

TABLE 1
ESTIMATED NET MIGRATION OF NATIVE WHITES, NATIVE NONWHITES,
AND FOREIGN WHITES (Hundreds)

	NATIVE NONWHITES		NATIVE WHITES		FOREIGN WHITES	
	North	South	North	South	North	South
1870–80	321	–744	–7,733	–1,338	10,198	255
1880–90	494	–812	–6,824	–2,608	22,778	602
1890–1900	1,364	–1,738	–817	439	20,448	634
1900–1910	1,288	–1,638	–9,612	–267	34,648	1,048
1910–20	4,669	–4,615	–398	–3,484	19,169	591
1920–40	10,224	–11,383	–2,436	–9,840	16,323	613
1940–50	9,598	–11,931	–9,862	–6,229	3,106	1,263

SOURCE.—Lee et al. (1957, table P1).

NOTE.—Author's tabulations. North = Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. South = Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

white migration out of the South and into the North began as early as 1870 and increased most rapidly after the onset of World War I.

Figure 2 plots the incarceration rate of whites and nonwhites in Great Migration states alongside racial disparity in incarceration. The incarceration rate of whites and nonwhites alike increased in the South between 1880 and 1950, but the small increase in the nonwhite incarceration rate relative to the white incarceration rate led racial disparity to fall over the period. In the North, by contrast, the nonwhite incarceration rate rose sharply relative to a flat white incarceration rate, leading racial disparity to increase.

The series displayed in figure 2 suggest that northward migration could have contributed to the aggregate increase in racial disparity in Great Migration states in two ways. First, since the nonwhite incarceration rate of the North was higher than that of the South as early as 1880, aggregate increases in racial disparity in incarceration could have resulted from the fact that nonwhites left a region with a comparatively low, and entered a region with comparatively high, nonwhite incarceration rate. Second, a quickening rate of northward migration might itself have increased the nonwhite, but not the white, incarceration rate of the North and thereby accelerated the aggregate increase in racial disparity. A decomposition helps assess relative importance of these explanations of the link between migration and incarceration.⁴

⁴ I thank an *AJS* reviewer for recommending this decomposition. Harding and Winship (2010) undertake a similar decomposition using selected data from 1940 to 1980.