

Geography as an Element in the Historical Sociology of the Jews: New York, 1900–1981 and the United States, 1880–1980

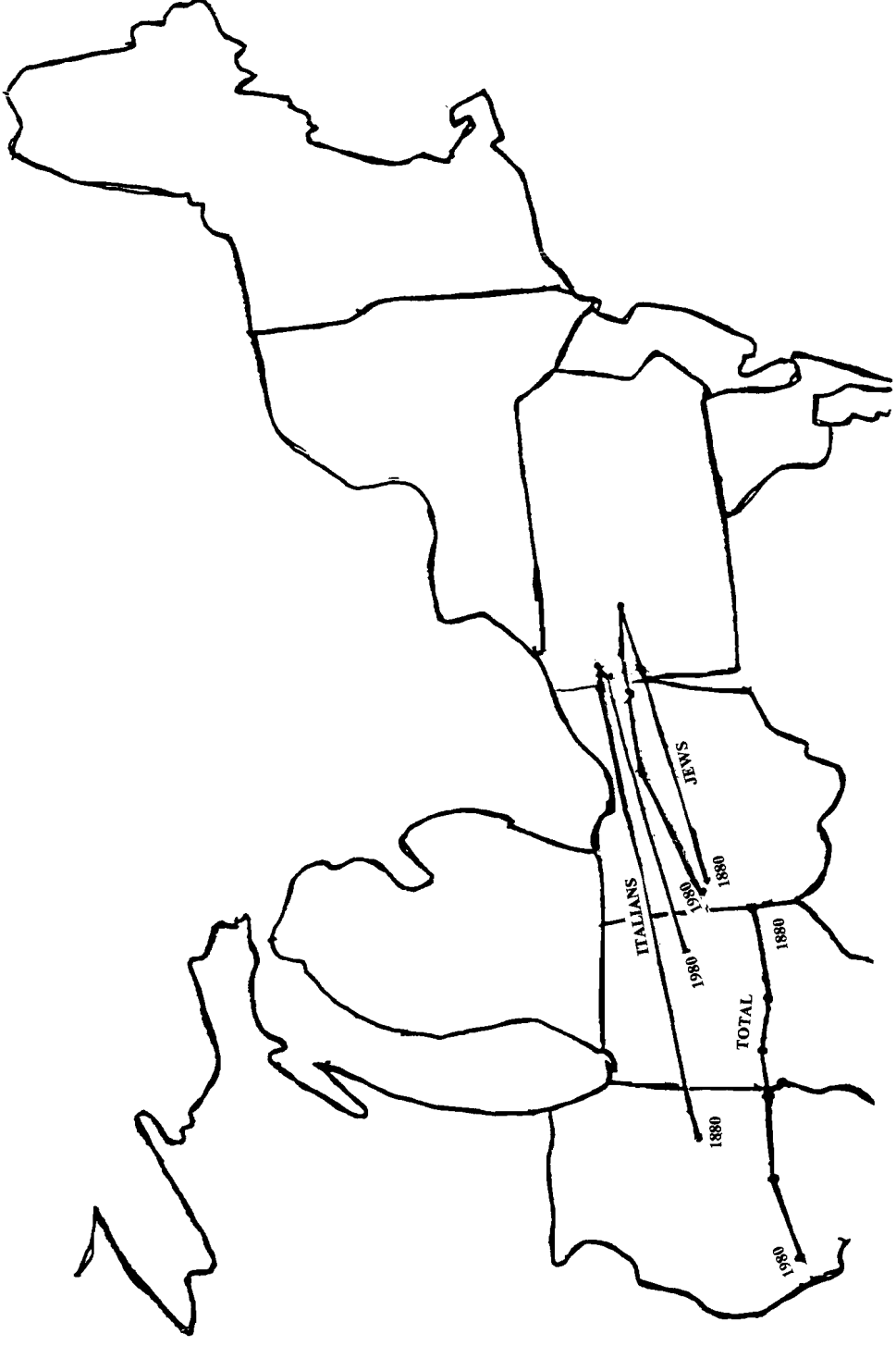
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In his classic monograph, Louis Wirth asserted “Where the Jew lives is as good an index as any other as to the kind of Jew he is.” (Wirth, 1928. p. 286) What Wirth wrote about Jews in Chicago in the 1920s is even more compelling on a wider stage in the 1990s. In the past two generations, Jews have become more differentiated socially, culturally and religiously all reflecting, causing and being a consequence of geographic location. The titles of two books capture the essence of our story. These are Oscar Handlin’s *The Uprooted* (1951) and John Bodnar’s *The Transplanted* (1985). Immigrants, Jews among them, felt the pain of uprootedness as they attempted to transplant their lives into new soil. They carried with them what is so awkwardly termed cultural baggage, some of which they tossed overboard on their journey, but much remained with them. They brought language, religion, economic skills and tastes, all of which would come to influence their lives in their new land. They found new opportunities but they also found new constraints. Out of this inchoate mixture, crucial decisions would be made, among them place of domicile. If anything, Wirth underestimated the significance of place as an outcome and indicator of social process. In this paper I will focus on the changing location and population density of the Jews in the United States and New York City.

The National Picture

On the national level we shall use two summary statistics, population center of gravity, and scatter over area. The former is analogous to the mean and the latter to the variance. I have constructed a time series consisting of the number of Jews, Italians and the total American population for the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia and New York City for the period 1880 through 1980. I chose to examine the Italians because they entered the United States in large numbers concurrently with the Jews and there is a significant body of research comparing the two. We will examine the data and then interpret them.

MAP 1. THE UNITED STATES SHOWING THE CENTERS OF GRAVITY OF JEWS, ITALIANS AND THE TOTAL AMERICAN POPULATION, 1880-1980



In 1880, the center of gravity of the Jewish population (as well as the American population generally) was western Ohio, close to the Indiana border, with the Italian population a bit west of both in eastern Illinois. The American center of gravity moved relentlessly westward during the entire one hundred year period, almost in a straight line, ending the period in western Illinois. (In fact if we had used counties rather than states as the unit of analysis, the curve would have described a straight line.) The Jewish and Italian populations by contrast shifted their centers of gravity eastward in 1900, with the Jews moving even farther eastward by 1920. It took until 1980 for the Jews to find themselves centered again in the same place where they had begun a full century earlier. The 1880 period reflects the influence of the spatial distribution of the earlier German Jewish migration, while the hundred years following reflect the weight of the enormous wave of East European Jewish migration and its 'coming to terms' with America. Along with its shifting center of gravity, America's Jewish population changed in its density. A way of looking at American Jewish population distribution in comparative perspective is through its coefficient of scatter (Bachi, 1989). The higher the number, the greater the dispersion of the population. These data are presented in Table 1.¹

TABLE 1. SCATTER RELATIVE TO AREA: THE JEWS, ITALIANS AND THE TOTAL AMERICAN POPULATION FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES, WASHINGTON, D.C. AND NEW YORK CITY, 1880-1980

| Year | Jews | Italians | Total |
|------|------|----------|-------|
| 1880 | .453 | .590 | .393 |
| 1890 | .206 | .489 | .440 |
| 1900 | .268 | .318 | .458 |
| 1910 | .176 | .369 | .513 |
| 1920 | .205 | .289 | .531 |
| 1930 | .245 | .266 | .560 |
| 1940 | .247 | .266 | .579 |
| 1950 | .361 | .260 | .626 |
| 1960 | .393 | .297 | .669 |
| 1970 | .526 | .399 | .698 |
| 1980 | .662 | .627 | .739 |

For both the Jews and Italians we see a remarkably similar pattern. Their scatter was about at its numeric mid-point in 1880, reflecting the relative lack of geographic concentration, though both groups were more concentrated than was the American population as a whole. Ethnic groups tended to settle in particular areas. Thus the Scandinavians were and are to be found in the upper midwest (Minnesota),

1. New York City declined more than did the tri-state area during the 100 year period.

the Dutch in Michigan, etc. The level of scatter of the Jews in 1880 was not reached again until some time in the 1960s while for the Italians it was not reached until the 1970s. The change in scatter of both Italians and Jews reflects their more even distribution across the map of America as the process of assimilation proceeds apace.² For Jews, the point of maximum concentration was 1910, with a slight increase in 1920. The most marked increase in scatter for Jews occurred in the 1960s through the 1970s, with the coming of age of the third generation of East European-origin Jews. This was also the period of radical growth in the rate of intermarriage, a factor related both as cause and consequence to spatial distribution. Among Italians, concentration was greatest during the long period 1920 through the 1950s. For both Italians and Jews, maximum dispersion is to be found in 1980; however even at their maximum, their scatter is less than that of the American population as a whole. There remains some degree of "lumpiness" in the population distributions of both groups. For example, relatively few Jews or Italians are yet to be found in the southeast, with the exception of Florida. Here a note of caution. The Italian data are census-based and include only first and second generation persons for most of the one hundred year period as subjective ethnic identification was used in the 1980 census. For the Jews, communal data were used and there is no generational restriction.³ For the three groups, there was essentially no shift during the 1930s, the period of the great depression when inter-state migration in the United States was at its low point (Long, 1988). Contrary to the image evoked of the "Okie" westward trek in literature (e.g. Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*), few Americans moved significant distances during the depression. Where was the situation better and who had the means to get there? There was a great deal of local moving during the 1935–40 period with Jews among the most frequent movers.

The East European Jews, and to a lesser extent the Southern Italians, concentrated in the East, most particularly in New York City in the face of attempts to distribute them more evenly across America⁴ (Livingston, 1979; Romanofsky, 1975). To explain this phenomenon, some suggest that as an urban people, Jews found New York to be ideal. While Russian Jews had been expelled from villages by the end of the nineteenth century, few lived in the major cities of the empire until after the 1917 revolution. The urbanization of Imperial Russian Jewry was in no way comparable to what would emerge in the United States. I propose that perhaps

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2. For additional discussion of this issue, see for example Lieberman, 1963.
 3. Some ambiguity in the recent Italian numbers results from the fact that persons of mixed ancestry (Italian and other[s]) tend to opt for their Italian identity (Waters, 1990. pp. 142–43).
 4. The Industrial Removal Commission had its successes. Perhaps one of the oddest is the resettlement of Jews from Mamora, Turkey to Seattle, Washington forming a still thriving community (Papo, 1987. p. 23). Many Jewish communities were populated by Jews from particular places in Europe, no doubt through the process of chain migration. Thus Milwaukee is primarily Litvak with many from Slutsk and Kapulye families (Swichkow and Gartner, 1963. p. 156). In New York City, with its massive Jewish population, Jews on the Lower East Side settled blocks by area of origin in the old country.

the major factor accounting for the spatial distribution of the mid-nineteenth century German Jewish migration and the radical change to Jewish spatial distribution under the impact of East European Jewish migration may be found in the economic roles assumed by each wave.

A large fraction of the German Jewish population resided in New York but there were major centers in the mid-west, the South and California. German Jews tended to share areas with their non-Jewish co-nationals. They continued to supply economic services to German gentiles as they had done in their native land. In many instances they participated in German secular culture and recreational life. Russian Jews in the United States did not have large Russian and other slavic gentile populations with whom to continue their economic function.⁵ They had to find new economic roles which allowed them to exploit the talents and training they brought with them.

New York offered Jews employment in its nascent major industry, the needle trades, to a far greater degree than did any other area in the country. Jewish population concentration was both a cause and consequence of the garment trade's concentration in New York. While American Jewish historiography has tended to focus on the sweat shop conditions of garment workers, New York's ladies' garment industry paid significantly better than did other manufacturing employment that was available elsewhere. With New York's decline as a center of light manufacturing, and as second and third generation Jews entered other occupations, particularly the professions, the attraction of New York decreased. Had it been otherwise, New York's primacy would have been eroded more rapidly and profoundly.⁶

While I can not examine the relations of the Jews with the garment trade in detail here, some nagging questions must at least be raised. The fundamental assumption is that immigrants made rational choices moving to places that would give them the best lives, including, but not restricted to, earning a living. Where possible, this meant continuing the economic role which they had in their native lands. When we compare the occupational distribution of Jews in the Russian census of 1897 with the data presented in the United States census of 1910 and by the Dillingham Committee of 1911 we find a far higher proportion of Jews in the United States in the needle trades than was the case in Russia. Furthermore, Jewish tailoring in Russia was more likely to be artisanal, unlike the garment factory which had come to dominate the industry in the United States (Kahan, 1986).

Several mutually compatible responses come to mind. First, we know that the Jewish immigrant population was not a random sample of the Russian Jewish population in any way. Thus it is quite possible that those with garment skills were more likely to migrate in response to the call of opportunity in the United States.

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5. A study of immigrants into western Pennsylvania shows occupational continuity for both the slavic and Jewish immigrants. This I believe was more the exception than the rule. (Morawska, 1985, 1987).
 6. I am indebted to Professor Emanuel Tobier for the time series on relative wages in garment and other manufactures in New York and the nation. On the question of urban and rural dwelling of the Italians in America, see Nelli (1970. pp. 15–21).

Second, though the work venue differed in Russia and the United States, the skills of tailors were easily converted into the skills of garment factory workers. Third, learning of the availability of work in the garment trade, some of those who intended to migrate may have acquired the necessary skills prior to their westward passage.

The New York Picture

City wide

We will focus on two related questions. First, what, if any, changes have occurred in the Jewish propensity to live among other Jews over the years for which we have data. Second, what happened on the local level within the city to account for the rise and fall (and in some instances the resurrection) of Jewish neighborhoods.⁷

TABLE 2. THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF NEW YORK'S JEWS, 1961-1981

| | D J-WNJ | D Total | Scatter/Area |
|------|---------|---------|--------------|
| 1916 | ---- | ---- | .561 |
| 1925 | 58.8 | 58.8 | .601 |
| 1930 | 49.9 | 51.2 | .780 |
| 1940 | 48.4 | 49.9 | .810 |
| 1950 | 45.6 | 47.4 | .940 |
| 1957 | 40.2 | 41.4 | 1.060 |
| 1970 | 36.3 | 41.7 | 1.480 |
| 1981 | 26.6 | 34.7 | 1.700 |

D J-WNJ = the proportion of Jews who would have to move so as to randomly distributed among white non-Jews.

D Total = the proportion of Jews who would have to move so as to be randomly distributed among all non-Jews.

The measures of scatter take into account the spatial distribution of the population (Bachi, 1989).

At the turn of the century through the First World War, Jewish population density was incredibly high. It has been estimated that in 1892 75% of New York's Jews lived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and at the turn of the century the Lower East Side Wards, where the Jews lived, were the most densely populated

7. The Jewish population's center of gravity in New York City remained very stable over the period studied as a function of compensating shifts in population distribution. This may in turn be a consequence of restrictions generated by the small space of the city.

areas of the City.⁸ The Lower East Side fraction of the City's Jewish population declined to 50% by 1903 with the development of newer Jewish neighborhoods (Rischin, 1962. p. 93). However, the newer neighborhoods were, for the most part, also very heavily Jewish. The first City-wide data available to permit reconstruction of the propensity of Jews to live with other Jews were collected in 1916 by Alexander Dushkin (1918). After Dushkin, we have good estimates for 1925, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1957, 1970, 1981 (see Table 2).

In the first column of statistics (D J-WNJ), Duncan's D is presented as a measure of the spatial separation of Jews from white non-Jews for the period 1925–1981.⁹ "D" requires two populations, thus it could not be computed for 1916 for which Dushkin presented an estimate for the Jewish population but not for the non-Jews. The second column repeats "D", this time including the entire non-white population. When we compare the two, we find an ever increasing difference between the two columns as the non-white, particularly black, proportion of the city, grows. The inclusion of the black population makes for an increase of Jewish separateness as a function of the high degree of isolation of blacks from all white groups. The scatter statistic, computed entirely differently, shows results completely consistent with "D". There has been steady decline in Jewish residential concentration, again reflecting the processes of acculturation and secularization of New York's Jews.¹⁰

Boroughs and neighborhoods

Another way of looking at Jewish population geography in New York is to examine the shifting areas of Jewish density in the City or what we might term the rise and fall (and in at least one instance, the second rise) of Jewish neighborhoods.¹¹ This is more than an exercise in spatial dynamics for the shifts in neighborhoods reflect shifts in the social, religious and economic conditions of the Jews in the context of an ever-changing city. We will examine relative concentration in the boroughs first and then zero in on particular neighborhoods.

All of the borough statistics should be read in the context of the changing total Jewish population in the City. Reflecting the primacy of the Lower East Side and

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8. Massey (1985) argues that the densely populated ethnic neighborhood was a product of industrialization and the factory system. Ethnic division of labor and industrial concentration were the conditions that led to extreme ethnic population concentration.
 9. The size of the D coefficient is in part a function of the number of units into which the populations are distributed and the population size of each unit. Most of the literature is based upon census tracts, while here we are using "Revised Statistical Districts" (Horowitz and Kaplan, 1959. pp. 82–84) which are much larger than tracts, thus the coefficients reported are smaller. Some scholars have reported that even in apparently integrated neighborhoods, Jews will tend to live in certain apartment houses and non-Jews in others. Thus, even tracts miss some degree of residential separateness (Bayer, 1978. p. 153; Cohen, 1977. p. 49; 1981. p. 136; Lowenstein, 1983. p. 493).
 10. Moore (1981. pp. 30–31) presents a coefficient for 1930 showing a small reversal of the secular trend. However, my calculations show slightly different results and no reversal.
 11. For a very interesting analysis of Jewish neighborhood concentrations in a nineteenth century provincial American city, see Mesinger, 1983.

the emergence of Jewish Harlem at the turn of the century, Manhattan was the home of almost two thirds of the Jews in the City. Manhattan declined rapidly as the Lower East Side lost most of its Jewish population, reaching a low point of approximately one in six in 1930, and remained at that level until 1981 (reaching one in four) when the Jews returned to Manhattan in large numbers, though they settled in different parts of the borough as we shall see. The details for this discussion are presented in Table 3. Brooklyn, as the second largest area of Jewish concentration at the beginning of the century (home to one in four Jews) approached half of the City's Jewish population in the mid-twenties, a position it held until 1950, after which it slowly declined to a bit more than one third. The Bronx began slowly at the beginning of the century with one in twenty five Jews and grew rapidly into the twenties, remained stable through the Second World War and then went into rapid decline so that at the end of our time series, 1981, The Bronx had returned to about where it was in 1910. Queens was a minor player in New York Jewish geography until after the First World War; its major growth occurred after the Second World War with the boom in apartment house construction in Forest Hills and Kew Gardens.¹² Richmond never achieved major significance as a center of Jewish population, but did show growth in the 1970s subsequent to the construction of the Verrazano Bridge which linked the borough with Brooklyn.

Of the several changes in Borough Jewish population, we shall focus particularly on The Bronx and Brooklyn. Both lost Jewish population, as did the City as a whole; from a high of over two million in the 1950s the Jewish population had fallen approximately by half in 1981 with the decline in The Bronx far sharper than that in Brooklyn. A close comparison of the two Boroughs is quite revealing. If we look at some of the basic characteristics of the two boroughs on the eve of decline in 1950, the census data would not have predicted their differential decline. If anything, one might well have predicted greater decline for the Jewish population in Brooklyn than in The Bronx. The two boroughs had about the same general population density, the same proportion white non-Puerto Rican population, the same level of income, and the same proportion of young children. The housing stock in Brooklyn was considerably older and the general trend is a flow out of old neighborhoods into new ones. (The recent phenomenon of gentrification challenges that generalization somewhat and we will deal with that a bit further on.) Why then did Brooklyn fare so well and The Bronx so poorly?

12. During the 1920s, when the Bronx was being developed with apartment houses, developers in Queens were building one and two family houses. Jews were overwhelmingly apartment dwellers as shown in the 1940 census of population, thus the Queens housing stock was not congruent with the housing tastes of Jews (Plunz, 1990. p. 131).

TABLE 3. JEWISH POPULATION BY BOROUGH/COUNTY, 1900 -1981**Part A — Absolute numbers (thousands)**

| Year | Bronx | Brooklyn | Manhattan | Queens | Richmond |
|------|-------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 1900 | 20 | 132 | 314 | [15] | [5] |
| 1910 | 84 | 326 | 599 | 42 | [11] |
| 1916 | 211 | 568 | 696 | 23 | 5 |
| 1920 | 278 | 604 | 657 | [86] | [17] |
| 1925 | 390 | 800 | 500 | 57 | 4 |
| 1930 | 585 | 851 | 297 | 88 | 4 |
| 1940 | 599 | 958 | 299 | 120 | 4 |
| 1950 | 530 | 940 | 350 | 280 | 10 |
| 1957 | 493 | 854 | 339 | 423 | 6 |
| 1970 | 170 | 593 | 198 | 438 | [28] |
| 1981 | 96 | 413 | 276 | 317 | 31 |

Part B — The Jews of each borough as a percentage of all the Jews in New York City

| Year | Bronx | Brooklyn | Manhattan | Queens | Richmond |
|------|-------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 1900 | 4 | 27 | 64 | 3 | * |
| 1910 | 8 | 31 | 57 | 4 | * |
| 1916 | 14 | 38 | 46 | 2 | * |
| 1920 | 17 | 37 | 40 | 5 | * |
| 1925 | 22 | 46 | 29 | 3 | * |
| 1930 | 32 | 47 | 16 | 5 | * |
| 1940 | 30 | 48 | 15 | 6 | * |
| 1950 | 25 | 45 | 17 | 13 | * |
| 1957 | 23 | 40 | 16 | 20 | * |
| 1970 | 12 | 42 | 14 | 31 | 2 |
| 1981 | 8 | 36 | 24 | 28 | 3 |

* = less than 1%

TABLE 3. JEWISH POPULATION BY BOROUGH/COUNTY, 1900 -1981 (CONT.)**Part C — Jews as a percentage of total population in each borough**

| Year | Bronx | Brooklyn | Manhattan | Queens | Richmond |
|------|-------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 1900 | 10 | 11 | 17 | ** | ** |
| 1910 | 19 | 20 | 26 | ** | ** |
| 1916 | 34 | 32 | 33 | 6 | 5 |
| 1920 | 38 | 30 | 29 | ** | ** |
| 1925 | 44 | 36 | 26 | 11 | 3 |
| 1930 | 47 | 42 | 16 | 9 | 3 |
| 1940 | 43 | 36 | 16 | 9 | 2 |
| 1950 | 37 | 34 | 18 | 18 | 5 |
| 1957 | 35 | 33 | 19 | 24 | 3 |
| 1970 | 12 | 23 | 13 | 22 | ** |
| 1981 | 8 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 9 |

** = can not be reliably calculated

Part D — Jewish population of suburban counties in thousands

| Year | Nassau | Suffolk | Westchester |
|------|--------|---------|-------------|
| 1957 | 329 | 20 | 116 |
| 1970 | 516 | 154 | 191 |
| 1981 | 308 | 106 | 123 |

Part of the decline in Jewish population City-wide reflected the more general decline in the proportion of the City that is White non-Hispanic. From the mid-twenties on, the Jews constituted a stable 30% (plus or minus 2 percentage points) of the City's white non-Hispanic population. This tells us that Jews left the City at about the same rate as did other whites. In the Bronx however, the Jews were 59% of their 1950 fraction of the white non-Hispanic population while Brooklyn Jewry had maintained its parity with other white ethnic populations. In other words, Bronx Jews left the Borough far more rapidly and thoroughly than did other whites.

Some have attributed the precipitous decline of Bronx Jewry to the destruction of housing made necessary by the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway. Others have laid the blame at the door of Co-Op City, a massive middle income housing development in the North East Bronx which purportedly drained off the Jewish population of the lower Bronx (Greenberg and Boswell, 1972). Neither of these factors explains the magnitude of Jewish population loss. I attribute the difference in

Jewish out-migration to a compositional effect, that is, to the Jews themselves beginning with the kinds of Jews who were initially recruited to the two Boroughs. My thesis is that Brooklyn, initially and fortuitously, recruited more traditional Jews, who ultimately created networks of institutions which gave them a stake in their neighborhoods, thus inhibiting out-migration.¹³

In his biography of Robert Moses, Robert Caro (1974. p. 856) characterized The Bronx as a “staging area” from which residents expected that they, or certainly their children, would move out into more fashionable areas. In a discussion of Caro’s book, Marshall Berman, political scientist and Jewish former Bronxite, wrote of his youth in the Bronx.

For the Bronx of my youth was possessed, inspired, by the great modern dream of mobility. To live well meant to move up socially, and this in turn meant to move out physically; to live one’s life close to home was not to be alive at all. Our parents, who had moved up and out from the Lower East Side, believed this as devoutly as we did — even though their hearts might break when we went. Not even the radicals of my youth disputed this dream...(Berman, 1982).

But we need not rest the argument on reminiscences or speculations. There is hard evidence that points to the traditionalism of Brooklyn Jewry and the secularism of the Jews of the Bronx with their implications for geographic mobility or stability.

By the time of the First World War, Brooklyn had twice as many permanent synagogue seats per 1,000 Jews as did the Bronx (Kaplan, 1918). Between 1912 and 1939, 8 Jewish day schools or *yeshivot* were established in Brooklyn as compared with only one in the Bronx — and that a transplant from Harlem. During the 1930s, Brooklyn sent students far out of proportion to its population to the newly founded Yeshiva College (Gurock, 1988. p. 116). The Bronx had important and grand synagogues but they were fewer in number and less grand in scale than those of Brooklyn. The Bronx institutionalized secular Jewish forms on a scale far exceeding that of Brooklyn. Beginning in the 1920s, four housing projects were built by and for various left of center Jewish socio-economic and political groups (Trillin, 1977). The call for the secularist Yiddish Language conference in Czernowitz was written in an apartment in the South Bronx. A colony of Yiddish writers grew up in the Crotona Park area of the Bronx. Examples could be multiplied pointing in the same direction, namely the greater secularism and working class ideology (if not objective

13. While here I will stress differences in religious traditionalism and its consequences for mobility, housing tenure is another significant factor. Brooklyn shows a higher rate of ownership, a factor that inhibits or at least is negatively correlated with geographic mobility. Analysis of the 1940 census shows New York to have a more mobile population than do other major cities. Controlling for city, Jews show a higher rate of renting, thus accounting in part for greater Jewish mobility. Although of marginal concern here, it has been argued that home ownership has an effect on social mobility as well. Thernstrom (1964. pp. 155–157; 1973. pp. 170–171) argues that the use of limited family capital to buy rather than rent inhibited upward mobility for Irish and Italians. Others argue that the lack of home ownership inhibits black social mobility.

reality) of Bronx Jewry and the religious traditionalism of Brooklyn's Jews. Obviously, counter examples could be cited, but I point to statistical tendencies not absolutes. A similar instance of geographically localized secularism has been reported for Italians in Chicago.¹⁴

The religious infra-structure created by Brooklyn Jewry made the borough attractive to the more rigorously Orthodox holocaust survivors who came to the United States after the Second World War. Their neighborhoods exhibited "institutional completeness", a characteristic which gives neighborhoods greater holding power (Breton, 1964; Drieger and Church, 1974). The rigorously Orthodox Jews had a greater stake in their neighborhoods. They had yeshivot, mikvaot, Sabbath-observing stores, synagogues that conducted their services in their own tradition. In some instances these Jews replaced the less traditional Jews and founded new institutions, and in others they shifted the existing institutions to the religious right.¹⁵ Rather than move out when neighborhoods began to show signs of ethnic succession, they were more likely to hold their ground and even to seek to expand their holdings in the area. (Lubavitch Hasidim were accused of actively encouraging their black neighbors in Crown Heights to sell their homes to the Hasidim.)

In Crown Heights, where the Lubavitch Hasidim thoroughly dominated Jewish life, the active role taken by their leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn enhanced the effects of institutional completeness. On the last day of Passover, 1969, the Rebbe announced to his disciples that he would remain in the area and told them Jewish law forbids the abandonment of fellow Jews (Kestenbaum, 1975). His moral authority was enough to keep his disciples in the neighborhood. The survival of Orthodox Williamsburg was an "iffier" matter. Williamsburg was home to several hasidic dynasties (though there was a plurality of Satmar Hasidim), thus a unified, disciplined response was more problematic. Further, Williamsburg lost good housing as the Brooklyn Queens Expressway ripped through its middle, much as the Cross Bronx Expressway cut through the Bronx. In response, the Square Hasidim moved en masse to Ramapo Township in suburban Rockland County where they reconstituted their lives in an incorporated Hasidic Village.¹⁶ Other Hasidim moved to Orthodox Borough Park. Had the Satmar Rebbe not decided to stay, there is little doubt but that other Hasidim would have left the neighborhood. Once Satmar made its decision to stay, the Hasidim became masters of politicking,

14. A parallel phenomenon, i.e., the apparent reluctance of Orthodox Jews to move away from their neighborhoods and institutions has been reported for Germany as well (Lowenstein, 1983. p. 483).

15. Schick (1979) describes how the "modern" yeshivot, i.e. those using Hebrew rather Yiddish as the language of instruction, came early to Orthodox Borough Park in Brooklyn, later to be overwhelmed by the more rigorously Orthodox Post Second World War immigration.

16. As of 1990, the town of Ramapo in the county of Rockland had a total population 94,000, of whom I estimate 26,000 were rigorously Orthodox Jews, many but not all Hasidim of whom the mass had migrated from Brooklyn.

even getting the housing authority to alter building plans so as to include sabbath elevators to conform to Orthodox practice (Weinberger, 1965).¹⁷ Ironically, it is the illiberal Hasidim of Williamsburg and Crown Heights who live in racially integrated neighborhoods.¹⁸

While religious traditionalism accounts for the survival of Brooklyn's Jewish population, a different set of factors has come into play accounting for the rise of the central Manhattan. This is the area on either side of Central Park going as far as 110th Street on the Upper West Side and 96th Street on the Upper East Side. The Jewish population of Harlem flowed out in two streams, with the poorer fraction moving to the Bronx and the richer Jews moving to the Upper West Side, particularly Broadway, West End Avenue and Riverside Drive. While we have no direct evidence from censuses or other population sources to anchor this assertion, it is consistent with the differential move of Jewish institutions out of Harlem. Thus, whereas in 1920, the Upper West Side had two synagogues, by 1929 it had 9, 6 of which were migrants from Harlem.¹⁹

For the Jewish businessman in the garment trade, the Upper West Side was an ideal location. During and right after the First World War, the garment district moved to its present location in the West 30s. The Broadway line IRT made commuting a simple matter for the garment entrepreneur and executive, accounting for the fact that Jews did not congregate along less accessible Central Park West during that period. In 1915, 3% of the Upper West Side Jewish householders were in the garment trade while by 1925 that fraction had grown to 51%. During the depression and into the 1940s and 1950s the Jewish population of the Upper West Side continued to grow. However, by the late 1950s and into the 1960s and 1970s, the Upper West Side began to lose its appeal, and a significant fraction of its

17. The lack of organized response has been blamed for the turnover of East Flatbush from a middle class Jewish neighborhood into a black slum. East Flatbush had neither institutional completeness nor Hasidic discipline (Koltun and Schechter, 1977). The discipline displayed by Satmar and Lubavitch obviated the "prisoner's dilemma" in which all would gain if the "prisoners" would act in concert but, through lack of trust and discipline, none could be sure that his fellow could be counted upon.

18. A variation on this theme is that of the shift of a neighborhood not from Jewish to black or other non-Jewish ethnicity, but from non-orthodox to orthodox, an intra-ethnic succession which creates resentment and fear on the part of the long term Jewish residents. In the common complaint that the "neighborhood is changing", a non-orthodox resident of a posh suburban neighborhood recently exclaimed, "First they come here with a yeshiva, then they follow with a shul, and then the migration starts." (Barbanel, 1972).

19. Much of my discussion of the Upper West Side is based upon Berrol, 1986. In part the development of the Jewish upper west side was due to the housing boom of the 1920s, a response to the shortage of the World War I period and a tax abatement in force from 1920 to 1922. More housing units were completed during the twenties than in any subsequent decade (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1988. p. 174.). There were Jews living on the Upper West Side prior to the 1920s. At least as early as the 1890s the Upper West Side was home to a significant Jewish population (Zeisloft, 1899 as cited in Trager, 1987. p. 5).

population and at least two of its major Reform Temples moved across Central Park to the more elegant Upper East Side.²⁰ The Jews had continued their socio-economic upward mobility and the garment trade no longer held the same place that it had a generation earlier. In the co-op condo boom of the eighties, the two sides of the park increased in absolute numbers, as a fraction of the local population and, for the Upper East Side, as a fraction of total New York Jewry²¹ (Table 4).

TABLE 4. THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE UPPER WEST SIDE AND THE UPPER EAST SIDE, 1930–1989

| Year | No. of Jews (thousands) | | Jews as % of local population | | Local Jews as % of City's Jews | |
|------|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| | UWS | UES | UWS | UES | UWS | UES |
| 1930 | 46 | 30 | 23 | 13 | 3 | 2 |
| 1940 | 63 | 22 | 26 | 10 | 3 | 1 |
| 1950 | 75 | 34 | 28 | 14 | 4 | 2 |
| 1957 | 71 | 42 | 29 | 20 | 3 | 2 |
| 1970 | 57 | 42 | 25 | 21 | 2 | 3 |
| 1981 | 64 | 67 | 30 | 34 | 6 | 6 |
| 1989 | 72 | 96 | 34 | 44 | 6 | 8 |

Jews flocked to central Manhattan, particularly to the Upper East Side, primarily for reasons not directly related to their Jewishness. Indeed, central Manhattan Jewry has a high rate of inter-marriage, a low level of affiliation with synagogues, and a low level of religious observance. Jews came to central Manhattan because of secular characteristics, which though ultimately attributable to Jewishness, were several steps away from primordial identity and piety. As the highest earning, most successful, lowest fertility population (thus least requiring children's facilities) in the city, Jews were attracted to Central Manhattan, with its elegant apartments selling or renting at very high prices. The Upper West Side went through a period of decline but it was revived because of its desirable centrality and luxury. The Upper East Side is the richest Congressional district in the country (abutting East Harlem, the country's poorest). It is the terminal point for the upwardly mobile. When Jews arrived in numbers and discriminatory practices became difficult to impose, Jews

20. While there was little housing construction during the period 1934–1956, the number of housing units almost doubled as large apartments were divided and single family brownstones became single room occupancy rooming houses as an accommodation to the newer low income population (Trager, 1987, p. 97).

21. During an earlier period, "co-oping" was used as a way of excluding Jews. The greater concern to be exhibited by co-op owners and their agents enabled exclusion of "...a hooknosed tenant, of the kind of hooknose you know and apprehend" (Hubert, 1911, p. 327).

moved into the neighborhood that their means and social condition would allow: from the Lower East Side to the Upper East Side, from Hester Street to Park Avenue in two generations.²²

What More is There?

I have attempted to deal with a relatively neglected area of the Jewish experience. There was much that I did not touch upon or that I barely alluded to. For example, what are the individual level correlates and determinants of Jewish self-segregation? The Brooklyn — Bronx comparison and the discussion of central Manhattan gave us inferential evidence but harder evidence is available, though not for a long time series. So too, my reading of the raw materials suggests that Jews go through neighborhoods quickly, though Jewish traditionalists do not do so.²³ In fact we do have some comparative data which I am now working on which will permit a direct and rigorous test of the hypothesis. What are the consequences of Jewish residential scattering? Here too we have some evidence which holds interesting paradoxes requiring resolution. Are there Jewish patterns of spatial location and mobility that transcend the particularities of New York or even of the United States? I believe that there are but this we will know when we have done more comparative work. Such work is now going on (see DellaPergola, 1989 a, b).

22. As early as July 1939 a lead article in *Fortune* described the differences in cultural style of east side and west side households, clearly favoring the west.

23. I attribute in part the historic pattern of high Jewish geographic mobility to the tendency of Jews to rent rather than own their homes. Analysis of the 1940 and 1970 census files, identifying Jews by Yiddish mother tongue, shows this pattern very clearly. The difference between Jews and others holds when controlled for geographic area, life cycle status, factors related to propensity to own (as yet unpublished.) The same is shown using the Detroit Area Study by Goldberg and Sharp, (1958. p. 113). A caution: while the correlation between ownership and mobility stands up when controls are introduced, it is still not clear just what the logical status of the relationship is. That is, is home ownership the "cause" or is it the indicator of a reluctance to own predicated on a desire not to be encumbered and thus inhibited to move. The decennial census does not give us housing tenure status (i.e. rent or own) at two points in time. Further it gives tenure at the year of the census and movement from residence five years earlier. Thus we can not be sure that current tenure accurately "predicts" prior tenure. The argument would be helped if there were two reasonably separate markets, i.e. rental and owner-occupancy. For the period 1981–1987, that has been demonstrated for New York City. In all, 89% of the households are in the same tenure class at both points in time (DeGiovanni and Minnite, 1992. p. 276).

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