Immigrants Assimilation, Status, and Slavery.

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November 21, 2025

Abstract

Social status is a neglected dimension of immigrant assimilation. This paper examines its causal role in the Southern U.S. between 1850 and 1870, where slaveholding signaled elite standing and social acceptance. Using a panel of linked individuals from Census data, I exploit the abolition of slavery in 1865 as an exogenous disruption to this status order. I employ a triple-difference design that compares European immigrant and U.S.-born slaveholders to their non-slaveholding counterparts before and after emancipation, and I proxy assimilation through occupational standing. The results show that only immigrant slaveholders experienced a sharp occupational downgrading after 1865, while all other groups maintained or improved their positions. This decline is concentrated within white-collar occupations—those least dependent on enslaved labor—ruling out explanations based on skills, technology, discrimination, or general equilibrium effects. The evidence suggests that emancipation removed a visible signal of legitimacy that had previously granted immigrants access to elite jobs.

1 Introduction

Immigration and the integration of immigrants are among the most salient social and political issues of our time. In the most recent U.S. presidential election, debates did not center solely on how many immigrants should be admitted, but increasingly on how well immigrants integrate into American society. This concern resonates globally and is mirrored in the economics literature, where "Migration" has become a major research topic and "Immigrant Assimilation" an increasingly important subfield. A growing body of evidence shows that successful immigrant integration matters not only for immigrants themselves but also for host societies: integrated immigrants increase aggregate productivity (Burchardi et al., 2020), display lower rates of criminal activity and recidivism (Pinotti, 2017), and decrease political backlash (Alesina and Ferrara, 2005; Tabellini, 2020). Economists have identified multiple channels shaping integration (see Abramitzky and Boustan, 2017). Yet one fundamental dimension remains underexplored: social status. The latter, broadly defined as the relative rank of an individual within a social hierarchy, determines how people are perceived and,

in turn, whether they are accepted as members of the community. It can be inherited (through race, gender, or family networks) or achieved (through education, occupation, or marriage). If immigrants' ability to integrate depends critically on holding the "right" markers of status, then integration is not simply a matter of overcoming economic or cultural frictions. It also requires access to, or recognition of, the symbols of legitimacy that host societies value. In this sense, status operates as a distinct barrier to immigrant assimilation—one that can persist even when other obstacles recede. Indeed, as Fouka (2019) and Abdelgadir and Fouka (2020) show, policies that disregard immigrants' perceived status can even backfire. This paper examines the role of status for immigrant integration in a particularly stark historical setting: the U.S. South before and after the Civil War. In this context, slaveholding functioned as a central marker of elite status. Beyond its economic value, the ownership of enslaved people signaled prosperity, legitimacy, and membership in the "ruling race" (Gleeson, 2001). For European immigrants, slaveholding provided a visible badge of acceptance into Southern society. As Oakes (1998) observed, the increase in foreign-born slaveholders in the 1850s reflected how ownership of slaves became for many immigrants "the single most important symbol of their success in the New World." I exploit the abolition of slavery in 1865 as a natural experiment that abruptly removed this marker of status. This setting provides a quasi-experimental environment where an exogenous shock—the abolition of slavery—instantaneously stripped away a visible and widely recognized marker of social status. This makes it possible to identify how status, conditional on the observable endowment of human capital and wealth, shapes immigrants' economic trajectories. Such identification is exceedingly difficult in contemporary contexts, where status signals are more diffuse, endogenous, and intertwined with education, language, or occupational sorting. The relevance today lies in the persistence of status-driven barriers to immigrant integration. While slavery as an institution is gone, societies continue to rely on visible markers to categorize outsiders and to decide who is granted access to elite or middle-tier opportunities. Results highlight that when a key marker of status is removed, immigrants' upward mobility prospects collapse disproportionately, even when they are otherwise comparable in terms of wealth or skills. This underscores a general mechanism: integration depends not only on productivity or human capital but also on whether immigrants can credibly signal alignment with the host society's norms of prestige and respectability.

Empirically, I use a newly linked, balanced panel of individuals observed in the 1850–1870 Censuses and estimate a triple-difference specification that exploits both within-individual variation and across-group contrasts. The identifying variation compares occupational mobility for European immigrants who owned slaves in 1850 to two natural benchmarks: (i) immigrant non-slaveholders and (ii) U.S.-born slaveholders. The estimator absorbs county×year shocks and allows returns to baseline endowments (e.g., education and wealth rank) to evolve flexibly over time. The key identifying coefficient isolates the post-1865 residual change in occupational status that is unique to immigrant slaveholders, net of average shifts experienced by comparable natives and immigrant peers. This approach aims to recover the effect of losing a visible social credential—slave ownership—rather than reflecting wealth destruction or differential technological exposure. I further control for baseline

industry×year interactions and cluster standard errors at both the county and baseline-industry level. Identification rests on three components. First, the use of linked Census data enables the construction of a balanced panel that tracks the same individuals across three waves, addressing concerns about selection due to migration, mortality, or sample entry. Second, the abolition of slavery in 1865 constituted an abrupt and largely unforeseen institutional shock. While the Civil War made emancipation conceivable, its timing, permanence, and enforcement remained uncertain up to ratification, limiting the scope for anticipatory responses. Third, the identifying assumption is validated empirically: an event–study analysis reveals that the occupational trajectories of immigrant slaveholders evolved similarly to those of both immigrant non-slaveholders and native slaveholders prior to 1865. That is, the gap-in-gap remained flat in the pre-period, both across immigrant groups and between immigrants and natives, lending support to the parallel trends assumption in triple differences. This allows a causal interpretation of the post-emancipation divergence as the loss of a public status marker, not driven by differential pre-trends or endogenous selection.

The results show a clear and specific pattern: European immigrant slaveholders suffered a marked occupational penalty after 1865. This decline is not plausibly a generic wealth shock—if it were, U.S.-born slaveholders, who experienced the same nominal loss of enslaved property, would display similar or larger downgrades; instead, native slaveholders on average maintained or even improved their occupational standing after emancipation. Nor is the pattern consistent with broad-based labor-market discrimination against immigrants: the post-1865 loss is tightly concentrated in elite, prestige-sensitive occupations (the top segment of the occupational hierarchy), not in manual or semi-skilled jobs that depended most on enslaved labor. Because these elite roles are relatively less directly intensive in enslaved inputs, their selective collapse among immigrant slaveholders points away from a productivity / lost-input story and toward a mechanism of status loss—the disappearance of a visible credential that had uniquely facilitated immigrants' access to local elites. In other words, the abolition of slavery curtailed a crucial assimilation pathway for European immigrants. By stripping away the most visible and codified social credential available to outsiders, emancipation disproportionately harmed those who had seemed most integrated before the war. Consistent with the integration paradox highlighted by Finseraas and Sønderskov (2025), the very immigrants who had invested most heavily in adopting the dominant status marker of Southern society turned out to be the most vulnerable to exclusion once that marker lost its value. To uncover this pattern, I estimate a triple-difference design that compares changes in occupational status for European immigrant slaveholders relative to (i) immigrant non-slaveholders and (ii) U.S.-born slaveholders. This richer counterfactual allows me to isolate the immigrant-specific component of the post-1865 adjustment, netting out average shocks to immigrant labor demand and to slaveholding households more broadly. The identifying assumption—common trends across groups—is supported by a triple-difference event study showing that pre-trends are flat: the difference between immigrant slaveholders and the combined control group evolves similarly to the analogous difference between U.S.-born slaveholders and non-slaveholders prior to abolition. After 1865, immigrant slaveholders diverge sharply, experiencing a significant occupational downgrade not matched by any of the

comparison groups. The disruption manifests along two margins. First, at the extensive margin immigrant slaveholders became significantly less likely—unconditionally—to occupy white-collar posts, the segment of the labor market where reputational capital, referrals, and visible signals of legitimacy matter most; this relative shortfall is not matched by a compensating inflow into operative or unskilled work. Second, conditional on remaining in white-collar employment, those who stayed were systematically shuffled into lower-prestige positions: within-occupation estimates show a precisely estimated decline in the occupational income score. Together, these margins point to selection out of observable, high-status roles for some immigrant slaveholders and downgrading within the white-collar hierarchy for those who remained—patterns that are difficult to square with a pure productivity or "lost input" story. Crucially, this pattern does not reflect selection into migration or slaveholding. I confirm this by shifting focus to the second generation—children of immigrant and native households. These individuals did not choose whether to migrate, where to settle, or whether their parents would become slaveholders. Estimating a triple-difference event study with second-generation individuals confirms the main findings: even among children, those whose families had held slaves experience a sharp and persistent post-1865 penalty. Importantly, the triple-difference design passes a direct test of the identifying assumption: the difference in pre-trends between second-generation immigrant slaveholders and non-slaveholders is statistically indistinguishable from the analogous difference among natives. The heterogeneity analysis sharpens this interpretation: the penalty is concentrated among longstanding slaveholding households (i.e., those who were slaveholders both in 1850 and 1860) and among moderately wealthy immigrants for whom ownership had functioned as the principal social credential. In other words, the consequence was not a uniform erosion of productive capacity but a re-ranking of immigrants in prestige-sensitive labor markets. Bottan et al. (2025) provide a useful framework for interpreting these findings by distinguishing between two channels through which status preferences operate: self-image ("feeling rich") and social-image ("looking rich"). Their study finds that social-image concerns tend to dominate, reinforcing the idea that status is not only an internal measure of self-worth but also an external signal used to secure access to opportunity. In this sense, slaveholding in the antebellum South can be interpreted as a particularly stark form of "looking rich": ownership of enslaved laborers was a public, visible badge that signaled prosperity and conferred membership in the "ruling race."

This paper speaks to three strands of literature. Firstly, it contributes to the vast literature that examines the determinants and consequences of immigrant assimilation. Economists have identified multiple channels shaping integration: time spent in the host country (Abramitzky et al., 2014), the arrival of new immigrant groups that are culturally more distant (Fouka et al., 2022), age at arrival (Arellano-Bover and San, 2025), coercive schooling (Maruthiah, 2024), religious organizations (Gagliarducci and Tabellini, 2024), or home-country violence (Zaiour, 2024). Much of this work has focused on cultural outcomes. Recent research has also examined how discrimination and forced assimilation policies shape immigrant behavior. Gould and Klor (2016) find that discrimination against Muslims after 9/11 discouraged assimilation, while Fouka (2019) and Ab-

delgadir and Fouka (2020) show that coercive policies such as the prohibition of German-language schooling or the French headscarf ban can strengthen minority identification rather than weaken it. Fouka (2020) provides the first causal evidence of such a backlash, showing that forced assimilation policies can instigate a strengthening of minority identity. Conversely, Saavedra (2021) finds that Japanese and German immigrants responded to wartime hostility by increasing their assimilation efforts. This heterogeneity highlights that immigrant responses to external shocks depend heavily on the institutional and social environment. This paper contributes to this literature in several ways. First, it identifies a novel channel of assimilation: social status. While prior work has emphasized human capital, cultural proximity, and policy environments, I show that immigrants' ability to integrate also hinges on whether they possess markers of legitimacy recognized by the host society. Second, I exploit a difference-in-differences setting that follows the same individuals across successive U.S. Census waves in a newly constructed balanced panel, allowing me to track occupational trajectories. Third, whereas most studies examine shocks or policies that facilitated assimilation, this paper investigates the consequences of a negative shock—the removal of a key social credential. Ex-ante, it is not clear whether the forces that promote integration operate symmetrically with those that obstruct it.

The second strand of literature to which this paper relates is the economics of slavery and slaveholders. American slavery has long been the most studied institution in the field of U.S. History, yet the economics literature on slaveholders is more recent. The advantages of slavery for Southern agriculture have been well documented (Fogel and Engerman, 1974; Wright, 1974), and scholars have emphasized the multiple roles slaves played as agricultural labor, collateral for credit, and liquid assets (Gonzalez et al., 2017; Martin, 2010; Tadman, 1990). Saleh (2024) studies the consequences of trade booms on labor coercion in Egypt during the First Globalization Era. Martins et al. (2023) study the effect of the partial compensation that slaveholders were granted following the 1834 slave emancipation in the British Cape Colony on health outcomes. Galli et al. (2024) offers a long-run analysis of elite persistence in the slave society of the West Indies. The abolition of slavery was a massive wealth shock, but recent works have highlighted the remarkable persistence of the Southern planter elite. Bellani et al. (2020) show that former slave owners remained dominant in Southern legislatures for decades after the Civil War, while Ager et al. (2021) demonstrate that their descendants eventually recovered the wealth lost through emancipation. This persistence was driven by mechanisms ranging from marriage-market advantages. Other investigated mechanisms are continued access to cheap Black labor under coercive arrangements, as well as westward migration to frontier areas with weak institutions where former elites could recreate hierarchical social orders (Bazzi et al., 2023; Rubio-Ramos, 2022). While this literature has focused on native-born slaveholders, I highlight a previously overlooked group: European immigrants who used slaveholding as a means of assimilation. Owning slaves is no longer a relevant credential, but parallel mechanisms exist: elite educational degrees, citizenship status, skin color, religious affiliation, or even the neighborhood of residence. What remains constant is the role of status as a gatekeeper, shaping access to high-return occupational paths and mediating the translation of

economic resources into social capital. In this sense, this historical setting offers external validity not by replicating modern markers of belonging, but by isolating the pure effect of losing a socially recognized status signal. This insight informs current debates on immigrant assimilation, labor market discrimination, and social cohesion: it shows that status can be as decisive as skills, and that shocks to the value or credibility of immigrants' status markers—whether through policy changes, credential recognition, or social stigma—have profound consequences for their integration.

Finally, this paper contributes to the economics literature on status. Previous works have shown that status plays an important role across very different settings. In Uganda, obesity acts as a marker of status, facilitating access to credit (Macchi, 2023). In South Korea, children's education and related expenditures on schooling confer status and help explain persistently low fertility rates (Kim et al., 2024). In India, households can signal wealth by withdrawing female family members from the labor force, a practice that contributes to the country's high female labor force non-participation (Munshi and Singh, 2024). A more established strand is the literature on conspicuous consumption, from Veblen (1989) seminal theory of "pecuniary emulation" in which lower-status individuals try to emulate the consumption patterns of those at a higher level of status even if they do not have the means to engage in such consumption behavior. A substantial body of evidence shows that individuals care not only about their absolute resources but also about how they compare to others around them. For instance, subjective well-being tends to decline as the average income of neighbors rises (Perez-Truglia, 2020), and individuals often prefer to relocate to lower-income areas to improve their relative standing (Bottan and Perez-Truglia, 2022). Similarly, demand for status goods highlights how people invest in visible consumption to signal economic success to their peers (Bursztyn et al., 2017). Taken together, these studies underscore that status is a powerful determinant of economic behavior. What remains largely unexplored is how status interacts with immigrant integration. The institution of slavery has not previously been conceptualized as a form of status capital. Yet in the antebellum South, slaveholding was a categorical marker: a binary, highly visible signal of belonging to the local elite.

2 Historical Context

2.1 European Immigrants in the Southern U.S.

The nineteenth century witnessed a sharp rise in European immigration to the United States, particularly beginning in the 1840s. This wave was propelled by both economic hardship and political upheaval in Europe, especially the Irish potato famine and the failed revolutions of 1848 in the German states. Technological improvements in transatlantic shipping further lowered costs and reduced travel time, opening migration opportunities to a broader set of households. Standard narratives emphasize that the South was an unlikely destination for these migrants. The region's predominantly rural economy, its entrenched reliance on enslaved labor, and its Protestant Anglo-American culture are often portrayed as creating a hostile environment for foreigners. By contrast, the urbanizing North, with its industrial demand for labor and dense port cities, is remembered

as the natural entry point for European immigrants. This interpretation has led historians to overstate the extent to which immigrants "avoided" the South. Closer examination of the evidence, however, reveals a more nuanced story. Early scholarship by MacGill (1909) challenged the notion of immigrant absence in the South, documenting their presence. South Carolina, for instance, was described by Maguire (1868) as "probably the most Irish of any of the States of the Union," highlighting both the scale and cultural visibility of Irish settlement. Weaver (1947) underscored the important role of immigrant groups in Southern urban centers before the Civil War, complicating the image of a purely native-born white South.

2.2 Slavery in the U.S.

Prior to the Civil War, Southern White households had greater wealth than Northern ones across the entire distribution (Ager et al., 2021). Major port cities were critical nodes of immigrant settlement. Charleston, which by the end of the colonial period ranked as the fourth largest city in North America, served as a magnet for European arrivals and a hub of Atlantic trade. Even more striking was the role of New Orleans: between 1834 and 1844 it was the busiest port in the United States, and by 1850 it ranked second only to New York in foreign immigrant inflows (Gleeson, 2001). The city's economic dynamism was well recognized: contemporary observers noted that "there is no place in all of the states so good for making money as New Orleans" (Clark, 7 Apr., 1819). Such accounts testify to the fact that, far from being closed to outsiders, the Southern economy in certain areas offered lucrative opportunities that could rival or even exceed those available in the North. In 1860, about 21 percent of white Southern households owned at least one enslaved person, though ownership was highly concentrated: only 0.5 percent of households held more than 50 slaves (Soltow, 1975). Large planters such as Joshua J. Ward—often referred to as the "King of the Rice Planters"—epitomized this concentration of wealth and prestige. Slaveholding was not merely an economic investment; it was a credential for political influence and a gateway to the highest ranks of society. Southern politicians, judges, and legislators were disproportionately drawn from the "ruling race", underscoring the institution's dual role as both an economic asset and a badge of social distinction. The market for slaves mirrored this dual function. Prices for enslaved people rose steadily throughout the 1850s, peaking on the eve of the Civil War (Calomiris and Pritchett, 2016). The surge in prices reflected not only the profitability of plantation agriculture but also the political protection enjoyed by the institution. In cultural and symbolic terms, slavery was deeply entrenched. Pro-slavery novels of the period—such as The Planter's Northern Bride (1854) or The Black Gauntlet (1860)—portrayed slaveholders as benevolent patriarchs, often likened to Roman aristocrats, belonging to a natural social and moral aristocracy. Slavery was also highly visible in urban settings: enslaved men and women performed domestic and public tasks that made the institution ubiquitous in everyday life. Contemporary observers noted that in New Orleans, for instance, it was rare to see white individuals in the city markets, as nearly all food purchasing was conducted by enslaved people. This visibility mattered for social hierarchies. Slaveholding was a binary marker: one either belonged to the "ruling race" or one did not.

2.3 U.S. Civil War

The political economy of slavery reinforced this role. The defense of the institution was not purely ideological but also reflected the social capital it conferred. Southerners mobilized politically to protect their position, culminating in the secession crisis of 1861 and the Civil War (Calomiris and Pritchett, 2016). The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 was both unexpected and deeply uncertain in its outcome. Although tensions between different regions had increased during the 1850s, few contemporaries could have predicted that disputes over slavery would escalate into a large-scale military conflict that would claim over 600,000 lives. Contemporaries and historians alike agree that the central issue was the survival and expansion of slavery as a labor system and a marker of Southern identity (Calomiris and Pritchett, 2016), even though debates over tariffs and states' rights were often invoked. Southern secession was driven by slaveholders' fears that Lincoln's election and the rise of the Republican Party posed a mortal threat to the institution. For the Union, the war eventually became not just about preserving the nation but about ending slavery altogether. Immigrants played a nontrivial role in this struggle. Thousands of foreign-born individuals fought on both sides of the war, and their participation reflected both ideological commitments and the desire to secure belonging in their adopted country. Lonn (1940) documented the widespread presence of immigrants in the Confederate ranks, underscoring that many newcomers sought assimilation through alignment with the South's defining institution. On the Union side, however, European radicals of the 1848 revolutions injected a different form of immigrant mobilization. Dippel and Heblich (2021) show that the "Forty-Eighters," expelled from Germany after the failed revolutions, became prominent antislavery campaigners in the United States. Settling across Midwestern towns, they mobilized Union Army volunteers. Their influence extended beyond enlistment, lowering desertion rates during the war and leaving a lasting institutional legacy in American civil society. The end of the war brought a profound transformation. With the Union victory, slavery was formally abolished through the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. This was followed by the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877), a period of contested political and social reorganization. This period marked not merely a formal abolition of slavery but a profound renegotiation of political power, economic relations, and social hierarchies in the South. Federal occupation, Black enfranchisement, and the establishment of new institutions generated both unprecedented opportunities for political realignment and fierce resistance from entrenched elites. This turbulent transition reshaped local labor markets, property rights, and racial boundaries, creating a volatile environment in which the economic and social position of both native-born Southerners and immigrants was fundamentally redefined.

3 Data

The analysis draws on individual-level data from the IPUMS U.S. Census for 1850, 1860, and 1870. I leverage newly linked longitudinal data from Census Tree, which allows tracking the same individuals across successive censuses. Specifically, this linkage follows 10.9 million individuals from

1850 to 1860 and 8.45 million from 1850 to 1870, enabling the construction of a balanced panel where the same individuals are consistently observed over three decades. To minimize confounding from selective outmigration, I restrict the sample to individuals who remained in the South throughout this period.[1]

Households are classified as slaveholding if at least one member owned slaves. This household-level measure captures the social benefits of slaveholding that could accrue to individuals even if they were not the direct legal owner. To focus on the mechanisms of interest, I exclude farmers from the analysis. Large planters are clear outliers, and IPUMS documentation highlights a recoding misclassification whereby laborers without an industry are systematically reassigned to farm labor when residing in a farmer's household.

The analysis relies on a large, inclusive sample designed to capture broad labor market transitions. This dataset includes both men and women (following Wishart and Logan, 2024), individuals who were not necessarily household heads, and those with intermittent employment, while still excluding group-quarter residents and maintaining continuous Southern residence. The resulting sample encompasses 838,470 individuals per wave (2,515,410 person-year observations in total), with approximately 32 percent of households classified as slaveholding. The geographic distribution is relatively balanced: Virginia (17%), Kentucky (13%), Tennessee (12%), North Carolina (11%), and Missouri (10%) are the most represented states. Men constitute 54 percent of the overall sample and 56 percent among slaveholders.

European immigrants represent about 2 percent of the sample (roughly 19,247 individuals per wave), with approximately 11 percent of these residing in slaveholding households—mirroring the prevalence among U.S.-born individuals. Their country-of-origin distribution is dominated by Germany and Ireland, followed by Great Britain and France. Among European immigrants, men account for 60 percent of the total and 70 percent among slaveholders. Household roles show similar patterns across origin groups: in 1850, 47 percent of European immigrants were household heads (55 percent among slaveholders), 35 percent were spouses, and 7 percent were children.

4 Empirical Strategy

The empirical analysis relies exclusively on a triple-difference (DDD) backbone and its associated event–study diagnostics. I adopt this focus because the research question requires isolating an immigrant–specific response to the sudden removal of a publicly observable status marker while purging out common wealth, technology, and local demand shocks that affected all slaveholders. TWFE / single DID comparisons are informative but risk conflating the status channel with county- or industry-level productivity shocks, heterogeneous treatment effects, or compositional changes; the DDD substantially mitigates these threats by differencing across nativity as well as slaveholding status and time.

[1] Following Ager et al. (2021), Southern states are defined as Delaware, Missouri, Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Formally, I estimate

$$\log Y_{i,c,t} = \beta_1 \left(Immigrant_i \times Post_t\right) + \beta_2 \left(Slaveholder_i \times Post_t\right) + \beta_3 \left(Immigrant_i \times Slaveholder_i \times Post_t\right) + \Gamma X_{i,t} + \mu_i + \theta_{c,t} + \varepsilon_{i,c,t},$$

where $\log Y_{i,c,t}$ denotes the log of the outcome (occupational income score) for individual i in county c at census year t; $Immigrant_i$ indicates European nativity; $Slaveholder_i$ is a pre-treatment indicator of membership in a slaveholding household; and $Post_t$ marks the post-emancipation period. The coefficient of interest, β_3, isolates the immigrant-specific post-1865 response of slaveholders net of the average immigrant response (β_1) and the average slaveholder response (β_2). The DDD removes shocks that operate similarly on slaveholders regardless of nativity (for example, industry-specific productivity declines, county destruction, or crop-price swings) because such shocks appear in both the immigrant and native DID comparisons and thus cancel in the triple difference. The key maintained assumption is a weaker, DDD-specific parallel trends requirement: the difference in pre-treatment trends between slaveholders and non-slaveholders among immigrants must equal the analogous difference among natives. I assess this assumption directly via event-study diagnostics (below); if the two lower-order DID pre-trends are comparable (or if the triple-interaction leads are jointly indistinguishable from zero), then remaining post-1865 variation in β_3 is plausibly driven by the removal of a publicly visible status credential rather than by common wealth or technology shocks. To evaluate the identifying assumption I implement three complementary tests. First, I present event-study graphs for the two lower-order DID comparisons (immigrant DID and native DID) so readers can visually assess whether pre-treatment deviations are similar in magnitude and direction across groups. Second, I estimate an event-study that includes year-by-year leads and lags of the triple interaction (Immigrant×Slaveholder×Year), using 1860 as the reference year; the point estimates and confidence intervals for the pre-period leads provide a direct test of pre-trend in the triple term. Third, I conduct a joint significance test of the pre-treatment triple coefficients (a joint F / Wald test) to formally evaluate whether pre-period triple coefficients differ from zero. Together these diagnostics both validate the parallel-trends requirement for the DDD and guide sensitivity checks (industry×year controls, group-specific trends, and the second-generation analysis described below). All specifications include individual fixed effects, county×year fixed effects, and a rich set of covariate×year interactions (baseline education and baseline wealth percentile interacted with year dummies). In the large sample I additionally interact sex and baseline household position (head, spouse, child, other) with year dummies to account for evolving selection into employment. To purge productivity/technology channels I condition on pre-war industry by fully interacting baseline industry with year fixed effects and implement two-way clustered standard errors (county and baseline-industry). Finally, I report a battery of robustness checks: alternative sample definitions, group-specific trends, and heterogeneity analyses (old vs. new slaveholders, wealth quantiles, within-occupation results, and a second-generation event-study that alleviates selection concerns).

5 Main Result

I focus exclusively on the triple-difference (DDD) specification and its associated event-study diagnostics. While a conventional two-way fixed-effects (TWFE) or single DID comparison—immigrant slaveholders versus immigrant non-slaveholders—provides a rough indication of post-emancipation changes, such approaches cannot separate the status-specific effect from broader shocks affecting all slaveholders, such as local wealth losses, technological shifts, or industry-level disruptions. The DDD improves on this by differencing the immigrant DID against the analogous native DID (Immigrant × Slaveholder × Post), which purges shocks common to both immigrant and native slaveholders while isolating the immigrant-specific residual. In this sense, the triple-difference directly targets the effect of losing a socially recognized status marker rather than conflating it with general economic or productivity shocks, providing a more credible and robust framework for interpretation. The triple-difference (DDD) specification consolidates these results. In Table 2, the coefficient of interest, β_3, captures whether emancipation differentially affected the occupational trajectories of European immigrant slaveholders relative to both U.S.-born slaveholders and immigrant non-slaveholders. Across all models, β_3 is negative and statistically significant, ranging from -0.036 to -0.060 log points. The effect remains stable when introducing industry-by-year fixed effects and two-way clustered standard errors, ruling out that the decline reflects changes in sectoral demand or technological shocks. The pattern is thus inconsistent with a "technology" or "skills" channel. If emancipation had altered the returns to specific occupations or industries, we would expect comparable effects among natives operating in the same sectors. Instead, the penalty is unique to immigrant slaveholders. The evidence therefore supports a "status" mechanism: emancipation eliminated a socially recognized marker of elite identity, selectively disrupting the assimilation trajectories of immigrants who had invested in it. Column (4) of Table 2 is the more demanding in terms of controls. To strengthen its causal interpretation, I next examine the dynamic evolution of the triple interaction coefficients over time. Specifically, I estimate an event-study specification in which the treatment variable is the interaction between immigrant status, slaveholding status, and a full set of year dummies. The coefficients therefore capture the year-by-year evolution of the occupational gap between immigrant slaveholders, immigrant non-slaveholders, and U.S.-born slaveholders, relative to the reference year 1860. Figure 2 plots the coefficients on Immigrant × Slaveholder × Year from this specification. Consistent with the identifying assumptions of the DDD design, the pre-treatment coefficients are flat and statistically indistinguishable from zero, indicating no differential pre-trends in occupational trajectories between treatment and control groups. This pattern provides direct support for the parallel trends assumption required for triple-difference identification: in the absence of emancipation, the occupational gap between immigrant and U.S.-born slaveholders would have remained stable over time. The absence of pre-trend differentials indicates that potential biases in the lower-order DID comparisons are common and cancel out, leaving the post-1865 divergence as the primary driver of the triple-difference effect. After 1865, the estimated coefficients turn negative and statistically significant, indicating a sharp occupational decline for immigrant slaveholders relative to both immigrant non-slaveholders and

U.S.-born slaveholders. Together with the flat pre-trends, these dynamics strengthen the causal interpretation of the DDD estimates reported in Table 2. Moreover, the joint pre-trend test for the triple interaction (Immigrant × Slaveholder × Year) yields $F(2, 117) = 2.78$ with $p = 0.066$. This indicates only mild evidence of pre-trend differences at the 10% level, but not at conventional 5% significance. In practice, the pre-treatment differences are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero at the 5% threshold, providing credible support for the identifying assumption that any differential trends between immigrants and natives cancel out in the triple-difference design. Put differently, the joint test of the pre-treatment triple-interaction coefficients cannot reject the null of no differential pre-trends at conventional significance levels, reinforcing the validity of the DDD framework.

5.1 Addressing Selection

The primary concern is that slaveholder and non-slaveholder households may have been on differential trends prior to Emancipation, potentially violating the parallel trends assumption. To address this, I first documented event-study estimates for the three pre-treatment waves (1850–1860). The estimated pre-trends are flat and statistically indistinguishable from zero, indicating no systematic divergence between slaveholding and non-slaveholding immigrant households before 1865. While the two groups may differ in levels, the absence of differential pre-trends provides support for the validity of the difference-in-differences design. Another substantive concern relates to endogenous selection along two margins: (i) the decision to migrate, and where to locate (e.g., Louisiana versus North Carolina); and (ii) the decision to become a slaveholder. One possible strategy would be to focus on 1860 and 1870 and use 1850 to construct a shift-share instrument to address migration selection, combined with plausibly exogenous variation—such as soil suitability, proximity to railroads, or distance to ports—to instrument for slaveholding. However, this approach would limit the analysis to two periods, precluding the use of dynamic event-study specifications and complicating the estimation strategy by introducing a two-way endogenous treatment with two instruments. Instead, I pursue a second strategy that focuses on the second generation—children of immigrant and native households. Crucially, second-generation individuals did not choose either to migrate (or where) or to become slaveholders. This removes the most salient sources of endogenous selection. I then estimate a triple-difference event-study design, where the key interaction is between being a second-generation child, slaveholding, and the post-1865 period. This approach allows me to directly test whether the difference in pre-trends between second-generation immigrant slaveholder and non-slaveholder households is not statistically different from the analogous difference among native households, supporting the validity of the parallel trends assumption in the triple-difference framework. Using this design, Figure 3 shows that results are robust: there remains a significant and negative post-1865 effect of being the child of an immigrant slaveholder, even after accounting for potential selection on migration and slaveholding decisions.

6 Mechanism

Building on the patterns documented in the previous section, where European immigrant slaveholders experienced a relative occupational downgrading following emancipation, this section investigates the mechanisms underlying that decline. Two possibilities are particularly salient. First, some immigrant slaveholders may have exited the observable labor force or left elite occupational categories altogether, reflecting a reallocation at the extensive margin. Second, among those who remained in positions within elite occupations, there may have been a systematic downward reranking, consistent with an intensive-margin adjustment. To assess these channels, I proceed in two steps. First, I analyze transitions across broad occupational groups—white-collar, craft, operative, and unskilled work—capturing whether immigrant slaveholders were able to enter or remain in prestigious occupational categories after emancipation. Second, I examine outcomes within each category by restricting the sample to individuals employed in a given group and estimating regressions of occupational income status on the same triple-differences specification. This double approach allows me to disentangle whether abolition disrupted immigrants' occupational mobility primarily through sorting across categories (extensive margin) or through downward shifts within categories (intensive margin).

Transitions across occupations

Table 3 reports estimates for the extensive margin: the probability of working in each broad occupational group (white-collar, craft, operative, unskilled). Columns (1)–(4) show that this differential effect is concentrated in the white-collar sector. The point estimate for the white-collar cell is $\beta_3 = -0.0235$: immigrant slaveholders became about 2.35 percentage points less likely, relative to the relevant comparators, to be in white-collar occupations after emancipation. The corresponding triple interactions for craft, operative, and unskilled work are statistically indistinguishable from zero. The lower-order interaction terms clarify the underlying contrasts. After 1865 European immigrants in general were modestly more likely to occupy white-collar positions, and slaveholding households among the native born also retained a white-collar advantage. The negative β_3 therefore does not imply a large absolute collapse for immigrant slaveholders in isolation. Indeed, the implied net post-1865 change for immigrant slaveholders in the white-collar margin is still positive. The key inference, however, is comparative: immigrant slaveholders gained less than both immigrant non-slaveholders and U.S.-born slaveholders. Two features of the estimates sharpen their interpretation. First, the absence of a significant negative triple interaction in the operative and unskilled margins argues against a pure productivity explanation in which emancipation mechanically forces former owners into manual work; if lost productive complementarities with enslaved labor were the dominant channel, one would expect a clear increase in the probability of performing manual tasks or operatives, which we do not observe. Second, these design choices remove common local and sectoral shocks and allow returns to baseline endowments to evolve, so the residual differential that β_3 captures is narrowly the immigrant-specific response of slaveholders to the removal of the

slaveholding marker. To further investigate the mechanism, Table 8 (reported in the Appendix) examines the same occupational margins **conditional on being employed**. The exercise confirms that the extensive-margin penalty is partly driven by labor-force exit or missing occupational records. Conditional on working, the negative triple interaction in the white-collar sector largely disappears, implying that immigrant slaveholders who remained employed were not significantly disadvantaged in their access to white-collar roles. No systematic shifts are observed in craft, operative, or unskilled occupations either. These results reinforce the interpretation that the primary post-1865 impact operated through a reduction in overall occupational participation and the comparative probability of entering elite, white-collar roles, rather than through shifts among those actively employed.

Within-occupation outcomes

Table 4 examines the intensive margin: conditional on occupying a given broad occupational class, did immigrant slaveholders suffer a relative loss in the prestige of the positions they held? I estimate the same triple-difference specification as in the previous sections, restricting the sample to workers within each class and using the logarithm of the occupational income score as the dependent variable. The evidence is sharply concentrated in the white-collar sample. The implied net post-1865 change for an immigrant slaveholder who remains in white-collar employment is therefore negative. This suggests that among white-collar incumbents, immigrant slaveholders were sorted into lower-prestige positions after emancipation relative to comparable U.S.-born incumbents and to immigrant non-slaveholders. Columns (2)–(4) show that this intensive-margin penalty does not appear in craft, operative, or unskilled samples. The absence of within-class downgrading in manual and semi-skilled categories strengthens the inference that the white-collar result is not driven by a general collapse in productivity or by a mechanical shift from high- to low-productivity occupations. White-collar tasks in this setting are not intensive in enslaved labor; a productivity-driven account would struggle to generate a selective within-white-collar decline without producing complementary increases in manual-work prestige or analogous effects in crafts and operatives, which these regressions do not detect. Because the chosen controls neutralize common local and sectoral shocks as well as baseline differences in human capital and wealth, the residual within-white-collar downgrading is most plausibly attributable to the erosion of the social-image channel—the loss of a visible credential that mattered for referrals, reputations, and other non-pecuniary returns to elite occupations—rather than to a uniform decline in productive capital.

Taken together with the transition results, the within-occupation pattern implies a two-margin response to emancipation. At the extensive margin, immigrant slaveholders were more likely to quit the labor force from white-collar occupations. At the intensive margin, those immigrant slaveholders who remained in white-collar employment were systematically relegated to lower-prestige positions. If emancipation removed a publicly observable status credential that facilitated access to the most prestigious white-collar posts: loss of the marker reduced both the probability of entry into the white-collar gate and, for those who retained access, their placement within the white-collar

hierarchy.

7 Heterogeneity

Heterogeneity by Type of Slaveholding

Table 5 explores whether the occupational penalties documented in the baseline results vary across different types of slaveholding households. I distinguish three groups: *old slaveholders* (households owning slaves in both 1850 and 1860), *new slaveholders* (households that acquired slaves between 1850 and 1860), and *previous slaveholders* (households that held slaves in 1850 but not in 1860). This classification allows me to disentangle long-standing social embeddedness in the institution of slavery from more opportunistic or transient participation. Column (1) focuses on old slaveholders. The triple interaction coefficient for European immigrant slaveholders after 1865 indicates a statistically significant decline in the occupational ranking relative to the US-born comparison group. In contrast, the immigrant×post main effect and post×slaveholder effect are positive, suggesting that the observed downgrading is concentrated in the interaction: only immigrant slaveholders with a long-standing history of slaveholding experienced a relative loss. This suggests that abolition primarily disrupted the occupational trajectories of immigrants whose social standing and community embeddedness were anchored in entrenched slaveholding. Column (2) focuses on new slaveholders. Here, the triple interaction is no longer statistically significant. The attenuation of the effect implies that households acquiring slaves shortly before the Civil War did not leverage slaveholding as a durable status signal. Consequently, the abolition shock did not materially affect their relative placement within occupational hierarchies, consistent with the interpretation that social capital, rather than economic capital, drove the baseline penalties. Column (3) considers previously slaveholding households, i.e., those that had exited the institution before 1860. The triple interaction is statistically indistinguishable from zero. This reinforces the inference that households which had already divested from slaveholding were insulated from post-emancipation occupational penalties, having reoriented their social and economic strategies away from slavery-dependent prestige.

The heterogeneity pattern supports a status-driven mechanism. Abolition did not uniformly penalize all slaveholders; rather, the negative occupational impact was concentrated among European immigrants whose integration into Southern society relied on the long-standing social credentials conferred by slaveholding. Newly established slaveholders, who had limited time to accrue reputational capital, and former slaveholders, who had already adapted, experienced minimal occupational disruption.

Heterogeneity by Wealth

Table 6 investigates whether the post-emancipation occupational penalty for European immigrant slaveholders varies along the initial wealth distribution. The underlying hypothesis is that if slaveholding functioned primarily as a social credential rather than a productive asset, its relative importance for occupational outcomes should diminish among the very wealthiest households, who

could rely on alternative markers of status. Columns (1)–(4) report triple-difference estimates for progressively wealthier subsets of the sample: the top 40–30%, 30–20%, 20–10%, and top 10% of the wealth distribution. In column (1), the triple interaction coefficient is negative and marginally significant, indicating that immigrant slaveholders in the upper-middle segment suffered a relative decline in the occupational ranking after 1865. This effect underscores that for moderately wealthy households, slaveholding was a conduit of social prestige. Moving up the wealth ladder, the triple interaction loses statistical significance in columns (2)–(4), suggesting that among the very wealthiest households, slaveholding was less binding as a source of social capital. Taken together, the heterogeneity analysis reinforces the interpretation that the post-emancipation occupational effects were fundamentally status-driven. For upper-middle wealth households, slaveholding was a central credential translating into occupational mobility; its removal imposed a measurable assimilation shock. By contrast, for the richest immigrants, the multiplicity of alternative status channels mitigated the effect. This evidence disentangles the social from the economic dimensions of the abolition shock, highlighting that occupational penalties arose from the erosion of embedded prestige rather than from direct loss of productive capacity.

8 Second Best

The abolition of slavery eliminated a key marker of elite status in the antebellum South. If slaveholding had functioned as a means of signaling local standing, its disappearance raises a natural question: how did former slaveholders attempt to preserve social distinction once slave ownership was no longer possible? A plausible "second best" strategy was to replicate pre-war household labor hierarchies through market-based arrangements. In particular, employing Black domestic servants could serve as a substitute channel to sustain symbolic distance and continuity in status signaling. To examine this, I estimate a cross-sectional regression in which the dependent variable is an indicator for whether a household employed a Black domestic servant in 1870. The specification includes county fixed effects and the same baseline controls, allowing comparisons among households facing similar local labor market conditions. The results, presented in Table 7, show strong persistence. Households that owned slaves in 1850 were 21 percentage points more likely to employ Black domestic servants in 1870 than non-slaveholding households in the same county. This is a striking difference, underscoring that the end of slavery did not sever the social and economic ties linking former slaveholders to Black labor. Instead, many households appear to have transitioned from slaveholding to employing freed people as servants, thereby maintaining a visible marker of household status. Turning to the immigrant–native distinction, two findings stand out. First, European immigrant households were overall less likely than U.S.-born households to employ Black domestic servants. Second, and crucially, the interaction between immigrant status and 1850 slaveholding is small and statistically insignificant. In other words, while immigrant households were less prone to hire domestic servants in general, immigrant slaveholders were not systematically more or less likely than U.S.-born slaveholders to continue the practice in 1870. These findings help clarify the

assimilation mechanism. Before 1865, slaveholding operated as a binary social credential: one either belonged to the category of "slaveholder" or did not. For European immigrants, this clear-cut marker had special value, enabling them to display local respectability and gain access to higher-status occupational trajectories despite their outsider origins. After emancipation, however, that credential disappeared. Employing domestic servants, while in principle a substitute, did not carry the same categorical force. This suggests that what mattered for assimilation before 1865 was not simply the use of Black labor, but the social meaning attached to the institution of slavery. Once that categorical marker was abolished, immigrants lost the assimilation channel it had provided, and they did not attempt to replicate it by hiring domestic servants.

9 Conclusions

By focusing on slavery as a status marker, this paper brings a new perspective to the literature on assimilation. Existing studies of status typically treat it as a gradient associated with income or consumption, but in this case status was tied to a discrete institution that could be abruptly removed by political change. By exploiting the abolition of slavery as a natural experiment, I show that European immigrant slaveholders suffered sharp occupational penalties relative to both native slaveholders and immigrant non-slaveholders. These effects cannot be attributed to differences in skills, productivity, or general economic shocks. Rather, the results point to a mechanism in which status—publicly recognized and institutionally codified—shapes access to high-return occupational opportunities. Immigrant slaveholders lost the social credential that had facilitated their integration, leading both to selection out of elite occupations and to downward shifts within those roles for those who remained. The most pronounced penalties occurred among immigrants who had most heavily invested in this status marker.

These findings have broader implications. First, they illustrate that integration is not purely a function of human capital or economic performance: access to socially recognized markers of legitimacy is critical. Second, policies that neglect status considerations may inadvertently hinder assimilation and exacerbate inequality. Third, the historical evidence underscores that sudden institutional changes can disrupt integration pathways by invalidating previously effective status signals, a mechanism that may be relevant for contemporary reforms in labor markets, educational systems, or immigration policy. Overall, the study highlights the enduring role of status as a gatekeeper in shaping economic and social inclusion, suggesting that successful integration strategies must account not only for resources and skills but also for the signals that convey social legitimacy.

Table 1: TWFE: Occupational Change Before and After Emancipation

	(1)	(2)
slavehh × post	−0.059***	0.022***
	(0.0217)	(0.0069)
R-squared	0.013	0.014
Individual FE	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes
Sample	Small (EU)	Small (US-born)
Observations	10,059	57,907

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

Table 2: Triple Difference

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Variable:	log occ. status			
eu_imm × post (β_1)	0.0604***	0.0559***	0.0659***	0.0596***
	(0.0115)	(0.0122)	(0.0167)	(0.0175)
slavehh × post (β_2)	0.0198***	0.0305***	0.0315***	0.0364***
	(0.0069)	(0.0057)	(0.0093)	(0.0073)
eu_imm × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0528***	−0.0359**	−0.0602**	−0.0418**
	(0.0182)	(0.0163)	(0.0247)	(0.0184)
R-squared	0.796	0.780	0.807	0.789
Control for Industry	No	No	Yes	Yes
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sample	Small	Large	Small	Large
Observations	68,118	140,999	68,118	140,999

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county level (columns 1–2) or county and industry level (columns 3–4). Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

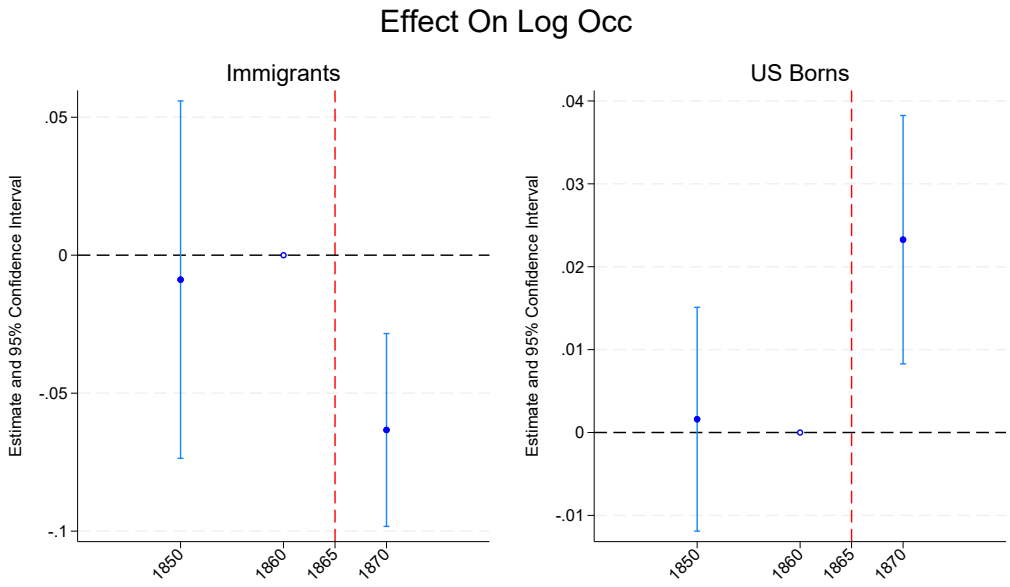


Figure 1: Event study estimates of the impact of emancipation on occupational status. The left panel focuses on European immigrants, the right panel on U.S.-born individuals. In both cases, treated units are slaveholding households and controls are non-slaveholding households.

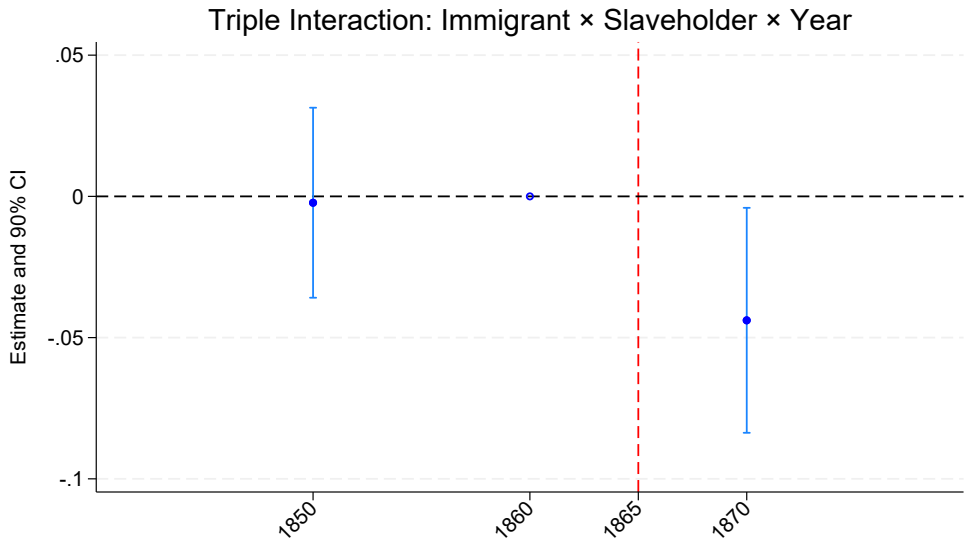


Figure 2: Event-study coefficients for Immigrant × Slaveholder × Year.

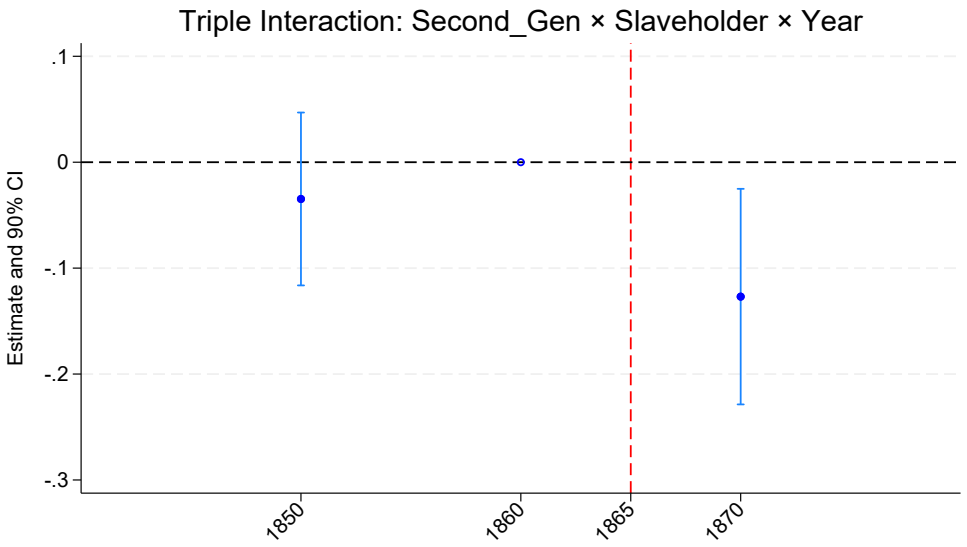


Figure 3: Event-study coefficients for Second Gen Immigrants × Slaveholder × Year.

Table 3: Transitions across Occupations

Dep. Variable:	(1) White Collar	(2) Craft	(3) Operatives	(4) Unskilled
eu_imm × post (β_1)	0.0152**	−0.0074	−0.0002	−0.0216
	(0.0057)	(0.0068)	(0.0048)	(0.0161)
slavehh × post (β_2)	0.0198***	−0.0105***	−0.0020	−0.0121***
	(0.0024)	(0.0035)	(0.0017)	(0.0026)
eu_imm × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0235*	0.0142	0.0019	0.0172
	(0.0123)	(0.0134)	(0.0095)	(0.0128)
R-squared	0.781	0.800	0.622	0.489
Control for Industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparison Group	US Born	US Born	US Born	US Born
Sample	Large	Large	Large	Large
Observations	314,534	314,534	314,534	314,534

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county and industry level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

Table 4: Within-Occupation Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dep. Variable:		log occ. status		
white_eu × post (β_1)	0.0316**	0.0006	−0.0006	0.0127
	(0.0141)	(0.0036)	(0.0071)	(0.0715)
post × slavehh (β_2)	−0.0035	0.0016	0.0013	0.0169
	(0.0061)	(0.0019)	(0.0064)	(0.0433)
white_eu × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0348***	0.0037	0.0088	0.0440
	(0.0127)	(0.0061)	(0.0143)	(0.1445)
R-squared	0.867	0.891	0.917	0.950
Control for Industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparison Group	US Born	US Born	US Born	US Born
Sample	White Collar	Craft	Operative	Unskilled
Observations	42,144	49,049	8,543	2,674

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county and industry level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

Table 5: Old vs New Slaveholders

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dep. Variable:		log occ. status	
eu_imm × post (β_1)	0.0604***	0.0565***	0.0538***
	(0.0181)	(0.0171)	(0.0172)
slavehh × post (β_2)	0.0448***	0.0262***	0.0221***
	(0.0080)	(0.0073)	(0.0083)
eu_imm × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0430**	−0.0175	−0.0233
	(0.0189)	(0.0188)	(0.0246)
R-squared	0.787	0.743	0.733
Control for Industry	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparison Group	US Born	US Born	US Born
Sample	Old	New	Previous
Observations	133,714	117,235	101,719

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county and industry level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

Table 6: Wealthier

Dep. Variable:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	log occ. status			
eu_imm × post (β_1)	0.0594***	0.0412*	0.0405**	0.0470*
	(0.0194)	(0.0233)	(0.0203)	(0.0264)
slavehh × post (β_2)	0.0399***	0.0247**	0.0058	0.0207*
	(0.0081)	(0.0118)	(0.0103)	(0.0122)
eu_imm × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0362*	−0.0793	−0.0525	−0.0312
	(0.0212)	(0.0516)	(0.0501)	(0.0322)
R-squared	0.745	0.823	0.856	0.844
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparison Group	US Born	US Born	US Born	US Born
Sample	Top 40-30%	Top 30-20%	Top 20-10%	Top 10%
Observations	101,166	14,441	12,213	14,110

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county and industry level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

Table 7: Second Best

Dep. Variable:	(1) domestic servant (1870)
eu_imm	−0.088***
	(0.021)
slavehh1850	0.213***
	(0.006)
eu_imm × slavehh1850	0.022
	(0.021)
R-squared	0.119
Comparison Group	US Born
Sample	Large (1870)
Observations	104,024

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

A Additional Tables

Table 8: Transitions across Occupations - Conditional on Working

Dep. Variable:	(1) White Collar	(2) Craft	(3) Operatives	(4) Unskilled
eu_imm × post (β_1)	0.0214**	−0.0134	−0.0001	−0.0474**
	(0.0088)	(0.0086)	(0.0085)	(0.0185)
slavehh × post (β_2)	0.0274***	−0.0126*	−0.0049	−0.0247**
	(0.0067)	(0.0065)	(0.0039)	(0.0087)
eu_imm × post × slavehh (β_3)	−0.0107	0.0217	0.0046	0.0288
	(0.0168)	(0.0188)	(0.0162)	(0.0197)
R-squared	0.831	0.798	0.690	0.586
Control for Industry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County-Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comparison Group	US Born	US Born	US Born	US Born
Sample	Large	Large	Large	Large
Observations	140,999	140,999	140,999	140,999

Note. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the county and industry level. Asterisks denote statistical significance (*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$).

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