

The Seeds of Ideology

Historical Immigration and Political Preferences in the United States

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- Did European immigrants influence US political ideology and preferences for redistribution?
 - Use large scale, nationally representative survey data from CCES
- Exploit variation in the presence of European immigrants across US counties between 1910 and 1930
 - Historical settlements of different immigrant groups in the US
 - Changes in nation-wide migration flows across countries

Ex-Ante Ambiguous Question

- Negative correlation b/w ethnic diversity and preferences for redistribution (Alesina et al., 1999; Dahlberg et al., 2012; Luttmer, 2001)
- Immigrant background of American working class hindered the success of socialism in the US (Lipset and Marks, 2000)

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- Immigrant background of American working class hindered the success of socialism in the US (Lipset and Marks, 2000)
- Long and short run effects of diversity might be different
 - "Contact hypothesis" (Allport, 1954)
 - Gradual assimilation of immigrants
 - Spillovers of culture and ideology from immigrants to natives
- Immigrants exposed to social welfare reforms in Europe
 - Europeans often members or founders of socialist movements in the US
 - Several examples (e.g., German and Swedish immigrants)

Main Findings

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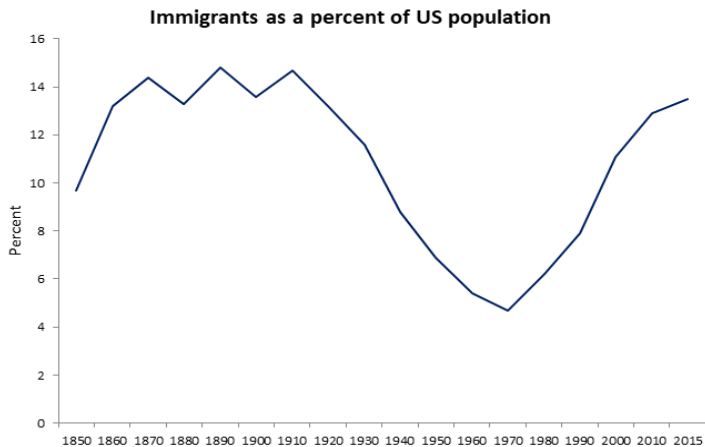
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- Immigrants brought their (pro) redistribution preferences w/ them
 - Vertical transmission across generations unlikely to be enough
 - Inter-group contact and horizontal transmission
- Political mobilization of immigrants
 - Immigrants' demand apparent already during the New Deal
 - Elect politicians more likely to support pro-redistribution bills

- ① **Historical Background**
- ② Data and Empirical Strategy
- ③ Main Results
- ④ Mechanisms
- ⑤ From the Past to the Present
- ⑥ Conclusions

Immigration in American History

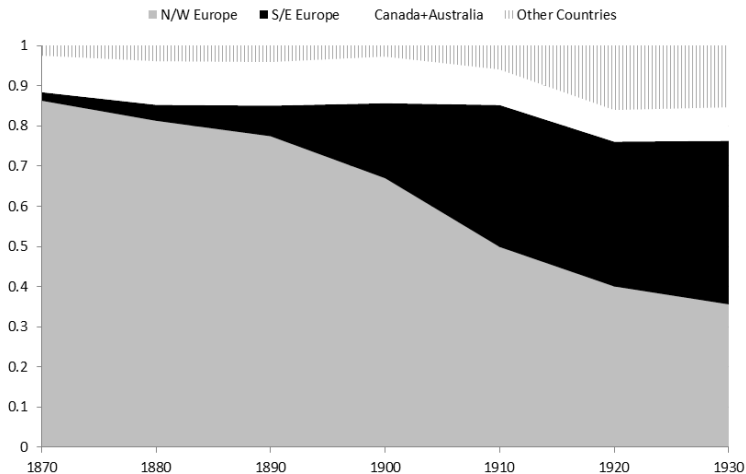


The Age of Mass Migration

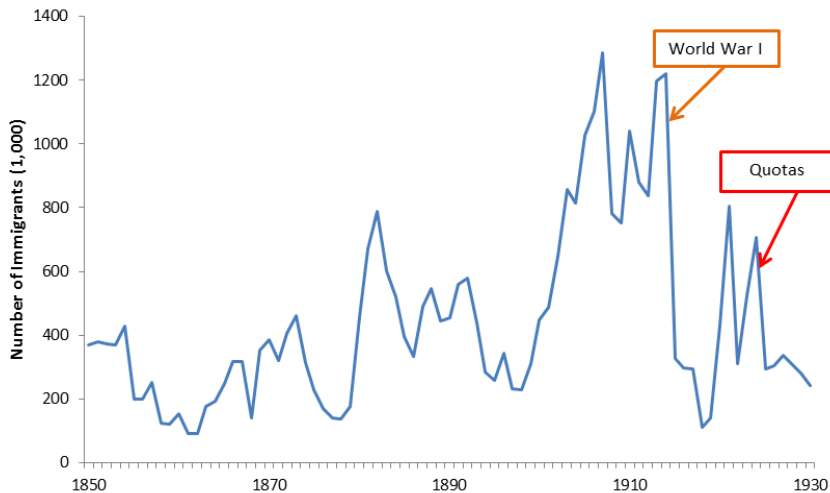
- Until 1915, unrestricted European immigration
- More than 30M European immigrants between 1850 and 1915
 - 1850-1890: Germany, UK, Ireland, Nordic countries
 - 1890-1915: Southern and Eastern Europe, Russia

Changing Composition of the Foreign Born

Share of Foreign Born, By Region



The End of European Immigration: WWI and Quotas



Quotas

European Immigrants and American Ideology

Immigrants may have moved natives' ideology to the left

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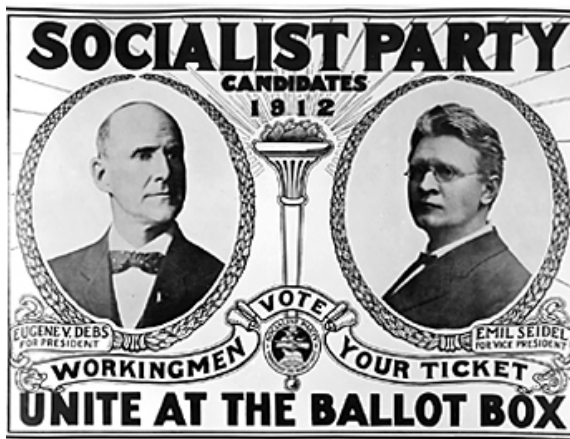
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- Political mobilization of immigrants
 - Immigrants often members (or founders) of socialist movements
 - Immigrants incorporated in the Democratic voting bloc
 - Shift Democratic Party's platform to the left

Alternative Mechanisms

European Immigrants and American Socialism



Many European immigrants became leaders of the US socialist movement

Road Map

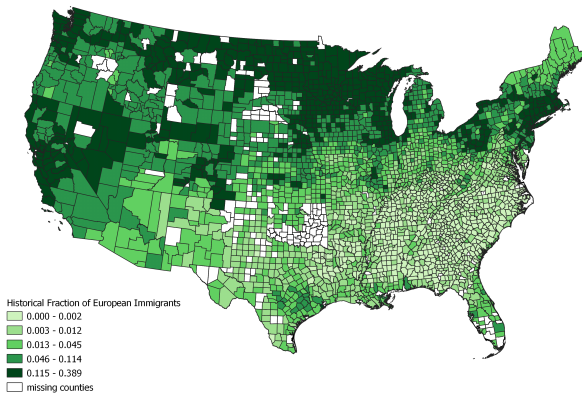
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Collect data from a variety of sources. Most importantly, from

- Full count US Census of population 1900-1930
 - Immigration, demographic, and economic county level data
- Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (CCES)
 - Political ideology and preferences for redistribution, 2006-2018

Questions

Average European Immigrant Share, 1910-1930



Map

- Estimate the effects of European immigration on natives' ideology

$$y_{icst} = \alpha_s + \delta_t + \beta Imm_{cs} + X_{cs} + W_{icst} + u_{icst} \quad (1)$$

- y_{icst} : ideology of respondent i in county c in survey year t
- Imm_{cs} : average 1910-1930 fraction of immigrants in county c
- α_s and δ_t : state and survey year fixed effects
- X_{cs} and W_{icst} : county (historical) and individual controls

Instrument for Immigration

- Different versions of the shift-share instrument (Card, 2001)
- Share of predicted (recent) immigrants in Census year τ

$$\tilde{Z}_{cs\tau} = \frac{\sum_j \alpha_{jc} O_{j\tau}^{-c}}{P_{cs}^{1900}} \quad (2)$$

- $O_{j\tau}^{-c}$: immigrants from country j entering the US b/w $\tau - 1$ and τ , net of those settling in county c
- α_{jc} : share of immigrants from country j living in county c in 1900
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 - α_{jc} : share of immigrants from country j living in county c in 1900
 - P_{cs}^{1900} : 1900 county population
- Recover the average predicted immigrant share (Z_{cs}) by
 - Adding 1900 immigrant share to the predicted inflows
 - Taking the average across decades (1910 to 1930)

Modified instrument building on Sequeira et al. (2020)

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- Interact predicted shares w/ 1910-1930 predicted national flows

Identifying Assumptions

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Natives Hold More Left-Leaning Ideology

Dep. Variable	Ideology (1)	Party Scale (R to D) (2)	Democratic Party (3)	1[Voted Democratic] (4)
<i>Panel A. OLS</i>				
Average immigrant share	0.652*** (0.132)	1.924*** (0.250)	0.457*** (0.046)	0.342*** (0.062)
<i>Panel B. 2SLS - Baseline shift-share IV</i>				
Average immigrant share	0.623*** (0.153)	1.867*** (0.297)	0.447*** (0.055)	0.359*** (0.074)
Observations	365,363	379,550	368,761	288,742
F-stat	627.3	633.1	629.7	616.6
<i>Panel C. 2SLS - Alternative shift-share IV</i>				
Average immigrant share	1.090*** (0.370)	2.919*** (0.715)	0.668*** (0.138)	0.602*** (0.171)
Observations	299,497	311,275	302,430	236,898
F-stat	66.75	67.25	66.98	67.67
Mean (s.d.) dep. var.	2.90 (1.14)	4.31 (2.20)	0.39 (0.49)	0.52 (0.50)

5 pp ↑ immigration \implies 6% ↑ Democratic identification

Natives Have Stronger Preferences for Redistribution

Dep. Variable	Oppose Spending Cuts (1)	Support State Welfare Spending (2)	Support Minimum Wage Increase (3)	Taxes to Pay State Deficit (4)
<i>Panel A. OLS</i>				
Average immigrant share	0.221*** (0.052)	0.993*** (0.219)	0.265*** (0.050)	0.098*** (0.030)
<i>Panel B. 2SLS - Baseline shift-share IV</i>				
Average immigrant share	0.211*** (0.063)	1.080*** (0.321)	0.266*** (0.060)	0.100*** (0.034)
Observations	341,647	134,494	167,414	259,935
F-stat	623.7	583.1	603	666.2
<i>Panel C. 2SLS - Alternative shift-share IV</i>				
Average immigrant share	0.400*** (0.135)	1.498*** (0.426)	0.261** (0.126)	0.133* (0.069)
Observations	280,483	110,740	137,596	212,963
F-stat	67.75	67.02	65.39	70.15
Mean (s.d.) dep. var.	0.60 (0.49)	2.84 (1.20)	0.73 (0.45)	0.41 (0.26)

5 pp ↑ immigration \implies 3% ↑ support for redistribution

Summary of Robustness Checks

- Control for baseline Democratic vote share
- Account for religious and ethnic diversity and for long-run inequality
- Aggregate to the CZ level to deal with "white flight"
- Drop the US South and trim potential outliers
- Consider 1850-1930 period and control for pre-1900 immigration
- Control for "frontier exposure" and for Black and Mexican migration
- Control for individual group 1900 shares ("Bartik shares")

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- Immigrants brought their preferences with them
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- Exploit variation in exposure to social welfare programs
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 - Validate this conjecture using ESS data
- Construct an index of average exposure at the county level
 - Weights equal to immigrant shares from each country
 - Always control for immigrants' economic characteristics

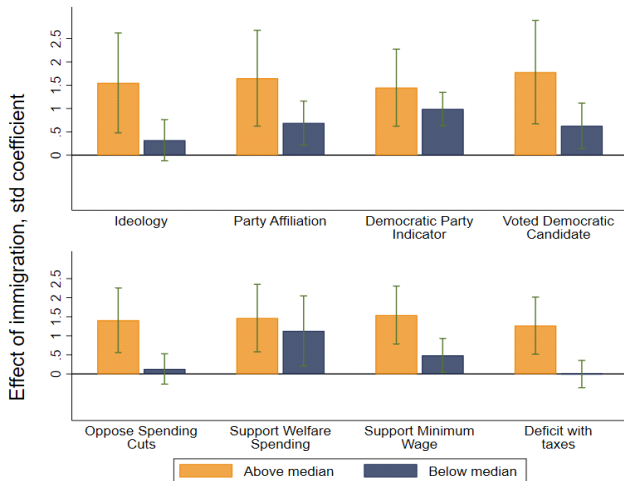
Figure

Index of Exposure to Reforms

Economic Mechanisms

German Example

Heterogeneity Effects: Exposure to Reforms



Effects larger in counties with higher exposure to social-welfare reforms

Inter-Group Contact and Transmission of Ideology

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 - Higher support for the Progressive Party in 1924 elections
 - Diffusion of ethnic socialist newspapers

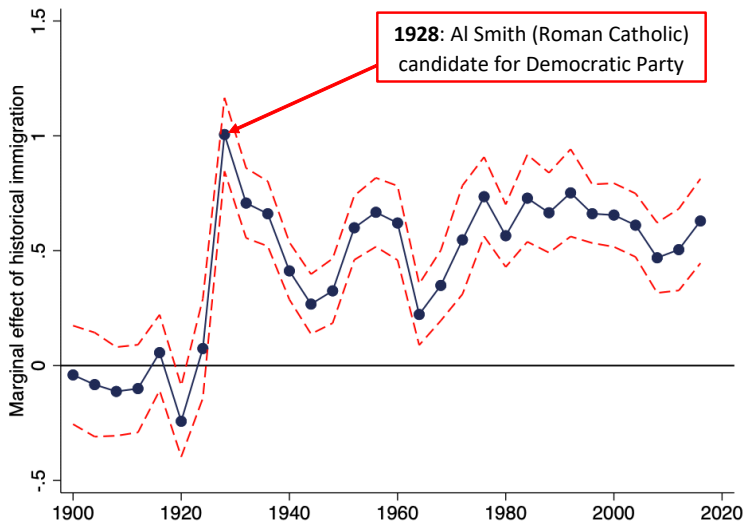
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- Social transmission also evident on natives' naming patterns
 - "Immigrant" and "socialist" names among native kids

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European Immigration and Democratic Vote Share



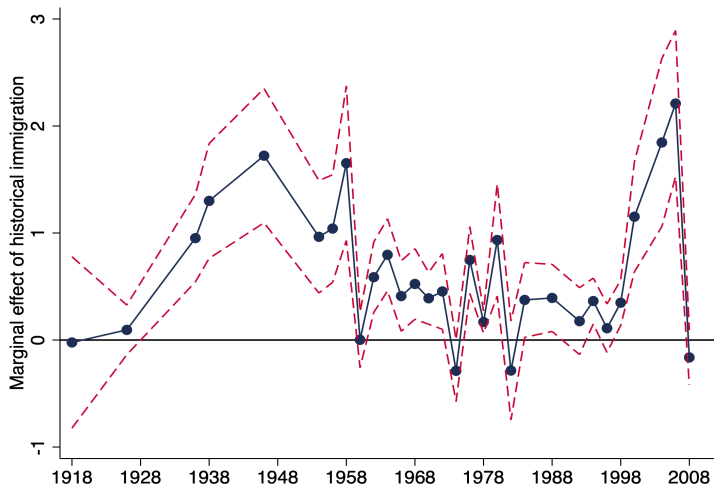
Andersen (1979): "Mobilization Theory"

Al Smith, the rags-to-riches scion of the Fulton Fishmarket, was responsible for bringing the children of "new immigration" into an increasingly welfare-oriented Democratic Party.

Kristi Andersen (1979)

New Deal

Elect Politicians Supporting Redistribution Bills



Historical immigration \implies \uparrow Pr. voting for pro-redistribution bills

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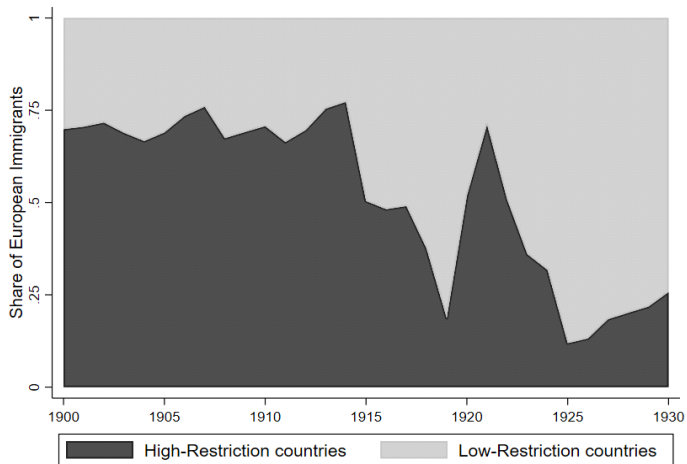
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 - Process reinforced by political inclusion of immigrants
- Key to distinguish between short and long run effects of diversity
- Direction and strength of spillovers depend on
 - Preferences of immigrants relative to those of natives
 - Malleability of local culture
 - Immigrants' incentives to retain their own preferences

BACK-UP SLIDES

Differential Effects of the Quotas



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 - More successful migrants more likely to stay

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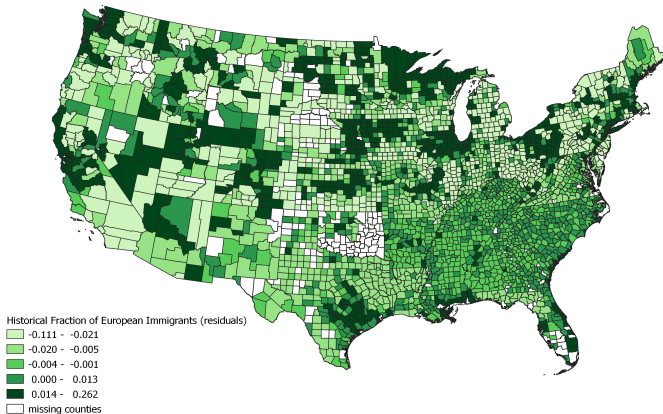
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- Immigrants' selection and economic characteristics
 - More individualistic people more likely to migrate
 - More successful migrants more likely to stay
- The "American Dream" and immigrants' intergenerational mobility
 - Stronger faith in effort than in luck

Political Ideology and Preferences for Redistribution

Use 8 questions from CCES to measure

- Political ideology
 - Conservative-Liberal indicator (5-point scale)
 - Party affiliation (7-point scale)
 - Democratic Party indicator (dummy)
 - Voted for Democratic candidate (dummy)
- Preferences for redistribution
 - Oppose spending cuts (dummy)
 - Support welfare spending (5-point scale)
 - Support increase in the minimum wage (dummy)
 - Finance deficit with taxes (0-100, rescaled)

European Immigrants (Partialling Out State FE)



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Identifying Assumptions

- 1900 immigrant enclaves must be uncorrelated with
 - Migration patterns of different countries from 1910 to 1930
 - County-specific factors correlated with evolution of ideology

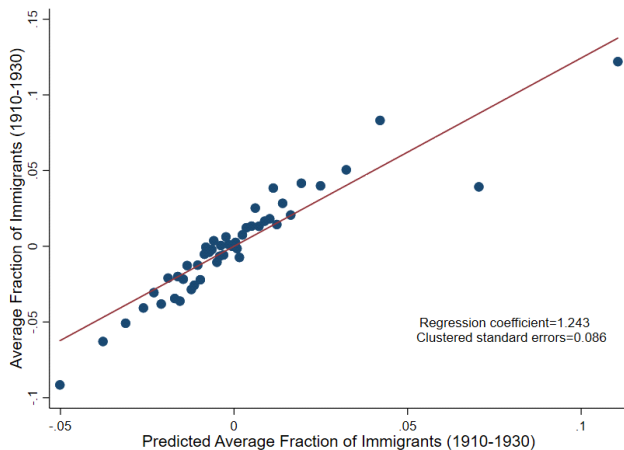
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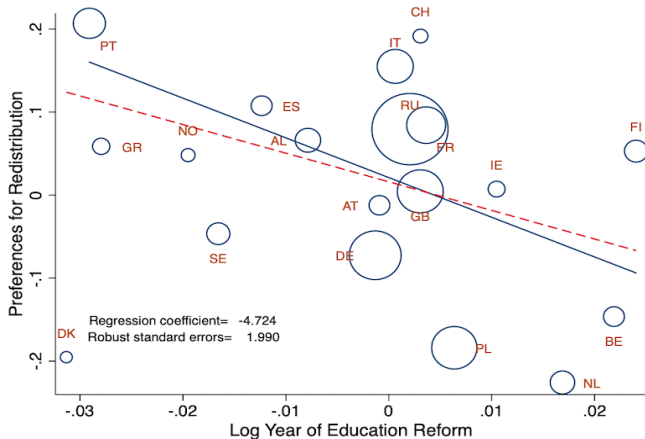
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 - County-specific factors correlated with evolution of ideology
- Robustness checks
 - Historical controls, including 1850-1900 immigration
 - Granger causality test for Democratic vote share
 - Control for 1900 immigrant shares, one at the time
 - Control for Black American and Mexican migration waves

First Stage



1pp \uparrow predicted immigrant share \implies 1.2pp \uparrow actual immigrant share

Exposure to Social Welfare Reforms and ESS Data



Index of Exposure to Social Welfare Reforms

- County-level average exposure to social-welfare reforms:

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 - Assign a value of 0 if reforms introduced after immigration year
 - Robust to alternative assumptions

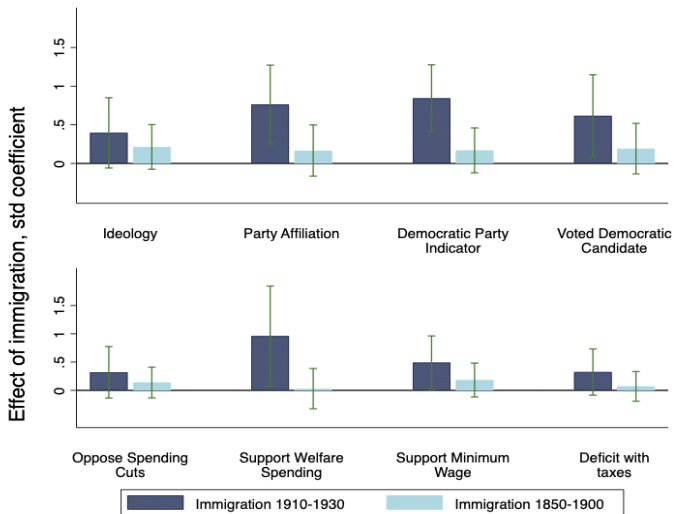
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 - Robust to alternative assumptions
- Use predicted immigrant shares to construct an IV for PR_{jc}

Effects Only for Post-1900 Immigrants



- European immigration spurred growth (Sequeira et al., 2020)
 - Income $\uparrow \implies$ demand for redistribution \downarrow (Meltzer&Richard, 1981)
 - Positive effects visible already in the short run

Economic Channels

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 - Literacy, skills and occupation, ability to speak English
 - Intergenerational mobility
- Immigrants' selection unlikely to move natives' preferences to the left
 - More individualistic people more likely to migrate (Knudsen, 2019)
 - Successful immigrants more likely to stay (Abramitzky et al., 2019c)

Only Post-1884 Germans Increase Democratic Ideology

Dep. Variables:	Ideology	Party Scale (R to D)	Democratic Party	1[Voted Democratic]
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
German share (1900-1930)	2.370** (1.180) [0.0207]	7.174*** (2.211) [0.0327]	1.902*** (0.435) [0.0392]	1.674*** (0.544) [0.0335]
German share (1850-1880)	-0.122 (0.161) [-0.005]	-0.441 (0.338) [-0.0102]	-0.105 (0.0677) [-0.0110]	-0.122 (0.0777) [-0.0124]
Observations	354,994	368,838	358,322	280,355
Mean (s.d) dep. variable	2.91(1.14)	4.32(2.20)	0.39(0.49)	0.52(0.50)
Individuals controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Historical controls	Y	Y	Y	Y

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Only Post-1884 Germans Raise Demand for Redistribution

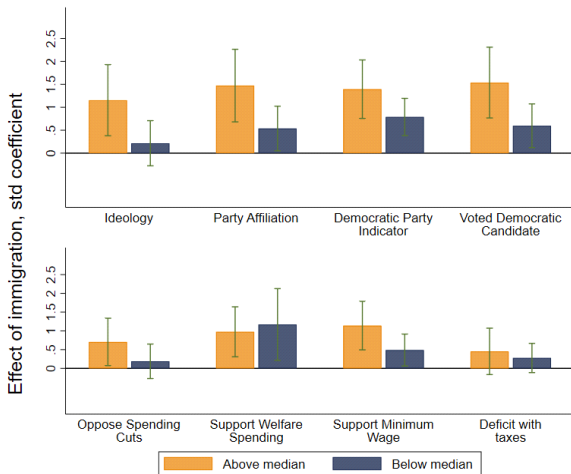
Dep. Variables:	Oppose spending cuts (1)	Support Welfare Spending (2)	Support minimum wage increase (3)	Prefer taxes to pay for state deficit (4)
German share (1900-1930)	1.100*** (0.410) [0.0224]	3.275*** (1.200) [0.0273]	1.120*** (0.371) [0.0250]	0.302 (0.242) [0.0114]
German share (1850-1880)	-0.123** (0.0609) [-0.0128]	-0.156 (0.204) [-0.0066]	-0.0752 (0.0686) [-0.00856]	-0.0552 (0.0357) [-0.0106]
Observations	331,794	130,720	162,877	252,700
Mean (s.d) dep. variable	0.60(0.49)	2.84(1.20)	0.73(0.45)	0.41(0.26)
Individuals controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Historical controls	Y	Y	Y	Y

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Vertical Transmission Is Not the Only Channel

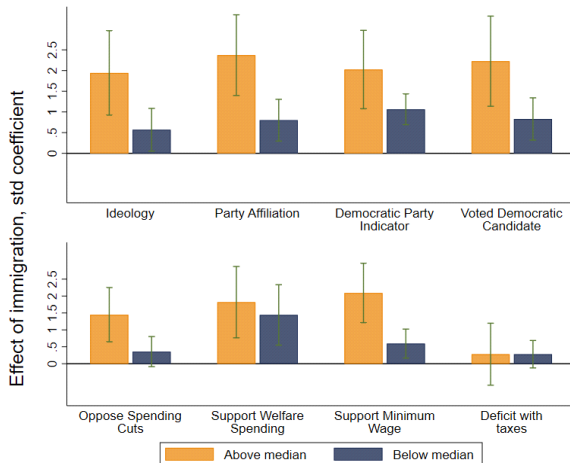
Dep. Variable:	Party Scale (R to D) (1)	Ideology (2)	1[Voted Democratic] (3)	Gov't spending for the poor (4)	Gov't vs individual responsibility (5)	Gov't should do more (6)
<i>Panel A. Any US born</i>						
Average immigrant share	1.863*** (0.555)	1.164*** (0.266)	0.272** (0.116)	0.632*** (0.217)	0.457* (0.250)	1.007*** (0.304)
F-stat	145.9	147.4	142.7	152.7	149.8	151
Mean dep variable	4.182	3.858	0.556	1.729	3.009	2.884
Observations	18,607	16,029	15,513	9,005	10,737	10,606
<i>Panel B. US born with native parents</i>						
Average immigrant share	1.876*** (0.536)	1.139*** (0.311)	0.302** (0.118)	0.670*** (0.213)	0.453* (0.270)	0.920*** (0.304)
F-stat	140.8	142.8	137.1	148.3	139.1	141.7
Mean dep variable	4.148	3.841	0.552	1.722	3.003	2.871
Observations	16,788	14,462	13,979	8,130	9,664	9,553
<i>Panel C. US born with native grandparents</i>						
Average immigrant share	2.028*** (0.651)	0.950** (0.416)	0.390*** (0.146)	1.017*** (0.227)	0.216 (0.319)	0.574* (0.325)
F-stat	121.8	123.4	117.2	119.2	122.1	126.1
Observations	11,782	10,069	9,807	5,692	6,745	6,694
Mean dep variable	4.165	3.820	0.541	1.738	3.032	2.897
Individual controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Historical controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Region&wave FEs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Transmission of Ideology: Intermarriage



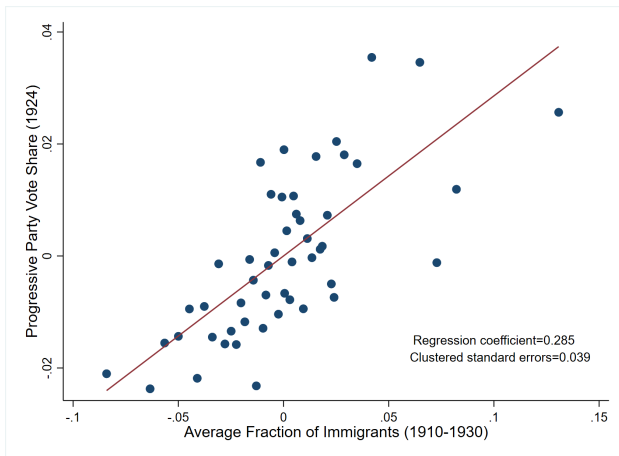
Effects larger in counties with higher intermarriage

Transmission of Ideology: Residential Integration

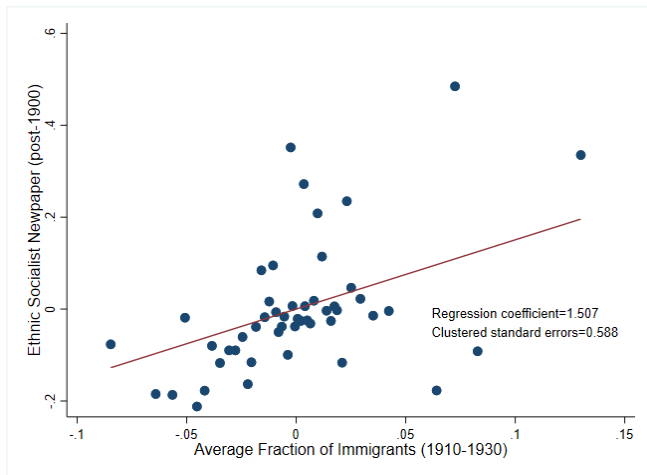


Effects larger where immigrants were more residentially integrated

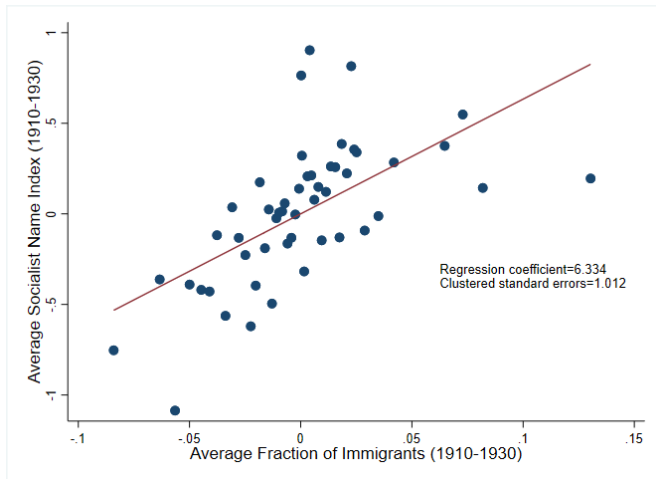
European Immigration and the Progressive Party (1924)



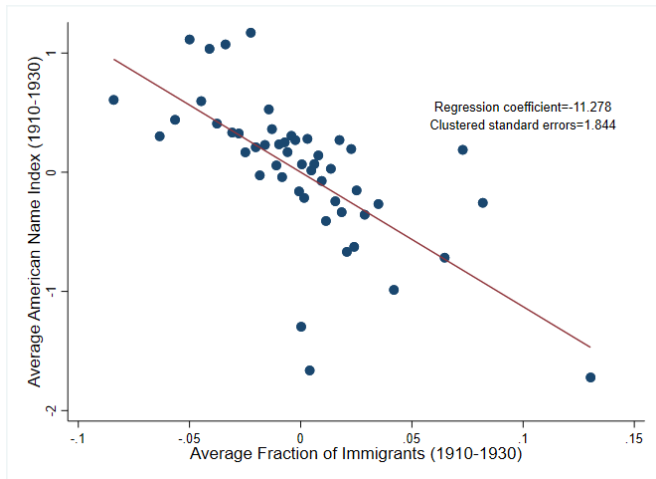
More Ethnic Socialist Newspapers



More Socialist Sounding Names Among Natives



More Immigrant Sounding Names Among Natives



European Immigrants and New Deal Generosity

Dep. Variable:	Relief expenditures (1)	Public works (2)	Farm programs (3)	Housing loans (4)
Average immigrant share	183.2*** (27.99) [0.267***]	-39.93* (22.24) [-0.025*]	130.7*** (20.25) [0.081***]	-6.208 (56.90) [-0.008]
Sales growth	1.470 (4.317)	21.20*** (5.008)	-17.31*** (4.174)	-8.441 (8.208)
F-stat	103.1	103.1	103.1	103.1
Observations	2,969	2,969	2,969	2,969
Mean (S.D.) dep var	76.71 46.99	31.92 44.25	37.61 53.63	0.406 0.264
Individual controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Immigrants' characteristics	Y	Y	Y	Y
Historical controls	Y	Y	Y	Y

European immigrants $\uparrow \implies$ Relief expenditures \uparrow