

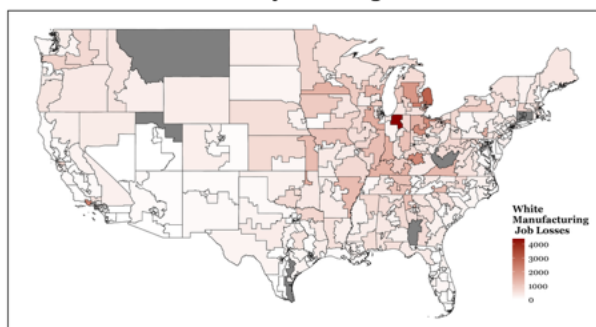
Layoffs and Tradeoffs: How Deindustrialization Shifts Elite Rhetoric on Globalization

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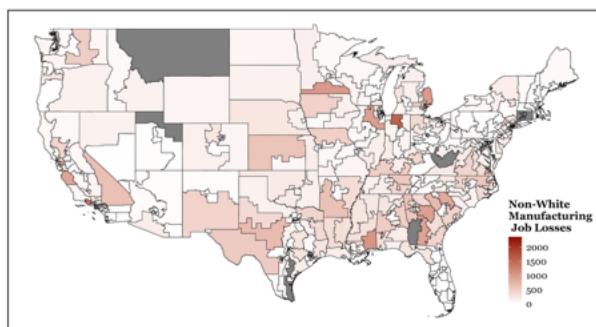
When factories close, voters get angry, and a large body of research tracks where that anger goes. We ask a different question: what do politicians say? "Layoffs and Tradeoffs: Deindustrialization and Elite Rhetoric on Globalization" follows the Twitter messaging of every member of the US House of Representatives from 2013 to 2020 and links it to manufacturing job losses in their own districts. The answer depends on party and ideology. After white workers lose jobs, conservative Democrats talk more negatively about immigration, while liberal Democrats hold their ground. Moderate Republicans do something else entirely: they ease off immigration and turn their criticism toward trade. Backlash against globalization is not only a right-wing story. Politicians on both sides redirect economic pain toward whichever target suits them best.

The project has since grown into a second paper, "The Minority Card: Outgroup Scapegoating as Minority Outreach" with Sarah Hunter (Yale University). Here we move to the Senate and ask what happens when the workers losing jobs are not white. Democratic senators respond to these losses by criticizing immigration, but only in states with few immigrants, where doing so costs them little. Republican senators do not shift at all. Together, the two papers cover both chambers of Congress and show how politicians respond to economic anxiety among white and minority Americans alike.

Deindustrialization by US Congressional District



(a) Mean white manufacturing job losses, 2013-2020



(b) Mean nonwhite manufacturing job losses, 2013-2020

Gray areas indicate missing data. Source: US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators.