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; Rosenau 1990). Sometimes these new loyalties take innocuous forms, such as family or a business firm (Strange 1996), but other times they may be a motivating force behind subnational activity. While it is doubtful that globalization has single-handedly caused any separatist movements, it is, in the eyes of some scholars, an important contributing factor. Dion argues, for example, that trade globalization and liberation has “helped to

generate the opinion that ‘Canada is useless now’ among many . . . citizens in Quebec” (1993, 41).

If globalization and the end of the Cold War have helped fuel separatist activities in many locations around the world, it is plausible that they would do the same among some white Southerners here in the United States. The Cold War, after all, elicited intense nationalist loyalties among many Americans, including Southerners. And, although globalization has not affected the United States as extensively as it has many smaller nations, it has had an impact on the economics and culture of the nation. We begin our search for present-day Southern nationalism by briefly recounting its history.

The Development of Southern Nationalism

While differences between Northern and Southern whites can be traced to the early English settlements in America, it was not until the 1830s that “sizable numbers of Southerners began to perceive that their own set of shared interests were becoming increasingly incompatible with those of the rest of the Union and were, in fact, being threatened” (McCardell 1979, 6). Slavery may have been the *sine qua non* of growing sectionalism, but in the eyes of many Southerners the North was becoming too commercial, greedy, coarse, and domineering—in short, too uncivil (Cash 1941; Freehling 1990; Sydnor 1948; Taylor 1961). Whether real or imagined, these perceptions helped galvanize feelings of Southern nationalism that culminated in the Civil War.

The South emerged from the war with its institutions and economy destroyed, but, as is often the case in defensive struggles, with an increased sense of identity. As Cash (1941 [1991, 104]) makes clear, “four years of fighting for the preservation of their world and their heritage, four years of measuring themselves against the Yankee in the intimate and searching contact of battle, had left these Southerners far more self-conscious than they had been before, far more aware . . . of the line which divided what was Southern from what was not.” So while the war may have quelled feelings of Southern nationalism, it amplified sectional differences, leaving Southerners with a stronger sense of shared identity. This Southern consciousness remained strong even as memories of the war faded and Southerners redeveloped patriotic feelings for the United States.

Southern identity is still strong today. Reed (1983), for instance, has found that most native white Southerners think of themselves as Southerners and give at least some thought to the region on a regular basis. Many journalists have also written extensively about the enduring power of Southern consciousness (Applebome 1996; Egerton 1974; Horwitz 1999). Scholars of public opinion have shown that Southerners and non-Southerners continue to

hold very different attitudes on a wide range of topics (Cowden 2001; Ellison 1991; Hurlbert 1988; Nadeau and Stanley 1993; Rice and Coates 1995). In a comprehensive tracking of more than 60 attitudes from the 1970s to 2000, Rice, McLean, and Larsen (2002) report that the opinions of white Southerners are substantially more conservative than those of non-Southerners in the areas of race, religion, gender roles, sexual attitudes, and civil liberties. Although these differences are not always great in percentage point terms, they are statistically significant and they have not dissipated over the past three decades. In other areas, however, such as work ethic, life satisfaction, and support for government social assistance, there are no regional differences. Taken as a whole, these studies suggest that there are still important differences between Southerners and non-Southerners. Despite popular sentiments that we are experiencing an “Americanization of the South” (or, alternatively, a “Southernization of America”), the empirical evidence indicates continued regional distinctiveness. What is less clear is the degree to which contemporary white Southerners hold separatist feelings; that is, to what extent they favor an independent South. Certainly most Southerners, even those who identify strongly with their region, are just as patriotic toward the United States as most non-Southerners. For some, though, their love of the region may be paired with a desire for Southern independence. It is these people who interest us.

Contemporary Southern Nationalism

Measuring the number of contemporary Southern nationalists is a slippery task. If we limit our search to only members of neo-Confederate groups that advocate independence, such as the Southern League, the number of nationalists is a few thousand at best. If, however, we cast the net wide to include, let us say, all Southerners who own a Confederate flag the number is surely several million. Neither of these measures is pleasing—the first is too narrow and the latter too broad. Moreover, both are only surrogate indicators of the psychological attitude we are trying to measure. What we need are data from a public opinion survey question that asks Southerners whether or not they favor an independent South. Until recently such data was scarce, but since 1992 the University of North Carolina Southern Focus Poll (SFP) has regularly asked a random sample of Southerners: “Do you agree or disagree that if it could be done without war, the South would be better off as a separate country today.”¹ While this question does not ask directly whether respondents favor Southern independence, this is certainly what it implies. It is difficult to envision why a person would agree that the South would be better off as a separate nation but not favor an independent South. We suppose that there may be a few people who feel this way, but their numbers are surely very small (there may also be a few people who

disagree that the South would be better off independent, but favor a Southern nation). As such, we treat people who say that the South would be better off separate as supporting Southern independence.²

The SFP is conducted every spring and fall, and each survey consists of interviews with approximately 800 randomly selected Southerners from the 11 states of the Confederacy, plus Kentucky and Oklahoma (approximately 400 non-Southerners are also polled, but these data are not included in our study). The Southern independence question that we employ has been asked in eight of the surveys (spring 1992, and 1993, and fall 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999). To examine the data we pooled the answers to the independence question across all eight of the surveys in which it was asked and omitted non-white respondents. Once done, the results, which are reported at the top of Table 1, reveal that 10.5% of whites said that the South would be better off independent. Put in raw numbers, this means that out of the roughly 70 million whites in the South today over 7 million think that the South would be better off separate. With this many potential Southern nationalists it is certainly possible that separatism could become a potent political force in the region. And, if the pro-Southern political activity turned clandestine and violent, as is often the case in bitter subnationalist struggles, the consequences could be disastrous. Of course, this is a worse case scenario. At this time these pro-Southern attitudes appear to be relatively latent, rarely resulting in any organized activity. Still, if the results of the pro-independence question are to be believed, the conclusion must be that national unity is far from universal in the American South.

But should we take the results of the pro-independence question at face value or are there other possible explanations for the large number of respondents who think the South would be better off as a separate nation? The surveys were conducted scientifically and the nationalism question seems clear and unbiased, so there are no problems here. It is conceivable, we suppose, that some respondents were flippant with their pro-independence answers, but it seems equally likely that some respondents who favored independence decided to keep their opinions to themselves when talking to a stranger. In sum, the pro-independent percentage might be a bit high or low, but there is no compelling reason to suspect that this is the case. We are left with the uncomfortable notion that as many as 1 in 10 white Southerners want the South to be separate.

The Social Background Correlates of Separatist Attitudes

The SFP surveys include a wide array of social background questions that allow us to examine what types of white Southerners favor an independent South. The findings, presented in Table 1, generally conform to expectations, although in many instances the relationships are weak. The strongest

Table 1. Southern Nationalism among White Southerners

Social Background Variables	Percent Favoring an Independent South	
All Southern Whites (4923)	10.5%	(515)
Education* (4905)		
Less Than 9th Grade	30.8%	(147)
9th To 11th Grade	21.4	(334)
High School Degree	14.4	(1422)
Some College	8.7	(2379)
College Graduate or More	4.7	(623)
Income* (4367)		
\$0-\$19,999	17.9%	(872)
\$20,000-\$29,999	10.4	(768)
\$30,000-\$39,999	10.3	(755)
\$40,000-\$49,999	9.7	(537)
\$50,000-\$59,999	7.5	(386)
\$60,000+	6.5	(1049)
Age* (4891)		
18-24	16.7%	(443)
25-44	11.1	(2100)
45-64	7.9	(1531)
65+	9.9	(817)
Gender* (4923)		
Men	11.6%	(2192)
Women	9.5	(2731)
Urban/Rural* (4908)		
City/Suburb	8.1%	(2465)
Town	11.6	(1265)
Country	13.8	(1178)
Southern Region (4923)		
Deep South	11.5%	(1352)
Periphery South	10.1	(3571)
Time in South* (4596)		
0-5 years	7.0%	(301)
6-10 years	5.4	(258)
10+ years	6.9	(1203)
All life	12.6	(2834)

Notes: *significant at .05 level or greater (gamma); the numbers in parentheses are sample sizes; income is household income before taxes; urban/rural is self-reported; deep south is Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina (periphery is all other Southern states).

patterns involve education and income, with less educated and lower income respondents substantially more likely to favor independence. Presumably, better educated and wealthier people have more at stake in the present system and have a better understanding of the significant challenges that would face an independent South. Also, many better off Southerners are Northern transplants who are less likely to favor independence.

The relationship with age is more interesting. According to the data, younger respondents, especially those under 25, are more supportive of a separate South.³ Approximately 17% of those under 25 think the South would be better off as a separate nation, compared to about 10% of those 65 and older. If this is a life-cycle effect we would expect these young people to become less separatist minded as they age, but if it is a generation effect these young people may be the vanguard of an increase in separatist sentiment. While it will take data over a longer period of time to sort this out for certain, it is our guess that the relationship is primarily due to the life-cycle effect. Similar to better educated and wealthy Southerners, older Southerners probably have more to lose with a change in the present system and they are probably better able to understand the difficulties that would confront a fledgling Southern nation.

Table 1 also reveals that men are slightly more likely to favor independence than women and people in the countryside and small towns are slightly more likely to favor independence than people in the cities and suburbs. There is no significant difference in the degree of support for an independent South between people in the deep Southern states and those in the periphery South. Finally, life long residents of the South are about twice as likely to think that the South would be better off independent as those who have moved to the region. It is worth noting that some of the migrants to the South may favor independence because they do not like the region and see it as different enough from the rest of the nation that both regions would be better off with a separation.

As the next step in the analysis we entered these background questions into a logit regression model to test their relative power to discriminate between those respondents who think the South would be better off independent and those who do not. The results, presented in Table 2, show that all of the independent variables are significant except the measure of Southern regions. Education is by far the most significant variable, followed by income and time lived in the South. The coefficients indicate that the respondents who favor a separate South tend to be less educated, less well off financially, and life long Southerners. The other significant variables indicate that pro-independence respondents tend to be younger, rural residents, and men. Taken together, these independent variables tell us a great deal about the social background of the white Southerners who think the South

would be better off separate. We now turn to examining how the separatist attitudes relate to a variety of other attitudes that have long been prevalent in the South.

The Attitudinal Correlates of Separatist Attitudes

It is unlikely that pro-independence attitudes arise in isolation of other attitudes. Instead, Southern nationalist feelings probably develop in tandem with other attitudes that support and encourage separatist views. In this part of the analysis we investigate the relationship between nationalist feelings and four potentially complementary attitudes: racial views, perceptions of the North, moral conservatism, and pro-Confederacy feelings. We are often limited in this examination to questions that appear in only one of the SFP surveys, so our sample sizes are sometimes small and we are unable to conduct a multivariate analysis. Nevertheless, the results are very informative.

Racist attitudes have always been common throughout the United States, but they have played a much larger role in the South because of the region's large black population and its slave history (Black and Black 1987). Because of the region's past, it seems possible that Southern whites who

Table 2. Social Background Determinants of Southern Nationalism

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Beta	Significance
Education	.185	.026	.417	.000
Income	.118	.032	.218	.000
Age	.011	.003	.181	.001
Gender	.371	.106	.186	.000
Urban/Rural	-.151	.063	-.123	.017
Southern Region	.068	.114	.031	.547
Time in South	-.232	.073	-.202	.002

N = 4058; Cox and Snell R-square = .036; Nagelkerke R-square = .074; Dependent variables is support for Southern independence, with 1 = favor independence, 2 = do not favor independence; Education is the number of years of formal schooling; Income is 1 = \$0-\$19,999, 2 = \$20,000-\$29,999, 3 = \$30,000-\$39,999, 4 = \$40,000-\$49,999, 5 = \$50,000-\$59,999, 6 = \$60,000+; Age is the age in years; Gender is 1 = men, 2 = women; Urban/Rural is 1 = city/suburb, 2 = town, 3 = countryside; Southern Region is 1 = deep southern states, 2 = periphery southern states; Time in South is 1 = 0-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 10+ years, 4 = life-long resident. The beta statistics are the standardized logistic regression coefficients computed by multiplying the unstandardized logistic regression coefficients by the standard deviations of the independent variables (Selvin 1991). Comparing the odds ratios, as is sometimes done to measure the relative importance of independent variables in logit models, is not reliable because the coefficients are influenced by the metric of the independent variable.

harbor racist feelings may be more likely to feel that the South would be better off independent. To test for this we examine the relationship between the nationalism question and two racial questions. The first question asks respondents, “Are you in favor of integration of the races, strict segregation, or something in between?” The second asks, “Would you object if a child of yours dated someone of a different race?” The results, which are presented in Table 3, show that support for a Southern nation is much higher among whites who favor strict segregation and whites who have concerns about their child dating someone of a different race. For example, only 5.7% of the respondents who favor integration support independence, compared to 28.7% of those who favor strict segregation (it should be noted that only about 8% of the sample favor strict segregation). Clearly, there is a link between race-related attitudes and support for an independent South.

Southern animosity toward the North (or non-South) has existed for over 200 years and has, from time-to-time, dominated the political thinking in the region. White Southerners have often seen Northerners as meddling in Southern affairs and unfairly criticizing Southern culture. We examine whether Southern feelings for the North are related to separatist attitudes by using two SFP questions about the non-South. The first asks whether Southerners agree or disagree with the statement, “Most non-Southerners look down on Southerners,” and the second asks them whether they agree or disagree with the statement, “Most non-Southerners dislike Southerners.” The findings in Table 3 show that opinions of non-Southerners are related significantly to separatist attitudes. Southerners who said that non-Southerners look down on them and dislike them are much more likely than other Southerners to say that the South would be better off independent.

Another set of attitudes that may be associated with Southern nationalism has to do with moral conservatism. Southerners have long been more conservative on many moral issues than non-Southerners (Hurlbert 1998; Rice, McLean, and Larsen 2002) and this may lead some Southerners to think that the region would be better off independent. We use two questions from the SFP to test this notion, both of which ask about recent changes in moral behavior. The first informs respondents that homosexual relationships are now more accepted and asks whether this “is an improvement, a change for the worse, or something that doesn’t matter very much one way or the other.” The second question is the same except that it asks about divorce. Table 3 reports that Southerners who feel that the greater acceptance of homosexual relationships is an improvement are significantly less likely to support independence than those who see acceptance as a change for the worse. The results also show that those who see the greater acceptance of divorce as an improvement are less likely to support independence than those who do not, although this relationship fails to reach statistical

Table 3. The Attitudinal Correlates of Southern Nationalism

<i>Racial Attitudes</i>				
Southern Nationalism	Favor ¹		Object if	Do Not Object
	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Segregation</u>	<u>Child Dates Another Race</u>	<u>If Child Dates Another Race</u>
Favor Indep.	5.7%	28.7%	17.9%	4.9%
Oppose Indep.	<u>94.3</u>	<u>71.3</u>	<u>82.1</u>	<u>95.1</u>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	(1286)	(108)	(347)	(247)
Significance	.000		.000	
<i>Attitudes Toward North</i>				
	North Looks Down on South		North Dislikes South	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Favor Indep.	10.4%	5.3%	16.9%	4.9%
Oppose Indep.	<u>89.6</u>	<u>94.7</u>	<u>83.1</u>	<u>95.1</u>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	(250)	(337)	(118)	(452)
Significance	.02		.000	
<i>Moral Attitudes</i>				
	Greater Acceptance of Homosexual Relations ²		Greater Acceptance of Divorce	
	<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Change for Worse</u>	<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Change for Worse</u>
Favor Indep.	4.7%	15.6%	9.7%	13.7%
Oppose Indep.	<u>95.3</u>	<u>84.4</u>	<u>90.3</u>	<u>86.3</u>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	(127)	(437)	(124)	(474)
Significance	.001		.11	
<i>Confederate Attitudes</i>				
	Own Confederate Flag		Relatives in Civil War	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Confederate</u>	<u>Union/Both</u>
Favor Indep.	25.0%	10.6%	10.6%	3.3%
Oppose Indep.	<u>75.0</u>	<u>89.4</u>	<u>89.4</u>	<u>96.7</u>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	(84)	(601)	(132)	(90)
Significance	.01		.01	

See text for question wording; significance is chi-square statistic.

¹The "something in between" response category was dropped from this analysis.

²The "it doesn't matter much one way or the other" response category was dropped from this homosexual question and the divorce question.

significance. From this evidence, we can draw the tentative conclusion that moral conservatism is linked to separatist attitudes.

It also seems possible that Southerners who have affection for the Confederate States of America may be more likely to feel the region would be better off independent. After all, the Confederacy was a Southern separation, so those who have a fondness for it may be more likely to favor an independent South today. To test for this we use two questions. The first asks respondents whether they own a Confederate flag and the second asks those who said they had relatives who fought in the Civil War whether their relatives fought for the Confederacy, the Union, or both sides. The flag question is a measure of contemporary psychological attachment to the Confederacy and the question about Civil War relatives measures historical connection to the Confederacy. Table 3 indicates that both of these measures are significantly related to the separatist attitudes. One quarter of the respondents who own a Confederate flag support independence compared to 10.6% of those who do not and those with relatives who fought for the Union or for both sides in the conflict were the least supportive of independence of any demographic group examined.

The findings in Table 3 show clearly that separatist opinions are related to racial attitudes, feelings about the North, moral conservatism, and attachment to the Confederacy. While data limitations prevent us from sorting out which of these factors is most closely related to pro-independence views in a multivariate model, it is still very useful to know that each of the relationships performs as expected. This gives us additional confidence in the validity of the Southern separatist question and in our notions of what kinds of white Southerners hold separatist attitudes.

Discussion

According to the SFP data, approximately ten percent of white Southerners think that the South would be better off independent. To us, this seems surprisingly high, signaling the potential for a separatist movement in the region. It is true that the current Southern separatist organizations, such as the Southern League, are small and attract little attention, but if one in ten white Southerners share their desire for independence the possibility for widespread activity certainly exists. At present, the separatist views held by these Southerners seem dormant, probably taking a backseat to more salient reference groups, such as political party, religion, or social class. However, as history has demonstrated time and time again, seemingly latent loyalties can suddenly be reactivated given the right stimulus. It is hard to imagine what that stimulus might be, but it would need to involve issues that pit Southern interests against those of the rest of the nation. The emergence of

such issues has been made less likely in recent decades as one-party politics has been replaced in the South by nationally based two-party competition. In addition, the redistribution of federal resources has consistently benefited the South for more than a last half-century, further binding the region to the nation.

Even if pro-independence feelings became salient there is little chance that the separatists could exert any controlling influence in the region. With only ten percent of the whites favoring independence, separatists would seem relegated to a minor political force. That might change, of course, if they could rally other Southerners to their cause. It would also change if even a small number of them were willing to use extralegal means, especially violence, to promote their cause. There are many examples around the globe of relatively small extremist groups exerting tremendous influence through violence, such as the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland. Here at home the Ku Klux Klan, a white Southern creation, comes to mind. Such a development in the contemporary South seems highly unlikely, but given the upsurge in separatist activity worldwide, some of which is quite violent, the possibility should not be dismissed out-of-hand.

Finally, it is worth asking why the number of Southerners who favor independence is not larger. After an extremely bloody civil war and ongoing Northern interference in Southern affairs, it might seem surprising to many people that only ten percent of white Southerners think that their region would be better off as a separate nation. Much of the answer probably lies in the unique nature of Southern secession prior to the Civil War. White Southerners did not see themselves as leaving the Union, but rather thought that they were purging the nation of a greedy and immoral North. As a Confederate school textbook explained, Northerners were a “keen, thrifty, speculating . . . people; money-loving and money making, without much restraint as to means, success being the all absorbing object” (Rice 1862, 51). In the eyes of many Southerners, they were the rightful heirs of the great American experiment and it was left to them to preserve the Founding Fathers’ principles of spirituality and generosity (Faust 1988). So completely did the Confederacy embrace American history that George Washington appeared on their official seal. This eased reunion with the North because the Southerners were still part of the nation whose early history they so admired. Some Southerners went so far as to justify defeat on the battlefield by saying that God had wanted to keep the glorious American nation together and now depended on the South to reform the North from within (Cash 1941). Southern patriotism for the United States reemerged relatively quickly, as evidenced by the large number of Southerners who readily fought in the Spanish-American War, scarcely a generation after the Civil War. And today, according to the 1996 General Social Survey, 41% of white

Southerners feel very close to America, compared to 34% of whites in the rest of the nation. In short, Southerners have always felt patriotism for America and this has probably served to blunt post-Civil War Southern nationalism.

NOTES

¹The SFP has occasionally experimented with asking the Southern independence question in different ways. We decided not to combine responses across the various questions because of the differences in question wording.

²Ideally we would have a wider variety of separatist questions to examine. In particular, it would be useful to have questions that ask more directly about secession. It would also be useful to have a series of questions examining how much effort and what kinds of efforts the respondents would expend to achieve secession.

³This relationship holds even with the non-native Southerners (who tend to be older) excluded from the analysis.

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