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from the Progressive Era

Immigrant franchise and
immigration policy: Evidence

RÉSUMÉ

What is the role played by immigrant groups in shaping migration policy in the destination country? To study this question we exploit historical variation in access to the franchise induced by different residency requirements across U.S. states. We start by documenting that naturalized immigrants were more geographically mobile than natives. Next we show that congressmen representing districts with large numbers of naturalized U.S. citizens were more likely to support an open migration policy, but that more stringent residency requirements attenuate this effect. Our results indicate that congressmen electoral accountability to naturalized immigrants was a key factor in explaining this outcome.

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