

Ross Mattheis

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Harvard University

E-mail: ramattheis@gmail.com Web: ramattheis.github.io | Updated: Mar. 5, 2025

Academic and Professional Appointments

Economist, ISO New England	2025-present
Postdoctoral Fellow, Economics, Harvard University	2024-2025

Education

Ph.D. Economics, Harvard University	2018-2024
B.A. Applied Math, University of California, Berkeley (with honors)	2018

Research

WORKING PAPERS

Spurious Mobility in Imperfectly Linked Historical Data (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: When was the United States a land of opportunity? This paper revisits the history of intergenerational mobility in the US accounting for the impact of imperfectly linked census data. Incorrectly linked observations typically attenuate ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates, such as the association of income ranks among fathers and sons. This attenuation exaggerates levels of mobility, as mobility is inversely related to the strength of the relationship between parents' and children's outcomes. I address bias due to imperfectly linked data from the perspective of nonclassical measurement error and propose a class of models for misclassification—error in discrete data—that rely on a repeated, conditionally independent measure of the misclassified variable. A natural source for such a repeated measure can be found by linking observations into an additional sample. In a validation exercise, the proposed estimator reduces bias by 50-90% relative to OLS, with a larger reduction in bias on more severely misclassified samples. After correcting for misclassification error, estimates of the rank-rank slope of occupation status for White men born between 1832 and 1910 are 50-100% higher than OLS estimates, depending on the cohort. Revised estimates suggest a U-shape pattern for intergenerational mobility in US history. Individuals born before the Civil War experienced levels of mobility comparable to the present, while those born between the Civil War and WWI—who entered the workforce during the highest levels of inequality in the US before the present—experienced lower levels of mobility than in any region in the US today.

There's No Such Thing As Free Land: The Homestead Act and Economic Development with Itzhak Raz

WORK IN PROGRESS

Our Crowd? Intra-ethnic Frictions in the Economic Integration of Immigrants with Sara Benetti and Elijah Locke

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Harvard University, Research Assistant for Claudia Goldin	2019
Harvard University, Research Assistant for Melissa Dell	2019

Honors, Grants, and Fellowships

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University	2023-24
Thomas Cochran Fellowship in Business and Economic History, Harvard University	2021-2022
Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University	2020-23
Research Grant, LEAP Program, Harvard University, (with Itzchak Raz)	2019

Teaching

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Sophomore Tutorial Instructor, "Natural Experiments in History"	2021-23
Teaching Fellow, Intro to Econometrics	2020

Conferences and Seminars

2024-2025: Stanford University, *planned*; LEAP Seminar, Stellenbosch University, online.

2023-2024: NBER Summer Institute Development of the American Economy, virtual session.

2022-2023: Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture (ASREC), Harvard University.

2021-2022: LBS Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Conference (TADC); Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics (SIOE).

Professional Service

REFEREEING

Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Urban Economics, Labour Economics.

OTHER SERVICE

Economic History Graduate Workshop Organizer, Harvard University, 2021-2023

Center for History and Economics Undergraduate Research Program Co-organizer, Harvard University, 2022-2024

Resident Co-Pizzaiolo at Harvard Economics (with Aakaash Rao), 2020-2024

References

Claudia Goldin
cgoldin@harvard.edu

Lawrence Katz
lkatz@harvard.edu

Edward Glaeser
eglaser@harvard.edu

Isaiah Andrews
iandrews@mit.edu