Between Arab and White: Syrians and the U.S. Naturalization Law *

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Abstract

This paper examines how legal inclusion shapes immigrant assimilation. I study the 1915 Dow v. United States ruling, which classified Arabs as white and thus eligible for naturalization. Using U.S. Census data, I show that Arab children born after 1915 received significantly less foreign-sounding names, with within-family estimates indicating effects comparable to decades of additional parental U.S. exposure. Difference-in-differences analyses relative to Poles and other immigrant groups corroborate these findings. I also provide evidence that, among first-generation immigrants, intermarriage with natives increased following the ruling, while residential integration lagged behind. Importantly, these cultural shifts translated into economic payoffs: post-Dow cohorts with less-foreign names earned about 37 percent higher hourly wages and were significantly less concentrated in immigrant-intensive manufacturing jobs. Finally, I assemble a new corpus of Arab-American newspapers (1890–1940) to study identity debates, offering the first systematic text-based evidence of how migrants internalized legal reclassification. Taken together, these findings show that access to naturalization encouraged and rewarded assimilation—an insight of enduring relevance as contemporary pathways to citizenship narrow worldwide.

JEL Codes: J15, K37, N31, N32,

Keywords: Naturalization, Arab Immigrants, Assimilation, Cultural Identity

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1 Introduction

Across countries, citizenship policy is at the center of debates about how access to naturalization shapes immigrants' political, economic, and social integration into host societies (Bloemraad, 2006; Hainmueller et al., 2017). Whether naturalization opportunities should be expanded or restricted remains contested among policymakers, academics, and civil society actors (Dancygier, 2010; Goodman, 2010; Howard, 2005), a debate made all the more politicized by widespread misperceptions about the size and characteristics of immigrant populations (Alesina et al., 2023). At the core of this debate lie key trade-offs for immigrant assimilation: Does citizenship encourage integration by lowering social and legal barriers? Or does it enable cultural distinctiveness by securing rights that reduce the pressure to conform? Empirically disentangling these perspectives is difficult because naturalization is typically endogenous to prior assimilation, leaving open the fundamental question of whether legal inclusion itself can reshape immigrant behavior.

This paper asks: How does legal inclusion affect immigrants' assimilation efforts? I address this question through the 1915 Dow v. United States ruling, in which the Fourth Circuit Court classified Arabs as "white," thereby confirming their eligibility for naturalization under the Naturalization Act of 1870, which restricted citizenship to "white persons" and persons of African descent (*Dow v. United States*, 1915; Gualtieri, 2009; *Naturalization Act*, 1870). The decision did not grant citizenship directly but resolved uncertainty over Arabs' racial classification—and thus their legal status—at a time when many other immigrant groups remained ineligible (Gualtieri, 2009; Lopez, 2006). To interpret how such a legal shock might influence behavior, I develop a simple conceptual framework in which immigrant households weigh the trade-off between cultural distinctiveness and assimilation. The framework allows for competing mechanisms. On one hand, by lowering institutional and social barriers, legal inclusion could raise the returns to conformity and reduce the costs of assimilation. On the other, it could encourage the preservation of cultural identity by providing the security of recognized rights. This structure yields a set of clear empirical predictions that guide the analysis.

To measure cultural assimilation empirically, I begin with child naming—a widely used indicator of cultural distinctiveness and integration (Lieberson, 2000; Cook et al., 2014; Fouka, 2019; Abramitzky et al., 2020). I construct a Foreign Name Index (FNI) from the 1920 U.S. Census, anchored in pre-1915 naming patterns to avoid endogeneity, and develop a novel Arabic Name Americanization Index using the bilingual Syrian Business Directory (1908–1909), which system-

atically links Arabic and English name variants. The index incorporates distinctive features of Arabic phonology, allowing me to quantify the extent to which Arabic names were adapted into Americanized forms. Within-family comparisons reveal sharp naming shifts after 1915. Among male siblings, those born after the Dow ruling received names that were 7–8 FNI points less Arab than their older brothers—an effect comparable to nearly two decades of additional maternal U.S. exposure (Abramitzky et al., 2020). Among female siblings, the shift was even larger: daughters' names became about 10 points (15.6%) less foreign, consistent with sociological evidence that naming is more flexible for girls (Rossi, 1965; Lieberson, 2000; Sue and Telles, 2007). The Arabic Name Americanization Index further reveals heterogeneity: the least-assimilated families were those most likely to Americanize Arabic phonology directly, while more assimilated households shifted toward non-Arab foreign names.

Difference-in-differences estimates using birth cohorts corroborate these results and strengthen causal identification. Specifically, I compare U.S.-born children of Arab fathers to U.S.-born children of other immigrant fathers across birth cohorts before and after 1915. Using Poles as the primary control group—an unambiguously white population whose children provide a clear counterfactual—reveals a 7-point larger decline in foreignness for Arab children. I also estimate specifications using alternative comparison groups that were widely regarded as white, offering a sharper contrast in legal and social standing. Across all designs, results remain consistent. Across all designs, results remain consistent. Relative to Abramitzky et al. (2020)'s finding that ten years of maternal U.S. residence reduced FNI by about four points, the Dow ruling induced a 7–10 point decline—equivalent to accelerating assimilation by roughly 17–25 years.

I next examine heterogeneity in naming responses to shed light on mechanisms. Families with higher socioeconomic status—those with literate or higher-occupational-status fathers, longer U.S. residence, or stronger labor force attachment—exhibited the largest naming shifts, suggesting that households already on an assimilation trajectory were most responsive to the ruling (Fouka, 2019). Changes were also more pronounced in areas with smaller Arab enclaves, consistent with weaker co-ethnic networks heightening social pressure to conform. Finally, exploiting spatial variation in legal certainty, I find persistent and statistically significant effects in states within the Fourth Circuit, where eligibility for citizenship was unambiguous and the ruling binding. That assimilation intensified even under full legal certainty suggests that the ruling's impact extended beyond clarifying status: incentives for social acceptance and the internalization of whiteness were central drivers of change.

I also provide suggestive evidence that assimilation through naming translated into tangible economic rewards. A large body of research shows that familiar or Americanized names are associated with higher callbacks, better educational outcomes, and improved labor-market prospects, operating through both statistical screening—where names signal English proficiency, cultural fit, or client acceptance—and taste-based preferences (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Figlio, 2005; Biavaschi et al., 2017; Laham et al., 2012). Building on this evidence, I link second-generation Arab men observed in the 1920 Census to their labor market outcomes in 1940 and implement a difference-in-differences design that interacts birth cohort (pre- vs. post-Dow) with whether a child received a less foreign-sounding name in the pre-period (defined as an FNI of 25 or below). The results show that the name premium—the wage and occupational return to having a less foreign-sounding rather than Arabic-sounding name—increased sharply after 1915. Post-Dow cohorts with less-foreign names earned roughly 36 percent more, were significantly more likely to be self-employed, and were less concentrated in manufacturing jobs traditionally associated with immigrant labor. Taken together, these findings suggest that the Dow ruling not only reshaped naming practices but also altered the economic value of assimilation strategies, rewarding families who had already invested in Americanizing their children's identities.

To examine outcomes that require coordination with natives, I study intermarriage and residential integration among first-generation immigrants (Abramitzky et al., 2014; Fouka et al., 2022; Gordon, 1964; Tabellini, 2020). Because the census does not record marriage year prior to 1930, I exploit the 1930 Census variable on age at first marriage to recover marriage timing and construct a panel of marriage cohorts. This framework enables a difference-in-differences design with extended pre- and post-periods, showing that Arab–native intermarriage increased by two to four percentage points after 1915, with event studies revealing a sharp break at the ruling. By contrast, using stacked repeated decennial census cross-sections from 1900 to 1930, I find that Arab household heads became 0.7 percentage points less likely than Poles to have a native-born neighbor in the enumeration order, suggesting that residential integration lagged behind marital assimilation

Finally, I assemble a novel corpus of Arab-American newspapers created by the diaspora and published between 1890 and 1940: 16 titles, nearly 7,000 issues, and about 55,000 pages, collected through extensive scraping and archival work.[1] Through the newspapers, I find that the case was salient within the community. This dataset provides the first systematic access to the diaspora's own debates over identity, belonging, and boundaries with both natives and other immigrant

[1]Sources include the Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies, the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the National Archives in New York and Boston.

groups. In ongoing work, I apply natural language processing and text-as-data methods to trace how editors framed Arab identity before and after Dow, and how these frames shifted in response to the new legal classification of Arabs as white. Taken together with the census evidence, the newspapers will shed light not only on the administrative implications of Dow, but also on how the Arab community itself understood and internalized the new racial status.

Second, I provide new causal evidence on a central policy debate: does expanding access to naturalization accelerate immigrant assimilation? Prior work shows that assimilation responds to discrimination (Fouka, 2019), inter-group contact (Bazzi et al., 2019; Bursztyn et al., 2024; Schneider-Strawczynski, 2020), the arrival of other groups (Fouka et al., 2022), enclave size (Edin et al., 2003), and government policies (Bandiera et al., 2019; Fouka, 2020). Yet much less is known about the role of legal institutions—especially courts—in redrawing racial boundaries and altering who could naturalize. By exploiting a rare historical episode of judicially granted inclusion, I show that expanding eligibility for citizenship catalyzed assimilation, shifting both cultural practices and inter-group relations. In doing so, I add an institutional dimension to the literature on identity formation and cultural transmission (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bisin and Verdier, 2001).

This paper contributes to the literature in three main ways. First, it advances our understanding of the factors shaping immigrant assimilation and identity formation. A growing empirical literature examines how various forces influence immigrants' integration—such as inter-group contact, discrimination, and government policies (Edin et al., 2003; **?**; Bursztyn et al., 2024; Gagliarducci and Tabellini, 2025). Yet much less is known about how legal inclusion—and in particular, court decisions that redraw racial boundaries—affects these processes. In this respect, the paper relates to recent work on identity-based policies that alter incentives for assimilation and belonging (Saleh, 2018; Saleh and Tirole, 2021; Ağır and Artunç, 2019). More broadly, it speaks to the theoretical literature on identity formation and group categorization, which emphasizes how individuals adjust behaviors and preferences in response to perceived group boundaries and changes in the social or economic environment. (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bisin and Verdier, 2001). By exploiting a rare episode of judicially granted inclusion—the Dow v. United States ruling—I show how the expansion of citizenship eligibility reshaped assimilation behaviors.

Second, I extend the literature on the Age of Mass Migration beyond the European experience to an understudied yet significant group. Economic historians have largely focused on Italians, Poles, Scandinavians, and other European migrants (Abramitzky et al., 2012; Bandiera

et al., 2013; Abramitzky et al., 2014; Abramitzky and Boustan, 2017; Fouka, 2019; Abramitzky et al., 2020; Tabellini, 2020), leaving the Middle Eastern experience mostly absent despite its historical importance (Saleh, 2017). I focus on Arab migrants from Greater Syria—a predominantly Christian population whose contested racial classification offers new insights into how law and identity shaped assimilation (Lopez, 2006). In doing so, the paper also brings attention to a non-Muslim group from the Middle East, a population rarely studied in the migration and economic history literature, thereby expanding the scope of analysis beyond both Europe and the dominant Muslim-focused narratives on the region (Saleh, 2022).

Third, I introduce new data and measures for studying assimilation among non-European groups. I develop a novel Arabic Name Americanization Index using the bilingual Syrian Business Directory (1908–09), which systematically links Arabic and English name variants and incorporates distinctive features of Arabic phonology. In addition, I assemble a new corpus of Arab-American newspapers published between 1890 and 1940. While historians have described Arab-American debates over identity anecdotally (Jacobs, 2015; Gualtieri, 2009), this is the first systematic effort to measure and trace these discussions over time. Taken together, these sources provide new tools for analyzing cultural assimilation and identity formation within an understudied Middle Eastern migrant group.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides historical background. Section 3 presents the conceptual framework. Section 4 describes the data, and Section 5 outlines the empirical framework. Section 6 presents the main results and examines mechanisms and robustness. Section 7 concludes.

2 Historical Background

2.1 Age of Mass Migration and Arab Migration

Between 1850 and 1913, the United States absorbed nearly 30 million European immigrants, one of the largest migration waves in history (Hatton and Williamson, 1998; Abramitzky et al., 2012). Falling transport costs due to steam technology, combined with economic opportunities and political upheaval in Europe, spurred this movement (Keeling, 1999). Early arrivals were primarily from Northern and Western Europe, but after 1890 migration shifted toward Southern and East-

ern Europe (Gagliarducci and Tabellini, 2022). This period was characterized by limited federal restrictions on European migration, and scholars have examined it extensively to study the labor-market and cultural effects of large-scale immigration (Abramitzky et al., 2014; Abramitzky and Boustan, 2017). By contrast, little attention has been paid to contemporaneous migrants from the Middle East. Using the decennial U.S. censuses, I estimate that by 1930 roughly 400,000 individuals from Greater Syria (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine) resided in the United States.[2]

Syrian migrants were overwhelmingly Christian—historical accounts estimate as high as 95 percent—primarily Maronite, Melkite, and Orthodox (Kayal and Kayal, 1975; Jacobs, 2015). They migrated for three main reasons: to avoid conscription into the Ottoman army, to escape sectarian tensions, and economic hardship back home. Economic opportunities in the United States provided an additional pull factor (Gualtieri, 2009; Jacobs, 2015). Syrians settled across major U.S. cities, with especially visible enclaves in New York and Boston ("Little Syria"), where they established businesses, churches, and community organizations. Community newspapers, numbering around 20 by the 1920s, became important forums for debate over identity, race, and belonging (Gualtieri, 2009; Jacobs, 2015).

2.2 Naturalization Act of 1870 and *Dow v US*

U.S. naturalization law linked citizenship directly to racial classification. The 1790 Naturalization Act restricted naturalization to "free white persons," and although the 1870 amendment extended eligibility to persons of African nativity or descent, it continued to exclude other racial groups until 1952 when racial prerequisites were dropped (*Naturalization Act*, 1870)[3]. As a result, courts repeatedly confronted the question of which immigrants qualified as "white." These "racial prerequisite" cases involved many groups. For example, the Supreme Court held that Japanese were not white and thus ineligible for naturalization (*Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178, 1922), and reached the same conclusion for Indians, despite anthropological classifications of them as Caucasian (*United States v. Thind*, 261 U.S. 204, 1923). By contrast, Armenians were deemed white and therefore eligible (*In re Halladjian*, 174 F. 834, 1909).[4]

[2]Throughout the paper, I use the terms "Syrian" and "Arab" interchangeably to refer to immigrants from Greater Syria (modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine). Virtually no other Arab or North African groups were present in the U.S. during this period: the 1900 census records only a handful of individuals from North Africa or the Arabian Peninsula.

[3]Figure A.1 shows the timeline of naturalization and immigration laws in the US.

[4]For a detailed overview of racial prerequisite cases, see Lopez (2006).

Collectively, these cases demonstrate that race was not a natural or fixed category but a social product shaped through law (Lopez, 2006). By deciding who could naturalize, judges actively defined the boundaries of whiteness and reinforced the broader racial hierarchy that structured American society. Naturalization conferred tangible political and civic rights, including voting, greater legal security in property and business ownership, and international mobility through access to a U.S. passport (Gualtieri, 2009).

For the Arabs, specifically those from Greater Syria, the process of their naturalization hinged on whether or not they are white (Gualtieri, 2009). *Dow v. United States* is a US Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, case where George Dow, a Syrian immigrant appealed two lower court decisions that denied his application for naturalization as a US citizen (*Dow v. United States*, 1915). The courts were divided on whether Syrians could be considered "white" under the law or not. Dow argued that Syrians, as part of the historical Caucasian race, should be eligible for naturalization. This case finally led to the naturalization of Dow based on the premise that residents originating from Syria were considered racially "white" and therefore eligible to become naturalized US citizens.

> "*the generally received opinion...that inhabitants of a portion of Asia, including Syria,[are] to be classed as white persons.*"
>
> — Circuit Judge Charles Albert Woods (September 15, 1915)

The decision did not automatically confer citizenship but resolved the debate over Syrians' racial status. It extended eligibility for naturalization to the vast majority of Arab immigrants, who were overwhelmingly Christian (Kayal and Kayal, 1975; Gualtieri, 2009; Jacobs, 2015). However, the ruling did not apply to all Arabs: North Africans and non-Levantine Arabs remained excluded until later cases.[5]

Although decided by the Fourth Circuit (covering Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina), the Dow precedent was soon accepted nationally and cited widely (Lopez, 2006; Gualtieri, 2009). This created geographic variation in the timing of legal certainty, which I exploit in the analysis below. The Dow decision thus provides a unique setting to study the role of legal inclusion in shaping assimilation. It marked a sharp institutional shift: a judicial recognition of Syrians as "white" and therefore as potential citizens. This recognition had the

[5]For example, in *In re Ahmed Hassan* (1942), a Yemeni immigrant was deemed ineligible on the grounds that "the Arabian peninsula was far from Europe and part of the Mohammedan world" (*In re Ahmed Hassan*, 1942). Only in *Ex Parte Mohriez* (1944) did the federal government recognize all Arabs and North Africans as white and therefore eligible to naturalize (*Ex parte Mohriez*, 1944).

potential to alter both external opportunities for Arabs (e.g., access to rights and reduced barriers to integration) and internal identity formation within the community.

3 Conceptual Framework

This section develops a conceptual framework to rationalize how the 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling altered Arab immigrants' incentives to assimilate. The ruling clarified their eligibility for naturalization and, in doing so, reshaped the trade-off between cultural distinctiveness and assimilation. The framework integrates insights from models of cultural transmission and identity economics and generates testable predictions for our assimilation outcomes.

Legal inclusion and the assimilation trade-off Before 1915, Arabs occupied an ambiguous racial position. Their eligibility for naturalization depended on whether they were legally "white," a status that was inconsistently interpreted across courts. The *Dow* ruling reduced this ambiguity by clarifying that Arabs were indeed white and therefore eligible for citizenship. This clarification increased the perceived probability of legal inclusion, denoted p, from p_{pre} to $p_{\text{post}} > p_{\text{pre}}$. In doing so, it altered the trade-off faced by immigrant families between the expected benefits of adopting majority traits—both legal and social—and the cultural and institutional costs of doing so. The ruling effectively raised the expected payoffs to assimilation through greater legal certainty and social acceptance while lowering both identity and bureaucratic frictions. Whether a household chose to assimilate depended on its position relative to a critical threshold at which expected benefits outweighed costs. Families below this threshold before 1915 remained culturally distinctive, while those pushed above it after 1915 began investing in assimilation. Assimilation effort reflects the balance between four components:

Legal benefits. Citizenship offered a bundle of rights previously uncertain for Arabs—voting, land ownership in certain states, access to licensed professions, and travel rights (Foley, 1965; Keyssar, 2000; Lopez, 2006; Motomura, 2006; Ngai, 2004). Legal benefits increase with assimilation effort but eventually saturate once the eligibility threshold is reached.

Social benefits. Assimilation also yielded social payoffs through greater acceptance by the native majority, denoted $S(a, \Theta)$. These benefits depended on local context Θ: they were higher in

areas with smaller Arab enclaves or lower prejudice. Assimilation also signaled belonging and helped distance Arabs from more stigmatized groups (Fouka and Tabellini, 2022).

Identity costs. Immigrant families derive utility from preserving and transmitting their inherited cultural traits to their children (Bisin and Verdier, 2001). Departures from these traits entail psychological and social costs that rise with the strength of cultural attachment, denoted by κ. On the other hand, the *Dow* ruling, by reclassifying Arabs as "white," may have altered how these families perceived their own identity reference point. Assimilation—previously associated with abandoning an inherited minority identity—now became consistent with membership in a legally recognized in-group. This internalization of a new identity reduced the perceived loss from adopting majority traits, effectively lowering the marginal identity cost of assimilation ($\kappa_{\text{post}} < \kappa_{\text{pre}}$) (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bisin et al., 2016; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Institutional costs. Before 1915, legal ambiguity created the risk that assimilation efforts (e.g., name Americanization, intermarriage) might not yield legal rewards. This uncertainty raised effective costs $C_{inst}(a;\iota)$, scaled by bureaucratic friction ι. The *Dow* ruling reduced these frictions by clarifying eligibility.

Together, these factors define the household's expected utility from assimilation. The ruling acted by increasing expected benefits (p, B, S) and lowering costs (κ, ι), thereby moving many families closer to—or across—the assimilation threshold.

3.1 A simple static model

A representative household chooses assimilation effort $a \geq 0$ to maximize

$$U(a \mid p, \Theta, \kappa, \iota) = p\, B(a) + S(a, \Theta) - \big[C_{id}(a;\kappa) + C_{inst}(a;\iota)\big].$$

Assumptions:

- $B'(a) > 0, B''(a) \leq 0$; $B(a)$ saturates once legal eligibility is met at $a = \bar{a}$.
- $S_a(a, \Theta) > 0, S_{aa}(a, \Theta) \leq 0$; social returns are stronger in smaller enclaves or more prejudiced areas.

- $C_{id,a} > 0, C_{id,aa} \geq 0$, with steeper slopes for higher cultural attachment ($\partial C_{id,a}/\partial \kappa > 0$).
- $C_{inst,a} > 0, C_{inst,aa} \geq 0$, with steeper slopes for higher bureaucratic frictions ($\partial C_{inst,a}/\partial \iota > 0$).

The *Dow* ruling changes parameters as follows:

$$p_{\text{post}} > p_{\text{pre}}, \qquad \iota_{\text{post}} < \iota_{\text{pre}}, \qquad \kappa_{\text{post}} \leq \kappa_{\text{pre}}.$$

3.1.1 Threshold condition

A household assimilates only if the expected utility gain from assimilation is non-negative:

$$\Delta U(p, \Theta, \kappa, \iota) = U(a^* \mid p, \Theta, \kappa, \iota) - U(0 \mid p, \Theta, \kappa, \iota) \geq 0.$$

This defines a *threshold level of legal certainty*:

$$p^*(\Theta, \kappa, \iota) = \frac{C_{id}(a^*; \kappa) + C_{inst}(a^*; \iota) - S(a^*, \Theta)}{B(a^*)}.$$

Households with $p < p^*$ remain culturally distinctive, while those with $p \geq p^*$ invest in assimilation. The *Dow* ruling increased p and lowered κ and ι; as a result, many families previously below the threshold crossed it after 1915, producing discrete increases in assimilation behavior.

3.1.2 Comparative statics

$$\frac{\partial a^*}{\partial p} > 0, \qquad \frac{\partial a^*}{\partial \kappa} < 0, \qquad \frac{\partial a^*}{\partial \iota} < 0.$$

Assimilation rises with legal certainty and falls with identity attachment and institutional friction. Heterogeneity in κ, ι, and local context Θ determines which families respond most strongly to the legal shock.

3.1.3 Predictions

The threshold model implies that immigrant households differ in their position relative to a critical level of legal certainty, $p^*(\Theta, \kappa, \iota)$, at which the expected benefits of assimilation exceed its identity and institutional costs. The 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling raised the perceived probability of legal inclusion ($p_{\text{post}} > p_{\text{pre}}$) and lowered both identity and bureaucratic frictions ($\kappa_{\text{post}} \downarrow,\ \iota_{\text{post}} \downarrow$). These shifts generate two distinct post-ruling regimes with corresponding empirical implications.

Threshold-Crossing (Activation) Regime. Households that were below the assimilation threshold prior to 1915 begin to assimilate once the ruling increases expected benefits and lowers costs. The rise in legal certainty and the reduction in perceived identity loss push such families across the critical threshold p^*, producing a discrete increase in optimal assimilation effort a^*. In this regime, assimilation outcomes should exhibit discontinuous breaks at the time of the ruling. Specifically, the Foreign Name Index (FNI) for Arab children should fall sharply for cohorts born after 1915, reflecting more Americanized naming choices. Intermarriage rates with native-white spouses should increase for cohorts marrying in the 1920s relative to earlier cohorts, while residential patterns should gradually shift toward greater integration with native-born neighbors These effects are predicted to be strongest in locations or subgroups that faced greater legal ambiguity and institutional frictions before 1915, where the change in p and ι was largest, and in communities with smaller Arab enclaves or higher baseline prejudice, where the social return to assimilation $S_a(\cdot)$ is steeper. By contrast, responses should be muted among families with stronger attachment to inherited cultural identity (high κ).

Saturation (Continuation) Regime. Households that were already above the assimilation threshold prior to 1915 experience limited change because legal benefits had largely saturated. When assimilation effort already met or exceeded the level required for citizenship eligibility ($a^* \geq \bar{a}$), additional legal certainty yields no further marginal legal payoff ($B'(a) = 0$). Assimilation trajectories should therefore continue smoothly, with little or no discrete break at 1915. In the naming dimension, this implies continuity of pre-existing trends in FNI, or at most a mild attenuation once legal incentives plateau. Intermarriage and residential integration should likewise evolve gradually, consistent with long-run assimilation trajectories. In these contexts, any post-1915 assimilation is driven primarily by social and identity channels rather than new legal incentives.

Cross-State Diffusion and Mechanism Tests. Because the *Dow* ruling was immediately binding in the Fourth Circuit (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) and diffused gradually elsewhere, the model predicts systematic spatial heterogeneity in assimilation responses. In binding states, where post-1915 legal certainty was effectively complete ($p_{\text{post}} \approx 1$), any further assimilation must originate from non-legal mechanisms such as identity internalization (a reduction in κ) or higher social returns to assimilation (S_a). In contrast, in non-binding states where diffusion was slower ($p_{\text{post}} < 1$), both legal and social channels operate simultaneously, implying larger or earlier changes where legal ambiguity persisted longest. Comparing assimilation responses across these settings thus provides a direct test of the relative importance of legal-certainty versus social-identity mechanisms.

The framework therefore predicts two possible empirical regimes following the 1915 ruling. If the increase in legal certainty and the reduction in costs move households across the assimilation threshold, assimilation outcomes should display discrete post-1915 jumps (the activation regime). If households were already above the threshold, assimilation should continue smoothly without a structural break (the saturation regime). Observed heterogeneity across states and social contexts provides a direct test of which mechanism dominated.

4 Data

This section presents the main data sources used in the analysis and the construction of the main variables and outcomes.

4.1 Historical U.S. Census

For the main analysis, I use full-count U.S. Census microdata from 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 (Ruggles et al., 2024). The 1920 Census is the core dataset for studying naming patterns among second-generation children. The censuses report first and last names, birth year, gender, birthplace, parents' birthplace, mother tongue, years in the United States, occupation, literacy, English-speaking ability, marital status, and state/county identifiers. I use the 1930 wave to study intermarriage (for reasons outlined below) and stacked repeated cross-sections from 1900–1930 to study residential integration.

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Identifying Arabs and Control Groups. Individuals of Arab origin are identified using a combination of birthplace and mother tongue. I include individuals born in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, or Jordan whose mother tongue is listed as Arabic or Syrian Arabic. To account for census coding of Ottoman subjects as "Turkey," I also include individuals reporting Turkey as birthplace when their mother tongue is Arabic or Syrian Arabic.

Across the 1900–1930 full-count files, I identify approximately 312,514 individuals of Arab ancestry; contemporary estimates put the number closer to 400,000.[6] Figure A.2 shows the evolution of the Arab population by state, with New York and Massachusetts consistently recording the largest counts. Arabs were primarily concentrated along the East Coast (Figures A.3–A.4).

My preferred comparison group is Polish immigrants, who arrived contemporaneously (late 1890s) and were generally considered white. Although this offers a clear contrast from other groups, there are certain limitations. A limitation is that Poland did not exist as an independent state before 1918, making identification by birthplace problematic; I therefore rely on Polish mother tongue, which may also capture some Jewish Poles, not all of whom were perceived as white. As robustness, I also construct alternative control groups widely perceived as white—Germans, Scandinavians, English, French, Belgians, Italians, Greeks, and Irish—relying primarily on birthplace, with additional coding where geopolitical ambiguity requires it

Children's Names My first measure of assimilation focuses on the naming choices of Arab parents for their U.S.-born children. Names are powerful reflections of cultural identity, political preferences, and assimilation intent, and systematically vary across racial, ethnic, and social groups (Lieberson, 2000; Cook et al., 2014; Assouad, 2025). Crucially, naming decisions are entirely

[6]The discrepancy arises because many Arabs were enumerated as born in "Turkey," reflecting Greater Syria's status within the Ottoman Empire. Conditioning on mother tongue helps correctly identify first-generation immigrants.

under parental control, unlike other outcomes that depend on natives' attitudes and behaviours (Fouka, 2019; Gagliarducci and Tabellini, 2022). Naming allows parents to transmit culture vertically across generations and signal group identity, but it also entails trade-offs. Choosing an ethnically distinctive name may preserve cultural ties but could impose economic costs through labor market discrimination (Biavaschi et al., 2017; Algan et al., 2022). Conversely, selecting an Americanized name may signal assimilation but carries a cultural cost, particularly for those closely connected to their heritage (Fouka, 2019; Abramitzky et al., 2020). Thus, naming choices serve as a salient and revealing measure of parental assimilation effort in response to changes in legal and social boundaries.

To capture the ethnic content of names, I construct the *Foreign Name Index*, an index of name distinctiveness. This measure was first used by Fryer Jr and Levitt (2004) and more recently by many social scientists (Fouka, 2019; Abramitzky et al., 2020). It is gender and ethnicity specific. The measure is usually constructed as follows:

$$\text{FNI}_{\text{Name},n,c} = \frac{P_r(\text{Name} \mid I_{n,c})}{P_r(\text{Name} \mid I_{n,c}) + P_r(\text{Name} \mid I_{N \setminus n,c})} \times 100$$

where n represents nationality, c represents birth cohort, and I is an indicator for individuals of a given nationality and birth cohort. The $I_{N \setminus n,c}$ is an indicator for individuals of other nationalities, excluding nationality n. The FNI measures the frequency of a name within a specific ethnic group relative to its frequency in the entire population. It is usually calculated for each birth year using data on names from previous birth years and cohorts.

Because the 1915 ruling may have influenced what is perceived as foreign, I construct this measure using only the pre-treatment period, 1900-1914. This approach provides a stable benchmark for "foreigness" before the treatment, avoiding any feedback loop or bias in which post-ruling behavior influences the measure itself. Therefore, I examine how the distribution of naming choices evolves over time relative to a consistent reference point. My measure is constructed as follows, not per cohort but using all data from the pre-Dow period (1900-1914):

$$\text{FNI}_{\text{Name},n} = \frac{P_r(\text{Name} | I_{n,\text{pre-period}})}{P_r(\text{Name} | I_{n,\text{pre-period}}) + P_r(\text{Name} | I_{N \setminus n,\text{pre-period}})} \times 100$$

A higher FNI value indicates a more distinctively foreign name. For instance, if we calculate the FNI for Arabs, a value of 100 implies that a name is unique to Arabs and never found among non-Arabs, while a value of 0 means that the name is never used by individuals of Arab origin.

All necessary information, such as first names, birth year, nationality, and birthplace, is derived from the full-count 1920 US Census.

Intermarriage I also examine the impact of *Dow v. U.S.* on intermarriage, an outcome that—unlike naming—is not fully under individual control but also depends on natives' willingness to accept and interact with immigrants. Intermarriage is therefore viewed as the ultimate stage of social assimilation (Gordon, 1964).

Using the *age at first marriage* variable available in the 1930 Census, I infer the year of first marriage from each individual's birth year to construct a marriage-year panel. The sample consists of first-generation Arab and Polish male immigrants, born abroad, aged 15–60, whose first marriage occurred between 1890 and 1930. The outcome variable equals one if the immigrant married a white American woman with both parents born in the United States, thereby conditioning on both nativity and race. The sample is restricted to married men.

Residential Choices A further dimension of assimilation is residential proximity to natives, which reflects both immigrants' integration efforts and natives' willingness to accept them as neighbors. In the U.S. Census, enumeration was conducted door-to-door up to 1960. Using information on enumeration district, state, and the order of enumeration within manuscripts, I identify an individual's immediate neighbors through lead–lag positions on the census line. The outcome variable equals one if an immigrant household has at least one neighboring household headed by a native of native parentage. The measure is defined for households with at least one observed neighbor and is calculated at the household-head level to avoid double-counting. This analysis relies on stacked repeated cross-sections from the 1900–1930 censuses.

Economic Outcomes To assess whether assimilation through naming paid off economically, I examine whether second-generation Arabs with less foreign-sounding names benefited more in the labor market once Arabs were recognized as white. Names are salient signals of assimilation and often serve as proxies for English fluency, cultural fit, or client acceptance. The literature shows that Americanized or familiar names are associated with better callbacks, schooling, and labor-market outcomes (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Figlio, 2005; Biavaschi et al., 2017). After the Dow v. United States ruling eliminated ambiguity over Arabs' racial classification, the rel-

evant margin of discrimination likely shifted—from exclusion at the group level to sorting within the group—making the name signal even more valuable. To test this hypothesis, I link second-generation Arab men observed in the 1920 Census, where names and fathers' characteristics are recorded, to the 1940 Census, which is the first decennial wave to report detailed occupational and wage data. The linkage relies on Census Tree, a genealogical infrastructure that matches individuals across censuses using family-based identifiers rather than name-only algorithms, thereby improving coverage and accuracy for common names and minor spelling variations. The 1940 Census provides information on annual wage and salary income, usual hours worked per week, weeks worked in the previous year, and standardized industry and occupation codes. From these variables, I construct measures of annual income, hourly wage (income divided by total hours worked), and indicators for self-employment and employment in manufacturing. These outcomes allow me to assess whether cultural assimilation—proxied by less foreign-sounding names—translated into higher earnings and occupational changes for Arabs after their legal reclassification as white.

4.2 Historical Newspapers

To study how questions of race, citizenship, and assimilation were debated in public discourse, I construct a new dataset of Arab-American newspapers and combine it with a large corpus of mainstream American newspapers.

Arab-American press. This section provides an overview of historical Arab-American newspapers and their role in shaping immigrant identity, as well as describing the new dataset I construct for future analysis.

The Arab-American press dates back to the late 19th century, with the arrival of the first major Arab immigrant families, such as the *Arbeely* family in 1878. Two sons of Youssef Arbeely established the first Arabic-language newspaper in America, *Kawkab America* (Star of America), whose first issue appeared on April 15, 1892 (Khater, 2016). *Kawkab America* was bilingual, publishing in both English and Arabic, typically with the front page in English. Figure A.6 shows one of the earliest issues, dated April 29, 1892, featuring articles about Syrians in America and Syrian etiquette. Although anecdotal, these early issues already reveal the dual identity of Arab immigrants and their negotiation between old and new worlds. Other prominent newspapers soon followed, including *Al-Hoda* (The Guidance), founded in 1898 by Naoum Mokarzel, and *Mi-*

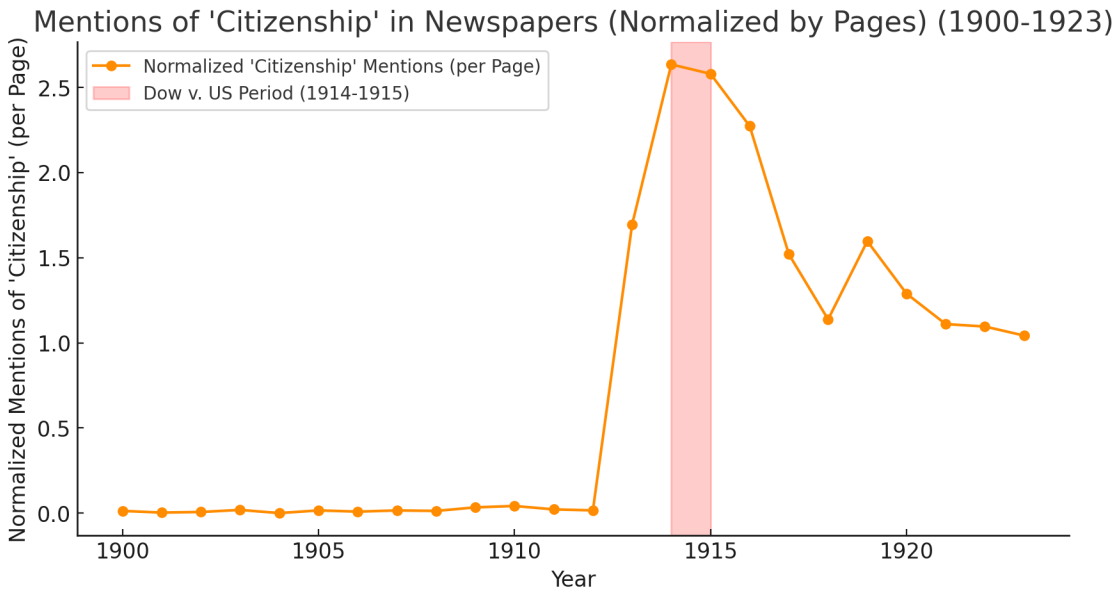
raat ul-Gharb (Mirror of the West), founded in 1899 by Najeeb Diab. These publications quickly became central to Arab immigrant communities, sustaining cultural cohesion and negotiating identity between heritage and assimilation (Jacobs, 2015).

I scraped and digitized 16 newspapers covering 6,930 editions and 54,774 pages [7]. Optical character recognition (OCR) and Layout Parser (Shen et al., 2021) were used to extract text, headlines, and structural features. This dataset provides the first large-scale systematic evidence on Arab-American discourse. Figure A.7 presents the timeline of the collected newspaper editions, along with information about religious or sectarian affiliations where known. Not all newspapers are available uniformly across years, which raises potential selection concerns regarding the topics covered. To address this, I plan to expand data collection further to fill existing gaps.

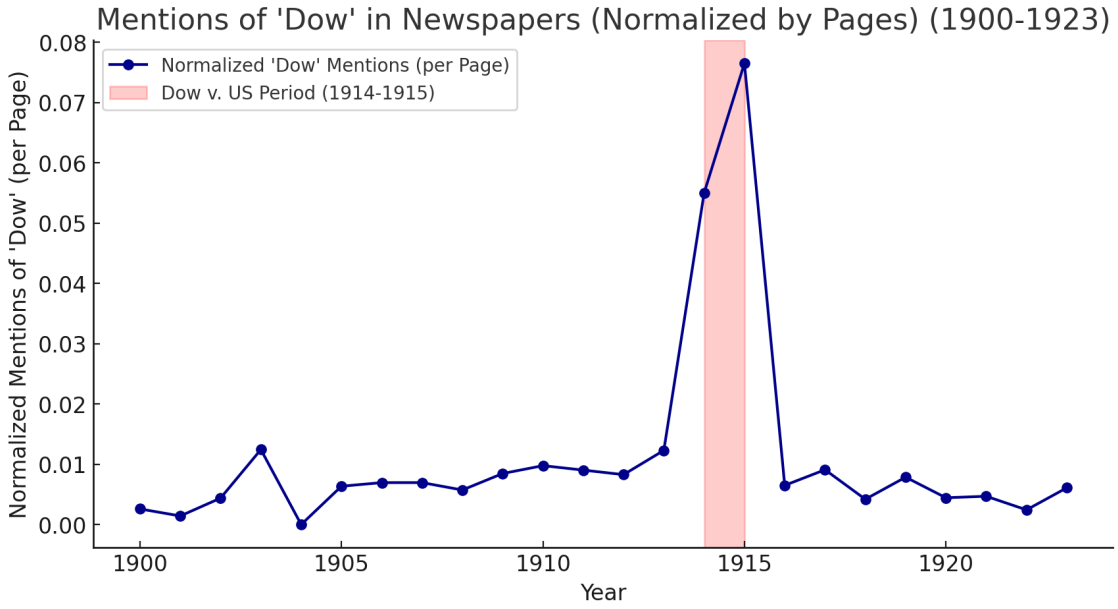
Figure 1 illustrates the salience of *Dow v. U.S.* within the Arab-American press, showing sharp spikes in normalized references (by page count) to "citizenship" and "Dow" during 1914–1915. In ongoing work, I apply natural language processing and text-as-data methods to trace how editors framed Arab identity before and after Dow, and how these frames shifted in response to the new legal classification of Arabs as white.

American press. For comparison, I use *American Stories* (Dell et al., 2024), which digitizes 438 million articles from the Library of Congress's Chronicling America collection (1780–1960). I use the data at the article level, with article ID, newspaper name, edition (including the date), page, headline, byline, and the article text. I focus on articles mentioning Arabs, Syrians, or related terms, enabling the study of mainstream discourse around Arabs before and after the *Dow* ruling. Planned analyses include topic modeling (via Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)) to track shifts in themes and sentiment analysis to measure how Arabs were described in different contexts. This dataset provides the necessary benchmark for situating Arab-American debates within broader American public opinion. Figures A.8 and A.9 present snapshots from articles discussing the Arab/Syrian community in New York City. The first article has an intrigued tone, while the second uses offensive language, such as referring to Arabs as a "plague of men".

[7] Sources included scrapping editions from Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies and archival collection at the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the National Archives in New York and Boston.



(a) Normalized mentions of "Citizenship"



(b) Normalized mentions of "Dow"

Figure 1: Salience of *Dow v. US* in Arab-American newspapers

4.3 Syrian Business Directory (1908-1909), Naming Indices and Algorithms

To complement the Foreign Name Index, which captures the distinctiveness of names across groups, I construct a new measure of *Name Americanization* specific to Arabic names. The literature has typically used naturalization records to study name changes (Biavaschi et al., 2017; Fouka, 2019), but these are limited to certain districts, cover uneven time periods, and are less suitable for relatively small groups such as Arabs. Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that Arabs Americanized their names early and sometimes substantially (e.g., *Youssef* becoming *Joseph*, or *Ilyas* becoming *Louis*), underscoring the need for a more tailored approach. Since the Arabs in this

context were predominantly Christian, a dictionary of common Arab Christian names is required.

The directory. The *Syrian Business Directory* (Mokarzel and Otash, 1908), obtained from the Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Studies, is a voluntary register of 2,936 Arab-owned businesses. It records business owners' names in both Arabic and English, place of origin in the Middle East (sometimes at the village level), type of business, and U.S. address. Figure A.10 shows a snapshot from a page for New York City in the directory. Map A.11 shows the geographical distribution of Arab-owned businesses in the United States for the years 1908-1909. As a contemporaneous bilingual source, the directory provides a rare mapping from Arabic to reported English names, allowing direct observation of "Americanization paths." For example, in A.10 *Dawood* appears as *David*, while *Khalil* appears as *Kalil*, dropping the distinctive Arabic "kh" sound.

Constructing the index. I first create a dictionary of Arabic–English name pairs from the directory by OCR-ing the Arabic text, manually transliterating Arabic names (see Appendix A for transliteration guidelines and Table A.2 for some examples), and matching them to the reported English names. Figure 2 shows the top 10 transliterations and English names. Descriptively, we see that the name "Youssef" will most likely be Americanized to "Joseph". Figure 3 shows the Arabic name, the transliterations, and the most common English names associated with the names in the directory. Hence, it gives a snapshot of the most common *Name Americanization paths*

From this, I compute three complementary distance measures:

1. *Normalized edit distance.* For each Arabic–English pair, I calculate the Levenshtein distance (minimum number of insertions, deletions, or substitutions to convert one string into the other) and normalize by the maximum character length of the two names. This produces a score between 0 (identical) and 1 (maximally different).

2. *Phonetic distance (NYSIIS).* I also compute distance using NYSIIS (New York State Identification and Intelligence System), a phonetic encoding algorithm designed to capture how names are pronounced in English. Compared with Soundex, NYSIIS retains more vowels and multi-character sequences (e.g., "MAC," "SCH"), yielding higher recall for name variants. I compute the normalized edit distance between the NYSIIS codes of each Arabic transliteration and its reported English equivalent.

3. *Weighted phonetic edit distance.* To capture the specific phonological features of Arabic,

I tokenize transliterations into graphemes (e.g., `kh`, `gh`, `sh`, `th`, `dh`) and assign higher penalties for substitutions or deletions of these culturally distinctive sounds. For example, dropping "kh" in *Khalil* → *Kalil* incurs a higher cost than substituting a vowel. The resulting score is again normalized by token length to lie between 0 and 1.

I then average these three measures into a composite *Name Americanization Index* (AMI). Higher values indicate greater deviation from the Arabic root, and thus greater conformity with American naming patterns.

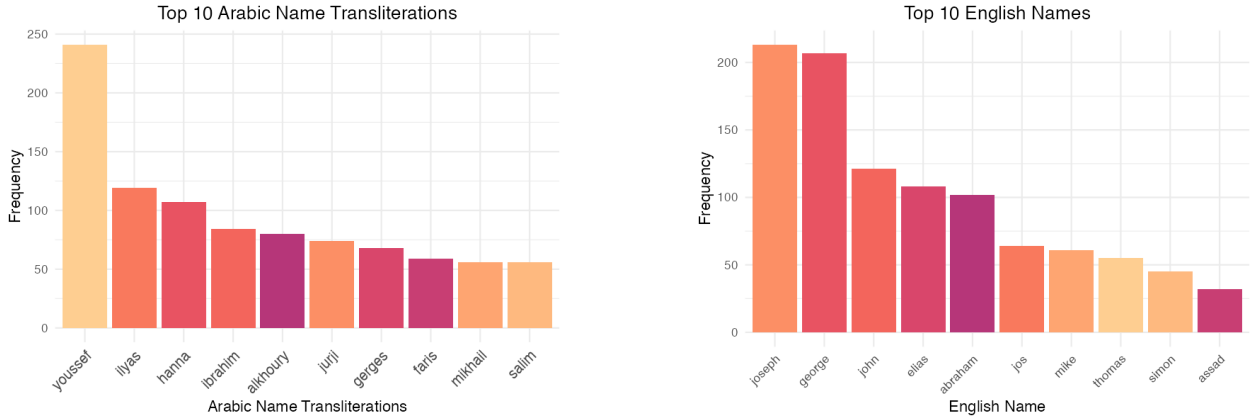


Figure 2: Top names in the *Syrian Business Directory*

Note: The figure on the left, show the top 10 Arabic name transliteration, such as Youssef and Ibrahim, and their frequency in the directory. The figure on the right shows the top 10 English names (that correspond to Arabic names) in the directory.

Applications. By merging the AMI back to census first names, I can identify which Arab names were Americanized and trace multiple Americanization paths for the same English name. For instance, "Louis" may derive from *Ilyas*, while "Elias" is a closer transliteration. These correspond to different levels of assimilation effort. Unlike the Foreign Name Index, which measures distinctiveness across groups, the AMI captures the intensity of convergence toward American naming norms *within* the Arab community. Together, these two measures provide a richer picture of cultural assimilation.

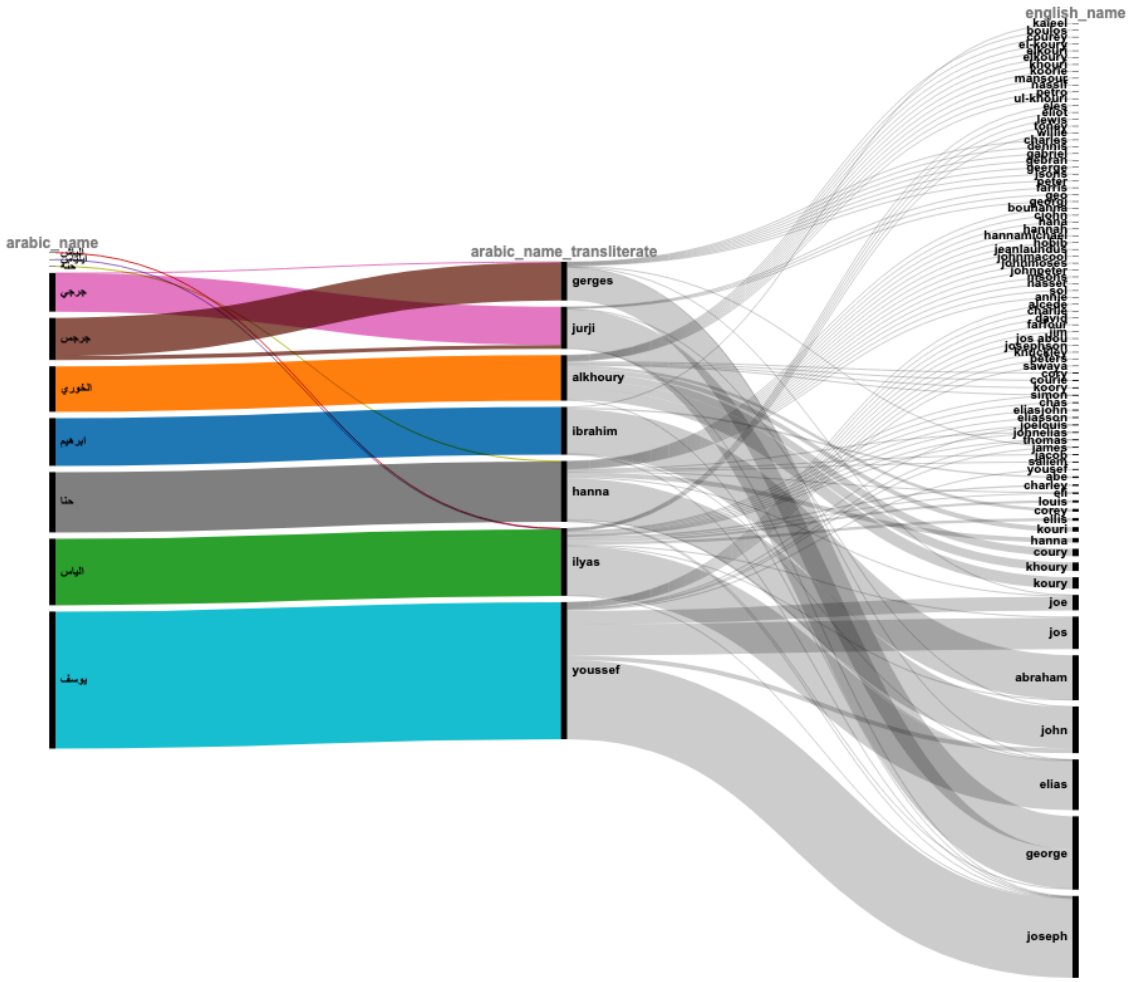


Figure 3: Alluvial figure of the most common *Americanization Paths*

Note: It shows the Arabic names, their transliterations to English, and their corresponding English names from the Syrian Business Directory (Mokarzel and Otash, 1908)

5 Empirical Framework

This section presents the empirical strategies I use to estimate the effect of Dow v. United States (1915) on Arab immigrants' assimilation, measured through naming practices, intermarriage, and residential integration.

5.1 Naming Patterns

5.1.1 Within-Family Identification

To estimate the impact of the *Dow* ruling on naming, I exploit variation in sibling birth timing within Arab families. The key idea is to compare U.S.-born siblings from the same household, some born before and some after 1915. This design holds constant unobserved, time-invariant family characteristics—such as cultural preferences, parental education, or household assimilation strategies—that may otherwise confound comparisons across families.

I use the 1920 Census, restricting to households with at least two same-gender siblings (male or female) under age 15 at the time of enumeration (i.e., birth cohorts 1905–1920). Focusing on the 1920 Census mitigates concerns about cohabitation of older siblings, which would arise if the 1930 Census were used: children born earlier (e.g., in 1905) may or may not be living in the parental household by 1930, introducing selection bias and potentially comparing families of different assimilation profiles [8]. The specification is as follows:

$$FNI_{ijsco} = \beta_1 \text{PostDow}_i + \alpha_j + \lambda_s + \gamma_c + \delta_o + \varepsilon_{ijsco} \tag{1}$$

where FNI_{ijsco} is the Foreign Name Index of child i, in family j, born in state s, residing in county c, and with birth order o. PostDow_i equals 1 if the child was born in or after 1915. α_j are household (mother) fixed effects, λ_s state-of-birth fixed effects, γ_c county-of-residence fixed effects, and δ_o birth order fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the household level.

I estimate the model separately for male and female siblings, comparing Arab male siblings to each other and Arab female siblings to each other. To assess pre-trends, I also implement an

[8] Figure B.12 shows that cohabitation was relatively common among the Arab population in the United States. Specifically, it plots the share of US-born men with an Arab father who were still living with the head of the household.

event-study version of this design, interacting birth-year dummies with the post-1915 indicator, with 1914 as the reference year.

Heterogeneity. To assess whether the effect of the *Dow* ruling varied across families' assimilation profiles, I re-estimate equation (1), splitting the sample by father's attributes. Specifically, I divide families above versus below the median in father's occupation score,[9] years in the U.S. (measured at the birth of the father's first U.S.-born child),[10] and local Arab diaspora share (standardized leave-one-out share at the state level). I also split by binary indicators for father's literacy and self-employment. This design continues to exploit within-family variation and remains causal within each subgroup, but differences across groups should be interpreted descriptively.

Name Americanization As an alternative outcome, I use the Arabic Name Americanization Index introduced in Section 4, which maps Arabic names in the census to their Americanized counterparts [11] Since this index applies only to individuals whose names can be traced back to Arabic roots, estimation again relies on the within-family design. This allows me to test whether *Dow* shifted Americanization even after an initial period of early adaptation, which is evident in pre-1915 data and in contemporaneous sources such as the 1909 Syrian business directory. To capture heterogeneity, I also split families by the FNI of their oldest child born before 1915, using it as a proxy for baseline assimilation.

Spatial Variation in Legal Certainty As an additional test, I exploit geographic variation in how binding the *Dow* decision was. Because the case was initially decided in the Fourth Circuit, the ruling directly applied to states in that jurisdiction before being recognized more broadly. I therefore examine whether assimilation responses were larger in Fourth Circuit states, which faced greater legal certainty earlier, relative to other states. This exercise provides a test of treatment intensity and speaks to the assimilation trade-offs the immigrant faces. Even when legal and material benefits are secured, did Arab families further increase assimilation effort? Evidence

[9]The occupation score is measured using the IPUMS OCCSCORE variable, which assigns each occupation an income score equal to the median total income (in hundreds of 1950 dollars) of all persons employed in that occupation in 1950. A limitation is that this measure relies on the 1950 wage structure rather than contemporaneous earnings, but it is widely used as a proxy for occupational standing in historical census data.

[10]The YRSUSA1 variable records years since immigration at enumeration. To avoid conflating later child births with additional years in the U.S., I anchor the measure at the father's first U.S.-born child, making it constant within families.

[11]Each Arabic-origin name is matched to its most probable English variant using the bilingual Syrian Business Directory (1909); the analysis is replicated using varying match thresholds to ensure robustness.

of such a pattern would suggest that motives beyond material benefits—such as identity internalization and the desire for social acceptance—also played a role.

Threats to Identification A remaining concern is that even within a family, siblings are exposed to different macro environments that could influence naming patterns independently of the Dow ruling. To assess this, I first estimate an event-study version of the model to verify that naming trends were stable across pre-1915 cohorts, which serves as a test for differential pre-trends or cohort-specific shocks. I then complement the within-family analysis with a cohort difference-in-differences framework comparing Arabs to contemporaneous immigrant groups, which absorbs any nationwide naming shifts common across groups, such as wartime propaganda or general assimilation trends. Selective fertility could also bias estimates if families continuing to have children after 1915 differ systematically from those who stopped earlier; however, household fixed effects ensure that identification comes only from families with both pre- and post-1915 births, while restricting the sample to children under age 15 in 1920 minimizes attrition. Taken together, these checks support the interpretation that the within-family estimates capture the causal effect of Arabs' reclassification as white on parental naming choices, rather than coincidental shifts in the broader environment.

5.1.2 Cohort Difference-in-Differences Across Groups

While the within-family design identifies effects within Arab families, I also estimate cohort-based difference-in-differences (DiD) models comparing second-generation Arabs to other immigrant groups. This design benchmarks whether Arab responses differed from contemporaneous groups whose racial classification was generally less contested. The specification is as follows:

$$FNI_{insc} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Arab}_i + \beta_2 \text{PostDow}_i + \beta_3 (\text{Arab}_i \times \text{PostDow}_i) + \phi_s + \delta_t + \theta_{ct} + \varepsilon_{insc} \quad (2)$$

where FNI_{insc} is the FNI score of child i from nationality n, born in state s, and residing in county c. Arab_i is an indicator equal to 1 if the individual has an Arab father and 0 otherwise, PostDow_i is an indicator for being born in or after 1915, and β_3 captures the differential effect of the *Dow* ruling on Arabs relative to the control group. I also include state-of-birth fixed effects ϕ_s (to absorb persistent differences across states), birth-year fixed effects δ_t (to capture common cohort

shocks), and county-by-year fixed effects θ_{ct} (to control for local, time-varying shocks that may influence naming practices). Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust. My preferred specification compares US-born children to Arab fathers to US-born children to Polish fathers. I also estimate the model comparing them to alternative groups whose whiteness were less contested as a robustness check as mentioned in Section 4

Threats to Identification. Although this cohort-based DiD design already mitigates concerns from the within-family analysis by comparing Arabs to other immigrant groups, a few potential threats remain. The main issue is that the estimated PostDow × Arab effect could partially reflect differential exposure to World War I or anti-Ottoman sentiment, since Arabs were Ottoman subjects while Poles and other Europeans were not. To assess this, I replicate the analysis using Greeks—many of whom emigrated from Ottoman-controlled territories but were legally classified as white—as an alternative control group. I also estimate an event-study specification interacting Arab status with birth-year dummies, normalizing 1914 as the reference year. The event-study shows stable pre-trends and a discrete break in 1915, consistent with the timing of Dow rather than wartime shocks. Finally, rich fixed effects for birth year, state of birth, and county-by-year interactions further absorb any residual cohort or local shocks. Taken together, these checks support the interpretation that the estimated effect captures the causal impact of Arabs' reclassification as white on naming behavior.

5.2 Intermarriage and Residential Integration

The naming results capture immediate assimilation choices by parents. To provide broader context, I also examine outcomes that evolve more gradually and reflect both immigrant assimilation efforts and native attitudes: intermarriage and residential integration. For intermarriage, I use both stacked repeated cross-sections from the 1900–1930 Censuses and a panel constructed from the 1930 Census using the "age at first marriage" variable, which allows me to recover marriage year and implement a difference-in-differences design. For residential integration, I rely on stacked repeated cross-sections from the 1900–1930 Censuses.

Intermarriage. The stacked repeated cross-sections analysis uses samples of first-generation Arab and Polish men in the 1900 and 1910 (pre-*Dow*) and 1920 and 1930 (post-*Dow*) censuses, restricting to married men between ages 15 and 60. The outcome is an indicator for marrying a

white native-born woman with native parentage (see Section 4), expressed in percentage points. Controls include age, labor-force status, English proficiency, years in the United States, and class of work.

The panel design leverages the "age at first marriage" variable, reported at the earliest in the 1930 Census, to compute the marriage year as the birth year plus the age at first marriage. This allows me to follow Arab and Polish men married between 1890 and 1930 and compare cohorts marrying before versus after 1915. The estimating equation is a difference-in-differences specification of the form

$$\text{Intermarried}_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Arab}_i + \beta_2 \text{PostDow}_t + \beta_3 (\text{Arab}_i \times \text{PostDow}_t) + \mathbf{X}_i' \gamma + \phi_s + \theta_{ct} + \varepsilon_{ist}, \quad (3)$$

where $\text{Intermarried}_{ist}$ is the intermarriage outcome for individual i in state s with marriage year t, Arab_i indicates Arab men, PostDow_t equals one for marriages in or after 1915, and β_3 is the DiD estimate of interest. Controls $\mathbf{X}_i$ include age at marriage, labor-force participation, literacy, years in the U.S., citizenship, occupational score, and English-speaking ability; fixed effects include state, county-by-year, and state-by-year. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. I further estimate versions with narrower marriage windows (e.g., 1910–1920, 1912–1918) and with group-specific linear trends to absorb the small increase in Arab intermarriage pre-1915. To visualize dynamics, I also estimate an event-study specification interacting Arab status with marriage-year dummies, normalizing 1914 as the reference year. This provides a direct test for differential pre-trends and a dynamic picture of the treatment effect.

Residential Integration. I also examine residential integration, measured as whether an immigrant household had at least one native-born neighbor of native parentage. This outcome is constructed using enumeration order in the 1900–1930 Censuses, defined at the household-head level to avoid double-counting, and expressed in percentage points. I stack repeated cross-sections from 1900, 1910 (pre-*Dow*) and 1920, 1930 (post-*Dow*), and estimate regressions comparing Arab and Polish households. Specifications include controls for age, labor-force status, years in the U.S., and literacy, with county, state-by-year and county-by-year fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the state level.

5.3 Economic Outcomes

To assess whether assimilation through naming translated into economic rewards, I examine whether second-generation Arabs with less foreign-sounding names benefited more in the labor market once Arabs were legally recognized as white. The analysis focuses on second-generation Arab men observed in the 1920 Census and links them to their records in the 1940 Census, which is the first decennial wave to report detailed wage and occupational data. Linkage is performed through Census Tree, a genealogical infrastructure that matches individuals across censuses using family-based identifiers rather than name-only algorithms, thereby increasing both accuracy and coverage for common names and minor spelling variations. The 1940 Census provides information on annual wage and salary income, hours and weeks worked, and standardized occupation and industry codes. From these, I construct three complementary measures: (i) annual income, (ii) hourly wage (income divided by total hours worked), and (iii) indicators for certain industries.

I estimate the following difference-in-differences specification:

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta \left(\text{PostDow}_i \times \text{LessForeign}_i\right) + \gamma X_i + \lambda_t + \lambda_s + \varepsilon_{ist}, \tag{4}$$

where Y_{ist} denotes individual i's labor-market outcome in state s and birth cohort t. The variable PostDow_i equals 1 for individuals born in or after 1915, and LessForeign_i equals 1 if the individual's pre-period Foreign Name Index (FNI) score is ≤ 25, indicating a less foreign-sounding name. The vector X_i includes father-level controls (occupation score, English proficiency, years in the United States, self-employment status, and father's own FNI). The specification includes birth-year and 1940 state fixed effects, with industry and occupation fixed effects added sequentially. Standard errors are clustered by state.

The coefficient of interest, β, captures the *name premium*—that is, whether having a less foreign-sounding name paid off more in the labor market after Arabs were legally recognized as white. A positive and significant estimate would indicate that the economic returns to Americanized naming increased once Arab whiteness was codified in law, consistent with the idea that cultural assimilation efforts were more strongly rewarded in the post-*Dow* period.

This exercise is necessarily suggestive rather than causal. Linking individuals across census waves introduces selection concerns: linkage success may vary with name commonness, spelling stability, or family structure. Moreover, only those surviving and enumerated in 1940 are ob-

served, potentially biasing the linked sample toward more established or upwardly mobile individuals. Despite these caveats, the design provides a useful test of whether symbolic assimilation choices—captured through naming—were associated with measurable economic advantages once legal inclusion was secured.

6 Current Results

6.1 Children's Names

6.1.1 Within Family Results

Descriptively, I find evidence suggestive of a strong shift towards less distinctly Arab names. Figure 4 shows the evolution of the mean Arab Name Index, FNI measured specifically for the Arabs, by birth year. As shown, there is a sharp drop in the FNI post 1915, implying a shift towards Arabs naming their (male) children more American, and less foreign names.

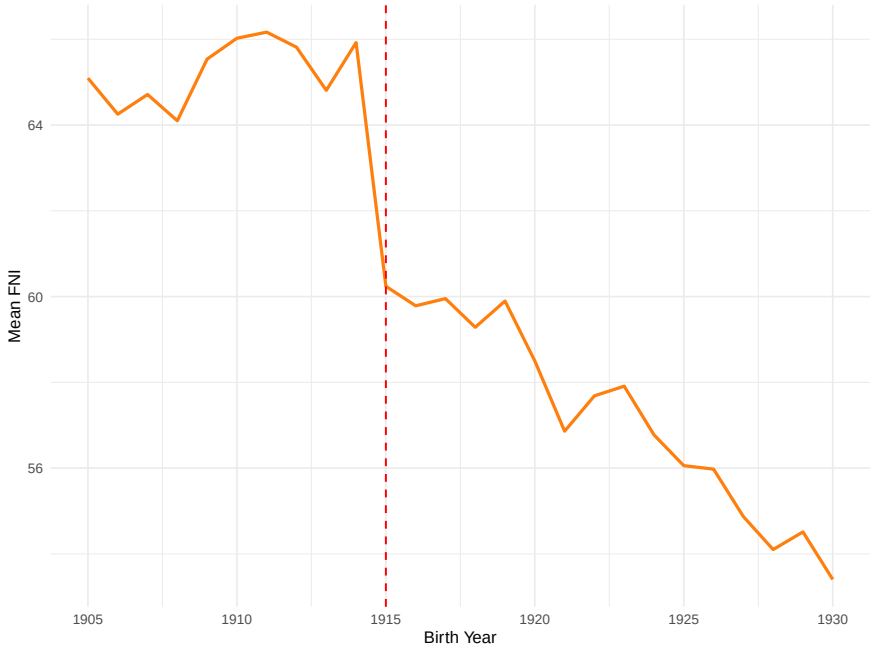


Figure 4: Evolution of Foreign Name Index for Second-Generation Arabs over birth cohorts
Note: It shows a sharp drop post-1915 in the FNI measure, highlighting a shift towards more American and less foreign names for second-generation, US-born (male) children to Arab fathers.

Figure 5 shows the pre- and post-Dow distribution of FNI for US-born male children to Arab fathers. Since FNI was computed in the pre-period, the result from this figure is more intuitive. The stable benchmark for "foreigness" before the treatment allows us to measure changes in the

distribution of naming choices relative to a consistent reference. The post-1915, or post-Dow distribution, has a higher density of observations towards the lower end of FNI. This indicates that from the initial distribution of FNI, names that were less frequent within the Arab community-and therefore had a lower FNI-became more common among birth cohorts that were born post-1915. Names with $FNI = 0$ within the diaspora included names such as *Marvin* or *Wesley*. Furthermore, the post-1915 distribution has a lower density of observations toward the higher end of FNI. Such that we see less names with $FNI = 100$, such as the names of *Shafik* or *Nassif* [12]. Finally, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirms that the two distributions are significantly different, as indicated by the reported p-value.

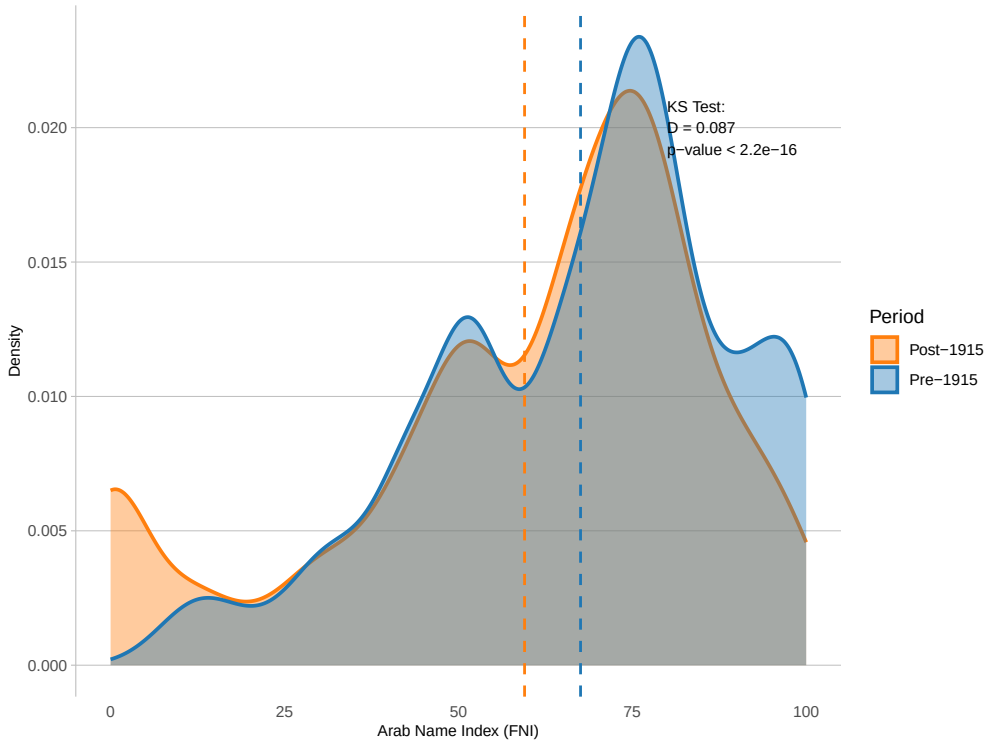


Figure 5: Pre- and post-Dow (1915) distribution of FNI

Note: This is computed for US-born children with Arab fathers. Figure shows a clear shift towards less distinctly Arab names. The reported p-value of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov indicates that the distributions are significantly different from each other.

Next, towards a causal step, I conduct the previously outlined within-family analysis, comparing male siblings within the same family, born before and after 1915. The sample includes all men born in the US to an Arab father, who live in the same household as their father and at least one male sibling, and who were 15 years old or younger at census time. I use the 1920 census to abstract from bias that (much) older siblings in the same household could mean a lower assimilation profile of this family.

[12]Table B.3 shows the most frequent names in the pre and post-periods. The top 4 names remain unchanged, then we see that Albert ($FNI = 64.64$) replaced Fareed ($FNI = 100$) a distinctively Arab name, Louis (69.08) replaced Abraham ($FNI = 93.18$), and James ($FNI = 50.89$) replaced Michael ($FNI = 86.27$)

Table 1 presents estimates from the within-family analysis examining the impact of the Dow v. United States ruling on name foreignness among second-generation Arab children. The key independent variable is an indicator for being born in or after 1915, the year of the treatment. In column (1), I estimate a simple model including only the Post-Dow indicator, finding a large and statistically significant decrease in the Foreign Name Index (FNI) of 8.05 points. Column (2) adds a linear trend in birth year to account for time-varying naming patterns. Columns (3)–(5) progressively introduce fixed effects to absorb unobserved heterogeneity: state of birth, household fixed effect, mother fixed effect, county of residence, and birth order. The household fixed effects (column 4) restrict comparisons to siblings living in the same household, while the mother fixed effects (column 5) allow comparisons among siblings who share a mother. These fixed effects control for unobserved family-level characteristics such as socioeconomic status, assimilation attitudes, and cultural preferences.

The Post-Dow coefficients remain large and highly significant across specifications. In columns (4)–(5), the estimates cluster around -7.8 FNI points, implying that boys born after 1915 received substantially less ethnically distinctive names than their older brothers. Relative to the pre-treatment mean (65.66), this is a 12–13% decline. Substantively, this shift corresponds to moving from a pre-treatment average name of *Basel* ($FNI = 65.66$), to a name like *Ralf* ($FNI = 57.81$) or *Danny* ($FNI = 57.79$). To gauge magnitude, I benchmark to Abramitzky et al. (2020), who estimate that ten additional years of *maternal* U.S. residence reduce a child's FNI by about 4 points. Under this calibration, the within-family effect of -7.8 points corresponds to roughly $7.8/(4/10) \approx 19.5$ years of extra maternal U.S. exposure. Thus, the Dow-induced shift in naming is comparable to accelerating assimilation by nearly two decades within the same family.[13]

Figure 6 shows the event study results which reveal no evidence of systematic trends in the FNI among cohorts born before 1915. The coefficients for earlier birth years are statistically insignificant, suggesting that naming practices were relatively stable prior to the ruling. This strengthens the credibility of the within-family design. In contrast, the post-1915 cohorts exhibit a sharp and sustained decline in FNI, consistent with a sudden behavioral response. The absence of pre-trends, combined with the magnitude and timing of the naming shift, supports the interpretation that the Dow ruling triggered a change in parental assimilation strategies — even within the same family.

[13]This is a back-of-the-envelope scaling that applies Abramitzky et al. (2020)'s gradient to my context; the populations and periods differ, so the comparison is illustrative rather than exact.

Table 1: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Naming of U.S.-born Children to Arab Fathers

Dependent Variable: Foreign Name Index (Pre-Treatment Mean = 65.66)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Post-Dow	-8.048***	-8.570***	-8.396***	-7.815***	-7.852***
	(0.3238)	(0.5997)	(0.3775)	(0.9319)	(0.7434)
Linear Time Trend		X			
State of Birth FE			X	X	X
Household ID FE				X	
Birth Order FE				X	X
County FE				X	X
Mother ID FE					X
Observations	22,806	22,806	16,464	16,464	16,464
R^2	0.0264	0.0264	0.0373	0.4920	0.5019

Note: Sample consists of U.S.-born males with a foreign-born Arab father, living in the same household as their father and at least one male sibling, and age 15 or younger at census time (1920). Standard errors are clustered at the household level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.

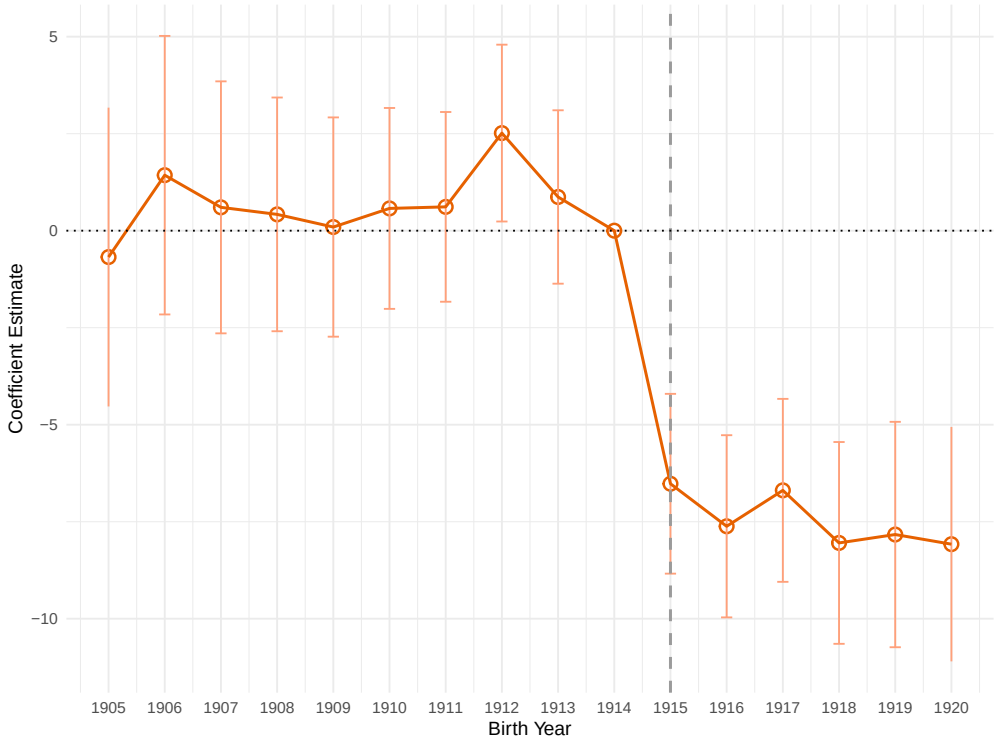


Figure 6: Within-Family Event Study: Effect of Birth Cohort on FNI

Note: This figure presents estimates from a within-family event study comparing Arab male siblings born before and after the 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling. Same sample and specification as before. The reference cohort is 1914. The absence of pre-trends supports the validity of the design and suggests a discrete drop in FNI following 1915, consistent with a naming response to legal reclassification.

Women's Names I extend the analysis to U.S.-born females with Arab fathers and find an even larger decline in the FNI following the 1915 ruling. This suggests a stronger shift toward Ameri-

canized naming practices for daughters. Descriptively, Figure B.15 shows the distribution of FNI before and after the ruling, revealing a consistent downward shift across the distribution. This pattern reflects a broad-based movement away from ethnically distinctive names and toward names that carried lower ethnic salience within the Arab diaspora. Figure B.14 plots the average FNI for women by birth year and shows a marked drop after 1915. I also replicate the within-family analysis for women, comparing female siblings within the same household or mother born before and after the ruling, using the 1920 census[14]. Table B.4 reports the estimates, and Figure B.16 presents the event study results. The effect for women is both statistically and economically significant: a reduction of about 10 FNI points (15.6%), larger than for male siblings. Using the same calibration from Abramitzky et al. (2020) (10 years of maternal U.S. residence $\approx$ 4 FNI points), a 10-point decline maps to roughly 25 years of maternal exposure. This larger response aligns with sociological evidence that parents exercise greater naming flexibility for daughters (Rossi, 1965; Lieberson, 2000; Sue and Telles, 2007).

6.1.2 Heterogeneity by Parental Characteristics

To deepen our understanding of the impact of the *Dow v. United States* ruling on assimilation behavior, I examine how naming responses varied across different characteristics of Arab fathers. Specifically, I explore heterogeneity by father's class of work, years spent in the United States, literacy, occupation score, and the size of the Arab diaspora in the child's state of birth.

It is plausible that some subsets of Arab families were more responsive to the new legal and social climate created by the Dow decision. For example, naming a child with a less ethnic name may have been less costly for fathers who had spent more time in the United States and were more embedded in American society, compared to recent arrivals who remained more culturally attached to their heritage (Fouka, 2019). Likewise, fathers who were self-employed or owned a business may have faced stronger economic incentives to assimilate, given more frequent interactions with native-born Americans. The local size of the Arab diaspora may also have shaped naming behavior: in states with large Arab populations, cultural reinforcement through community norms may have reduced the pressure to Americanize. In contrast, in states with fewer Arabs, parents might have seen name Americanization as a useful strategy to ease integration—or, alternatively, might have clung to ethnic naming as a means of preserving identity in the absence of

[14]Figure B.13 shows cohabitation shares for U.S.-born women with Arab fathers who were still living with the head of the household.

community support.

Figure B.17 displays the evolution of the median FNI by birth year, stratified by each characteristic. Table B.5 presents the corresponding regression estimates. The results consistently show that fathers who were more socioeconomically established responded more strongly to the Dow ruling. Those with higher occupational standing, greater literacy, and longer residence in the United States were significantly more likely to give their children less foreign names. These characteristics likely reflect both stronger integration into U.S. institutions and reduced attachment to home-country cultural norms. Fathers who were self-employed or employers also exhibited a markedly larger decline in FNI, consistent with the hypothesis that business owners faced stronger market incentives to assimilate. Their greater exposure to native-born clients and dependence on reputation likely made Americanized names a valuable signal of trustworthiness and cultural alignment. This pattern echoes evidence from sources such as the Syrian Business Directory (Mokarzel and Otash, 1908), which documented how Arab merchants often adopted Americanized naming practices. Self-employed individuals also interacted more regularly with the native-born population, amplifying the potential economic returns to assimilation and mitigating the risk of discrimination. Lastly, the analysis looks also at the share of the Arab diaspora in the state of birth (measured in 1910). Arab fathers living in states with a below-median Arab share were significantly more likely to give their children less-foreign names. This pattern is consistent with weaker ethnic reinforcement in smaller communities: limited access to Arabic-language institutions and fewer co-ethnic neighbors may have increased social pressure to conform to mainstream norms. In contrast, larger Arab enclaves could provide cultural insulation and reduce the perceived benefits of assimilation. Together, these findings highlight that the impact of the Dow ruling on naming assimilation was not uniform: it was strongest among fathers who were more established, economically independent, and situated in environments offering fewer opportunities for ethnic reinforcement.

6.1.3 Heterogeneity by Legal Certainty

As outlined previously, the probability of legal inclusion p varies across jurisdictions. The 1915 *Dow* ruling did not itself confer citizenship but resolved whether Arabs qualified as "white" for naturalization. It was binding in the Fourth Circuit and gradually accepted elsewhere (Gualtieri, 2009), shifting p from p_{pre} to $p_{\text{post}} > p_{\text{pre}}$, with some jurisdictions reaching $p_{\text{post}} = 1$ sooner.

I proxy full legal certainty by Fourth-Circuit jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina), classifying children by state of birth. I then estimate within-family regressions with mother fixed effects, state-of-birth fixed effects, county fixed effects, and birth-order fixed effects, and compare post-1915 changes in naming for *Fourth-Circuit births* (full certainty) versus *non-Fourth births* (lower certainty). To visualize dynamics, I also estimate separate event-study models relative to 1914, clustering standard errors at the household level.

Table B.6 shows that within Arab families, post-1915 names become less foreign in both groups. The full-certainty point estimate is more negative than the lower-certainty estimate but less precise due to the smaller Fourth-Circuit sample, so I view it as directional evidence. Figure 7 echoes this pattern: after 1915, the full-certainty series (orange) generally lies below the non-Fourth series (gray), with overlapping 90% confidence intervals. Taken together, the results are consistent with the interpretation that assimilation effort in naming increases even when legal certainty is effectively complete, suggesting roles for social acceptance and identity internalization alongside material legal returns.

6.1.4 Name Americanization

To complement the Foreign Name Index (FNI), I construct a novel Name Americanization Index based on an Arabic–English dictionary derived from the Syrian Business Directory. This index captures whether a given name has a direct, phonetically softened, or transliterated English counterpart, and thus provides an additional lens on cultural assimilation beyond frequency-based measures.

Figure B.18 presents the distributions of Americanization scores for children born in the pre- (1910–1914) and post- (1915–1920) cohorts. While the post-1915 distribution places slightly more mass on Americanized variants, the difference is insignificant, and a Kolmogorov–Smirnov test fails to reject equality ($D = 0.019$, $p = 0.226$). This descriptive evidence aligns with anecdotal evidence that Arabs had already begun Americanizing their names before the ruling, similar to other existing immigrant groups upon arrival at Ellis Island (Jacobs, 2015).

Table B.7 presents within-family fixed effects estimates. For the full sample of Arab families, I find no evidence of increased Americanization: if anything, the probability of adopting an Anglicized variant declines slightly (−4.2 percentage points, $p < 0.05$). Instead, the primary assimilation response appears in the Foreign Name Index (FNI), where children's names became

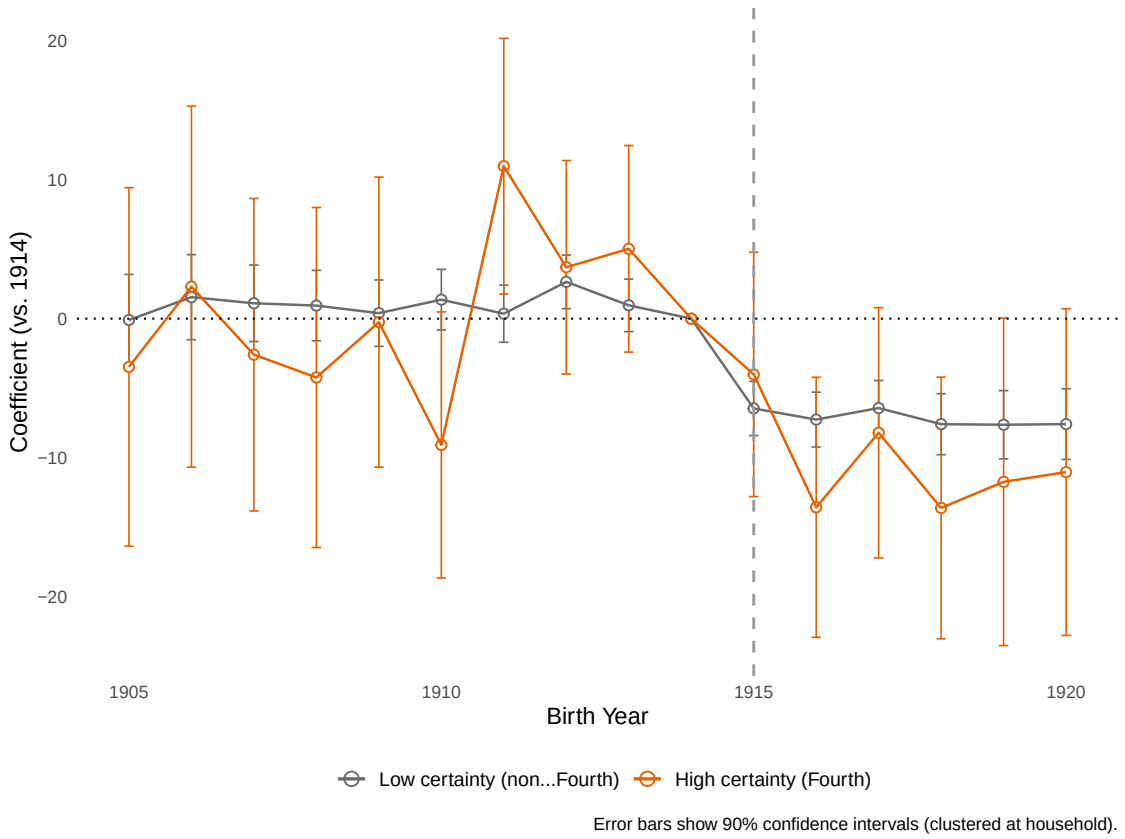


Figure 7: Event Study of Naming by Legal Certainty (90% CIs). Notes: Points and lines show birth-year coefficients relative to 1914 from within-family models estimated separately for lower-certainty (non–Fourth Circuit; gray) and full-certainty (Fourth Circuit; orange) births. Models include mother fixed effects, state-of-birth fixed effects, and birth-order fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the household level. The vertical line marks 1915 (*Dow*). The full-certainty series is generally more negative after 1915 but less precisely estimated, aligning with a larger—though imprecise—post-1915 response under full legal certainty.

substantially less foreign after 1915 (−7.9 points; column 1).

A closer look at family heterogeneity reveals a different picture. Among households that were least assimilated prior to 1915—proxied by older siblings with pre-period FNI scores of 80 or above—naming responses are much sharper. In this subgroup, post-Dow children received names that were on average 13.5 FNI points less foreign (column 2), and the probability of adopting an explicitly Americanized variant rose by 7.4 percentage points (column 3). These results suggest that cultural attachment mattered: while most families assimilated by softening foreign names, the most traditional households adopted an intermediate strategy, combining the preservation of Arabic roots with a selective embrace of Americanized variants.

Finally, it is important to note some limitations. Linking back to the census requires assigning each first name to its most probable Arabic root from the business directory, thus this link is not always unique. Furthermore, in some cases, names present in the directory are not observed in the census and are therefore dropped. While not every link is certain, the index still provides a sys-

tematic and replicable method to study the degree of name Americanization, capturing deviations from Arabic-specific sounds and structures that signal assimilation.

6.1.5 Across Group Results

While the within-family design provides valuable evidence by comparing siblings exposed to different legal environments, the across-group exercise strengthens causal interpretation.

As mentioned previously, I compare Arabs to Poles based on the premise that Poles began arriving in the US around the same time and were generally perceived as white. Therefore, comparing the assimilation efforts of Arabs to an already established white group provides a clear contrast. Table 2 presents the results of the cohort-based difference-in-differences as previously outlined in 2.

Table 2 reports the results of a cohort-based difference-in-differences analysis as specified in 2, comparing naming patterns among second-generation Arabs and Poles before and after 1915. The coefficient on the Post-Dow × Arab interaction term captures the differential effect of the Dow ruling on second-generation Arabs relative to second-generation Poles. The estimated coefficient on this interaction term is large, negative, and statistically significant, amounting to -6.93 in column (5). Given the pre-treatment average of 65.66, this implies a 10.5% reduction in the foreignness of names among Arab children born after the ruling, relative to Poles. This suggests a marked shift toward more less foreign nams among Arabs in response to the Dow decision.

To validate the DiD identification strategy, I estimate an event study specification that compares naming trends for Arabs and Poles across birth cohorts. The model interacts an Arab indicator with year-of-birth dummies, using 1914 as the reference year. This allows visualization of cohort-by-cohort deviations in the FNI between Arab and Polish children, and is particularly useful for testing the parallel trends assumption. Figure 8 shows no evidence of differential pre-trends in naming between Arabs and Poles in the years leading up to the 1915 ruling. Coefficients on the Arab-by-year interactions for pre-1915 cohorts are close to zero and statistically insignificant, indicating that naming patterns evolved similarly across the two groups before treatment. This supports the validity of the DiD design. In contrast, a clear and sustained divergence emerges after 1915: FNI scores for Arab children decline sharply relative to Polish children, consistent with a shift toward more Americanized names. This reinforces the interpretation that Arab parents responded to the legal reclassification by altering how they named their children. The absence of

pre-trends strengthens the causal interpretation of the DiD estimates presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Naming: Arabs vs. Poles

Dependent Variable: Foreign Name Index (Pre-Treatment Mean = 65.66)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Arab	0.750***	0.779***	0.771***	2.465***	2.894***
	(0.215)	(0.215)	(0.215)	(0.229)	(0.264)
Post-Dow × Arab	-7.314***	-7.337***	-7.322***	-7.545***	-6.934***
	(0.329)	(0.329)	(0.329)	(0.330)	(0.391)
Linear Time Trend		X			
Birth Year FE			X	X	X
State of Birth FE				X	X
County-Year FE					X
Observations	460,503	460,503	460,503	460,503	460,498
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.008	0.020

Note: This table presents cohort-based difference-in-differences estimates comparing U.S.-born children of Arab and Polish fathers before and after the 1915 ruling. Columns incrementally add fixed effects: linear birth year trend, birth year fixed effects, state of birth, and county-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Other control groups To further probe the robustness of the findings, I compare Arabs to other groups that were generally more considered white and the result generally is very robust showing that consistently Arab parents gave their US born children consistently less foreign names post-Dow. This broader set of comparison groups ensures that the Arab results are not an artifact of any single control group but rather reflect a robust causal response to the *Dow* ruling. Figure 9 shows the different event studies from our previous specification when comparing US born children to Arab fathers to US born children of the other immigrant groups.

One limitation is that these event-study specifications do not explicitly model heterogeneous adoption or cross-group spillovers, even though the Arab case could have influenced expectations among other immigrant groups. Recent methodological work has highlighted how staggered treatment timing and spillovers can complicate identification in DiD settings (Goodman-Bacon, 2021; Sun and Abraham, 2021; de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille, 2020). Incorporating these insights is a promising next step, but even without them, the consistency of results across many alternative benchmarks strengthens the interpretation that legal reclassification spurred assimilation among Arabs.

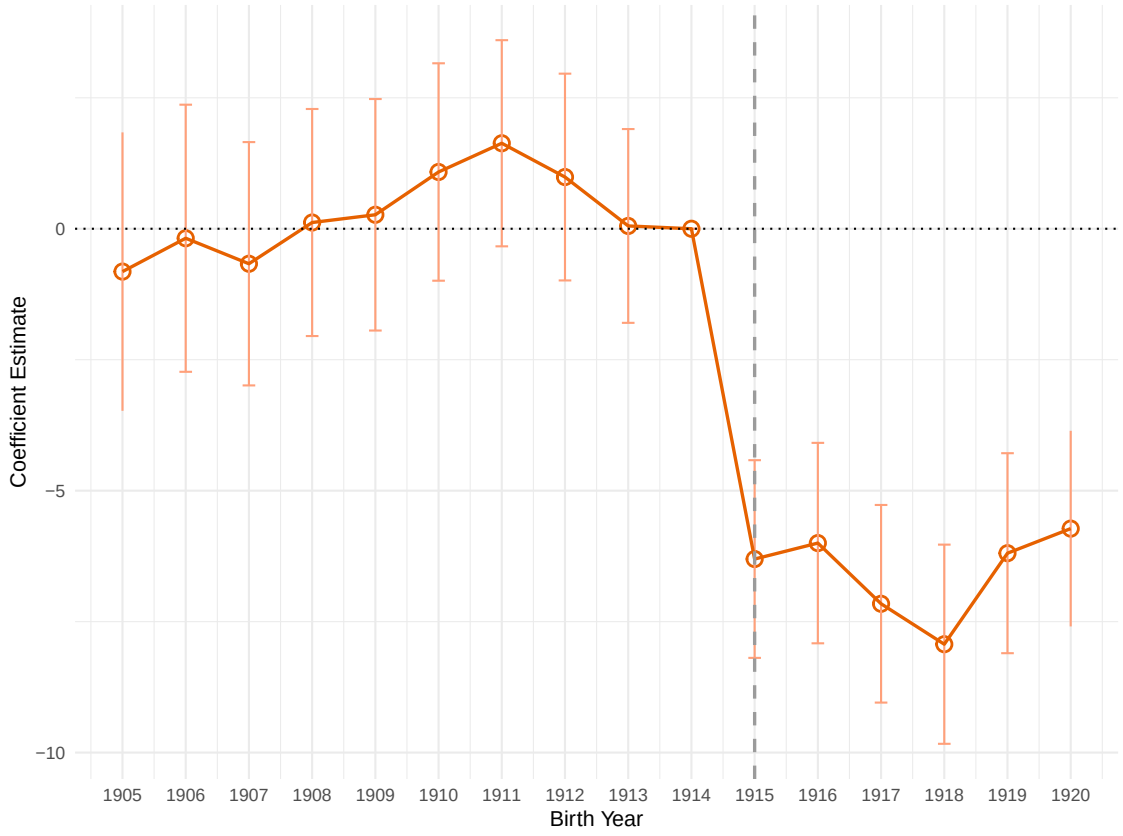


Figure 8: Event Study: Impact of *Dow v. US* on Naming Patterns (Arabs vs. Poles)

Note: This figure presents estimates from an event study specification comparing naming patterns of U.S.-born children of Arab and Polish fathers across birth cohorts. The coefficients plot the interaction between the Arab group indicator and year-of-birth dummies, with 1914 as the reference year. The specification includes fixed effects for birth year, state of birth, and county-by-year. Confidence intervals reflect heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. The flat pre-trend suggests that naming trajectories between Arabs and Poles were parallel prior to 1915, supporting the validity of the difference-in-differences design. A sharp post-1915 decline in FNI among Arabs relative to Poles indicates a discrete shift in naming behavior following the *Dow* ruling.

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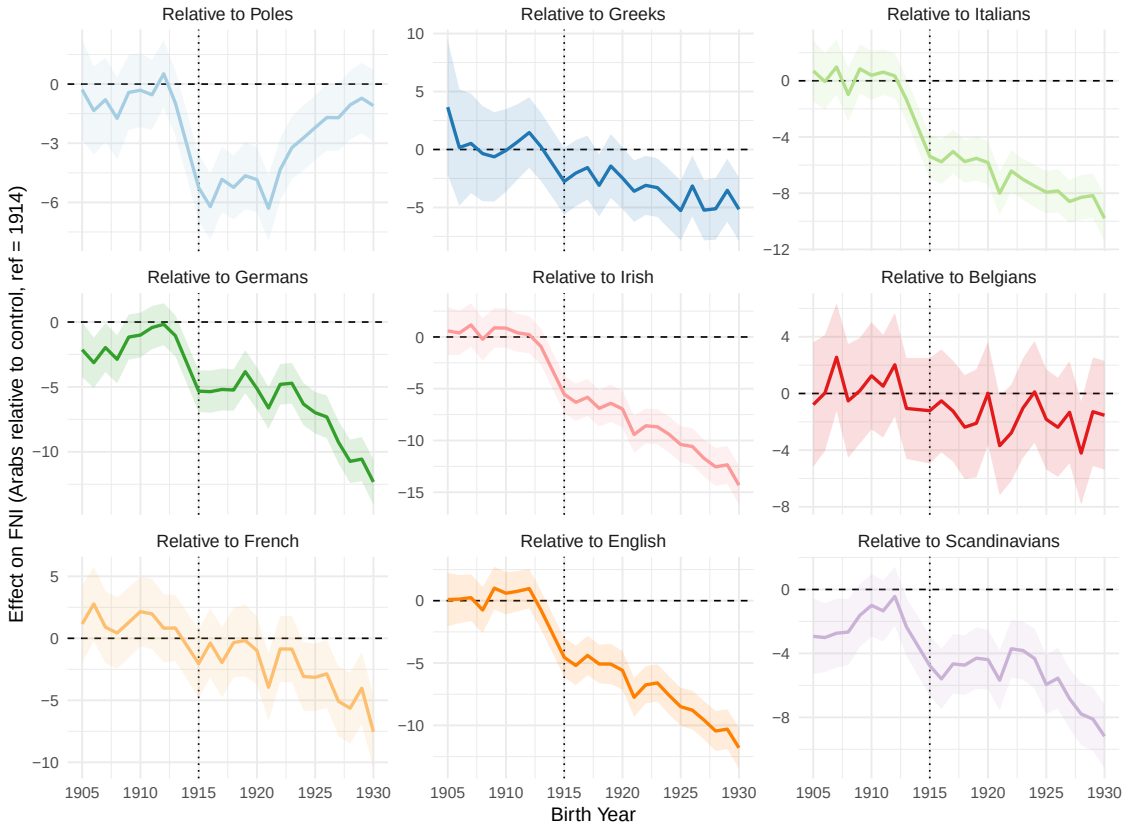
Figure 9: Event-Study Estimates of Post-Dow Effect on Foreign Name Index (Arabs vs. Control Groups, 1930 Census)



Notes: Each panel displays coefficients from separate event-study regressions estimated on US-born children to Arab fathers versus US-born children to other immigrant fathers. Birth year 1914 is omitted as the reference. All specifications include state-by-birth-year and county-by-birth-year fixed effects. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. Separate control groups include Italians, Greeks, Japanese, Armenians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Filipinos. Birth cohorts are restricted to 1905–1930. All specifications include birth-year, state of birth, and county-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust.

6.2 Intermarriage and Residential Integration

Intermarriage. Intermarriage is defined as a first-generation Arab or Polish man marrying a native-born white woman, observable in the census if spouses co-reside. As mentioned previously, I use the age at first marriage variable available from the 1930 census and use information on birth year to create a marriage-year panel enabling a difference-in-differences setting. The sample includes first-generation Arab and Polish men whose first marriage occurred between 1890 and 1930, aged 15–60 at the time.

Figure 10 plots raw intermarriage rates. Even before 1915, Arabs intermarried at rates of 5–6%, far higher than Poles ($< 1\%$). After the ruling, Arab intermarriage more than doubled to above 10%, while the Polish rate rose more gradually to about 6.5% by 1930.

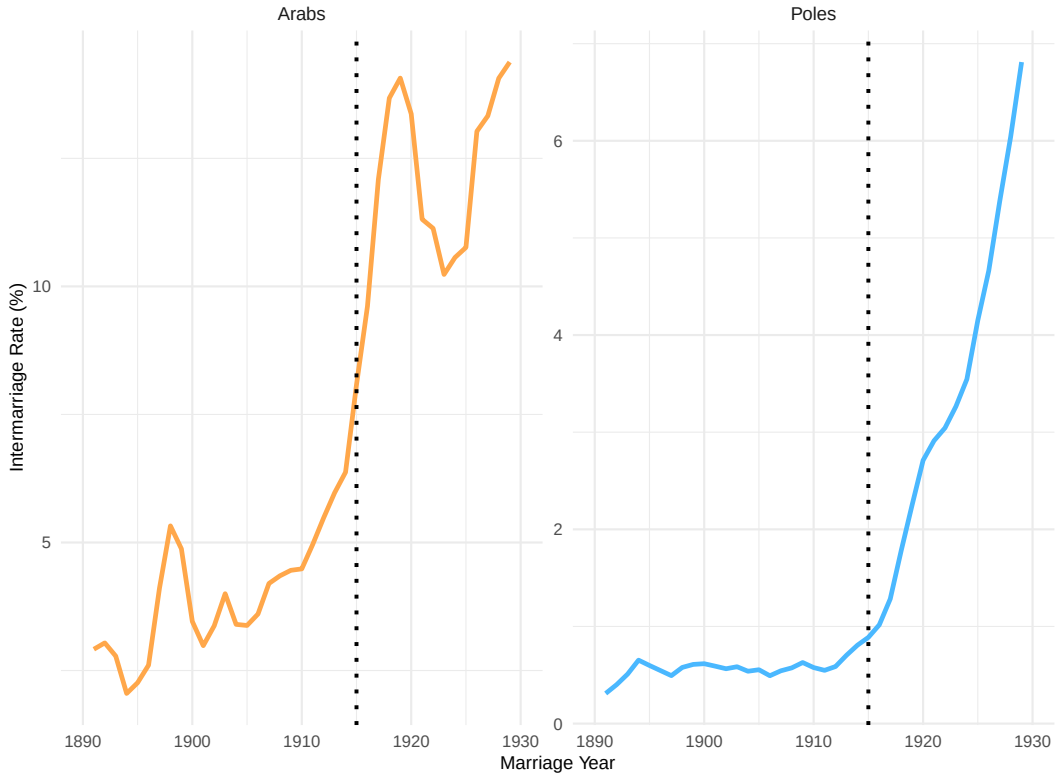


Figure 10: Raw intermarriage rates by marriage year

Note: Figure plots share of marriages in that year that cross ethnic lines (wife = white and native, with native parentage). Curves are drawn through three-year moving averages to smooth small-cell noise. Vertical dashed line marks the 1915 *Dow v. U.S.* ruling.

Table 3 reports DiD estimates. Across marriage-year windows, the post-Dow interaction is positive and significant, ranging from 3–6 percentage points with basic fixed effects and stabilizing around 3–4 points with richer state–county–year controls. Event-study results (Figure 11) confirm a modest upward drift for Arabs before 1915, followed by a discrete jump in the treatment year. Allowing for group-specific linear trends reduces the estimate to about 2 points but leaves it

statistically significant. It is important to note that the increase cannot be explained by skewed sex ratios, as Figure B.19 shows Arabs were consistently 60:40 male-to-female. Furthermore, note that men marrying native women at the time didn't automatically mean that they could get the US citizenship, they still have to go through the normal process.

Table 3: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Intermarriage: Arab vs. Polish Men

	Full Sample		1910–1920		1912–1918		Trend-Adjusted
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Arab	1.328***	1.312***	1.936***	1.678***	2.678***	2.073***	1.259***
	(0.225)	(0.196)	(0.382)	(0.333)	(0.527)	(0.477)	(0.424)
Post-Dow × Arab	5.401***	3.401***	5.954***	3.773***	4.904***	3.459***	2.048*
	(0.419)	(0.419)	(0.680)	(0.635)	(0.866)	(0.796)	(1.067)
Arab × t (linear trend)							0.274
							(0.173)
Observations	304,479	304,479	140,752	140,752	94,128	94,128	169,555
Adjusted R^2	0.056	0.249	0.056	0.248	0.056	0.241	0.234
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FE: State	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FE: Marry Year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
FE: County-Year		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
FE: State-Year		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
FE: St-County		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes

Note: Sample consists of first-generation Arab and Polish men enumerated in the **1930** U.S. census, for whom we can back-out the calendar year of first marriage as *birth year + age at first marriage*. We restrict to those who were at least 15 and at most 60 years old when married. The dependent variable equals 100 (1x100 so interpret coefficients as percentage points) if the wife is white and native born with native parentage, and is multiplied by 100, so the coefficients are interpreted as percentage points. Columns (1)–(2) use all marriage years 1890–1930; (3)–(4) restrict to marriages 1910–1920; (5)–(6) narrow further to 1912–1918 to balance pre/post windows. Column (7) uses the 1910-1920 and add a group-specific linear trend term ($\text{Arab}_i \times t$, where t = marry year − 1910) to absorb the mild upward drift in Arab inter-marriage observed before 1915. The coefficient of interest is on *Post-Dow* × *Arab* and is the difference-in-differences estimate. Individual controls include age, labour-force participation, English proficiency, years in the United States, citizenship, literacy, and occupational score. Reported standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust and clustered by state. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

Lastly, I use the Honest DiD framework of Rambachan and Roth (2023) to assess robustness to violations of parallel trends. Figure B.21 shows that the Arab–Polish gap remains significantly positive as long as post-1915 confounding is no more than 25% larger than the strongest pre-trend. Only if one assumes post-treatment bias at least 50% greater than pre-trends does the effect vanish. Taken together, the evidence points to a robust 2–4 percentage point rise in Arab–native intermarriage attributable to the *Dow* ruling, over and above gradual assimilation trends.

Residential integration. I next examine residential assimilation, measured as whether a household headed by an immigrant had at least one native-born neighbor. Neighbors are inferred from the order of enumeration in manuscript records, which followed a door-to-door protocol until

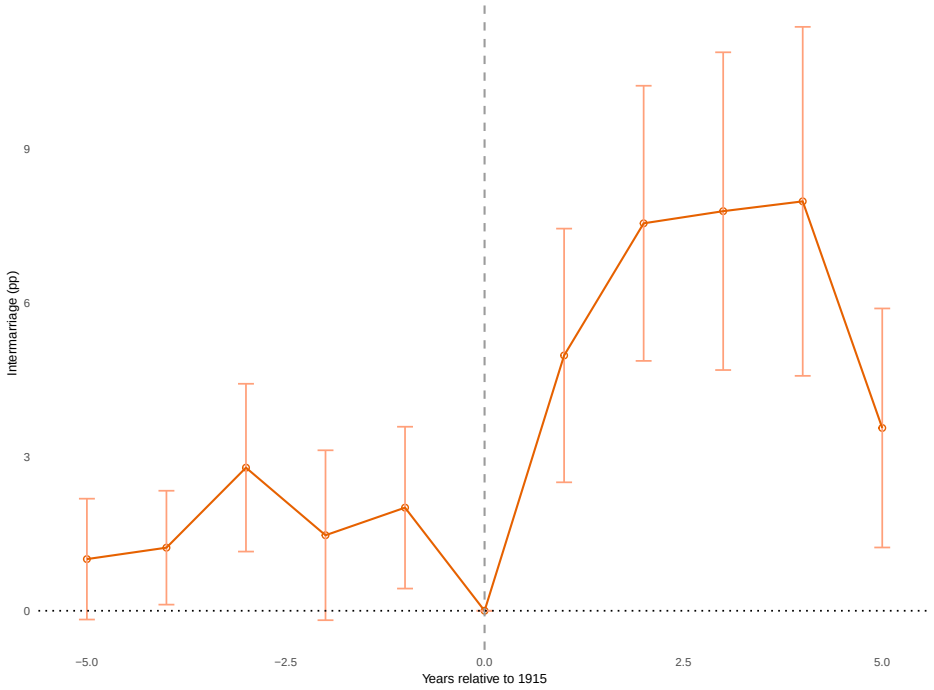


Figure 11: Event study of Arab–Polish intermarriage gap

Note: Points plot $\hat{\beta}_k$ from the regression $\text{Intermarried}_{it} = \alpha + \sum_{k \neq -1} \beta_k \big(\text{Arab}_i \times \mathbf{1}\{t = 1914 + k\}\big) + \mathbf{X}_i'\gamma + \text{FE} + \varepsilon_{it}$, where t is the man's marriage year (imputed as birth year + age at first marriage) and the omitted event time is $k = -1$ (marriages in 1914). The sample comprises first-generation Arab ($\text{Arab}_i = 1$) and Polish ($\text{Arab}_i = 0$) men observed in the 1930 census; the outcome equals one if the wife is white and native born with native parentage. Controls $\mathbf{X}_i$ match Table 3; fixed effects include state, county–year, state–county, and state–year. Vertical dashed line marks the 1915 *Dow v. U.S.* ruling. Bars are 95% confidence intervals with clustered standard errors at the state level.

1960. To avoid double-counting, I restrict the sample to household heads, following Gagliarducci and Tabellini (2022).

Column (2) of Table B.8 shows that Arab household heads were 0.7 percentage points less likely to have a native neighbor after 1915 compared to Poles. This contrast with the intermarriage results suggests that assimilation unfolded differently across domains. Arabs may have faced reduced barriers to marital integration without corresponding shifts in residential patterns, perhaps because ethnic enclaves offered community support or because natives resisted residential proximity. Future work will explore these mechanisms.

In sum, intermarriage rose sharply after legal reclassification, while residential integration lagged. The divergence underscores that assimilation is multidimensional, with distinct social and spatial dynamics shaping immigrant incorporation.

6.3 Economic Outcomes

I now turn to whether assimilation through naming translated into measurable labor-market gains. Names are salient signals of cultural fit and perceived assimilation, and after the *Dow v. United States* ruling removed the ambiguity surrounding Arabs' racial classification, such signals likely became more economically meaningful. If employers' screening shifted from group-level exclusion to within-group sorting, Arab men with more Americanized names should have faced higher returns in the labor market.

Hourly Wages. Table 4 presents the estimates using log hourly wage as the outcome. Across all specifications, the interaction between the post-*Dow* period and having a less foreign-sounding name (FNI ≤ 25) is positive and grows in magnitude as controls and fixed effects are added. In the fully saturated specification with industry and occupation fixed effects (column 4), the coefficient of 0.315 implies that, after 1915, men with less foreign names earned roughly 37% higher hourly wages than those with more foreign-sounding names, even within the same industry and occupation. This pattern is consistent with the idea that Americanized names enhanced perceived cultural proximity or client acceptance, translating into higher pay once Arabs were legally classified as white.

Table B.9 shows similar results when using log annual income as the outcomes. Furthermore, Table B.10 shows that after 1915, men with less foreign-sounding names were significantly less likely to be employed in manufacturing—traditionally immigrant-intensive—and more likely to be self-employed[15]. These patterns suggest a stronger move toward business ownership and small-scale entrepreneurship, the occupational niches that characterized upward mobility among Arab immigrants in that period.

[15]Farmers can also be self-employed so I drop them in the following column and the result is not driven by that but by business owners and employers.

Table 4: Effect of Less Foreign-Sounding Names (FNI ≤ 25) on Log Hourly Wage, Second-Generation Arab Men

	Dependent variable: Log Hourly Wage			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Less foreign-sounding (FNI ≤ 25)	-0.032	-0.074	-0.122	-0.157
	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.091)	(0.107)
Post-Dow	-0.143**	-0.141**	-0.174***	-0.162**
	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.042)	(0.048)
Post-Dow × Less foreign-sounding	0.146	0.226*	0.271*	0.315**
	(0.099)	(0.103)	(0.121)	(0.122)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry FE	No	Yes	No	Yes
Occupation FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,462	2,462	2,462	2,462
Adj. R^2	0.16	0.26	0.27	0.30
Mean of Dep. Var.		0.717		

Notes: The table reports difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of having a less foreign-sounding name (FNI ≤ 25) after the *Dow v. United States* ruling (1915) on log hourly wages among second-generation Arab men linked from the 1920 to the 1940 Census using the *Census Tree* genealogical infrastructure. All models include controls for father's occupation score, literacy, years in the U.S., English proficiency, and self-employment status. Birth-year and state fixed effects are included in all columns; columns (2)–(4) sequentially add industry and occupation fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. Significance levels: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Limitations and discussion. There are several limitations to this exercise. First, economic outcomes are observed only in the 1940 Census, which restricts the analysis to relatively early cohorts and precludes following later generations into mid-century labor markets.[16] Second, families who chose to Americanize their children's names may have differed systematically in unobserved ways—such as being more forward-looking, more invested in education, or more committed to long-term settlement in the United States—that would themselves lead to better economic outcomes. This raises the possibility that part of the observed "name premium" reflects underlying

[16] Access to the 1950 Census would permit tracking later cohorts into adulthood and assessing the persistence of these effects, but I do not yet have access to this wave.

family selection rather than the causal effect of naming per se.

Third, linkage to the 1940 Census is not random. As shown in Table B.11, children who are successfully linked to 1940 are positively selected relative to those who are not: they are more likely to be literate, speak English, and have fathers with higher occupational scores, longer residence in the U.S., and higher rates of self-employment. This implies that the linked sample overrepresents families that were already somewhat assimilated or socioeconomically advantaged. While the inclusion of detailed father-level controls and fixed effects helps mitigate this concern, the direction of selection suggests that estimates may slightly overstate the magnitude of assimilation-related gains.

Taken together, these caveats underscore that the results should be interpreted as suggestive rather than fully causal. Nonetheless, the timing, internal consistency, and robustness of the findings across multiple outcomes strongly support the interpretation that the *Dow* ruling increased the economic returns to assimilation.

7 Conclusion

This paper provides new evidence on how legal inclusion shapes immigrant assimilation, exploiting the 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling that reclassified Arabs as white and thus eligible for naturalization. I show that the ruling promoted assimilation across multiple dimensions: Arab children born after 1915 received markedly less foreign-sounding names, with effects comparable to decades of additional parental exposure to the United States; intermarriage with natives rose sharply, even as residential integration lagged behind; and the economic returns to assimilation increased, with post-*Dow* cohorts bearing less foreign names earning roughly 36 percent more and shifting away from immigrant-intensive manufacturing into self-employment and other occupations. These results highlight that judicially granted inclusion did not simply codify existing trends but rather accelerated assimilation.

Beyond documenting outcomes for one group, the findings underscore the broader role of institutions in redrawing racial boundaries and shaping immigrant trajectories. Whereas much of the literature has focused on discrimination, contact, and enclave dynamics, I demonstrate that legal classification itself can alter incentives and payoffs to assimilation strategies, with lasting social and economic consequences. By extending the study of the Age of Mass Migration beyond

Europeans to an understudied Middle Eastern group, the analysis also enriches our understanding of how identity and law interacted during this formative period in American history.

The results open several avenues for further research. In ongoing work, I turn to Arab-American newspapers to examine how the community itself debated identity, belonging, and the meaning of whiteness in the wake of *Dow*, and I analyze American press coverage to capture shifts in native attitudes toward Arabs. Together with the census-based evidence presented here, these extensions will provide a fuller account of both the internal and external processes through which legal reclassification reshaped assimilation. More broadly, the historical case offers timely lessons for contemporary debates: at a moment when pathways to citizenship are narrowing worldwide, the evidence from Syrians in the early twentieth-century United States highlights the enduring role of civic inclusion in catalyzing integration and strengthening social cohesion.

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A Setting and Data

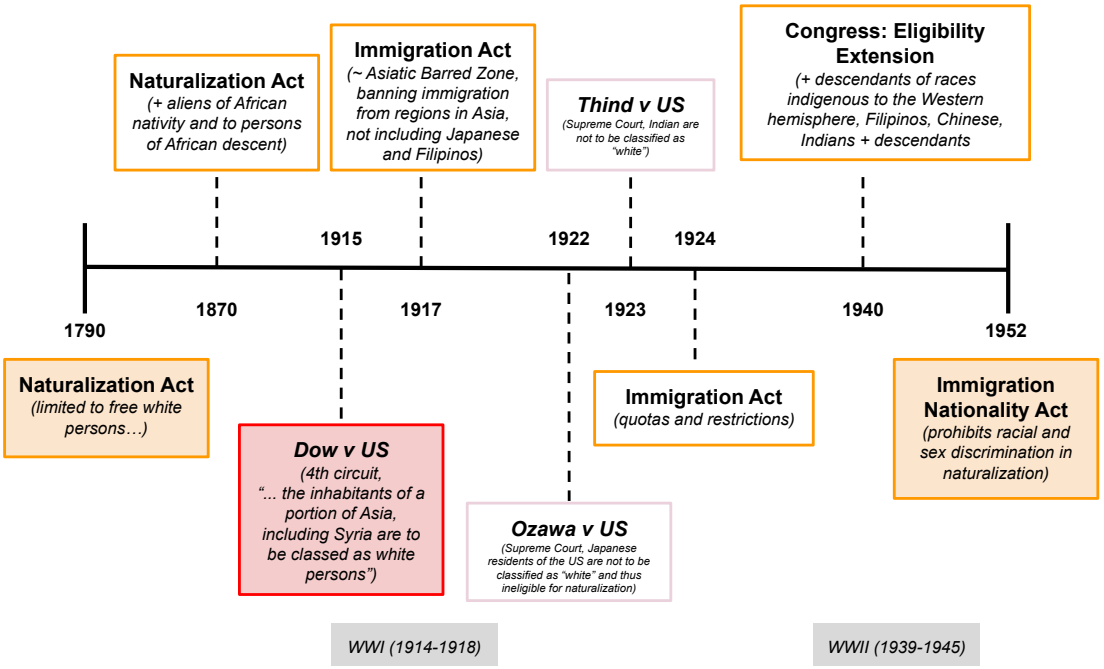


Figure A.1: Timeline of Naturalization and Immigration Laws

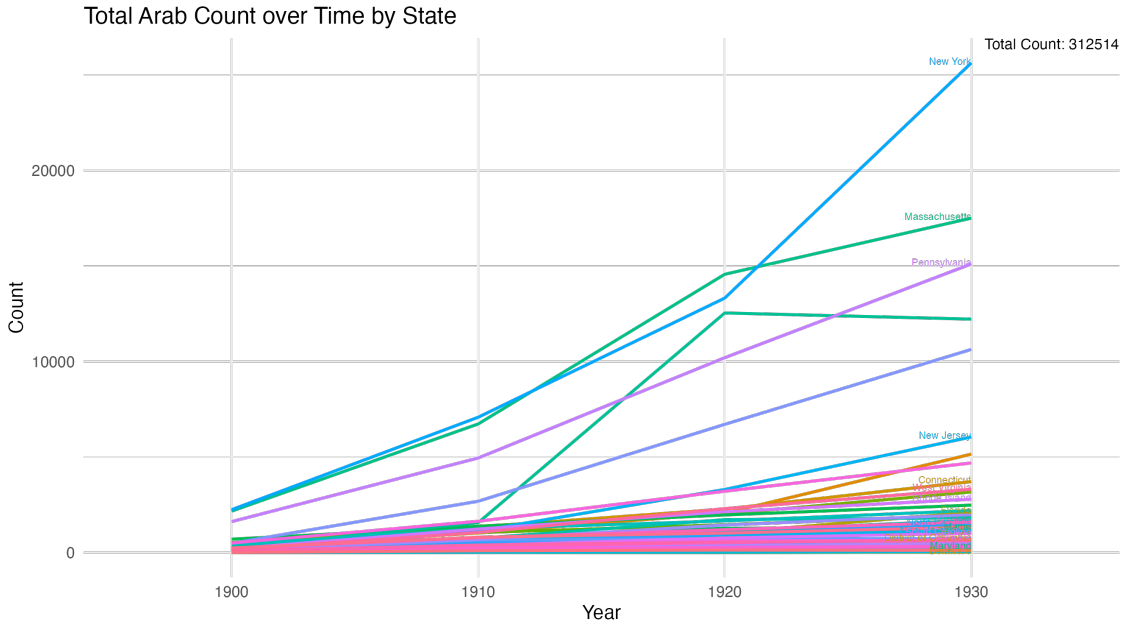


Figure A.2: Total count of Arabs over time state

Note: Figure shows that New York City and Massachusetts were the states that consistently hosted more Arabs during the 1900-1930 period.

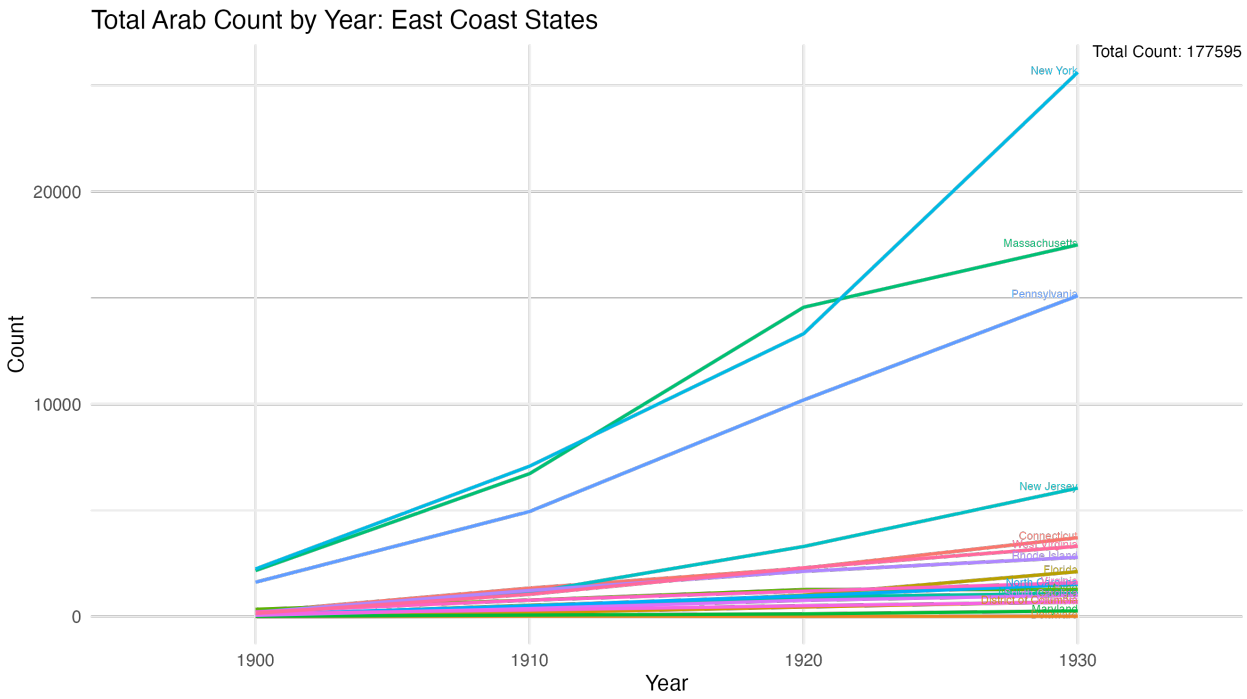


Figure A.3: Total count of Arabs over time: East Coast States

Note: The East Coast hosted the majority of the Arab diaspora. The region is generally understood to include the U.S. states that border the Atlantic Ocean: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia, as well as the federal capital of Washington, D.C., and non-coastline states: Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia.

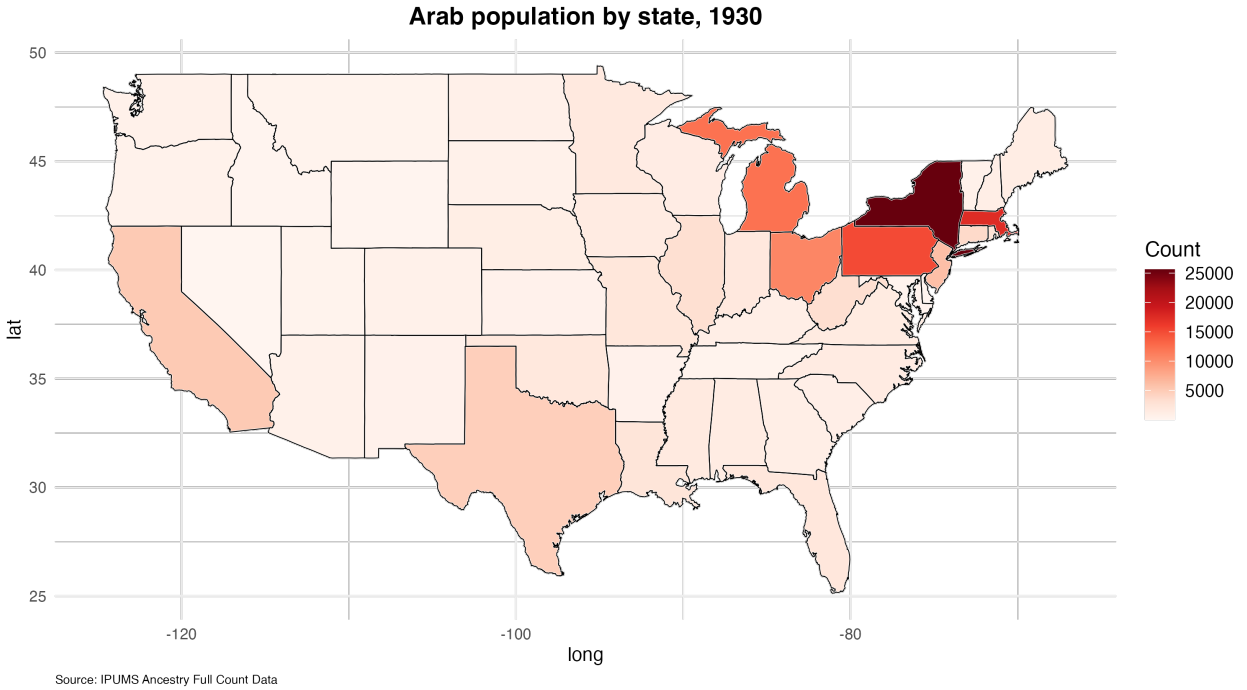
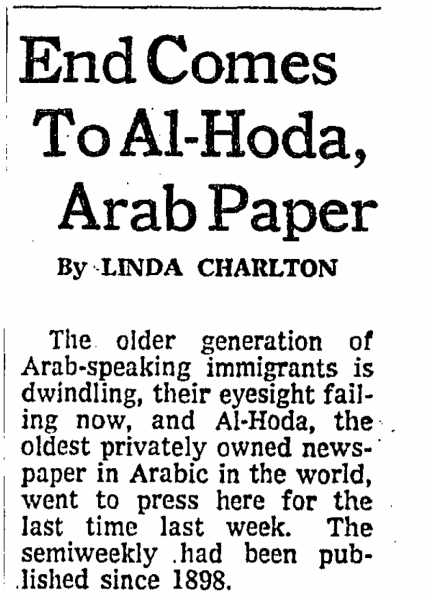


Figure A.4: Total count of Arabs by US state in 1930

Table A.1: Number of US-born Males by Father's Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Pre-Dow Count	Post-Dow Count
Arab	12,288	41,291
Polish	176,043	408,094
Japanese	5,080	29,543
Chinese	1,861	4,952
Filipino	126	1,625
Indian	341	927
Mexican	39,252	189,572
Puerto Rican	554	5,398
Cuban	1,810	3,372
Greek	7,229	55,489

Note: This table provides the count of US-born children to fathers of the listed ethnicities. Counts are divided by the pre- and post-Dow periods.



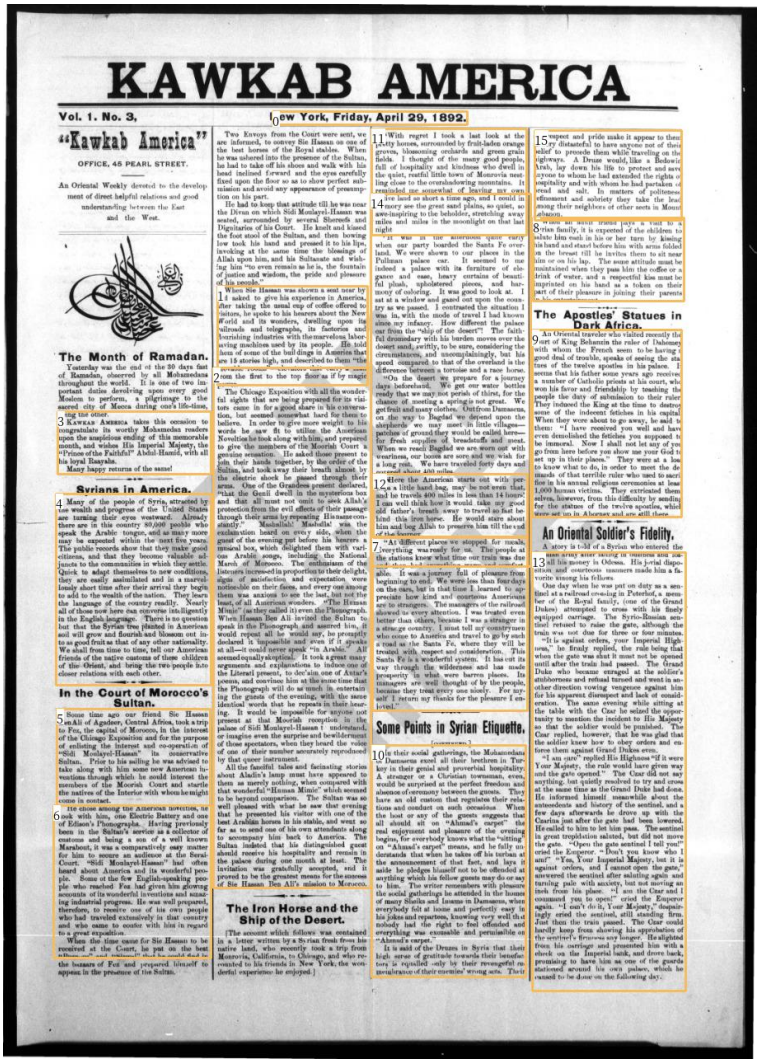
End Comes To Al-Hoda, Arab Paper

By LINDA CHARLTON

The older generation of Arab-speaking immigrants is dwindling, their eyesight failing now, and Al-Hoda, the oldest privately owned newspaper in Arabic in the world, went to press here for the last time last week. The semiweekly had been published since 1898.

Figure A.5: Snapshot of an article published in the New York Times in September, 1971

Note: The article goes in length into the history of the paper and the evolution of its content and readership from the early Arab migration wave till the day of the article.



KAWKAB AMERICA

Vol. 1. No. 3, New York, Friday, April 29, 1892.

"Kawkab America"

OFFICE, 45 PEARL STREET.

An Oriental Weekly devoted to the development of direct helpful relations and good understanding between the East and the West.

The Month of Ramadan.

Yesterday was the end of the 30 days fast of Ramadan, observed by all Mohamedans throughout the world. It is one of two important duties devolving upon every good Moslem to perform, a pilgrimage to the sacred city of Mecca during one's life-time, ing the other.

3 Kawkab America takes this occasion to congratulate its worthy Mohamedan readers upon the auspicious ending of this memorable month, and wishes His Imperial Majesty, the "Prince of the Faithful" Abdul-Hamid, with all his loyal Rayahs.

Many happy returns of the same!

Syrians in America.

4 Many of the people of Syria, attracted by the wealth and progress of the United States are turning their eyes westward. Already there are in this country 80,000 people who speak the Arabic tongue, and as many more may be expected within the next five years. The public records show that they make good citizens, and that they become valuable additions to the communities in which they settle. Quick to adapt themselves to new conditions, they are easily assimilated and in a marvellously short time after their arrival they begin to add to the wealth of the nation. They learn the language of the country readily. Nearly all of those now here can converse intelligently in the English language. There is no question but that the Syrian tree planted in American soil will grow and flourish and blossom out into as good fruit as that of any other nationality. We shall from time to time, tell our American friends of the native customs of these children of the Orient, and bring the two people into closer relations with each other.

In the Court of Morocco's Sultan.

5 Some time ago our friend Sie Hassan en Ali of Agadeer, Central Africa, took a trip to Fez, the capital of Morocco, in the interest of the Chicago Exposition and for the purpose of enlisting the interest and co-operation of "Sidi Moulayel-Hassan" its conservative Sultan. Prior to his sailing he was advised to take along with him some new American inventions through which he could interest the members of the Moorish Court and startle the natives of the Interior with whom he might come in contact.

6 He chose among the American novelties, to ook with him, one Electric Battery and one of Edison's Phonographs. Having previously been in the Sultan's service as a collector of customs and being a son of a well known Marabout, it was a comparatively easy matter for him to secure an audience at the Serai-Court. "Sidi Moulayel-Hassan" had often heard about America and its wonderful people. Some of the few English-speaking people who reached Fez had given his glowing accounts of its wonderful inventions and amazing industrial progress. He was well prepared, therefore, to receive one of his own people who had traveled extensively in that country and who came to confer with him in regard to a great expedition.

When the time came for Sie Hassan to be received at the Court, he put on the best [illegible] and [illegible] that he could find in the bazaars of Fez and prepared himself to appear in the presence of the Sultan.

Two Envoys from the Court were sent, we are informed, to convey Sie Hassan on one of the best horses of the Royal stables. When he was ushered into the presence of the Sultan, he had to take off his shoes and walk with his head inclined forward and the eyes carefully fixed upon the floor so as to show perfect submission and avoid any appearance of presumption on his part.

He had to keep that attitude till he was near the Divan on which Sidi Moulayel-Hassan was seated, surrounded by several Shereefs and Dignitaries of his Court. He knelt and kissed the foot stool of the Sultan, and then bowing low took his hand and pressed it to his lips, invoking at the same time the blessings of Allah upon him, and his Sultanate and wishing him "to even remain as he is, the fountain of justice and wisdom, the pride and pleasure of his people."

When Sie Hassan was shown a seat near by 14 asked to give his experiences in America. After taking the usual cup of coffee offered to visitors, he spoke to his hearers about the New World and its wonders, dwelling upon its railroads and telegraphs, its factories and flourishing industries with the marvelous labor-saving machines used by its people. He told them of some of the bull dings in America that are 15 stories high, and described to them "the [illegible] from the first to the top floor as if by magic [illegible]

The Chicago Exposition with all the wonderful sights that are being prepared for its visitors came in for a good share in his conversation, but seemed somewhat hard for them to believe. In order to give more weight to his words he saw fit to utilize the American Novelties he took along with him, and prepared to give the members of the Moorish Court a genuine sensation. He asked those present to join their hands together, by the order of the Sultan, and took away their breath almost by the electric shock he caused through their arms. One of the Grandees present declared, "that the Genii dwell in the mysterious box and that all must not omit to seek Allah's protection from the evil effects of their passage through their arms by repeating Hasmane-constantly" "Mashalla! Mashalla! was the exclamation heard on every side, when the guest of the evening put before his hearers a musical box, which delighted them with various Arabic songs, including the National March of Morocco. The enthusiasm of the listeners increased in proportion to their delight, signs of satisfaction and expectation were notice-able on their faces, and every one among them was anxious to see the last, but not the least, of all American wonders. "The Hassan Music" (as they called it) even the Phonograph. When Hassan Ben Ali invited the Sultan to speak in the Phonograph, and assured him, it would repeat all he would say, he promptly declared it impossible and even if it speaks at all—it could never speak "in Arabic." All seemed equally skeptical. It took a great many arguments and explanations to induce one of the Literati present, to dec'aim one of Antar's poems, and now'one him at the same time that the Phonograph will do as much in entertaining the guests of the evening, with the same identical words that he repeats in their hearing. It would be impossible for anyone not present at that Moorish reception in the palace of Sidi Moulayel-Hasan ! understand, or imagine even the surprise and bewilderment of those spectators, when they heard the voice of one of their number accurately reproduced by that queer instrument.

All the fanciful tales and fascinating stories about Aladin's lamp must have appeared to them as merely nothing, when compared with that wonderful "Hassan Music" which seemed to be beyond comparison. The Sultan was so well pleased with what he saw that evening that he presented his visitor with one of the best Arabian horses in his stable, and went so far as to send one of his own attendants along to accompany him back to America. The Sultan indeed that his distinguished guest should receive his hospitality and remain in the palace during one month at least. The invitation was gratefully accepted, and it proved to be the greatest means for the success of Sie Hassan Ben Ali's mission to Morocco.

The Iron Horse and the Ship of the Desert.

[The account which follows was contained in a letter written by a Syrian fresh from his native land, who recently took a trip from Monrovia, California, to Chicago, and who recounted to his friends in New York, the wonderful experience he enjoyed.]

11 "With regret I took a last look at the pretty horses, surrounded by fruit-laden orange groves, blossoming orchards and green grain fields. I thought of the many good people, full of hospitality and kindness who dwell in the quiet, restful little town of Monrovia nestling close to the overshadowing mountains. It reminded me somewhat of leaving my own native land so short a time ago, and I could in memory see the great sand plains, so quiet, so awe-inspiring to the beholder, stretching away miles and miles in the moonlight on that last night

12 It was in the afternoon quite early when our party boarded the Santa Fe overland. We were shown to our places in the Pullman palace car. It seemed to me indeed a palace with its furniture of elegance and ease, luxury curtains of beautiful plush, upholstered pieces, and harmony of coloring. It was good to look at. I sat at a window and gazed out upon the country as we passed. I contrasted the situation I was in, with the mode of travel I had known since my infancy. How different the palace car from the "ship of the desert"! The faithful dromedary with his burden moves over the desert sand, swiftly, to be sure, considering the circumstances, and uncomplainingly, but his speed compared to that of the overland is the difference between a tortoise and a race horse.

"On the desert we prepare for a journey days beforehand. We get our water bottles ready that we may not perish of thirst, for the chance of meeting a springis not great. We get fruit and many clothes. Outfrom Damascus on the way to Bagdad we depend upon the shepherds we may meet in little villages—patches of ground they would be called here—for fresh supplies of breadstuffs and meat. When we reach Bagdad we are worn out with weariness, our boots are sore and we wish for a long rest. We have traveled forty days and [illegible] miles.

13 Here the American starts out with per- [illegible] a little hand bag, may be not even that, and he travels 400 miles in less than 14 hours! I can well think how it would take my good old father's breath away to travel so fast he kind this iron horse. He would stare about him and beg Allah to preserve him till the end of the journey.

7 "At different places we stopped for meals everything was ready for us. The people at the stations knew what time our train was due [illegible] and everything was [illegible] comfortable. It was a journey full of pleasure from beginning to end. We were less than four days on the cars, but in that time I learned to appreciate how kind and courteous Americans are to strangers. The managers of the railroad showed to every attention. I was treated even better than others, because I was a stranger in a strange country. I must tell my countrymen who come to America and travel to go by such a road as the Santa Fe, where they will be treated with respect and consideration. The Santa Fe is a wonderful system. It has cut its way through the wilderness and has made prosperity in what were barren places. Its managers are well thought of by the people, because they treat every one nicely. For myself I return my thanks for the pleasure I enjoyed."

Some Points in Syrian Etiquette.

[continued.]

10 In their social gatherings, the Mohamedans of Damascus excel all their brethren in Turkey in their genial and proverbial hospitality. A stranger or a Christian townsman, even, would be surprised at the perfect freedom and absence of ceremony between the guests. They have an old custom that regulates their relations and conduct on such occasions. When the host or any of the guests suggests that all should sit on "Ahmad's carpet" the real enjoyment and pleasure of the evening begins, for everybody knows what the "sitting" on "Ahmad's carpet" means, and he fully understands that when he takes off his turban at the announcement of that fact, and lays it aside he pledges himself not to be offended at anything which his fellow guests may do or say to him. The writer remembers with pleasure the social gatherings he attended in the houses of many Sheiks and Ieams in Damascus, when everybody felt at home and perfectly easy in his jokes and repartees, knowing very well that nobody had the right to feel offended and everything was excusable and permissible on "Ahmad's carpet."

It is said of the Druzes in Syria that their high sense of gratitude towards their benefactors is equalled only by their revengeful remembrance of their enemies' wrong acts. Their

15 suspect and pride make it appear to them very distasteful to have anyone not of their relief to precede them while traveling on the highways. A Druze would, like a Bedouin Arab, lay down his life to protect and save anyone to whom he had extended the rights of hospitality and with whom he had partaken of bread and salt. In matters of politeness, refinement and sobriety they take the lead among their neighbors of other sects in Mount Lebanon.

8 When an Arab Sheik pays a visit to a fellow family, it is expected of the children to salute him each in his or her turn by kissing his hand and stand before him with arms folded on the breast till he invites them to sit near him or on his lap. The same attitude must be maintained when they pass him the coffee or a drink of water, and a respectful kiss must be imprinted on his hand as a token on their part of their pleasure in joining their parents [illegible]

The Apostles' Statues in Dark Africa.

9 An Oriental traveler who visited recently the court of King Behanzin the ruler of Dahomey, with whom the French seem to be having a good deal of trouble, speaks of seeing the statues of the twelve apostles in his palace. It seems that his father some years ago received a number of Catholic priests at his court, who won his favor and friendship by teaching the people the duty of submission to their ruler. They induced the King at the time to destroy some of the indecent fetishes in his capital. When they were about to go away, he said to them: "I have received you well and have even demolished the fetishes you supposed to be immoral. Now I shall not let any of you go from here before you show me your God to set up in their places." They were at a loss to know what to do, in order to meet the demands of that terrible ruler who used to sacrifice in his annual religious ceremonies at least 1,000 human victims. They extricated themselves, however, from this difficulty by sending for the statues of the twelve apostles, which were set up in Abomey and are still there.

An Oriental Soldier's Fidelity.

A story is told of a Syrian who entered the [illegible] army some years ago, and [illegible] all his money in Odessa. His genial disposition and courteous manners made him a favorite among his fellows.

One day when he was put on duty as a sentinel at a railroad crossing in Petersburg, a member of the Royal family, (one of the Grand Dukes) attempted to cross with his finely equipped carriage. The Syrio-Russian sentinel refused to raise the gate, although the train was not due for three or four minutes.

"It is against orders, your Imperial Highness," he finally replied, the rule being that when the gate was shut it must not be opened until after the train had passed. The Grand Duke who became enraged at the soldier's impertinence and refusal turned and went in another direction vowing vengeance against him for his apparent disrespect and lack of consideration. The same evening while sitting at the table with the Czar he seized the opportunity to mention the incident to His Majesty so that the soldier would be punished. The Czar replied, however, that he was glad that the soldier knew how to obey orders and enforce them against Grand Dukes even.

"I am sure" replied His Highness "if it were Your Majesty, the rule would have given way and the gate opened." The Czar did not say anything, but quietly resolved to try and cross at the same time as the Grand Duke had done. He informed himself meanwhile about the antecedents and history of the sentinel, and a few days afterwards he drove up with the Czarina just after the gate had been lowered. He called to him to let him pass. The sentinel in great trepidation saluted, but did not move the gate. "Open the gate sentinel I tell you!" cried the Emperor. "Don't you know who I am!" "Yes, Your Imperial Majesty, but it is against orders, and I cannot open the gate," answered the sentinel after saluting again and turning pale with anxiety, but not moving an inch from his place. "I am the Czar and I command you to open!" cried the Emperor again. "I can't do it, Your Majesty," despairingly cried the sentinel, still standing firm. Just then the train passed. The Czar could hardly keep from showing his approbation of the sentinel's firmness any longer. He alighted from his carriage and presented him with a check on the Imperial bank, and drove back, promising to have him as one of the guards stationed around his own palace, which he caused to be done on the following day.

Figure A.6: Front page of Kawkab America from April 29, 1892

Note: The front page features news from home and the United States, describes Syrians in America (annotation number 4), and discusses "some points in Syrian Etiquette" (annotation number 10).

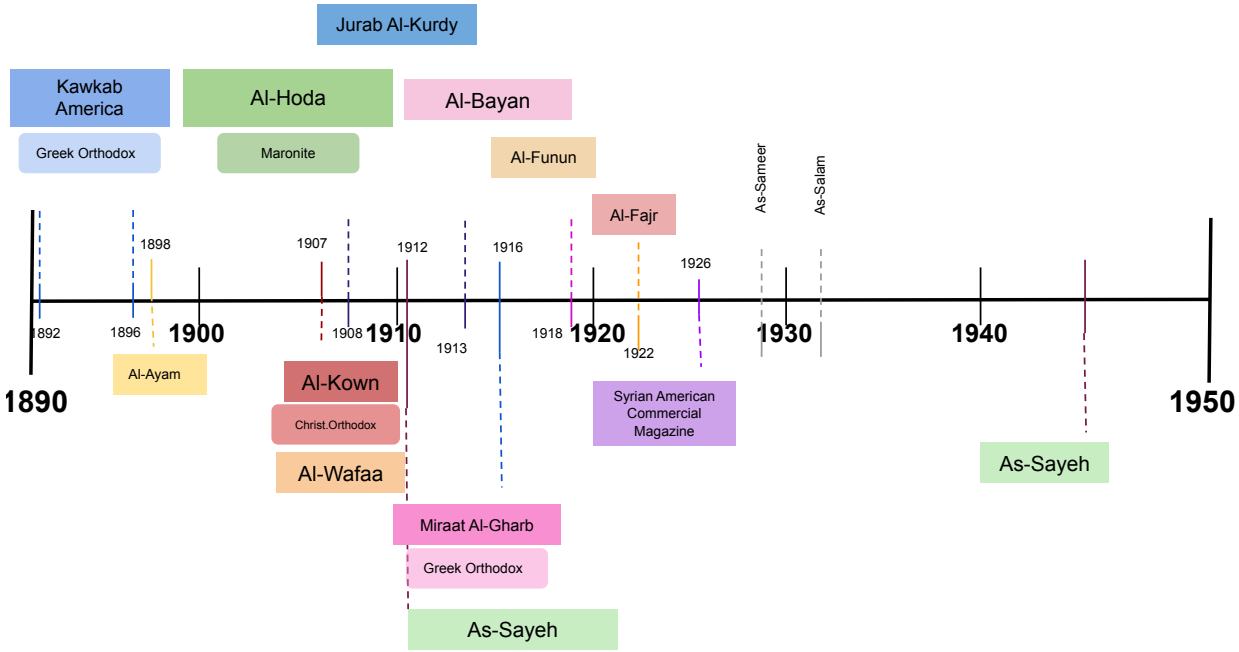
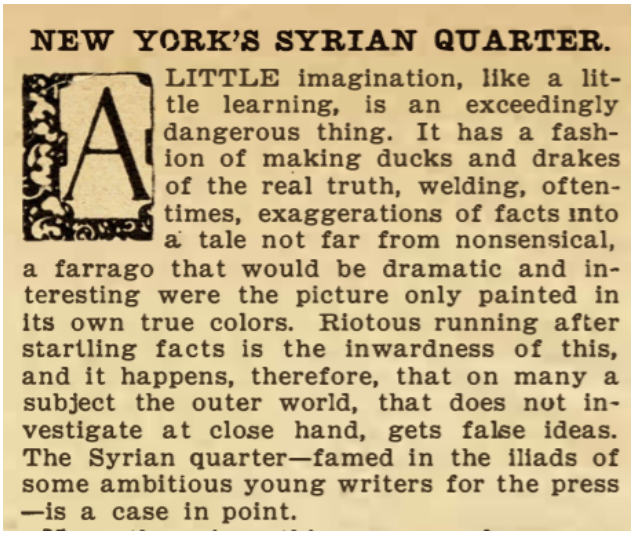


Figure A.7: Arab-American newspapers timeline



NEW YORK'S SYRIAN QUARTER.

A LITTLE imagination, like a little learning, is an exceedingly dangerous thing. It has a fashion of making ducks and drakes of the real truth, welding, oftentimes, exaggerations of facts into a tale not far from nonsensical, a farrago that would be dramatic and interesting were the picture only painted in its own true colors. Riotous running after startling facts is the inwardness of this, and it happens, therefore, that on many a subject the outer world, that does not investigate at close hand, gets false ideas. The Syrian quarter—famed in the iliads of some ambitious young writers for the press—is a case in point.

Figure A.8: Snapshot of an article describing New York's Syrian quarter

OCTOBER 14, 1893. THE ILLUSTRATED AMERICAN. 453

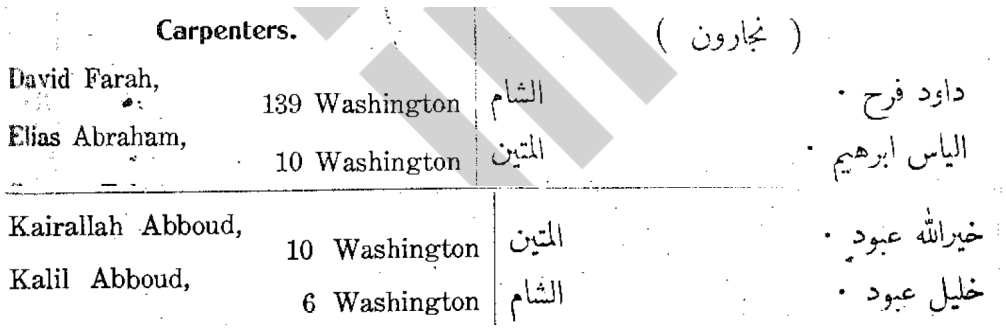
A PLAGUE OF MEN.

SOME strange elements have insinuated themselves into the immigration problem. It is not the most obvious factors in the question that are the most interesting, even though they be the ones of paramount importance. To the superficial observer it would seem absurd to consider seriously the part played in the corruption of our national life by Syrians. And yet the student of the situation who sets out to examine the subject in all its phases and aspects, may not disregard even such an obscure and apparently insignificant detail as is suggested by the steadily increasing colony of dusky Orientals who have planted a patch of the

of his own country. Ingenious cabinets of olivewood, rude jewelry not unlike that of Benares, bits of sandstone said to have come from the ruins of King Solomon's temple and accompanied by printed slips in "English as she is spoke," attesting that fact, gimcracks for feminine adornment made of amber and silver, fans of musky sandalwood, long, gilded flasks of rose attar, and boxes of figs make up the outlandish stock in trade with which these white-teethed, black-bearded, and suave spoken aliens hope to coze a competence from the rich Occidentals. In the winter, the peripatetic merchants, still following the course of wealth and fashion, betake them-

SOME RECENT ARRIVALS FROM DAMASCUS.

Figure A.9: Article in the Illustrated American about Syrian immigrants. Titled *A Plague of Men.*



Carpenters.			(نجارون)
David Farah,	139 Washington	الشام	داود فرح ٠
Elias Abraham,	10 Washington	المتين	الياس ابرهيم ٠
Kairallah Abboud,	10 Washington	المتين	خيرالله عبود ٠
Kalil Abboud,	6 Washington	الشام	خليل عبود ٠

Figure A.10: Snapshot from a page for New York City in the Syrian Business Directory (1908-1909)

Note: It shows the type of industry, names of owners in Arabic, where they're from in the Middle East, the business' street address, and the corresponding English names. This directory is organized by city within every state.

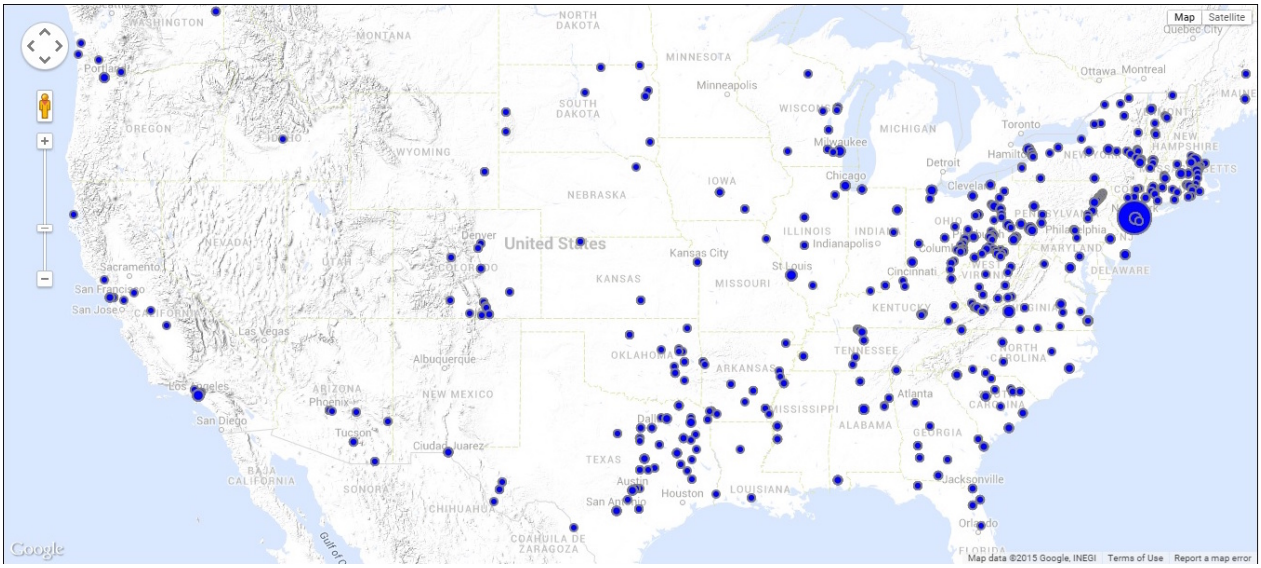


Figure A.11: Map of Arab-American Businesses: Syrian Business Directory (1908-1909)

Note: The geographic distribution of the businesses follows the distribution of the Arab diaspora across US states. Map by KCLDS.

A.1 Transliteration guidelines

The transliteration methodology for Arabic to English involves mapping Arabic consonants to their closest English equivalents and approximating Arabic vowels based on common pronunciation. Special attention is given to Arabic letters that lack direct English equivalents, which are represented by English letter combinations (e.g., "kh" for خ). Short vowels (اَ fatha, اِ kasra, اُ damma) are sometimes implied rather than written, while long vowels are represented by "a," "u," and "i" for ا (Alif), و (Waw), and ي (Ya), respectively. Key consonants include "A" or omitting the Alif (أ) when it starts a word, "dh" for ذ, and "gh" for غ. Distinctive sounds, such as ع (Ayn) and ء (Hamza), may be represented with an apostrophe or omitted. Names are transliterated consistently to preserve readability; for example, إلياس becomes "Ilyas," نخله becomes "Nakhleh," and مراد داود becomes "Murad Dawood."

Arabic Name	**English Transliteration**
إلياس	Ilyas
ابراهيم	Ibrahim
جرجي	Jurji

Table A.2: An example of Arabic names and their English transliterations

B Results Appendix

Table B.3: Most Frequent Names and Their Associated FNI Scores (Pre- and Post-Period)

Pre-Period	FNI	Post-Period	FNI
George	77.89	George	77.89
Joseph	72.45	Joseph	72.45
John	49.93	John	49.93
Edward	65.45	Edward	65.45
Fareed	100.00	Albert	64.64
Abraham	93.18	Louis	69.08
Michael	86.27	James	50.89

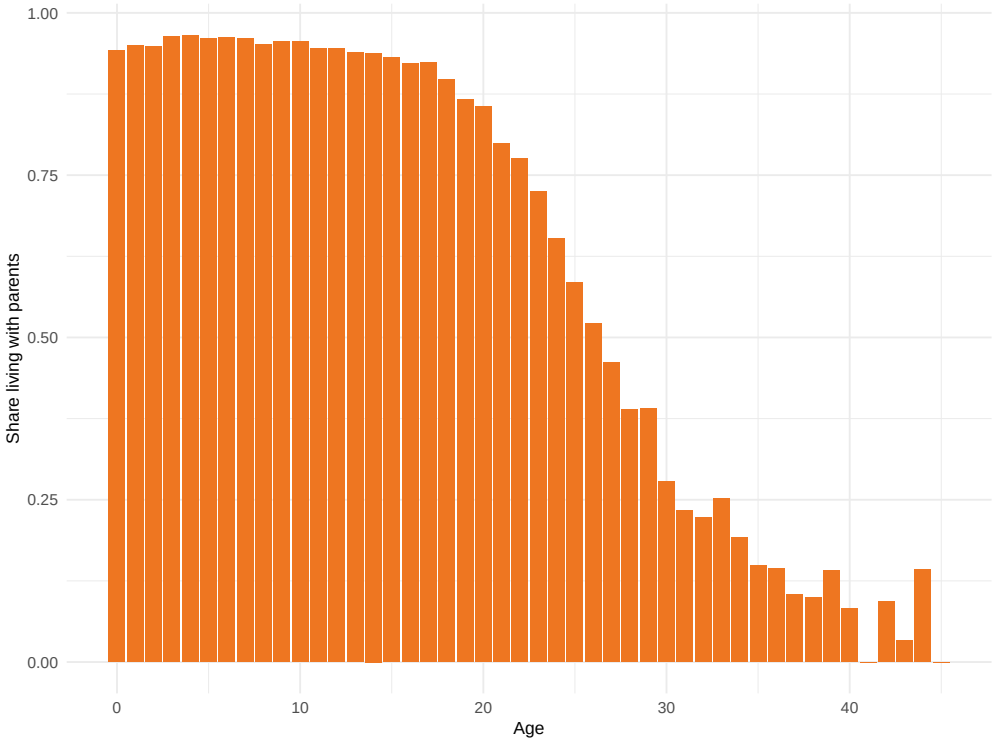


Figure B.12: Share of US-born Arab men who live with their parents

Note: The figure depicts the share of US-born men with an Arab father who are still living with their parents. Data is from the 1920 full-count census

Table B.4: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Naming of U.S.-born Female Children to Arab Fathers

Dependent Variable: Foreign Name Index (Pre-Treatment Mean = 64.02)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Post-Dow	-10.97***	-8.518***	-11.17***	-9.648***	-9.547***
	(0.3782)	(0.6544)	(0.3804)	(0.7463)	(0.7542)
Linear Time Trend		X			
State of Birth FE			X	X	X
Household ID FE				X	
Birth Order FE				X	X
County FE				X	X
Mother ID FE					X
Observations	15,861	15,861	15,861	15,861	15,861
R^2	0.05089	0.05203	0.05950	0.48149	0.49144

Note: Sample includes U.S.-born females with a foreign-born Arab father, living in the same household as their father and at least one female sibling, and age 15 or younger at the time of the 1920 Census. The dependent variable is the Foreign Name Index (FNI). Columns progressively introduce fixed effects: linear time trend, state of birth, household ID, mother ID, county of residence, and birth order. Standard errors are clustered at the household level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table B.5: Regression Results by Father Characteristics

Dependent Variable:	FNI									
Model:	Occ Score		Share of diaspora in state		Father's years in the US		Father's literacy		Father's class of work	
	Below Median	Above Median	Below Median	Above Median	Below Median	Above Median	Illiterate	Literate	Employed	Self-employed
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	10
Post-Dow	-9.25***	-9.67***	-11.6***	-7.67***	-9.17***	-9.53***	-7.45***	-9.64***	-9.08***	-10.0***
	(1.22)	(1.28)	(1.23)	(0.921)	(1.18)	(1.35)	(1.48)	(0.901)	(1.26)	(1.23)
Fixed Effects										
Household ID	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State of Birth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Order	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	6,066	6,695	7,049	9,886	7,420	8,726	4,168	11,978	5,928	6,833
R^2	0.49609	0.48929	0.48480	0.48785	0.59795	0.57797	0.46262	0.49911	0.50768	0.47859
Median	25		0.13%		11		-		-	

Clustered (household) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

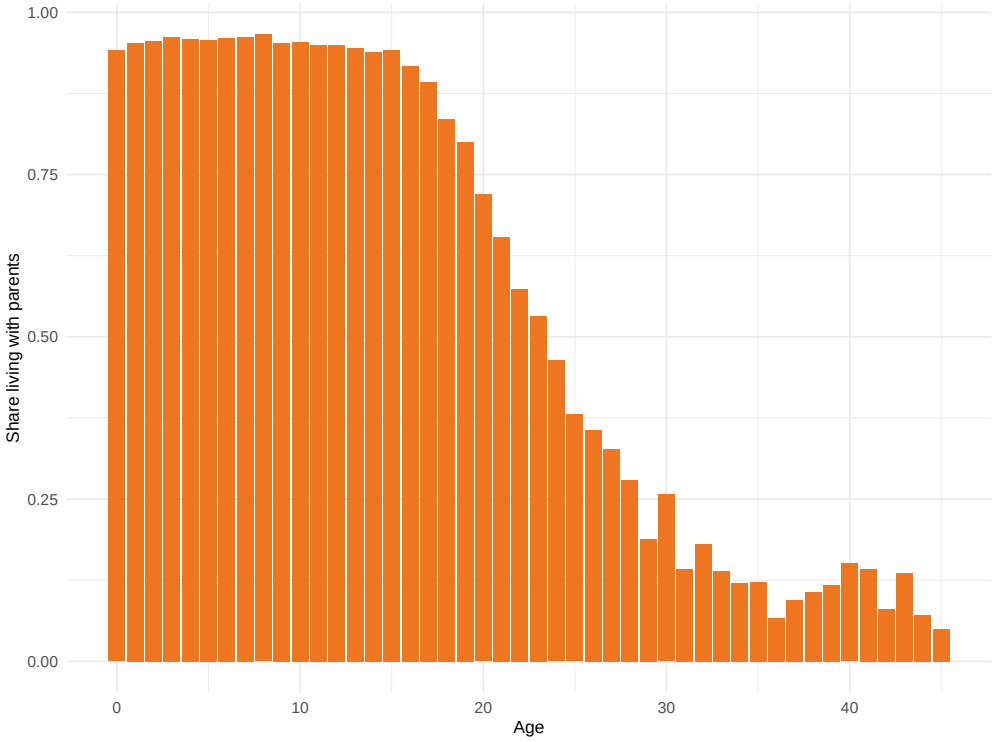


Figure B.13: Share of US-born Arab women who live with their parents

Note: The figure depicts the share of US-born women with an Arab father who are still living with their parents. Data is from the 1920 full-count census

Table B.6: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Naming of U.S.-born Children to Arab Fathers, by Legal Certainty (State of Birth)

Dependent Variable: Foreign Name Index (Pre-Treatment Mean = 65.66)			
	Full Sample (1)	Lower Certainty (non–Fourth) (2)	Full Certainty (Fourth) (3)
Post-Dow	-7.852***	-7.660***	-11.849***
	(0.7434)	(0.7602)	(3.9635)
Mother ID FE	X	X	X
State of Birth FE	X	X	X
Birth Order FE	X	X	X
County FE	X	X	X
Observations	16,464	15,558	906
R^2	0.5019	0.52285	0.50534

Note: Sample consists of U.S.-born males with a foreign-born Arab father, living in the same household as their father and at least one male sibling, age ≤ 15 at the 1920 census. "Full certainty" corresponds to Fourth Circuit states defined by *state of birth* (`bpl`): Maryland (02400), Virginia (05100), West Virginia (05400), North Carolina (03700), South Carolina (04500). Standard errors clustered at the household level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.

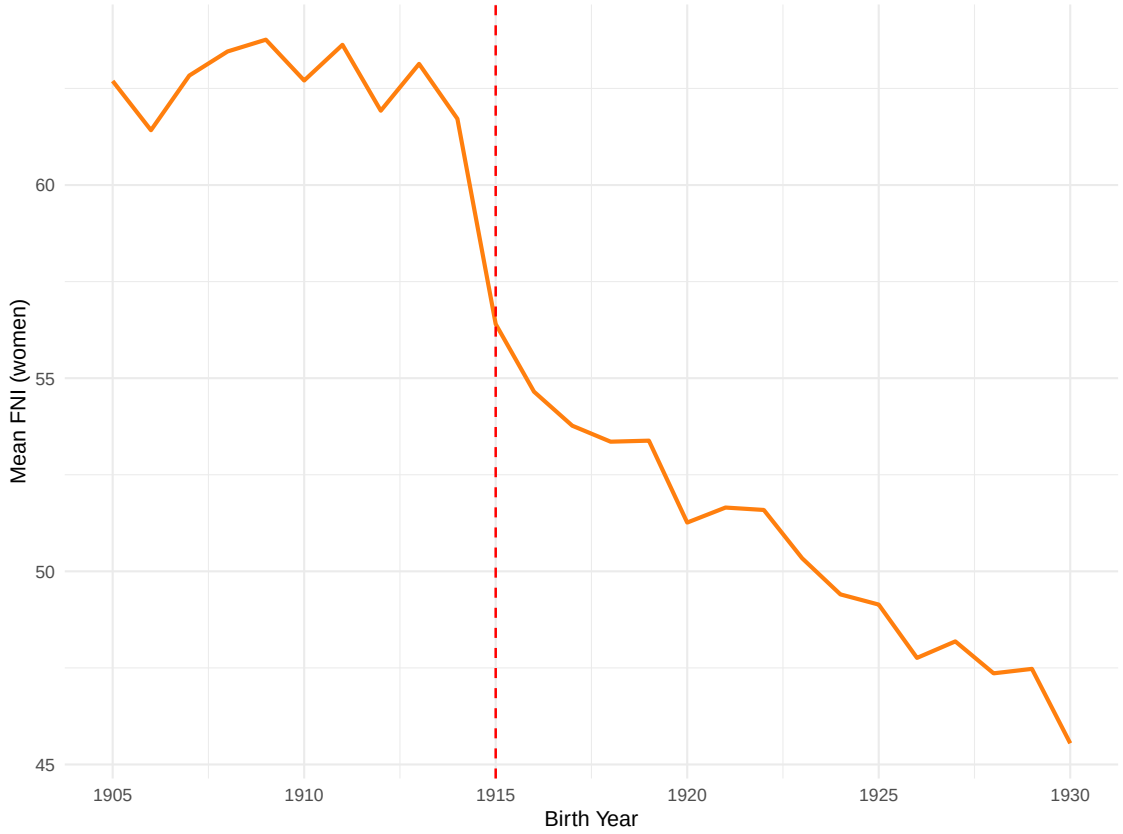


Figure B.14: Evolution of Foreign Name Index for Second-Generation (women) Arabs over birth cohorts
Note: It shows a sharp drop post-1915 in the FNI measure, highlighting a shift towards more American and less foreign names for second-generation, US-born (female) children to Arab fathers.

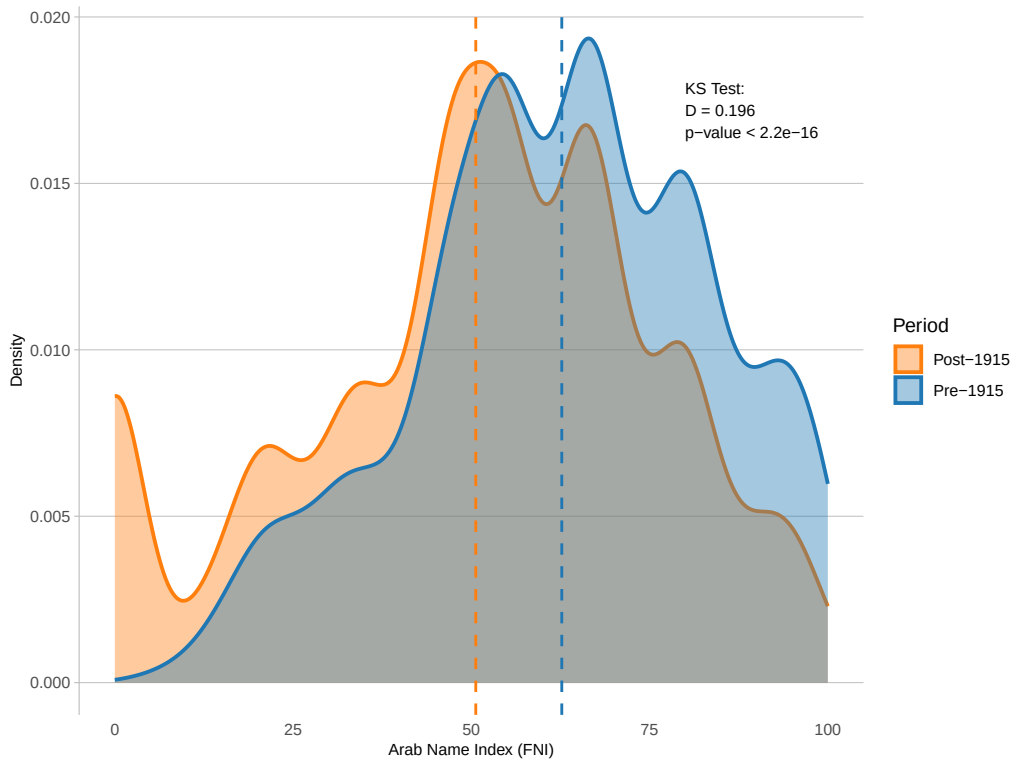


Figure B.15: Pre- and post-Dow (1915) distribution of FNI (US-born women to Arab fathers)
Note: This is computed for US-born women with Arab fathers. Figure shows a clear shift towards less distinctly Arab names. The reported p-value of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov indicates that the distributions are significantly different from each other.

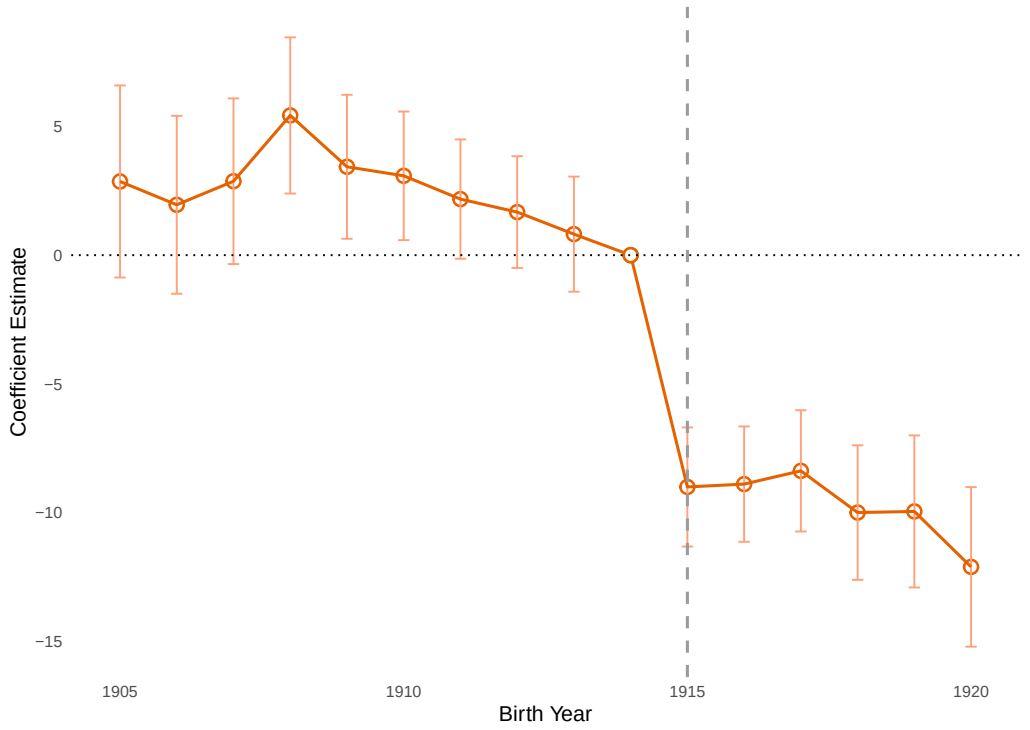


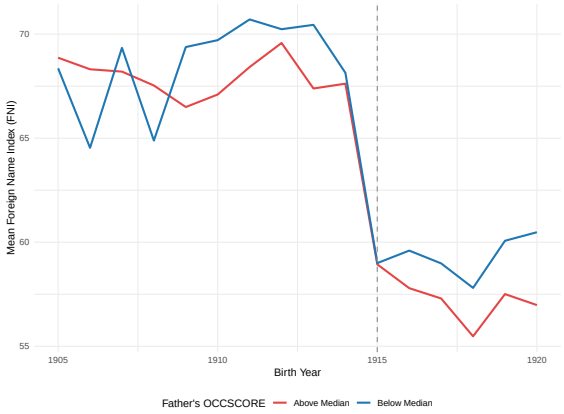
Figure B.16: Within-Family Event Study: Effect of Birth Cohort on Women's FNI

Note: This figure presents estimates from a within-family event study comparing Arab female siblings born before and after the 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling. Same sample and specification as before. The reference cohort is 1914.

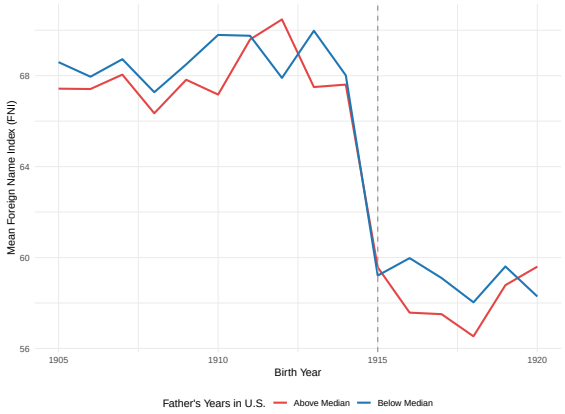
Table B.7: Effect of *Dow v. United States* on Name Americanization

	(1) FNI	(2) FNI (Trad. $\geq$80)	(3) Amer. Switch (Trad. $\geq$80)
Post-Dow	-7.913***	-13.510***	0.074**
	(0.815)	(0.844)	(0.035)
Mother FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Order FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
County of residence FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
State of Birth FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs.	12,397	2,646	2,646

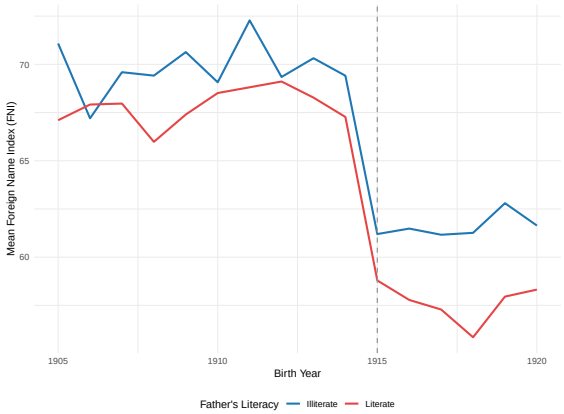
Notes: Each column reports within-family FE estimates of the effect of being born after the 1915 *Dow v. United States* ruling. Column (1) uses the Foreign Name Index (FNI) for all Arab families. Columns (2) and (3) restrict the sample to families with pre-period maximum FNI $\geq$80 (least assimilated). Dependent variable in column (3) is the expected probability of adopting an Americanized name variant. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at the household level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.



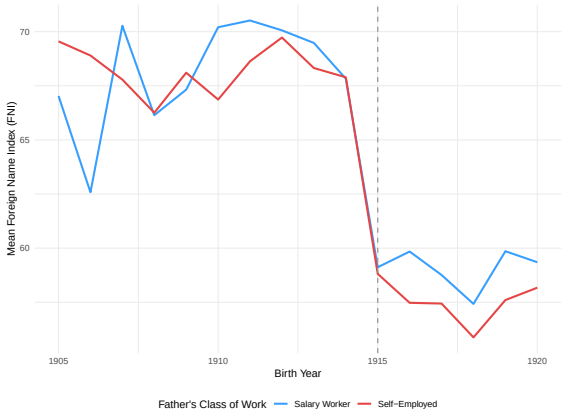
(a) By father's occupation score



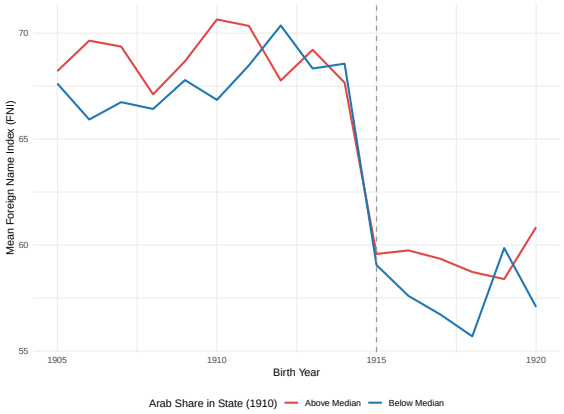
(b) By father's years in the U.S.



(c) By father's literacy



(d) By father's class of work (self employed vs works for wages)



(e) By state of birth in the pre-period

Figure B.17: Evolution of the median FNI by birth year for second-generation Arabs, differentiated by father's characteristics and state of birth

Note: Figure (a) differentiates between father's occupation score which is a constructed variable that from IPUMS assigns occupational income scores to each occupation. The median score is 25. Figure (b) differentiates between father's residency in the US being below or above median. This is computed at the birth year of the child. Figure (c) differentiates between fathers who are literate and those who are not. Figure (d) differentiates between self employed fathers and those who work for wages. Lastly, Figure (e) differentiates between states of birth in 1910 that are below or above the median share of the Arab diaspora.

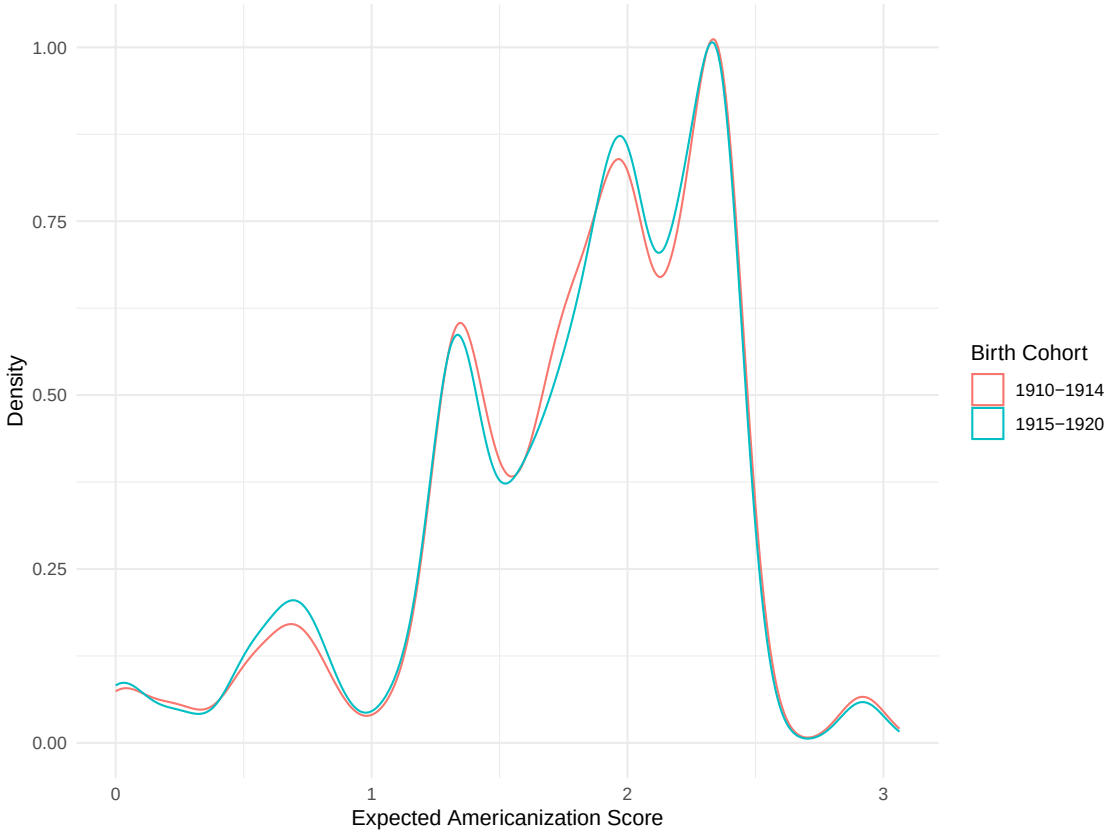


Figure B.18: Distributions of Americanization Scores by Cohort

Note: This figure plots the distributions of Americanization scores for pre- and post-Dow cohorts. The distributions are not statistically different from each other as indicated by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($D = 0.019$, $p = 0.226$)

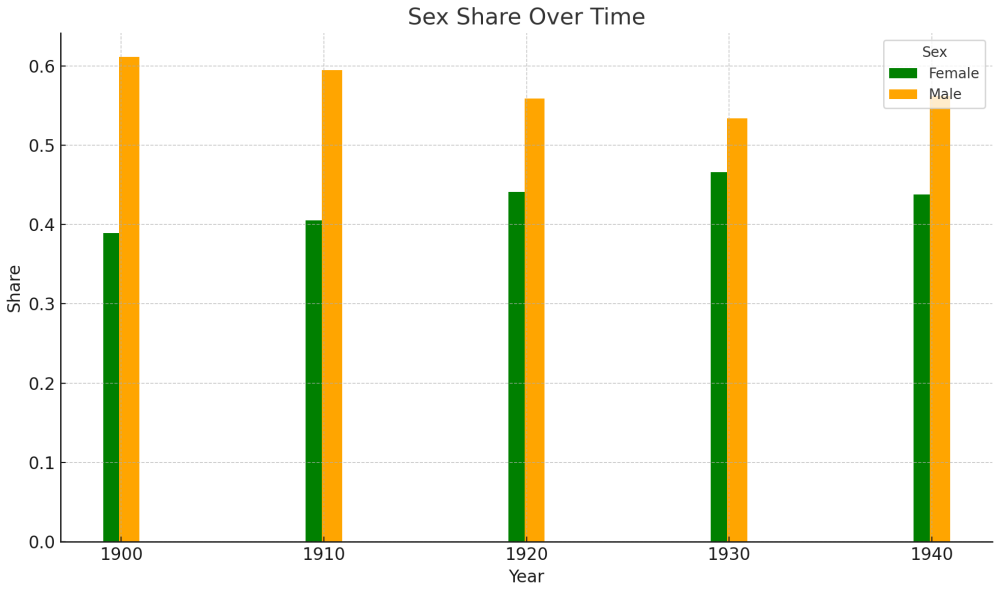


Figure B.19: Sex Composition of Arab Immigrants Across Census Waves

Note: This figure plots the share of Arab men and women in the U.S. census across available waves. The distribution remains relatively balanced over time, with no evidence of a stark gender imbalance in the Arab immigrant population.

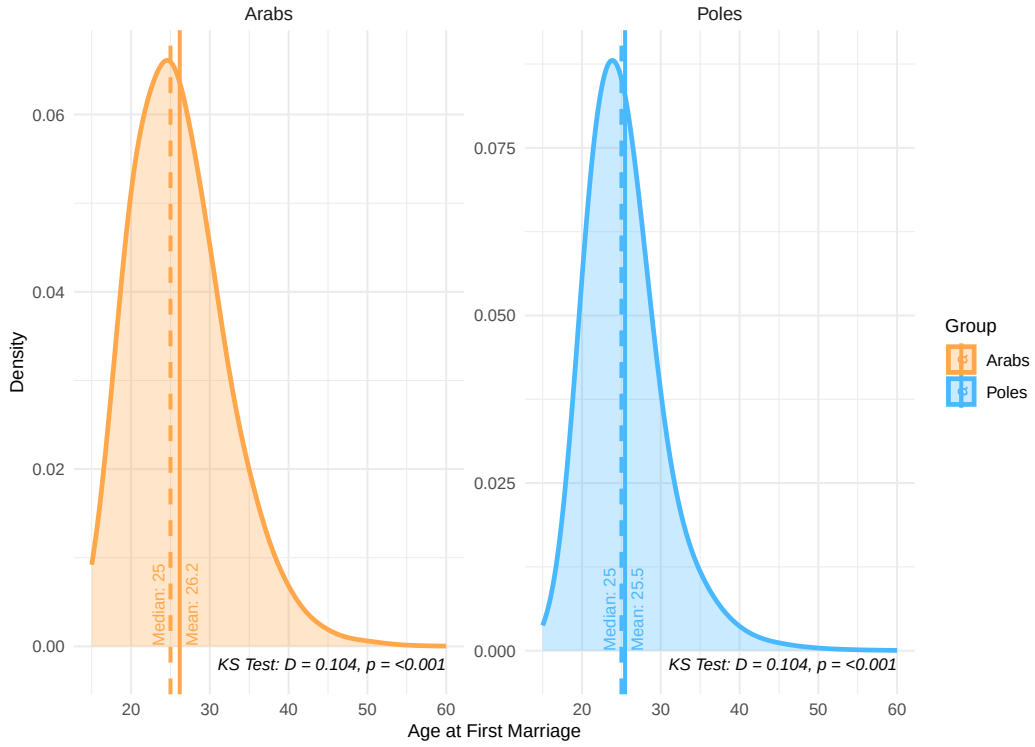


Figure B.20: Age at first marriage, Arab vs. Polish men (1930 sample)

Note: Figure plots the full distribution of age at first marriage for Arab and Polish men. Both groups peak at roughly 25 years, yet the Arab density is flatter and more right-skewed—yielding a higher mean and greater dispersion. A Kolmogorov–Smirnov test rejects equality of the two distributions.

Table B.8: Effect of *Dow v. US* on Intermarriage and Residential Integration

	Intermarriage (1)	Residential Integration (2)
Arab	2.504***	1.471***
	(0.306)	(0.277)
Post-Dow × Arab	3.017***	-0.728*
	(0.339)	(0.295)
Observations	939,481	975,843
Adjusted R^2	0.119	0.053
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes
FE: County-Year	Yes	Yes
FE: State-Year	Yes	Yes
FE: County	Yes	Yes

Note: This table uses stacked repeated cross sections of the different census waves. Column (1) uses a sample of first-generation Arab and Polish men who are married and at least 15 years old in each census wave. Column (2) includes household heads only, to avoid double counting, from each census wave. Post-Dow is defined for census years 1920 and 1930. Individual controls include age, class of work (wage worker or self-employed), labor force status (employed or not), years of residency in the US, and English-speaking ability. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust and reported in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.

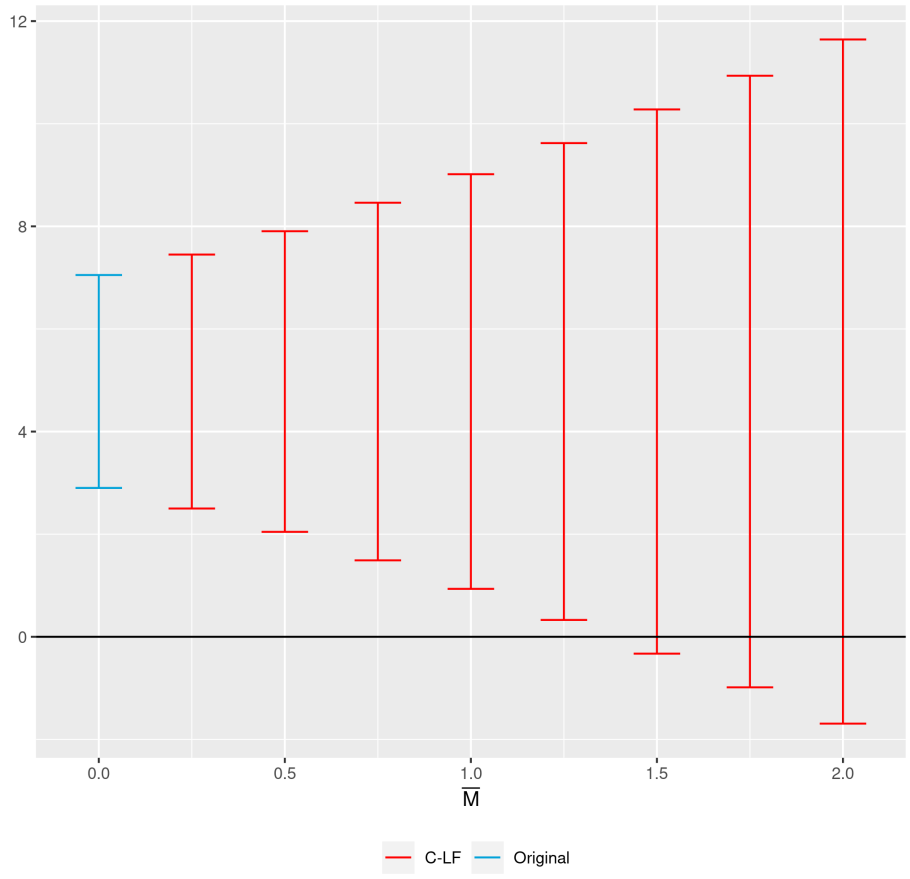


Figure B.21: Honest-DiD "honesty curve" ($\Delta^{\mathrm{RM}}(\bar{M})$ bound, 90% C-LF)

Note: The plot shows the average post-1915 Arab–Polish treatment effect under increasingly allowances for post-treatment bias. The blue line $(\bar{M} = 0)$ reproduces the *classical* DiD point estimate and its 90 % confidence interval—i.e. it assumes exact parallel trends. Red lines re-estimate the effect for a grid of multipliers $\bar{M} \in \{0.25, 0.50, \ldots, 3\}$ in the relative-magnitude bound $\|\delta_{\text{post}}\|_\infty \leq \bar{M} \, \|\delta_{\text{pre}}\|_\infty$; error bars are 90 % conditional least-favourable (C-LF) intervals from `HonestDiD`. The red interval stays strictly above zero for $\bar{M} \leq 1.25$, meaning the Arab inter-marriage rise is robust so long as post-1915 confounding is no more than 25 % larger than the largest pre-1915 Arab–Polish gap. At $\bar{M} \approx 1.5$ the interval first touches zero, indicating that a hidden bias at least 50 % bigger than the pre-trend would be required to fully nullify the estimate.

Table B.9: Effect of Less Foreign-Sounding Names (FNI $\leq$ 25) on Log Annual Income, Second-Generation Arab Men

	Dependent variable: Log Annual Income			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Less foreign-sounding (FNI $\leq$ 25)	0.008	-0.026	-0.030	-0.050
	(0.105)	(0.100)	(0.097)	(0.101)
Post-Dow	-0.117*	-0.101†	-0.099†	-0.086
	(0.052)	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.059)
Post-Dow $\times$ Less foreign-sounding	0.114	0.184†	0.192†	0.224*
	(0.105)	(0.095)	(0.104)	(0.105)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry FE	No	Yes	No	Yes
Occupation FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,075	3,075	3,075	3,075
Adj. R^2	0.16	0.21	0.23	0.25
Mean of Dep. Var.			1142	

Notes: The dependent variable is log annual wage and salary income in 1940. The sample and specification are identical to Table 4. All regressions include controls for father's socioeconomic characteristics and fixed effects for birth year and state. Columns (2)–(4) successively add industry and occupation fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. Significance levels: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table B.10: Effect of Less Foreign-Sounding Names (FNI $\leq$ 25) on Industry and Occupational Outcomes, Second-Generation Arab Men

	(1) Manufacturing	**(2) Self-Employed**	**(3) Self-Employed, Non-Farm**
Less foreign-sounding (FNI $\leq$ 25)	1.103	-0.095*	-0.083*
	(1.179)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Post-Dow	-0.016	-0.088***	-0.083***
	(0.035)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Post-Dow $\times$ Less foreign-sounding (FNI $\leq$ 25)	-0.248*	0.068†	0.066†
	(0.097)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,928	4,117	4,069
Adj. R^2	0.03	0.09	0.09
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.569	0.251	0.241

Notes: The table reports difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of having a less foreign-sounding name (FNI $\leq$ 25) after the *Dow v. United States* ruling (1915) on industry and self-employment outcomes among second-generation Arab men linked from the 1920 to the 1940 Census. Column (1) reports marginal effects for employment in manufacturing (an immigrant-intensive sector). Columns (2)–(3) report effects for self-employment overall and for self-employment outside agriculture, respectively. All regressions include father-level controls (occupation score, literacy, years in the U.S., English proficiency, and self-employment status), as well as fixed effects for birth year and state. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. Significance levels: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table B.11: Comparison of Linked and Unlinked Children (1920 Baseline Characteristics)

	Linked	Unlinked	Difference
Child characteristics (1920)			
Foreign Name Index	63.61	63.14	0.471
Literate	0.88	0.82	0.064***
Speaks English	0.43	0.40	0.032***
Father characteristics (1920)			
Occupational score	31.04	29.31	1.729***
Literate	0.88	0.82	0.079***
Speaks English	1.92	1.89	0.028***
Self-employed	0.57	0.48	0.089***
In labor force	1.98	1.97	0.005**
Years in U.S.	18.21	16.77	1.438***

Notes: This table compares children of Arab fathers observed in the 1920 Census who are successfully linked to the 1940 Census (via the *Census Tree* genealogical infrastructure) to those who are not. Means are reported for each group, with the final column showing the simple difference. Asterisks denote statistical significance of the difference: $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$. Linked individuals are more likely to be literate, to speak English, and to have fathers with higher occupational status, longer residence in the United States, and higher rates of self-employment. This indicates positive selection into linkage, suggesting that the matched sample overrepresents more assimilated or socioeconomically established families.