Topics in Economic History
Class 5: The American Civil War

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An overview

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  - .. with a lot of smaller 'events/episodes' introducing quasi-random variations
  - Availability of good historical records $\rightarrow$ possibility to easily assemble large data sets

An overview

- The literature covers a **wide range of topics**, such as the effect on:
  - Long-run economic performance (Althoff and Reichardt 2024, Feigenbaum et al. 2022 and Goldin and Lewis 1975)
  - Wealth and intergenerational mobility (Ager et al. 2021, Derenoncourt et al. 2023 and Dray et al. 2023)
  - Labour market outcomes (Dupraz and Ferrara 2023)
  - Cultural attitudes (Bazzi et al. 2023 and Esposito et al. 2021)
  - Political attitudes and persistence (Bellani et al. 2022 and Taylor 2023)
  - Violence (Logan 2019 and Testa and Williams 2023)
- And many more ...

This class

- Two presentations:
  1. *Leadership in Social Movements: Evidence from the "Forty-Eighters" in the Civil War*, Dippel and Heblich (2021) (American Economic Review)
  2. *Mobilizing the Home Front: War and Women's Political Activism*, Petroff (WP)

Leadership in Social Movements: Evidence from the "Forty-Eighters" in the Civil War

Dippel and Heblich (2021)

American Economic Review

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- ... but 95% of soldiers in the Union Army were volunteers!
- Why so many?

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- Exploits the role of the *Forty-Eighters*, leaders in the German (failed) revolutions of 1848-1849, who were subsequently expelled to the US for their activities
  - ↪ By chance, their ideology happened to resonate with US political struggles a decade later in the US

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- Compares enlistments in towns where the *Forty-Eighters* have settled with towns where they have not, using a matching method and an IV strategy
- Towns where *Forty-Eighters* settled show two-thirds higher Union Army enlistments

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  - ↪ Solve the 'reflection problem'
- **Effects of immigrant groups** (Hornung 2014; Moser, Voena, and Waldinger 2014; Borjas and Doran 2012)
  - ↪ Focus on the diffusion of beliefs and behavior rather than knowledge

Historical Context

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- The movement advocated for a more balanced distribution of power between the ruling monarchs and their subjects $\rightarrow$ a more democratic nation
- Protests erupted in various German cities in 1848
- But they failed, which marked the beginning of systematic persecution and prosecution of those involved in the revolution

Historical Context

Forty-Eighters emmigration

- Many were sentenced to long prison terms and some were sentenced to death
- But, sentences were reduced for those who agreed to leave German lands for good
- Long story short: many fled to the US
- And arrived during a period of relative political quiet over slavery

Figure A1: Cartoon by Ferdinand Schröder on the end of the revolution in Europe in 1849



Notes: The political cartoon by Ferdinand Schröder titled "Rundgemälde von Europa im August MDCCCXLIX" shows how the absolutistic rulers force the *Forty-Eighters* to leave Europe on a boat from Le Havre. It was first published in *Düsseldorfer Monatshefte*, 1849.

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- However, in 1954, the Kansas-Nebraska bill repealed the Missouri Compromise that had prohibited slavery in the North ...
- ... which put back the issue of slavery at the center of the US political stage
- An opportunity for *Forty-Eighters* to revive their dormant political convictions!
  - ↪ "Revive the spirit of the failed struggle for liberty in the fight against slavery" (Baron 2012, p. 3)

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The *Forty-Eighters* means of influence

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  - iv **Enlistment** → 1/3 of *Forty-Eighters* had military experience, almost all of those who had this background did enlist

Data

Identifying the *Forty-Eighters*

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- Indicator of exposure $\rightarrow$ towns in which at least one *Forty-Eighters* had settled in the five years prior to the Civil war
- Combined with detailed town-level data (1850 and 1860) (Fishman, 2009): population size, race, and gender

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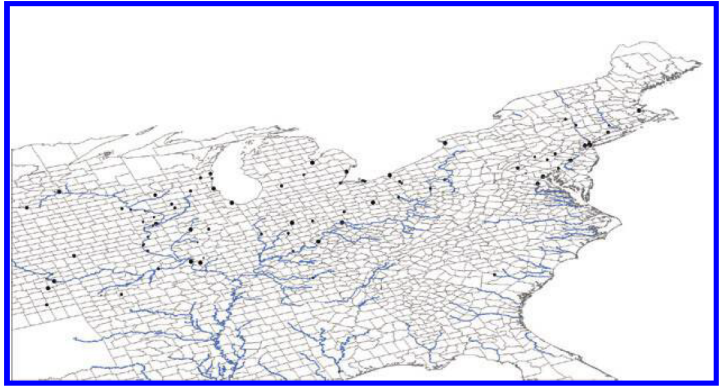


FIGURE 2. SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE FORTY-EIGHTERS

Notes: The map shows the spatial distribution of the Forty-Eighter towns. Larger bubbles indicate locations with more Forty-Eighters. In addition, the figure displays rivers (blue) and 1860 county boundaries (gray).

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The Union Army Data

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- Outcome variable → (log) number of enlistments for the entire Union Army by towns
- Enlistments were the immediate object of *Forty-Eighters*' actions → ideal to measure their influence

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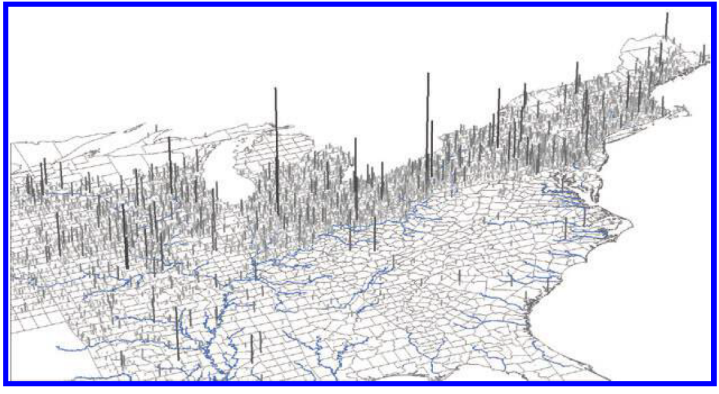


FIGURE 3. MAPPING ENLISTMENTS

Notes: This figure displays the spatial distribution of enlistments per adult males. In addition, the figure displays rivers (blue) and 1860 county boundaries (gray).

Empirical Strategy

Naive approach

$$y_i = \beta \cdot D(\textit{Forty-Eighter}_i > 0) + X_i\delta + \eta_s + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

- i stands for town and s for state
- y is the outcome of interest: log of enlistment
- $D(\textit{Forty-Eighter}_i > 0)$ if at least one Forty-Eighter lived in this town between 1856 and 1861
- X_i a set of town and county control variables
- η_s state FE

Empirical Strategy

Threat of identification

- Main threat to identification to overcome:
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  - ↪ endogenous location choices of *Forty-Eighters* in specific towns, potentially more prone to pro-Republican / anti-slavery ideas
- The authors address this concern:
  - ↪ by combining (i) a propensity score matching and (ii) an instrumental variable strategy

Empirical Strategy

Propensity Score Matching

- To address selection on observable $\rightarrow$ select a sample of control towns that are statistically similar to treated towns

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- To address selection on observable → select a sample of control towns that are statistically similar to treated towns
- Employ propensity score matching using several dozen covariates
  - demographic characteristics, geographic features, distances to the coast and major infrastructure, religious indicators, and prior vote share
  - likely to co-locate with other recent German immigrants in the Midwest and choose less rural locations

Empirical Strategy

Propensity Score Matching

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  - demographic characteristics, geographic features, distances to the coast and major infrastructure, religious indicators, and prior vote share
  - likely to co-locate with other recent German immigrants in the Midwest and choose less rural locations
- Once these factors are conditioned for → well-balanced sample of treatment and control locations

Empirical Strategy

Propensity Score Matching

TABLE 2—EFFECT OF FORTY-EIGHTERS ON UNION ARMY ENLISTMENTS

	Full sample			Prop. score matched (PSM-1)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
D(*Forty-Eighters*)	0.915	0.912	0.894	0.583	0.605	0.597
	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.001]	[0.000]	[0.000]
	{0.000}	{0.000}	{0.000}	{0.006}	{0.004}	{0.006}
Observations	11,095	11,095	11,095	261	261	261
R^2	0.563	0.566	0.571	0.700	0.724	0.733
Number of Forty-Eighter towns	72	72	72	54	54	54
Mean outcome	3.898	3.898	3.898	4.810	4.810	4.810
Oster delta	0.517	0.518	0.516	1.707	1.962	1.955
Core controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
+ other Vselect		✓	✓		✓	✓
+ all controls			✓			✓

Notes: The table reports results from estimating equation (1). The outcome variable is the log of Union Army enlistments in a town. Columns 1–3 report on the full sample, comparing 72 Forty-Eighter towns to 11,023 control towns. Columns 4–6 report on the matched sample, comparing 54 Forty-Eighter towns to over 207 matched control towns. Each column reports the number of treated towns (*Number of Forty-Eighter towns*) providing identifying variation in each specification, as well as the mean of the dependent variable. *Oster delta* refers to the test of the relative importance of observed and unobserved variables in generating selection bias suggested in Oster (2019). If $\delta > 1$, results are considered robust. Standard errors are clustered at the state-level, *p*-values are reported in square brackets. In braces, we additionally report *p*-values for wild-bootstrap clustered standard errors.

- Estimates in columns 4-6 suggest that the *Forty-Eighters* increased enlistments by two-thirds rather than 90 percent (Columns 1-3)
- But alone, does not establish causality ...

Empirical Strategy

Instrumental Variable Strategy

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- Importance of network and social connections during the boat trip to learn more about destinations
- You do not choose your co-passenger onboard → exposure to idiosyncratic knowledge about US towns is quasi-random
- They left Europe quickly → *Forty-Eighters* selected their ships quasi-randomly

Empirical Strategy

Instrumental Variable Strategy

- Immigrant ship lists in the 'Germans to America' book collection for 1848-52 (approx. 50% migrants who went to the US) $\rightarrow$ 136 ships with 152 *Forty-Eighters* on them

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- "indicator for whether a town was a reported destination on one of the Forty-Eighters' ships, conditioning on the overall attractiveness of a given destination according to the ship lists."

Empirical Strategy

Instrumental Variable Strategy

	Control stated destinations all ships					
Panel C. Second stage: log enlistments						
D(Forty-Eighter ships' destination)	0.477	0.608	0.677	0.583	0.713	0.815
	[0.038]	[0.015]	[0.057]	[0.019]	[0.006]	[0.021]
Hausman *p*-value	0.748	0.908	0.664	0.988	0.669	0.419
Kleibergen-Paap Wald rk *F*-statistic	20.70	18.24	17.19	22.06	19.89	22.63
Anderson-Rubin *F*-test	0.069	0.024	0.117	0.037	0.010	0.050
Panel D. First stage: D(Forty-Eighters)						
D(Forty-Eighter ships' destination)	0.625	0.614	0.629	0.591	0.580	0.611
	[0.000]	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.000]	[0.001]	[0.000]
R^2	0.277	0.289	0.324	0.292	0.306	0.343
Control bins	Quartile			Septile		
Observations	261	261	261	261	261	261
Number of Forty-Eighters	54	54	54	54	54	54
Core controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
+ other Vselect		✓	✓		✓	✓
+ all controls			✓			✓

Notes: The table reports results of IV estimations on the same sample and controls as Columns 4–6 of Table 2. Columns 1–3 control for quartile bins of the distribution of destination towns and columns 4–6 control for septile bins. Panels A and B calculate the popularity measure of stated destinations for non-Forty-Eighter ships only and panels C and D for all ships. Panels A and C report on the second-stage results. Panels B and D report on the first stage results. Standard errors are clustered at the state level, *p*-values are reported in square brackets.

Mechanisms

- Test two mechanisms (at the town level): the circulation of German-speaking newspapers and the distribution of Turner Societies

$$y_{it} = \beta_{DD} \cdot D(\text{Forty-Eighter} > 0)_{it} + \eta_{ts} + \eta_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

- i stands for town, s for state and t for year
- y_{it} is the presence of German-speaking newspapers / Turner Societies
- $D(\text{Forty-Eighter} > 0)_{it}$ panel variation (from 1840 to 1861) in whether there was a *Forty-Eighter* in a town
- η_{ts} and η_i are respectively state-by-year FE and a town FE

Mechanisms

TABLE 4—EFFECT OF FORTY-EIGHTERS ON TURNER SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS

	D(German newsp.)		D(Turner Society)		log enlistments			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
D(Forty-Eighters)	0.222	0.131	0.127	0.139	0.605	0.484	0.551	0.450
	[0.003]	[0.006]	[0.018]	[0.004]	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]
D(German newspapers)						0.544		0.491
						[0.003]		[0.007]
D(Turner Society)							0.428	0.362
							[0.009]	[0.017]
Fixed effects	State	Town + State × t	State	Town + State × t	State	State	State	State
Observations	261	5,376	261	5,376	261	261	261	261
R^2	0.576	0.739	0.333	0.477	0.724	0.730	0.728	0.733

Notes: This table replicates previous specifications for two likely mechanisms of the Forty-Eighters' influence: the presence of a German newspaper in a town, and the presence of a Turner Society. Standard errors are clustered at the state level in all columns except columns 2 and 4 where they are clustered at the town level. Columns 2 and 4 report difference-in-differences results estimated using equation (2); p-values are reported in square brackets.

- Mechanisms can plausibly explain the core effect of the *Forty-Eighters* → approx. 25% of baseline effect
- "We recognize the strong identifying assumptions made in mediation analysis, and emphasize that these results should be interpreted as suggestive only" (p. 497)

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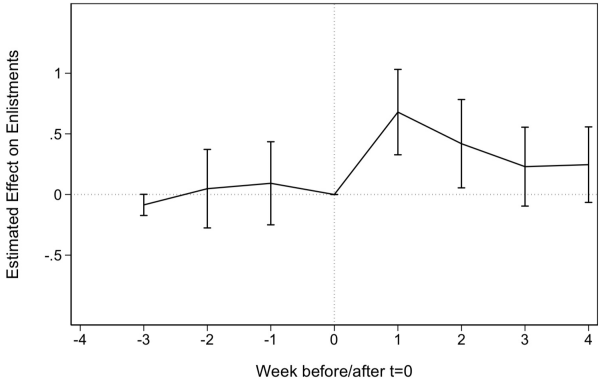
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- Implement event-studies to estimate the dynamic effects or such "acts of leadership"
- However, the timing of such acts is likely endogenous $\rightarrow$ "For example, a public speech about the war effort may have occurred when a town's residents were already agitating for war enlistments"
- "Consequently, we think of the event-study results [...] as suggestive evidence and do not claim causality"

Mechanisms

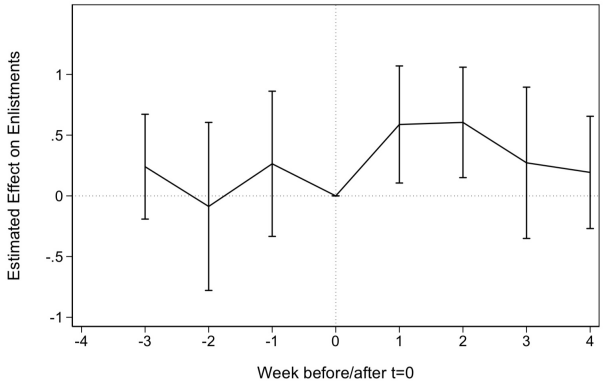
Figure A10: Effect of *Forty-Eighters*' civilian acts of leadership



⇒ "similar to the enlistment effects in the baseline estimations: civilian acts of leadership cause enlistments to go up by 60 percent in the event week and the week after, followed by a return to the baseline" (p. 499)

Mechanisms

Figure A11: Effect of *Forty-Eighters*' own enlistments



⇒ "flat pretrend followed by a sharp 70 percent increase in the number of enlistments in the week a Forty-Eighter enlists followed by 40 percent increase in the following week" (p. 499)

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$\Rightarrow$ Importance of leadership in social networks and in the formation of collective action in social movements

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