

THE AMERICAN SOUTH: A THIRD RECONSTRUCTION

The American South is the fastest-growing region in the United States. Its history has transformed the country, and today its power, diversity, and potential make the South of the United States a powerful place to invest in for profound change.

Thirteen states in the south-east stretching from Virginia to Texas is a region with a shared social, economic, and political history that has greatly influenced the trajectory of the country since the United States was born. And today is no exception. Today the South is in a midst of a historic transformation that will have a profound impact on the USA and the whole world in general. We'll try to explain why.

The South is Powerful. The South is the fastest-growing region in the United States. Half of America's population growth of the last six years has been in these thirteen states. And with this growth comes rising political clout. Right now the South is home to one-third of all Electoral College votes which determine who becomes president. And after the 2020 Census, the region is likely to gain five more Congressional seats. This means the South has growing potential to influence the priorities of the whole country.

The South is Diverse and Dynamic. The South is white urban and rural communities. And it is home to **the Black Belt** – a stretch of countries with large African American populations both urban and rural. Today half of all African Americans in the United States live in the thirteen Southern states, and return migration is bringing more and more African Americans back to the South. But it is not just black and white. Seven of the ten states in the South are with the fastest-growing Latinx populations are in the South, and four of the ten states with the fastest-growing Asian and Asian American communities are in the South as well.

Gay, lesbian, and transgender people are building their futures in the Southern big cities and its small towns. Throughout these communities the South is home to innovators, artists, and activists with a deep love for the region, and the drive and passion to make it thrive.

The South is an Incubator. Many of the country's most regressive policies were and are, forged and tested in the South. But the South and its diverse culture has also been a springboard for visionary thinking. It's a birthplace of movements that transformed the country.

The South is Ready. Today the South is entering what could be described as **a Third Reconstruction. The First Reconstruction** launched a record number of African American officials into public office, pioneering policies for expanding

public education, labour rights, and democratic access. **The Civil Rights movement, a Second Reconstruction**, ended Jim Crow laws, and sparked liberation movements across the South and the whole country.

And today, some of the most innovative social justice campaigns in the country are conceived and led by local organizers in the South. Communities in the region are also promoting a transition from dependence on polluting power sources to an economy fuelled by clean energy. These are some examples; there are countless others.

This is the South today – a region of immense promise and potential that with the right investments could drive a period of profound change for the entire country. Now is the time to realize the true promise of this vibrant and powerful region.