

GIANLUCA RUSSO

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Boston University, Department of Economics

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, 2020 (expected)

Dissertation Title: *Political Economy of Mass Society*

Dissertation Committee: Robert A. Margo, James J. Feigenbaum and Daniele Paserman

MSC Economics, University of Tor Vergata, 110/110 *First Class Honors*, 2014

Main Advisor: Stefano Gagliarducci

B.S. Political Science, University of Roma Tre, 110/110 *First Class Honors*, 2012

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Political Economy, Economic History, Applied Microeconomics

WORKING PAPERS

“Mass Media and Cultural Homogenization: Broadcasting the American Dream on the Radio,” (Job Market Paper), October 2019.

“WWI and the Rise of Fascism in Italy: Evidence from *La Vittoria Mutilata*,” October 2019.

“The Effect of Child Labor Laws on Child Labor,” (joint with James J. Feigenbaum), September 2019.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Emigration and Long-Run Economic Development: The Effects of the Italian Mass Outmigration” (joint with Nicola Fontana, Marco Manacorda and Marco Tabellini).

“Voting Behavior and Mass Media: Radio Networks in the United States, 1925-1940”.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Social Science History Association Annual Meetings, Chicago, IL	November 2019
Harvard Economic History Workshop, Cambridge, MA	November 2019
Stanford Economic History Workshop, Stanford, CA	October 2019
Economic History Association Annual Meetings, Atlanta, GA	October 2019
European Historical Economics Society Conference, Paris, France	August 2019
Economic History Association at UdeSA, Buenos Aires, Argentina	May 2019
Harvard Economic History Workshop, Cambridge, MA	April 2019
ASE, Italian Economic History Association Meetings, Milan, Italy	September 2018
World Economic History Congress, Boston	August 2018
Harvard Economic History Workshop, Cambridge, MA	March 2018
Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality, Chicago	August 2017

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Manuel Abdala Gift Grant, Boston University	Spring 2020
Institute for Economic Development Research Grant, Boston University	Fall 2018

GIANLUCA RUSSO

Economics Department Summer Research Grant, Boston University
Economic History Association Exploratory Travel Grant

Summer 2017
Spring 2017

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Bob A. Margo, Boston University,	Fall 2019
Research Assistant for James J. Feigenbaum, Boston University	Fall 2017 to Spring 2018
Research Assistant for Ivan Fernandez-Val, Boston University	Fall 2016
Research Assistant for Martin Fiszbein, Boston University	Summer 2016

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, EC 204 Empirical Economics, Boston University,	Summer 2019
Instructor, EC 204 Empirical Economics, Boston University,	Summer 2018
Teaching Fellow, EC 102 Introduction to Macroeconomics, Boston University,	Spring 2016
Teaching Fellow, EC 371 Environmental Economics, Boston University,	Fall 2015
Teaching Fellow, EC 201 Introduction to Microeconomics, Boston University,	Fall 2015

LANGUAGES: Italian (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate), Spanish (intermediate)

COMPUTER SKILLS: R, Stata, Latex

CITIZENSHIP: Italian/F1

REFERENCES

Professor Robert A. Margo
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GIANLUCA RUSSO

Mass Media and Cultural Homogenization: Broadcasting the American Dream on the Radio (Job Market Paper)

Does media shape culture? I leverage the expansion of radio networks in the United States to identify the impact of access to mass media on cultural homogenization and nation building. I reconstruct radio network access via a signal propagation model suitable to AM radio, the only radio technology available at the time. I determine what radio channels were available to American households by feeding the propagation model with newly digitized data on the universe of transmitting stations during the interwar period. I combine radio network coverage with several measures of cultural change based on naming patterns for children. Exploiting exogenous variation in radio signal reception induced by soil characteristics and stations' tower growth over time, I provide evidence that network access homogenized American culture. Homogenization occurred through the assimilation of white immigrant and black households towards mainstream white native culture. Assimilation is strongest for immigrant families: foreign parents were six percent more likely to name their sons using popular white names after network access. Focusing on names from baseball players, I suggest that aspirational naming is a key mechanism to explain certain features of the results. While foreign households picked from the full distribution of baseball names, native families chose names exclusively from the most successful, those featured in the All-Star games. Thus, in addition to diffusing information, the radio has subtler effects, increasing the likelihood of "naming for success".

WWI and the Rise of Fascism in Italy: Evidence from *La Vittoria Mutilata*

One of the key steps that allowed Mussolini to become the Italian *Duce* was the victory in the 1924 national elections. I study the impact of World War I on Mussolini's electoral success. To gauge the effect of the war, I construct a measure of military casualties from the universe of Italian municipalities, which is matched to municipal level voting in the 1924 election. Controlling for the number of military drafted in an Italian municipality, variation in the share of casualties is induced by military events exogenous to municipality characteristics that could simultaneously affect support for Fascism. Using this conditional independence approach, I find that a ten percentage point increase in the casualty rate increased the vote share for Fascism by three percentage points. The same increase in casualty rate is matched by a similar but negative coefficient on the share for the Socialist Party. I decompose the effect of the casualties rate by its intensity to show that the number of casualties interacted positively with the number of veterans back from the frontline. I interpret this as evidence that Fascist support was driven by municipalities where the high number of casualties was matched by veterans militarized and brutalized by the war experience.

The Effect of Child Labor Laws on Child Labor (joint with James J. Feigenbaum)

From 1880 to 1920, child labor in the United States fell dramatically. At the same time, most states passed laws regulating minimum working ages. Past quantitative work based on census samples have yielded mixed results on the efficacy of these laws and historians have questioned whether the politically powerful employers of children would allow such regulation if child labor was in high demand. Turning to the newly-digitized complete count census data from 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930, we find large effects of child labor laws on child labor. While the laws reduced labor from boys and girls in equal measure, the laws did have differential effects, binding in urban areas not rural and especially in the largest cities and more for the children of foreign-born parents. Children with parents working in manufacturing and textiles were especially affected by the labor restrictions. In contrast to the reduction of labor supply among white children, child labor laws had limited effects on the odds of African American boys or girls working.