

08. The Age of Mass Migration

Econ 373: US Economic History

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- ▶ Early literature focused on placing Age of Mass Migration in context of changes in the broader Atlantic World, more recent work focused on relationship to research in labor or development economics

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 2. The Economics of Immigration: assimilation; the returns to migration; [self-selection](#); the impact of the immigrants on natives; and immigrants and innovation
- ▷ These themes are not wholly distinct, but we can think about economic historians and history-inclined economists as dominating #1 and economists in labor and development (and perhaps trade) dominating #2

Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

- ▶ The economist Albert Hirschman wrote the classic book *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, which provides a framework for studying decision-making within organizations or countries in response to decline, oppression, etc
- ▶ The book's title posits three responses (i.e., exit, voice, or loyalty) and then works through the implications of these choices—using big social science frameworks like this to motivate your work can be useful
- ▶ Karadja & Prawitz (2019) use Hirschman's framework explicitly to understand the causes and direction of political change in Sweden during the Age of Mass Migration
- ▶ Less explicitly, Dippel & Heblich (2021) consider the role that refugees from the 1848-49 German Revolutions played in the Civil War era in the United States

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- ▶ I suggest starting with [Borjas \(1987\)](#) for a now old formulation of the Roy model in the context of immigration, [Chiquiar & Hanson \(2005\)](#) provide a more recent formulation

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- ▶ In historical perspective, it is interesting to consider “refugee” migrations that result from famine, persecution, etc, and the role this can play in reshaping countries
 - ↳ with respect to politics, diversity of demand, the stock of human capital, the technological frontier

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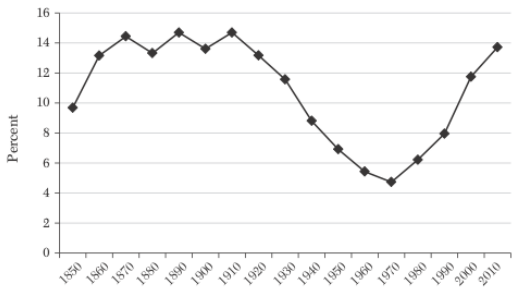
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- ▷ The role that migration costs have played is not really considered in detail (with the exception of noting changes in transatlantic shipping costs over time), the role of *bilateral* frictions is worth some attention

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- ▷ A few stylized facts (related to selection) for the Age of Mass Migration in the US:
 - ↳ time-series: flow and stock



Panel B. Foreign-born stock as percentage of the US population (1850–2010)

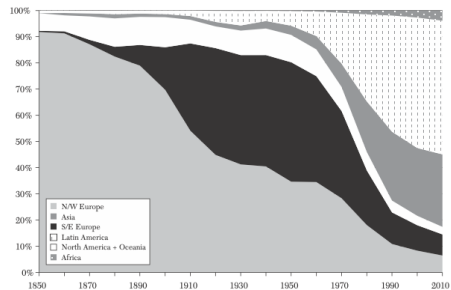
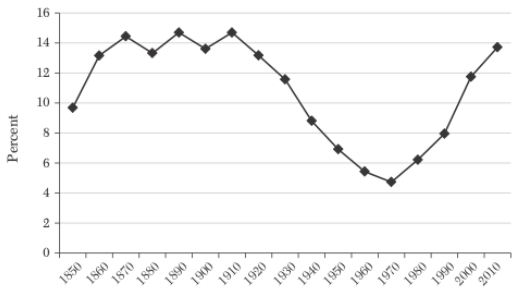


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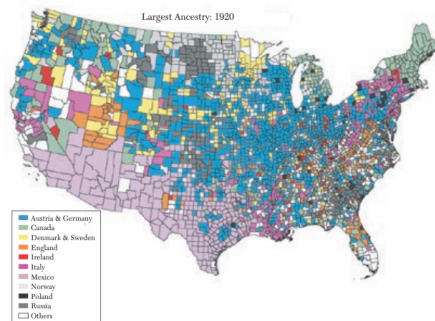
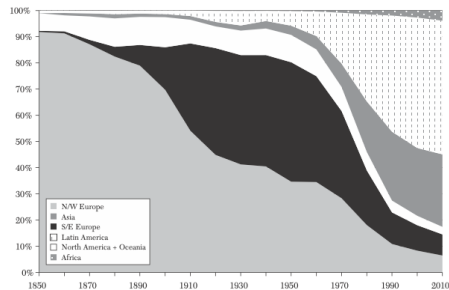
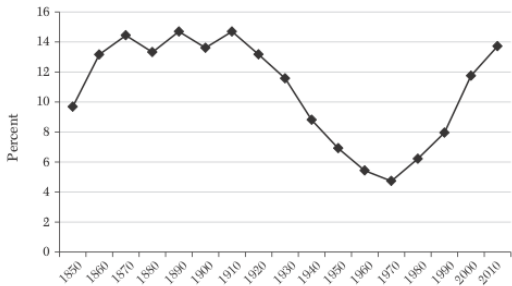


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- ▷ Let's first do a quick primer on census linking (more generally applicable)

Census Linking

- ▶ Many kinds of historical data do not have unique identifiers that allow researchers to follow individuals over time
- ↳ work by Raj Chetty along with researchers Opportunity Insights is an example where such identifiers are available but need to be suppressed in publicly available data and replication files

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- ▶ Today, the constraint is not technological but statistical: how to create a representative panel of individuals for the particular question of interest

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- ▶ There are different approaches in the literature, I'll discuss a common one here and provide references to the literature at the end of this section
- ▶ Caveat: the commonly used approaches have tended to work best (or only) for white men for the United States, matching women and Black Americans has proved challenging

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 3. For each record in dataset A, look for records in dataset B that match on first name, last name, place of birth, and exact birth year
- From here there are three possibilities: (i) take unique matches, (ii) drop multiple matches, (iii) expand birth year cutoff ± 1 , ± 2 and take only unique matches

Census Linking

▷ Variants include:

- ↳ using NYSIIS (New York State Identification and Intelligence System) standardized names
- ↳ using Jaro-Winkler string distance to measure the similarity of two strings
- ↳ using middle names/initials as a linking characteristic for those who have them
- ↳ using a fully automated probabilistic approach, formally balancing similarity across many measures
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- ▷ In population-to-population matching automated methods perform well, but it is worth considering the performance (i.e., exclusion restrictions) for any particular application

Practical Aspects of Census Linking

▷ Literature (how to):

- ↳ Bailey et al, "How Well Do Automated Methods Linking Perform?" *JEL* (2020)
- ↳ Abramitzky et al, "Automated Linking of Historical Data," *JEL* (forthcoming)
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▷ Resources:

- ↳ [IPUMS.org](https://www.ipums.org) for complete count census data, 1850-1940
- ↳ [CensusLinkingProject.org](https://censuslinkingproject.org) for individual matches

A Nation of Immigrants

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 - ↳ the key empirical issue is that assimilation has to be constructed from data that includes comparisons of people who arrived in different years or the possibility of return migration
- ▷ ABE's solution is construct a panel of individuals using census linking
 - ↳ the result is a sample of 20,225 immigrants and 1,650 native-born workers

Evaluating Census Linking

SAMPLE SIZES AND MATCH RATES BY PLACE OF BIRTH

Country	1900 Number in Universe (1)	Number Matched (2)	Match Rate, Total (3)	1900 Number, Unique (4)	Match Rate, Unique (5)
A. 1900 Source: IPUMS					
Austria	4,835	339	.070	4,677	.072
England	7,438	664	.089	6,175	.107
France	11,615	728	.063	9,139	.079
Germany	19,855	2,248	.113	16,733	.134
Ireland	9,737	861	.088	6,323	.136
Italy	7,624	811	.106	7,042	.115
Norway	3,541	425	.120	2,822	.151
Russia	5,804	644	.111	5,203	.124
Sweden	6,164	559	.091	4,070	.137
US natives	10,000	1,650	.165	8,345	.197
B. 1900 Source: Ancestry.com					
Belgium	6,060	545	.090	5,962	.091
Denmark	34,594	1,980	.058	17,425	.114
Finland	23,843	828	.035	22,197	.037
Portugal	12,585	584	.046	8,362	.070
Scotland	53,091	4,349	.082	15,529	.280
Switzerland	22,276	3,311	.149	20,588	.161
Wales	17,767	1,342	.076	9,876	.135

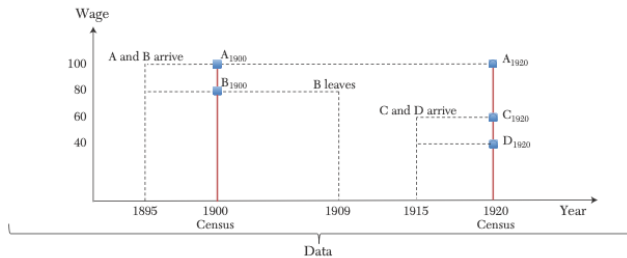
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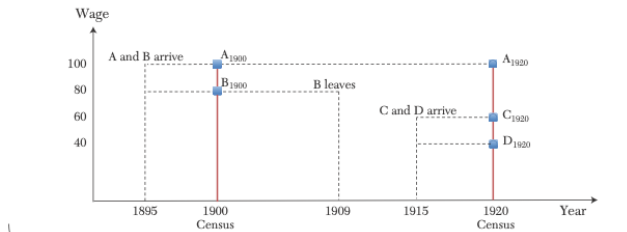
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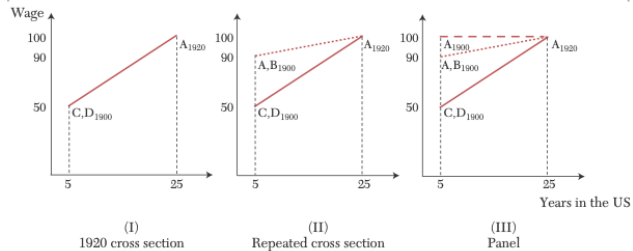
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- ▶ What is the advantage of panel data relative to the alternatives?





Data

Estimated assimilation



Immigrant Assimilation in the Age of Mass Migration

- ▶ The main analysis compares occupational mobility of native-born and immigrant workers:

$$y_{ijmt} = \gamma_{t-m} + \mu_m + \theta_t + \theta_j + f(\text{age}_{it}) + \varepsilon_{ijmt}$$

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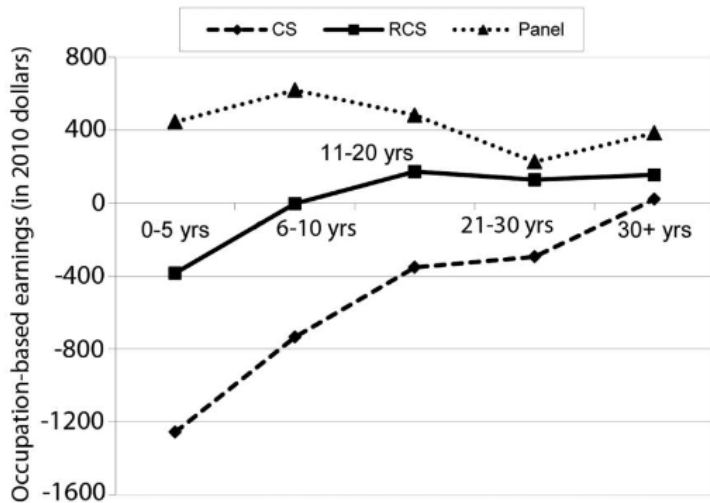
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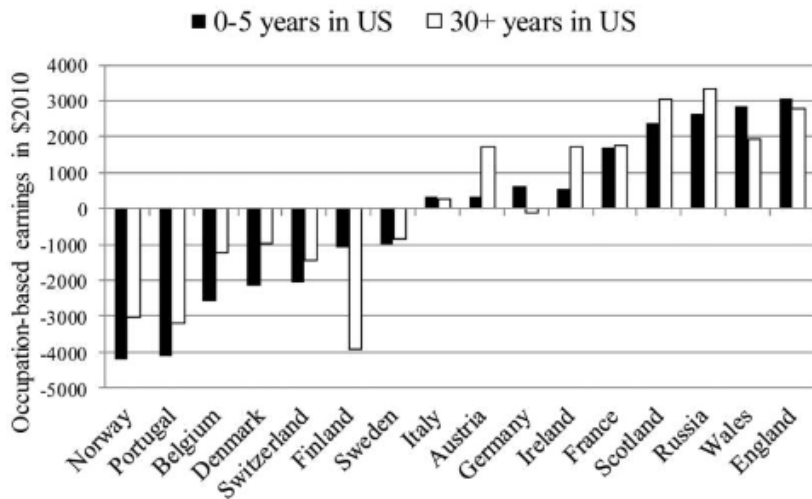
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- ▶ ABE then present results by origin country and 0 – 5/30+ years in the United States

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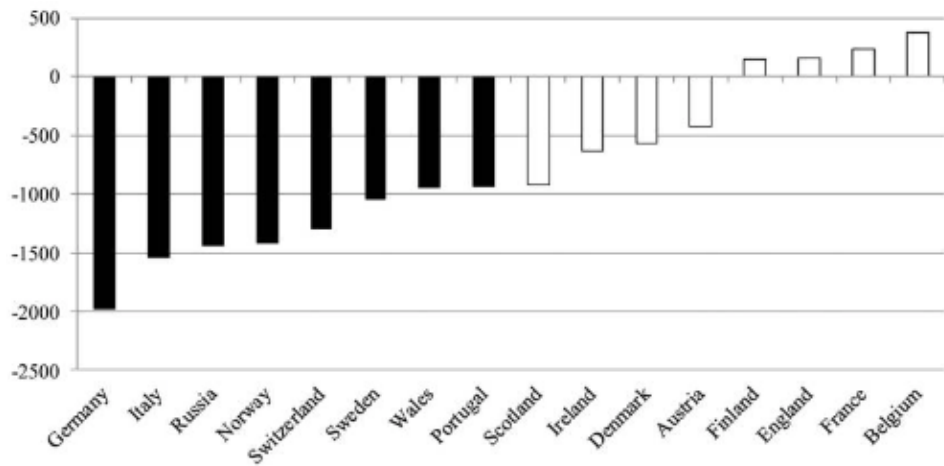


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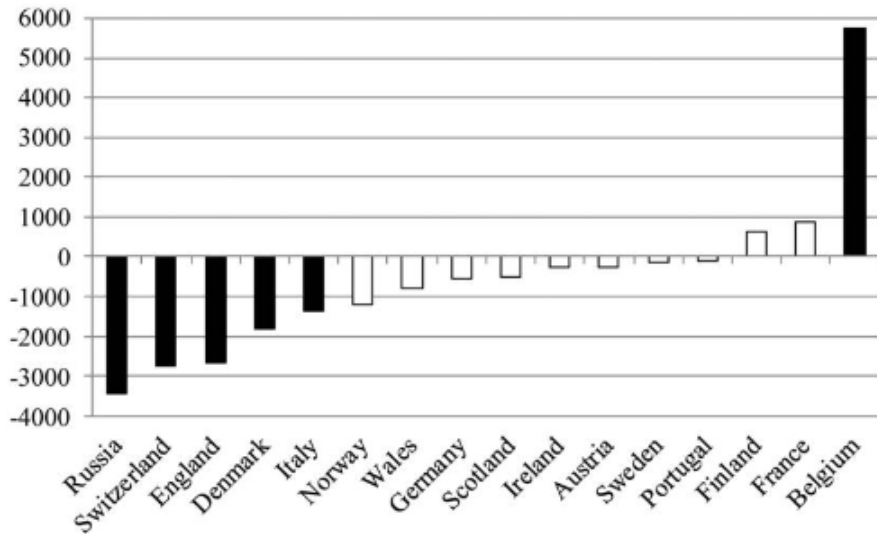
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- ▶ Looking at selection of return migrants

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- ▶ Looking at selection of return migrants: countries like Russia, Switzerland, and England saw negative selection of return migrants

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- ▶ The sending country is particularly important for predicting success of immigrants in the United States
- ▶ This suggests considerable scope for quickly integrating immigrants into the American society (contrary to concerns at the time)

Immigrant Assimilation in the Age of Mass Migration

- ▶ Immigrants to the United States during the Age of Mass Migration did not have lower skill occupations upon arrival, moved up the occupational ladder at same rate as natives
- ▶ The sending country is particularly important for predicting success of immigrants in the United States
- ▶ This suggests considerable scope for quickly integrating immigrants into the American society (contrary to concerns at the time)
- ▶ But... also suggests scope for labor market competition between immigrants and natives
- ↳ perhaps consistent with evidence from [Goldin \(1993\)](#) on the timing, geography, and political economy of immigration restriction in the early twentieth century

Immigration and Structural Change

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 - ↳ European immigrants substantially upgraded their occupational status relative to natives in the nineteenth century, but not in the early twentieth century
 - ↳ This difference was due to collapsing differences in occupational distributions between immigrants and natives, not the changing composition of sending countries

Immigration and Structural Change

Figure 4(a): 1850

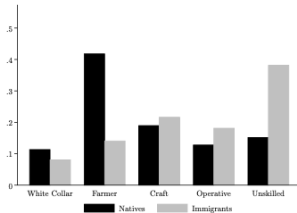


Figure 4(b): 1880

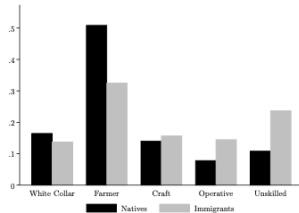


Figure 4(c): 1900

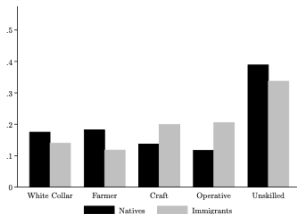


Figure 4(d): 1930

