



*"Domestic Workers Waiting for the Bus, Atlanta, Georgia." Joel Sternfeld (1944-), April 1983, Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago*

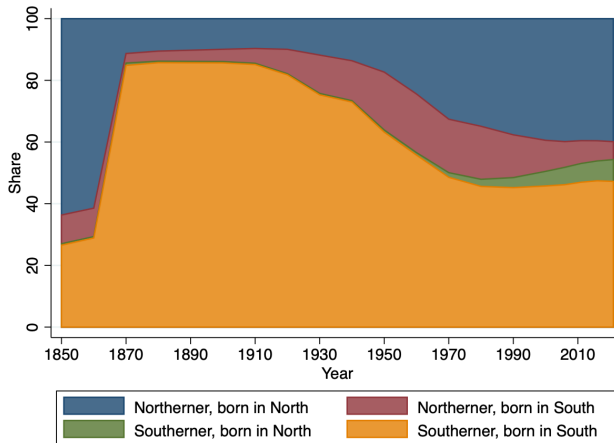
## The Great Migration and Female Labor Force Participation

Adam Jutt (William & Mary)

John Parman (William & Mary and NBER)

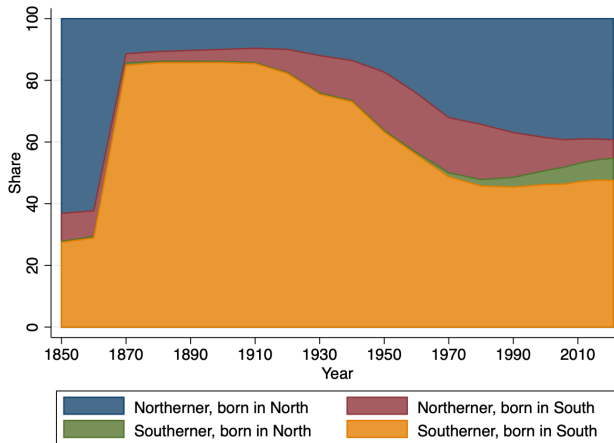
September 8, 2023

# Gender and the Great Migration



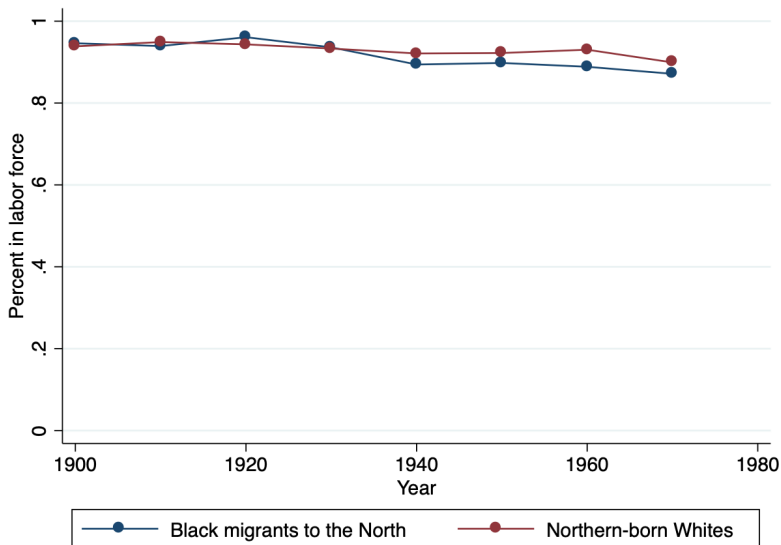
Distribution of the black population in the US, 1850 - 2021

# Gender and the Great Migration



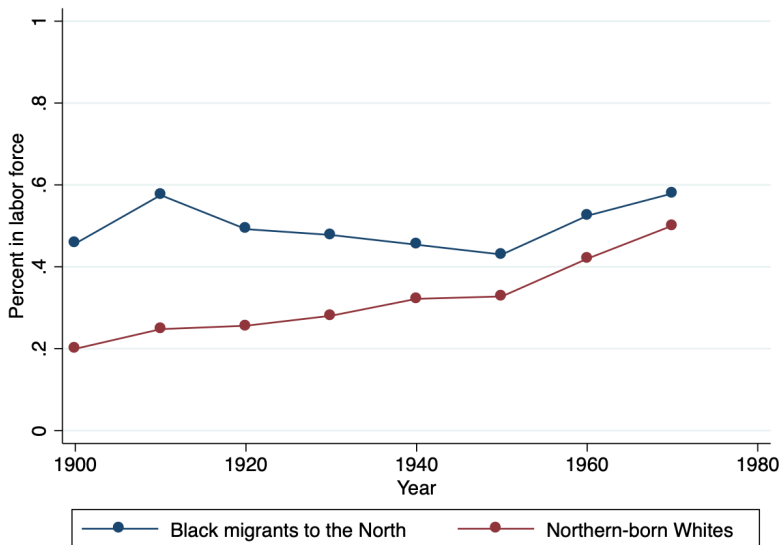
...and of the black female population in the US, 1850 - 2021

# Gender and the Great Migration



Northern labor force participation, 18- to 55-year-old males

# Gender and the Great Migration



Northern labor force participation, 18- to 55-year-old females

# Gender and the Great Migration

- Motivating our work are these basic stylized facts of the Great Migration:
  - Black female migration mirrored black male migration in many ways (scale, geographic patterns, individual characteristics)
  - Black females differed from black males in terms of lower LFP and greater likelihood of working in domestic services
  - Differences in LFP by race were far greater for females than males
- Our basic question is how the Great Migration impacted females' allocation of time between market labor and household production

# The Demand for Domestic Help

is suspicion of fraud. This measure can be put to good use right now, when war contracts are being cancelled, to cushion the shock for both employers and employees.

## The Philadelphia Inquirer

ESTABLISHED 1829

M. L. ANNENBERG, Publisher, 1936-1942

Published Every Day in the Year by  
TRIANGLE PUBLICATIONS, INC.

### THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

CHARLES A. TYLER.....Chairman and General Manager  
JOHN T. CUSTIS.....Editor  
JOHN J. FITZPATRICK.....Managing Editor

WALTER H. ANNENBERG.....Publisher

Daily by Carrier, 18c weekly. Sunday by Carrier, 12c weekly.  
Sunday by Mail, \$7.00 yearly. Daily by Mail, \$7.50, one year;  
\$4.00, 6 months; \$2.15, 3 months; 75c, 1 month.

Entered at Postoffice at Philadelphia, Pa., as second-class matter

NEW YORK OFFICE.....270 Madison Ave.  
WASHINGTON BUREAU.....National Press Bldg.  
CHICAGO BUREAU.....369 N. Michigan Ave.  
DETROIT BUREAU.....8-241 General Motors Bldg.  
ST. LOUIS BUREAU.....Globe Democrat Bldg.  
EUROPEAN BUREAU.....16 Regent St., London

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### THE INQUIRER'S PLATFORM

To print the news accurately and fearlessly, but never to be content with merely printing the news; to strive always to uphold the principles of our American democracy, to war relentlessly against alien "isms", to fight intolerance, to be the friend and defender of those who are persecuted and oppressed; to demand equal justice for employer and employed, to work for the advancement of industry in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania; to expose political hypocrisy and corruption; to be just, to be fair and above all to be unswervingly independent; to fight and never to cease fighting to maintain the sanctity of personal liberty and the inviolability of human rights.

## Domestic Help Shortage

Many housewives, we're sure, would be glad to comply with the War Manpower Commission's request to share their domestic help with women war workers, who lose time from their jobs because they can't get anybody to look after their homes and children. But the chief trouble is that housewives are having a tough time getting domestic help on any basis. Even houseworkers by the day are hard to come by.

If the WMC would devote some of its gigantic brain power to figuring out ways to increase the supply of domestic help there would be more point to its plea that such help be shared with war workers.

### PUTTING IT BRIEFLY

—Speaking of canned music, Petrillo certainly knows how to blow his own horn.

—Future tourists doubtless will use Cherbourg again—but it'll never seem the same to the Germans.

—Admiral Byrd plans more explorations of the icy regions after the war. He could get plenty of volunteers right now.

—Chicago has issued a guide for convention visitors that "even the most ignorant can understand." Evidently intended for uninstructed delegates.

# The Demand for Domestic Help

**15 Help Wanted—Women**

**COMPTOMETER OPERATOR**—Temporary work; immediately. Write Box A-379, Post-Gazette

**COLORED GIRL**—\$10  
Doctor's home; stay; 2 children. SC 1160.

**COLORED MAID** wanted, general housework, \$14.00 week. Call PE. #182.

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**DRUG COUNTER SALESGIRL**  
**Over 21**

Interviews daily except Saturday or Sunday between 10-12 a. m.  
SUN DRUG CO.,  
317 BOUQUET ST. AT FORBES FIELD  
or 2-4 p. m.  
805 MARKET ST.  
Write C-787 Post-Gazette

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**Girl—White \$12**  
Housework, cooking; home nights, 4 rooms. Morewood Apts. Museum 0655.

**GIRL**—Housework, private room-bath; children school-age; stay; \$10. Penhurst 6885.

**GIRL-WOMAN**, white. General housework, assist with children. Stay optional, \$10-\$12. Locust 0950.

**GIRL**—White or light colored, housework, small apartment, stay; child, good salary. Hazel 2773. K-374, Post-Gazette.

**GIRL-WOMAN**, steady, reliable, general housework; stay; good wages. Coraopolis 339. A-785 Post-Gazette.

**GIRL**—General housework; no cooking; good salary; stay; private room. Hazel 8572.

**HOUSEKEEPER**—Complete charge small apartment, 8-month-old baby; private room; no laundry; \$10.00. Hiland 7023 after 6.

**HOUSEKEEPER—WHITE**—\$12  
Experienced, adults; references. Evenings free. Laundress employed. Montrose 4016

**MOTHER'S HELPER**—Colored-white, assist housework; no laundry; no cooking; stay. Hazel 1210.

**HOUSEMOTHER-Governess.** Unit of large private school, near Phila. Room & meals, 5½-day week. Call Personnel, Langhorne, Pa., 3731.

**HOUSEMOTHER-Assistant,** & office relief, in white Protestant institution. Must live in. Call SA 9-0984.

**HOUSEWORK.** General. Light laund. Sheets & shirts go out. No cooking. Dishwasher. Disposal. Dryer & clothes washer. 9 to 5. 5 days. No Sats. or Suns. Gtn. vic. L or S bus. Exp. Refs. \$30 & car fare. GE 8-2047.

**HOUSEWORK,** white, fond of children, 2. Sleep in. 5½-day wk. Bendix, ironer & dishwasher. Some cook. Own rm., b., radio, in lovely home. Must have good refs. \$40. BRyn Mawr 5-3465

**HOUSEWORK,** gen., cooking, sleep in. Bus. mother & child. Must be able to care for child. Refs. essential. \$30. Hilltop 6-8690.

**HOUSEWORK,** expd. & refs. Plain cooking, no laundry. 1 child. Small home. Sleep in. Own room & bath. Good salary. LI 3-8711.

**HOUSEWORK,** colored, part time, 5 days wk., 9 to 3 or 10 to 4. \$25. Germantown. Must be fond of children. Expd. & refs. CH 7-3025.

**HOUSEWORK.** Plain cooking, assist children, no heavy work or laundry, sleep in. Center city. Expd. & refs. \$40. PE 5-6792.

**HOUSEWORK,** Colored. Genl. cleaning. Some cooking, 5 days, 10 till after dinner. Small new mod. Ranch. N.E. Must iron well. Ref. \$20. DE 3-1118.

*Pittsburgh Post Gazette, December 8, 1942 (left); Philadelphia Inquirer, September 19, 1953 (right)*



## The Demand for Domestic Help

*An informal investigation of household employment was made in the spring of 1937...[The] general minimum weekly wage at which workers were placed was \$5, and the average was from \$7 to \$10...The large majority of applicants were Negro women. Inadequate living and working conditions on the job were reported for many households. In a number of homes no bathing facilities were provided for the workers; too often the bed was found to consist of a cot in the living room or furnace room. – Women's Bureau Bulletin, No. 165, 1938*

# The Supply of Domestic Help

## Industries by racial composition of workforce, 1950

<u>Northern females</u>			
Rank	Industry (i)	Relative probability of holding job in industry $\Pr(i B)/\Pr(i W)$	Black share within industry $\Pr(B i)$
1	Private households	7.44	0.375
2	Laundering, cleaning, and dyeing	3.79	0.234
3	Hotels and lodging places	3.19	0.205
4	Leather products, except footwear	1.76	0.124
5	Misc fabricated textile products	1.64	0.117
...			
96	Banking and credit	0.08	0.007
97	Lumber and building material retailing	0.00	0.000
98	Petroleum refining	0.00	0.000
99	Shoe stores	0.00	0.000
100	Drugs, chemicals, and allied products	0.00	0.000

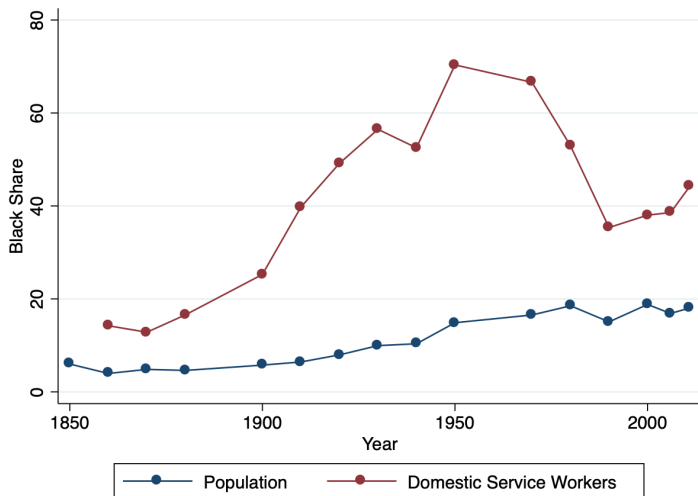
# The Supply of Domestic Help

## Occupations by racial composition of workforce, 1950

### Northern females

Rank	Occupation (i)	Relative probability of holding occupation $\Pr(i B)/\Pr(i W)$	Black share within occupation $\Pr(B i)$
1	Private household workers (nec)	9.62	0.437
2	Porters	9.29	0.429
3	Elevator operators	8.08	0.395
4	Laundry and dry cleaning Operatives	4.97	0.287
5	Service workers, except private household (nec)	4.95	0.286
...			
96	Bank tellers	0.00	0.000
97	Spinners, textile	0.00	0.000
98	Ticket, station, and express agents	0.00	0.000
99	Statisticians and actuaries	0.00	0.000
100	Personnel and labor relations workers	0.00	0.000

# The Supply of Domestic Help

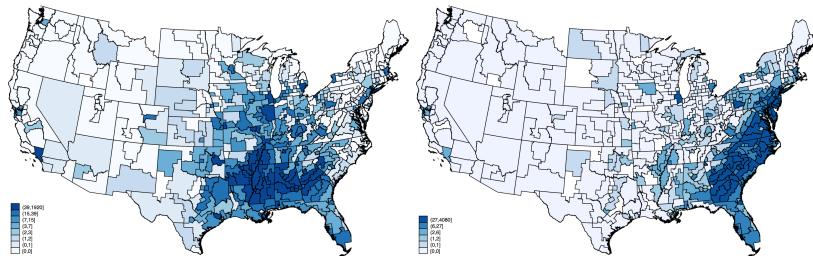


Black share of female population and of female domestic workers,  
Philadelphia, 1850-2020

# Race and Work Decisions

- The Great Migration had a huge impact on the supply and composition of domestic workers
- This leads to several possibilities for impacts on white female work decisions:
  - Increased competition in domestic work drives white females out of the sector (both due changing wages and social status)
  - Paid domestic work offers a substitute for non-market work of females, increasing time spent in market work
  - It could also complement non-market work, shifting how time is spent in the household
  - Effects will likely differ by marital status and educational level
- The plan: see how individual-level white female work decisions vary with the growth of the black female population in Northern cities

# Empirical Approach - Not Reinventing the Wheel...



## Empirical Approach - ...But Tweaking It

- We'll follow the established approach of a shift-share instrument using Southern push factors with a couple of key tweaks
  - Estimate shares and marginal effects of push factors specifically for females
  - Take advantage of Census Linking Project data to push shares further back in time (1920-30 migrants) while still doing things at the county level
  - Split samples by marital status and educational attainment
  - Consider entire MSA's to allow for commuting domestic workers (especially in later years)
- Outcomes are limited to what we can observe in the federal census (LFP, unemployment, occupation, family characteristics,...)

# Preliminary Results

Table 9: Effects of black female population on white female unemployment, dependent variable is unemployment status (1=unemployed, 0=employed)

Regression sample (all samples restricted to white working-age females):			<u>Unmarried</u>		<u>Married</u>	
			Non-HS		Non-HS	
	Unmarried	Married	Grad	HS Grad	Grad	HS Grad
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
OLS estimate:	-0.067** (0.03)	-0.089** (0.04)	-0.003 (0.07)	-0.098** (0.04)	-0.022 (0.05)	-0.104** (0.04)
IV estimates using migrant shares based on:						
1920 to 1930 migrants	0.014 (0.09)	-0.014 (0.13)	0.030 (0.23)	-0.154 (0.12)	-0.045 (0.15)	-0.075 (0.13)
1930 to 1940 migrants	-0.030 (0.07)	-0.035 (0.10)	-0.003 (0.16)	-0.131* (0.08)	-0.042 (0.11)	-0.067 (0.11)
1935 to 1940 migrants	-0.032 (0.07)	-0.053 (0.09)	0.051 (0.14)	-0.133** (0.07)	-0.045 (0.10)	-0.089 (0.09)

Notes: Each cell gives the estimated coefficient and standard error from separate regression. Full regression results are available in the appendix. Unmarried regressions control for age, age squared, presence of children under 5, presence of any children, home ownership, foreign born status and highest grade of schooling. Married regressions include these controls as well as husband's age and occscore. Standard errors are clustered by metropolitan area. All regressions include year and metropolitan area fixed effects.



# Preliminary Results

Table 10: Effects of black female population on white female labor force participation, dependent variable is labor force status (1=in LF, 0=not in LF)

Regression sample (all			<u>Unmarried</u>		<u>Married</u>	
samples restricted to			Non-HS		Non-HS	
white working-age	Unmarried	Married	Grad	HS Grad	Grad	HS Grad
females):	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
OLS estimate:	-0.272*	-0.174*	-0.672***	0.078	-0.222***	-0.115
	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.17)
IV estimates using migrant shares based on:						
1920 to 1930 migrants	-0.177	-0.297**	0.228	0.204	-0.291	-0.143
	(0.31)	(0.13)	(0.48)	(0.40)	(0.24)	(0.26)
1930 to 1940 migrants	-0.276	-0.241*	-0.083	0.168	-0.278	-0.119
	(0.24)	(0.13)	(0.40)	(0.27)	(0.17)	(0.22)
1935 to 1940 migrants	-0.356	-0.171	-0.258	0.089	-0.245*	-0.036
	(0.24)	(0.12)	(0.35)	(0.23)	(0.15)	(0.21)

Notes: Each cell gives the estimated coefficient and standard error from separate regression. Full regression results are available in the appendix. Unmarried regressions control for age, age squared, presence of children under 5, presence of any children, home ownership, foreign born status and highest grade of schooling. Married regressions include these controls as well as husband's age and occscore. Standard errors are clustered by metropolitan area. All regressions include year and metropolitan area fixed effects.

# Preliminary Results

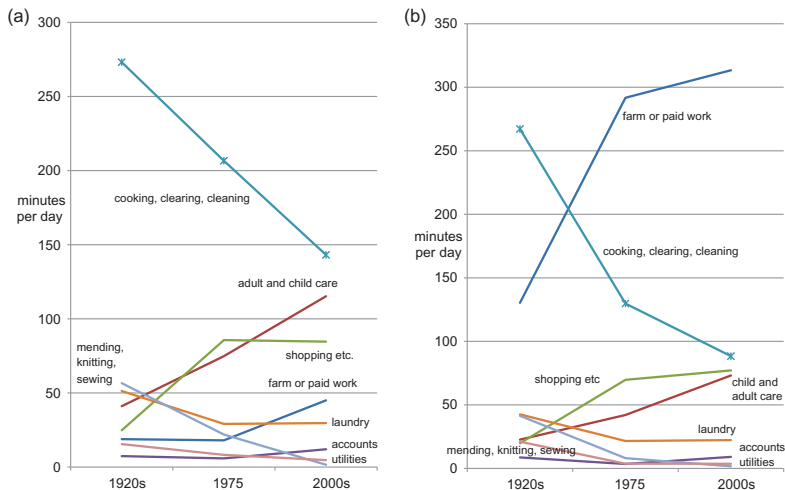
Table 11: Effects of black female population on white female family size, dependent variable is number of children

Regression sample (all samples restricted to white working-age females):			<u>Unmarried</u>		<u>Married</u>	
			Non-HS		Non-HS	
	Unmarried	Married	Grad	HS Grad	Grad	HS Grad
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
OLS estimate:	0.119 (0.26)	1.188*** (0.23)	0.618 (0.61)	-0.307* (0.18)	0.275 (0.26)	0.551*** (0.17)
IV estimates using migrant shares based on:						
1920 to 1930 migrants	0.755 (0.68)	1.501** (0.68)	0.099 (1.01)	0.569 (0.53)	0.440 (0.92)	1.622** (0.65)
1930 to 1940 migrants	0.539 (0.49)	1.462*** (0.54)	0.501 (0.78)	0.246 (0.44)	0.487 (0.75)	1.288*** (0.43)
1935 to 1940 migrants	0.502 (0.38)	1.329*** (0.42)	0.775 (0.59)	0.073 (0.37)	0.350 (0.58)	1.087*** (0.33)

Notes: Each cell gives the estimated coefficient and standard error from separate regression. Full regression results are available in the appendix. Unmarried regressions control for age, age squared, presence of children under 5, presence of any children, home ownership, foreign born status and highest grade of schooling. Married regressions include these controls as well as husband's age and occscore. Standard errors are clustered by metropolitan area. All regressions include year and metropolitan area fixed effects.

# An Echo of Electrification and Labor-Saving Tech...

**Figure 2. US Farm and Small Town Married Women 1920s to 2000s**



**Note:** (a) Women with seven or fewer hours paid or farm work per week. (b) Women with more than seven hours paid or farm work per week.

From Gershuny and Harms, *Social Forces*, 2016

## ...With Very Different Implications

*I see my own children only when they happen to see me on the streets when I am out with the [employer's] children, or when my children come to the “yard” to see me, which isn't often because my white folks don't like to see their servants' children hanging around their premises. – A child-nurse in 1912, More Slavery at the South in Plain Folk: The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans (1982), as quoted in Nakano Glenn (1991) Stanford Law Review, 43(6)*