

ABSTRACT

The Integration of Refugees and Economic Migrants in the U.S. from 1845 to 2017

Audrey K. Mirasola, M.S.

Advisor: Zachary Ward, Ph.D.

Research shows that refugees in the United States experience faster economic growth than other immigrants, in part because they have limited incentive to return home. However, this pattern has primarily been documented in the late 20th century, making it unclear whether faster economic assimilation is an inherent characteristic of refugee flows, or whether it is unique to recent decades. This paper uses data between 1850 and 2017 to compare the economic assimilation of refugee cohorts to economic cohorts. I find that after 1900, refugee cohorts start off at a lower average occupational prestige than both their economic immigrant and native-born counterparts upon arrival, but refugees economically assimilate at a faster rate and, in some periods, overtake the occupational prestige of economic immigrants after two decades. Older arrival periods display more complex patterns of assimilation where refugees do not always start off below natives or assimilate more quickly with more years of stay.

The Integration of Refugees and Economic Migrants
in the U.S. from 1845 to 2017

by

Audrey Mirasola, B.B.A.

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Jim Henderson, Ph.D., Chairperson

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Approved by the Thesis Committee

Zachary Ward, Ph.D., Chairperson

Steve Gardner, Ph.D.

Lauren Poor, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School

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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Since the 1600s, what became the United States has been a destination for those escaping persecution. From Puritan separatists leaving England in 1620 to the Iraqi Yazidi and Afghan refugees in 2020, a variety of groups have fled to the United States due to religious persecution, discrimination, and security concerns. Many perceive that displaced groups entering a country can overwhelm the economy and job market, disrupt political dynamics, breed tension between citizens and newcomers, create religious conflict, and cause a whole host of other problems. The question of how to approach welcoming and integrating refugees into the United States, and even if it should be done at all, has been asked persistently throughout history. Because refugees often face language, job skill, and mental health related barriers, they are an easy target of negative political agendas. While many assumptions are made about how refugees integrate and adjust to life in the United States, there are only a handful of economic studies that examine if these assumptions are true.

This paper addresses several questions regarding the assimilation of refugees into the United States. First, how do refugee assimilation patterns compare with the patterns of other immigrants? Second, how do refugee economic outcomes differ from the outcomes of native-born citizens? Lastly, and most importantly, do refugee patterns of assimilation change over time? The delicate placement of refugees in American society necessitates active research to ensure our understanding of refugees' ability to be both socially and economically successful upon arrival is accurate.

Drawing on historical census data, the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (YIS), I compare the economic outcomes of refugees and economic migrants. I consider refugees as those forced to flee with no or an unknown chance of returning home in the future (UNHCR 1951). For the purpose of this paper, economic immigrants are all immigrants who are not refugees; those likely to come to the United States for economic opportunity, education, or family. When comparing immigrant outcomes over such a long span, it is important to make the outcomes comparable over time. However, income data is not consistently available in historical censuses, and so I cannot estimate traditional specifications based on wage growth (e.g., Chiswick 1978, Borjas 2015). Therefore, I estimate economic assimilation based on one's economic rank in society, where rank is primarily based on one's occupation (Abramitzky et al. 2014, Collins and Zimran 2019).

I find that, after 1900, refugees assimilate at a faster rate than economic immigrants in each period. In the mid-19th century, the rate of economic growth was similar across refugee and economic. These findings are consistent with Brell et al. (2020) and Cortes (2004) who also find higher assimilation rates for refugees than for immigrants.

Another finding in recent decades is that refugees tend to start out with worse outcomes than economic migrants, in part because refugees have to abruptly leave their home with little foresight to ease the transition (Cortes 2004). I find this pattern also mostly holds throughout American history, with the exception of the 1900-1920 cohort of immigrants, where refugees start above economic immigrants in terms of occupational score. I predict that since refugees tend to be a random sample of the population of the

source country who are all equally effected by the crisis, their individual characteristics also reflect a random sample of the population. During the 1900-1920 period this random selection was not the case, many higher skilled Jewish migrants were fleeing from pogroms in Eastern Europe, which may have contributed to the higher economic ranks for refugees.

There are many different groups of refugees that have come to the United States throughout time, but they share important commonalities: their lack of choice in immigrating out of their home country and their inability to return home. Studying these groups at various times through U.S. history will help to inform whether assimilation patterns of refugees are significantly different than those of other migrants and if they have changed over time.

CHAPTER TWO

Background

Definition of Refugee

A legal definition of refugee is a relatively modern invention. Before the world wars, those fleeing persecution moved in small numbers and were dealt with on a country-by-country basis. In the aftermath of the world wars, the need for a standardized international response to refugee crises was evident (USCIS 2021). World War I and the Russian Revolution generated refugees in large numbers and motivated the League of Nations to create policies to assist these individuals (Ginsburgs 1957). In 1921, the League of Nations established the High Commission for Russian Refugees which helped over 1.5 million people who had been forced to flee their homes (UNHCR 1993). The League's definition of refugee was notably vague; refugees were considered anyone “in danger if they returned to their home countries” (UNHCR 1993). Though internationally refugees were beginning to receive assistance, the United States’ actions in the aftermath of WWI was to create stricter regulations and quotas governing immigration and prevent refugees from entering the country (USCIS 2021).

World War II and its displacement of millions of people again directed international attention to the plight of refugees. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in 1950 in order to create a cohesive approach to the management of refugee crises both present and future. The founding of this organization and the political climate at the time caused the U.S., among other countries, to expand quotas on refugees legally able to enter the country per year. The goal of the UNHCR

was to move refugees out of camps either back to their home country after the crisis is over or to a new permanent location (UNHCR 1951). They officially defined refugees as those "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of that country" (UNHCR 1951). This legal definition and the international push to address this issue resulted in "many legal instruments [...] in place now that were unavailable [...] before the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and, more important, the 1967 protocol to it that extended protection beyond those affected by the Second World War" (Stone 2018). This 1951 definition is still legally recognized today and is the one used in this paper to identify refugee groups from the modern period. While not every country agrees to abide by the U.N.'s new standards, the 1950s saw a change regarding how the rights of nationless individuals would be viewed and protected henceforth.

History of Refugees in the United States

For more than a century, the United States had no technical distinction between different types of immigrants. For much of American history, open borders meant that economic immigrants and refugees could come to the U.S. for virtually any reason (Higham 2011). One of the most notable refugee groups were the Irish potato famine immigrants. Around 500,000 Irish came to the U.S. in a period of 4 years, between 1845 and 1849 (Ferenczi and Willcox 1969). Relative to the American population, this was the largest influx of refugees ever to come to the United States (Collins and Zimran 2019). With such high nativist and anti-Catholic sentiment present in the U.S., integration, job

attainment, and social adjustment were difficult for this group (Hollenbach 2020).

Another significant group of refugees to enter the U.S. were those fleeing the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s. Tens of thousands crossed the border from Mexico every year between 1910 and 1917 (Richmond 1982). Soon after, increasing violence against Jewish populations in Europe caused a mass exodus to the United States. “Jews who had escaped the carnage of the Ukrainian Civil War (1918–1920) were more akin to refugees than immigrants” (Alroey 2018). Open borders meant that the type of immigrant an individual was, be it a refugee or economic immigrant, did not influence their ability to enter the United States; no technical distinction was made between the groups.

While there are always been refugees who have been forced to leave their home country, laws regarding who is allowed to come into the U.S. have developed recently. The era of mass migration at the turn of the 20th century came to an end with WWI. The Dillingham Commission, which conducted a nation-wide study on the impact of immigration, made recommendations to the government that the United States impose quotas to heavily limit the number of immigrants per country based on race, literacy and many other factors (Benton-Cohen 2018). While the League of Nations was trying to expand programs to help refugees, due to the protectionist political agenda fueled by the Dillingham Commission’s findings, the United States actively prevented large groups of refugees from entering the country. This perspective began to change in the aftermath of WWII. The United States passed legislation that expanded quotas and welcomed refugees. Truman put a temporary band aid on the issue of Jews being forced to flee their home with the Displaced Persons Act (Long 2013). The first time the word refugee was mentioned in US law was in 1953 when the scope of those who were considered refugees

expanded from those fleeing Nazism to include those fleeing communism (Refugee Relief Act 1953). This act allowed more displaced persons to come into the US after WWII, but was limited in scope because it only served to change who could come to the US under the quotas, not the size of the quotas themselves. Refugees from Germany, Poland, Romania, and many other countries came by the tens of thousands (Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 1978). This policy change highlighted the nation's new perspective on the moral obligation and economic impact of assimilating refugees.

The United States' approach regarding the acceptance of refugees in the last half century has shifted course. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed race-based immigration quotas and shifted the majority of immigrants away from Northern Europe (Chin 2015). Not only were quotas for different countries lifted, the U.S. also began to institute policies to help these individuals adjust to life after arrival. Noting that refugees tend to arrive with less resources, the government stipulated that "immigrants, but not refugees, are ineligible for public assistance for five years after their arrival" (Hein 1993). This additional aid paired with the incentive to assimilate due to an inability to migrate back to one's home country leads to a different set of outcomes for refugees. Groups of refugees came from Cuba starting in 1959, from Vietnam starting in 1975, and from Hungary starting in 1965; each of these groups had different characteristics influencing the way they adjusted to life in the U.S. (Roberto 1996). Chiswick (1978) says "Self-selection is weaker if migration is induced by political pressure in the country of origin." Because refugees do not self-select into migration and are rather forced to leave their home country, their education and skills are on average not as related to their destination country's job market as are those of economic immigrants. The 30,000

Hungarian refugees of 1965, therefore, present a unique case study because “the high educational level [...] attained before and after their arrival made their absorption into the mainstream relatively easy” (Pastor 2016). The Refugee Act of 1980 presents a new perspective on immigration in the U.S. because it establishes the Office of Refugee Resettlement and defines “asylees” as a separate immigrant type (Refugee Relief Act, 1980). Refugees entering the U.S. after this period have a slightly more streamlined course to receiving aid.

A variety of refugee groups have migrated to the United States. Comparing these refugee groups with other immigrants and with natives in the same period and with other refugee groups throughout U.S. history will aid us in identifying patterns in how refugees adjust to life in the U.S. and how those patterns have changed over time. Historians tend to view immigration in three waves; Irish and German immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s, Southern Europeans from the 1870s to the 1920s, and the diverse groups of immigrants from 1965 onwards. By conducting a consistent analysis on refugees over US history we can draw connections between how different people groups experience assimilation based on their personal characteristics, but also based on the laws in place during each period.

Previous Literature

The aim of this paper is to estimate the economic assimilation of refugees in comparison to economic migrants. In the economics literature, assimilation examines how earnings trajectories of immigrants differ from US-born individuals (Chiswick 1978, Borjas 1985). If immigrants catch up to US-born economic outcomes with more years of stay, then they economically “assimilate.”

While there is much research on immigrant populations as a whole, there is a limited literature on how outcomes differ across refugees and economic immigrants. Theoretically, there are reasons to suspect that refugee integration differs from economic migrants. Economic immigrants can prepare for their destination before they begin their journey, plan where they want to go and thus start learning the language, develop relevant job skills, and connect with relatives or acquaintances who have already migrated. These steps help to prepare economic immigrants to adjust and potentially ease the assimilation process. The journey of a refugee is entirely different. Migration is not motivated by economic opportunity in a new country, but by danger and loss at home. Refugees often are forced to flee without knowing their final destination, they can be made to wait for years in a refugee camp, and when they get accepted into a new country, they are not prepared to assimilate into the culture or the economy. Initial outcomes after arrival may therefore be worse for refugees than for economic immigrants.

While refugees likely start behind economic migrants at arrival, they have more incentive to invest in human capital after arrival. Economic immigrants have the freedom to migrate back to their home country, but refugees must learn to adapt because it is unlikely that they will return to their source country. The incentives for refugees to assimilate, learn language and job skills, and establish a solid footing in their host country are higher than for the average migrant. Since refugees' homes have often been destroyed or made permanently unsafe, "refugees have one very important commonality between them—they are all immigrants that must 'make it' in the country that gives them refuge" (Cortes 2004). While the differences between refugees and economic migrants have long been recognized, Cortes (2004) was one of the first to study the difference in assimilation

between economic and refugee migrants. Using ACS data on refugees and economic migrants who arrived between 1975 and 1979, Cortes (2004) found that refugee migrants started behind economic migrants, but then improved more rapidly with more years of stay.

Brell et al. (2020) expands on Cortes' (2004) schema across countries and across time by examining refugees entering the United States and Europe between 1990 and 2016. They identify refugee cohorts using an indirect method; if at least 70% of migrants from a given country and year are refugees, as officially defined by the UNHCR, then everyone from the cohort is considered a refugee. In European countries studied by Brell et al., refugee employment rates upon arrival start beneath other immigrants. They find that though refugees start out at lower employment rates, "employment growth of refugees is substantially higher than that of other migrant groups" (Brell et al. 2020). The United States is an outlier because refugee employment rates upon arrival parallel those of other immigrants. Brell et al. finds that "refugees' employment rates are not dissimilar to those of other immigrants, but a large initial gap in earnings exists, with a subsequent relative improvement" (Brell et al. 2020). Despite having similar employment rates, refugees earn significantly less than other immigrants upon arrival. The increasing rate of change in earnings of refugees is statistically significant. Upon arrival in the United States, refugees earn an average of 49% of the average wages of other immigrants and 40% of the average wages of native-born individuals. "After 10 years, average wages had improved to 55 percent of natives and 70 percent of other immigrants in the same position" (Brell et al. 2020). The fact that refugees' wages grow at a faster rate than those of other immigrants seems to be a US-specific phenomenon. In European countries, Bell

finds that “relative wage position gradually improves over time compared to an average native but not, in most countries, markedly faster than other immigrants” (2020). Perhaps this difference is due to characteristics of the refugee groups migrating to various host countries or due to governmental policies to assist with assimilation that are present in each host country.

While Cortes (2004) and Brell et al. (2020) analyze the assimilation of refugees in modern times, Collins and Zimran (2019) apply similar ideas to the Great Irish famine of the 1840s. The process established by Collins and Zimran (2019) addresses issues in both the limitations of the data and the interpretation of the results. Since information of year of immigration was not collected in the census before 1890, the first step in their process involved estimating year of immigration by the birthplaces and ages of children of immigrants. Collins and Zimran study second generation outcomes of famine immigrants from Ireland and thus their goal is to separate famine migrants out from pre-famine migrants. If a migrant has a US-born child earlier than 1845, then he immigrated before the famine. If a migrant had an Irish-born child post-1845 then he is a famine migrant. To allow for comparison between cohorts, they apply the same method to migrants from Britain and Germany. This approximation method works for “71% of Irish sons” (Collins and Zimran 2019). After using this method to identify year of immigration, the next step taken was to link this information to the 1880 full count census to compare occupational outcomes of the children of immigrants over time in the United States. They find that the children of Irish famine migrants are more likely than pre-famine Irish migrants to hold unskilled occupations, and that both groups of migrants were more likely to hold unskilled occupations than were natives. Though they found that there is an occupational

gap between famine and other migrants, Collins and Zimran noted that a significant increase in the rate of assimilation was found in the second generation. “The famine-era Irish disadvantage relative to natives in 1880 is much smaller than the gap observed for their fathers in 1850. In this sense, there is strong evidence of convergence in labor market outcomes between immigrants and natives” (Collins and Zimran 2019). Collins and Zimran’s (2019) findings on an increasing rate of assimilation are intergenerational, not within one generation like the results found by Cortes (2004), but the trend of income convergence with time spent in the United States is the same.

CHAPTER THREE

Data

Data Sources

Data sources include census micro-data between 1850 and 2010 and the 2019 American Community Surveys (ACS) from 2019, available from IPUMS (Ruggles et al. 2020). The ACS is a demographics survey of a fraction of the population that is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Census data from 1850-2010 includes a survey of similar information and depending on the year under study, the sample size available varies. I merged information from these census data to information from the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (YIS) from 1978 to 2017 along with qualitative identifiers of refugees in the historical period (1850-1977) in order to identify refugee cohorts. The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics is published by the Department of Homeland security each year and documents the number of each immigrant type each year.

Sample Restrictions

To allow for consistent comparison across time periods, I restrict the sample to specific characteristics. First, I analyze only working age individuals, those between 20 and 64, to ensure that education and retirement do not significantly skew the results. For similar reasons, I keep only immigrants who have been in the US for between 0 and 20 years. The exception to this are immigrants from the 1945-60 cohort. The year of immigration variable is missing from the 1950 and 1960 censuses, so to accurately measure assimilation over time I extend the analysis past 20 years. Since the occupational

score variable only provides information on those with occupations, the sample is by necessity restricted to these individuals. Lastly, since women historically are less likely than men to hold an occupation, I remove them from the analysis for comparison across time. For later periods, I do include gender as a control variable in some regressions.

Modern Period (1975-2017) Refugee Identification

Each census documents the country of origin of each immigrant, but does not include visa information; thus, we cannot directly identify who is a refugee and who is an economic migrant. Instead, I indirectly identify refugees and economic immigrants by country of origin and year of immigration (Cortes 2004, Brell et al. 2020). The Department of Homeland Security documents from 1978 to present the number of refugees per year and delineates these refugees by country of origin in the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Thus, for the modern period, we follow Brell et al. (2020) and identify refugee countries as those where 70% or more immigrants in a given year were refugees. For the period of 1975-1980, we adopt the schema used by Cortes to identify refugee populations based on information from Haines (1996). This method leads us to recognize eight countries from this period as refugee source countries.¹

One issue not addressed by previous literature is that there is no distinction made between economic immigrants and asylees. Asylees are those claiming to be refugees, but whose status as such has not been officially granted. These individuals are categorized by the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics separately from refugees and thus analysis based solely on YIS refugee numbers compared to the immigrant population as a whole

¹ The eight countries identified as refugee source countries for the 1975-1979 period are Afghanistan, Cuba, Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Haiti, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

overlooks this important people group. Asylees, having also been forced to flee their homes, have more in common with refugees than with economic immigrants, therefore, for the purposes of this paper, asylees will be classified together with refugees. This differs from Cortes (2004) and Brell et al.'s (2020) classification system by recognizing asylees have limited incentive to return to their home country with refugees. In this paper, we proxy the exact proportion of refugees with a “refugee fraction” created using Yearbook of Immigration and Census information.

Mid-20th Century (1945-1974) Refugee Identification

The 1978 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics documents refugees by country of origin and acts that allowed entrance into the United States. Thus, year of arrival can be approximated by examining the period where each act was in effect. I proxy the number of refugees by first noting which act allowed admittance into the U.S. then examining which countries the act applied to and which years the act was in effect. Illustrating this method with an example, the President's Directive of December 22, 1945 was in effect from 1946 to 1950 and through this act 11,660 refugees from Poland entered the United States (YIS 1978). Additionally, the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 allowed admittance of 12,826 Polish refugees from 1948-1952 (YIS 1978). Thus, we estimate that approximately 25,000 Polish refugees entered the U.S. during this six-year period. We systematically apply this logic to each act regarding refugees and each country which the act applied to produce estimates of refugees per year. I take information from President's Directive of 1945, the Displaced Persons Act, the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, the Act of July 29, 1953, the Act of Sept 11, 1957, the Act of July 25, 1958, the Act of Sept 2, 1958, the Act of Sept 22, 1959, the Act of July 14, 1960, the Act of Oct 3, 1965, the Act of Nov

2, 196, and the Act of Oct 30, 1977 (YIS 1978). Since the goal of the analysis is to examine changes in assimilation by decade, this estimated range for the year of immigration suffices. After creating total refugee estimates by country, I again use a “refugee fraction” to determine whether to count all migrants in a given year and country as a refugee.

Before World War II (1840-1945) Refugee Identification

For the historical period, no cohesive data source documents the number of refugees per country per year. Thus, we identify refugees qualitatively by examining the historical records on refugee crises. The literature establishes the major groups of refugees in each period (i.e. Irish famine refugees, Mexican revolution refugees, Cuban crisis refugees, etc.) and, similar to Brell et al.’s (2020) approach, we generalize that each individual migrating from these countries in a given period was a refugee. While some of these groups do not fit the classic definition of a refugee, the trend of being forced to leave their home country rather than willingly electing to go is a consistent determining factor. Table 3.1 lists all cohorts identified as refugees from 1840 onward.

One issue with refugee identification in the early period is that year of immigration is not available in all Censuses. I use Collins and Zimran’s (2019) method, discussed in the chapter 2, to estimate year of immigration based on the ages and birthplaces of children and then link observations from the 1850s to the later censuses. To link the censuses to one another I use data sets from the Census Linking Project.²

² <https://censuslinkingproject.org/>

Table 3.1 Refugee Groups Through U.S. History

Refugee Group	Period	Source
Ireland	1845-1850	Collins and Zimran (2019)
Germany	1848-1850	Wittke (2016)
Mexico	1913-1914	Richmond (1982)
Russian Pogroms	1903-1906	Alroey (2018)
Russia	1917-1920	Alroey (2018)
Germany	1945-1960	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Greece	1948-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Austria	1946-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Italy	1953-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Latvia	1948-1952	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Lithuania	1948-1952	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Netherlands	1953-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Poland	1946-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Romania	1948-1952	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
USSR	1948-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Yugoslavia	1948-1956	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
China	1953-1956	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Hungary	1948-1957	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Portugal	1958	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Cuba	1959-1973	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
China	1962-1966	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Afghanistan	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Cuba	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Soviet Union	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Ethiopia	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Haiti	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Cambodia	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Laos	1975-1980	Haines (1996)
Vietnam	1975-1980	Haines (1996)

Refugee Group	Period	Source
Albania	1991-1992	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Bulgaria	1983-1984	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Czechoslovakia	1981-1991	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Hungary	1982-1985, 1988-1989	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Poland	1982-1983	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Romania	1982-1989	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Yugoslavia	1987-1989, 1993, 1995, 1999-2003	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Croatia	2000-2001	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Bosnia	1993-2002	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
USSR/Russia	1980-2009, 2013, 2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Cambodia	1982-1986, 1988-1990	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Laos	1981-1982, 1984-1997, 2004-2006	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Vietnam	1981-1988, 1994-1995	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Afghanistan	1981-1989, 1991-1993, 2000-2004	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Iran	1987-1988, 2010-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Iraq	1982-1983, 1992-1995, 1997-1999, 2001, 2008-2009	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Libya	1991	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Sudan	1993-1996, 1998-2006, 2009, 2015-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Liberia	1993, 1999, 2001, 2003-2006	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Rwanda	1995, 1997, 200-2002, 2007, 2010, 2012	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Somalia	1992-2009	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Congo	1990-1991, 1993-1994, 1999, 2000, 2003-2005, 2007-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Moldova	2001, 2004	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Latvia	2010	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Russia	2015-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Azerbaijan	2001-2002, 2004-2005	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Indonesia	2010-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics

Refugee Group	Period	Source
Bhutan	2008-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Burma	2007-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Sri Lanka	2013-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Sierra Leone	2001, 2003-2004, 2010-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Eritrea	2006-2007, 2009-2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Ivory Coast	2006-2011	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Guinea	2004, 2005, 2008	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
South Sudan	2011-2013	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics
Uzbekistan	2016	Yearbook of Immigration Statistics

Older censuses tend to have less specific information on immigrant characteristics. The 1850-1880 and 1940-1960 censuses do not include year of immigration as a variable, thus our method of identifying refugees by country and year of immigration hits a roadblock. To address this issue, we use Collins and Zimran’s (2019) technique of identifying the year of immigration based on the ages and birth countries of the children of immigrants. If an immigrant has one child born in their country of origin and another born in the United States, we infer that their year of immigration occurred between the births of their two children. While this estimation method does not help to identify year of immigration of childless immigrants, it covers a “44% [of] Irish heads of household (including those without children)” (Collins and Zimran 2019). They note that while this is a limitation of this year of immigration identification method, to cause problems in analysis one would have to see significant variation in outcomes for those whose year of immigration is classified and unclassified. This is not noted as an issue in their results.

Proxies for Income

Census before 1940 do not include information on wages earned, so while Brell et al. (2020), who only studies data after 1990, have access to conclusive wage and employment data, incorporating refugees and immigrants from the historical period requires a proxy for the missing data.

Instead of measuring wage assimilation, I estimate economic rank assimilation based on occupational income scores. Occupations are available across the 1850-2017 period, and thus can be measured over time. Each person reporting a given occupation is assigned the average earnings of that occupation. I use the ACS occupation score variable to create a proxy for wages and I account for race and region in this ranking.

One issue with this method is that income by occupation is not available for years prior to 1940. Following the method developed by Abramitzky et al. (2021), I use the average earnings by occupation with information from the 1940 Census. We then “assume that the relative rank between income cells is stable” for the 1850-1940 period and calculate percentiles of occupation. With the assumption that the earnings of an occupation will maintain its relative ranking throughout each period despite the face value of the wage changing, we identify a consistent dependent variable that can be used to compare outcome in different time periods.

Broader Refugee Characteristics

While refugee groups vary throughout U.S. history, their average characteristics compared to economic immigrants for decades analyzed in this paper are listed below. Since refugees are forced to move abroad, this subgroup of immigrants may be more likely to reflect a random sample of their home country’s population. For refugees, we

expect age and education levels to reflect the distribution of their home country, but for economic immigrants, we hypothesize that they tend to be working age men. Table 3.2 lists characteristics of refugees and economic immigrants in each decade analyzed. Not all variables are available in all periods.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of Refugees and Economic Immigrants (1850-2019)

Characteristics	1850	1860	1920	1930	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Male										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	86.29	90.02	50.8	62.27	59.43	53.39	51.67	55.56
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	85.01	87.79	48.91	60.9	59.72	57.01	56.02	53.73
Married										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	68.29	81.42	71.15	61.81	61.81	64.77	65.15	64.06
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	59.49	75.13	69.75	64.6	61.55	62.55	61.69	61.36
NorthEast										
<i>Refugee</i>	72.72	62.29	66.03	44.02	34.03	16.53	19.31	18.26	21.88	19.67
<i>Economic Imm</i>	49.34	43.34	52.57	52.33	37.53	24.95	23.92	23.25	21.36	22.09
South										
<i>Refugee</i>	0.06	8.88	10.62	22.02	47.6	35.75	34.07	25.45	29.37	28.65
<i>Economic Imm</i>	0.44	7.57	6.02	5.53	14.3	19.79	23.72	28.59	34.99	36.75
West										
<i>Refugee</i>	19.92	1.66	6.52	18.17	9.99	34.8	38.18	36.63	28.29	29.94
<i>Economic Imm</i>	42.14	2.32	12.17	12.97	31.21	41.54	44.25	35.82	33.28	30.88
Midwest										
<i>Refugee</i>	19.92	27.16	16.83	15.79	8.38	12.92	8.44	19.66	20.46	21.74
<i>Economic Imm</i>	42.14	46.77	29.24	29.17	16.91	13.72	8.12	12.34	10.37	10.27
Low Edu										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	-	-	25.77	19.46	14.66	10.58	8.51	11.43
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	-	-	24.11	28.01	23.53	14.64	14.46	9.08
High school										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	-	-	38.22	36.25	8.42	6.29	4.01	2.9
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	-	-	37.3	28.01	8.12	8.36	8.04	4.52

Characteristics	1850	1860	1920	1930	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Some College										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	-	-	24.41	32.58	57.15	53.79	54.07	45.22
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	-	-	18.77	19.61	44.09	45.73	44.18	42.3
College										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	-	-	11.59	11.71	19.77	29.34	33.41	40.46
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	-	-	19.81	24.37	22.83	31.27	33.32	44.1
Low English										
<i>Refugee</i>	-	-	13.24	20.01	-	36.56	25.79	26.55	21.42	18.01
<i>Economic Imm</i>	-	-	14.93	7.29	-	36.43	30.92	26.65	29.08	20.59
Lit										
<i>Refugee</i>	84.59	86.19	89.28	84.73	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Economic Imm</i>	95.01	96.15	85.84	88.20	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average age										
<i>Refugee</i>	33.58	44.45	31.95	39.84	40.82	32.89	35.84	38.45	39.25	38.86
<i>Economic Imm</i>	33.19	42.98	32.08	39.24	40.35	31.82	33.46	35.33	37.01	38.04

Excepting 1980, economic immigrants are less likely to be married than are refugees. Economic immigrants also tend to be younger than refugees; the one exception is 1920. This aligns with the Cortes (2004) hypothesis of economic immigrants being more likely than refugees to be young, single and motivated to move for economic opportunity. In the 1850s and 1860s, refugees are much less likely to be literate than their economic immigrant counterparts. Comparing this with the Low English variable in later periods, this trend of refugees having less English skills does not hold in each period. Table 3.3 shows the percentage of immigrants who are refugees and how this percentage has changed over time.

Table 3.3 Refugees and a Percentage of Total Immigrants

Outcome	1850	1860	1920	1930	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
Refugee										
Fraction	35.62%	35.69%	3.68%	2.21%	27.14%	6.83%	9.22%	7.33%	3.03%	2.10%

As noted earlier, the Irish famine crisis caused the largest influx of refugees in U.S. history. The high percentage of refugees in this period can be attributed to this crisis and, in part, to the lack of regulation on the number of refugees allowed entrance into the country. As regulation expanded, we see a decrease in the percent of immigrants who are refugees. The exception is 1970, explained by multiple crises causing a surge of refugees.

CHAPTER FOUR

Empirical Framework

Model Specification and Regression Analysis

To estimate the economic assimilation of refugees and economic migrants, we follow the standard approach in the literature (Chiswick, 1978, Borjas 1985). We use linear regression to compare how immigrant outcomes improved relative to the US-born with more years of stay, with controls for life-cycle and year effects (Borjas 2015).

A set of models were estimated for each time frame in the form:

$$Rank_{it} = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^4 \theta_j YearsUS_{it} \times Refugee_i + \sum_{j=1}^4 \delta_j YearsUS_{it} \times Economic_i + f(age_{it}) + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where $Rank_{it}$ represents the percentile rank of occupational income with controls for region and race. Percentile ranking is done by year and age of observation such that 100 reflects the top-earning occupation and 0 reflects the lowest-earning occupation. The $\sum_{j=1}^4 \theta_j YearsUS_{it} \times Refugee_i$ term contains four different variables: the interaction of refugee status with four categories of years in the United States (typically, 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20). An alternative way to measure assimilation is to assume a quadratic form, but using categories more flexibly captures economic growth. Likewise, the $\sum_{j=1}^4 \delta_j YearsUS_{it} \times Economic_i$ term is an interaction of economic immigrant status and the same four categories for years in the United States. The vector $f(age_{it})$ represents a quadratic for age. The census year dummy variables are represented by γ_t . The last term

of the model, ϵ_{it} , is the error term. Robust Standard errors are calculated to account for heteroskedasticity.

To interpret the model, θ_1 is the initial difference in economic rank between refugees and US-born individuals. The difference $\theta_4 - \theta_1$ measures economic growth for refugees between 0-5 years of stay and 16-20 years of stay. If this difference is positive, then refugees improved throughout the lifecycle more than the US born. Similarly, δ_1 measures the initial gap between economic migrants and the US-born, and $\delta_4 - \delta_1$ measures the rate of economic assimilation. The typical pattern found for recent groups is that refugees assimilate faster than economic migrants, or $\theta_4 - \theta_1 > \delta_4 - \delta_1$. However, refugees start behind economic migrants, or $\theta_1 < \delta_1$. We focus on working age men (20-64) so as to not skew income analysis by including those too young to work or those at retirement age.

The main estimate of interest is how economic migrants compare to refugee migrants without controlling for observable characteristics. Indeed, this may be the most policy-relevant estimate: how the average refugee's outcome differs from the average economic migrant's outcome. However, it is also of interest to control for various observable characteristics and estimate the conditional rate of assimilation. Therefore, when information is available, I sometimes include controls for their English fluency and educational level. The *LowEnglish_{it}* vector houses language skill variables including Low English ability.³ The vector *Edu_{it}* contains the education level dummy variables

¹ The Low English variable is a dummy variable created using the speakeng variable available in ACS data. I code the speakeng values 1 and 6 ("Does not speak English" and "Yes, but not well") as not proficient and the remaining values as proficient.

high school completion, college attendance, and college completion.⁴ Robust Standard errors are again calculated to account for heteroskedasticity. This allows us to compare unconditional difference between economic migrants, refugees and US-born.

Additionally, we compare conditional difference between economic migrants, refugees and US-born, after controlling for human capital.

One issue with estimating the assimilation rate of economic immigrants is that they have the option to return to their source country. The use of cross-sectional data likely overstates the assimilation of economic migrants. The issue is that economics migrants may return home and return migration may be selective (Abramitzky et al. 2014). Since the lowest earning migrants are most likely to return home, those who are left in the US 10 years later are a higher-earning group. This could make it appear that the economic rank of economic immigrants grows over time when it is possible that the change overtime is due to low earners exiting the country.

Using an indirect method to identify refugees results is another issue with the empirical framework. The end result of this method is simply a weighted average of the numbers of refugees and economic immigrants; the actual proportion of refugees to immigrants overall is unknown. This limitation of the data must be acknowledged and considered when examining the results.

² The control for education is included in figures 5.7 and 5.8.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results

Mirroring Cortes (2004), the model above shows percentiles of economic rank regressed on the immigrant status, years spent in the United States, race, and age. Economic rank accounts for region, race, and occupational score, where occupational score averages earnings for each occupation. By regressing economic rank onto this set of variables, I allow for comparison of refugees across time periods. Though there are parallels between results from period to period, the outcomes are not identical. Figures 5.1-6 show how the dependent variable, economic rank, changes over time.

Later in this chapter, I will examine differences in assimilation of refugees and natives while controlling for influencing factors such as English language proficiency and education levels.

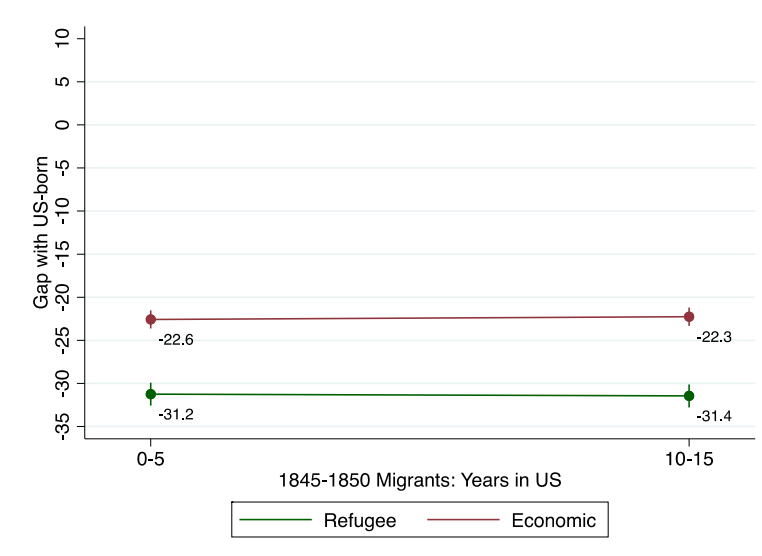


Figure 5.1 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1845-1850

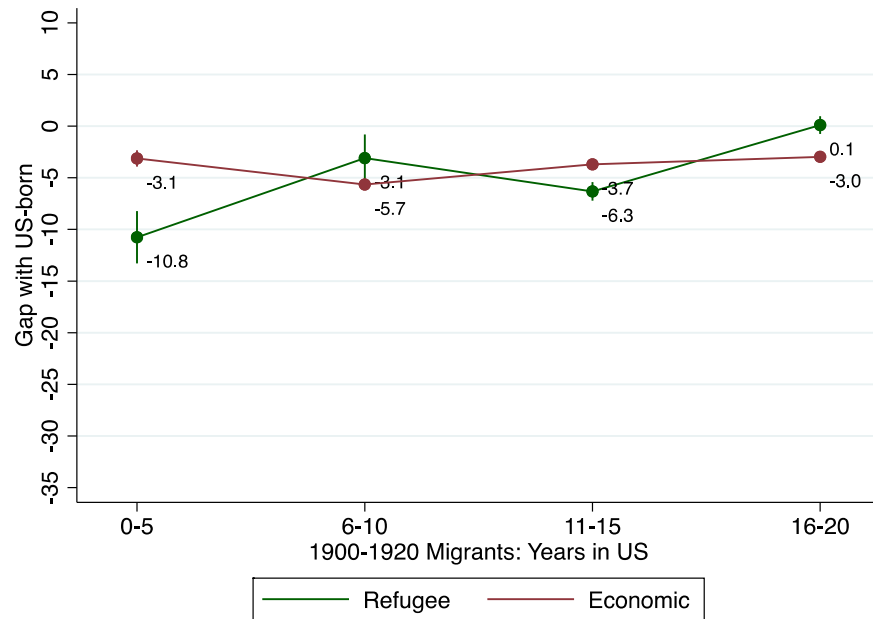


Figure 5.2 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1900-1920

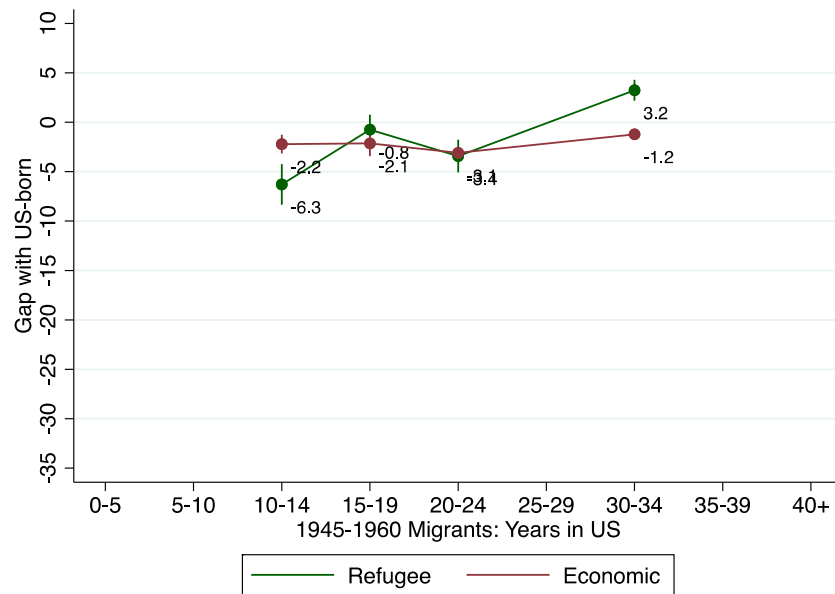


Figure 5.3 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1945-1960

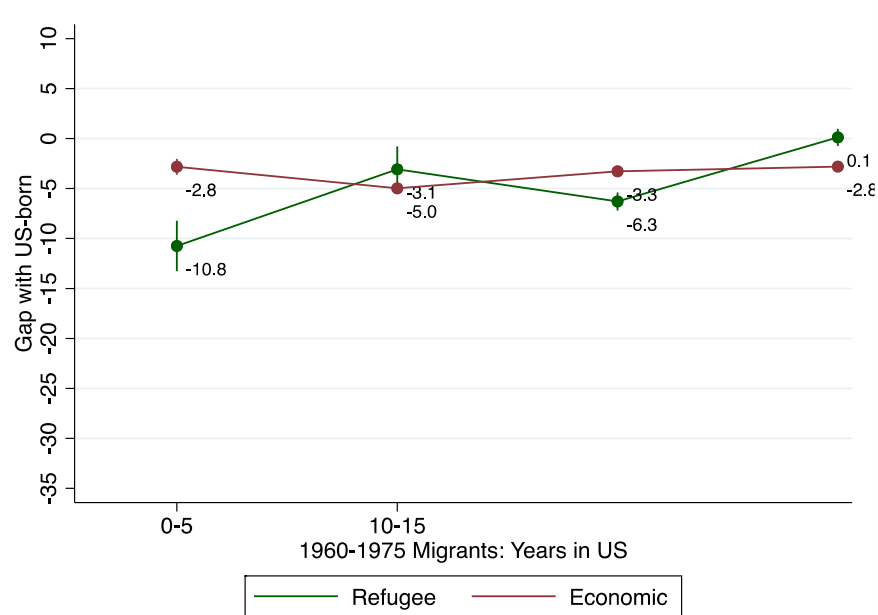


Figure 5.4 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1960-1975

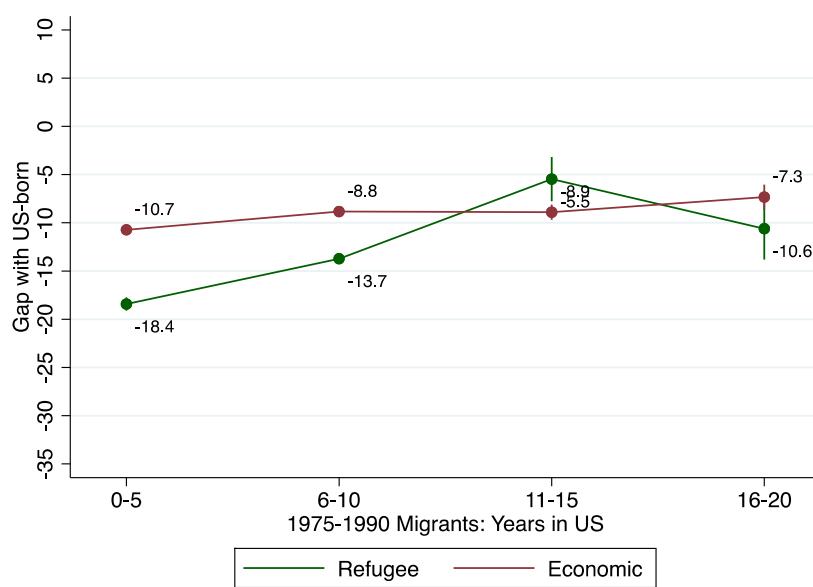


Figure 5.5 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1975-1990

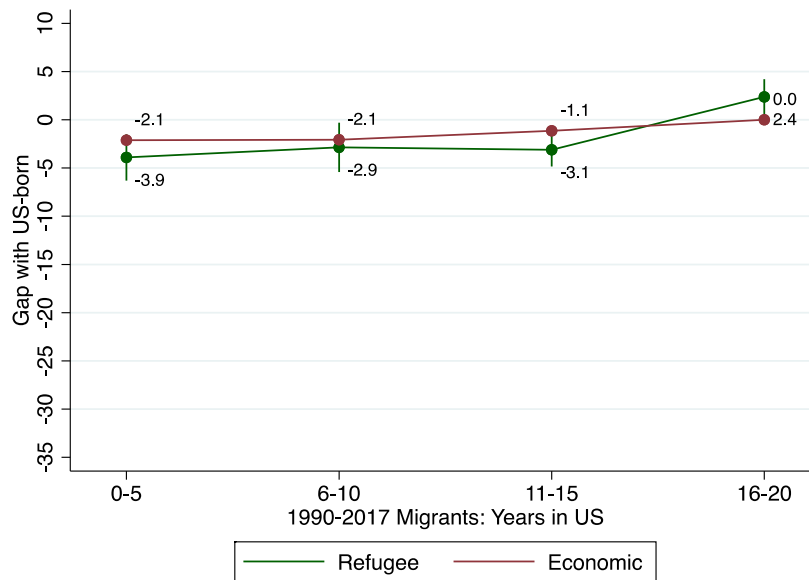


Figure 5.6 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth 1990-2017

In the 1845-1860 period, economic immigrants start 22.6 percentiles below native-born individuals, and marginally reduce this gap over the decades (to 22.3). Refugees fair even worse. They start 31.2 percentiles behind native-born individuals and their occupational score drops lower, to 31.4 points below over time. This is consistent with the findings of Collins and Zimran (2019), who find that Irish famine immigrants have lower earnings than other immigrants during their lifetime, but that the children of Irish famine immigrants have higher earnings growth rates than the children of other immigrants. This paper does not extend analysis to the children of refugees, but Collins and Zimran's findings hint that the assimilation growth of refugees in the mid-19th. The results from this paper show that assimilation does not occur for either group of migrants at a desirable rate.

In the 1920s and 1930s, this pattern of assimilation begins to change. The assimilation patterns of the 1900-1920 refugee cohorts are at first glance different than

those of other periods. Mexican immigrants from 1900-1940, including the refugee cohort from the Mexican revolution, are outliers in terms of assimilation patterns. “Mexicans arrived in lower ranked jobs than US-born whites and [...] this gap widened with more years of stay” (Escamilla-Guerrero et al. 2021). Mexican immigrants are more likely than other immigrant groups to start off with an unskilled job and lower US specific human capital. Even when human capital controls were considered, the controls did not account for this negative assimilation pattern. This suggests that Mexican-specific barriers, such as ethnic prejudice, which are not observable with census data prevent assimilation. Because of the unique nature of the Mexican refugee cohort, I include both figure 5.2 which includes Mexicans in the data and figure 5.7 which does not.

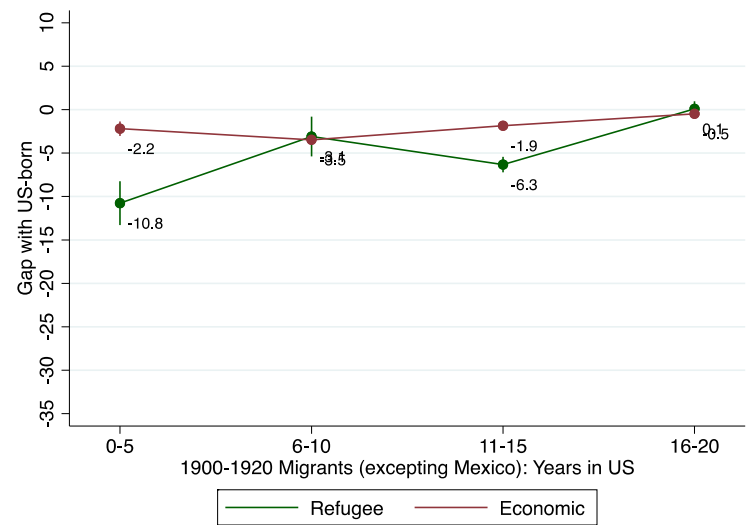


Figure 5.7 Unconditional Occupational Score Growth Excluding Mexicans

Economic immigrants start below native born individuals in this period by 3.1 percentiles. Refugees start below natives at 10.3 percentiles. The rate of assimilation for the two groups varies greatly. Economic immigrants close the gap with natives very

slightly and within 10-15 years are 3 percentiles behind natives on average. Refugees in this period assimilate to a greater rank. By 10-15 years after arrival in the U.S., they are ahead of native occupational score by 0.1 percentiles on average.

Post-WWII refugees start off at a disadvantage to economic immigrants. Refugees start out 6.3 percentiles below natives and economic immigrants start 3.1 percentiles below natives. There is some fluctuation over time. After two decades in the United States, refugee economic rank has risen above natives and they are now 3.2 percentiles ahead. Economic immigrants are still 1.2 percentiles below natives. Refugees clearly assimilate at a faster rate in this period. In addition to higher incentives to adjust, the institution of refugee aid programs may be one explanation to this higher assimilation rate. For the 1960s and 1970s, economic immigrants start out 2.8 and refugees start out 10.8 percentiles behind natives, but after two decades in the United State, refugees have reached the same average occupational score as natives whereas economic immigrants have remained stagnant.

In the period from 1975-1990, refugees again start off at a lower occupational rank, 18.5 percentiles below natives and after two decades, they reach 10.7 points behind natives. Economic immigrants, on the other hand, start 10.7 points below natives and narrow the gap to 7.3 percentiles after two decades. Lastly, from 1990-2017, a similar pattern occurs, economic immigrants start 2.1 percentiles below natives and after 20 years in the U.S., they remain 2.4 percentiles below. Refugees, however, start 3.8 percentiles below natives and after 20 years in the U.S. there is 0 gap with natives. Refugees assimilate faster in this period.

While the actual rates of assimilation differ between periods, the consistent finding is that refugees assimilate faster than do economic immigrants in each period. The exceptions are 1850 to 1860 where neither group assimilates. This deviation from the common trend in the 1850s and 60s may be explained by the sheer number of total migrants at this time, prejudices against immigrants, and a lack of aid programs to aid in assimilation. The other outlier, the early 1900s, may be explained by education, language, and skill levels of refugees from largely Jewish backgrounds.

Sometimes there is more information available, besides occupation, to estimate economic assimilation. For example, in the 1850 and 1860 Censuses, respondents reported the value of their real estate wealth, a continuous variable that provides more information about economic outcomes than occupation. Therefore, I can compare the wealth assimilation with economic rank assimilation (based on occupation, region, and race) I also regress the variable wealth onto the same set of independent variables to examine the correlation for the 1840 to 1860 period. The independent variable wealth is the summation of real and personal property and is available based on information in the 1860 census⁵. While this helps to get a closer approximation of a migrant's assimilation pattern, the missing information is still a limitation of the data set. Results from this regression show that in terms of property, refugees start below economic immigrants and both start below native-born individuals. Differing from the economic rank results, in terms of property both economic immigrants and refugees fair worse with more years of stay.

¹ These results can be found in the appendix.

In figures 5.8-12, the English proficiency of refugees and economic immigrants in measured over time.

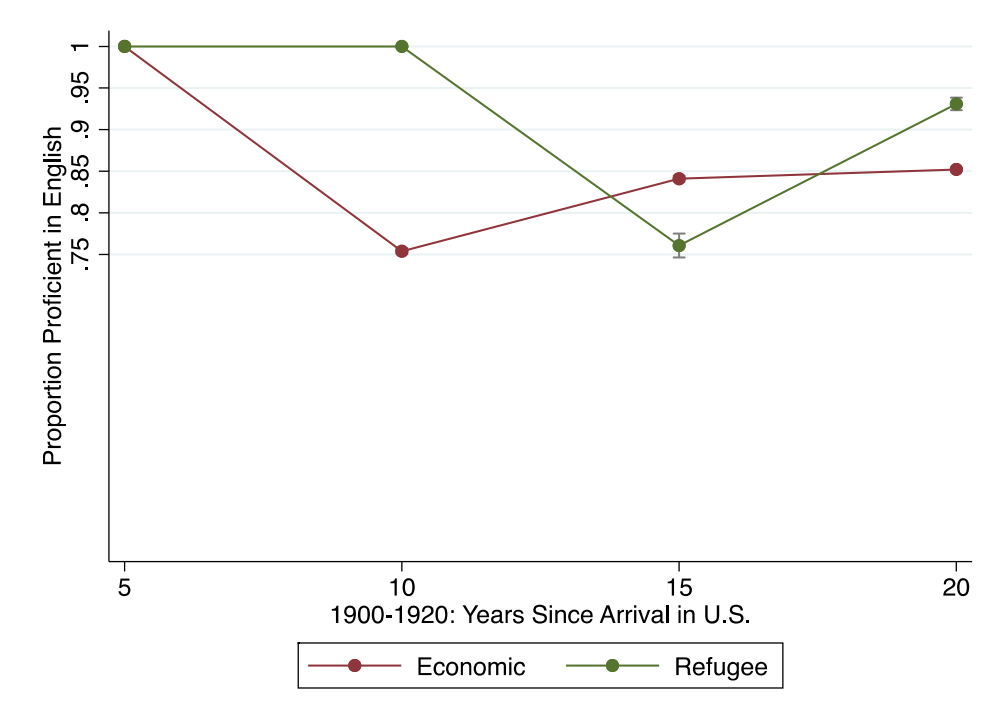


Figure 5.8 English Proficiency Profiles by Immigrant Type 1900-1920

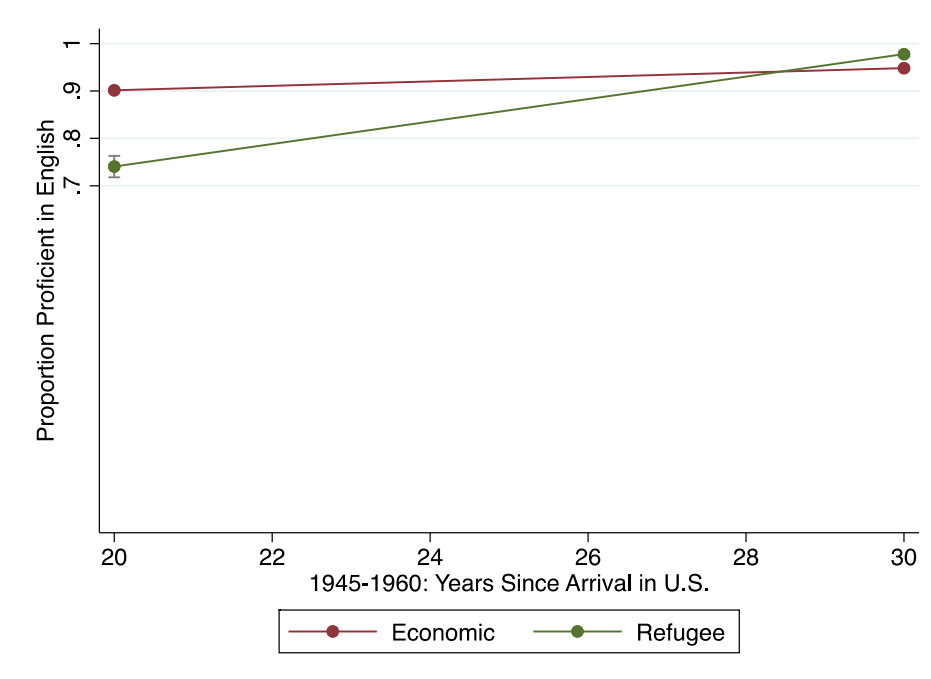


Figure 5.9 English Proficiency Profiles by Immigrant Type 1945-1960

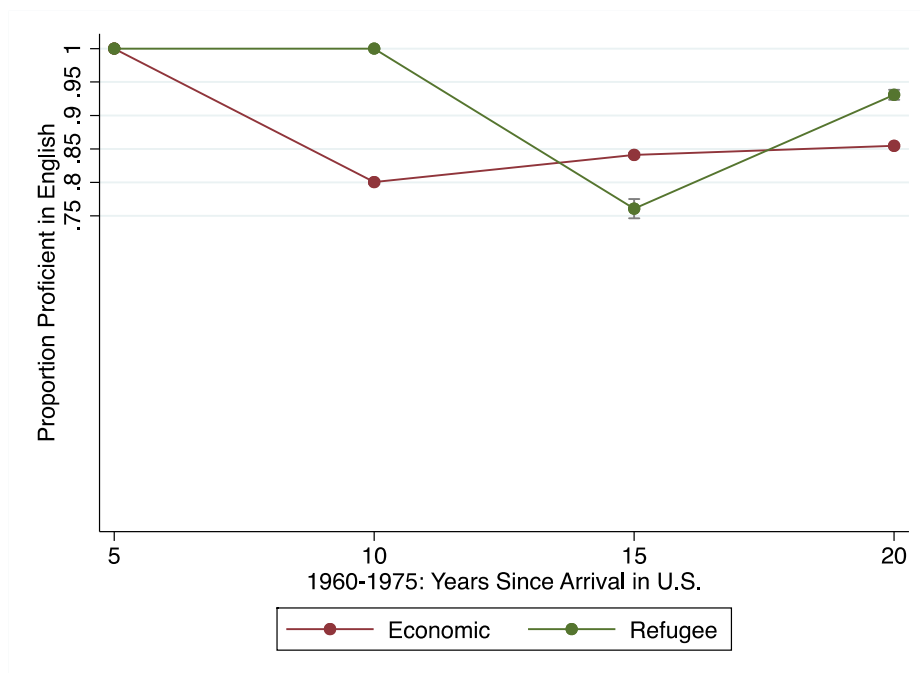


Figure 5.10 English Proficiency Profiles by Immigrant Type 1960-1975

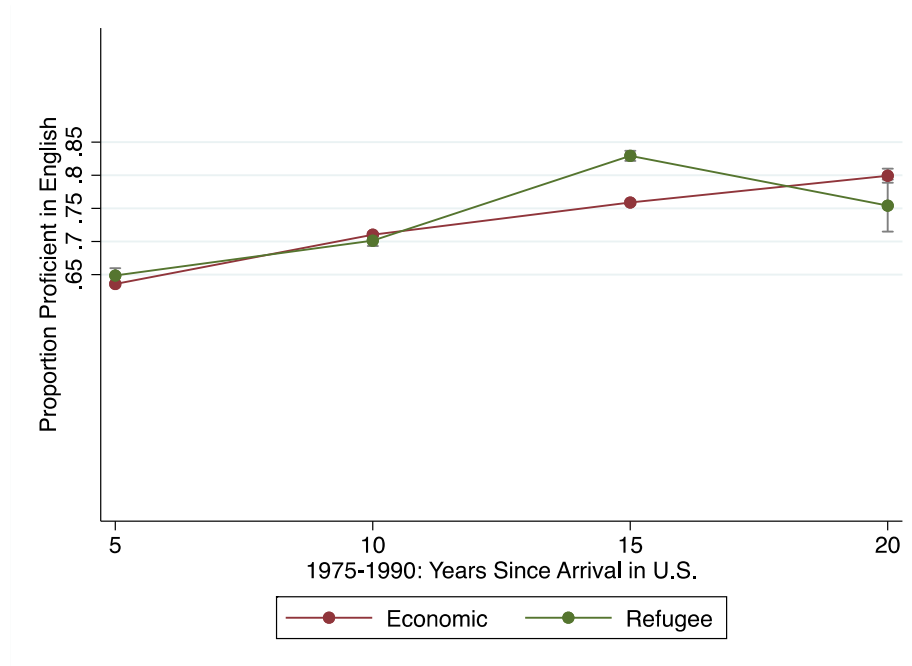


Figure 5.11 English Proficiency Profiles by Immigrant Type 1975-1990

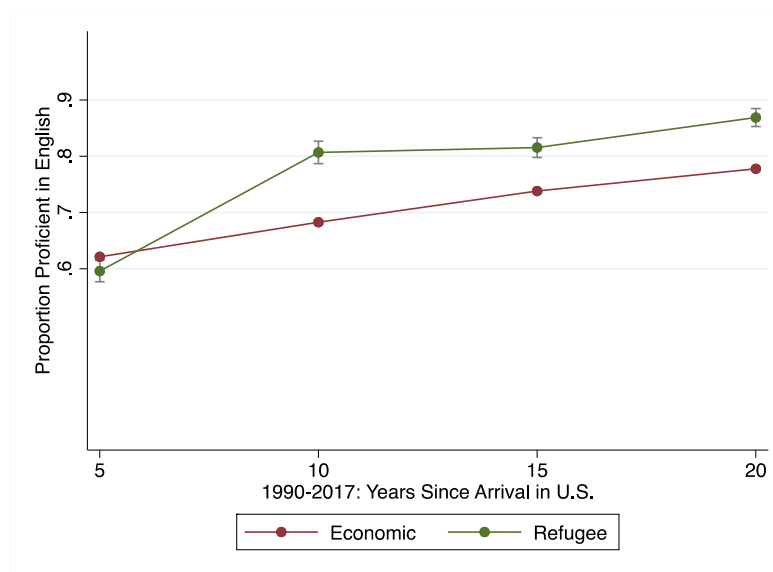
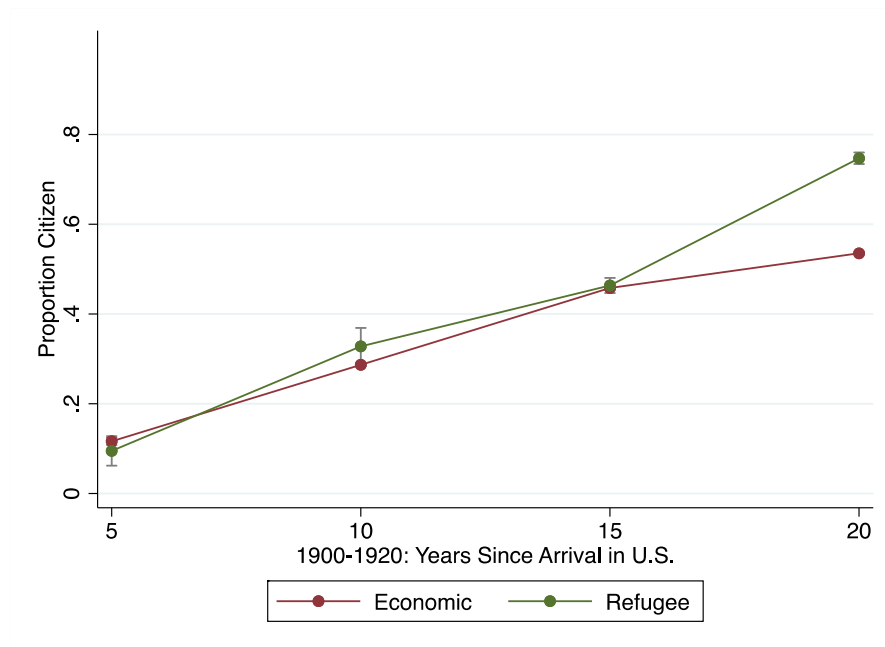


Figure 5.12 English Proficiency Profiles by Immigrant Type 1990-2017

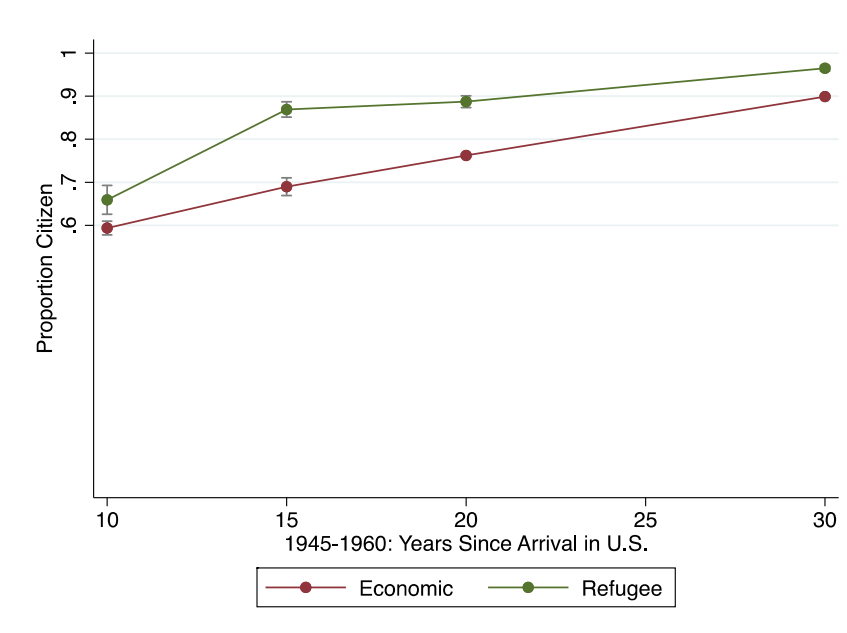
It should be noted that the 1970 ACS did not collect data on English proficiency, thus the outcomes for both the 1945-1960 and 1975 migrants capture only a portion after

time after arrival. Brell et al. (2020) and Cortes (2004) hypothesize that refugees arriving in the U.S. are less prepared with U.S. specific skills, in this case, English language proficiency. We find that in each period that refugees gain English language proficiency at a higher rate than do economic immigrants, which is perhaps motivated by higher incentives to assimilate. After five years in the U.S., refugees begin to overtake economic immigrants in this metric, but after two decades in the U.S., this lead shrinks.

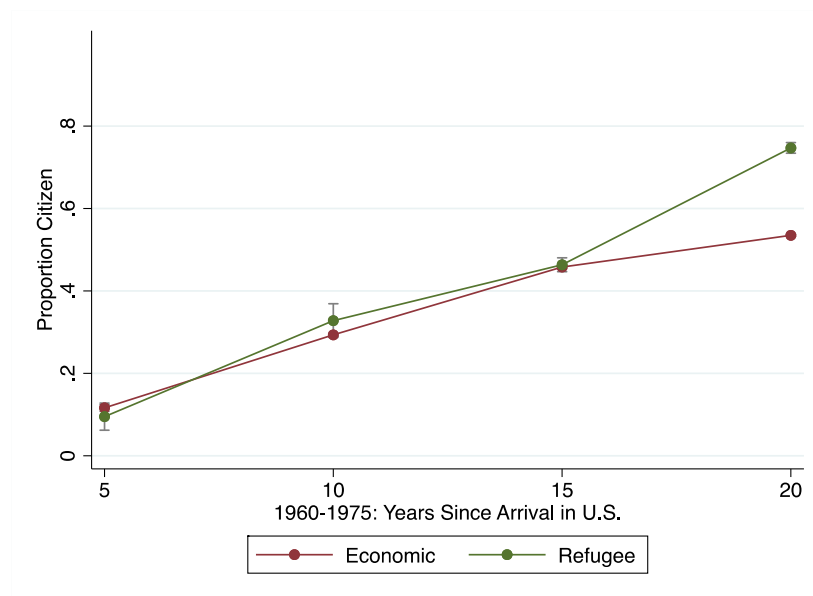
In figures 5.13-17, the attainment of U.S. citizenship is measured over years spent in the United States.



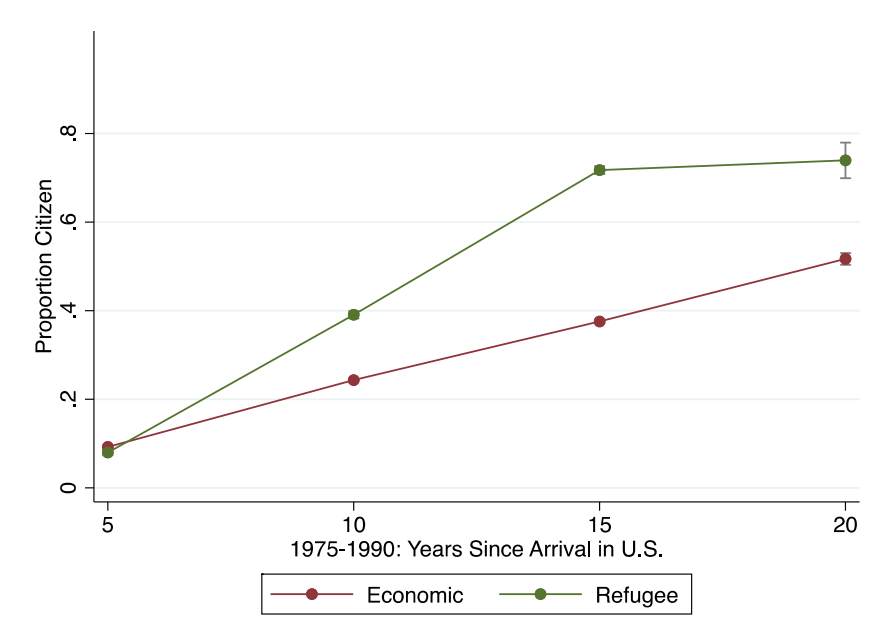
Figures 5.13 Citizenship Status by Immigrant Type Through 1900-1920



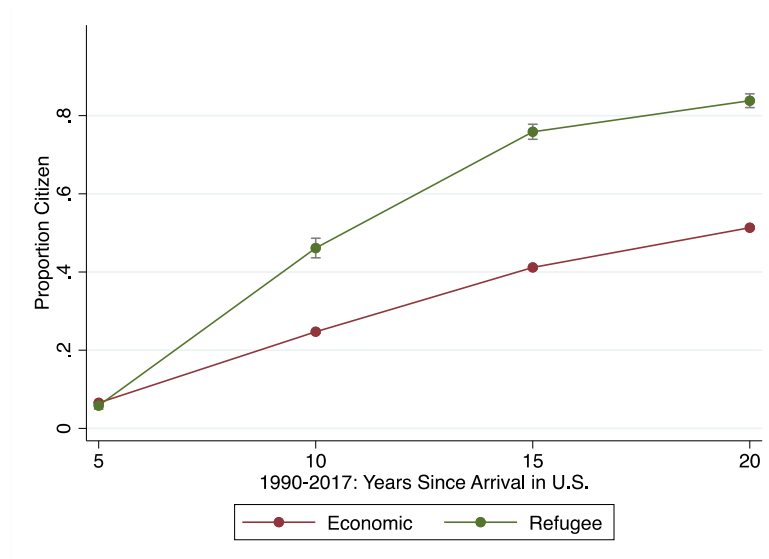
Figures 5.14 Citizenship Status by Immigrant Type Through 1945-1960



Figures 5.15 Citizenship Status by Immigrant Type Through 1960-1975



Figures 5.16 Citizenship Status by Immigrant Type Through 1975-1990



Figures 5.17 Citizenship Status by Immigrant Type Through 1990-2017

As with the above factors, following the narrative that refugees have a higher incentive to stay in the United States, the probability of obtaining citizenship increases

with years residing in the U.S. at a higher rate for refugees than for economic immigrants. While the rate of obtaining citizenship changes throughout time, the generalized trend is consistent. This aligns with the findings of Cortes (2004) for the 1975-1980 period.

Figures 5.18-22 show that refugees still demonstrate different assimilation patterns than economic immigrants when accounting for English language proficiency and other independent variables. To account for these differences, I impose a set of controls based on characteristics observable in Census data including region, marital status, education level, and English proficiency to determine if these observable factors account for the different assimilation patterns of refugees and economic immigrants.

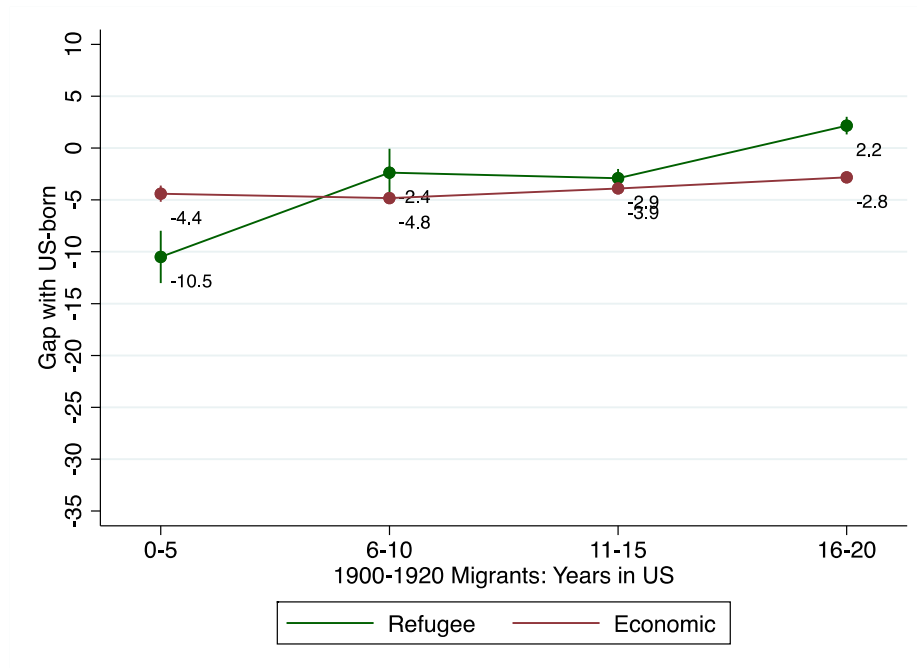


Figure 5.18 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth 1900-1920

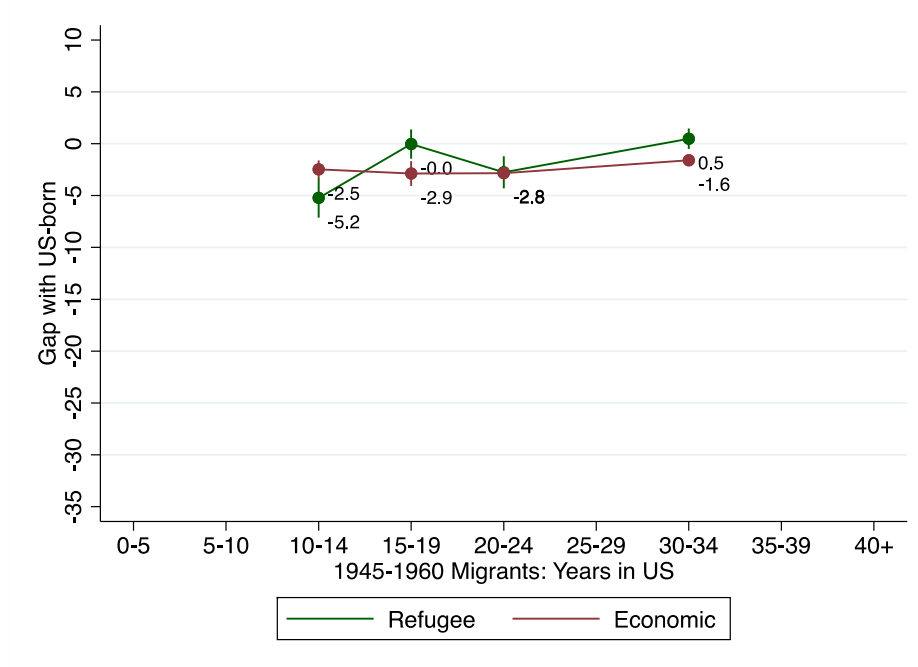


Figure 5.19 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth 1945-1960

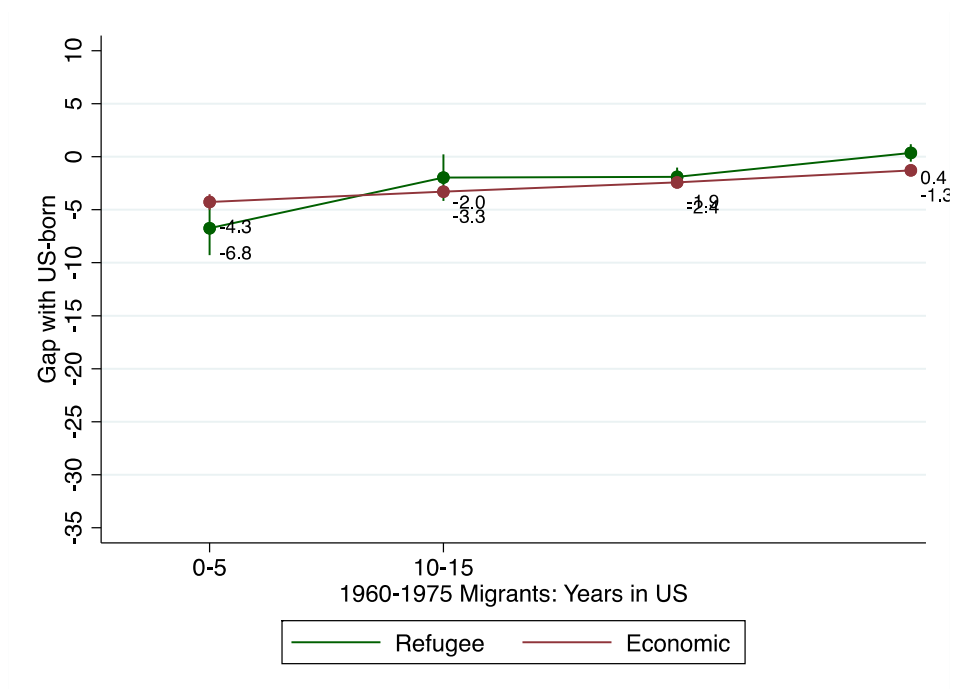


Figure 5.20 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth 1960-1975

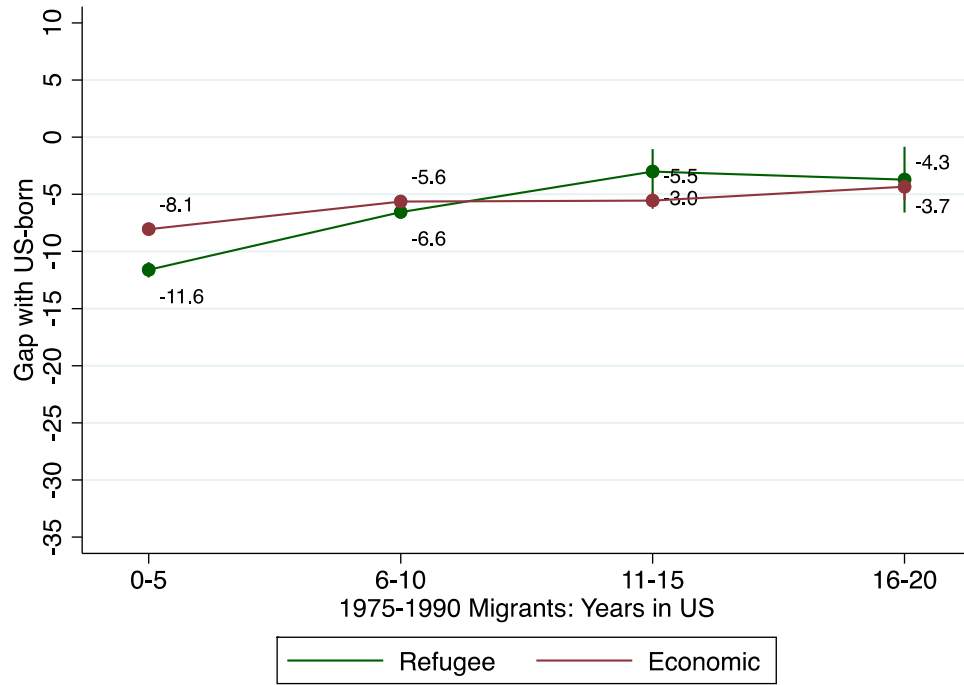
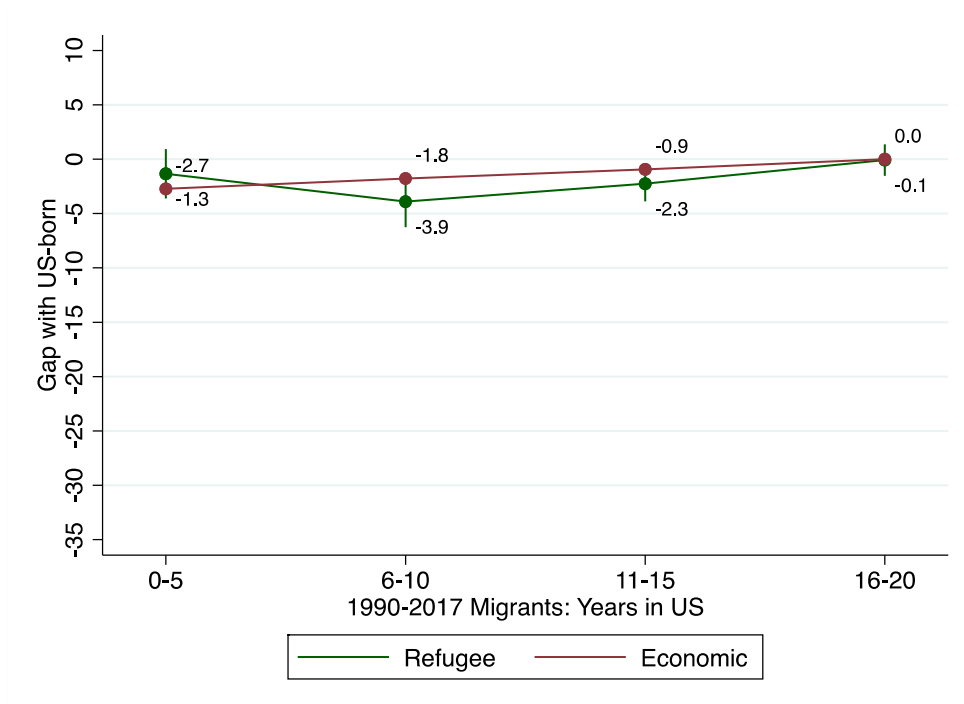
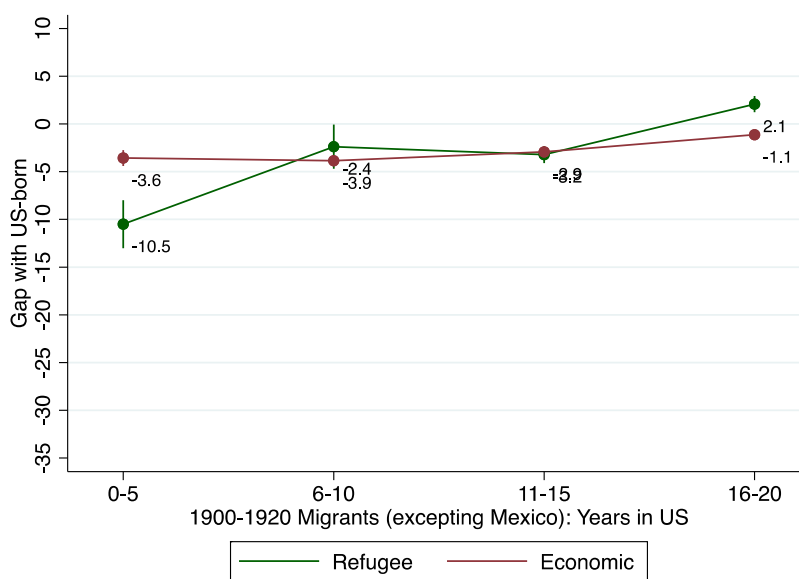


Figure 5.21 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth 1975-1990



Figures 5.22 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth 1990-2017

Controlling for observable characteristics such as English fluency and human capital decreases the gap between refugees and economic immigrants, but the gap does not disappear. The same trend is identifiable in each period. For the 1900-1920 cohort, economic immigrants start 4.4 percentiles behind native-born individuals and refugees start 10.5 percentiles behind. After 10 to 15 years in the U.S., economic immigrants have closed the gap with natives and are now 2.8 percentiles behind, whereas refugees have increased to a positive gap with native-born individuals and are now 2.2 percentiles above them in terms of economic rank. Again, when excluding Mexico from the data, I find a lower starting rank for refugees and a higher assimilation rate for refugees based on time in the US.



Figures 5.23 Conditioned Occupational Score Growth Excluding Mexicans

The 1945-1960 cohort begins with refugees 5.2 percentiles and economic immigrants 2.5 percentiles behind native-born individuals. Again, refugees assimilate at a faster rate than economic immigrants. After approximately three decades spent in the U.S., refugees are 0.5 percentiles above native-born individuals, as compared to economic immigrants being 1.6 percentiles below native-born individuals. For the 1960-1975 cohort, economic immigrants and refugees start 4.3 and 6.8 percentiles below natives, respectively. The same trend of refugees assimilating at a faster rate occurs again. After two decades spent in the U.S., economic immigrants are still 1.3 percentiles below native-born individuals, but refugees have surpassed native-borns by 0.4 percentiles. From 1975-1990, the same trend exists when accounting for additional variables. Economic immigrants begin .18 percentiles below native-born individuals and refugees begin 11.6 percentiles below native-born individuals. After two decades spent in the U.S., economic immigrants are 4.3 percentiles behind, and refugees are 3.7 percentiles behind. Finally, in the 1990-2017 period, economic immigrants start 2.7 percentiles below native-born individuals and after 20 years in the U.S., they have narrowed the gap to 0.1 percentiles below. Refugees, again, assimilate differently, starting at 2.7 percentiles below natives and moving to 0 percentiles below natives after 20 years spent in the United States.

The gap still remains when controlling for observable characteristics. It is the unobservable characteristics of refugees, which could include better contacts, networks, available aid programs, other qualifications that cause faster assimilation. More research must be done to identify the causes of this high assimilation rate.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This paper examines assimilation patterns of refugees and economic immigrants in the United States based on occupational score growth as well as wage and earnings growth when the data is available. Looking at data from ACS samples throughout US history in addition to Yearbook of Immigration Statistic Handbooks from 1978 to 2017, I utilize several methods of refugee identifications. First, calculating the fraction of immigrants from each source country who are refugees and designating refugee cohorts when at least 70% of the immigrants are refugees. Second, for the period 1975-1980, because YIS statistics are not available, I follow Cortes' (2004) method for refugee identification based on the United States legal definition. Thirdly, I identify refugees from the period 1940-1960 using quantitative data from the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics regarding acts related to refugee acceptance, number of refugees, and country of origin. Lastly, I use a qualitative method of identifying refugee groups from 1840 -1940 because data collection on refugees in the United States is lacking for this period. This method includes designating refugees based on academic and historical accounts.

This analysis of assimilation patterns informs us that though we can trace similarities between time periods, the rate of assimilation is different today than it was in earlier years, but refugees since 1900 tend to start out at a lower economic rank and assimilate faster than their economic immigrant counterparts in each period. Earlier periods see refugees assimilating slower; the more complex assimilation patterns of these earlier periods can, in part, be contributed to the size of refugee cohorts, the US-

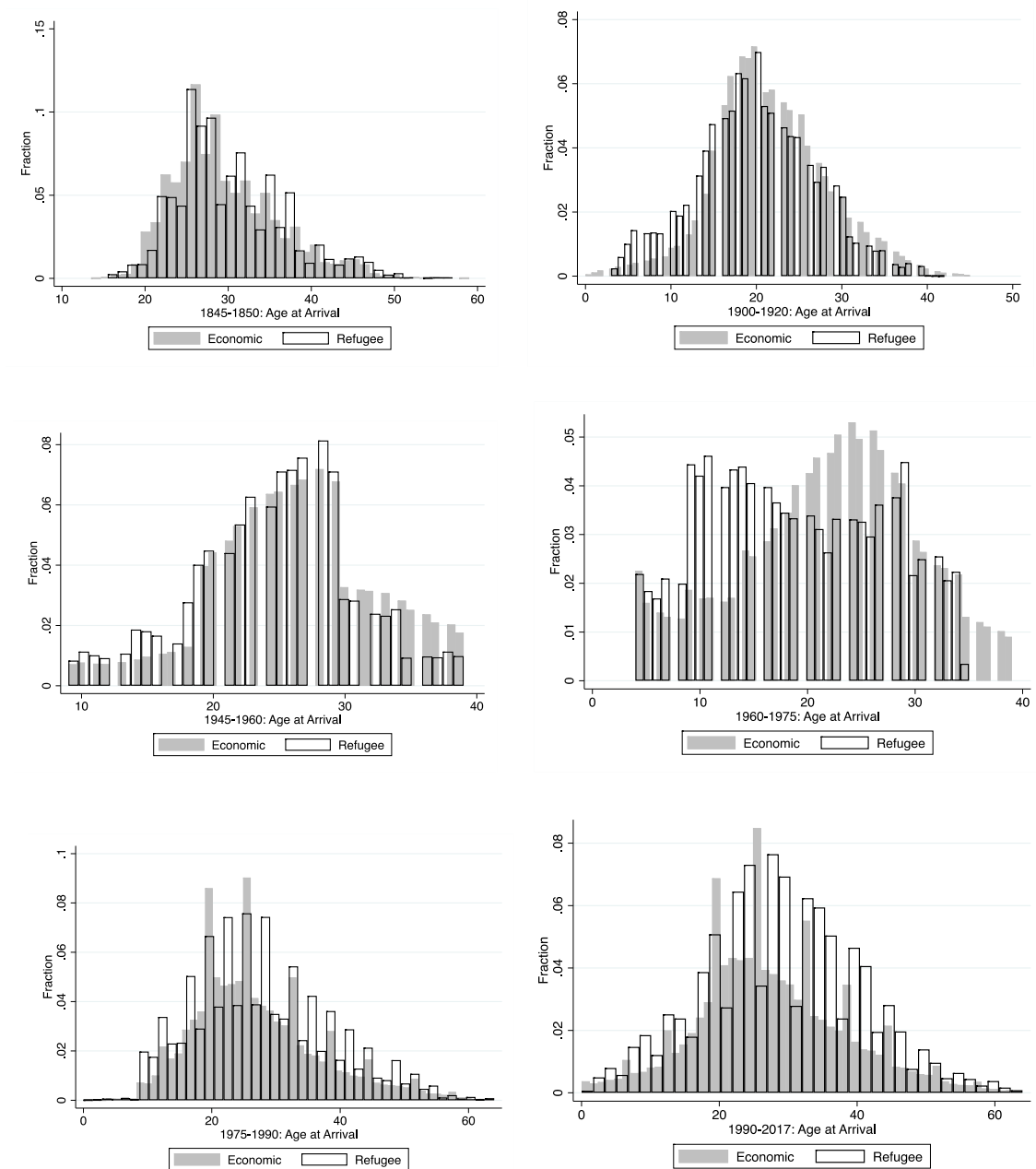
transferable skills of the cohorts, and political and legal perspectives on the acceptance and treatment of refugees. As more research is done on how refugees assimilate in the U.S., communities can work to better support these at-risk individuals. An example of a group motivated by the refugee success data is the Refugee Investment Network, which works to promote entrepreneurship and stability for this population.⁶ The growth of organizations such as the RIN and a recent increase in the study economic impact of refugees can help to challenge incorrect generalizations about the results of welcoming refugees into the country.

Refugees differ from other immigrants in many ways. While economic immigrants typically have the freedom to migrate back to their home country, refugees must learn to adapt because they have been forced to abandon their home or have no home to which they can go back. Since they have made a journey of no return, the incentives for refugees to assimilate, learn language and job skills, and establish a solid footing in their host country are higher than for an average migrant. Their homes have often been destroyed or made permanently unsafe. Knowing the motivations of refugees helps to explain the higher rate of wage and earnings growth seen for refugees who come to the United States.

¹ <https://refugeeinvestments.org/resources/refugee-lens/>

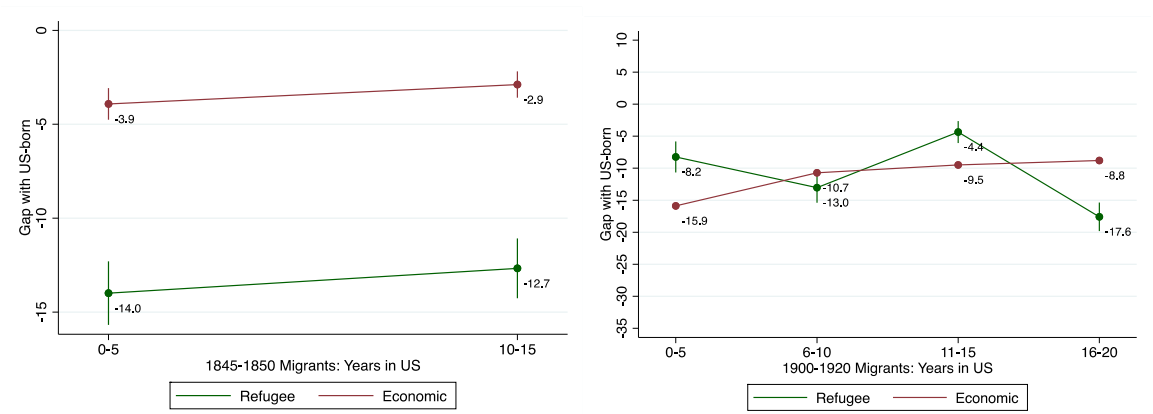
APPENDIX

APPENDIX



Figures A.1 Age Distribution at Time of Arrival

As hypothesized, economic immigrants are heavily concentrated between 20 and 40, prime working ages, while refugees are somewhat more spread out in both the younger and older age ranges.



Figures A.2 Literacy Score Growth

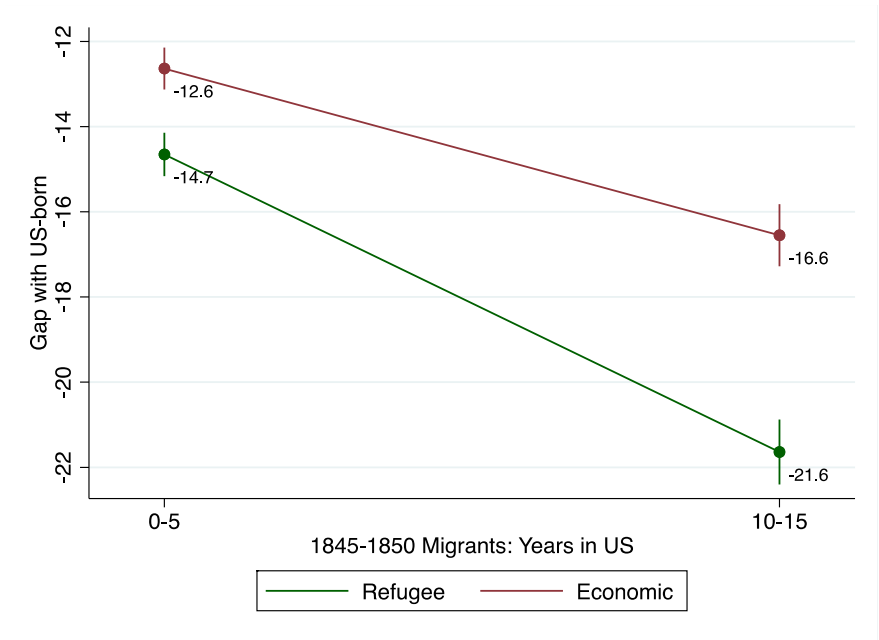
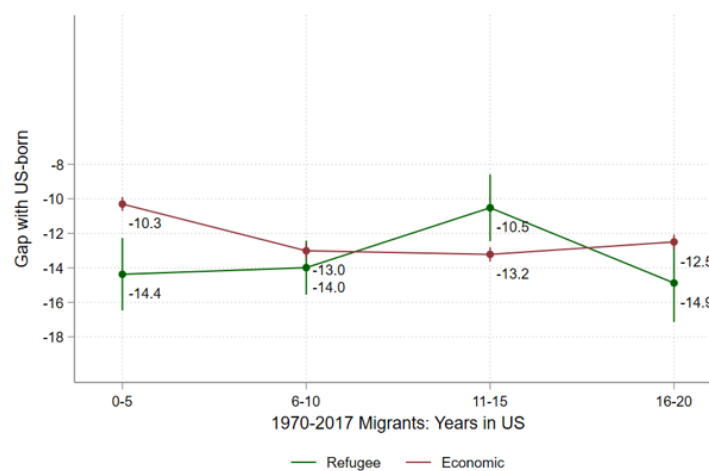
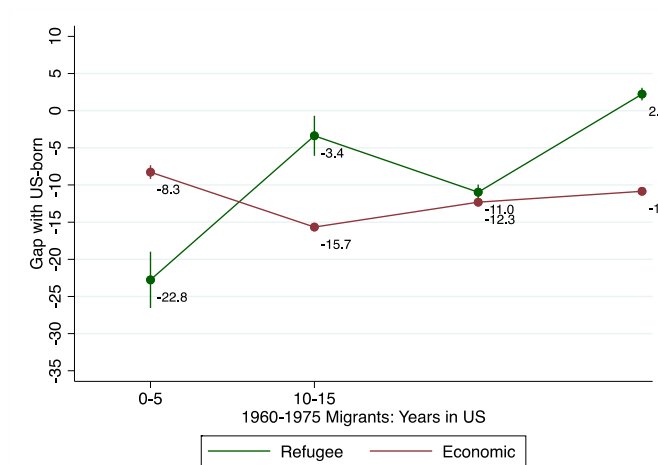
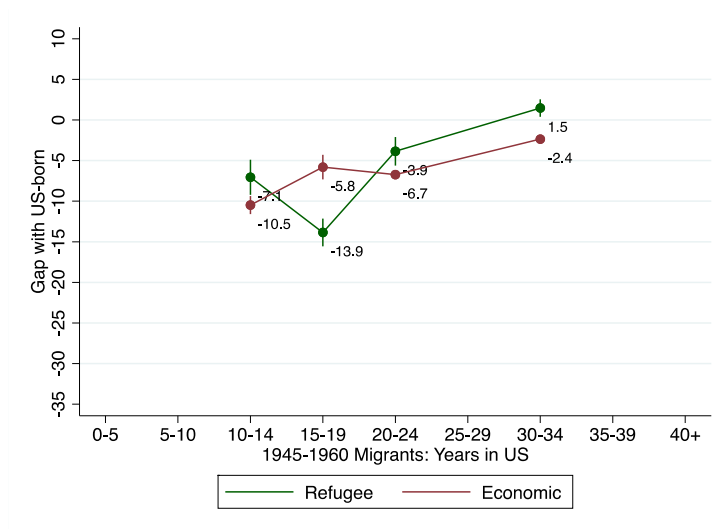


Figure A.3 Real Property Score Growth



Figures A.4 Educational Score Growth

Table A.1 Economic Rank Regressions for the 1845-1850 Cohort

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
year = 1860	-1.928*** (0.460)	-0.814** (0.413)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==1	-31.25*** (0.675)	-29.86*** (0.673)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-31.45*** (0.682)	-29.18*** (0.683)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==1	-22.57*** (0.540)	-17.98*** (0.521)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-22.26*** (0.538)	-17.76*** (0.517)
Midwest = 1		-20.06*** (0.330)
South = 1		-24.05*** (0.790)
West = 1		-6.086*** (1.500)
lit = 4, yes, literate (reads and writes)		14.00*** (0.761)
lit = 9, unknown, illegible or blank		-2.536 (7.141)
race [general version] = 2, black/african american/negro	-50.51*** (4.251)	-51.73*** (3.721)
age	8.462** (3.966)	8.960** (3.625)
age2	-0.295** (0.145)	-0.304** (0.132)
age3	0.00464** (0.00229)	0.00464** (0.00208)
age4	-2.70e-05** (1.32e-05)	-2.64e-05** (1.20e-05)
Constant	-30.48 (39.60)	-45.44 (36.28)
Observations	26,939	26,939
R-squared	0.210	0.328

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.2 Economic Rank Regressions for the 1900-1920 Cohort

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
census year = 1920, 1920	-1.830*** (0.0843)	-2.119*** (0.0788)
census year = 1930, 1930	-2.057*** (0.0867)	-2.876*** (0.0811)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==1	16.43*** (0.654)	10.66*** (0.663)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	16.31*** (0.726)	13.42*** (0.735)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==1	-7.182*** (0.151)	-6.045*** (0.155)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-4.771*** (0.117)	-8.144*** (0.114)
Midwest = 1		-8.728*** (0.0492)
South = 1		-20.95*** (0.0566)
West = 1		-2.145*** (0.0671)
LowEnglish = 1		-12.63*** (0.127)
married = 1		2.754*** (0.0433)
race [general version] = 2, black/african american/negro	-44.79*** (0.0347)	-36.55*** (0.0441)
race [general version] = 3, american indian or alaska native	-32.25*** (0.312)	-29.93*** (0.302)
race [general version] = 4, chinese	-26.22*** (0.416)	-28.67*** (0.432)
age	4.569*** (0.586)	4.797*** (0.551)
age2	-0.139*** (0.0247)	-0.166*** (0.0233)
age3	0.00179*** (0.000451)	0.00250*** (0.000424)
age4	-8.71e-06*** (2.99e-06)	-1.43e-05*** (2.82e-06)
Constant	5.639 (5.030)	16.04*** (4.738)
Observations	1,447,490	1,447,490
R-squared	0.269	0.347

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.3 Economic Rank Regressions for the 1945-1960 Cohort

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
	ECDF of cwscore_group1	ECDF of cwscore_group1
census year = 1980, 1980	0.230*** (0.0645)	-1.329*** (0.0613)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-6.297*** (1.044)	-5.227*** (0.974)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==15	-0.751 (0.764)	-0.0357 (0.722)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==20	-3.428*** (0.847)	-2.767*** (0.791)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==30	3.231*** (0.536)	0.476 (0.500)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-2.219*** (0.484)	-2.480*** (0.443)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==15	-2.145*** (0.661)	-2.883*** (0.611)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==20	-3.105*** (0.185)	-2.840*** (0.174)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==30	-1.222*** (0.190)	-1.600*** (0.176)
Midwest = 1		-0.330*** (0.0692)
South = 1		-8.509*** (0.0637)
West = 1		-1.223*** (0.0769)
LowEnglish = 1		-7.172*** (0.233)
married = 1		6.770*** (0.0573)
highschool = 1		3.927*** (0.0691)
somecollege = 1		12.31*** (0.0891)
college = 1		26.53*** (0.0807)
race [general version] = 2, black/african american/negro	-20.35*** (0.0689)	-14.41*** (0.0631)
race [general version] = 3, american indian or alaska native	-21.53*** (0.330)	-17.49*** (0.315)
race [general version] = 4, chinese	1.158 (0.722)	-3.695*** (0.653)
race [general version] = 5, japanese	0.159 (0.425)	-2.233*** (0.403)
race [general version] = 6, other asian or pacific islander	-3.289*** (0.549)	-4.609*** (0.520)
race [general version] = 7, other race, nec	-11.41*** (0.705)	-7.835*** (0.670)

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
age2	-0.0220 (0.0794)	0.0765 (0.0745)
age3	0.000290 (0.00117)	-0.00121 (0.00110)
age4	-1.45e-06 (6.40e-06)	7.04e-06 (6.01e-06)
Constant	44.39* (25.66)	59.58** (24.07)
Observations	2,234,092	2,234,092
R-squared	0.046	0.160

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.4 Economic Rank Regressions for the 1960-1975 Cohort

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
census year = 1970, 1970	-0.0210 (0.0992)	-0.784*** (0.0980)
census year = 1980, 1980	0.368*** (0.0890)	-1.153*** (0.0895)
census year = 1990, 1990	1.127*** (0.0903)	-2.897*** (0.0976)
census year = 2000, 2000	0.0231 (0.137)	-4.823*** (0.137)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==7.5	-3.029*** (1.170)	-1.894* (1.119)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==12.5	-6.298*** (0.459)	-1.897*** (0.449)
refugee==1 & yrsusa1_5==17.5	0.115 (0.438)	0.355 (0.418)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==7.5	-4.949*** (0.164)	-3.238*** (0.170)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==12.5	-3.263*** (0.152)	-2.388*** (0.151)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==17.5	-2.787*** (0.121)	-1.251*** (0.123)
Midwest = 1		-4.111*** (0.0746)
South = 1		-7.412*** (0.0745)
West = 1		-2.134*** (0.0846)
LowEnglish = 1		-4.312*** (0.287)
married = 1		2.923*** (0.0597)
highschool = 1		3.407*** (0.108)
somecollege = 1		8.540*** (0.114)
college = 1		26.43*** (0.119)
race [general version] = 2, black/african american/negro	-17.52*** (0.0827)	-13.09*** (0.0793)
race [general version] = 3, american indian or alaska native	-23.42*** (0.290)	-19.86*** (0.282)
race [general version] = 4, chinese	7.173*** (0.546)	-0.260 (0.495)
race [general version] = 5, japanese	8.190*** (0.427)	3.075*** (0.407)
race [general version] = 6, other asian or pacific islander	0.412	-3.546***

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
race [general version] = 7, other race, nec	-18.08*** (0.265)	-14.32*** (0.258)
race [general version] = 8, two major races	-15.26*** (0.837)	-13.31*** (0.783)
race [general version] = 9, three or more major races	-17.93*** (2.900)	-16.93*** (2.718)
age	0.599 (0.414)	-8.408*** (0.391)
age2	-0.0231 (0.0173)	0.302*** (0.0163)
age3	0.000360 (0.000308)	-0.00473*** (0.000289)
age4	-1.98e-06 (1.97e-06)	2.74e-05*** (1.85e-06)
Constant	47.00*** (3.561)	131.4*** (3.371)
Observations	9,505,509	9,505,509
R-squared	0.045	0.140

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.5 Economic Rank Regressions for the Modern Cohort

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
census year = 1980, 1980	0.209*** (0.0370)	-1.342*** (0.0361)
census year = 1990, 1990	1.555*** (0.0375)	-3.292*** (0.0454)
census year = 2000, 2000	0.638*** (0.0882)	-4.790*** (0.0876)
census year = 2010, 2010	1.397*** (0.0475)	-4.901*** (0.0548)
census year = 2019, 2019	1.053*** (0.0488)	-6.246*** (0.0563)
refugeecountry==1 & yrsusa1_5==5	-14.89*** (0.832)	-7.034*** (0.806)
refugeecountry==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-12.99*** (0.679)	-6.818*** (0.634)
refugeecountry==1 & yrsusa1_5==15	-9.522*** (0.816)	-4.830*** (0.674)
refugeecountry==1 & yrsusa1_5==20	-10.66*** (1.103)	-4.237*** (0.957)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==5	-9.510*** (0.178)	-4.460*** (0.171)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==10	-9.783*** (0.194)	-4.471*** (0.181)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==15	-8.988*** (0.187)	-4.206*** (0.173)
econimm==1 & yrsusa1_5==20	-7.944*** (0.199)	-3.459*** (0.182)
Midwest = 1		-6.321*** (0.0503)
South = 1		-7.415*** (0.0489)
West = 1		-1.718*** (0.0561)
LowEnglish = 1		-10.98*** (0.158)
married = 1		4.769*** (0.0389)

VARIABLES	(1) ECDF of cwscore_group	(2) ECDF of cwscore_group
somecollege = 1		(0.0730) 9.382***
college = 1		(0.0773) 28.36***
race [general version] = 2, black/african american/negro	-19.82*** (0.0557)	(0.0793) -15.44***
race [general version] = 3, american indian or alaska native	-22.94*** (0.214)	(0.0536) -19.05***
race [general version] = 4, chinese	6.397*** (0.309)	(0.207) -1.146***
race [general version] = 5, japanese	13.07*** (0.379)	(0.265) 6.314***
race [general version] = 6, other asian or pacific islander	2.354*** (0.189)	(0.352) -4.381***
race [general version] = 7, other race, nec	-22.88*** (0.115)	(0.171) -17.54***
race [general version] = 8, two major races	-12.92*** (0.213)	(0.114) -11.87***
race [general version] = 9, three or more major races	-13.79*** (0.567)	(0.527) -10.16***
age	-0.0149 (0.252)	(0.239) 0.343***
age2	-0.00168 (0.00983)	(0.00927) -0.00503***
age3	3.38e-05 (0.000164)	(0.000154) 2.72e-05***
age4	-2.08e-07 (9.84e-07)	(9.22e-07) 154.6***
Constant	54.00*** (2.317)	(2.206)
Observations	12,937,754	12,937,754
R-squared	0.077	0.200

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.

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