

Gambling for America: The first wave of migration to the Americas 1492-1540

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September 2023

What I really liked about the paper

- ▶ Interesting and important research question
- ▶ ... and we don't know much about it!
- ▶ Amazing data, from several historical sources, for different geographical areas
- ▶ A lot of maps
- ▶ It seems to be the first of a series of papers that can be done exploiting this data
- ▶ Well-written!

Comments

- ▶ What exactly does your definition of voluntary migration include and do you have any idea what was the share of involuntary migration?
 - ▶ Does it include nobles and other people appointed by the Crown to collect taxes, rule, report back,...?
 - ▶ Does it include convicted criminals?
 - ▶ Does it include priests?
 - ▶ Does it include crew members in the ships that made the trip?
- ▶ How would the Spanish Crown be sure that they would not revolt and declare independence?
- ▶ Some events horrified the Spanish Crown vs. Columbus considered settlement to be on the pattern of trading forts, with salaried employees to trade and to identify exploitable resources (Lockhart & Schwartz 1983). However, Spanish settlement in the New World was based on large, permanent communities with complex of institutions to replicate Castile

Networks mechanism

- ▶ When people migrated to Sevilla, could they choose where the boat would take them? How would you know where people in your hometown went to if they never returned? Letters?
 - ▶ Do you have data on names? Can you use surnames to see if they are relatives?
 - ▶ Do you know how many returned... and where to?
 - ▶ Within boat effects?
 - ▶ Those who traveled with a more extensive network, were they more successful (live longer, ...)?
 - ▶ How was marriage with locals regulated? How likely was for married people in Spain to take their wives later?
- ▶ You briefly mention the role of the leader of the expedition and present some statistics.
 - ▶ How exactly do you define that?
 - ▶ Where these roles defined a priori in Sevilla or during the trip? Or in the New World?
 - ▶ Were they recruiting people from their own hometowns or districts?

More questions on the data

- ▶ “For a portion of the sample, no specific destination is listed” and “some of the destinations were somewhat vague “
 - ▶ You convincingly explain how you deal with that. But I missed how many of these cases you have in your sample.
 - ▶ What happens if you drop them from the sample?
- ▶ Settlers to the United States (Florida, Colorado River, California,...) ... are they included?
- ▶ Does Spain include Flanders, some Italian territories?

Suggestions

- ▶ Check for long-run persistence of regional migration patterns and perhaps use that for an IV on the impact of migration on socioeconomic outcomes (such as social mobility, development,...).
- ▶ Control for some factors at origin municipality: shares of social classes; impact of other events (the revolt of the Comuneros); proxys for standards of living/ impact of inflation,...