Selective Migration as a Basis for Upward Mobility?: The Occupations of the Jewish Immigrants to the United States, ca 1900

by

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INTRODUCTION. The Jewish experience in the United States, and in western Europe, had a great deal to do with the economic position that the Jews had earlier occupied in Europe; they had been concentrated for centuries in commercial occupations (typically petty trade), and (in eastern Europe especially) also in artisanal crafts. Of these crafts, the most important, but by no means the only important one, was tailoring. While the degree of concentration in commercial as opposed to artisanal occupations varied considerably across time and space, the concentration in both was a source of advantage to the Jews compared to a background as peasants with but uncertain opportunities to move off the land or control the economy of the farm.

All this is familiar. My concern in this paper is to focus on the extent to which Jewish concentration in commerce was important in the first generation of Jewish immigrant workers from eastern Europe. We have all heard about the Jewish garment workers of that generation, their economic progress and their labor union struggles. There is a tendency among social historians (whether Irving Howe's generation of historians or Susan Glenn's[1]) to pay close attention to these garment workers -- a tendency eminently sensible up to a point. Similarly, among the students of upward mobility and ethnic comparisons, there has been a tendency to pay close attention to the skills utilized in these industrial occupations; these industrial skills constitute a clear, "concrete" and unmysterious explanation for the Jewish advantage that eventually produced distinctively rapid upward mobility -- clear and concrete, that is, by comparison to the vague, and often self-congratulatory mode of arguing from some aspect or another of Jewish culture.[2]

A familiar objection to this line of argument comes from those who do stress the various cultural characteristics of the Jews in explaining their upward mobility -- premigration cultural characteristics related to the fact that the Jews had long been a minority, or related to a tradition of learning, or to some other aspect of the historical experience of the Jewish people in eastern Europe. I mention this alternative line of explanation, variants of the "cultural hypothesis", as opposed to the variant of the "structural" sort of hypothsis described in the preceding paragraph for one reason only: in order to forestall a possible misunderstanding of my present purpose. My concern in this paper is not with the cultural argument, nor really with the distinction between cultural and structural hypotheses. Whatever else was or wasn't operating, I see no reason to doubt that the Jewish immigrants had a considerable advantage in terms of their prior economic background. Nor do I doubt that a crucial component of that background was the large proportion of skilled industrial workers among the Jews.

I suspect however, that we should not focus exclusively on this industrial background, and should give more explicit attention to the commercial elements in the Jewish experience. I would stress the explanatory power of prior economic experience among the Jews; but the way that advantage is understood should, I think focus more heavily on trade. This issue struck me with force years ago when I studied the immigrants in Providence R. I., a place that had only a small Jewish community, not a place like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia or Boston. A surprising proportion of the first generation of east European Jews in Providence were already

well launched in commercial careers. Often these Providence Jews had started in peddling and moved up. This pattern was admittedly stronger in Providence than it was in New York City. Still, even in the big cities, the Jews seemed to enter trade at a surprisingly rapid rate for late nineteenth-century immigrant groups.[3]

How can we explain that rapid rate of entry into trade? One possible explanation was that the Jews started in skilled work in small shops, especially in the garment industry, and from that basis they were poised for work in trade when they did well through skilled industrial work. To put it differently, the base of well-being that could serve as a spring-board for entering trade was greater among the east-european Jews because skilled industrial experience provided the well-being.[4]

On the other hand, such an explanatory framework might be incomplete. An explanation that stresses the prior Jewish experience in commerce might also be relevant. In part the argument about prior work in trade is analogous to the argument about prior work in skilled industrial sectors. That is, the Jews had a certain concrete skill -- but in this case the concrete skill would be interpreted as knowing something about the world of trade, rather than knowing how to use a needle or a sewing machine. Finally, the argument about trade has another side too, one that is a little closer to the sort of premigration cultural arguments to which I alluded earlier: the Jews may have been, to paraphrase the anti-Semites of that day, drawn to trade, predisposed and familiar with it, and valuing certain kinds of work more than other kinds of work. My point is not to sort out the cultural aspect of a background in trade from the specific skills that such a background would provide. I simply am noting in passing that both features might be operating.

However, the relative importance of the background in trade and the background in skilled industrial work also depends on the relative prevalence of each group among the immigrants. The scholars who studied information on Jewish immigrant occupations most carefully have tended to stress a crucial selectivity of migration: that the Jews engaged in manufacturing and mechanical occupations were greatly overrepresented and that the Jews engaged in commerce were greatly under-represented in the emigration than in the base population from which the emigration occurred. Such an under-representation should affect the strength of the argument that the Jewish advantage for upward mobility derived in considerable part from commercial experience.

Before proceding, I should recognize that one might object to the distinction between trade and industrial occupations for the purpose of clarifying the American Jewish trajectory. Recall that the great majority of the European Jews in "industrial occupations" were in fact artisans, and artisans in a more or less traditional setting, a setting of small shops with high proportions of self-employed individuals. Many more in those shops were at least aspiring to self-employment and observing self-employment in the context of the small shop, that is to say at close range. Therefore, many of those classified as "manufacturing workers" would also have had some considerable background with the world of buying and selling, and of running a kind of

small business. That this sort of artisan class existed among a minority in which a third were engaged in commerce would also have blurred the lines between those who work as skilled manual workers and those who work in trade.

All this is true, and it does reduce the need to determine the occupational origins of those Jews who came to the United States; my fundamental corrective -- that the orientation to commerce was very strong in the immigrant generation and should not be ignored when seeking explanations for Jewish upward mobility -- would hold even if the immigrants were in fact overwhelmingly artisans. However, it is also true that the force of this corrective is greater if the proportion of Jews who came with a background in trade is relatively great rather than relatively small. Moreover, the adequacy of our information on Jewish immigrant occupations has long been a subject of curiousity, and we have a chance now to investigate that issue with far better data than we have had in the past.

Two early treatments by very discerning observers were written before the first World War -- by Isaac Rubinow in 1906 and Liebmann Hersch in 1911. In the most important later treatment, Simon Kuznets extended Rubinow's analysis; Kuznets wrote several essays on these issues, most notably a magisterial book-length monograph, "The Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States, Background and Structure," published in 1975.[5] In Kuznets's presentation, 63% among Russian Jewish immigrant arrivals in 1899-1902 were manufacturing and mechanical workers, whereas 38% of the gainfully employed Russian Jews were in these occupations in 1897; by contrast, commercial occupations were greatly underrepresented: the 7% vs. 31% among Russian Jewish workers.[6] And on the basis of these discussions the the relevance of the industrial background of the Jewish immigration seemed especially relevant to the progress of the Jews in America -- to writers as different as Stephan Steinberg and Calvin Goldscheider.[7]

I want to reexamine the evidence for occupational self-selection, then, with these larger concerns in mind. Specifically, the paper takes up two sorts of tasks. The first task is to construct a more precise comparison of the immigrants and the base population from which they came, more precise than has been possible in the past because more detailed evidence is now available. The second task is to reconsider the possibility that the evidence reported by the immigrants is inaccurate due to misunderstandings or even purposefully deceptive.

As will soon be clear, the crucial comparisons will be between American data and data pertaining to the Russian Pale of Settlement. Within the Russian Empire, the Jews, with few exceptions, were restricted to twenty five provinces which were designated as the Pale of Settlement. The Pale included the 10 provinces of what was called Congress Poland (the last major part of Poland to be annexed to the Empire) as well as 15 other provinces along the Western part of the Empire.

The Pale included a large area, just over a third of a million square miles, making it as large as France and the British Isles combined. And while it was not as densely populated as these west-European countries, 42 million people were living in the Pale in 1897. Of these, 5

million were Jews; these Jews comprised 94% of all Jews in the Russian Empire. While there were important Jewish elites in the two capitals of the Empire, Moscow and St. Petersburg together had barely 30,000 Jews in 1897, well under 2% of each city's population, well under 1% of the Empire's Jews. Other Jewish communities outside the Pale were similarly small, and the largest were in provinces that in fact bordered the Pale and had once been designated as part of the Pale. So, in a demographic sense, in order to study the Jewish masses of late 19th century Russia, we can effectively study the Pale.

Within the Pale itself, Jews were concentrated in cities and in market towns; after 1881, new Jewish settlement in the villages of the countryside (where most of the non-Jewish population lived) was restricted. And Jews were excluded from agricultural occupations -- reinforcing their tendency to concentrate in small-scale trade and artisanal work. As a result, the Jews comprised about 1/9th of the population of the Pale, but the figure is not very meaningful; the important point is the proportion that Jews comprised in the towns and cities, which was about 3/8ths of the total.[8]

By the late-nineteenth century, the combination of rapid population growth, changes in the wider economy and discriminatory legislation led to a severe economic hardship for high proportions of Russian Jews, and to the large-scale emigration. East-European Jewish emigration came overwhelmingly from the Pale, and from just across the western border of the Pale in the Austro-Hungarian provinces of Galicia and Bukovina (which held a similar but much smaller Jewish population, numbering some 800,000 and 100,000 respectively).[9]

Just under 200,000 Jews had immigrated from eastern Europe by 1890. Some 400,000 more came in the next decade; and fully 1.4 million arrived between 1901 and 1914. Also, a considerable proportion of the entire immigration occurred within a single five-year period: between 1904 and 1908 630,000 Jewish immigrants arrived. During World War I, the immigration dropped to very low levels, began to pick up after the War, and then was cut off when the American Congress imposed immigration restriction on Europeans in the early 1920s (in all, some 330,000 came in the decade 1915-24).[10]

EVIDENCE. I consider the occupational evidence found in four sources.

1) The detailed published reports from the 1897 Russian Census, much of which I and others have made machine readable.

2) A sample of Jewish immigrant arrivals drawn from 1899-1900 and from 1907-8 at the Port of New York (selected from microfilms of passenger lists).

3) A survey of Jewish immigrants working in industry in 1909 -- which asked about the immigrants' occupation prior to arrival in the United States (conducted by the Dillingham Commission).

4) The 1910 U.S. Census PUMS which includes a large group of the Yiddish mother tongue population, and also reports their country of origin.

Because the Russian Census offers such detailed tabulations on Jews, because the Russian Jews were the most numerous among the east-European arrivals, and because the evidence in the second source is available for the first time at the level of the individual immigrant, this paper focuses principally on comparisions between the first two sources listed. I want to stress the great advance that the second source consititutes over the available published data; in order to appreciate the point recall that Rubinow, Kuznets Hersch and others who have studied the Jewish immigration were limited to the annually published reports on immigrant occupations, published by the US Commissioner of Immigration. In those reports, all Jews were aggregated together on one line: there was no breakdown by country of origin, gender, or age (let alone region within country of origin).

I coded the occupations of the immigrant sample members drawn from the passenger lists in the same classification scheme that the Russian Census used for occupations. As a result, it is possible to compare with some precision the occupations of the Russian-Jewish immigrant arrivals and the occupations of the Jews in the Russian Pale of Settlement at about the same time.[11]

ADJUSTING FOR SEX, REGION, AND AGE STRUCTURE. Table 1 presents the figures on the Jewish occupations in Russia. I have shown elsewhere that the Russian Jewish emigrants came very disproportionately from certain parts of the Russian Pale of settlement; in the 1900 passenger-list sample, seven provinces in the Northwest of the Pale, where 25% of the Pale's Jewish population lived, sent 67% of its emigrants; the figures were less lopsided by 1907, but still impressive (see map). The occupations of the Jews in those parts of the Pale were distinctive -- with more Jews in handicraft occupations compared to commerce (Table 1).

This part of the Pale was growing slowly if at all in economic terms, and routes from the region to central and western Europe were very well established. Thus, there were reasons (other than a self selection by occupation) why more people were leaving this part of the Pale than other parts. And consequently, a region with a somewhat distinctive Jewish occupational structure sent a disproportionate fraction of the immigrants. This point must be considered when comparing the 'base population' of the Pale with that of the immigrants.

The other major difference (besides any occupational selectivity) between the two populations (immigrants and the Jewish community from which they came) is that the immigrants were very heavily concentrated in the young adult ages.

Thus when we compare the base population and that of the immigrants in Table 2, we adjust for the age of the immigrants and their regional origin -- and we compare for each sex separately. These adjustments do reduce somewhat the extent to which trade appears underrepresented among the immigrants -- because the percentage of traders in the north was

lower than elsewhere and because the young were less likely to be in trade than those who were older.[12]

Nevertheless, it is clear from the table that most of the under-representation in trade and over-representation in manufacturing and in labor and personal service cannot be explained by the immigrants' age and region of origin. A considerable gap between the adjusted Russian occupational profile (the profile we would expect the immigrants to exhibit in the absence of occupationally selective migration) on the one hand and the observed immigrant occupational profile on the other. Kuznets had shown a a contrast between 7% in trade among the immigrants and 31% in trade in the Pale; the adjusted contrast in Table 2 is less severe but it remains noteworthy 28% vs. 11%. In the same comparison, the the manufacturing workers are overrepresented among the immigrants 66% vs. 43%. The various unskilled groups are found in about the expected proportions.[13]

Can we believe that such a contrast could be explained not by selective emigration but by inaccurate or deceptive reporting by the immigrants? In order to erase such a contrast we would have to believe that (between 28% and 11% in trade) 17 out of every hundred with a reported occupation (and more than half of all believed to have been in trade: 17/28), were mistakenly classified -- virtually every year. Since virtually all of the men 20 and older had occupations (92% or more in every age group), there is little room for male occupations that were unreported to account for the contrast.

THE QUALITY OF THE IMMIGRANTS' OCCUPATIONAL REPORTING. How then are we to understand these patterns? Possibly the over- and under-representations we observe simply reflect the reality. However, some Jews may have lied about prior occupation, because they knew that Jews were viewed as an unproductive commercial class, instinctively drawn to trade. Rubinow speaks repeatedly of the criticism then in vogue, "the argument that the entire Jewish race is a race of traders and therefore exploiters...", "the theory generally accepted both in Russia and in the United States that the European Jew is in the majority of cases a merchant, and only in America is transformed into a productive worker," etc.[14] Nontrivial proportions who had worked in trade may have said they had been involved in something else to avoid the stigma.

Alternatively, even if they did not lie, many may still have given a misleading report; they may have answered in terms of the sort of work they expected to get, not in terms of the sort of work they had actually had in Europe. A peddler might have said he was a laborer for example, and someone without skills may have said "tailor."

Kuznets suggested a kind of test for the quality of these reports. While the manufacturing sector was greatly overrepresented, and the garment workers were overrepresented even among manufacturing workers, Kuznets noted that we could look at the distribution of *other* major sectors of manufacturing workers and see whether they were roughly in the right proportions among all manufacturing workers, by which he meant in the proportions the Russian Census would lead us to expect. He examined four such major groups of occupations -- wood industry

and construction, food industry, metal industry and all other industries; "the general impression is" Kuznets wrote, that the distribution of Jewish manufacturing workers by industrial sector in Russia "is sufficiently similar to that in the immigration data in the United States to be taken as comparable." And so, he concluded,"there was not too much distortion in the occupational information provided by the Jewish immigrants."[15]

The test is crude for several reasons. First, it assumes that "push and pull" factors operated distinctively only in connection with the garment industry -- that all other trades were collapsing in Russia or booming in the United States at about the same degree. Second, the criterion for "sufficiently similar" is loose, since the ratio of Russian to U.S. prevalence of these groups of trades among Jewish workers is about twice as large for two of the groups as it is for the other two.[16] And third, we can add a fifth major grouping of trades for comparison; as Table 2 shows, it is possible to estimate the prevalence of the shoemakers among the Jewish clothing workers on both sides of the ocean. And since the shoemakers are as numerous as two of the groupings of trades that Kuznets noted (food and metal workers), focussing on shoemakers is not unreasonable. The shoemakers were notably less well represented than other manufacturing workers among the immigrants. Therefore, the sectoral distributions of Jewish skilled workers in Russia and among the Russian-Jewish immigrant arrivals were less similar than it appeared to Kuznets (even ignoring the dramatic overrepresentation of the garment workers); as a result, by the criterion he suggests (the similarity of those distributions), the accuracy of the occupational reporting seems less certain. There may have been more "Columbus Tailors" among these immigrants than he thought -- immigrants who became tailors only after they discovered America. But we can hardly be sure.

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY. On the whole, the passenger list data also shows a certain reassuring consistency from year to year in the published reports based upon them and especially in the 1900 to 1907 sample data (Table 3). While the percentage of industrial workers seems to have been growing in the aggregate figures, in fact it is a) shifts in the sex ratio of the immigrants, b) shifts in countries of origin (increase in the Russian share) and c) a sharp rise in the reporting of women's occupations -- especially women 15-22 that accounts for the trend. The Russian and Austrian male occupations actually remain remarkably consistent. The change in the reporting of female occuaptions is hard to explain, and is by far the strongest argument for volatility in the way the figures are reported. But it is not clear that this argument for volatility should be extended to male occupations.

EVIDENCE FROM ANOTHER SOURCE. In the United States Immigration Commission Reports (1911, volumes on "Immigrants in Industry"), substantial numbers of Russian Jewish immigrants from the garment industry and also from several other industries were surveyed (Table 4). Among many other questions the immigrants were asked about their occupations prior to arrival in the United States. Among 1,057 Russian Hebrew male clothing workers in New York City, 19% claimed a background in trade; among 480 such workers in Chicago, 25% claimed a background in trade; and among 267 in Baltimore 30% claimed a background in trade. Among 272 Russian Hebrews interviewed in the boot and shoe industry,

21% claimed a background in trade; in woolen and worsted goods, of 100 Russian Hebrew men, 24% did so. In slaughtering and meat packing, of 153 men, 18% claimed a background in trade. Only in silk goods manufacturing was the percentage claiming a background in trade lower: of 185 Russian Hebrews, only 5% claimed a background in trade -- an industry in which virtually all the rest (91%) claimed a background within the textile industry itself. [17]

Several points about these survey results should be appreciated. First these surveys were apparently undertaken independently in several different cities so it is unlikely that any local fluke affected the outcomes. Second, the workers surveyed were found in industrial work, not in commerce. Presumably had workers in the trade sector been asked about prior experience they would have been more likely than the industrial workers to report a prior occupation in trade, given any sort of occupational continuity. Third, those answering the question in the survey were probably unlikely to view themselves in an insecure position when they responded to the Commission's question about prior occupation. By contrast, many would have perceived their position as insecure when they filled out the passenger lists, at the point of seeking entry to the United States; at that time the incentive to lie may have been great. Perhaps, of course there was a tendency to exxagerate one's earlier experience; but if so, and the exaggeration was in the direction of claiming experience in trade, that in itself is revealing of a wider connection to trade as a plausible higher status.

EVIDENCE FROM LATER PROGRESS. Finally, there is one other perspective that should be brought to bear on this question, namely the occupations of the Jewish immigrants in the United States Census. The Census of 1910 is especially useful because it includes information on Yiddish Mother Tongue, an excellent tool for identifying the east-European Jews. Table 5 shows the occupations of the male Yiddish-mother-tongue immigrants in 1910, in terms of the critical occupational categories (Table 5A).

Clearly, over the course of years in the United States, we would not expect young immigrant arrivals to remain in their initial position; and so the table distinguishes immigrants by date of arrival. And yet, it is only the immigrants who had been in the country for a decade or more that differ appreciably from those here a shorter time. The immigrants who had been here for 2 or 3 years do not appear to have differed much occupationally from those here 7 or 8 years. And this is some indication that we are not picking up changes that occurred due to longer residence in the country.

The 1910 Census figures are much more compatable with the Immigration Commission surveys than with the data reported in the passenger lists. Even among the most recent arrivals, nearly a quarter were engaged in trade, and the figures rise sharply, reaching a half for those longest resident in the country. The contrast to non-Yiddish-Mother-tongue immigrants is admittedly crude but it is striking nonetheless (Tables 5A and 5B): the Jewish concentration in trade even among the most recent arrivals was greater than that among the non-Jewish immigrants who had been in the country for any length of time, even longer than 20 years (23% rising to 50% among the Jews; 5% rising to 17% among the others). The Jewish rapid rise to self-

employment, also shown in Tables 5A and 5B reinforces the same perspective as the figures on trade. These comparisons cannot resolve the question of why the Jewish concentration in these sectors; however, the comparisons do underscore the magnitude of the explanatory burden assigned to the hypothsis that it was the Jewish advantage in industrial skills that made this rapid movement into trade and self-employment possible. The alternative hypothesis makes the explanatory task easier -- that besides any industrial skill advantage that the Jews had, many Jewish immigrants had a background in trade, and that perhaps too many others valued trade more highly than non-Jews whose economic situation was comparable.

And finally a look back to the Pale is helpful here (Table 6). The areas of the Pale that were booming -- Warsaw, Lodz, and the cities of the south -- Odessa, Ekaterinoslav, and smaller places -- had industry to offer -- especially this was true of Lodz. And so it might be thought that the Jews were leaving Lithuania and the other provinces of the core region where they had been in petty trade or outdated handicrafts for more attractive jobs in major industries. No doubt there was some movement of this type But just as was the case in the new world, it was only partly the prevalence of industry and more generally the prevalence of a dynamic economy that accounts for the Jewish occupational profile. In the big fast growing cities of the Pale, the Jews were no more likely to be in manufacturing occupations than in the non-urban areas of the Northeast core provinces. Probably a higher proportion of the manufacturing sector jobs in the big cities were in modernized sectors (although still small in scale of shop); probably more tailors worked to produce goods for distant markets when they worked in Lodz than when they worked in a Lithuanian Shtetl; nevertheless, it is striking not only that the number of "industrial workers" is not higher in the latter context but also that those in trade were actually more prevalent in these big cities to which the Jews were migrating than in the core provinces (whether in urban or rural areas).

We cannot really reconcile the conflicting figures on the proportions of Jewish traders among the arrivals that seems to emerge from the comparison of the passenger lists and the surveys of the Immigration Commission; obviously, one simple way out of the maze is to assume that the figures in the passenger lists are indeed unreliable despite their internal consistency for males. Rubinow/Kuznets thought in terms of 7% traders among the immigrants; we found 11%, but perhaps we should think in terms of 20-30% as the Immigration survey figures suggest. In any case, the tables presented in this paper provide the most precise comparison available on occupational selectivity among the Russian immigrants and on the possible distortions in the data. If the case for distortions is not accepted, the inconsistency between the immigrant reports upon arrival and the evdence from later reports and from early experience in the American economy (Tables 5 and 6) must be confronted in some other way; it cannot be ignored.

In any case, the last two tables help set the issue in a larger context (Tables 5 and 6 that deal with occupations prevalent among migrants both within the pale and across the ocean). As I noted at the outset, we should not forget that the artisans in general had reasons to be oriented towards commerce and probably this was expecially true for Jewish artisans in particular (since so many members of their community were involved in petty trade even if some of the artisans were

not). And if so, the proportion of the Russian-Jewish immigrant workforce with some propensity to commerce and self-employment would then have been very large indeed -- that is, it would have included both the 20% that may have been in trade, and many of the much greater proportion listed as manufacturing workers. And if all these were interested in trade, the rapid entry of the Jews into trade in America would be easier to understand.

TABLE 1. JEWISH OCCUPATIONS IN THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT, 1897

Industrial sector	Pale: men and women		7 core provinces: men and women	
	% of all Jews with occupations	% that Jews comprise of all in this sector	% of all Jews with occupations	% that Jews comprise of all in this sector
trade - in agric	15	78	12	92
trade - other	19	69	14	85
mfg - clothing	18	51	19	68
mfg - other	20	25	24	46
labor/per. ser.	13	13	12	16
transport*	3	21	4	33
Agriculture	3	1	4	1
Military	3	6	3	6
all other**	7	19	8	27
Total (000s): non-agric, civ. workforce***	100 [1,264]	30 [4,196]	100 [323]	41 [778]

* Nearly all carters and draymen

** Includes (in about equal proportions) a) "clergy, non-Christian," "persons serving about churches, etc.," "teachers and educators" and b) miscellaneous groups of other workers (included among whom were all other professionals).

*** For the sake of meaningful comparisons with the non-Jewish population, the total row is limited to the non-agricultural civilian workforce. Excluded from all rows are those whose occupation was listed as unknown and those for whom "occupation" was listed as dependent on charity, relatives, etc.

TABLE 2. THE OCCUPATIONS OF JEWS IN THE PALE (1897)
AND OF JEWISH IMMIGRANT ARRIVALS FROM RUSSIA (1899/1900)
-- BY SEX

Sector	% Jews in the Pale				% Jewish immigrant arrivals from Russia, 1900 - sample data	
	Female	Male			Male	Female
		no adjust-ment	adjusting for region**			
			only	and for age		
trade	24	36	31	28	11	1
clothing mfg.	17	18	18	18	32	78
- garment mfg.*	na	11	11	11	23	na
- shoe mfg.*	na	7	7	7	9	na
other mfg.	11	22	24	25	34	7
laborers\pers.serv.	41	6	5	5	20	13
transport	0	5	5	5	***	0
agriculture	2	3	4	3	2	0
military	0	3	4	9	0	0
other	5	8	8	7	1	1
total	100	100	100	100	100	100
total N	na	na		na	1,091	108

NOTES TO TABLE 2.

*The Census did not distinguish shoemakers from other clothing workers; the estimate here is based on the percentage of shoemakers among all clothing workers as reported for each province in the JCA survey

** The occupational distribution when workers in the various provinces of the Pale are included in the same proportions as are found in the sample of immigrants (in column 4); the age adjustment is cruder: the product a*b/c
where
a = the number of Jewish male workers in each industrial sector
b = number of all male workers 20-39 in the sector in the seven core provinces (discussed in Table 1) and
c = number of all male workers in the sector in the seven core provinces.

*** Less than half of 1%; included with agriculture.

TABLE 3A. OCCUPATIONS OF JEWISH IMMIGRANT ARRIVALS, 1899/1900 + 1907/8

Sector	% Jewish immigrant arrivals -- sample data					
	All		From Russia			
			Male		Female	
	1900	1907	1900	1907	1900	1907
trade	10	9	11	8	1	5
clothing mfg.	31	36	32	29	78	58
- garment mfg.*	25	32	23	23	na	na
- shoe mfg.*	6	4	9	6	na	na
other mfg.	29	23	34	34	7	2
laborers\pers.serv.	25	26	20	20	13	34
transport	1	1	0	1	0	0
agriculture	3	0	2	3	0	0
military	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	2	3	1	4	1	1
total	100	100	100	100	100	100
total N	2,410	1,941	1,091	956	108	402

For those of Austrian Birth (primarily Galician):

Sector	Male		Female	
	1900	1907	1900	1907
Trade	11	17	0	4
Clothing mfg.	24	21	32	50
Other mfg.	27	30	3	2
Labor/per. ser.	29	20	62	41
Other	9	12	3	3
Total (100%) N	642	218	103	100

TABLE 3B. CONSISTENCY OF MALE AND INCONSISTENCY OF FEMALE OCCUPATIONAL REPORTING IN THE PASSENGER LISTS OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS: 1900-1907

Sex	Composition		% with occupation listed		% of all with occupations		% of women 15-22 years of age-- with occupation listed	
	1900	1907	1900	1907	1900	1907	1900	1907
Male	55	52	72	72	88	70	na	na
Female	45	48	12	34	12	30	23	74*

* The rise in the reporting of young women's occupations is found across countries of origin: For those 15-22, the percentage with an occupation was

by country	1900	1907	Difference
Russia	17 (515)	74 (439)	57
Austria	28 (251)	80 (118)	52
All other	34 (153)	70 (60)	46
Total	23 (919)	74 (617)	51.

For other ages the change in reporting for women was much less marked:

Age		
0-14	2 (652)	2 (492)
15-22	23 (919)	74 (617)
23-30	11 (368)	24 (274)
31-44	6 (252)	12 (195)
45+	2 (163)	20 (143)
Total	12 (2354)	34 (1721)

TABLE 4. THE OCCUPATIONS OF JEWISH IMMIGRANT MEN PRIOR TO THEIR IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES: 1909
(FROM THE U.S. IMMIGRATION COMMISSION REPORTS)

Type of employment, 1909	Prior occupation of the "Hebrew -- Russian"					Prior occupation of the "Hebrew -- Other"				
	% trade	% mfg		% other	N	% trade	% mfg		% other	N
		clthg	other				clthg	other		
Clothing workers										
NYC	19	63	13	95	1,057	29	59	5	7	509
Chicago	25	53	13	91	480	27	48	9	16	147
Baltimore	30	50	13	7	267	na				
Other workers -- U. S.										
Shoe	21	52	18	9	272	na				
Silk	5	91	1	3	185					
Textile	24	34	29	87	100					
Meat	18	27	31	24	153					

na -- not applicable: less than 100 respondants.

TABLE 5. OCCUPATIONS OF MALE IMMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1910

A. THE RUSSIAN-BORN, YIDDISH-MOTHER-TONGUE IMMIGRANTS

Sector	Year of immigration (% in each sector and N)					
	before 1891	1891-96	1897-1901	1902-04	1905-07	1908-10
Trade	50	49	34	32	26	23
Garment mfg.	25	26	30	26	34	31
Other mfg.	16	14	24	30	28	32
all other	9	11	12	12	12	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
% self-employed	63	51	44	35	28	19
N=	165	137	125	171	192	78

NOTE: The Russians comprised 79% of all male Yiddish-Mother-Tongue immigrants with an occupation, so that the figures for the entire group vary only slightly for those of the Russian-born.

B. ALL MALE IMMIGRANTS OTHER THAN THE YIDDISH-MOTHER-TONGUE GROUP

Sector	Year of immigration (% in each sector and N)					
	before 1891	1891-96	1897-1901	1902-04	1905-07	1908-10
Trade	16	17	15	11	8	5
All mfg.	35	40	41	43	50	51
all other	49	43	46	46	42	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
% self-employed	36	22	16	12	6	3
N=	8952	2330	1981	1978	3044	2193

TABLE 6. MALE JEWISH OCCUPATIONS IN THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT, HIGH IN- AND OUT-MIGRATION AREAS COMPARED

Industrial sector	The seven core provinces of the Northeast* (high out-migration) %		Urban areas of the five provinces with most rapid growth* (high in-migration) %	
	non-urban	urban	West Poland	New Russia
trade - in agric	13	10	8	18
trade - other	15	15	28	20
mfg - clothing	19	19	18	18
mfg - other	25	29	25	21
labor/per. ser.	4	5	8	7
transport*	5	5	4	4
Agriculture	8	1	0	1
Military	2	6	3	5
all other**	9	10	6	6
Total	100	100	100	100

* The seven core provinces of the northwest are Vilna, Kovna, Grodno, Minsk, Suwalki, Plotsk and Lomza. The two provinces in West Poland with rapid growth are Warsaw and Petrokow, and those of New Russia are Kherson, Ekaterinoslav and Taurida.

NOTES

1. Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers,* 1976; Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 1990.

2. See the references to Kuznets and Goldscheider and Zuckerman later in this section.

3. Joel Perlmann, "Beyond New York: The Occupations of Russian Jewish Immigrants in Providence, R. I. and in Other Small Jewish Communities 1900-1915," American Jewish History, 72 (March 1983), 369-394 and "Beyond New York, A Second Look: the Occupations of East-European Jewish Immigrants in Providence and Similar Communities, 1910," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, 10 (November 1989), 375-88. Some of the material in the earlier paper is summarized in Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure among the Irish, Italians, Jews, and blacks in an American City, 1880-1935; Cambridge University Press, 1988 130-138;

4.Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews," 111-2.

5. See note 6. If Rubinow had one failing from the perspective of our times it was the need to show the world that the Jews were not really parasitical and unproductive. Every few pages he departs from his otherwise modern tone, to offer some further demonstration: the Jews don't shirk manual labor, the Jews were forced out of agriculture, the Jews have worked as manual laborers before coming to the United States, the Jews don't really want to be tavern keepers in Russia, etc. See for example, "Economic Conditions," 498, 500, 506. Given Rubinow's agenda to show that the Jews were not parasitical (see text below), he was eager, and perhaps too eager to show not only that were the Jews already involved in manual labor in Russia, but also that the United States was getting far less than its share of the Jews involved in trade.

6. Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews," Table XI, rows 4 and 6. The figures for Russian Jews refer to those living in the Pale.

7. Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman, The Transformation of the Jew (Chicago, 1984) 163-7, which reiterate the arguments and cite Kuznets repeatedly, and Stephan Steinberg, The Ethnic Myth (New York, 1980).

8. The chapters by S. Ettinger, "The Modern Period," in H. H. Ben Sasson, ed., A History of the Jewish People (Cambridge, 1976) comprise the standard guide to modern Jewish history, and a survey of conditions in Russia is Salo W. Baron, The Russian Jew under Tzars and Soviets (New York, 1964); see also Ezra Mendelsohn, Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers Movement in Tsarist Russia, Cambridge, England, 1970; Arcadius Kahan, Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History, Chicago, 1986. See also the contemporaneous Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), Recueil de Materiaux sur La Situation Economique des Israelites de Russie, 2 vols., Paris, 1906 [translation of the Russian version which appeared in 1905] and Isaac M. Rubinow, Economic Condition of the Jews in Russia (Bulletin #15, United States

Bureau of Labor), Washington, 1907 [reprint: New York, 1905], which reviewed in English this material and the data on Jews in the 1897 Russian Census. On the Census itself see Ralph S. Clem (ed.) Research Guide to the Russian and Soviet Censuses, Ithaca, 1986; Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler, Brigitte Roth (eds.), Die Nationalitaten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszahlung von 1897, 2 vols., Stuttgart, 1991. The fullest use of the census materials for Jews has been B. D. Brutskus, Occupations of the Jewish Population... [Russian], St. Petersburg, 1908.and his Statistics of the Jewish Population [Russian] St. Petersburg, 1909. See also Richard H. Rowland, "Geographical Patterns of the Jewish Population in the Pale of Settlement of Late Nineteenth Century Russia," Jewish Social Studies, 1986, 207-234. On the emigration, see in addition to Rubinow, Liebmann Hersch, Le Juif Errant D'Aujourd'hui, Paris, 1913; Samuel Joseph, Jewish Immigration to the United States from 1881 to 1910, New York, 1914 and Imre Ferenczi, International Migrations (Volume I: Statistics), New York, 1929; and Simon Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States: Background and Structure," Perspectives in American History, 9 (1975), 35-126.

9. The Jewish emigration west that occurred in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries came overwhelmingly from these two areas, the Pale and Galicia. Other communities in the east, and other sources of Jewish emigration, were of trivial importance by comparison to these two. German Poland had few Jews by the end of the 19th century, other Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (most notably the large Hungarian Jewish population) were both more assimilated and less likely to emigrate. The only Jewish community comparable in socio-economic and cultural terms (and in terms of emigration rates) to those of Galicia and the Russian Pale was that in adjacent Rumania, but the Rumanian Jewish population was much smaller than the Jewish population of Galicia or the Pale.

10. Samuel Joseph, Jewish Immigration; Imre Ferenczi, International Migrations; Simon Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews."

11. The Russian Census also utilized in a few instances a more detailed occupational classification system, in terms of some 350 industrial sectors. This scheme was never used in the crosstabulations by mother tongue. Nevertheless, the existence of the more detailed classification scheme was important for my work, because the Census authorities showed under which of the 65 major occupational categories each of the 350 detailed occupational categories were subsumed. This information made it possible to determine with some confidence how to classify my sample members' occupations in a manner consistent with the Russian Census classification.

12. For example because time was required to amass resources for trade, or because some older artisans found the work too strenuous and tried to move into trade, or because of a cohort effect making it harder to enter in the 90s than in the 70s.

13. Liebmann Hersch, whose Le Juif Errant d'Aujourd'hui (1913) remains an extraordinarily useful survey of east-European-Jewish immigration patterns, believed that many of the laborers were in fact men who had been in trade, perhaps as peddlers, or that they were young men who had essentially no fixed occupation, young men of the famous "Luftmensch" group in the Jewish

Pale, men who lived off the air. These people were, in Hersch's phrase, in trade or set to enter it. Hersch pointed to numerous reports from Jewish organizations that registered prospective emigrants in the Pale. In their reports, the proportion of day laborers was low, the proportion of those in trade considerably higher. Hersch, Le Juif Errrant, 121-3. However, there are several low-skill occupations that figure distinctly in the Russian Census and not in the immigration Commissioner's publications (or in the passenger lists on which the publications rest). Thus, military service, and transport work (carting and draying) are jobs young men might well have taken but which may have turned up as general labor in the immigration records. From this perspective, the percentage of those in low skill work appears to be about what would have been expected.

14. Rubinow, "Economic Conditions," 498, 500.

15. Kuznets, "Russian Immigration," 111.

16.Kuznets, Table XII.

17. United States Immigration Commission, Reports (Immigrants in Industries, vols. 6-25) see reports for each industry mentioned; the table is in each case entitled "Occupation of foreign-born male employees before coming to the United States." The Immigration Commission's summary in volume 20 of the Reports ("Part 23"), page 175, also lists a grand total, for 2,777 Russian Hebrew males in all industries, apparently including 263 workers from miscilaneous industries not shown in Table 4 of this paper. In that summary, 20% of the 2,777 men reported that they had been engaged in trade. Similarly, the summary indicated 964 non-Russian Hebrew males, including 308 not shown in Table 4. Of the 964, 24% indicated that they had been in trade. In a footnote to Arcadius Kahan,"Economic Opportunities and some Pilgrims' Progress: Jewish Immigrants from Eastern Europe in the United States, 1890-1914," the author wrote "The various inquiries conducted not at the time of entry into the United States but years later, reveal that the share of those gainfully employed in commerce prior to their arrival varied between 20-30% of the total employed" (reprinted in the posthumous Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History, ed. Roger Weiss, (Chicago, 1986). I assume that the "various inquiries" Kahan had in mind were the various industry reports of the Immigration Commission.