

Movement and Occupational Hierarchy of Working White Males: A Longitudinal Analysis of First and Second Generation European Immigrants in the late 19th Century

Sula Sarkar and Rebecca Vick

Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota



Minnesota Population Center

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Immigration into the United States peaked around the turn of the 20th century with 22 million European immigrants entering the country between 1880 and 1900. During this period, the number of foreign born living in the United States doubled from almost 7 million to about 14 million.

Most of the immigrants were of working age, comprising a larger fraction of the labor force than that of the total population. The immigrants raised a second generation whose social, cultural, and economic characteristics were heavily influenced by their culturally diverse parents. In our study, we look at the assimilation of first and second generation immigrants by looking at their occupational characteristics and spatial location at two different time points - 1880 and 1900

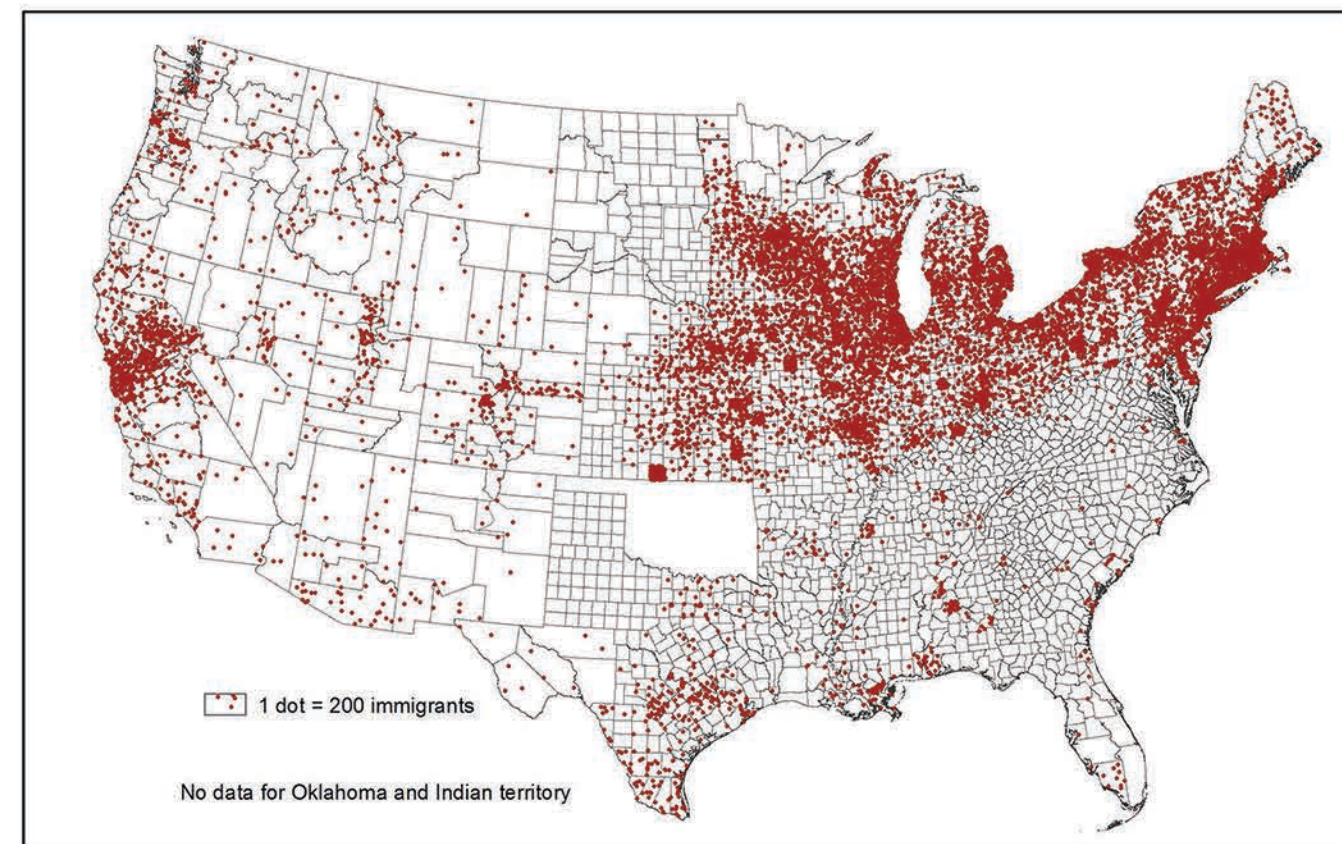


Figure 1: Concentration of immigrants in 1880, United States. Figure 1 shows the county of location of all foreign born persons identified in the 1880 census. Most European immigrants were concentrated in the Northeast and the Upper Midwest.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Did immigrants and second generation immigrants move up the occupational ladder and how did their occupational mobility compare to the native-born?
2. How did the first and second generation immigrants move spatially within the United States?

DATA AND METHODS

We use the IPUMS Linked Representative Samples of the United States, which consist of a 1880 complete count database linked to a one in one hundred national random sample of the population of 1900. Our study takes into account only the "primary" links and not the other household members who were linked separately.

Table 1 lists the immigrants/second generation immigrants and the control groups that we selected from the longitudinal sample for our study. **Table 2** lists the occupational classification system. The occupational rank is assigned by the authors for statistical modeling.

Study Groups	Birthplace	Parents Birthplace	Total N
Cohort 1	Europe	Variable	822
Cohort 2	United States	Variable	5,887
Cohort 3	United States	Europe for "both" parents	551
Cohort 4	United States	United States for "both" parents	5,095

Table 1: The different COHORTS used in our analysis. We compare COHORT 1 with COHORT 2 and COHORT 3 with COHORT 4. All the persons in the four cohorts are WHITE MALES between the ages of 20 to 50 years old in 1880 and subsequently 40 to 70 years old in 1900

Occupational hierarchy	Occupational ranking	Immigrants in 1880, % (n)	Native-born in 1880, % (n)
White collar (Professional workers, managers, and sales workers)	1	17.15 (141)	15.70 (924)
White collar (farm managers)	2	28.22 (236)	41.35 (2,434)
Skilled trades (Carpenters and other named trades)	5	17.76 (146)	9.97 (587)
Semi-Skilled trades (Apprentices, operatives, stationary engineers, and makers)	6	18.25 (150)	8.99 (529)
Service (Janitors, waiters, watchmen, and guards)	7	1.82 (15)	0.82 (48)
Unskilled (Farm laborers)	8	3.53 (29)	11.86 (698)
Unskilled (Laborers)	9	10.34 (85)	6.13 (361)
Total		97.08 (798)	94.8 (5,581)
Unknowns		2.92 (24)	5.20 (306)

Table 2: Occupational hierarchy of immigrants and native-born in 1880. As occupational rank increases, the occupations change from blue to white collar. Any person with a non-occupational response in both 1880 and 1900 was omitted from this analysis.

RESULTS

We take difference of occupational ranking for the same person. We find no statistically significant difference ($p=0.3294$) between years 1880 and 1900. A statistically significant difference in occupational ranks ($p<0.001$) in Wilcoxon signed rank sum tests was observed for all the four cohorts in our study suggesting that all groups including the immigrants, their children, and the native-born moved up the occupational ladder.

Next we compare whether a larger number of immigrants and children of immigrants moved up the occupational ladder than the native-born. For immigrants versus the native-born (cohorts 1 and 2) and statistically significant difference ($p<0.001$) for children of immigrants versus children of the native-born (cohorts 3 and 4)

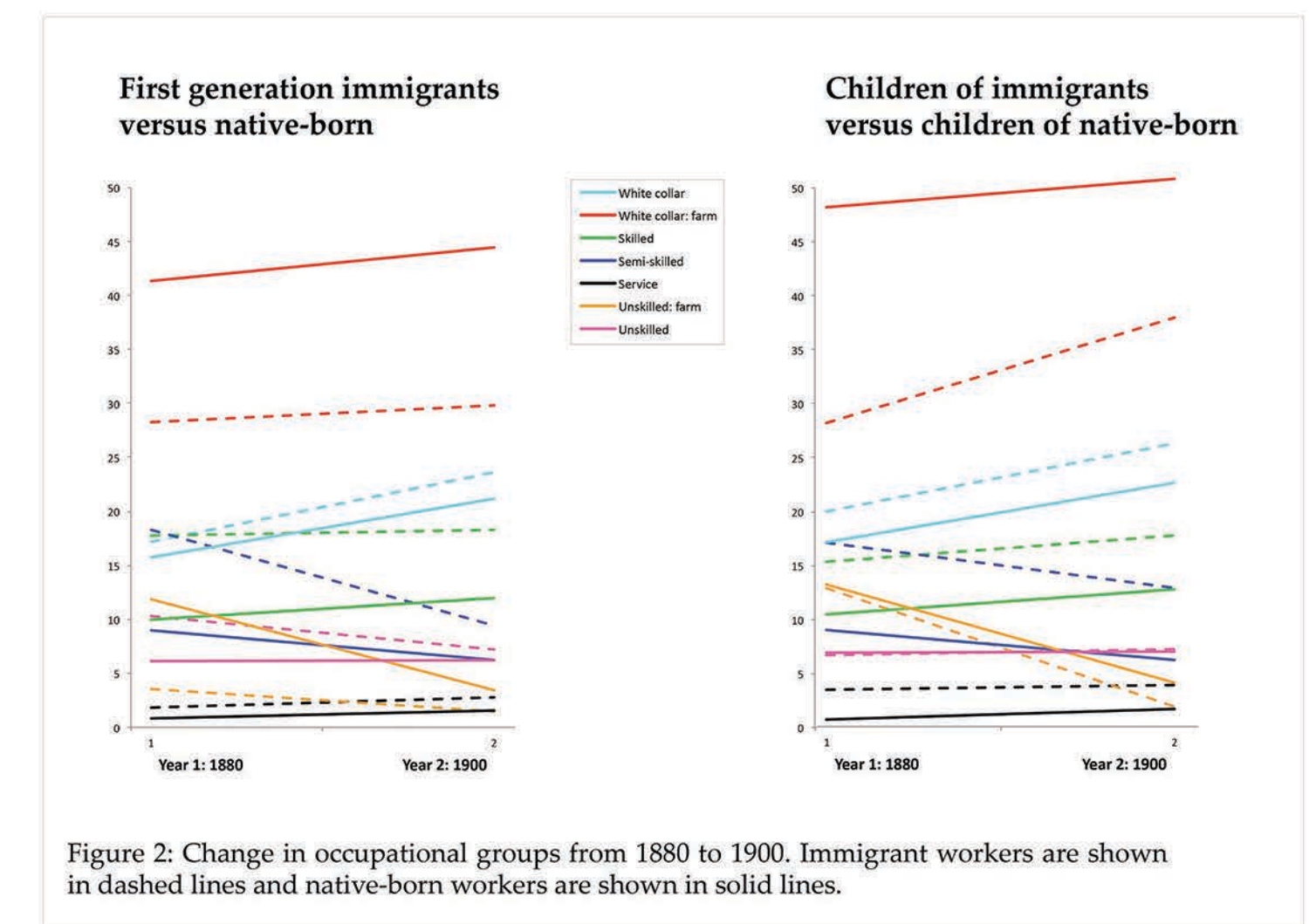


Figure 2: Change in occupational groups from 1880 to 1900. Immigrant workers are shown in dashed lines and native-born workers are shown in solid lines.

DISCUSSION

We conclude that immigrants have moved up the occupational ladder from blue to white collar jobs, but their advance is in no way significantly greater than that of the native-born. On the other hand, there are more children of immigrants who have ascended from blue to white collar jobs than their corresponding cohort, the children of the native-born.

MAPPING IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

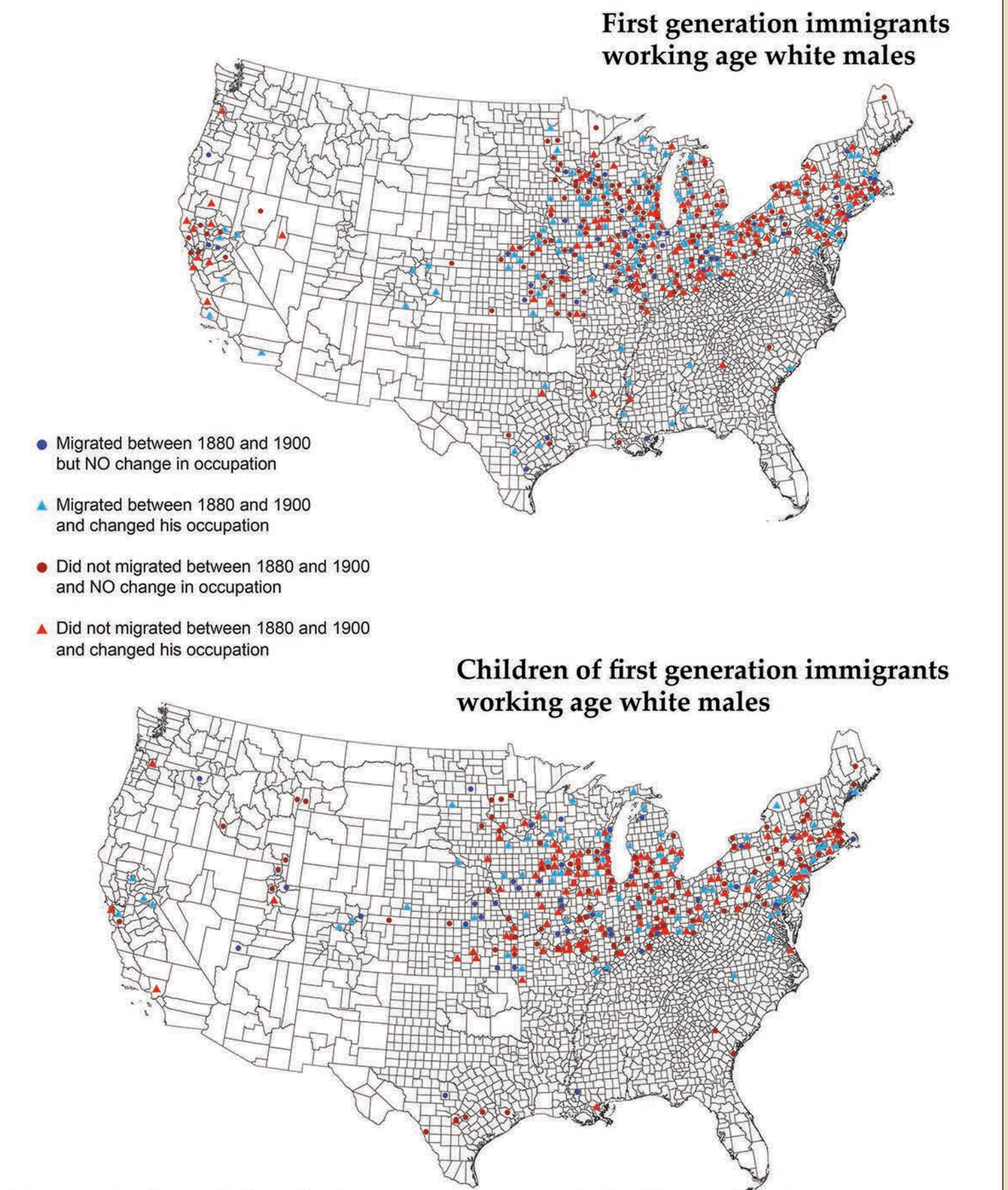


Figure 3: Each symbol in the figure represents one linked first generation immigrant or their children. Red represents males who moved between 1880 and 1900. Blue represents an immigrant who did not move. The triangle signifies a change in occupation between 1880 and 1900.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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