

**May 11, 2004**  
**American Enterprise Institute**  
**The Wendt Distinguished Lecture**

**The Political Economy of**  
**World Mass Migration:**  
**Comparing Two Global Centuries**

**Jeffrey G. Williamson**  
**Harvard University**

This lecture draws heavily on an ongoing book with the title **World Mass Migration: Two Centuries of Policy and Performance** (MIT Press, God willing) written in collaboration with Timothy Hatton (Australian National University, Canberra).

To find more working papers of mine on world migration from 1492 (or 1421) to 2004, browse at

[www.economics.harvard.edu/~jwilliam](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/~jwilliam)

If you want to pursue these issues by email, try me at  
jwilliam@kuznets.fas.harvard.edu

# Road Map for Two Global Centuries

**Rising Immigrant *Quantity* and  
Falling Immigrant *Quality***

**Getting the Economics Right:**

**Immigrant Impact on Labor Markets *redux***

**The Global Centuries Compared:**

**Immigrants, Wages and Inequality**

**Policy and the Demise of Mass Migration at  
the end of the First Global Century**

**The (Big) Labor Force Impact of the Quotas**

**Did the Absence of Immigrants Contribute to  
the Great Income Leveling in America?**

**Explaining Immigration Policy Before the  
1930s: Political Debate and Backlash**

# ***World Mass Migration: Two Centuries of Policy and Performance***

**Timothy J. Hatton**

**Jeffrey G. Williamson**

Chapter 1 Goals and Guidelines

## ***PART I The Rise of World Mass Migration***

Chapter 2 Evolving World Migrations since Columbus

Chapter 3 The Transition to Mass Migration: How It All Began

Chapter 4 What Drove European Mass Emigration?

Chapter 5 Emigrant Origins and Immigrant Outcomes

Chapter 6 Impact of Mass Migration on Convergence and Inequality

Chapter 7 Mass Migrations in the Poor Periphery

## ***Part II The Fall of World Mass Migration***

Chapter 8 Political Debate and Policy Backlash

Chapter 9 The Demise of Mass Migration and Its Impact

## ***Part III The Rise (Again) of World Mass Migration***

Chapter 10 Resurrection: World Migration since World War II

Chapter 11 World Migration under Policy Constraints

Chapter 12 Where Are All the Africans?

Chapter 13 The Rise (and Fall?) of Asylum Seeking

Chapter 14 The Fiscal and Labor Market Impact of Immigration

Chapter 15 Migrant Selection, Immigrant Assimilation, and Emigrant Brain Drain

## ***Part IV The Future of World Mass Migration***

Chapter 16 Policy and Prejudice

Chapter 17 Policy and Performance

Chapter 18 Looking to the Future

# Backlash!

## US Anti-Immigrant Attitudes in the First Global Century

**Kansas workers 1895**

**“Restrict’ immigration 63%**

**“Suppress” 24%**

**Total opposed to *status quo* 87%**

**Kansas workers 1897**

**“Restrict’ immigration 68%**

**“Suppress” immigration 24%**

**Total opposed to *status quo* 92%**

**Michigan workers 1895**

**“Restrict” immigration 92%**

**US Adults Surveyed 1953-1997**

**“Opposed to immigration” 40-70%**

**Table 1**  
**The Migrant Stock Around the World, 1965-2000**

Year	1965	1975	1985	1990a	1990b	2000
<b>Migrant Stock (Millions)</b>						
World	75.2	84.5	105.2	119.8	154.0	174.9
Africa	8.0	11.2	12.5	15.6	16.2	16.3
Asia	31.4	29.7	38.7	43.0	50.0	50.0
Latin Am. & Carib.	5.9	5.9	6.4	7.5	7.1	5.9
North America	12.7	15.0	20.5	23.9	27.6	40.8
Europe	14.7	19.5	23.0	25.1	48.4	56.1
Oceania	2.5	3.3	4.1	4.6	4.8	5.8
<b>Percentage of World Migrant Stock</b>						
World	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Africa	10.6	13.2	11.9	13.1	10.5	9.3
Asia	41.8	35.1	36.8	35.9	32.4	28.6
Latin Am. & Carib.	7.9	6.8	6.1	6.2	4.6	3.4
North America	16.9	17.8	19.5	20.0	17.9	23.3
Europe	19.6	23.1	21.8	20.9	31.4	32.1
Oceania	3.3	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.1	3.3
<b>Migrant Stock as a Percentage of Population</b>						
World	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.9	2.9
Africa	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.1
Asia	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.4
Latin Am. & Carib.	2.4	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.1
North America	6.0	6.3	7.8	8.6	9.8	13.0
Europe	2.2	2.7	3.0	3.2	6.7	7.7
Oceania	14.4	15.6	16.9	17.8	18.0	19.1

**Table 2**  
**Source Area Composition of US Immigration, 1951-2000**  
 (% of total)

Region of Origin	1951-60	1961-70	1971-80	1981-90	1991-2000
Europe	52.7	33.8	17.8	10.3	14.9
West	47.1	30.2	14.5	7.2	5.6
East	5.6	3.6	3.3	3.1	9.4
Asia	6.1	12.9	35.3	37.3	30.7
Americas	39.6	51.7	44.1	49.3	49.3
Canada	15.0	12.4	3.8	2.1	2.1
Mexico	11.9	13.7	14.2	22.6	24.7
Caribbean	4.9	14.2	16.5	11.9	10.8
Central America	1.8	3.1	3.0	6.4	5.8
South America	3.6	7.8	6.6	6.3	5.9
Africa	0.6	0.9	1.8	2.4	3.9
Oceania	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.6
Total (000's)	2,515	3,322	4,493	7,338	9,095

Source: Hatton and Williamson 2004, Table 10.2.

Notes: National origin based on country of last residence. Totals include 2.7 million former illegal aliens receiving permanent resident status under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, 1986. Of these, 1.3 million fall in the decade 1981-1990 period and 1.4 million in the decade 1991-2000.

**Table 3**  
**Education of Sending Country Stayers and of Its Emigrants in Host Countries c1990**

Region (no. sending countries)	Years of Schooling		
	Stayers in the Sending Countries	Migrants in the Host Countries	Difference (Migrants-Stayers)
Africa (4)	4.6	15.4	10.8
Mexico (1)	6.3	7.5	1.2
Caribbean and Central America	5.4	11.2	5.8
South America (10)	5.9	12.5	6.6
Asia (15)	5.8	14.4	8.6
Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Turkey (3)	7.8	12.6	4.8
<b>Total (47)</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>

*Source and Notes:* Based on Hendricks (2002: Table B1). All figures are unweighted averages. The stayer column is based on Barro-Lee while the migrant column is based on OECD censuses around 1990. The two columns use country observations only if they supply both the stayer and the migrant information

**Table 4****Estimated Effects of Immigration on Wages and Employment of Natives**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Country/Region/Time</b>	<b>Effect on earnings of immigration equivalent to 1% of the labor force (in percent)</b>	<b>Effect on Employment/unemployment of immigration equivalent to 1% of the labor force (in percentage points)</b>
Altonji/Card (1991)	US cities, 1970-1980	-1.2 (less skilled)	NA
Lalonde/Topel (1991)	US cities, 1970-1980	-0.63 (immigrants); -0.83 (young blacks)	NA
Borjas et al. (1997)	US States, 1960-1990 (Males)	0.59 (1960-70); 0.07 (1970-80); -0.01 (1980-90)	Employment: -0.03 (1960-70); 0.13 (1970-80); -0.05 (1980-90)
Card (2001)	US cities, by occupation, 1985-90	-0.15	Employment: -0.05
DeNew/Zimmermann (1994)	German industries	-4.1 (all); -5.9 (blue collar); 3.5 (low experienced white collar)	NA
Pischke/Velling (1997)	German counties, 1985-9	NA	Employment: 0.05 Unemployment: 0.2
Addison/Worswick (2002)	Australian States by occupation, 1982-96	1.5 (all); 2.7 (less educated)	No effects on unemployment
Dustmann et al. (2002)	UK Regions 1983-2000	1.9 (all); 2.2 (skilled); 1.2 (semiskilled); 2.2 (unskilled)	Unemployment: 0.2 (all); 0.1 (skilled); 0.4 (semiskilled); 0.03 (unskilled)

*Note:* The estimates reported here are based on regression coefficients that are often not significantly different from zero. Many of the authors offer a range of estimates using different methods and the ones presented here are considered the most representative. Since the model specifications vary, the estimates from different studies are not strictly comparable.

**Table 5**  
**Net US Immigration by Region of Origin 1910-1939**

	<b>1910-1919</b>	<b>1920-1929</b>	<b>1930-1939</b>
"Old" Europe	910,309 (21.2)	991,128 (32.9)	77,839 (37.0)
"New" Europe	2,548,453 (59.5)	542,058 (18.0)	113,016 (53.7)
Mexico	135,678 (3.2)	455,502 (15.1)	-75,240 (-35.8)
Canada	417,016 (9.7)	912,651 (30.3)	144,325 (68.6)
Other	274,809 (6.4)	107,441 (3.6)	-49,503 (-23.5)
Total	4,286,265 (100.0)	3,008,780 (100.0)	210,437 (100.0)

*Source:* Gemery (1994: Table 9.2, 178).

*Notes:* Canada includes Newfoundland.

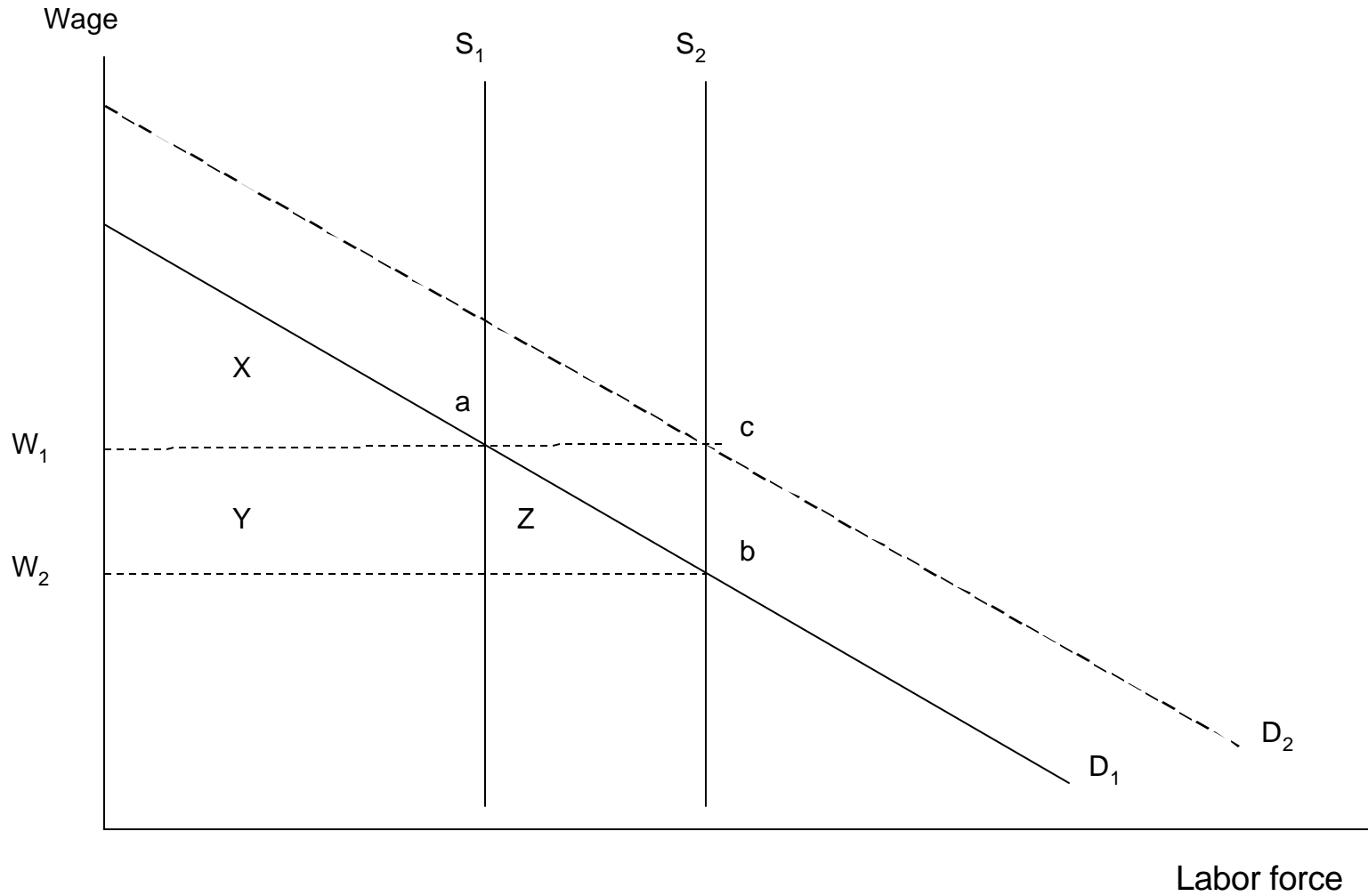
**Table 6**  
**US Labor Force Growth, 1910-1940: Some Counterfactuals**

	Labor force growth rate (% p.a)	Percentage due to net immigration
<b>Actual:</b> 1880-1910	2.29	40.1
<b>Actual:</b> 1910-1940	1.14	11.6
<b>Counterfactuals for 1910-1940 with immigrant participation rate of 1910-40</b>		
Net immigration rate of 1919-1940	1.14	11.6
Absolute net immigration of 1880-1910	1.38	30.9
Net immigration rate of 1880-1910	1.66	44.1
<b>Counterfactuals for 1910-1940 with immigrant participation rate of 1880-1910</b>		
Net immigration rate of 1910-1940	1.17	14.5
Absolute net immigration of 1880-1910	1.48	35.6
Net immigration rate of 1880-1910	1.82	50.4

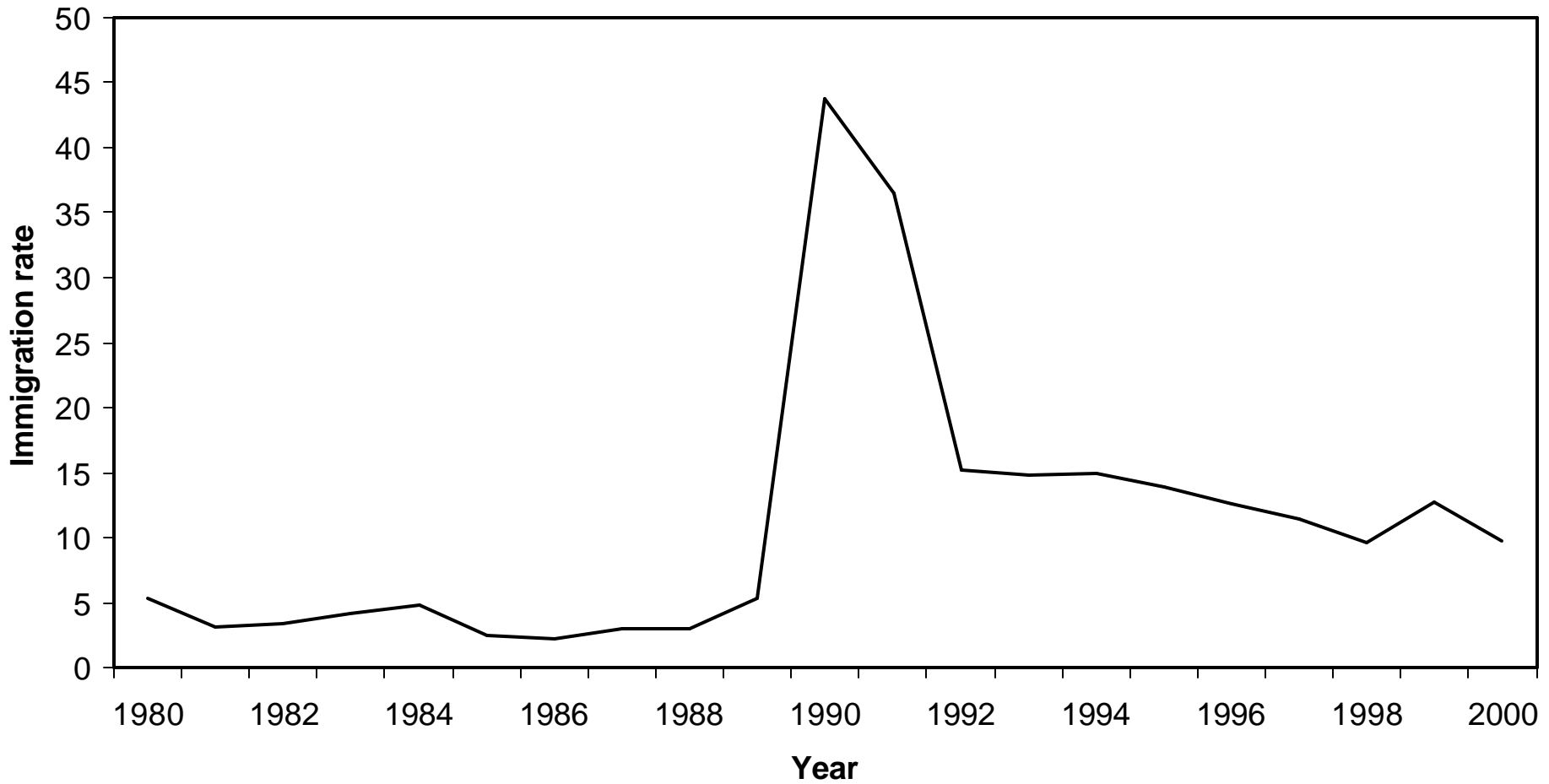
Sources: Hatton and Williamson 2004, Table 9.3.

# Figure 1

## The Economic Effects of Immigration

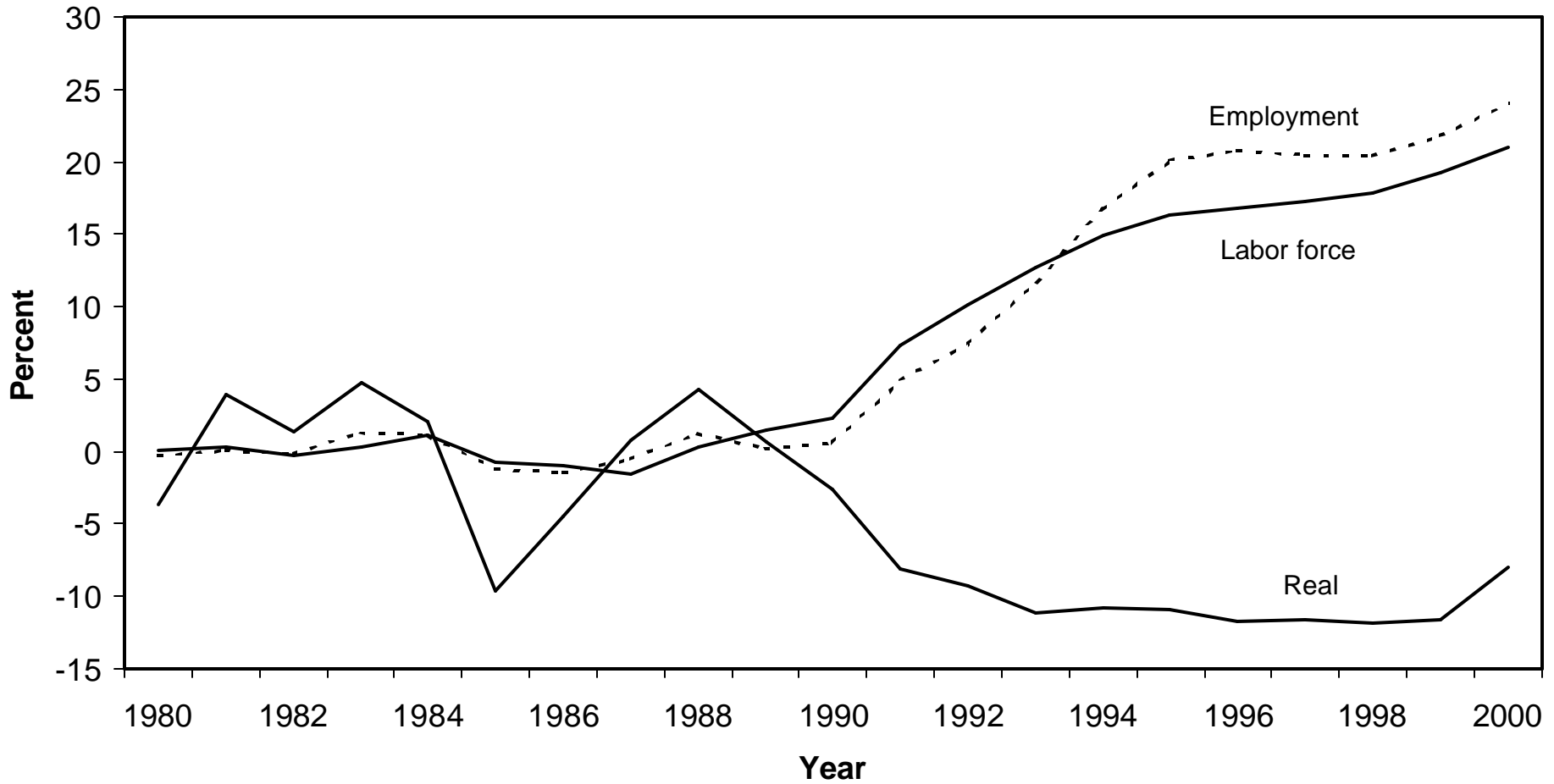


**Figure 2**  
**Immigration to Israel, 1980-2000**  
(per 1000 population)



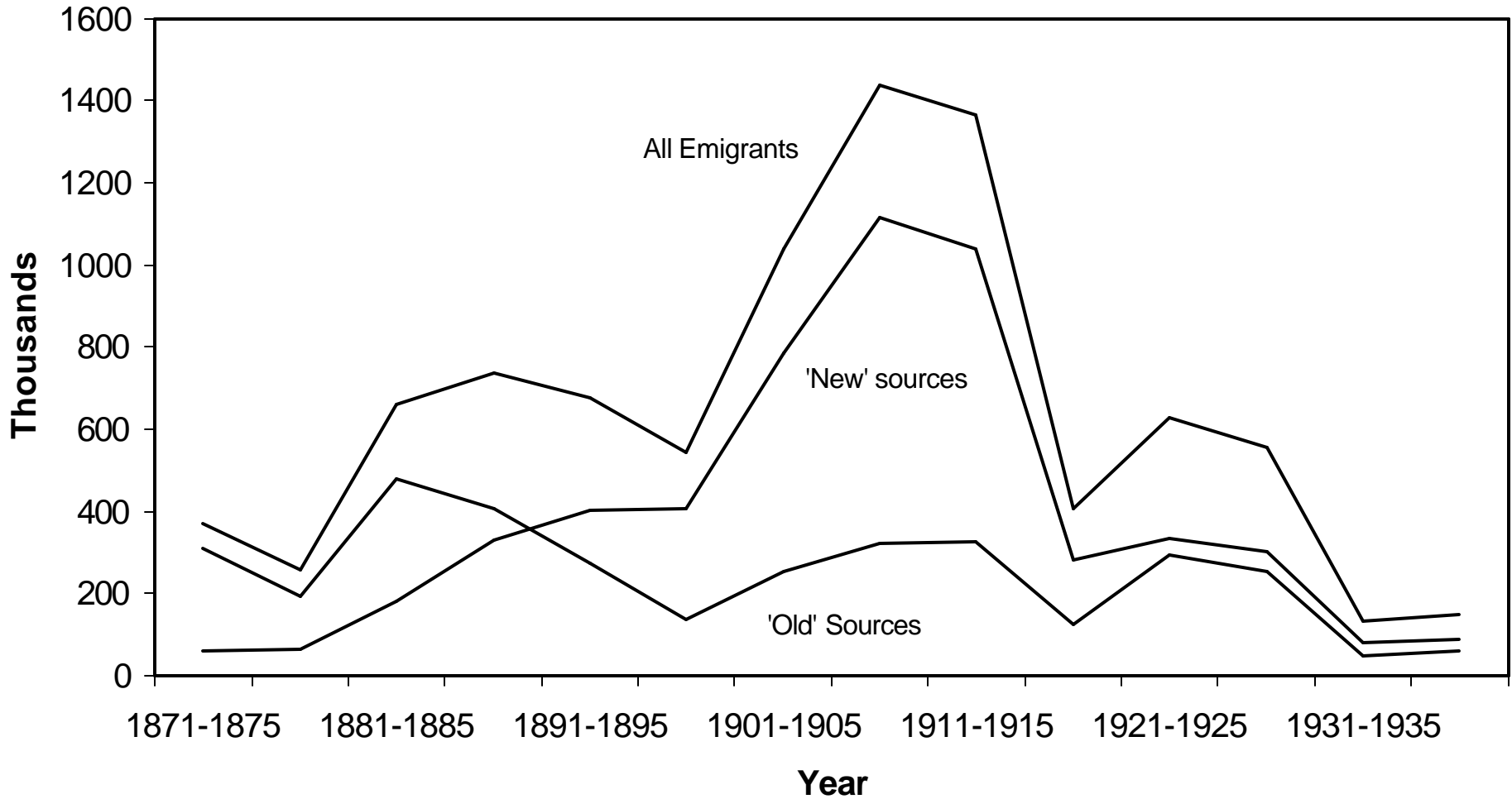
Source: Israel, Central Statistical Bureau online at <http://194.90.153.197/reader/shnatonenew.htm>.

**Figure 3**  
**Labor Supply and the Real Wage in Israel, 1980-2000**  
(deviations from 1980-89 trend)



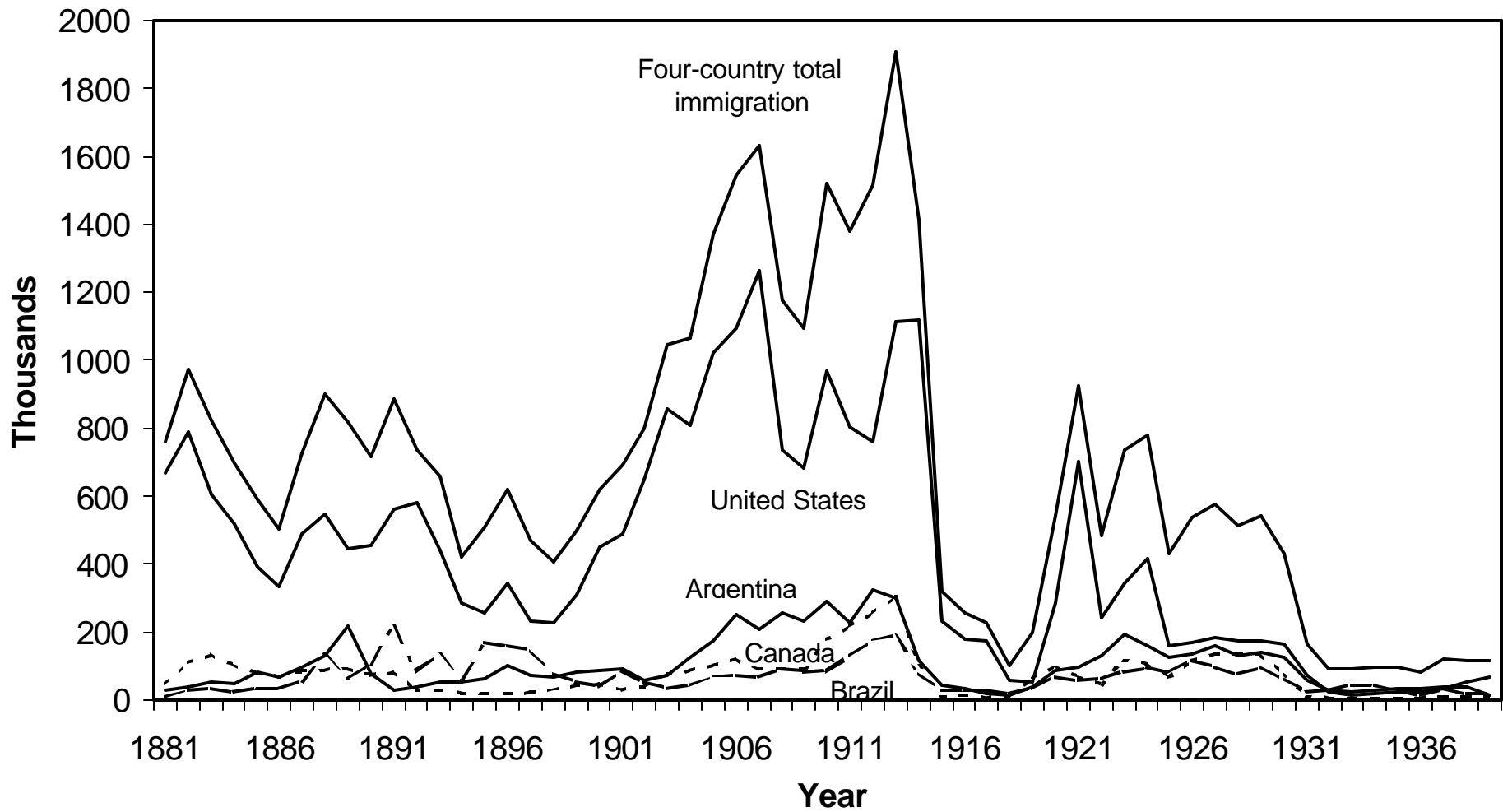
Source: Bank of Israel online at <http://www.bankisrael.gov.il/publeng/dataeng.htm>.

**Figure 4**  
**Emigration from Europe, 1881-1939**  
(five-year averages)



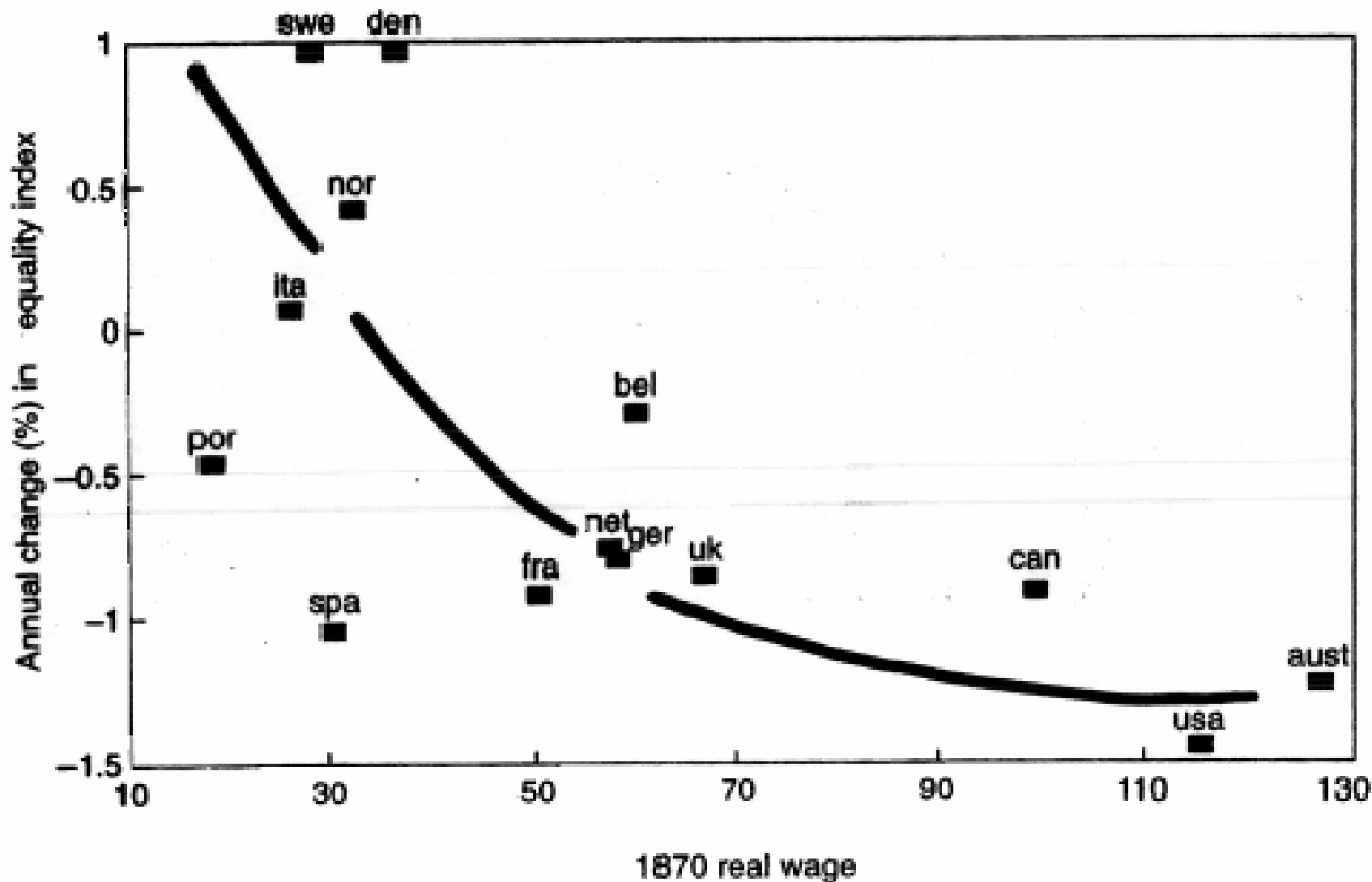
Source: Kirk (1946: 289).

**Figure 5**  
**Immigration to Chief New World Destinations, 1881-1939**



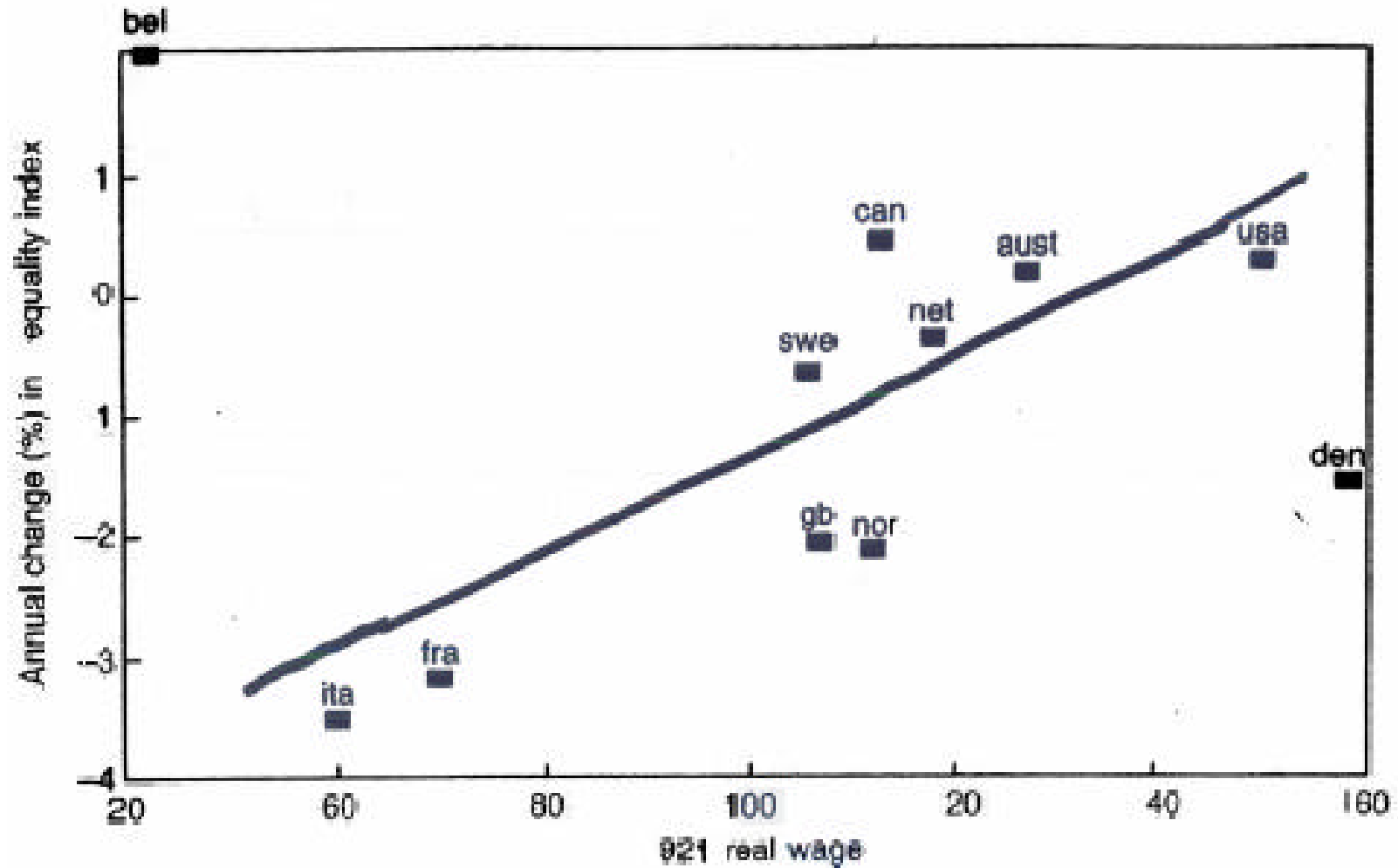
Source: Ferenczi and Willcox (1929: 361, 384-9, 539-40, 550); Kirk (1946: 280).

Figure 6  
Initial Labor Scarcity and  
Distribution Trends in the Greater Atlantic Economy 1870-1913



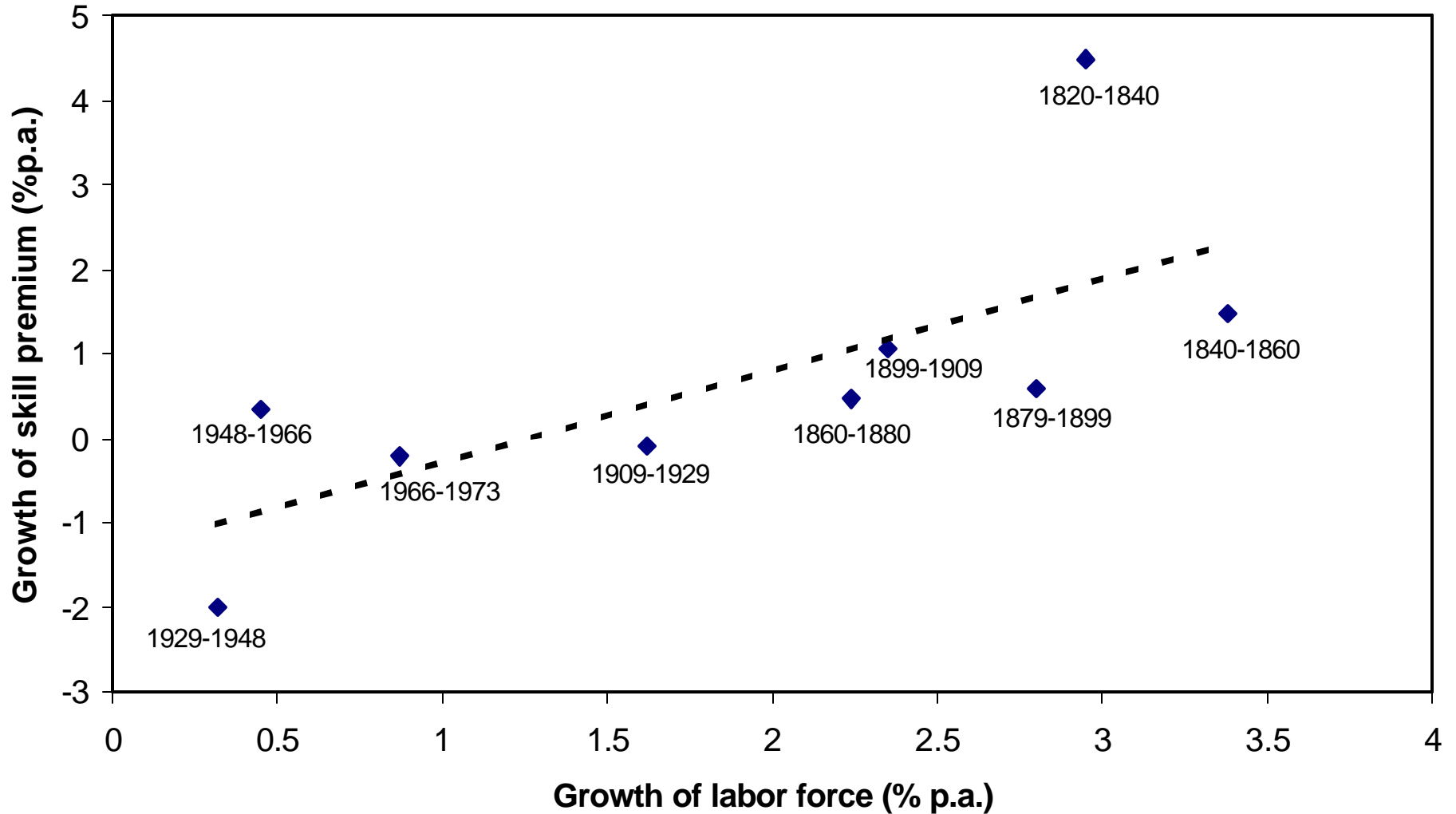
Source: Williamson (1997: Figure 6).

Figure 7  
 Initial Labor Scarcity and  
 Distribution Trends in the Greater Atlantic Economy 1921-1938



Source: Williamson (1997: Figure 7).

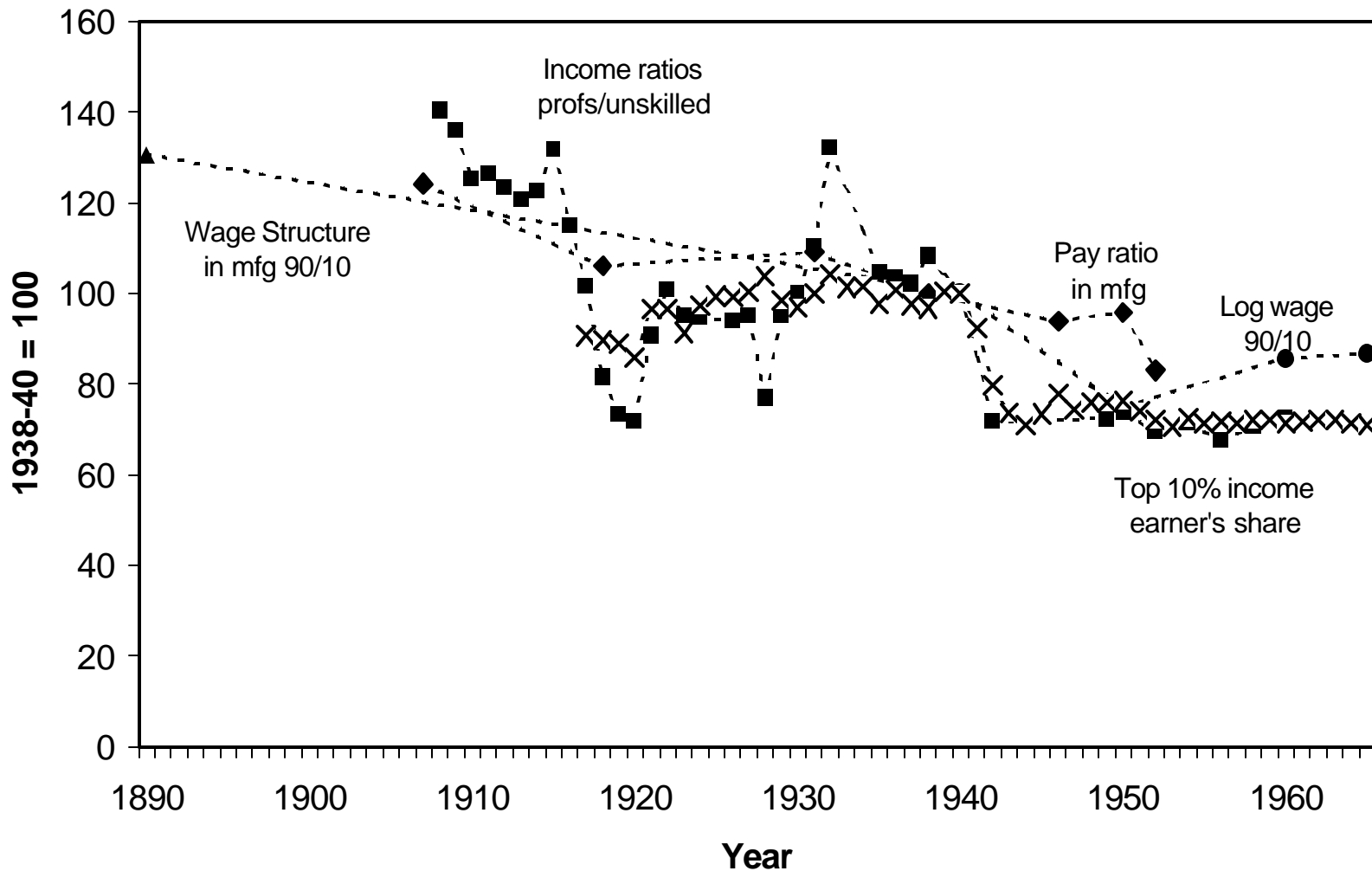
**Figure 8**  
**Labor Supply and the Skill Premium in the US, 1820-1973**



Source: Williamson and Lindert (1980: 205).

# Figure 9

## American Inequality Trends, 1890-1965



*Sources and notes:* wage structure in mfg 90/10 = wage ratios, male production workers, top 10 % relative to bottom 10% (Goldin and Katz forthcoming: Table 2.1); income ratios, profs/unskilled = ratio of earnings of college full professors to low-skilled (Goldin and Katz forthcoming: Table 2.3); log wage 90th-10th = wage dispersion of white men, log weekly wages 90th-10th percentiles (Goldin and Margo 1992: Table 1); pay ratio in mfg = pay ratios, skilled to unskilled in urban manufacturing (Goldin and Margo 1992: Table VII); top 10% share income earners = income share of the top 10% of earners (Piketty and Saez 2003: Table II).