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IMPROVING US AND EU IMMIGRATION SYSTEMS

Migration from the United States to the European Union: trends and characteristics

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Giambattista Salinari



**Improving EU and US Immigration Systems' Capacity for Responding to Global
Challenges: Learning from experiences**

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**Migration from the United States to the European Union:
trends and characteristics**

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**Improving EU and US Immigration Systems' Capacity for Responding to Global Challenges:
Learning from experiences**

The project is co-funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Pilot Projects on “Transatlantic Methods for Handling Global Challenges in the European Union and United States”. The project is directed at the Migration Policy Center (MPC – Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies – European University Institute, Florence) by Philippe Fargues, director of the MPC, and Demetrios Papademetriou president of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) the partner institution.

The rationale for this project is to identify the ways in which EU and US immigration systems can be substantially improved in order to address the major challenges policymakers face on both sides of the Atlantic, both in the context of the current economic crisis, and in the longer term.

Ultimately, it is expected that the project will contribute to a more evidence-based and thoughtful approach to immigration policy on both sides of the Atlantic, and improve policymakers’ understanding of the opportunities for and benefits of more effective Transatlantic cooperation on migration issues.

The project is mainly a comparative project focusing on 8 different challenges that policymakers face on both sides of the Atlantic: employment, social cohesion, development, demographic, security, economic growth and prosperity, and human rights.

For each of these challenges two different researches will be prepared: one dealing with the US, and the other concerning the EU. Besides these major challenges some specific case studies will be also tackled (for example, the analysis of specific migratory corridor, the integration process faced by specific community in the EU and in the US, the issue of crime among migrants etc.).

Against this background, the project will critically address policy responses to the economic crisis and to the longer-term challenges identified. Recommendations on what can and should be done to improve the policy response to short-, medium- and long term challenges will follow from the research. This will include an assessment of the impact of what has been done, and the likely impact of what can be done.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the websites of the project:

- <http://www.eui.eu/Projects/TransatlanticProject/Home.aspx/>
- <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/immigrationsystems/>

For more information:

Improving EU and US Immigration Systems' Capacity for Responding to Global Challenges: Learning from experiences

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Abstract

This paper analyzes emigration from the United States to the European Union. Few empirical studies have been conducted on this topic and theorization on this type of migration is essentially inexistent. In this paper, we tried to fill this gap and to show how migration between advanced economies is crucial in understanding different and under-researched aspects of international migration. Specifically, the magnitude of migration from the US appears “too large” to be explained through classic migration theories but “too small” when compared to the overall movements originating in other developed countries. As to the main results, the lower migration propensity showed by the US born population compared with that of the population born in other advanced economies seems to be related to its historical evolution: the US has never had mass emigration and US colonialism was historically less relevant, at least compared to Europe. Geographical and cultural *proximity* assume instead a major relevance in explaining US emigration patterns and magnitude. Focusing on the characteristics of US emigration, we found, that the interplay of various specific forces have created over time a composite profile of this population, which – being characterized by specific and various motivations – looks, generally speaking, heterogeneous. More specifically, the profile of US emigrants in the European Union Member States is, we have found, essentially linked to family formation and to economic integration between EU and US society. We conclude that migration between advanced economies is relevant internationally, but largely ignored at a scientific level. The more interactions between economies are destined to augment, the more an understanding of their consequences for origin and destination countries becomes a priority.

Introduction

This paper analyses emigration trends from the United States (US) to the European Union (EU) in the framework of the European project “Improving EU and US Immigration System” along the lines of an associated research paper “Scientists, Managers, and Tourists: The Changing Shape of European Mobility to the United States” which looks instead at the opposite – and better researched – phenomenon, migration from the EU toward the US.

Analyzing the magnitude and intensity of US emigration, its determinants and characteristics is potentially a thorny issue. At the academic level, very few empirical studies have been conducted on this topic and theorization on this type of migration is essentially inexistent. Exceptions are represented by a number of studies focusing on data limitations and potential alternative tools to estimate emigration patterns from the US (see among others Woodrow-Lafield and Kraly, 2004; Schwabish, 2009; Kraly, 1998; Woodrow-Lafield, 1996) together with two specific studies aimed at estimating and defining the profile of emigrants from the US (Warren and Kraly, 1985; Bratsberg and Terrell, 1996). Another branch of the research has instead focused on emigration of the foreign-born population living in the US (see among others Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1982; Borjas and Bratsberg, 1996).

The complexity of approaching this topic has then been confirmed by the difficulty of finding exhaustive data to measure the phenomenon, shedding light on the general lack of interest in this issue, not least by national authorities in charge of registering migratory events from the US to abroad.

Given this general lack of studies, our first question was then to explore whether studying migration from the US¹ – one of the most advanced and powerful societies in the world – could be considered relevant for a better understanding of international migration patterns. In this paper, we want to show why not only is such migration relevant but that, in fact, it is crucial for understanding current international movements.

Around the year 2000, more than 2 million individuals born in the US lived abroad, representing more than 1% of the total migrant population living all over the world. In relative terms, US migrants accounted for 1% of the total resident population in the US compared with 2.3% of all developed countries migrants and 2.0% of the total from developing ones (source: Global Migrant Origin Database – version 4).

From these few figures, two main research issues emerged which will accompany our study of migration patterns from the US:

- First, it seems reasonable to look at the determinants of this type of emigration. As will be shown later, migration from the US is mainly directed towards countries with an average *per capita* income which is *substantially* lower than the US. Here economic determinants are weak in explaining this phenomenon. What other reasons could have triggered the departure of two million people from their country?
- Second, from a comparative perspective, despite migration from the US being a significant phenomenon, the propensity of the population born in the US to go abroad is lower than that shown by the population born in other developed countries. It is, for example from 5 to 7 times lower than the propensity showed by Western European populations and 3 times lower with respect to the average industrialized economies. Thus, this begs a further question: what are the *obstacles* to US emigration?

These issues represent a sort of paradox because while the magnitude of emigration from the US seems “too large” to be explained through traditional migration theories, at the same time, it is “too small” when compared to other developed countries. The paper will, indeed, try to explain and

¹ Here, we are dealing only with migration from the population born in the US, which has not to be confounded with return migration of migrants from the US. According to available data, the topic of an eventual phenomenon of migration patterns of second or eventually third generations of migrants cannot be addressed.

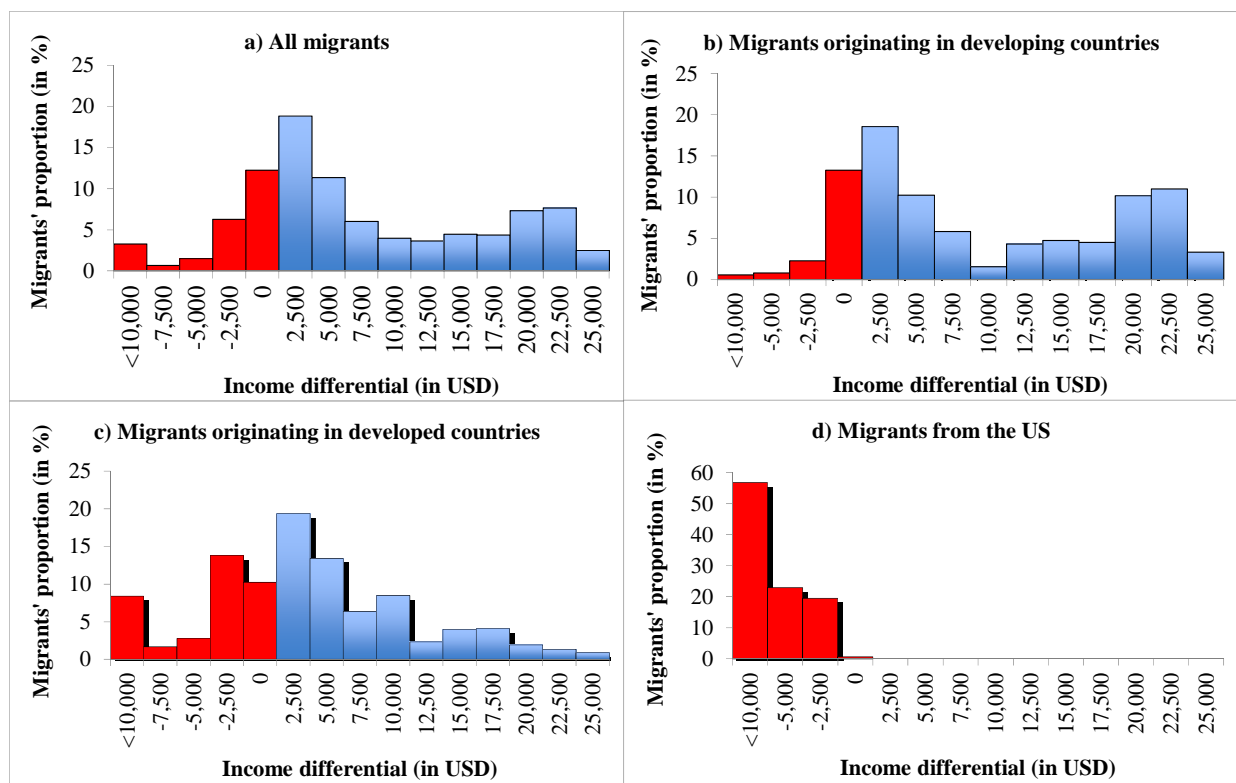
develop this paradox as well as describe which are the trends and characteristics of emigration from the US towards the European Union. In details, section 1 approaches migration from the US and - more in general - from advanced economies in the framework of the current theorization on international migration movements; section 2 looks at whether any link between internal and international movements in and from the US can be found; section 3 represents the core of the analysis by presenting the main trends and characteristics of emigration from the US in the EU MS.

1. Searching for a theory

While the majority of theories on migration have attempted to explain movements from the Global South towards the Global North, a more recent approach has looked at what has been termed South-South migration. In this framework, theories on migration between developed economies are conspicuous by their absence.

This lack of theorization may derive from migration theory which has historically given – more or less explicitly – a predominant role to income differentials in explaining the determinants of international movements: people migrate to become richer, to search out a better future for their children, to invest in their own human capital etc. According to this view, migrating from a richer to a poorer country would be meaningless. However, the evidence shows that this type of migration occurs frequently and that significant numbers are involved. “Northern migrants” represent indeed around 20% of the total migrant stock all over the world. Among them, 80% live in another advanced economy.

Figure 1. International migrants by migrant origin area and income differential between origin and destination country, year around 2000



Source: Authors' own elaboration on Global Migrant Origin Database – version 4 (GMOD v.4)

Figure 1 shows an overall picture on the distribution of international migrants according to income differentials between origin and destination countries. The modal value of the total distribution (figure 1a) is found in correspondence of values between 0 (i.e. the same average income *per capita* is

observed in origin and destination countries) and 2,500 (i.e. the average *per capita* income in the destination country is higher than the one registered in the origin country by a value of 2,500 USD). The majority of migratory exchanges occur thus between countries with similar wealth conditions. The proportion of migration exchanges between countries with a negative income differential (i.e. the average income *per capita* in the origin country is higher than the one found in the destination country) stands instead at 24%.²

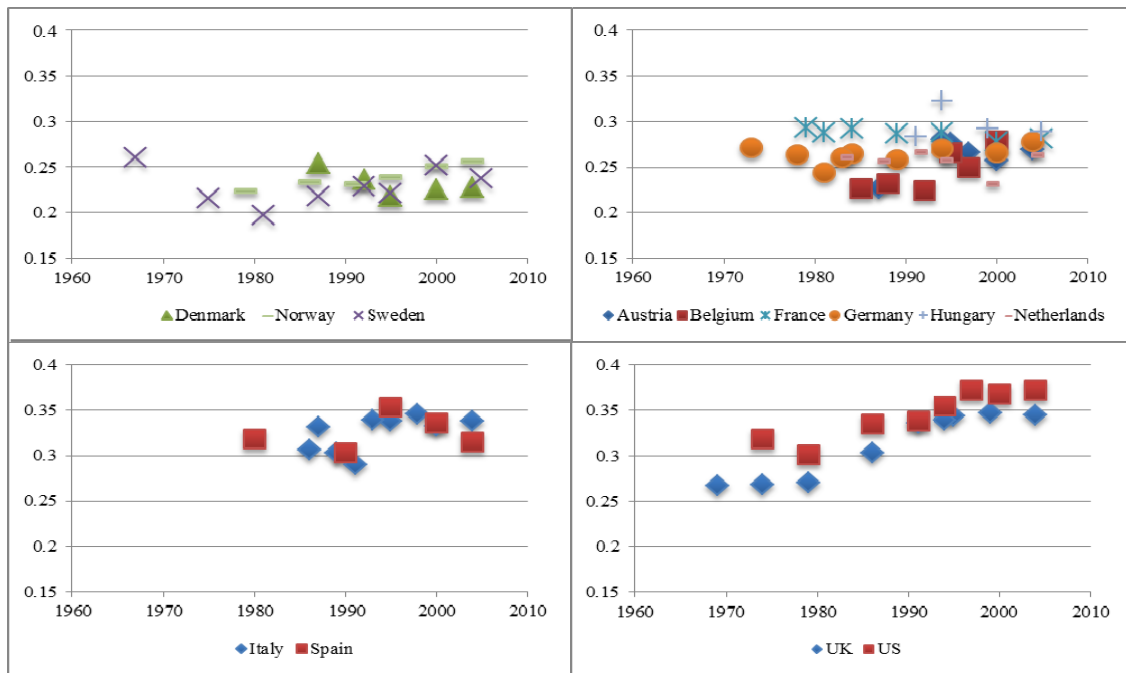
By looking only at migration originating in developed countries (figure 1b), the phenomenon of migration towards poorer countries clearly emerges. Here, the proportion of exchanges observed between countries with an income differential lower than 2,500 USD equals 56% while the same value equals 37% if we observe migration exchanges between countries with a negative income differential.

Figure 1c shows the US case. Obviously, 100% of emigration is destined to poorer countries. However, the fact that almost 60% of migration exchanges from the US are with countries with lower average income *per capita* of **more than 10,000 USD** is significant.

Finally, by selecting only those countries belonging to the developing bracket (figure 1d), we see that 35% of their migration exchanges are associated with an income differential lower than 2,500 USD while 17% take place with a negative differential.

Actually, migration theory does not exclude that migration can occur from “richer” to “poorer” countries or, at least, between countries with similar wealth conditions. Migration from countries such as Norway or Sweden towards the US could, indeed, reflect maximization behavior given the difference of income distribution between origin and destination countries (see Borjas, 1987).

Figure 2. Gini Index in selected countries, 1960-2000



Source: Authors’ own elaboration on Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), available at <http://www.lisproject.org/key-figures/key-figures.htm>

² It is worth mentioning a second peak of the distribution showed by figure 1a in correspondence with the group 20,000-25,000, i.e. the group which South-North migration theory has been focused upon. The income differential between Mexico and US equals, for example, 21,192 USD.

Figure 2 shows income inequality proxied by the Gini Index in selected countries. The Swedish population is well known as a population with the lowest income inequality in the world (Gini Index = 0.24). In this society, low-skilled individuals – who belong to the lowest part of income distribution – do not earn an income too much lower than highly skilled ones. On the contrary, the US population suffers from the highest income inequality among developed countries (Gini Index = 0.37) – in this society, therefore, a large income differential exists between low and high skilled workers. This means that highly-skilled Swedish workers would have a comparative economic advantage working in the US. In other terms, highly-skilled Swedish workers are incentivized to move to the US because the US rewards the highly-skilled more than Sweden. In line with Borjas' theory, migration from Sweden to the US would tend to be “positively selected”, i.e. composed of highly skilled individuals.

Borjas' terms can, of course, be reversed and extended to migration from countries with high-income inequality (e.g. the US) towards countries with low income inequality (the majority of EU MS). Here, if an economic advantage exists at all, it will concern low-skilled individuals: for them, indeed, migrating to Sweden would imply a net economic gain *via* the reduction of the distance that separates them from the richest in society. On the contrary, for highly-skilled US individuals, migrating to Sweden would mean a substantial loss in terms of the advantageous position which they enjoy in the US. Thus, since European societies are characterized on average by lower income inequality than the US, according to Borjas, migration from the US, if it occurs, should be “negatively selected”, i.e. low skilled individuals should have a higher propensity to migrate than highly-skilled people.

As income inequality in the US has progressively grown since early mid-seventies by reaching its peak in the current period, while EU countries (apart from the UK) have, instead, experienced this phenomenon with a time lag and at a lower intensity, according to Borjas' theory, the migration of highly skilled individuals from the US to the EU MS should have gradually decreased (see also Mayda, 2010).

Apart from Borjas, other theories have been developed addressing the phenomenon of migration from developed countries. Among others, Zelinsky (1971), later cited by Massey (1988), Skeldon (2008), and de Haas (2007) argues that migration is intrinsically linked to the evolution of all societies: in pre-industrialized societies, migration was prevented by the difficulty of finding capital to move and it was also limited by the lack of efficient means of transport and communication routes. Thanks to the industrialization process, these obstacles were overcome and together with the change in demographic conditions (reduction of mortality and strong population growth) the “migration hump” took place, i.e. the period of mass migration and this lasted for a period ranging from 30 to 70 years. With the end of this process, migratory intensity slowed remaining, however, at higher values than those registered by pre-industrial societies.

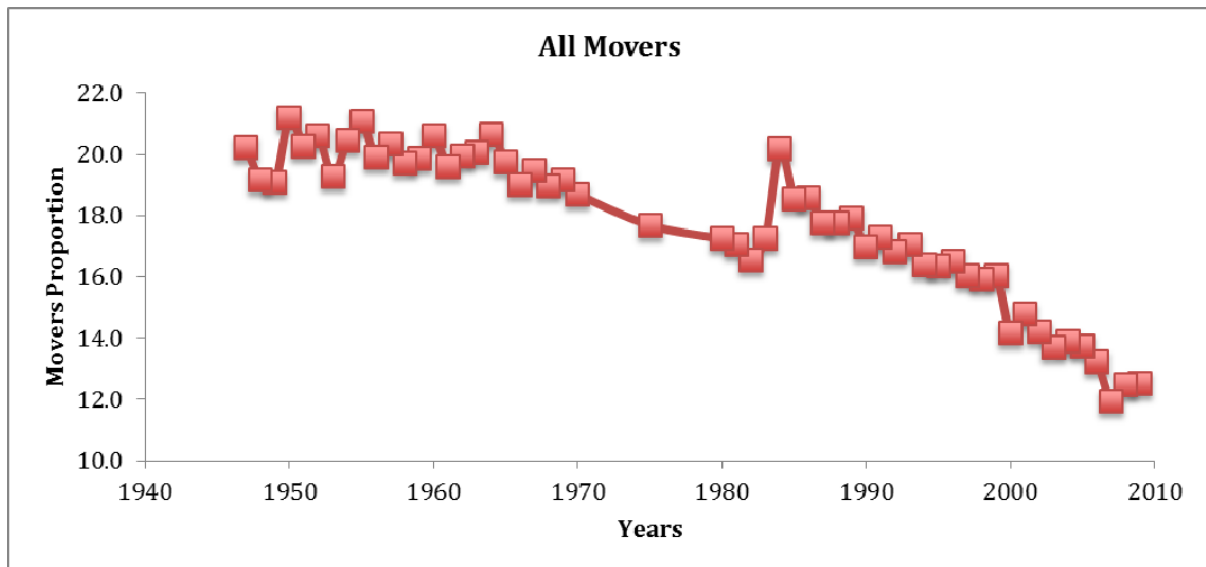
Ultimately the issue of migration and development has been considered in relation to the globalization process. In this framework it has been noticed (Sassen, 1991) that the process of globalization is strictly connected with the evolution of *global cities* and *global élites* associated to a very high mobility. According to this view – and contrary to Zelinsky's theory – , the development of the globalization process would lead to a progressive increase of migration movements especially from most advanced societies.

2. Internal migration and international migration: is there any link?

Before analyzing the main characteristics of international US emigration, it is worth looking at the features of internal migration in that country and the question of whether any link can be found between this and the scarce presence of the population born in the US abroad – scarce, at least, when compared to other developed countries. Has internal migration within the US acted as an inhibitory force constraining international emigration from the country?

In order to describe internal mobility in the US, time series dating back to 1840 have been used (Bureau of the Census, 1975; US Census Bureau, 2010). Through their analyses, three main phases can be observed: 1) a gradual decrease of internal mobility is found in the period 1860-1930, a phenomenon which has remained largely unexplained; 2) a vertiginous increase in internal movements starting from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1970s, related both to the emigration of African-Americans from the Southern to the Northern regions and to a rise in the average educational level of the population residing in the US, and 3) a gradual and continuous decrease starting in the mid-1970s and carrying through until today. According to the US Census Bureau (1985), this pattern has been linked to the historical trend of the interest mortgage's rate: it had decreased during the 1960s and 1970s rising impressively in 1984 and then decreasing again in 1990s.

Figure 3. Proportion (in %) of internal migrants on the total population, US, 1945-2010



Source: Authors' elaboration on US Census Bureau (CPS Historical Geographical Mobility/Migration)

Our analysis focuses on this third more recent phase, for which a wide range of additional information are available.

The intrinsic determinants of these patterns are far from clear. According to the literature (see e.g. Schachter, 2004), four factors are likely to influence internal mobility patterns, namely: age, migration tends to be concentrated in the younger age groups, and more specifically in the 20-35 age group; level of education, the higher the level of education the more they will move; income and employment status, earning an income below the poverty threshold or being unemployed may augment the likelihood of emigration; and house ownership and having children, this may prevent people from moving (Greenwood, 1975; Treyz et al., 1993; Schachter, 2004: 9).³ In this framework, two kind of internal migrants seem to emerge: first, young people with a high level of education who move to study or to look for a first job and second, those who are in difficult economic conditions who move to try to improve their life (to reduce rent costs, to search for a new occupation, etc.).

In order to explain the decrease in internal mobility, different hypotheses have been advanced in line with the factors noted above.

³ Specific ethnic groups such as African-American and Latinos are found to be associated with the propensity to move. But the significance of ethnicity tends to disappear once checked for the four factors noted here.

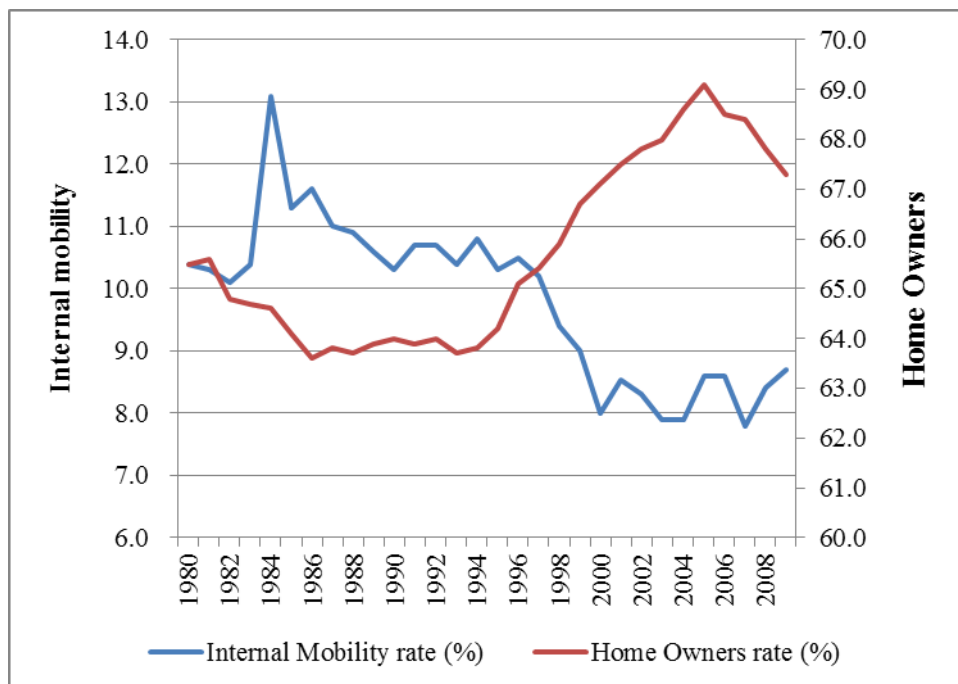
Demographers point out the role of ageing. It acts as an inhibitor to internal mobility given the proportional reduction of the young population. These effects though have been found to be too marginal to explain the phenomenon, i.e. 0.1% (Molloy, Smith and Wozniak, 2011: 14).

Economic theories have, instead, focused on the role of the income differential effect and the diffusion of technologies. As to the first one, notwithstanding the fact that mobility seems not to be influenced by income conditions above the poverty threshold, some scholars (Glaeser and Tobio, 2007; Molloy, Smith and Wozniak, 2011) have hypothesized that the progressive economic convergence of different areas in the US (produced, in part, by high internal mobility in the past) could have reduced the economic benefits of internal migration. However, no significant changes have been observed in net internal migration rates (Molloy, Smith and Wozniak, 2011). As to the second hypothesis, there is the idea that internal mobility has been reduced by the diffusion of new technologies and especially by the possibility of working at home thanks to web facilities. Indeed, the number of “home workers” passed from 2.1% to 4.1% of the total employed population of 2009 (Molloy, Smith and Wozniak, 2011: 16). However, again these numbers seem too small to account for the whole – forty-years long – phenomenon.

The most convincing explanation can probably be found in changes in house-owning. Starting from the 1980s, the proportion of homeowners has gradually increased (with the significant exception of the period 1984-1990) until 2005, when the first difficulties in the US housing market emerged.⁴ The monetary expansion produced then seems thus to have provoked a rise in the proportion of homeowners which has been ultimately associated with a reduction in internal mobility.

Indeed, by looking at the relationship between the evolution of internal mobility and home owners rates, it emerges how these two series are negatively correlated (figure 4) over time, resulting in a Pearson correlation coefficient equal to -0.87 in the period 1980-2009.

Figure 4. Internal mobility and home owners’ rate (%), US, 1980-2009



Source: Authors’ elaboration on US Census Bureau data (CPS Historical Geographical Mobility/Migration Tables; Housing Vacancies and Homeownership - CPS/HVS).

⁴ This moment represents, indeed, the first critical point which will lead to the global financial crisis in 2007, ongoing at the time of writing.

In other terms, the negative relationship between owning a house and moving within the US seems strong and, to look further, some *long-term* causes of the current crisis may have contributed also to the progressive reduction of internal mobility over the last 30 years.

Finally, it is worth noting that the reduction in internal mobility is a specific feature of the US society. This phenomenon is in fact unknown in other developed economies for which statistical info is available.

In Canada, for example, internal mobility has been almost stationary over the same period. In the European Union, data shows a gradual increase in internal mobility patterns due probably to political unification. Within the EU MS, internal movements are higher (Finland and Denmark) or substantially equivalent (France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Ireland) to that observed in the US. The population born in these countries has, however, a higher propensity to emigrate abroad.

By considering these countries patterns, we can thus conclude that internal migration has not likely represented a constraint on international emigration from the US.

3. Emigration from the United States to the European Union

3.1 US migrants around the world

Before entering in the core of the study, i.e. the analysis of emigration from the US to the EU, a brief introduction to the magnitude and destinations of US migration around the world is needed in order to better set the phenomenon at a global level. To this aim, data have been taken from the Global Migrant Origin Database (version 4)⁵ which allowed us to quantify the migrant stock of the US born population at a global level in the years around 2000.

In the years around 2000, the number of US migrants around the world was 2.3 million. Table 1 shows the first 10 destinations of US migrants as well as those of EU27 migrants, employed here for comparative purposes.

⁵ The Global Migrant Origin Database (GMOD) is a bilateral migration database registering the stock of international migrants. It is provided by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) and covers 226 destination and origin countries (matrix 226 x 226). The sources of GMOD are mainly census data, from the 2000 round. For those countries where appropriate census data were unavailable, data are taken from: a) population registers (Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland and Norway); b) "source unclear or not stated but obtained from National Statistics Bureau" (Italy, Latvia, Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Burkina Faso, Taiwan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates); and c) "unknown, need to check with United Nations" (Faroe Islands, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Algeria, Guinea, Mali, Saint Helena, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Iraq, Lebanon, Qatar, Yemen, Greenland, Nauru, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Suriname.) US migrants are defined according to the "country of birth criterion", i.e. population born in the US. For those countries where no foreign-born data are available, the totals are obtained by multiplying the shares obtained by the nationality matrix by the totals in the foreign-born matrix. The nationality matrix is taken by the same or other sources. This data imputation is made after having verified that the series foreign-born and foreign-nationality populations were correlated to a significant extent. This correlation is verified by using a technique based on the entropy measure devised by Walmsley and McDougal Walmsley, T. L and R. McDougall. 2004. "Using entropy to compare IO tables", GTAP Research Memorandum 9, Center for Global Trade Analysis, Purdue University. Since the main aim of the GMOD was to produce a full bilateral matrix, additional data imputations were carried out for residual categories labeled with the prefix "Other". These imputations were made according to the propensity of the origin country (here the US) to send its population abroad relative to those of other countries in the "Other" category.

Table 1. US (1a) and EU27 (1b) emigration stocks (*) and migration rate ()
by country of residence, first 10 destinations, circa 2000**

(1a) US			(1b) EU27		
Country of residence	Number	Migration rate (‰)	Country of residence	Number	Migration rate (‰)
EU27	570,032	2.02	US	4,717,724	9.75
Mexico	342,137	1.21	Canada	2,065,717	4.27
Canada	278,574	0.99	Australia	1,832,662	3.79
Puerto Rico	233,508	0.83	Turkey	935,310	1.93
Philippines	157,003	0.56	Switzerland	894,127	1.85
Australia	53,694	0.19	Argentina	424,338	0.88
Japan	38,804	0.14	Israel	377,468	0.78
Saudi Arabia	27,903	0.10	Russian Federation	344,896	0.71
Pakistan	26,119	0.09	Pakistan	308,827	0.64
Switzerland	23,504	0.08	Brazil	297,107	0.61

Notes: (*) US and EU migrants are defined according to the “country of birth criterion”, i.e. population born in the US and the EU, respectively. (**) The migration rate is the number of migrants abroad on the total population at home per 1,000 individuals.

Source: Authors’ own elaboration on GMOD v.4

In the years around 2000, EU MS was the first destination for US migrants and the United States hosted the largest number of EU MS migrants.

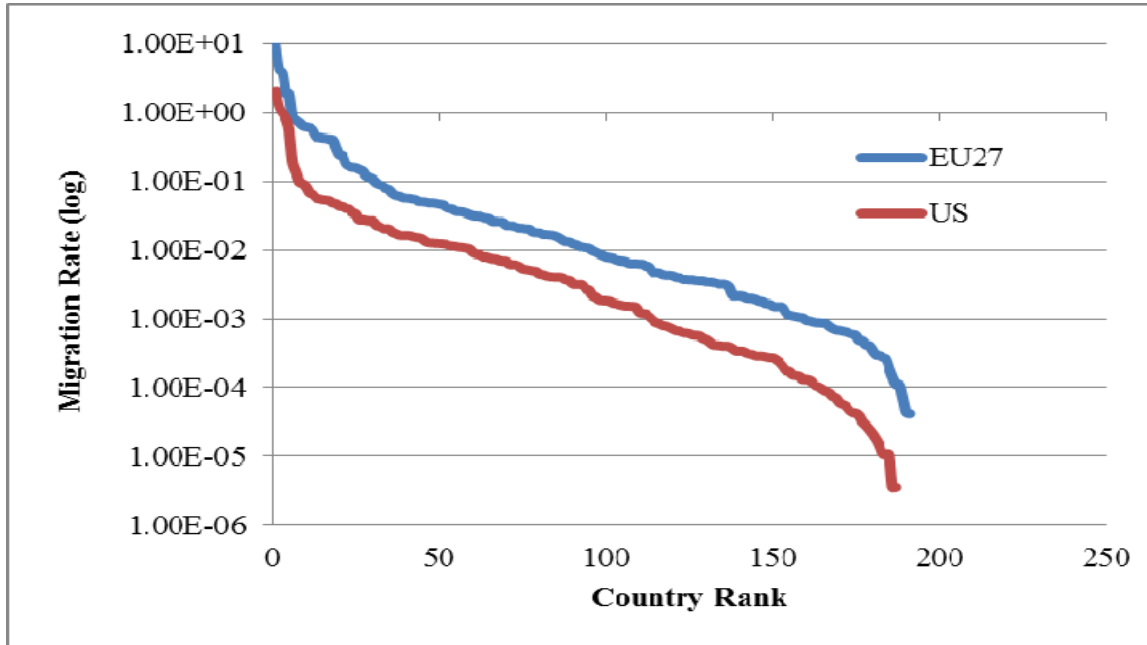
In absolute terms, the number of US migrants residing in the EU27 was, however, disproportionately higher than their European counterpart, equal respectively to 570,032 and 4.7 million individuals, i.e. European migrant population was 8.2 times larger than the US equivalent. The same applies if we look at the phenomenon in relative terms. US population register, indeed, a migration rate towards the EU equal to 2.02‰ vs 9.75‰ of EU migrants, i.e. the migration propensity of EU individuals to move towards the US is around 5 times higher (odds ratio) than the US one.

Despite the reciprocal importance of the two countries for their emigrants living abroad, when looking at other destinations, two different migratory systems seem to emerge. Indeed, only Canada and Australia are among the first ten destinations both for the US and the EU MS. The other three fundamental destinations for US migrants, namely Mexico, Canada and Puerto Rico, seem to indicate the importance of the geographical component (in terms of geographical distance) of international migration from the US. Around 40% of the total of US emigration stocks in 2000 was absorbed by these three neighbor states. Then, Australia and the Philippines followed hosting around 9.4% of the total US migrant stock, a type of emigration which has a cultural and historical background, for example, the Philippines had been a US colony from 1898 to 1946. The presence of US migrants in the other four destination countries seems, instead, to be economically-driven in terms of trade exchanges of commodities, goods and financial services (Saudi Arabia, Japan and Switzerland) or ascribable to geo-politics (Pakistan).

As a whole, the destinations of US migrants are, generally speaking, heterogeneous with no obvious interpretive scheme to hand. These states include, indeed, developed as well as developing countries, countries that are close and faraway, and countries that are near in linguistic-cultural terms, and other that are more distant.

In a comparative perspective, however, what does emerge is the lower propensity to emigrate among US migrants when compared to their European counterparts. Moreover, this gap tends to rise according to the destination ranking: in other words the magnitude of US emigration is concentrated in fewer countries than European emigration.

Figure 5. US and EU27 migration rate according to selected destinations ranked by absolute number of US and EU presence, years around 2000



Source: Authors' own elaboration on GMOD - v.4

Table 2 confirms these patterns: US migration is largely concentrated in Canada and Central American countries, in Oceania and in some Asian regions, particularly the south-eastern and western areas of that continent. Compared with the EU patterns, US migration propensity is higher than the EU equivalent only in a small number of cases: particularly Central America, the Caribbean and Eastern Asia.

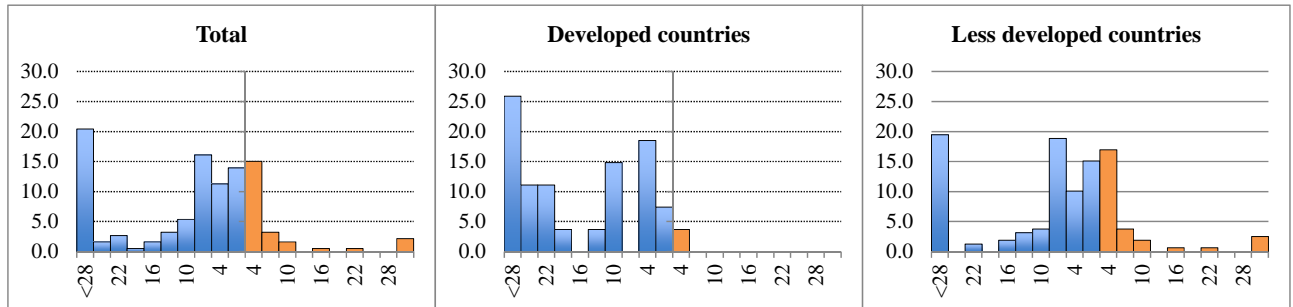
Table 2. US and EU emigration stocks and rates by region of destination, years around 2000

Region of destination	Tot US migr 2000	Migration rate 2000	Tot EU27 migr 2000	Migration rate 2000
Africa				
Eastern Africa	11,750	0.04	332,572	0.69
Middle Africa	6,617	0.02	119,497	0.25
Southern Africa	1,520	0.01	124,512	0.26
Northern Africa	15,224	0.05	99,276	0.21
Western Africa	24,998	0.09	194,923	0.40
America				
Central America	370,466	1.31	59,334	0.12
South America	66,034	0.23	1,044,942	2.16
USA	0	0.00	4,717,724	9.75
Northern America	282,169	1.00	2,075,680	4.29
Caribbean	285,470	1.01	126,998	0.26
Asia				
South Central Asia	40,699	0.14	677,580	1.40
South Eastern Asia	186,467	0.66	278,428	0.58
Eastern Asia	70,289	0.25	62,026	0.13
Western Asia	95,275	0.34	1,917,498	3.96
Europe				
EU27	570,032	2.02	11,235,507	0.00
Others Europe	65,904	0.23	2,258,748	4.67
Oceania				
Australia + New Zealand	67,038	0.24	2,103,277	4.35
Melanesia	999	0.00	13,170	0.03
Micronesia	23,127	0.08	3,127	0.01
Polynesia	4,272	0.02	25,333	0.05

Source: Authors' own elaboration on GMOD - v.4

Figure 7 shows the difference in migration propensity between EU and US migrants. Specifically, the left part of the figure includes the number of destinations countries (x-axis) where US migration propensity is lower than the EU propensity, while the contrary is observed in the right part of the figure. Each histogram proxies the difference in migration propensity (in terms of odds ratio).

Figure 6. Odds ratio of US and EU migration rate by number of countries of residence (total – 6a; developed countries – 6b; developing countries 6c)



Source: Authors' own elaboration on GMOD - v.4

Globally, the EU migration propensity is thus higher than the US one in 77% countries, or 96% of developed countries and in 74% of developing ones.⁶

The reasons why US emigration propensity is substantially lower is not straightforward. Economic determinants do not provide a clear explanation: in 50% of the developing countries, European migration is 7 times higher than the US, but European exchange with developing countries is not 7 times higher than the US one.

The only plausible explanation seems to be, instead, related to the different historical evolution of migration patterns in the two areas. Unlike EU MS, the US has never had important periods of mass emigration and its colonial power has been historically-speaking less relevant when compared to Europe. These processes have, instead, likely created, in the European context, a historical residual of interests, links and European communities living abroad, which seem to continue gradually to attract migration flows from EU MS. This process has though never occurred in the US. This implies that historical trends seem to influence current patterns of migration from the two areas meaning a higher propensity of emigration from the EU than from the US.

This interpretation seems to support again the very great importance of *proximity* in determining emigration patterns and magnitude both in geographical (distance) and historical terms (historical interactions). This hypothesis is arguably corroborated by the concentration of US migrants in Mexico, Canada and Puerto Rico, countries that are geographically but also historically close. It is also confirmed by the lower propensity of US migrants to migrate when compared to the EU: the EU has tended to be much more internationally oriented (perhaps because of the recent colonial past of many European countries).

3.2 Trends of migration from the United States to the European Union

If, at the global level, the limited migratory propensity of the US-born population has appeared to be driven by historical factors, such as the US's limited colonial expansion and the absence of mass migration movements, specific counterbalancing forces seem to have helped maintain a largely stable migration propensity towards the European Union in the last decades.

By comparing the stock of migrants in the EU MS in 2001 and 2010 (table 3), we see that US emigrant stocks rose from 482,922 to 540,297 at a growth rate of 11.9%, a value which is slightly more than the growth registered by the total population residing in the US in the period 2000-2010, which equalled 9.8%, i.e. an almost stationary pattern is observed.

⁶ This latter pattern is probably due to the fact that the Caribbean and Central American countries are considered by UN as "developing countries".

However, this growth has been particularly important in both absolute and relative terms in two European states, namely in the United Kingdom, where the total population born in the US passed from 145,000 to 200,000 from 2004 to 2010 (growth rate of 37.9%) and in Spain, where from 2001 to 2010, the number of US immigrants grew from 22,689 to 37,046 at a growth rate of 63.3%. In 2010, the main European destinations are United Kingdom (hosting 37.0% of the total US emigration stocks in the EU), Germany (18.2%), France (8.9%), Spain (6.9%) and Italy (5.9%).

Table 3. US emigration stocks (*) residing in the European Union Member States by country of residence, circa 2001 and 2010

Country of residence	Source	Year	2001	Source	Year	2010
Austria	Population Census	2001	6,176	Population Register	2009	9,416
Belgium	ESEG (**)	2001	10,594	Population Register	2010	15,171
Bulgaria	Population Census	2001	163	Population Register	2009	190
Cyprus	Population Census	2001	1,600	Population Census	2001	1,600
Czech Republic	Population Census	2001	1,660	Database of Foreigners	2010	3,320
Denmark	Population Register	2001	8,323	Population Register	2010	10,688
Germany	Central Register of Foreigners	2002	113,528	Central Register of Foreigners	2010	98,352
Estonia	Population Census	2000	193	Population Census	2000	193
Finland	Population Register	2001	2,903	Population Register	2010	3,907
France	Population Census	1999	39,463	Population Census	2005	48,174
Greece	Population Census	2001	18,140	Residence Permits	2006	1,769
Hungary	Database of Foreigners	2001	932	Database of Foreigners	2010	1,404
Ireland	Population Census	2002	14,622	Population Register	2010	18,960
Italy	Permits to stay	2001	45,528	Permits to stay	2009	31,001
Latvia	Population Census	2001	201	Population Register	2010	774
Lithuania	Population Register	2001	1,028	Population Register	2008	1,741
Luxembourg	Population Census	2001	866	Population Census	2001	866
Malta	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Netherlands	Population Register	2001	17,770	Population Register	2010	19,897
Poland	Population Census	2002	9,004	Population Register	2010	10,851
Portugal	Population Census	2001	5,266	Database of Foreigners	2009	3,873
Romania	Population Census	2002	1,463	Population Register	2009	2,545
Slovakia	Database of Foreigners	2003	434	Database of Foreigners	2009	714
Slovenia	Population Register	2001	665	Population Register	2010	666
Spain	Population Register	2001	22,689	Population Register	2010	37,046
Sweden	Population Register	2001	14,711	Population Register	2010	17,179
United Kingdom	Annual Population Survey	2004	145,000	Annual Population Survey	2010	200,000
Total EU27			482,922			540,297

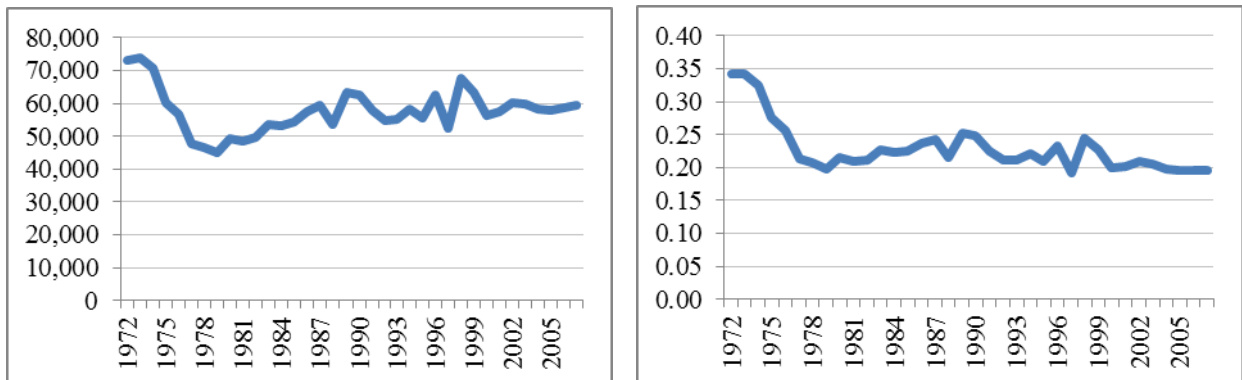
Notes: (*) US emigration stocks are defined according to the country of birth criterion except for some countries, namely Bulgaria, Germany, Greece and Italy, where data were available only according to the country of nationality criterion; (**) ESEG stands for Enquête Socio-Economique Générale.

Source: provided in the table.

Flow data⁷ confirm this almost stationary pattern observed in migration from the US in the last four decades and specifically in the period 1972-2007 for Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom and from 1988 to 2007 for the above-mentioned 5 countries *plus* Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Italy and Spain (figure 7).

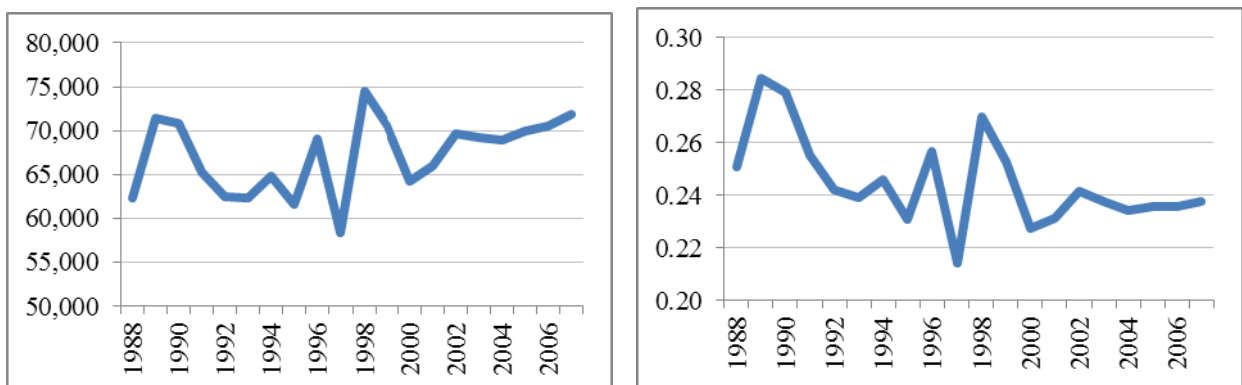
Specifically, two main phases of emigration trends from the US seem to emerge. From 1972 to 1977, a progressive reduction in emigration movements from the US is observed, while from 1978 until today the long-term trend has been largely stationary despite some short-term shocks, especially during the five-year period 1995-2000.

Figure 7. Migration from the US to 5 European countries (Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and United Kingdom), 1972- 2007: absolute values (left) and rates (right).



Source: Authors' own elaboration on International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2008 Revision

Figure 8. Migration from the US to 10 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom), 1988-2007: absolute values (left) and rates (right).



Source: Authors' own elaboration on International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2008 Revision

3.3 Driving forces of US emigration

In order to understand the main forces associated with US migration, a Generalized Least Square Model (GLSM) has been implemented aimed at evaluating and comparing the relationship between selected economic, social and demographic determinants and emigration patterns from the US to the EU from 1980 to 2007. As a response variable, migration flow time series from the US to 5 European

⁷ Flow data have been taken from "United Nations. 2008. International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2008 Revision."

states, namely the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium (representing respectively the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 8th and 9th destinations in terms of US emigration stocks today) has been used; as to the covariates, three dimensions have been considered:

- Economic: proxied by the US *per capita* Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the proportion of home-owners from the total US adult population;
- Social: proxied by social inequality, indexed by the Gini coefficient in the US and the number of students enrolled in post-secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official eligible school-age population corresponding to the same level of education (Gross Enrolment Ratio);
- Demographic: proxied by the past growth of the US population (in the 20 year-period before).

Table 4. Results of the Generalized Least Square Model⁸

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	0.009	0.135	0.065	0.9488
Home Owners	-1.001	0.243	-4.156	0.0004
US Log GDP pc	1.874	0.569	3.294	0.0033
US Inequality	-0.697	0.303	-2.3	0.0313
Education	-0.183	0.314	n.s.	n.s.
Pop.Increase (lagged 20 years)	0.886	0.382	2.318	0.0301
logLik	-28.5			

Before presenting the main results of the analysis, two major points deserve attention. First, all considered variables have a significant impact on the risk of emigrating from the US towards the EU except the proportion of students attending post-secondary education. In other words, the rise of the net enrolment tertiary rate during the observed period has not affected, either positively or negatively, the tendency of the population born in the US to migrate towards the EU. Second, no serial correlation was detected meaning that the magnitude of migration at time t seems not to be affected by the magnitude of migration at time $t-1$, thus undermining the *chain migration hypothesis* for the US.

As to the factors associated with emigration from the US, the socio-economic determinants are particularly relevant. Specifically, they act in an opposite direction, leading to the observed stationary trend of US emigration, as found in the descriptive analysis reported at the beginning of this paragraph.

The main effect⁹ is attributable to the GDP *per capita* trend. Over the last 30 years, its growth has been positively associated with the migration propensity towards the EU of the US born population. The classic economic literature does not provide any solid explanation because – we suspect – this literature has been historically focused on migration from poorer to richer countries. According to its major scholars (see e.g. Sjaastad 1962; Todaro 1969; Borjas 1987) income growth in the origin country is positively associated with a reduction in the emigration rate. More recently, other scholars (Faini e Venturini 1994a, 1994b; Hatton and Williamson 2009) have found instead an inverted (U) relationship between income and migration for selected low-income countries. They argued thus that increased *per capita* incomes has resulted in growth for migration abroad by enabling these populations to reduce migration costs.

⁸ It is worth mentioning as the same analysis was performed by implementing an ARIMA model, the results of which (not presented here) were largely similar to the ones produced by the GLSM model.

⁹ Given that time-series have been previously standardized, coefficients can be compared to a large extent.

In our analysis, we suspect, instead, that other forces than those triggering movements from less developed countries play a role in determining migration movements from one advanced society (in this instance the US) to another (here the EU). Specifically, this migration results from specific motivations, such as international business, education, retirement, etc. which push selected categories of people into “choosing” to migrate in a less economically constrained framework. We will investigate more in depth this point in the next section.

As mentioned, this effect is counterbalanced by two other socio-economic forces pulling in the opposite direction: the proportion of homeowners in the adult population and social inequality trends. According to this analysis, these trends have been negatively associated with migration propensity.

As to the first indicator, the analysis confirmed what has been already found in the previous section (see paragraph 2) concerning internal mobility. Thus it can be said that both internal and international movements seem to be strictly negatively associated with trends in the US housing market. With respect to the second indicator, the growth of the Gini Index in the US society has been negatively associated with emigration propensity in the EU. This result seems, instead, in line with Borjas’s theory, according to which the rise of social inequality would lead, over time, to a reduction in the magnitude of emigration flows in absolute terms. In the US case the more unequal the income distribution, the more qualified people tend to stay at home given the wage advantage they have with respect to low-skilled individuals. However, it should also be noted that this phenomenon could also depend on some spurious relationships with missing variables, leading to a misinterpretation in the results.¹⁰

Further, we also found that the demographic dimension was positively associated with US migration propensity. More specifically, population growth in the last 20 years would have resulted in a rise in emigration to the EU. However, we suppose that this phenomenon is only the result of *period* dynamics: the generations born during the baby boom have progressively entered the labour market, and then have leaved the age bracket 20-30 where the migration propensity is highest, leading first to a relative increase, and then to a relative decrease, in potential migrants.

To conclude, the migration propensity from the United States to the European Union has been almost constant in the last 3 decades. This pattern is associated with two opposite forces. According to our model, the growth in average income *per capita* would have been positively associated with emigration movements towards the EU, while this phenomenon has been negatively associated, first, to the growth of the proportion of Home Owners as stimulated by the monetary expansion and, second, with the rise in social inequality in US society, the latter having exerted its power over highly-skilled individuals.

3.4. US emigrant stocks in the EU: a heterogeneous profile

This section analyzes the profile of the US born population residing in the EU MS. To this end, two types of sources have been used, namely: the Database on Immigrants in OECD countries and non-OECD countries (DIOC-E);¹¹ and the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS).¹² Thanks to these two

¹⁰ For instance, the negative trend in migration towards the EU measured by the rising inequality may describe the rising relevance of alternative destinations.

¹¹ DIOC-E is an international database registering the international stock of migrants (aged 15 and over). It is provided by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and covers all European Union countries of destination except for Cyprus and Malta. The sources of DIOC-E are mainly census data, from the 2000 round. For those countries which do not take periodic censuses, data are taken from population registers (Denmark, Finland and Sweden), labor force surveys (Germany and the Netherlands) or *Enquête socio-économique générale* (Belgium). US immigrants are defined according to the “country of birth criterion”, i.e. population born in the US. For more detailed information: see OECD. 2011. DIOC-E 2000 (RELEASE 2.0) - Methodology (available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/43/46561464.p>)

¹² A major limitation of the EU LFS dataset is that, for the sake of representativeness, the stock of population born abroad and residing in the EU MS was grouped into macro-regions of birth. As a matter of fact, data have been available only for

sources, it has been possible to sketch out an overall profile of the US born population residing in the European Union at different points in time (respectively 2000 and 2009 for DIOC and EU LFS), with an impressive series of individual and household characteristics.

As pointed out in the previous empirical analysis (see paragraph 3), the classic determinants of international migration play a different and sometimes unexpected role in the migration propensity of the US born population directed towards the EU. This interplay of forces has gradually, over time, created a composite profile of this population, which – being characterized by specific but varying motivations – is, generally speaking, heterogeneous.

Specifically, our analysis sheds light on 4 typologies of US emigrant stocks in the EU, namely mixed couples, business men, old females in the EU12 new Member States and a residual part of low skilled workers.

In terms of age and sex, US emigrants residing in the EU27 in the years around 2000 were concentrated in the adult population: 71.7% were aged between 25 and 64 years of age (vs 66.8% in the US) (table 4).

Table 4. Population born in the US aged 15+ by area of residence and age group, circa 2000

Age group	Area of residence							
	US		EU27		EU15		EU12	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
15-24	30,277,331	16.3	55,422	15.4	53,918	15.6	1,504	12.0
25-64	124,136,281	66.8	257,684	71.7	253,592	73.1	4,092	32.7
65+	31,361,667	16.9	46,133	12.8	39,202	11.3	6,931	55.3
Total	185,775,279	100.0	359,240	100.0	346,712	100	12,528	100.0

Source: Authors' own elaboration on DIOC-E

A significant finding is related to the distribution by sex of US emigrants in the EU (table 5): the sex ratio is found at 0.88 (vs 0.93 in the US).

Table 5. Population born in the US aged 15+ by area of residence and sex, circa 2000

Sex	Area of residence							
	US		EU27		EU15		EU12	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Males	89,422,641	48.1	168,445	46.9	163,387	47.1	5,058	40.4
Females	96,352,638	51.9	190,795	53.1	183,325	52.9	7,470	59.6
Total	185,775,279	100.0	359,240	100.0	346,712	100.0	12,528	100.0

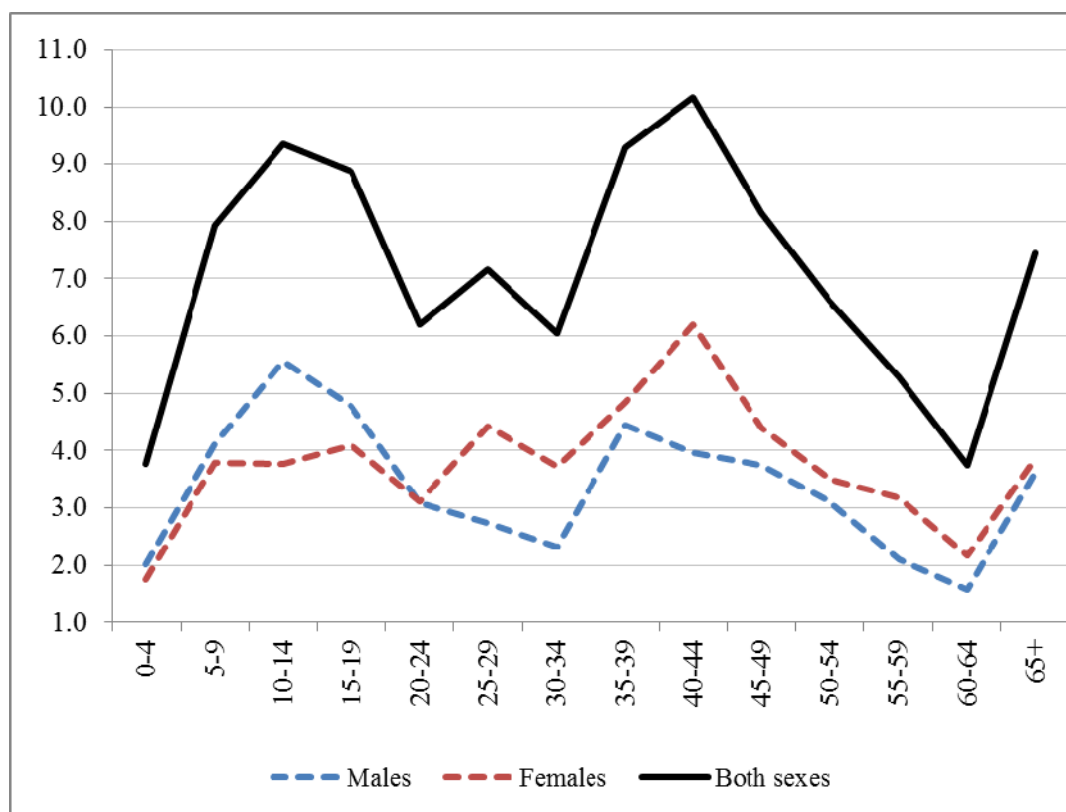
Source: Authors' own elaboration on DIOC-E

This “female prevalence” concerns all age groups from 25 years old onwards (figure 9).

(Contd.) _____

the category “North America”, which includes both US and Canadian migrants. The sample size of northern American migrants equals 3,020 individuals.

Figure 9. Population born in North America aged 15+ and residing in the EU by sex and age group, 2009



Source: Authors' own elaboration on EU-LFS

These demographic characteristics may indicate that the presence of US immigrants in the EU is linked to the formation of family unions between US and EU natives, i.e. mixed marriages. Indeed, according to EU LFS data, 56.5% of Northern American immigrants aged 18+ live with a partner (table 6) and among these couples, 83.6% are composed of mixed unions – i.e. between Northern American migrants and EU natives – including 47.0% of unions between a Northern American female and a EU male and 36.6% between a US male and a Northern American female (table 7).

Table 6. Population born in in North America aged 15+ and residing in the EU by sex and union condition, 2009

Sex	Union condition	%
Males	No partner	18.4
	Partner	25.5
Females	No partner	25.1
	Partner	31.0
Total		100.0

Source: Authors' own elaboration on EU-LFS

Table 7. Population born in North America aged 15+ and residing in the EU by sex and Partner's region country of birth, 2009

Sex	Partner's region country of birth	%
Males	EU27	36.6
	North America	5.4
	Others	2.6
Females	EU27	47.0
	North America	5.1
	Others	2.3
Unknown		1.1
Total		100.0

Source: Authors' own elaboration on EU-LFS

The formation of mixed unions seems thus an important driver in keeping US migrants in the EU. Under the extreme hypothesis that all US migrants who lives in the EU with an EU partner remain as a consequence of this union, mixed marriages may explain around 40% of the US presence there. In this framework, the prevalence of females may explain the gender disequilibrium observed in the population structure by sex and by age and in particular the fact that this disequilibrium is observed starting from the population aged 25+, when unions are more frequent.

An analysis of US emigration stock by age and sex helps us pick out another interesting group residing EU12 new Member States. Despite the small presence of US migrants in these countries (4.4% of the total of EU MS in 2010), it is worth noting the surprising demographic characteristics of this population. Here, the sex ratio is even more pronounced: indeed, for every 100 US male migrants there are 147 US female migrants. The peculiarity of this second female group is, however, related to their distribution by age: 68.9% is composed of women aged 65+, whereas the male equivalent is 36.6%. This small community of US migrants in EU12 is thus essentially composed of old women. Unfortunately, no clear explanation for this pattern has been found. The only plausible hypothesis (return migration) is presumably untenable given that this population was born in the US.

Additional information characterizing US migrants in the EU MS can be derived from an analysis of their educational and occupational profiles.

Table 8 shows how the majority of US migrants aged 15+ residing in the EU have a high level of education (50.8%), followed by those holding a medium degree (30.2%). Only 2 out 10 US migrants in the EU have a low level of education.

Table 8. Population born in the US aged 15+ by area of residence and level of education, circa 2000

Level of education	Area of residence			
	US		EU27	
	Number	%	Number	%
Low level (ISCED 0/1/2)	37,800,782	20.3	64,634	19.0
Medium level (ISCED 3/4)	96,991,147	52.2	102,601	30.2
High level (ISCED 5/6)	50,983,350	27.4	172,496	50.8
Total	185,775,279	100.0	339,731	100.0
Unknown	-	-	19,509	-

Source: Authors' own elaboration on DIOC-E

By comparing the distribution by level of education of the US born population residing in the EU and the US born population residing in the US, we can now see whether US emigrants tend to be negatively or positively selected. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, according to Borjas's theory, migration from the US should be *negatively selected* given the relative wage advantage of low-skilled individuals in moving towards more equal societies and the consequent disadvantage of moving for highly-skilled individuals. However, the fact that the highly-skilled population is overrepresented in the emigrant population (50.8%) compared to the resident population in the US (27.4%) and also that the proportion of low-skilled individuals among US emigrants (19.0%) equals that found in the resident population in the US (20.3%) challenges this hypothesis.

This complex relationship between educational level and migration propensity seems to identify two groups of labour migrants: first, low skilled individuals, a smaller group whose emigration is driven by reaching for more equal societies in terms of wages and social benefits; and, second, highly skilled individuals, who are, instead, attracted by economic integration between EU and US society, in other words by globalization dynamics. The following section which analyzes the occupational profile of US migrants hopes to clarify this picture.

Table 9. Population born in the US aged 15+ residing in the EU by occupation, circa 2000

Occupation	Number	%
Armed forces	5,456	3.5
Legislators, senior officials and managers	26,546	17.2
Professionals	54,488	35.4
Technicians and associate professionals	22,575	14.7
Clerks	13,244	8.6
Service workers and shop and market sales	13,236	8.6
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	1,340	0.9
Crafts and related trades workers	7,118	4.6
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	3,756	2.4
Elementary occupations	6,293	4.1
Total	154,052	100.0
Unknown	2,692	-

Source: Authors' own elaboration on DIOC-E

In the years around 2000, 67.3% of US migrants were employed in highly-qualified occupations, namely as *professionals* (54,488 or 35.4% of the total), *legislators, senior officials and managers* (26,546 or 17.2%), or *technicians and associate professionals* (22,575 or 14.7%). The occupation in which US migrants tend to find most is that of *corporate managers*, i.e. managers employed in the largest companies in terms of numbers of employed individuals, where around 20,000 US migrants work. Presumably, a large number of these US workers are employed in US enterprises based or located in EU MS. In other terms, they belong to the so-called *global elite* identified by globalization theorists and their mobility is intrinsically linked to the internal logistics of the single companies where they work, rather than specific economic forces. However, this migration has tended to acquire increasing relevance internationally, so much so that its consequences for origin and destination countries need to be looked at more carefully.

The other side of US migration to the EU is represented by the fact that 1 out of 5 US immigrants (31,743 or 20.6% of the total) are, instead, employed in low occupational levels, namely service and

trade activities¹³ (21,694 or 14.1%), or elementary and manual occupations¹⁴ (10,049 or 6.5%). This proportion is similar to that of US migrants with a low level of education (19.0%).¹⁵ This is the segment of the US migrants which very likely reacted to the different levels of equality standards in terms of wages between the US and the EU society. Here, Borjas's theory, highlighting the inequality component in migration patterns is perhaps confirmed.

However, this theory seems to be valid only for one, in fact, the smallest component of US emigration stocks residing in the EU. The other three components, namely migrants driven by family motivations, highly-skilled individuals driven by international companies' needs and elderly women¹⁶ residing in the EU12 appear to be driven by other forces, which are not, strictly speaking economic.

These findings are in accordance with the results of our previous analysis, according to which GDP *per capita* growth was found to be positively associated with the migration propensity of citizens from the US to the EU. It seems, in fact, reasonable to argue that the growth of the US economy has been accompanied by a rise in the interactions between US and EU societies. These are represented by both the growth in tourist journeys, as well as study abroad experiences with the consequent rise of occasions to meet a EU partner, but also of the waves of migrants depending on economic growth and globalization, brought about by, the presence of US companies in the EU and EU companies in the US.

Conclusions

This paper examined emigration from the United States to the European Union. Analyzing the magnitude and intensity of US emigration, its determinants and characteristics has been a thorny issue. Few empirical studies have been conducted on this topic and theorization on this type of migration is essentially inexistent. In this paper, we tried to fill this gap and to show how migration between advanced economies is crucial in understanding different and under researched aspects of international migration.

Specifically, the magnitude of migration from the US appears "too large" to be explained through classic migration theories – since we suspect these theories have been focused on migration from poorer to richer countries – but "too small" when compared to the overall movements originating in other developed countries.

As to the main results, the lower migration propensity showed by the US born population compared with that of the population born in other advanced economies seems to be related to its historical evolution: the US has never had mass emigration and US colonialism was historically irrelevant, at least compared to Europe. Geographical and cultural *proximity* assume instead a major relevance in explaining US emigration patterns and magnitude.

Focusing on the characteristics of US emigration to the EU, we found that the interplay of various specific forces, namely the rise of US Gross Domestic Product *per capita*, the US housing market trends, the growth of social inequality, as well as the ageing of the US population have played a different – and sometimes unexpected – role in affecting the propensity to emigrate from the US.

These forces have created over time a composite profile of this population, which – being characterized by specific and various motivations – looks, generally speaking, heterogeneous. More specifically, the profile of US emigrants in the European Union Member States is, we have found, essentially linked to family formation and to economic integration between EU and US economies.

¹³ They include service workers and shop and market sales and craft and related trades workers.

¹⁴ They include elementary occupations, plant and machine operators and assemblers and skilled agricultural and fishery workers

¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that the matching between educational and occupational level among US migrants is extremely high being equal to 72.8% of cases.

¹⁶ The determinants of this phenomenon are however far from being clear.

For family formation, high proportions of mixed couples composed by an individual born in the US and another born in the EU are found, especially among US women migrants, a group which is overrepresented. As to economic integration, the analysis of US migrants in the EU by level of education shows, as the large prevalence of highly-skilled individuals employed for most part in high occupational levels of performing economic sectors confirms, that the integration between EU and US economies may explain an important part of these movements. Here it is worth mentioning that a “residual” part of US emigrants with low levels of education is found, confirming Borjas’s theory, according to which low-skilled individuals moving from unequal to more equal societies, i.e. from the US to the EU MS, would find a relative advantage in terms of wages. This latter pattern is probably linked to the constant growth of social inequality in US society (at least over the last 30 years), according to which low-skilled individuals would find a relative wage advantage in emigrating from the US towards more equal societies.

We conclude that migration between advanced economies is relevant internationally, but largely ignored at a scientific level. The more interactions between advanced economies are destined to augment, the more an understanding of their consequences for origin and destination countries becomes a priority.

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