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Social mobility and integration of Amsterdam Jews: the ethnic niche of the diamond industry, 1850-1940

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SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INTEGRATION OF AMSTERDAM JEWS

The Ethnic Niche of the Diamond Industry, 1850-1940

Joris Kok

Cover image: Diamond cleavers' and cutters' workspace ca. 1901-1903
Koninklijke Verzamelingen, Den Haag
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**Social Mobility and Integration of Amsterdam Jews:
The Ethnic Niche of the Diamond Industry, 1850-1940**

**Sociale mobiliteit en integratie van Amsterdamse Joden:
De etnische niche van de diamantindustrie, 1850-1940**

Proefschrift

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Amsterdam: Jerusalem of the West, City of Diamonds	1
1.2	Theoretical Framework	5
1.3	Recent Scholarship	15
1.4	Data and Methods	21
1.5	Outline of the Dissertation	33
2	Amsterdam and Her Jews	35
2.1	Introduction	35
2.2	Life and Work in Amsterdam	36
2.3	Jewish Emancipation and Legacies of Discrimination	42
2.4	Jewish Population Dynamics in Amsterdam from the 18th Century Onwards	44
2.5	Continuity and Change in the Jewish Occupational Structure	47
2.6	Educational Opportunities and Structure	57
2.7	Social, Cultural, and Political Life	61
2.8	Amsterdam: An Atypical Jewish Centre	66
3	The History and Dynamics of the Amsterdam Diamond Industry and Union	69
3.1	Introduction	69
3.2	A Historical Background	69
3.3	Specialisations	81
3.4	ANDB and Her Members: 1894–1919	91
3.5	A Rapid Decline: 1920–1940	99
3.6	What Makes the Diamond Industry Special?	103
4	Bright Prospects or Dull Realities? Occupational Following and Intergenerational Mobility	107
4.1	Introduction	107
4.2	Pathways of Intergenerational Mobility	110
4.3	Broad Trends in Intergenerational Mobility	113
4.4	Micro-Mobility within the Diamond Industry	123
4.5	Conclusion	130
5	“Mazzel and Broche for the Whole Misjpoge” Social Exogamy, Inter marriages, and Social Networks	133
5.1	Introduction	133
5.2	Who (Inter)Marries Whom?	137
5.3	Social Exogamy	143
5.4	Inter marriages	145
5.5	Status Premiums	149
5.6	Social Networks	154
5.7	Conclusion	158

6	Students of <i>the Trade</i>	
	Career Trajectories and Life Course Mobility	161
6.1	Introduction	161
6.2	Background	163
6.3	Apprenticeships and Career Outcomes	172
6.4	Careers in the Diamond Industry	177
6.5	Life Course Mobility	193
6.6	Conclusion	201
7	From Rough to Polished Neighbourhoods?	
	Residential Mobility and Spatial Integration	205
7.1	Introduction	205
7.2	Jewish Neighbourhoods and Jews' Residential Spread	208
7.3	Data and Sources	210
7.4	Amsterdam Neighbourhoods	215
7.5	Residential Locations of Diamond Workers	227
7.6	Diamond Workers' Life Course Data	230
7.7	Conclusion	239
8	Sparkling Students or Disadvantaged Dropouts?	
	Educational Outcomes of the Next Generation	243
8.1	Introduction	243
8.2	Background	244
8.3	Data	246
8.4	Education Levels	248
8.5	Educational attainment	250
8.6	Occupational distribution	258
8.7	Conclusion	265
9	Conclusion	267
9.1	The Story	267
9.2	What is New?	269
9.3	Frames	270
9.4	Relationship between Social Mobility and Integration	276
9.5	Setting the Agenda	279
	References	282
	Appendices	
A	The Construction of the Jewish Name Index	304
B	Additional Figures for Chapter 2	312
C	Additional Tables and Figures for Chapter 5	315
D	Bereavement of Fathers prior to Sons' Marriages	320
E	Additional Figures and Tables for Chapter 6	321
F	Description of Linkages between Apprenticeship Cards and 1941 Gemeentelijst	325
	Acknowledgements	326
	Summary	328
	Samenvatting	332
	Curriculum Vitae	336

1

Introduction

“Is Amsterdam, then, a Jewish town?
“Nay, but ‘tis the Jerusalem of the West.”

— Israel Zangwill¹

1.1 Amsterdam: Jerusalem of the West, City of Diamonds

1.1.1 Introduction

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Jewish poet Israel Zangwill asserted Amsterdam was “the Jerusalem of the West.”² The autochthonous Dutch-Jewish community had by then already been formally emancipated for nearly a century,³ as the comparatively tolerant Netherlands had been one of the first European nations to grant such freedoms.⁴ The Jewish population of Amsterdam encapsulates a notable case in the discussion around Jewish social mobility and integration in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe.⁵ The city provided Jews with the freedom and opportunities to integrate on their own terms.⁶ Nevertheless, Amsterdam Jews, comprising approximately 10 percent of the total population, were characterised by sparse intermarriage and high residential segregation in comparison to other Western European Jewish communities.⁷ Apart from the growing adoption of the Dutch language, changes in the material and social conditions of Amsterdam Jewry had been minimal in the first half-century after their emancipation.⁸ However, consequential changes started taking place after 1850. Jews began moving out of the Jewish Quarter, a semi-secluded settlement zone to the east of Amsterdam’s city centre, and settled in newly-

¹ Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (New York, 1892), 82.

² Idem.

³ Jozeph Michman, “De emancipatie van de Joden in Nederland,” *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 96.1 (1981): 78–82.

⁴ Ivo Schöffer, “The Jews in the Netherlands: The Position of a Minority through Three Centuries,” *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 1981, 90; Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, “Emancipation and the Liberal Offer,” in *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton, 1995), 24.

⁵ Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman, *The Transformation of the Jews* (Chicago, 1984), 14–15, 44–45.

⁶ Hans Daalder, “Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society,” in *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton, 1995), 37–58; Bart Wallet, “Joden in Amsterdam,” in *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam: 1550–2021*, ed. Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (Amsterdam, 2021), 90–91.

⁷ Wout Ultee and Ruud Luijkx, “Jewish–Gentile Intermarriage in Six European Cities 1900–1940. Explaining Differences and Trends,” *The Netherlands’ Journal of Social Sciences* 34.2 (1998): 171.

⁸ Bart Wallet, “‘End of the Jargon–Scandal.’ The Decline and Fall of Yiddish in the Netherlands (1796–1886),” *Jewish History* 20.3 (2006): 333–48; Karina Sonnenberg–Stern, *Emancipation & Poverty: The Ashkenazi Jews of Amsterdam* (Basingstoke, 2000); Bart Wallet, “‘Godsdienstzin, beschaving en arbeidzaamheid’. De centralisatie en nationalisering van de Nederlandse joden, 1814–1870,” in *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, ed. Hans Blom et al. (Amsterdam, 2017), 247–53.

built neighbourhoods with fewer coreligionists and more sanitary housing.⁹ They experienced occupational upgrading and diversification;¹⁰ they increasingly secularised and took leading positions in the Social Democratic and labour movements.¹¹ They married Gentile partners more frequently;¹² and they were over-represented among high school and university graduates.¹³ While one may question the degree to which Amsterdam's Jewry had assimilated or integrated,¹⁴ it can undoubtedly be stated that thousands of Amsterdam Jews saw tremendous improvements and developments in their economic and social lives from the mid-nineteenth century up to the brink of the Second World War.

The bloom of the Amsterdam diamond industry, although not the only change, undoubtedly was a central element in this transformation. This modest industry, an occupational niche numerically dominated by Jews since the mid-eighteenth century, experienced a massive expansion during the early 1870s when rough diamonds were discovered in South Africa and transported to Amsterdam.¹⁵ Following this boom, the number of diamond workers rose from 1400 in the mid-1860s to over 10,000 in the 1890s.¹⁶ During those decades, upwardly mobile Jewish diamond workers became the symbol of Jews' socioeconomic advancement.¹⁷ Around the turn of the twentieth century, the diamond industry was the most important form of employment for Amsterdam Jews, engaging nearly one-third of all working Jewish men and one-tenth of working Jewish women.¹⁸ In Jewish circles it was unequivocally known as *het vak* ('the profession').¹⁹ Joining forces with Gentile workers in this industry, Jewish diamond workers established a non-denominational, and the first modern, trade union that would soon become the model for the Dutch trade union federation.²⁰ The union invested heavily in

⁹ Robert van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Jacqueline Vijgen, and Michiel Wagenaar, "Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940: From 'Ghetto' to 'Neighbourhoods,'" in *Immigration et société urbaine en Europe occidentale, XVIe–XXe siècle* (Paris, 1985), 127–41.

¹⁰ Peter Tammes, "'Hack, Pack, Sack': Occupational Structure, Status, and Mobility of Jews in Amsterdam 1851–1941," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 43.1 (2012): 12–19.

¹¹ Karin Hofmeester, "'Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...' De verhouding tussen joodse arbeiders en de arbeidersbeweging in Amsterdam, Londen en Parijs vergeleken, 1870–1914" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 1999), 73–74; Adriaan Pieter Veldhuizen, "De partij: over het politieke leven in de vroege SDAP" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2015), 60–65; Sietske van der Veen, "'Je had als vrouw al een achterstand, maar als Joodse vrouw nog veel sterker': Joodse vrouwen in de vrouwenbeweging (1870–1940)," *Historica* 2021.3 (2021): 39–45.

¹² Emanuel Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1936), 59–63; Peter Tammes, "Jewish–Gentile Inter-marriage in Pre-War Amsterdam," *The History of the Family* 15.3 (2010): 301–3.

¹³ Kees Mandemakers, "Gymnasiaal en middelbaar onderwijs. Ontwikkeling, structuur, sociale achtergrond en schoolprestaties, Nederland, ca. 1800–1968" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 1996), 615. Volkstelling 1930, Statistiek der academisch gegradueerden p. 166–167.

¹⁴ Selma Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History: The Integration of Jews Reconsidered," in *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)*, ed. Jonathan Israel and Reinier Salverda (Leiden, 2002), 225–38.

¹⁵ Robert Vicat Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871–1890* (Cambridge, 1987); Daniël Metz, *Diamantgracht: het joodse hart van een typisch Amsterdamse industrie* (Zutphen, 2022), 42–45.

¹⁶ Theo van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant 1845–1897* (Amsterdam, 1976), 15, 49.

¹⁷ Boudien de Vries, "De joodse elite in Amsterdam, 1850–1900: oude en nieuwe rijkdom," in *De Gelykstaat der Joden*, ed. Hetty Berg (Amsterdam, 1996), 81–91.

¹⁸ Jakob van Zanten, "Eenige demografische gegevens over de joden te Amsterdam," *Mens en Maatschappij* 2.1 (1926): 1–24.

¹⁹ Philo Bregstein and Salvador Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1978), 48–51; Karin Hofmeester, "The Impact of the Diamond Industry and the Diamond Workers' Union on Jewish Life in Amsterdam, 1894–1920," *Shofar* 38.3 (2020): 49.

²⁰ Theo van Tijn, "De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond (ANDB): een succes en zijn verklaring," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 88.3 (1973): 403–18;

the socioeconomic and cultural advancement of their members, who were among the first Jews to move to newer neighbourhoods and invest more intensively in education and the arts.²¹ Consequently, the diamond workers were known as pioneers in the *verheffing* ('uplifting') of the working class.²² However, the diamond industry was only temporarily a source of highly paid employment for a large number of Amsterdam Jews. Since 1920, low-wage competition from Antwerp and other international diamond centres plagued the Amsterdam diamond industry with long bouts of unemployment and successive wage reductions.²³ Over 40 percent of the workers were forced to find new employment or, alternatively, migrate to other diamond centres, within the first four years of this crisis.²⁴ Fewer than 3500 members remained by the end of 1939, less than one-third two decades prior.²⁵ How their former careers and the union's explicit 'civilising' influence impacted the subsequent social mobility and integration of Dutch Jews' most economically and culturally influential group of workers has never been studied. To fill this gap, my dissertation will use large new microdata and innovative methods to examine the trends and determinants of their social mobility and integration.

1.1.2 Research Questions

To map and study social mobility and integration, this dissertation reconstructs the lives and careers of Jewish diamond workers. I analyse life courses of various groups of Jews whose lives primarily took place in Amsterdam—studying their experiences in work, marriage, residence, and education—to improve our understanding of social mobility and integration trajectories more broadly of Amsterdam Jews. An emphasis is placed on Jewish diamond workers. Though the topic of earlier scholarship, these diamond workers' life courses, constructed specifically for this dissertation, are the most detailed investigation of their lives to date. Several life domains are studied to examine differences in life transitions and outcomes within the Jewish community and between Jews and Gentiles. The following three questions will guide this dissertation:

Research Question 1:

Why did some Jews experience upward mobility in early-twentieth-century Amsterdam while others did not?

Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 68–70; Ad Knotter, "Trade Unions and Workplace Organization: Regulating Labour Markets in the Belgian and American Flat Glass Industry and in the Amsterdam Diamond Industry in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Labor History* 57.3 (2016): 429.

²¹ Salvador Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak: sociaal democraat 1868–1943" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 1993), 114–16, 149–51, 317–19, 325–26, 500–502, 507–8, 644–48; Karin Hofmeester, "The Amsterdam Diamond 'Marketplace' and the Jewish Experience," *Jewish Culture and History* 24.1 (2023): 50–75.

²² Frits de Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen. De culturele betekenis van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkers Bond in de geschiedenis van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1955), 737.

²³ Wietske van Agtmaal, "Het diamantvak in Amsterdam: van oudsher een joodse negotie," in *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant. Joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland 1796–1940*, ed. Hetty Berg, Thera Wijsenbeek, and Eric Fischer (Amsterdam, 1994), 127.

²⁴ *Verslag nopens den toestand en de verrichtingen van den Algemeenen Nederlandschen Diamantbewerkers-bond over het tijdperk 1 januari 1924–31 december 1925*, 108–10 (henceforth cited as *Jaarverslag*).

²⁵ *Weekblad van den ANDB* 05–01–1940, "Loop van het ledental" (henceforth cited as *Weekblad*).

The upward rise of a great number of Amsterdam Jews overshadows experiences of downward mobility experienced by others.²⁶ While common, upward social mobility through the diamond industry was by no means guaranteed. This is partially evidenced by the growing number of peddlers with prior work experience in the diamond industry leading up to World War II.²⁷ These divergent paths make critical understanding why some moved up and others did not crucial. Although the post-1870 diamond industry was initially a great source of intergenerational upward mobility, it also imbedded Jews in their existing Jewish economy and networks.²⁸ The long-term social and economic payoffs of this entrenchment in the Jewish community, such as the strengthening of social networks within but not outside of this community, have so far been unclear. Specific individual characteristics may additionally have bolstered opportunities for some and not for others. Therefore, a second question is:

Research Question 2:

Which characteristics of Jewish diamond workers aided or hampered social mobility and integration in the core life domains?

Early scholars debating assimilation believed that social mobility and integration were intricately linked, with one inevitably leading to the other.²⁹ These two processes have been separated analytically in more recent theoretical work.³⁰ In the case of the diamond industry, the possibility exists that the social mobility of Jewish families through entering and remaining in the diamond industry had a long-lasting negative impact on their integration in all domains of life, including marriage, residence, and investment in education. This allows us to ask the third research question:

Research Question 3:

To what extent were social mobility and integration interrelated processes for Jewish diamond workers; and in what direction did these processes move?

These questions will be answered by comparing Jewish and Gentile diamond workers, Jews and Gentiles in other careers, and Jews in advanced stages of the integration process. Such comparisons will reveal the influence of the diamond industry and union on the Jewish workers and how it may have differed from Gentile workers. To accomplish this, I combine the richness of the Amsterdam population registers, which provide longitudinal social and demographic data, with the details of the diamond union's membership administration. This allows me to examine in-depth five domains of life:

²⁶ Selma Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat van Amsterdam 1900-1940 in woord en beeld* (Amsterdam, 2023), 257-62.

²⁷ Veronica Huberts, "De Amsterdamse venters: een sociografische monografie" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 1940), 78-79.

²⁸ Jaap Meijer, *Zij lieten hun sporen achter. Joodse bijdragen tot de Nederlandse beschaving* (Utrecht, 1964), 175-76.

²⁹ Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (Oxford, 1964); Jaap Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden: De Nederlands joden tussen 1933 en 1940* (Baarn, 1969), 116.

³⁰ Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530.1 (1993): 74-96; Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

work and occupations; education;³¹ marriage and family networks; choice of residence; and personal identification.

1.1.3 Chapter outline

Before we get to our analyses, this chapter will first introduce the theoretical framework and discuss useful concepts to be applied throughout the dissertation. Using the terminology obtained from the theoretical framework, I will outline existing scholarship in social mobility and integration of Jews and Gentiles relevant for my dissertation. Next, this introduction will provide an overview of how the theoretical framework will be applied to the life domains of work, marriage, residence, and education. The following section presents and summarises the data sources used for the analyses. Here we will also discuss the theoretical and practical question of who can be defined as Jewish. Finally, an outline of the rest of the dissertation, including brief summaries of each chapter, is presented.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This dissertation tries to reconstruct the social mobility and integration of Jews in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Amsterdam. Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth background and discussion on these topics. But what do we mean by these terms? The current section will introduce these and several other theoretical concepts that will prove helpful in understanding the economic and social trajectories of our research groups. The concepts are grouped in four categories. First, we build a working definition of social mobility and discuss how one can study it. Given their relative isolation until the mid-nineteenth century, a good understanding of the process of adaptation for the ethno-religious minority group of Amsterdam Jews across various life domains requires a strong theoretical foundation. We therefore turn next to the literature on assimilation—or integration, as I shall refer to this process throughout the dissertation. Then we will discuss relevant topics that, either directly or indirectly, apply to both social mobility and integration. These include the ideas of ethnic economies, ethnic niches, and social and cultural capital. The diamond industry was a unique ethnic niche within the ‘Jewish economy’ of Amsterdam.³² Large segments of Amsterdam Jewry saw work in this niche as *the* pathway to socioeconomic advancement, consciously or unconsciously forgoing economic integration into the mainstream economy. These ethnic niches and economies relied heavily on social and cultural capital, discussed in the next subsection. Social capital, embodied for instance by personal or professional ties to Jews and non-Jews, in the diamond industry or outside of it, may have provided different costs, benefits, and opportunities for economic mobility or social integration. Next, I will discuss how all these aspects can be combined in a life course approach. This perspective allows us to understand the influence of time and place, family, and societal changes on individual persons’ lives; and how they may have differed between Jews and Gentiles, diamond workers and those in other forms of employment.³³ Finally, I will provide a

³¹ The analyses on education are based on research persons’ sons’ conscript records between 1919 and 1940. This is an extension of the dataset.

³² Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 94.

³³ Jan Kok, “Church Affiliation and Life Course Transitions in the Netherlands, 1850–1970,” *Historical Social Research* 42.2 (2017): 59–91.

theoretical discussion on who is considered Jewish and who is Gentile, or non-Jewish. This will be complemented by a practical discussion on how this definition is operationalised using our sources is discussed in Section 1.4.5.

1.2.1 Social mobility

Social mobility refers to “the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society.”³⁴ We can express these positions as socioeconomic *origins* and *destinations*.³⁵ These positions are generally measured in social classes. Movements to higher social classes are considered ‘upward mobility.’ Likewise, a decline in social class is seen as ‘downward mobility.’ Horizontal mobility occurs when individuals move between positions within the same class. In historical research, social classes are commonly deduced from occupations.³⁶ Some explicitly distinguish social *occupational* mobility from other forms of mobility, such as educational or income mobility. Since this dissertation uses occupations to approximate social classes and social status,³⁷ social mobility will implicitly refer to social occupational mobility.

While mobility can occur at any time, three main types of mobility are usually studied in historical settings: intergenerational mobility, marital mobility, and life course mobility, also known as career mobility.³⁸ Intergenerational mobility concerns differences across generations. The class origin is the social class of the parents or father, and the class destination is the social class of their child. In studies of marital mobility, a comparison is commonly made between the groom and his father-in-law. Depending on the person of interest, this comparison can be interpreted as either the mobility of the groom or the mobility of the bride.³⁹ Career mobility examines movements across social classes during the life course. Both the origin and destinations of career mobility can vary by the duration of the life course studied, for instance from the start until the end of one’s career, or from age 30 to age 50.

A fourth element of mobility can be added. While residential mobility is frequently used to refer to the *geographical* aspect of moving between residences, it can also refer to the movement between neighbourhoods with varying class connotations. Although this can be interpreted as the outcome of other forms of social mobility, such as the consequence of career mobility, it is a distinctive process with benefits separate from the other social mobilities. In sociological literature this process has also been referred to as ‘neighbourhood upgrading.’⁴⁰ Downgrading of neighbourhoods was also possible, for instance as a consequence of gentrification which raised rents in previously affordable neighbourhoods and forced residential relocations. Like career mobility, residential mobility can be measured at different points in time, either comparing two instances or examining each residential relocation across a life course.

³⁴ Seymour Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Berkeley, 1959), 1–2.

³⁵ Richard Breen, *Social Mobility in Europe* (Oxford, 2004), 3–4.

³⁶ Marco van Leeuwen and Ineke Maas, “Historical Studies of Social Mobility and Stratification,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36.1 (2010): 430.

³⁷ Using HISCO, HISCLASS, and HISCAM schedules. For more information, see Section 1.4.4.

³⁸ Van Leeuwen and Maas, “Historical Studies.”

³⁹ Andrea Tyree and Judith Treas, “The Occupational and Marital Mobility of Women,” *American Sociological Review* 39.3 (1974): 293–302.

⁴⁰ David Varady, *Neighborhood Upgrading: A Realistic Assessment* (New York, 1986).

For each type of social mobility, researchers have distinguished between *absolute* and *relative* mobility.⁴¹ Absolute mobility is the raw movement from one social category to another. It can be studied for individuals as well as societies and its subpopulations. Those who are interested in class or group formation tend to use this measure.⁴² Absolute mobility does not account for changes in the economy or in social stratification. As an example, in an industrialising society the replacement of agriculture by factory employment may be considered an increase in absolute mobility without this society allowing the lowest social classes entry into higher classes. Relative mobility, in contrast, concerns the strength of the relationship between social origins and destinations. A strong correlation between the two implies a 'closed' society, while a low correlation between origin and destination suggests more fluidity. Relative mobility is not estimated at the individual level, but generally at larger levels of aggregation, such as cities or countries. It measures social mobility while accounting for structural changes to the economy or population, such as widespread industrialisation, which change absolute status or class but may not change their relative positions or distributions. In my dissertation the emphasis is placed on absolute mobility, since still little is known regarding Amsterdam Jews' general social mobility patterns. In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, structural factors were significant determinants of careers for both Jews and Gentiles in Amsterdam.⁴³ The massive expansion of the diamond industry and educational attainment being major examples. These need to be included to study their differential impact on the various ethno-religious groups.

1.2.2 *Assimilation and Integration*

Literature on assimilation is mostly based on the American context. An early definition was provided by Robert Park, a leading figure in the Chicago School of sociology, who defined assimilation as "[t]he name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence."⁴⁴ Early adopters of this definition relied heavily on fieldwork studying the experiences of American Jews.⁴⁵ In their view, Jews were completely representative for the overall immigrant experience; Louis Wirth stated that "[w]hat has happened in the case of the Jews is essentially what has taken place in all minority groups in recent times."⁴⁶ However, early assimilation scholars emphasised empirical work over theorising, which led them to believe that assimilation was wanted, inevitable, and linear. Sociological studies since 1965 have discussed whether older assumptions regarding assimilation

⁴¹ Robert Erikson and John Goldthorpe, *The Constant Flux. A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies* (Oxford, 1992), 55–56.

⁴² Andrew Miles, *Social Mobility in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1999), 6.

⁴³ Theo van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam. De maatschappelijke ontwikkeling van de hoofdstad van de jaren '50 der vorige eeuw tot 1875*. (Amsterdam, 1965); Ad Knotter, *Economische transformatie en stedelijke arbeidsmarkt. Amsterdam in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw*. (Zwolle, 1991).

⁴⁴ Robert Park, "Assimilation, Social," in *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. Edwin Seligman and Alvin Johnson (London, 1930), 281.

⁴⁵ Robert Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology* 33.6 (1928): 881–93; Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago, 1928); Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, 1945).

⁴⁶ Wirth, *The Ghetto*, 127.

still held true for new groups of immigrants. Since then, assimilation theory has split in two directions addressing this problem.

Classical assimilation theory

The earliest comprehensive theory of assimilation, which is now known as ‘classical assimilation theory,’ was provided in Milton Gordon’s magnum opus *Assimilation in American Life*.⁴⁷ Although providing much of the same analyses as his predecessors, Gordon’s work set itself apart by creating a larger theoretical framework in which he split assimilation into several dimensions.⁴⁸ He distinguished between seven stages in the assimilation process. *Cultural assimilation* or acculturation, the “change of cultural patterns to those of the host society,” was commonly the first to occur when new immigrants arrived in America and could last indefinitely without any of the subsequent stages.⁴⁹ The cultural patterns encapsulated in this concept of acculturation included religious beliefs and observance. Next was *structural assimilation*, which encompassed entering mainstream society by engaging in “large-scale primary group relationships,” entering host networks and society.⁵⁰ This stage includes the entry of minority group members into clubs and institutions. Mixed marriages between the ethnic minority group and the members of the host society, the conceptualisation of *marital assimilation*, was seen as “an inevitable by-product of structural assimilation.”⁵¹ This would in turn cause outsiders to lose their ethnic identity and lead to *identificational assimilation*. In fact, “once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously with or subsequent to acculturation, all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow.”⁵² Finally, during the stages of *attitude* and *behavioural receptional assimilation* and *civic assimilation*, prejudices, discrimination, and power conflicts would disappear.

Although the seven stages provide a strong demarcation of the assimilation process, Gordon’s conceptualisation of assimilation was criticised on several fronts.⁵³ The theory was normative and unidirectional, suggesting that minority groups inevitably assimilated into an unchanging mainstream dominated by a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant middle-class. It also overlooked the importance of economic assimilation and the potential economic benefits of forgoing assimilation. Nonetheless, concepts introduced by Gordon remain a worthwhile lexicon in our discussion.

Segmented assimilation and new assimilation theory

In response to the failings of classical assimilation theory, assimilation theory diverted into two directions. Segmented assimilation added two pathways to the classical assimilation theory.⁵⁴ Besides Gordon’s idea, which Portes and Zhou rephrased as ‘linear upward assimilation,’ ethnic minorities could also experience ‘linear downward assimilation’ when they assimilated into “permanent poverty and [i]nto the under-class.”⁵⁵ Alternatively, minority groups could avoid such fates by ‘delayed acculturation’

⁴⁷ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*.

⁴⁸ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 23.

⁴⁹ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 71, 77.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 70–71.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵² Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 81.

⁵³ Richard Alba and Victor Nee, “Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration,” *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 826–74.

⁵⁴ Portes and Zhou, “The New Second Generation.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

or ‘selective assimilation,’ whereby individuals outside of mainstream society maintain close coethnic ties, work in ethnic economies, and pursue socioeconomic advancements along those lines. Segmented assimilation effectively decoupled assimilation and acculturation from economic mobility, incorporating socioeconomic advancement without assimilation into the assimilation framework. However, one of the main downsides of segmented assimilation is how it approaches class. Upward and downward assimilation suggest there is no room for an ethnic middle-class.⁵⁶ Segmented assimilation also places more emphasis on overall assimilation, rather than experiences in different domains of life.

New assimilation theory

A separate account of assimilation was provided in Richard Alba and Victor Nee’s ‘new assimilation theory.’⁵⁷ This theory rephrases assimilation “[a]s the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences.”⁵⁸ This decline could mean that distinctions become less salient, less frequent, or relevant for fewer domains of life. Ethnicity here is seen as a social boundary that shapes actions by individuals and affects how people are perceived by others.⁵⁹ These boundaries can be altered in three ways: by boundary blurring, crossing, or shifting.⁶⁰ Boundary blurring occurs when the social distinction of ethnicity becomes clouded. For instance, Jewish-Gentile marriages and religious disaffiliation make the boundary between Dutch Jews and mainstream Christian society harder to distinguish.⁶¹ Children of mixed couples blur boundaries further. Boundary crossing is closely related to the conceptualisation of individual-level assimilation; individuals belonging to the minority group ‘cross over’ the boundary, leaving the boundary unchanged. Jewish conversions to Christianity are one example of boundary crossing. More extreme is boundary shifting, which moves the boundary to include groups which were previously excluded into mainstream society. In the Western world, for instance, formerly excluded Jews became part of “Judeo-Christian society,” but only in the late twentieth century and as a means to exclude newer ‘Others’ such as Muslims.⁶²

New assimilation theory avoids several pitfalls of the classical assimilation model. It highlights the bilateral direction of assimilation, sees mainstream society as an ever-changing entity—thereby avoiding a predestined destination; and makes no reference to a fixed or superior cultural group in mainstream society. It also incorporates discussions of social class beyond a mainstream White Anglo-Saxon Protestant middle class, thus diversifying the pathways, opportunities, and destinations of assimilation.⁶³

⁵⁶ Kathryn Neckerman, Prudence Carter, and Jennifer Lee, “Segmented Assimilation and Minority Cultures of Mobility,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22.6 (1999): 945–65.

⁵⁷ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁹ *Idem.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁶¹ Tammes, “Jewish–Gentile Inter-marriage in Pre-War Amsterdam,” 300.

⁶² Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 283; See also Ernst van den Hemel, “(Pro)Claiming Tradition: The ‘Judeo-Christian’ Roots of Dutch Society and the Rise of Conservative Nationalism,” in *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere*, ed. Rosi Braidotti et al. (London, 2014), 53–76.

⁶³ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 12.

Integration in this dissertation

In this dissertation, I will mainly use the framework provided by new assimilation theory. However, where relevant, concepts from classical and segmented assimilation theory are applied. For instance, Jewish porters discussed in Chapter 5 embody the concept of downward assimilation well. Furthermore, I will refer to assimilation as described in the new assimilation theory as ‘integration.’ Although the terms ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’ are not always synonymous, the two words encompass similar ideas and are often used interchangeably unless otherwise specified. This decision rests on two factors. First, the term assimilation and the sociological literature corresponding to it is a largely American endeavour.⁶⁴ European historians and sociologists have more often preferred the term ‘integration.’⁶⁵ Second, ‘assimilation’ is frequently used in Jewish history to refer to the *project* of assimilation, rather than the *process* of assimilation. In this context, Jews with no explicit preference for assimilation could derogatorily be called “assimilants”:

“[Z]ionists routinely denounced deeply committed but non-Zionist Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews as assimilated, or assimilationist... Thus, both “assimilation” and “assimilated Jew” became terms of opprobrium rather than of precise meaning; an “assimilated Jew” came to mean any Jew whose version of Jewishness one did not like.”⁶⁶ (Emphasis mine).

This was true in the Netherlands as well.⁶⁷ For some Dutch Jews, Zionism was considered the only non-assimilant path. “There is only one distinction, and that is between Zionism and assimilant,” expressed Jewish economist and Zionist Salomon Kleerekoper in 1938.⁶⁸ Using the word integration, which does not have the same historical meaning within the Jewish community, therefore avoids the problem of misunderstanding.

1.2.3 Ethnic niches, entrepreneurs, and economies

Since the 1990s, sociologists have established a body of literature that studies the clustering of minority groups in occupations, self-employment, and segments of the economy. These occupational ethnic concentrations are highly relevant for the diamond industry, the most significant ethnic niche in the Dutch-Jewish case. Ethnic concentrations could be found in specific occupations, i.e. ethnic niches, in the economy as a whole, in ethnic economies, and in entrepreneurship. Ethnic niches influenced intergenerational career patterns, marriage opportunities, residential choices, and educational attainment. Since the main niche in this dissertation, the diamond industry, was already an ethnic niche long before the start of the period studied in this dissertation, I have chosen not to include a discussion regarding ethnic niche formation.

⁶⁴ Richard Alba and Nancy Foner, *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton, 2015), 6–8.

⁶⁵ Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Champaign, 2005), 18–20; Alba and Foner, *Strangers No More*, 6–8.

⁶⁶ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, 2001), 7.

⁶⁷ Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, 87; Evelien Gans, “De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken. Een historische studie naar joodse sociaaldemocraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland” (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 1999), 117.

⁶⁸ Gans, “De kleine verschillen,” 37.

Instead, this dissertation focuses on the outcome of this particular ethnic niche. Nonetheless, in each chapter thoughtful consideration is placed on the historical, path-dependent nature of the diamond industry as an ethnic niche and how this has affected future Jews' lives and their decision-making.

Ethnic niches

The diamond industry is a perfect example of an ethnic niche and possibly the most important one in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Amsterdam. Simply said, "ethnic niches are just ethnic concentrations at high density."⁶⁹ Ethnic concentrations here refer to the clustering in occupations. When distinguishing ethnic niches, Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr used the metric of (1) at least 1000 people in the industry in total and (2) minority groups were at least 50 percent overrepresented in the niche compared with their share in the total population.⁷⁰ Since 1850, the Amsterdam diamond industry counted at least 1000 workers excluding the various forms of employers. Jews consistently made up over 70 percent of this workforce; an overrepresentation of 700 percent compared with their population share of Amsterdam; and 3500 percent compared with their share in the Dutch population.⁷¹ Among diamond workers' employers, their share was even higher.

Ethnic economies

The diamond industry was distant from the general labour market. It hired predominantly ethnic (Jewish) workers and products were exported rather than sold to the domestic mainstream market. Jews owned most of the factories, were virtually all employers, and nearly three-fourths of the workforce at the end of the nineteenth century consisted of Jews. In Light and Gold's terminology, the Amsterdam diamond industry was an integral part of an *ethnic-ownership economy*: "An *ethnic economy* or, as we shall later call it, an *ethnic ownership economy* exists whenever any immigrant or ethnic group maintains a private economic sector in which it has a controlling ownership stake."⁷²

The concept of ethnic economies is related to the work of Leydesdorff on the Amsterdam-Jewish 'proletariat.' While not engaging explicitly with the work of sociologists like Light and Gold, Leydesdorff refers to key ideas presented in this literature. She argued that in early-twentieth-century Amsterdam, "[t]here was a 'Jewish economy'—in other words, Jews were unevenly distributed through the various industrial sectors."⁷³ When ethnic groups, like the Amsterdam Jews, sought work in the general labour market, they were confronted with ethnic-controlled economies of other ethnic groups,⁷⁴ including the mainstream Gentile population. This could lead to

⁶⁹ Ivan Light and Steven Gold, *Ethnic Economies* (Orlando, 2000), 21.

⁷⁰ Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, "The Making of a Multicultural Metropolis," in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed. Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York, 1996), 28.

⁷¹ Around the turn of the century, Jews made up 2 percent of the total Dutch population, 10 percent of the Amsterdam population, and 70 percent of diamond workers. Van Zanten, "Eenige demografische gegevens over de joden te Amsterdam," 9.

⁷² Light and Gold, *Ethnic Economies*, 9.

⁷³ Selma Leydesdorff, *We Lived with Dignity. The Jewish Proletariat of Amsterdam 1900-1940*, trans. Frank Heny (Detroit, 1994), 53.

⁷⁴ Light and Gold, *Ethnic Economies*, 25.

discrimination. Leydesdorff mentions that in cases of competition, non-Jewish employers generally chose for Gentile employees.⁷⁵ Jewish ethnic entrepreneurs and economies existed in the diamond industry, in Jewish-owned department stores, and in the garment industry. Within Light and Gold's conceptualisation, Jewish self-employed peddlers as well as working proprietors—generally merchants or shopkeepers—can also be included in the concept of Jewish economy. The size, composition, and impact on social mobility and integration of the evolving Jewish economy will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Ethnic entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship has always been an important driver of social mobility. However, the reasons for and methods of entrepreneurial activity differed between members of mainstream society and outsider groups. Historically, ethno-religious minorities such as Dutch Jews were overrepresented among entrepreneurs.⁷⁶ They turned to self-employment for both economic and non-economic reasons. In the model developed by Waldinger and collaborators,⁷⁷ ethnic entrepreneurship is the result of an interaction between opportunity structure and the ethnic group's resources. The opportunity structure consists of several factors. Job market conditions are one. If members of an ethnic group are unable to find jobs with non-coethnic employers, or are only offered work in poor working conditions, then entrepreneurship may appear a more worthwhile alternative. In that case, market conditions and the legal framework become important. These conditions differ by time and place. For instance, eighteenth-century Dutch Jews were not allowed to open stores. Ethnic group's resources form the other key part of ethnic entrepreneurship. The social networks of the members of an ethnic group are an important driver of entrepreneurship. Cultural traditions can drive both the creation of such networks and be a pushing factor for entrepreneurship. For instance, Dutch Jews in smaller towns in the countryside were particularly involved in the cattle trade and related fields. Jewish dietary traditions pushed Jews to prepare their own meat and dairy. With networks in the cattle trade, entrepreneurship in hides, furs, and leather was a logical next step.⁷⁸ Networks and traditions together form an ethnic group's ethnic resources. These resources can, in turn, overlap and interact with class resources such as general or specialised human capital attainment.⁷⁹

While ethnic entrepreneurship and the disproportionate entry into self-employment allowed ethnic groups, including Jews, to rapidly move upwards in prosperous times, it also required large amounts of risk. This risk and the resulting precariousness were central to ethnic entrepreneurship according to Morawska: “[the] middle-class standard of living allowed by ethnic entrepreneurship, however, was an unstable achievement, an insecure prosperity—now present, then threatened, then returning again.”⁸⁰ This

⁷⁵ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 93–94, 242–43.

⁷⁶ Hetty Berg, Thera Wijsenbeek, and Eric Fischer, “Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland en joden in Neerlandse economische geschiedschrijving,” in *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant. Joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland 1796–1940*, ed. Hetty Berg, Thera Wijsenbeek, and Eric Fischer (Amsterdam, 1994), 15–17.

⁷⁷ Roger Waldinger et al., *Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Immigrant Business in Industrial Society* (Thousand Oaks, 1990).

⁷⁸ Serge ter Braake and Paul van Trigt, *Leerhandelaar, looier, lederfabrikant. Het succes van Joodse ondernemers in de Nederlandse Leerindustrie (1870–1940)* (Amsterdam, 2010).

⁷⁹ Ewa Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small-Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890–1940* (Princeton, 1996), 32.

⁸⁰ Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity*, 73.

instability, a “chronic condition” among Jews in Johnstown, was similar to the experiences of Amsterdam’s diamond workers, whose main source of employment fluctuated heavily with international economic conditions and whose niche was costly to learn due the expensive nature of their product.

1.2.4 Social and cultural capital

Financial capital allowed minority group members to become self-employed. However, other types of capital, such as social and cultural capital,⁸¹ helped ethnics find employment and advance in their careers. Social networks are one form of ‘social capital’ that were highly important for ethnic minorities.⁸² Family networks are an important aspect of these social networks.⁸³ Although not within the scope of this dissertation, the non-economic value of extending such networks beyond the Jewish community is highlighted by the increased survival rates of Jews with stronger non-Jewish networks during the Holocaust.⁸⁴

Contemporary research suggests that inter-ethnic ties were more important in achieving higher incomes for low-status workers than for high-status workers.⁸⁵ These inter-ethnic ties could assist in securing higher-paid employment of similar status outside of ethnic economies and within the mainstream economy. In contrast, high-status groups economically benefited more from intra-ethnic ties on the labour market, which could help with entrepreneurship.⁸⁶ For example, stronger ties with Jews may have supported Jewish diamond workers in becoming self-employed or earn higher wages within the industry, whereas ties with Gentiles could allow them easier access to office work in the mainstream economy.

Cultural capital, defined by Bourdieu “as competence in a society’s high-status culture,”⁸⁷ can be applied from both a social mobility and an integration perspective. General knowledge about art, literature, furniture, and cuisine could all be helpful in being perceived as a certain social class or reflect as more or less Jewish.⁸⁸ This cultural capital is obtained in the family or in formal schooling. Light and Gold relate this to entrepreneurship; having entrepreneur kinfolk provides cultural capital of entrepreneurship through exposure. The same can be applied for other careers. Having a large share of the family employed in the diamond industry provides tremendous cultural

⁸¹ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (Westport, 1986), 241–58.

⁸² Roger Waldinger, “The Making of an Immigrant Niche,” *International Migration Review* 28.1 (1994): 3.

⁸³ Alejandro Portes, “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 1–24.

⁸⁴ Peter Tammes, “Survival of Jews during the Holocaust: The Importance of Different Types of Social Resources,” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 36.2 (2007): 330–35.

⁸⁵ Emi Ooka and Barry Wellman, “Does Social Capital Pay off More within or between Ethnic Groups? Analyzing Job Searchers in Five Toronto Ethnic Groups,” in *Inside the Mosaic* (Toronto, 2006), 199–226.

⁸⁶ Ooka and Wellman, “Does Social Capital Pay off More within or between Ethnic Groups?,” 213; Dutch-Jewish economic elites often succeeded in economic sectors where Jews were historically present, although they increasingly broke through in non-traditional fields also. Sietske van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers: Patterns of Social Mobility and Integration among the Jewish Dutch Elite, 1870–1940” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2024), 105.

⁸⁷ Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 270.

⁸⁸ A discussion on Jewish perception and self-perception can be found in Chaya Brasz and Yosef Kaplan, eds., *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others* (Leiden, 2001).

capital for diamond work; but thereby limits the exposure to other forms of cultural capital, such as that for white-collar work.

While social and cultural capital can be helpful, reliance on such capital “gives rise to dependence on the ethnic community.”⁸⁹ In times of crisis, the greater investment in intra-ethnic ties could prove detrimental for future outcomes. Economic specialisation within an ethnic community creates larger risks through lessened diversification. Thus, when the Amsterdam diamond industry was hit with a severe crisis in the early-1920s, a large part of the Jewish community was affected. Hypothetically, those whose social networks consisted primarily of Jewish connections would have suffered the most in finding new employment. They faced downward mobility and downward assimilation, relying more on low-wage, low-skill labour or risky self-employment.⁹⁰

Social and cultural capital are therefore useful terms to help understand Amsterdam Jewish pre-war experiences. Chapter 4 shows how strong intergenerational ties led to greater occupational following in the Jewish community. In Chapter 5 we see that these coethnic ties are not limited to own kin but are further built and strengthened through marriages with coreligionists. Chapter 6 shows that stronger inter-ethnic ties could help Jews advance on the labour market. Chapter 7 shows how the changing Jewish residential distribution changed inter-ethnic neighbourhood ties.

1.2.5 *Life course approach*

Rather than study individuals at one moment in time, or cross-sectionally, this dissertation studies groups of individuals across their lifetimes. This is done by collecting microdata, information at the individual level, for different points in persons lives. Combining these longitudinal microdata form life courses, which are “basically standardized biographies.”⁹¹ Life courses allow researchers to study individual lives within the context of social change. Individual changes within life courses, known as *events* or *transitions*, can be measured in sequence or *trajectories*. In this dissertation, a number of life course transitions are examined. These primarily emphasise changes in occupations and accompanying social class, marital status, and residential locations. By placing these transitions in chronological order, temporal relationships can be established between them.

Different groups of life courses are needed to understand how social, economic, or environmental changes affect individual life courses differently. For instance, the influence of being born in a ‘Jewish’ family can only be understood in comparison to non-Jewish life courses. Jan Kok has shown that such differences in religious affiliation were related to significant variation in life trajectories.⁹² Jews were more likely to marry at a later age and had higher propensities to co-reside with kin during the entire life course.⁹³ Similarly, since we are interested in the influence of passing through the diamond industry—that is, being a diamond worker for at least a minimal period of time—on the lives and careers of Jews, a comparison is made with Jews who did not pass

⁸⁹ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 49.

⁹⁰ Portes and Zhou, “The New Second Generation,” 86–87; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 49.

⁹¹ Jan Kok, “Principles and Prospects of the Life Course Paradigm,” *Annales de Démographie Historique* 113.1 (2007): 203.

⁹² Kok, “Church Affiliation and Life Course Transitions.”

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 72.

through the diamond industry. This will indicate the influence of occupational choice on a variety of life outcomes, including partner choice, residential destinations, and the educational attainment of their next of kin.

The life courses used in this dissertation are unique. They are combined with detailed union data and pertain to an ethno-religious group, Jews, for whom few life courses currently exist. It also marks the first time comparisons are made within an occupational group of workers by ethno-religious background in the Dutch setting. However, such comparisons between Jews and Gentiles in various occupational sectors require us to identify *who* is Jewish or Gentile. We therefore turn next to a theoretical discussion on this definition.

1.2.6 *Who is Jewish and who is Gentile: theoretical*

Researchers have used a number of classifications to categorise Jews. They have been considered and studied as a religious, ethnic, racial, and social group. In her doctoral research, Leydesdorff referred to them as simply ‘a group.’⁹⁴ I, too, study Jews as a social group. The most comprehensive definition of ‘who is Jewish,’ and the one that is the most usable for the current dissertation, was offered by Dik van Arkel in 1966. Van Arkel suggested four categories of Jews:

1. Members of a Jewish congregation;
2. (Non-practising) former members of a Jewish congregation;
3. Descendants of either of the above two groups; or
4. Those who, without any specific affiliation or personal affinity with a Jewish congregation, are seen as Jews by others.⁹⁵

Van Arkel’s classification allows the multifaceted identifications of different segments of Jews to coexist. For the most part, Amsterdam Jews were comprised by the first two categories. In 1941, no more than 7 percent of Amsterdam Jewry was no longer a member of a Jewish congregation.⁹⁶ The definition also does not limit itself to the matrilinear *Halakha*, which states that only those children born from Jewish mothers were Jewish. While having mixed parents may have affected Jews’ self-identification, most Jews with non-Jewish mothers are and were considered Jewish by non-Jews.

1.3 Recent Scholarship

In this dissertation I will build on existing literature encompassing the social mobility, integration trajectories, and economic lives of Jews. The relevant literature can be divided into four groups. The first contains research on social mobility trends in the Netherlands. To understand the chances for social mobility for the average Dutch citizen, we first discuss the literature on social mobility in mainstream Dutch society. This establishes a baseline which we can compare Jewish social mobility to. Next is a smaller body of literature that has directly or indirectly addressed social mobility patterns of Jews in the Netherlands. This literature has primarily studied specific

⁹⁴ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 82–85.

⁹⁵ Dik van Arkel, “Antisemitism in Austria” (PhD diss., Leiden, Leiden University, 1966), XVI.

⁹⁶ A. Veffers, *Statistische gegevens van de joden in Nederland, deel 1* (Amsterdam, 1942), 29.

occupational categories or entrepreneurial clusters, as we are doing in the current dissertation. A third, larger body of work has emphasised integration of Jews in the Dutch context. This has led to two diverging strands of scholarship with diverging conclusions regarding the pre-World War II social destinations of Jews. Lastly, I will discuss a growing international literature that has addressed Jewish economic lives. Like the works on Dutch Jews' social mobility, this literature has focused on occupational niches and used a predominantly cultural perspective.

1.3.1 *Social mobility in the Netherlands*

Social mobility research has a rich tradition in the Netherlands. In recent decades, the Historical Sample of the Netherlands (HSN) and LINKS, both described in Section 1.4, have led to a number of studies on Dutch social mobility in different ways. These have predominantly focused on the impact of industrialisation and modernisation on mobility rates.⁹⁷ This body of literature has shown that more modern municipalities and cities saw higher starting positions of careers but less career growth;⁹⁸ and provided evidence that suggests that persons' achieved status—that is, their own qualifications and abilities—rather than their ascribed status—the characteristics of one's family—became increasingly important.⁹⁹ Knigge revealed that nineteenth-century inter-generational mobility was low, demonstrated by high correlations between fathers' and sons' social status.¹⁰⁰ However, his dissertation also showed that much of this correlation was explained by other family members, including siblings and grandfathers.¹⁰¹ More recently, it has been shown that uncles were important, also;¹⁰² and mothers, who were particularly important for the status attainment of both sons and daughters.¹⁰³ International comparisons have confirmed that intergenerational mobility among Dutch men was “unexpectedly low.”¹⁰⁴ Although this research covers the Netherlands as a whole, rather than the city of Amsterdam specifically, it shows that pre-war Netherlands was not a place with remarkable social mobility rates. This is the baseline we will consider when we compare Jews' social mobility rates.

⁹⁷ Richard Zijdeman, “Status Attainment in the Netherlands, 1811–1941: Spatial and Temporal Variation before and during Industrialization” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2010); Ineke Maas and Marco van Leeuwen, “Modernization and Long-Term Trends in Social Mobility,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Stratification*, ed. Markus Gangl et al. (Oxford, 2023).

⁹⁸ Wiebke Schulz, Ineke Maas, and Marco van Leeuwen, “Occupational Career Attainment during Modernization. A Study of Dutch Men in 841 Municipalities between 1865 and 1928,” *Acta Sociologica* 58.1 (2015): 5–24.

⁹⁹ Ineke Maas and Marco van Leeuwen, “Partner Choice in the Netherlands, 1813–1922: The Changing Importance of Ascribed and Achieved Status,” *The History of the Family* 24.1 (2019): 123–48.

¹⁰⁰ Antonie Knigge, “Sources of Sibling Similarity. Status Attainment in the Netherlands during Modernization” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2015), 19–20.

¹⁰¹ See also Antonie Knigge, “Beyond the Parental Generation: The Influence of Grandfathers and Great-Grandfathers on Status Attainment,” *Demography* 53.4 (2016): 1219–44.

¹⁰² Kim Stienstra and Antonie Knigge, “Indirect Pathways of Multigenerational Persistence: The Role of Uncles and Assortative Mating in the Netherlands, 1857–1922,” *The History of the Family* 28.1 (2023): 67–94.

¹⁰³ Siyang Kong, Ineke Maas, and Marco van Leeuwen, “Like My Mother before Me: Gender and Cross-Gender Effects on Status Attainment during Modernization,” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 69 (2020): 1–14.

¹⁰⁴ Ineke Maas and Marco van Leeuwen, “Toward Open Societies? Trends in Male Intergenerational Class Mobility in European Countries during Industrialization,” *American Journal of Sociology* 122.3 (2016): 873.

1.3.2 Jewish social mobility in the Netherlands

The social mobility of Jews in the Netherlands, and in Amsterdam particularly, has been assessed to have been generally upwards.¹⁰⁵ However, few studies have looked at a population at large at the micro-level while comparing and addressing the extent and pathways through which social mobility occurred for different ethno-religious groups. An exception is the article by Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens studying social mobility by religious denomination in late-nineteenth-century The Hague.¹⁰⁶ It reveals that Jews and Catholics both faced exclusion from higher social strata, although it was weaker for Jews.¹⁰⁷ The authors argued this exclusion was not the result of discrimination, but rather the historical class structure in The Hague, wherein many Jews were already part of the petty bourgeoisie as merchants and shopkeepers. Much of the existing focus in the literature has been on such Jewish ‘ethnic entrepreneurs.’ A prime example of this literature is the volume *Venter, Fabrikant, Fabriqueur* (‘Peddler, Factory Owner, Manufacturer’).¹⁰⁸ Comparing Jewish and non-Jewish entrepreneurs in various economic sectors, it concluded that a ‘typical Jewish entrepreneur’ did not exist.¹⁰⁹ This opposed De Vries who saw Jewish entrepreneurs in the textile trade as more innovative than Protestant and Catholic entrepreneurs due to the Jewish “heritage for learning.”¹¹⁰ Instead, the editors of the volume found no ‘typical Jewish entrepreneur,’ but rather commonalities between Jewish entrepreneurs, particularly in social class and social ties.¹¹¹ Like Protestants and Catholics, Jews depended more on networks consisting of members of their own ethno-religious background. Nor were Jewish entrepreneurs exceedingly innovative; Jews commonly only innovated more in industries where they had generations of experience.¹¹² For example, Jewish entrepreneurs more frequently specialised in segments of a trade, such as the leather and hide trade¹¹³ and more expensive cinemas within the film industry.¹¹⁴ Moreover, although Jewish entrepreneurs rarely asserted their Jewishness, there often was greater Jewish solidarity between Jewish entrepreneurs than in other groups. Non-Jewish entrepreneurs more often connected on shared regional backgrounds, while Jews connected on their shared ethno-religious backgrounds.¹¹⁵

In contrast to Jewish entrepreneurs, much less attention has been paid to the experiences of Jewish workers. While Jewish diamond workers have received attention

¹⁰⁵ Jakob Kruijt, “Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving,” in *Antisemitisme en Jodendom. Een bundel studies over een actueel vraagstuk*, ed. Hendrik Josephus Pos (Arnhem, 1939), 206–10; Tammes, “Hack, Pack, Sack,” 9–19; Hans Blom and Joël Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders, Nederlandse joden en joden in Nederland,” in *De Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, ed. Hans Blom et al. (Amsterdam, 2017), 287–98.

¹⁰⁶ Frans van Poppel, Aart Liefbroer, and Jona Schellekens, “Religion and Social Mobility in Nineteenth-Century The Hague,” *Sociology of Religion* 64.2 (2003): 247–71.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁰⁸ Berg, Wijsenbeek, and Fischer, “Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland.”

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹⁰ Benjamin de Vries, *From Pedlars to Textile Barons. The Economic Development of a Jewish Minority Group in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, 1990), 153.

¹¹¹ Hetty Berg, Eric Fischer, and Thera Wijsenbeek, *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant; joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland 1796–1940* (Amsterdam, 1994), 28.

¹¹² Berg, Wijsenbeek, and Fischer, “Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland,” 28.

¹¹³ Ter Braake and Van Trigt, *Leerhandelaar, looier, lederfabrikant*.

¹¹⁴ Fransje de Jong, “Joodse ondernemers in het Nederlandse film- en bioscoopbedrijf tot 1940” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2013).

¹¹⁵ Ter Braake and Van Trigt, *Leerhandelaar, looier, lederfabrikant*, 82.

in several academic works over the last century, none have dived deeply into their social mobility and integration trajectories.¹¹⁶ Boudien de Vries has shown that successful diamond workers in the 1870s reversed a position of underrepresentation of Jews among the Amsterdam financial elite to one of over-representation by the end of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ Their social destinations after the ruinous 1920-crisis has, however, been up for debate. According to Henri Heertje, a contemporary of these diamond workers, many of them ended up in similar or higher social classes.¹¹⁸ Especially their children were believed to have accumulated significant human capital and gone on to white-collar work. In contrast, Leydesdorff argued that “the social mobility between the diamond workers and the others [JK: the ‘proletariat’ or poor] increased so radically that it becomes meaningless to describe them separately from the poor or the peddlers. [...] What was once the proud culture of the diamond workers steadily degenerated into the lost glory of an increasingly rough group of hard-core unemployed.”¹¹⁹ More recent publications on the diamond industry have not remarked on the class destination of unemployed diamond workers in the post-1920 period.¹²⁰ This dissertation aims to fill this gap using new and unique data.

1.3.3 Integration in Dutch-Jewish History

A more pressing debate has been the degree to which Dutch and Amsterdam Jews integrated into Gentile society leading up to the war. In this debate, the relationship between social mobility and integration has been contrived.¹²¹ On one end, historians and social scientists have emphasised the growing similarities between Jews and Gentiles. Among them, historians such as Hans Blom and Joël Cahen have argued that Jews integrated gradually but continuously since the mid-nineteenth century. Jan Lucassen concluded in the introduction of a volume on Jewish entrepreneurs that “first slowly, but in the [twentieth century] more quickly, the minority position of Dutch Jews was declining and that they were on their way to [full] assimilation.”¹²² More recently, social and migration historians Jan and Leo Lucassen have stated that, at the brink of the Second World War, Jews were hardly distinguishable from non-Jews in the domains of work, schooling, and housing.¹²³ Sociologists Peter Tammes and Peter Scholten have shown, with new data, that structural integration had moved rapidly in the first half of

¹¹⁶ Henri Heertje, *De diamantbewerders van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1936); Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*; Van Tijn, “De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond”; Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*; Knotter, *Economische transformatie*; Karin Hofmeester, *Jewish Workers and the Labour Movement: A Comparative Study of Amsterdam, London and Paris 1870–1914* (London, 2017); Karin Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis: 125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerdersbond* (Zutphen, 2020); Metz, *Diamantgracht*.

¹¹⁷ De Vries, “De joodse elite in Amsterdam.”

¹¹⁸ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 223–29.

¹¹⁹ Leydesdorff, *We Lived with Dignity*, 60; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 101; this idea was shared by Ben Braber, *This Cannot Happen Here: Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940–1945* (Amsterdam, 2013), 45.

¹²⁰ Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*; Metz, *Diamantgracht*; Hofmeester, “The Amsterdam Diamond ‘Marketplace’ and the Jewish Experience”; Saskia Coenen Snyder, *A Brilliant Commodity: Diamonds and Jews in a Modern Setting* (Oxford, 2023).

¹²¹ See Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers.”

¹²² Jan Lucassen, “Joodse Nederlanders 1796–1940: een proces van omgekeerde minderheidsvorming,” in *Venter, fabrikant, fabrikant. Joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland, 1796–1940*, ed. Hetty Berg, Thera Wijsenbeek, and Eric Fischer (Amsterdam, 1994), 43.

¹²³ Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie: Een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers* (Amsterdam, 2018), 68.

the twentieth century.¹²⁴ International comparisons have shown the uniqueness of the Dutch–Jewish integration process.¹²⁵

On the other end, Selma Leydesdorff has questioned the degree to which Jews had integrated. In her doctoral research on the Jewish ‘proletariat’¹²⁶ in the beginning of the twentieth century, she found that Jews were stuck in the ‘Jewish economy,’ living separate lives isolated from Gentile society.¹²⁷ She argued that Jews spoke a different language, were discriminated in various segments of the economy, worked in distinctly different occupations, and continued to adhere to traditional customs.¹²⁸ Leydesdorff’s positioning against the integration of Jews may have been a result of her studying individual and not necessarily representative lives; her dissertation was based on 90 interviews with Holocaust survivors. Furthermore, her focus was explicitly on the ‘Jewish proletariat’ who most likely had the least resources, such as financial or social capital, available to them to effectively integrate. In contrast, those who have addressed integration at a larger scale, including Jews from all social classes, have offered a more nuanced view, highlighting the heterogeneity of the Dutch–Jewish community in early-twentieth-century Netherlands. This view is shared by Van der Veen, whose recent dissertation has demonstrated the advanced progress of Jewish elites’ integration, the diverse ways integration could take form, and the bidirectional nature of Dutch–Jewish integration.¹²⁹

Nonetheless, a reassessment of the process for the Jewish working class is needed. Karin Hofmeester has already established that Amsterdam–Jewish workers were far more integrated in the domestic non-denominational trade unions than Jews in Paris and London, where Jewish workers formed smaller denominational unions.¹³⁰ A similar tendency towards a separate labour movement was present in the United States.¹³¹ The current dissertation will add further resources and data to quantitatively estimate the degree to which a key segment of the Jewish working class remained an isolated segment of Amsterdam society, or whether they increasingly entered Gentile and mixed domains.

¹²⁴ Peter Tammes and Peter Scholten, “Assimilation of Ethnic–Religious Minorities in the Netherlands: A Historical–Sociological Analysis of Pre–World War II Jews and Contemporary Muslims,” *Social Science History* 41.3 (2017): 477–504.

¹²⁵ Nathan Weinstock, *Le Pain de Misère: L’histoire du mouvement ouvrier juif en Europe* (Paris, 1984); Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton, 1995).

¹²⁶ I have placed ‘proletariat’ in quotes since, although it is used by Leydesdorff themselves, I disagree with its application to the persons studied in her research. Much of Leydesdorff’s work addresses diamond workers and their families, a group who decidedly did not belong to the ‘proletariat.’ As we shall see across this dissertation, Leydesdorff’s depiction of diamond workers as a *lumpenproletariat* is demonstrably incorrect and Jewish diamond workers had social mobility trajectories distinct from other working-class Jews.

¹²⁷ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 264–67.

¹²⁸ Leydesdorff, “The Veil of History”; the different language refers to nicknames used by Jews to refer to certain streets. Many Jewish words and phrases became part of the ‘Amsterdam dialect.’ For example, see Megan Raschig, “Goeie Ouwe Gabbers: Listening to ‘Jewishness’ in Multicultural Mokum,” *Quotidian* 3.1 (2012): 21–36.

¹²⁹ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 8–9.

¹³⁰ Hofmeester, *Jewish Workers and the Labour Movement*.

¹³¹ Daniel Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880–1939* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).

1.3.4 Jewish economic lives in Jewish History

The current dissertation is neither a purely sociological work, nor is it a traditional Jewish history dissertation. Instead, it merges the disciplines and contributes to both using novel datasets to show new findings in the socio-economic sphere. Until recently, economic life was given little attention in Jewish history. The Jewish working class in particular received little emphasis. In the words of Nancy Green:

“The Jewish worker remains an anomaly. Ignored at worst, seen as ephemeral at best, the Jewish cap makers, shoemakers, diamond workers, and tinsmiths of the turn of the century have all but faded from memory in a history of modern Jewish social mobility. Only the Jewish tailor remains an emblematic if somewhat folkloric figure of a Jewish working class.”¹³²

Since then, attention for Jewish artisans and workers has remained marginal. However, a new shift has been noticeable in the years since Green’s statement in 1998. More attention has been placed on ‘Jewish economic difference.’¹³³ Rather than argue for or against Jewish exceptionalism as the creators of capitalism, a key part of Jewish economic history since Sombart’s thesis,¹³⁴ a greater emphasis should be placed on what explains the differences between Jewish and non-Jewish economic endeavours. In this context Jewish history has witnessed an ‘Economic Turn.’ This body of literature has targeted the study of economic life of Jews from a culturally-oriented perspective.¹³⁵ Publications now include studies of entrepreneurs in coral and diamonds,¹³⁶ ostrich feathers,¹³⁷ textiles and the rag trade,¹³⁸ alcohol,¹³⁹ cotton,¹⁴⁰ and department stores;¹⁴¹ as well as peddlers¹⁴² and shopkeepers.¹⁴³ Thus, it has focused largely on Jewish entrepreneurship and self-employment, and placed only marginal attention on the Jewish working-class and artisans.

¹³² Nancy Green, *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley, 1998), 1.

¹³³ Derek Penslar, *Shylock’s Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 2001).

¹³⁴ Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig, 1911).

¹³⁵ Gideon Reuveni, “Prolegomena to an ‘Economic Turn’ in Jewish History,” in *The Economy in Jewish History*, ed. Gideon Reuveni and Sarah Wobick-Segev (Oxford, 2011), 1–2.

¹³⁶ Gedalia Yogeve, *Diamonds and Coral: Anglo-Dutch Jews and Eighteenth-Century Trade* (Leicester, 1978); Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, 2009); David De Vries, *Diamonds and War: State, Capital, and Labor in British-Ruled Palestine* (New York, 2010); Tjil Vanneste, *Global Trade and Commercial Networks: Eighteenth-Century Diamond Merchants* (London, 2015); Coenen Snyder, *A Brilliant Commodity*.

¹³⁷ Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (New Haven, 2008).

¹³⁸ Nancy Green, *Ready-to-Wear and Ready-to-Work: A Century of Industry and Immigrants in Paris and New York* (Durham, 1997); Andrew Godley, *Jewish Immigrant Entrepreneurship in New York and London 1880–1914* (London, 2001); Adam Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York, 2016); Laura Ekholm, “Jews, Second-Hand Trade and Upward Economic Mobility: Introducing the Ready-to-Wear Business in Industrializing Helsinki, 1880–1930,” in *Global Perspectives on Changing Secondhand Economies*, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen and Jennifer Le Zotte (London, 2022), 73–92.

¹³⁹ Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition* (New York, 2020).

¹⁴⁰ Michael Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (New York, 2017).

¹⁴¹ Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880–1940* (Ithaca, 2015).

¹⁴² Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven, 2015); Diane Catherine Vecchio, *Peddlers, Merchants, and Manufacturers: How Jewish Entrepreneurs Built Economy and Community in Upcountry South Carolina* (Columbia, 2024).

¹⁴³ Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity*.

This dissertation aims to contribute to this literature while returning the focus on the Jewish worker. The diamond worker is, in the Dutch context, the one Jewish artisan who has received the most attention. Henri Heertje's 1936 dissertation *De diamantbewerders in Amsterdam* is an invaluable resource in this regard.¹⁴⁴ Theo van Tijn, Karin Hofmeester, and Daniël Metz have continued to build on this work.¹⁴⁵ However, detailed individual career and life trajectories have so far not been used in this literature. The life courses and additional data used in this dissertation, discussed in the following section, allows me to study the social and economic lives of Amsterdam Jews in greater detail than ever before.

1.4 Data and Methods

So far, we have discussed what we aim to study, namely the social mobility and integration of Amsterdam Jews and Jewish diamond workers; and also what we mean by these terms. Next is a clarification of the data and methods used in this dissertation. Until now, data on Dutch Jews has been limited and depended on oversampling on a number of criteria.¹⁴⁶ Oversampling here refers to selecting a specific subgroup, such as Dutch Jews, at greater numbers than their actual representation in the overall population. In this dissertation, existing data on Amsterdam Jews is complemented with the entire diamond workers' union membership administration and for a sample of the diamond workers' membership cards extra data. For each individual on these sampled membership cards, complete life course information is gathered from the Amsterdam population registers. Additionally, using a technique novel in the Dutch context, I identify Jewish families on the full-count marriage certificates of Amsterdam. In this section we will also revisit the question *Who is Jewish* and approach it from a practical and data-driven perspective.

1.4.1 Membership administration of the *Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerdersbond*

The core of the dissertation's work is based on the archive of the *Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerdersbond* (ANDB; 'General Dutch Diamond Workers Union'). The first modern trade union in the Netherlands, the ANDB was founded in 1894 following an industry-wide strike comprising all 10,000-plus Jewish and Gentile diamond workers in Amsterdam.¹⁴⁷ Due to the success of the strike, the ANDB was able to implement a mandatory union membership in collaboration with the employers' organisation. The ANDB membership administration, which covers the period 1898 until 1958—when the union merged into the metal workers' union—therefore comprises the entire industry, excepting members of three small denominational unions of limited numerical importance: the Protestant *Patrimonium*, the Roman Catholic *Sint Eduardus*, and the Jewish *Betsalel*.¹⁴⁸ The ANDB administration was unique in its breadth and detail, making

¹⁴⁴ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*.

¹⁴⁵ Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*; Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*; Hofmeester, *Jewish Workers and the Labour Movement*; Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*; Metz, *Diamantgracht*.

¹⁴⁶ Tammes, "'Hack, Pack, Sack'"; Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens, "Religion and Social Mobility."

¹⁴⁷ Van Tijn, "De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond."

¹⁴⁸ Herbert Schijf, "De leerlingen van de ANDB. Een indrukwekkende administratie," in *Een schitterende erfenis: 125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerdersbond*, ed. Karin Hofmeester (Zutphen, 2020), 60.

it the country's most informative union membership administration.¹⁴⁹ The level of detail is amplified by the high membership rate, as the union effectively blocked non-union workers to continue their activities in the industry. However, the administration of these workers only covers information regarding their careers *during* their memberships. While this is extremely informative for those who aim to study the changes within the industry, it cannot adequately describe workers' lives before and after their memberships, crucial ingredients to study their social mobility and integration. Nor does membership data tell us anything about religious affiliation, family background, or partner selection. To cover these gaps, additional sources are used to complement the career information included in the ANDB archive. For a sample of 800 diamond workers, explained in detail in Section 1.4.2, population registers shed light on complete life courses throughout Amsterdam, including family backgrounds, all co-resident individuals, additional occupational information, and residential histories. Marriage certificates for ever-married persons reveal additional family network information, including both sets of parents of the bridal pair and between two and four marital witnesses present at the marriage ceremony. This sample and the population registers will be discussed after a description of the different facets of the ANDB membership administration.

Membership cards

The first part of the ANDB's administration were membership cards introduced in January 1898. All full members of the union were registered on individual cards. Between 1898 to 1958, a total of 20,729 cards were filled out covering 18,150 unique members. Persons who had especially long careers in the diamond industry or who frequently migrated between Amsterdam and other diamond centres needed a second card to cover all accrued membership information and mutations. Membership cards were printed on thick pieces of cardboard and contained information on both sides. Personal information and membership mutations were recorded on the front while the backs counted the annual employment histories of workers' activities by the number of weeks.

An example of the front of a membership card is shown in Illustration 1.1. In 2018 and 2019, hundreds of volunteers contributed to the transcription of the information.¹⁵⁰ At the start of the membership, the date, names and date of birth, address, the specialisation—recorded as the 'section of the union'—and membership number were recorded. Over the years more information was added. In the above example, Elias was member of Section 2 of the union, the brilliant polishers; these were the most numerous workers in the industry. Once issued, cards were kept at the headquarters of the ANDB and updated regularly. The front of the card was updated for each residential change and when Elias' membership was ended in 1922 due to prolonged unemployment. On the cards of women, husbands' surnames were affixed to women's maiden names at the time of marriage. Nearly half of all female union members were listed with such double surnames, indicating the high share of working married women in this ethnic niche.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Jan Hornix, "Op zoek naar het vakbondslid. Een nieuw perspectief op onderzoek naar geschiedenis van de vakbeweging" (Nijmegen: Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, 2022).

¹⁵⁰ Volunteers entered the information on the citizens' science website VeleHanden.nl. All membership and apprenticeship cards can be viewed on <https://diamantbewerkers.nl>.

¹⁵¹ Hofmeester, "The Impact of the Diamond Industry," 156.

Source: ANDB archive, ARCH00210 #9450.

ILLUSTRATION 1.2 Example of the back of an ANDB membership card.
Source: ANDB archive, ARCH00210 #9450.

	CONTRIBUTIE			UITKEERING BIJ ZIEKTE		UITKEERING BIJ STAKING		UITKEERING BIJ UITSLOTING		UITKEERING BIJ BEVALLING		UITKEERING BIJ PENSIOEN		UITKEERING BIJ INVALIDITEIT		BOETEN		BEMERKINGEN
	Aantal weken betaald	Werk	Schuld	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	Aantal weken	Bedrag	
1898																		
1899	5																	verdund
1900																		
1901																		
1902																		
1903																		
1904	9																	
1905	52																	1 st klas 25-2-05
1906	40	1								10								4 ^{de} cont. bevaling
1907	45			3	19					10								4 ^{de} cont. bevaling
1908	43	6																4 ^{de} cont. bevaling
1909	51									10								4 ^{de} cont. bevaling
1910	51																	4 ^{de} " vacante
1911	51																	4 ^{de} " vacante
1912	45																	4 ^{de} " vacante
1913	40	10																4 ^{de} " vacante
1914	11	40																4 ^{de} " vacante
1915		53																4 ^{de} " vacante
1916	28	24																4 ^{de} " vacante
1917	4	46		2														4 ^{de} " vacante
1918	44	5								10								4 ^{de} " vacante
1919	46	4																4 ^{de} " vacante
1920	42	10								10								4 ^{de} " vacante
1921	24	24																4 ^{de} " vacante
1922	30	22																4 ^{de} " vacante
1923	34	15																4 ^{de} " vacante
1924	44	18																4 ^{de} " vacante
1925	21	20																4 ^{de} " vacante
1926	17	2																4 ^{de} " vacante
1927	53																	4 ^{de} " vacante
1928	50	2																4 ^{de} " vacante
1929	52																	4 ^{de} " vacante
1930	33	19																4 ^{de} " vacante
1931		22																4 ^{de} " vacante
1932		53																4 ^{de} " vacante
1933		3	20															4 ^{de} " vacante
1934																		4 ^{de} " vacante
1935																		4 ^{de} " vacante
1936																		4 ^{de} " vacante

Apprenticeship cards

When membership cards were introduced in 1898, the union had just implemented an indefinite bar on new apprentices; large inflows of apprentices in the 1880s and 1890s had led to an excess of workers.¹⁵² This temporary ban on apprenticeships ended in 1904 in agreement with the AJV for a reduction in working hours. In the same year, 500 new apprentices were selected and placed with instructors.¹⁵³ Consequently, a new card system needed to be introduced. Between 1904 and 1958, 7695 apprenticeship cards were issued. Besides personal identifying information, the apprenticeship cards recorded for one of the apprentices' parents' full names, dates of birth, and occupational information. These are shown on the top right corner of Illustration 1.3. In the case of Schoontje Diamant (1889–1957), her father Marcus Diamant (1858–1906) had worked in Section 2 ("II") until 25 November 1906, when he passed. The amount of information on the parents of apprentices reflects the power the ANDB had over the labour market in this industry. Although hopeful entrants could, on paper, only enter when a parent was a diamond worker, in practice nearly one-fourth of apprentices had parents who were not active as or had never worked as diamond workers.

¹⁵² Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 89.

¹⁵³ *Jaarverslag 1903–1904*, 39–40.

ILLUSTRATION 1.3 Example of an apprenticeship card.

Source: ANDB archive, ARCH00210#9411.

BRILLANTSNIJDEN.		O. K. No. 876
No. 1430	Geboren 1 Juni 1889	Zoon van Marcus Diamant
Namen Diamant Schoontje	Geboren 15 Januari 1858 te Amsterdam	Moeder
Woonplaats 3 ^e Oudeparkstraat 15 huis	Lid van	Vakgr. II No. 2753
	Overleden 25 November 1906	
	Invalide geworden	gewerkt tot
	Datum van controleering	
Datum van toelating 5 September 1907	Overzicht der gemaakte vorderingen	
Werkzaam bij Pohlmeijer	Atelier Ed. v. Dam	
	Fabriek	
Einde van den leertijd 30 September 1910		
Proef afgelegd bij Examen commissie		
Lid geworden op 30 Sept. 1910 van A.S.D.B.	E. R. No. 105	
Vakgr. 4 No. 587	Bemerkingen	
Broeders(s) No. 4112 - 4715		
Zuster(s) No.		

In the middle of the card we see that Schoontje started her apprenticeship on 5 September 1907 at the age of 18. Her instructor, listed here as Pohlmeijer,¹⁵⁴ instructed her in *brillantsnijden* ('brilliant cutting')—written in large letters at the top of the card—in Eduard van Dam's ("Ed. v. Dam") factory. In the bottom left we learn that she completed her apprenticeship on 30 September 1910, roughly three years after she started as an apprentice. She finished her examination at the union's exam committee ("Examen commissie") and became a member of the union on the same day. She was given a membership card stating that she was a member of Section 4 and member number 587. The information recorded on the bottom ("4112-4715") refers to the apprenticeship numbers of her siblings. Her younger brothers Maurits (1897-1942) and Jacob Diamant (1898-1921)¹⁵⁵ also had apprenticeships cards. Maurits apprenticed from 1912 until 1919, Jacob from 1913 until 1919. Both completed their apprenticeships as

¹⁵⁴ Only two Pohlmeijers were recorded in the union: Karel Hendrik Pohlmeijer (b. 1871) and his son Carl Hendrik Pohlmeijer (b. 1896). Given their age, Schoontje must have been instructed by Karel. At birth, Karel was listed as belonging to the Protestant *Hersteld Evangelisch Luthers* church. However, when he left for Idar, a German diamond production centre, in 1902, he was listed as religiously unaffiliated in the Amsterdam population register. Thus, the Jewish Schoontje Diamant was trained across sex and religious divisions.

¹⁵⁵ Jacob passed on 17 August 1921 in a fatal accident. Funeral notices were published in the newspapers *Algemeen Handelsblad* and *Het Volk* and the ANDB newsletter.

brilliant polishers, although Maurits' card noted that he had been kicked out of one of his apprenticeships for lack of ambition.

1.4.2 *Life courses and the Historical Sample of the Netherlands*

Although the various membership cards provide a complete overview of their working life during their memberships, they tell us little about their social and demographic lives outside of work, nor anything regarding their lives prior to becoming apprentices or after their memberships ended. For a complete overview of social mobility and integration, what we want is longitudinal information with continuous information on occupations, residence, and civil status. For this reason we turn to the *Historical Sample of the Netherlands* (HSN). The HSN has compiled over 40,000 life courses across the Netherlands for persons born between 1850 and 1922.¹⁵⁶ Using the methodology and software of the HSN, we have reconstructed comparable life courses for 800 diamond workers. Before going into our sample, I will first discuss the methodology of the HSN.

Historical Sample of the Netherlands

The HSN is a large-scale relational database containing life courses for Dutch residents all over the country.¹⁵⁷ It has compiled a representative population of the Netherlands by sampling birth certificates and constructed life courses by adding marriage and death certificates and entries from the population registers. These registers enable continuous tracking of individuals over time and space, making it one of the highest quality databases of historical life courses in the world.¹⁵⁸ Below, I will showcase the potential of the HSN at the hand of examples used in this dissertation.

The Amsterdam local government used population registers between 1850 and 1893 to keep track of residents and their movements. These were succeeded by *Gezinskaarten* ('Family cards') in 1893 until 1939. On both source types, each head of household was registered on these cards alongside the co-residents in their household. An example of such a *Gezinskaart* is presented in Illustration 1.4. The card registers Elias (Eli) Smalhout (1889–1939) and was issued after Eli left his parental home at age 24. In the top line we see Elias as a bachelor. From April 1913 until January 1914 he briefly lived by himself during his time as a diamond worker before moving back into his family's home. On the second line we see that he returns together with his partner Bregtje Sombogaart (1894–1991). They moved in on the 25th of March 1918, four days after their wedding. Elias is no longer listed as a diamond worker, but instead as an art teacher. Elias' religious affiliation is listed as *N.I.*, short for *Nederlands Israëlitisch* ('Dutch Israelite');¹⁵⁹ Bregtje's as *N.H.* (*Nederlands Hervormd* ['Dutch Reformed']). The Family cards therefore allow us to identify mixed marriages. Their children, Bob and Eline, are listed without religious affiliations, but neither Elias' nor Bregtje's affiliations were changed.¹⁶⁰ Thus, while the

¹⁵⁶ Kees Mandemakers and Jan Kok, "Dutch Lives. The Historical Sample of The Netherlands (1987–): Development and Research," *Historical Life Course Studies* 9 (2020): 72.

¹⁵⁷ Mandemakers and Kok, "Dutch Lives."

¹⁵⁸ Steven Ruggles, "The Future of Historical Family Demography," *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (2012): 425.

¹⁵⁹ Dutch Israelite meaning a member of the Dutch Israelite Religious Community (*Nederlands Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap*), i.e. Ashkenazi Jewish.

¹⁶⁰ Both Elias and Bregtje later became members of the Socialist-Zionist organisation Paole Zion. See Bert de Cort, "Elias Smalhout," *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (blog), 2017.

ILLUSTRATION 1.4 An example of a *Gezinskaart* in Amsterdam, ca. 1920.

Source: Amsterdam City Archive, 5422 #1371, “E. Smalhout (28-09-1889).”

The image shows a historical Dutch family card (Gezinskaart) for Elias Smalhout, dated 1920. The card is filled with handwritten information in Dutch. At the top, the name 'Smalhout' is written in large cursive. Below it, there are sections for personal details, family members, and addresses. The card is divided into columns and rows, with handwritten entries for each. The text is in Dutch, and the card is a good example of the type of data collected for the HSN project.

religious upbringing of their children did not appear to head in either direction, their feelings towards their religious affiliation were ambivalent enough that they did not request government officials to change their own affiliations. Elias moved from his parental home in the Lepelstraat surrounded by Jews in the East of Amsterdam to the Tweede Kostverlorenkade in the Southwest of Amsterdam. This move was a neighbourhood upgrade and residential integration in one. This individual Family card has therefore informed us about Elias’ career mobility, intermarriage, and residential mobility while also suggesting how he felt about his religious affiliation.

ANDB sample

Ideally, we would collect this same life course information for all 18,000-plus diamond workers. However, this is much too time-consuming. I therefore follow the HSN methodology and take several samples of randomly selected membership cards; 800 cards were sampled in total. To ensure comparability, we sample the same 10-year birth cohorts used by the HSN ranging from 1873-1882 to 1913-1922. Although women make up 19 percent of the union’s members,¹⁶¹ we need more data for women to identify patterns in their life courses. Without oversampling, women would make up an estimated 32 research persons in each birth cohort. This small number would provide us with too little statistical power to make statistically significant claims. Thus, rather than letting randomness decide the share of men and women, I selected 400 men and 400 women after deducing the names from HSN naming files.¹⁶² These were evenly spread over the five birth cohorts, meaning that we have 80 men and 80 women in each birth cohort. Approximately 65 percent of men and 85 percent of women were Jewish, for a total of 75 percent of diamond workers’ life courses. Collected information from regional population registers was limited to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague since Jews were mostly concentrated in Amsterdam and, to a smaller extent, in other large cities in

¹⁶¹ Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 50.

¹⁶² We used gendered name information from the HSN to dictate which person was male and who female. Names that could not be statistically deduced were manually indicated as male or female.

the Netherlands; and the diamond industry was more or less exclusively located in Amsterdam.¹⁶³

Jewish Dutch or Dutch Jews sample

To obtain a sizable comparison group of Jews who did not enter the diamond industry, I turn to the data collection of others. In earlier work, Peter Tammes collected life courses of several samples of Jews in Amsterdam for his NWO Veni project *Jewish Dutch or Dutch Jews* (JDJ).¹⁶⁴ These individuals were sampled from the ‘municipal registration list’ of Amsterdam. The ‘municipal lists’ of 1941 were the outcome of ‘Verordening 6/1941’ by German *Reichskommissar* Seys-Inquart during the German occupation of the Netherlands.¹⁶⁵ This ordinance required all persons with at least one Jewish grandparent to self-report and fill in a questionnaire within a limited time span. Few persons refused since information regarding their ethno-religious background was meticulously recorded in the population registers and Synagogues’ membership administration.¹⁶⁶ The Amsterdam list counted all 77,000 ‘full’ Jews living in Amsterdam.¹⁶⁷ During the war, these lists were used to segregate and deport Jews.¹⁶⁸

The JDJ database sampled 725 Jewish individuals present on the Amsterdam ‘municipal list,’ spread evenly across four ten-year birth cohorts from 1883–1892 up to 1913–1922. To study both the general Jewish experience as well as the lives of integrated Jews, four separate groups were sampled: 395 ‘representative’ Jews—sampled without additional characteristic requirements; 110 intermarried Jews, 110 religiously unaffiliated Jews, and 110 Jews who converted to Christianity. Due to their small numbers, the last three samples are combined in this dissertation under the name “non-identifying Jews.” For the purpose of the current dissertation we have added 200 life courses for the birth cohort 1873–1882 using the same relative distributions of the four samples. This enables us to continue comparing the ANDB life courses with the JDJ database across all birth cohorts.

Gentile Amsterdam sample

To study Jews in a comparative perspective we require similar life courses for Amsterdam Gentiles. For this reason I extracted from the central HSN database all Gentile individuals who were born between 1873 and 1922. I selected only Amsterdam-

¹⁶³ A small predominantly clandestine diamond industry grew in Hilversum. However, it was of minor importance, and it was uncommon for Jews to work here. For more information, see Joppe Schaap’s blogpost <https://steengoedhilversum.nl/de-geschiedenis-van-de-diamantindustrie-in-hilversum/>.

¹⁶⁴ Information on this Veni project, titled *Jewish Dutch or Dutch Jews?*, can be found on the website of the NWO with project number 275-52-007.

¹⁶⁵ Peter Tammes, “Het belang van Jodenregistratie voor de vernietiging van joden tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog,” *TSEG-The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 6.2 (2009): 34–62.

¹⁶⁶ Blom highlights the exceptional quality of the Dutch population registries in his comparison of the persecution of Jews in the Netherlands in an international comparative perspective. See Johan Blom, “De vervolging van de joden in Nederland in internationaal vergelijkend perspectief,” *De Gids* 150 (1987): 502.

¹⁶⁷ According to the 1935 Nuremberg Laws in Nazi Germany, a ‘full Jew’ was someone with at least three Jewish grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents and either belonged to a Jewish congregation or married to another ‘full’ Jew.

¹⁶⁸ Historians have debated the impact of these lists on Dutch Jews’ mortality outcomes during the Holocaust. In a comparative article, Tammes has argued that the registration of Jews across different occupied countries had little impact on the share of murdered Jews during the Shoah. Tammes, “Het belang van Jodenregistratie,” 41.

born individuals to limit migrant biases and observe persons' chances for social mobility since birth. Since all Jewish diamond workers with a membership card and all Jews on the municipal lists were at least 18 years of age, I limit the Gentile Amsterdam sample to those who survived until at least age 18. Since Jews in the base HSN database were used for the construction of Tammes' database, discussed above, I excluded everyone who was listed as belonging to a Jewish religious affiliation. This left 1201 individuals who function as our 'general' Gentile comparison group.

1.4.3 Marriage certificates

While the life course data is extremely detailed, it is limited in size and breadth of the study period. I therefore turn to an alternative database, LINKS ('LINKing System for historical family reconstruction'), to examine more people for a longer time period. LINKS is a software system which compiles and standardised Dutch civil certificates between 1811 until privacy laws allow.¹⁶⁹ Useful for this dissertation are the marriage certificates which are available for the entire country until 1932. Since we are interested in the case of Amsterdam Jews, we limit marriages to Amsterdam and three cities where (1) Amsterdam residents married frequently,¹⁷⁰ and (2) Jews were common among the bridal pairs that married there. These are Amsterdam, Zaandam, Weesp, and Watergraafsmeer.¹⁷¹ In these localities, 417,000 marriage certificates are available for the period 1811–1932.

The marriage certificates provide occupational information at a semi-standardised life stage, namely the time at marriage. For most men and women that ever married, marriage was the main transition to adulthood.¹⁷² In this sense, we observe the occupations of men at a comparable and important stage of their life. Despite unmarried men being absent from marriage certificates and occupations of fathers and fathers-in-law being incomplete in cases of early bereavement,¹⁷³ the marriage certificates are still largely representative for the occupational structure and intergenerational mobility trends.¹⁷⁴ In this period, nearly all men married during their lifetimes.¹⁷⁵ At the time of marriage, a groom is one generation removed from his father; occupations are therefore measured at different life stages. Linking marriage certificates of grooms with those of their parents allows for comparisons where both men are more similar in age and life stage.¹⁷⁶ In Chapter 4 I use LINKS' linked database of marriage certificates to study intergenerational mobility in this way.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ Kees Mandemakers et al., "LINKS. A System for Historical Family Reconstruction in the Netherlands," *Historical Life Course Studies* 13 (2023): 148–85.

¹⁷⁰ Richter Roegholt, *Ben Sijes: een biografie* (The Hague, 1988), 16.

¹⁷¹ The municipality of Watergraafsmeer was annexed by Amsterdam in 1921.

¹⁷² Hilde Bras, Aart Liefbroer, and Cees Elzinga, "Standardization of Pathways to Adulthood? An Analysis of Dutch Cohorts Born between 1850 and 1900," *Demography* 47.4 (2010): 1013–34.

¹⁷³ Henk Delger and Jan Kok, "Bridegrooms and Biases: A Critical Look at the Study of Intergenerational Mobility on the Basis of Marriage Certificates," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 31.3 (1998): 113–21.

¹⁷⁴ Zijdemann, "Status Attainment in the Netherlands, 1811–1941," 16–17; Van Leeuwen and Maas, "Historical Studies," 431.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Ekamper et al., eds., *Bevolkingsatlas van Nederland: demografische ontwikkelingen van 1850 tot heden* (Rijswijk, 2003).

¹⁷⁶ Knigge, "Sources of Sibling Similarity."

¹⁷⁷ Kees Mandemakers and Fons Laan, "LINKS Dataset Linked Marriages, the Netherlands, 1796–1943," 2020.

ILLUSTRATION 1.5. An example of a marriage certificate.

Source: Noord-Hollands Archief, 358.6#2327.

N^o. 191. Heden eenentwintig Maart negentienhonderd achttien
zijn voor mij Ambtenaar van den burgerlijken stand van Amsterdam verschenen, ten einde een
huwelijk aan te gaan:

Elias Smalhout, diamantolijsjer,
geboren en wonende alhier, oud acht.
entwintig jaren, meerderjarige zoon
van Barend Smalhout, oud vijftien.
vijftig jaren, — diamantversteller en
Sientje Metzelaar, oud vierenvijftig
jaren, — zonder beroep, beiden wonende
alhier en

Bregtje Sombogaart, zonder
beroep, geboren en wonende alhier, oud vier.
entwintig jaren, meerderjarige dochter
van Klaas Sombogaart, zonder be.
roep en Roeloffe Sebershoff, oud twee.
envijftig jaren, — verstelnaaister, beiden
wonderde alhier. De ouders des bruidegoms en
de moeder der bruid verklaarden, voor mij tegen.
woordig, toe te stemmen en deren echt. De
vader der bruid heeft blykens hierby
overgelegde authentieke akte, in deen recht
toefestehnd.

De afkondiging tot dit huwelijk is onverhinderd geschied, alhier den negen.
den dener maand

Ik heb bruidegom en bruid afgevraagd of zij elkander nemen tot echtgenooten en
getrouwelijk alle de plichten zullen vervullen, welke door de wet aan den huwelijken staat
verbonden zijn. Nadat deze vragen door hen bevestigend beantwoord werden, heb ik, in naam
der wet, uitspraak gedaan, dat zij door het huwelijk aan elkander zijn verbonden.
Als getuigen waren tegenwoordig: Heyman Smalhout,
broeder des echtgenoots, kantoorbediende,
oud dertig jaren en Hendrikus Johannes
Bruend Metuender van het Nederlandsch
Verbond van Vakvereenigingen, oud drieenvijftig
jaren, beiden wonende alhier. De moeder des
echtgenoots verklaarde niet te kunnen
naafsteekken, als hebbende geen subgraven
geleerd.

Waarvan akte, welke overeenkomstig de wet is voorgelezen.

E. Smalhout
B. Sombogaart.
B. Metzelaar
R. Sebershoff.

H. Smalhout
H. Metuender
R. Sebershoff

Illustration 1.5 shows the marriage certificate of Elias Smalhout, who we met earlier. On 21 March 1918, the Jewish Elias married with Gentile woman Bregtje Sombogaart. Each Dutch marriage certificate lists both parents of the groom and bride. We therefore also observe Barend Smalhout and Sientje Metzelaar, Elias' parents, and Klaas Sombogaart and Roeloffe Sebershoff, Bregtje's parents. Barend's occupation was listed as *diamantversteller* ('diamond setter'), a lower-ranked occupation in the diamond industry than Elias. Klaas was listed as no longer living and therefore listed without an occupation. Instead, although Amsterdam brides and mothers were rarely listed with occupations in this period, Klaas' widowed wife Roeloffe was listed as a *verstelnaaister* ('mending seamstress').

1.4.4 HISCO, HISCLASS, and HISCAM

As we discussed earlier, occupations are commonly used in historical research to estimate social status or class.¹⁷⁸ Researchers are assisted in this with standardised dictionaries of occupational titles. Such dictionaries standardise occupational titles and categorise them into sectors and subsectors of the economy, facilitating international and intertemporal comparisons. In social and economic history, HISCO ('Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations') is most commonly used.¹⁷⁹ HISCO gives each occupational title a five-digit code. These combinations of digits specify what type of work is being referred to. Diamond workers are included in code 88030. This refers to major group 8 ('Manufacturing and transport'), minor group 88 ('Jewellers and precious metal workers'), and occupation 88030 ('Gem cutters and polishers').

Additional schemes add more information to the occupations incorporated in HISCO. To stratify all occupations into social classes, HISCLASS was developed.¹⁸⁰ Common versions of HISCLASS include five or twelve social classes. However, since the present dissertation studies a highly urban locality where farmers are completely absent, I have reconstructed the social class scheme into five different classes. The classification used throughout the dissertation, unless stated otherwise, consists of (i) "Higher professionals and managers" (HISCLASS 1-2); (ii) "Lower professionals and managers" (3-5); (iii) "Skilled workers" (6-8);¹⁸¹ (iv) "Semi-skilled workers" (9); and (v) "Unskilled workers" (10-12).

For certain analyses, a numeric value of social position is preferred to the categorical HISCLASS. HISCAM provides such numeric values. Using a large database of marriages in nineteenth-century Europe, the HISCAM approach estimates the relative social position of incumbents of occupations groups based on who they married.¹⁸² For instance, if lawyers frequently married (the offspring of) doctors, but never married into the families of unskilled workers, then lawyers and doctors are in similar positions of the social stratification, while unskilled workers are not. By calculating such relations between occupations, researchers have been able to identify the position of each occupation in the social stratification. These schedules were calculated for Europe as a whole and for specific countries. I use the HISCAM-schedule for the Netherlands since diamond workers had significantly different status based on where they worked.¹⁸³ The Dutch HISCAM-schedule ranges from 40, a score corresponding to maids and servants, to 99, where we find mayors, doctors, lawyers, and judges. Diamond workers had a HISCAM-score of 63, one of the highest scores among skilled workers. It falls reasonably between the scores of other occupations that were common among nineteenth-century Jews: porters had a score of 47; cigar makers and peddlers 49; carters, cobblers, and tailors 51; office clerks 65; merchants 66; and commercial representatives 67. The Dutch

¹⁷⁸ Van Leeuwen and Maas, "Historical Studies," 430.

¹⁷⁹ Marco van Leeuwen, Ineke Maas, and Andrew Miles, *HISCO: Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁰ Marco van Leeuwen and Ineke Maas, *HISCLASS: A Historical International Social Class Scheme* (Leuven, 2011).

¹⁸¹ *Foremen* (HISCLASS 6) and *Farmers and fishermen* (8) are included with *Skilled workers* (7) due to their small sample sizes.

¹⁸² Paul Lambert et al., "The Construction of HISCAM: A Stratification Scale Based on Social Interactions for Historical Comparative Research," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 46.2 (2013): 77-89.

¹⁸³ Amsterdam diamond workers had much better working conditions and remuneration than Antwerp diamond workers, for instance.

HISCAM-scores therefore place diamond workers near the top of manual workers, but below most white-collar work, thus corresponding with the HISCLASS tiers while providing more differentiation within each social class.

1.4.5 *Who is Jewish and who is Gentile: practical*

Most historical sources do not state whether individuals were (former) members of a Jewish congregation, descendants of such individuals, or were perceived by others as being Jewish. Exceptions include the Amsterdam population registers and the ‘municipal registration lists’ constructed in 1941, both of which state religious affiliation. The full-count ANDB membership administration, counting nearly 20,000 unique persons, does not state this information. Therefore, researchers who are interested in differences between Jews and Gentiles must find another way to identify Jews.

In this dissertation, Jews are identified by several tiered techniques. When available, sources containing religious affiliation are used. This is true for all life courses based on population registers. The distinctiveness of Jewish names is used when religious affiliation is absent. That names were distinguishable as Jewish is evident from the frequency of Jewish name changers.¹⁸⁴ “With our despised immigrant clothing we shed also our impossible Hebrew names” stated one Jewish-American name changer.¹⁸⁵ Using names to identify Jews has a longstanding history, especially in the United States.¹⁸⁶ Spitzer created a name-based algorithm to identify Eastern European Jews arriving at Ellis Island.¹⁸⁷ Recently, Chiswick used a name-based approach for his book *Jews at Work*.¹⁸⁸ In the Dutch case, the distinctiveness of Jewish names was no different.¹⁸⁹ Amsterdam Jews increasingly replaced their Biblical first names with less Jewish-sounding names going into the twentieth century; Jacob became Jacques, Levi became Louis, and Saul became Paul.¹⁹⁰ In a technique described in Appendix A, I utilise the full-count population register of Amsterdam circa 1850 to calculate which names occurred so disproportionately among Jews that, statistically speaking, those who held those names could credibly be considered Jewish. For instance, the surname Voorzanger, the Dutch word for precentor or Jewish cantor (‘chazzan’), occurred 126 times and exclusively among Jews. Likewise, names that virtually never occurred among Jews are considered Gentile. Johannes or Jan, common given names among Gentiles, occurred 9620 times among Gentiles and only twice among Jews in Amsterdam. Using this information, individuals with distinctively Jewish (or Gentile) names are considered Jewish (or Gentile) in our sources.

However, not everyone had a distinctive Jewish name. Paul de Groot, born as Saul de Groot, would be listed with neither a given name nor surname distinguishable enough as either Jewish or Gentile. For these individuals, records are traced in the Amsterdam

¹⁸⁴ Kirsten Fermaglich, *A Rosenberg by Any Other Name: A History of Jewish Name Changing in America* (New York, 2020).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹⁸⁶ Harold Himmelfarb, Michael Loar, and Susan Mott, “Sampling by Ethnic Surnames: The Case of American Jews,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47.2 (1983): 247–60.

¹⁸⁷ Yannay Spitzer, “Essays on the Economics of the Jews and Their Migration” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2015).

¹⁸⁸ Barry Chiswick, *Jews at Work: Their Economic Progress in the American Labor Market* (New York, 2020).

¹⁸⁹ An article published in *De Vrijdagavond* listed 48 ‘types’ of Jewish names. *De Vrijdagavond* 19-09-1924, “Uit ons krijnpotje.”

¹⁹⁰ Based on the examples Jacques (Jacob) Presser, Louis (Levie) de Vries, and Paul (Saul) de Groot.

population register to deduce their ethno-religious background using the listed religious affiliation. For religiously unaffiliated individuals I look at their parents and, if necessary, grandparents.

For the marriage certificates used in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, ethno-religious backgrounds are distinguished based on the given and family names of the groom or bride and their respective parents. These three individuals have a total of five unique names, excluding the overlapping surnames of father and child; three given names and two surnames. A person is considered Jewish if three out of the five names are distinctively Jewish.¹⁹¹ If both surnames are Jewish, two Jewish names suffice. In this methodology, an individual could be considered Jewish even when neither their given name nor surname were Jewish if their father had a Jewish given name and their mother had a Jewish given and surname. Philippus Meijer, son of Hartog Meijer and Schoontje Polak, is one such example.¹⁹²

The definition of Jews as a ‘social’ group also affects the comparison group. If we had considered Jews solely as a religious group, those outside of the Jewish faith could be grouped by their own religious denominations. In this scenario, the clusters described by Jan Kok—Roman Catholics, Orthodox Protestants, and Liberal Protestants—would have made more sense.¹⁹³ However, I do not define Jews by their religious denomination—although our definition of Jewish is highly correlated with those whose religious denomination was Jewish since few Jews in the social category disaffiliated from their Synagogues. Nonetheless, the comparison I make throughout the dissertation is instead with ‘Gentiles;’ *goj* or *gojim* in Dutch-Yiddish. Thus, in this dissertation I will not make explicit comparisons between Catholics and Protestants.¹⁹⁴

Furthermore, the definition of Jewish includes both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. In the Dutch context, both were considered Jewish, although ties between the groups were only formal until the late nineteenth century (see Chapter 2). The small number of Sephardim make it hard to consistently compare them. Through growing intermarriage, Sephardic Jews became closely intertwined with, and hard to distinguish from, Ashkenazi Jews by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For this reason, I will only occasionally discuss the differences between the groups when those differences existed.

1.5 Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation is split into two parts. Part I comprises the current and next two chapters and provides an introduction and necessary background to this dissertation. Chapter 2 overviews the social, economic, and demographic changes that occurred in the Amsterdam-Jewish community from 1850 up to 1940. It will discuss the changes in the Amsterdam economy as a whole, how the lives and careers of Amsterdam Jews changed over time, and discuss progress in several indicators of integration. Chapter 3 covers the history and essential context of Amsterdam’s diamond industry. This includes an extensive discussion on the diamond workers’ union—the ANDB—and her role in

¹⁹¹ See Appendix A for the threshold of ‘distinctively.’

¹⁹² Philippus was a Jewish name originating from Philip the Tetrarch (26 BCE – 34 CE).

¹⁹³ Kok, “Church Affiliation and Life Course Transitions.”

¹⁹⁴ Comparisons between Roman Catholics and Protestants are abundant in the Dutch historiography. For an overview, see *Ibid.*, 70–82.

uplifting the diamond workers. It will also present the hierarchy that existed in the industry and examine differences between Jewish and Gentile diamond workers.

Part II consists of Chapters 4 through 9. These chapters and the dissertation's conclusion are based on analyses of new and high quality data. They apply the discussed theoretical framework to examine the social mobility and integration of Jews working in the occupational niche of the diamond industry and those employed in the mainstream economy in the life domains of work, marriage, residence, and education. Thus far, only Tammes and Scholten have applied new assimilation theory to the context of pre-war Amsterdam Jews.¹⁹⁵ They argued that boundaries were mostly altered by blurring and crossing; through intermarriages, religious disaffiliation, and a strong presence in Social Democratic politics. However, their research did not compare within the Jewish community or between Jews and Gentiles and did not explicitly address Jews' social mobility. In this dissertation I will examine transitions in life domains from the perspectives of both integration *and* social mobility in a comparative perspective.

Chapter 4 will examine intergenerational mobility. It uses marriage certificates and union administration data to estimate improvements in social class and positions within the diamond industry across generations. Chapter 5 focuses on the domain of marriage and studies partnerships between spouses of different social classes and ethno-religious backgrounds. By examining at the interaction between the two—that is, comparing the social positions of intermarrying Jews and Gentiles with those who married co-ethnic partners—it establishes the degree to which Jews were seen as favourable marriage partners. Furthermore, similarities in the occupations of grooms, fathers, and fathers-in-law are studied to examine varying and changing social networks by ethno-religious group. Chapter 6 examines the domain of work. It dives deeper into the careers of diamond workers and studies how career characteristics and trajectories differed between Jewish and Gentile diamond workers, as well as between men and women. Using the detailed life course and union administration data, this chapter enables a careful comparison in Jewish and Gentile diamond workers' career mobility. Housing choices are the focus of Chapter 7. Once again, the combination of life course and union administration data allows for following Jewish workers as they relocate to different areas of the city, to neighbourhoods varying in Jewish presence, and to districts characterised by lower or higher social-class residents. Chapter 8 explores the next generation, the sons of diamond workers, and studies their educational attainment. Conscript records are added to our life course data to observe educational attainment of sons aged 19 to 20 years old between 1919 and 1940. The chapter extends the results from Chapter 4 by introducing education as an element to intergenerational mobility and illustrates the impact of the ANDB's 'civilising offense' on life outcomes of subsequent generations. Chapter 9 will synthesise the findings from these analytical chapters, discuss their interconnections, and discuss desirable paths for future research.

¹⁹⁵ Tammes and Scholten, "Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands."

2

Amsterdam and Her Jews

“The Jews of Amsterdam enjoyed, within the context of those times, a great deal of tolerance which was at the essence of the city. From refugees they became guests, from guests, citizens.”

— Meyer Sluyser¹

“...I feel like a Dutchman through and through; A Dutchman among the Dutch, yet also Jewish among the Jews.”

—Henri Polak²

2.1 Introduction

During the Dutch ‘Golden Age,’ Amsterdam became one of the most prosperous cities on earth as the capital of the first modern economy and a global network city.³ Thousands of migrants and religious refugees came to Amsterdam for political and economic reasons.⁴ However, in the post-‘Golden Age’ era, Amsterdam’s economy frequently stagnated. In fact, during the first half of the nineteenth century, Amsterdam was in an economic slump and lagged behind other European capitals in terms of industrialisation.⁵ The city did not offer the same economic opportunities it had offered in the seventeenth century when a third of its inhabitants was born abroad.⁶ This changed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Dutch economy, and particularly Amsterdam’s, revived and flourished. Amsterdam’s population grew rapidly and the city had to expand its borders repeatedly.

Amsterdam was where most Dutch Jews lived.⁷ In the sixteenth and seventeenth century they settled in one part of the city, which became known as the *Jodenbuurt* (‘Jewish Quarter’), where they remained clustered until the late nineteenth century.⁸ The Amsterdam Jewish community, or communities rather, displayed great diversity. Wealthy Sephardim, ‘Portuguese Jews’—Jews from the Iberian Peninsula—used their networks to provide important international trade nodes.⁹ The more numerous and

¹ Meyer Sluyser, *Hun lach klinkt zo ver...* (Utrecht, 1959), 10.

² Quoted in Salvador Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak: jood en Nederlander,” *Groniek* 115 (1991): 37.

³ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁴ Leo Lucassen and Jan Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam, 1550–2021* (Amsterdam, 2021), 28.

⁵ Jan Luiten van Zanden, *De industrialisatie in Amsterdam 1825–1914* (Bergen, 1987), 11.

⁶ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*, 23, 102–3.

⁷ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 33–34.

⁸ Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, “Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940.”

⁹ Jonathan Israel, “Sephardic Immigration into the Dutch Republic, 1595–1672,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989): 45–53.

relatively poorer Ashkenazim—‘High-German Jews’ and later ‘Dutch Israelites’ from Germany and Central and Eastern Europe—were more commonly involved in lower levels of commerce.¹⁰ Both communities were struck hard by the economic decline of Amsterdam’s economy and trade position. Guild exclusion had made them dependent on commerce more than any other group in the Netherlands.¹¹ The stagnant economic growth and declining positioning of Amsterdam in international trade meant that Jewish political emancipation in 1796 initially had little impact on the economic lives of most Amsterdam Jews.¹² Later on, in the nineteenth century and twentieth century, Jews would make significant and often disproportionate impact on the city in all domains of life.

This chapter will examine the changing economic and social lives of Amsterdam’s residents with a particular focus on her Jews. I will first provide a general overview of the occupational structure, demographics, and religious diversity in Amsterdam. Then, I will switch attention to the Jews and their specific demographic and economic structure and experiences in Amsterdam. Key in this chapter will also be Jews’ integration into mainstream society. The discussion of general trends in Amsterdam combined with Jews’ specific experiences provide an overview of the opportunity structure in which Amsterdam Jews, including the diamond workers, lived and worked. A discussion about diamond workers’ lives and work is presented in Chapter 3. The current chapter will help us place the debate addressed in Chapter 1.3, in which opposing strands of scholarship have remarked on Jews’ integration. It will also help us contextualise the analyses in Chapters 4 through 8.

2.2 Life and work in Amsterdam

2.2.1 Population growth and religious diversity

In 1500, Amsterdam was a small city in Holland with a population of roughly 10,000. Most inhabitants were Dutch-born as few immigrants had yet come from outside the County of Holland.¹³ Amsterdam’s population grew throughout the sixteenth century as the grain trade with countries around the Baltic sea increased.¹⁴ The city became more religiously diverse when Holland joined the Revolt against Catholic Spain in 1578. Thousands of religious refugees, particularly from the southern Low Countries, saw this as a signal of Holland’s tolerance. Immigration flows accelerated after people who joined the Revolt in Antwerp blocked access to the sea in 1585. This strengthened Amsterdam’s already strong economic position by making it the main harbour in the North Sea region and soon all of the Atlantic Sea. Many immigrants were merchants, including a significant number of Sephardic Jews. Most merchants initially arrived with little capital but with strong trading networks, although some disembarked with significant wealth.¹⁵ Newcomers came from all over Europe, including Jews from Spain and Portugal. They

¹⁰ Jonathan Israel, “De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden tot omstreeks 1750: demografie en economische activiteit,” in *De Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, ed. Hans Blom et al. (Amsterdam, 2017), 98–130.

¹¹ Lucassen, “Joodse Nederlanders 1796–1940,” 14.

¹² Sonnenberg–Stern, *Emancipation & Poverty*, 92.

¹³ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*, 21.

¹⁴ Milja van Tielhof, *The ‘Mother’ of All Trades’: The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Leiden, 2002).

¹⁵ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*, 26; see also Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt (1578–1630)* (Hilversum, 2000).

were joined by Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in large numbers during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).¹⁶ At the end of the seventeenth century, over ten thousand Huguenots chose to emigrate from newly-minted Catholic France. Thus, by the turn of the seventeenth century Amsterdam was a city full of diverse groups of immigrants with varying national backgrounds and religious beliefs.

From the sixteenth until the mid-eighteenth century, Amsterdam was one of Europe's most important trading hubs. The grain trade, known as the *Moedernegotie* ('Mother of all trade'), enabled Amsterdam to be a staple market. Goods were imported to Amsterdam and stored there and processed (like sugar) before being exported across Europe. Much of the manufacturing of goods that arrived from overseas and colonial trade, such as sugar and tobacco, occurred in Amsterdam. These industries needed workers. Additional labour demand was created by high mortality rates in urban centres like Amsterdam.¹⁷ Immigrants largely filled this demand, particularly in occupations related to the manufacturing of clothing and the construction industry.¹⁸ Amsterdam's religious diversity further stimulated the printing industry. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth century Amsterdam was the world's prime printing hub. The religious tolerance of Holland allowed nearly anything to be printed without censorship. Hundreds of Jewish books were published in Hebrew, Yiddish, Portuguese, and Spanish, alongside many publications by the French Huguenots.¹⁹

During the eighteenth century most of the descendants of seventeenth-century immigrants would become indistinguishable from the mainstream Dutch-Protestant population.²⁰ The largest exception were the Jews. Except for small Black and Asian communities that existed in Amsterdam, the Jews stood out as the most distinct of the Amsterdam's immigrants.²¹ They were also on the receiving end of most discrimination.²² Economic decline and worsening trade relations made Amsterdam a less attractive destination for immigrants, while those who arrived earlier increasingly moved away. In the eighteenth century, after centuries of growth, the population of Amsterdam shrunk from over 200,000 inhabitants in 1700 to 180,000 in 1814.²³

¹⁶ Yosef Kaplan, "Amsterdam and Ashkenazic Migration in the Seventeenth Century," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989): 22–44.

¹⁷ Leo Lucassen, "To Amsterdam: Migrations Past and Present," in *New York and Amsterdam: Immigration and the New Urban Landscape*, ed. Nancy Foner (New York, 2014), 57.

¹⁸ Jan Luiten van Zanden, *The Rise and Decline of Holland's Economy: Merchant Capitalism and the Labour Market* (Manchester, 1993), 45–48.

¹⁹ Harm Den Boer, "Amsterdam as 'Locus' of Iberian Printing in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden, 2008), 87–110; Graham Gibbs, "The Role of the Dutch Republic as the Intellectual Entrepôt of Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 86.3 (1971): 323–49.

²⁰ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*, 42.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

²² *Ibid.*, 43.

²³ Huibert Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid in Amsterdam, 1540–1860: een relaas over demografie, economie en sociale politiek van een wereldstad* (Amsterdam, 1985), 50–51.

2.2.2 Occupational structure

During the Dutch 'Golden Age,' Amsterdam was *the* hub for global trade flows. Roughly everyone profited from this, including workers, as indicated by their relatively high real wages.²⁴ However, Amsterdam's economy deteriorated in the second half of the eighteenth century.²⁵ England and France surpassed Holland in terms of military power and international commerce. Amsterdam, which relied heavily on overseas trade, suddenly saw its employment opportunities dwindle.²⁶ The French Period (1795–1813) further depreciated Amsterdam's economy.

The economy continued to struggle until roughly 1860. Guilds had excluded Jews but had also constrained Gentiles' ability to learn skilled trades. Thus, a majority of Amsterdam's mid-nineteenth-century population were unskilled or semi-skilled workers.²⁷ The new Kingdom of the Netherlands was a late industrialiser and Amsterdam was no exception.²⁸ Particularly important for industry was the trade and processing of colonial goods such as cocoa, sugar, coffee, tobacco, and diamonds. The sugar refineries were among the first to industrialise in Amsterdam. Jews hardly worked in this sector;²⁹ they more frequently manufactured cut diamonds or prepared cigars.³⁰ It were these two industries that saw periods of growth during the otherwise poor economic decades in the first half of the nineteenth century. This growth was pushed by the expansion of the supply side. The *Cultuurstelsel* ('Cultivation System') in Java—taxation in the form of export crops in the Dutch Indies—brought more Java-grown tobacco into Amsterdam,³¹ whereas the diamond industry benefited from diamond deposit discoveries in Brazil in the 1840s and especially in South Africa in the 1860s.³²

More significant changes can be seen when we examine the occupational censuses. These were conducted in 1809 and every ten years since 1849. The share of workers employed in each of Amsterdam's major industries are shown in Table 2.1. Between 1809 and 1920 the number of industrial labourers nearly quadrupled from roughly 30,200 to 118,800 workers. The largest nineteenth-century sector, the clothing and cleaning industries, were on the decline for most of the century. Large subsections, like the cobblers, struggled to compete with cheaper shoes produced in Brabant and Germany.³³ The leather processing industry struggled for the same reasons. As a whole, clothing production saw growth again from the end of the nineteenth century when ready-to-wear clothing became more widely produced and consumed.³⁴ This is a clothing subsector Jews entered in larger numbers.³⁵ Metal processing was on the rise throughout

²⁴ Robert Allen, "The Great Divergence in European Wages and Prices from the Middle Ages to the First World War," *Explorations in Economic History* 38 (2001): 411–47.

²⁵ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*, 102–3.

²⁶ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), 1079–87.

²⁷ Marco van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity* (London, 2000), 15.

²⁸ Van Zanden, *De industrialisatie in Amsterdam*.

²⁹ They were, however, frequently the owners of such sugar refineries. Herbert Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Williamsport, 1937), 36–40.

³⁰ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews*, 40–44, 61–64.

³¹ Ulbe Bosma, "The Cultivation System (1830–1870) and Its Private Entrepreneurs on Colonial Java," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 38.2 (2007): 275–91.

³² Karin Hofmeester, "Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing: From India to Europe and Back, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth," *Journal of Global History* 8.1 (2013): 42–44.

³³ Knotter, *Economische transformatie*, 215.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁵ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 48–49.

the entire century. This sector primarily included the factories that produced machinery for other factories as well as the shipbuilding industry. Its growth was an important factor in, and result of, Amsterdam's growing industrialisation.³⁶

TABLE 2.1 The share of employment in Amsterdam per industrial sector, 1806-1920.

Industry	Year of census						
	1806	1849	1859	1889	1899	1909	1920
Clothing and cleaning	31.9	27.8	23.8	17.7	19.2	20.3	21.3
Metal processing	6.6	9.5	12.1	12.2	14.2	15.1	19.2
Construction industry	19.4	20.1	20.3	22.0	19.3	17.7	16.1
Food and luxury production	12.4	14.4	14.5	14.1	16.8	16.8	14.3
Diamond industry ^a	1.9	3.2	4.1	16.5	12.8	10.5	9.0
Wood, cork, and straw processing	6.1	7.1	7.7	5.4	4.8	5.0	4.4
Graphic industry	3.2	3.4	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.8	4.4
Chemical industry	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.6	1.6	1.9	3.0
Lighting; gas and electricity ^b	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.0	1.2	2.5	3.1
Leather processing	6.7	7.3	6.5	4.6	4.0	3.2	2.5
Paper processing	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.2	1.6	2.0
Textile industry	2.8	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5
Shipbuilding ^c	6.2	4.1	4.7				
Total (in %)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N (in thousands)	30.2	30.7	38.4	63.0	80.0	97.2	118.8
<i>Industry as percentage of total working population</i>							
1. Excluding domestic services and labourers	53.3	53.7	57.1				
2. Including domestic services and labourers		42.8	46.9	41.0	45.4	42.8	39.8

Source: Van Zanden, *De industrialisatie van Amsterdam 1825-1914*, (1987): 80.

Note: ^aIncluding pottery, glass, and lime processing (less than 1 percent); ^bUp to and including 1859: lighting, oil, fat, and soap production; from 1889 onwards utility companies; ^c Included in metal processing since 1889.

The diamond industry was clearly unique in its growth pattern. It grew from employing less than 2 percent of all industrial workers in 1806 to employing one in six in 1889. At this point it was the third-largest industrial sector in Amsterdam, following clothing and cleaning and the construction industry. From then onwards the relative share of the diamond industry declined as the number of workers in this industry remained fixed at roughly 10,000 despite continuous population growth. Nonetheless, it remained the fifth-largest industrial sector until 1920. After 1920 the industry declined rapidly due to the competition from Antwerp's diamond centre.

Another, more micro approach to understanding shifts in the occupational structure is to use nominal historical research. In his 1991 dissertation, Ad Knotter utilised conscription records of 19 and 20-year-old men to estimate the changing occupational

³⁶ Van Zanden, *De industrialisatie in Amsterdam*, 96–97.

structure of Amsterdam men between 1830 and 1900.³⁷ The Amsterdam marriage certificates enable a similar approach. Using marriage certificates from 1830 up to 1932, we can use grooms' occupations at the time of their marriage as an indicator of which industries were growing or on the decline. Rather than look at 19-year-olds, we will look at 18-to-39-year olds, men in relatively early stages of their careers marrying for the first time. Additional data allows me to also state accurately within marriage certificates which grooms and brides were Jewish and who were Gentiles.³⁸ Occupational differences between Jews and non-Jews will be discussed in more detail further in this chapter. In this next subsection we will observe how the occupational structure changed for all Amsterdam men.

Changing social classes

As we saw, early-nineteenth-century Amsterdam was mostly comprised of unskilled and low-skilled workers. We see this reflected in Figure 2.1, which shows the percentage of grooms across five social classes. Until mid-century, half of all grooms worked as unskilled (Panel E) or semi-skilled workers (D). The improvement in the economic conditions in Amsterdam are reflected in the changes in all social classes since roughly 1860. Unskilled workers are on the decline, dropping from 30 percent of all grooms in the period 1860-1864 to 16 percent in 1925-1929. These men were increasingly getting absorbed in skilled work (C) and as lower professionals and managers (B) in the expanding office sector. Similarly, at the tail end of the period, men who would in the past have become skilled workers were now also increasingly moving into work as lower professionals in commerce, in service, or in the growing government apparatus. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Amsterdam was increasingly becoming a city of services.

The occupational upgrading of Amsterdam's young men can also be seen when looking at the plotted average occupational scores of all Amsterdam grooms (panel F). From 1830 until 1860 a clear downward trend is shown. This coincides with the worsening economic conditions in Amsterdam. From 1860 onwards, the average occupational score is increasing continuously with two exceptions; the economic crisis in 1889-1890 and the start of World War I in 1914. While 1860 is seen as the point at which Amsterdam's economy recovered from a century-long decline, the period of growth in the occupational scores coincides with the expansion of most industries, in particular the expansion of the diamond industry.

Main changing occupational groups

At a large scale, we have now seen opportunities in Amsterdam's industries were improving. The diamond industry and ready-to-wear clothing branches changed the opportunity structure for both native Amsterdammers and immigrants. But which occupations were changing the most?

³⁷ Knotter, *Economische transformatie*.

³⁸ Discussed in Appendix A.

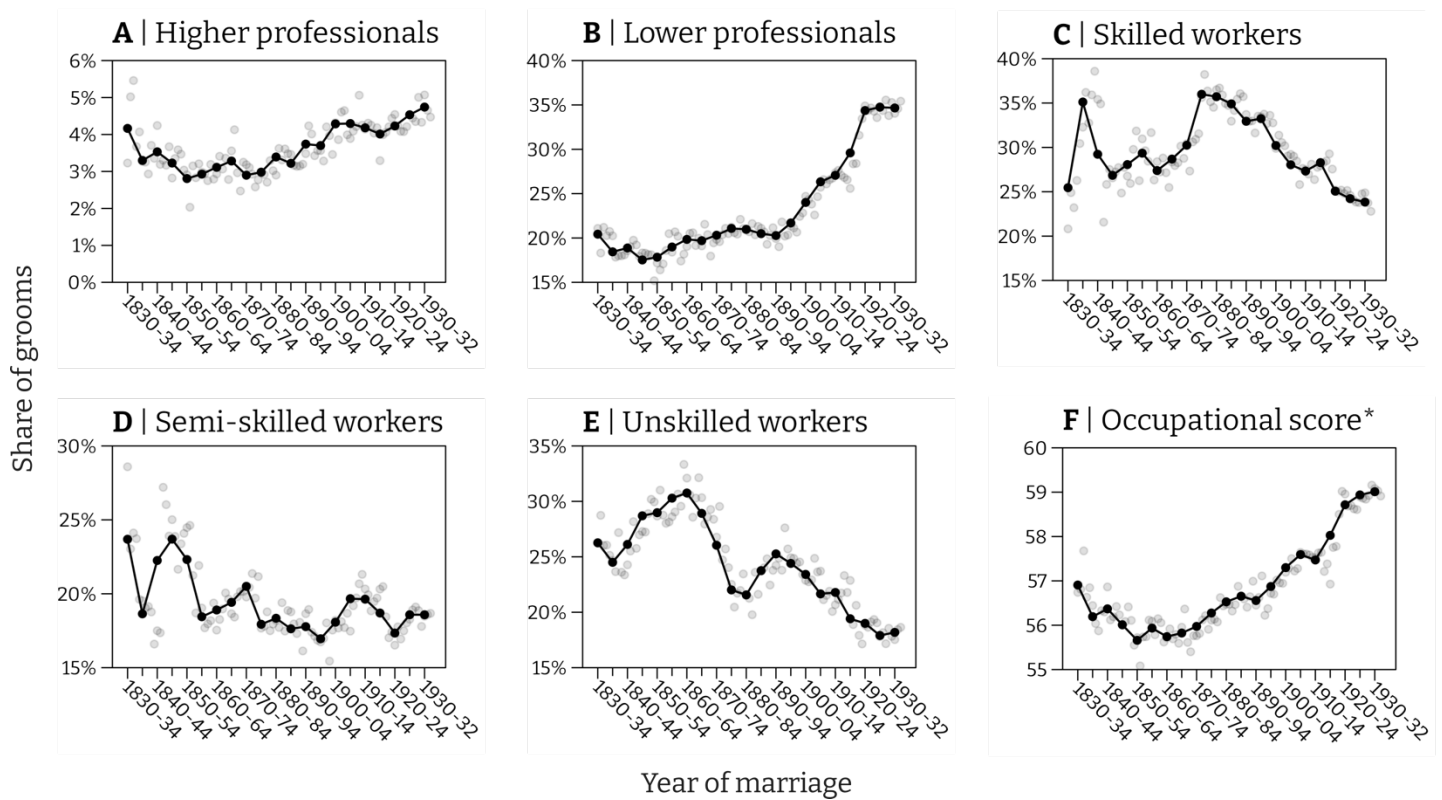


FIGURE 2.1 The share of grooms per social class and average HISCAM-score, Amsterdam 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release; <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ONOSRY>.

Note: the sample is limited to men marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; * y-axis is average occupational score (HISCAM); dark points and thick line represent five-year average (e.g. 1830-1834), grey points yearly values.

Using the marriage certificates, we can observe trends in the share of grooms reporting work in each occupational group. 20 HISCO minor groups, the first two digits of the HISCO code (see Section 1.4.4), counted at least 2 percent of all Amsterdam grooms in a given 5-year period. The trends between 1850 and 1932 are reported for each of these 20 occupational groups in Appendix B. Some occupational groups employed roughly the same share of Amsterdam's men over time, while others were either on the decline or on the rise. The two most notable increases are shown in Figure 2.2 below. The diamond industry (Panel B), which had only been the listed occupation for 3 percent of men before 1870, rose to employing 9 percent of men in the 1880s and 1890s. At that point the industry had reached its full capacity. Subsequently, the share of men working in this industry at the time of their marriage dropped rapidly, falling to 1 percent in the early 1930s. The other large growth is seen in the group of office workers. This was a relatively small group in 1850, being the profession for 2 percent of Amsterdam men, but was the occupation for one in eight men during the 1920s.

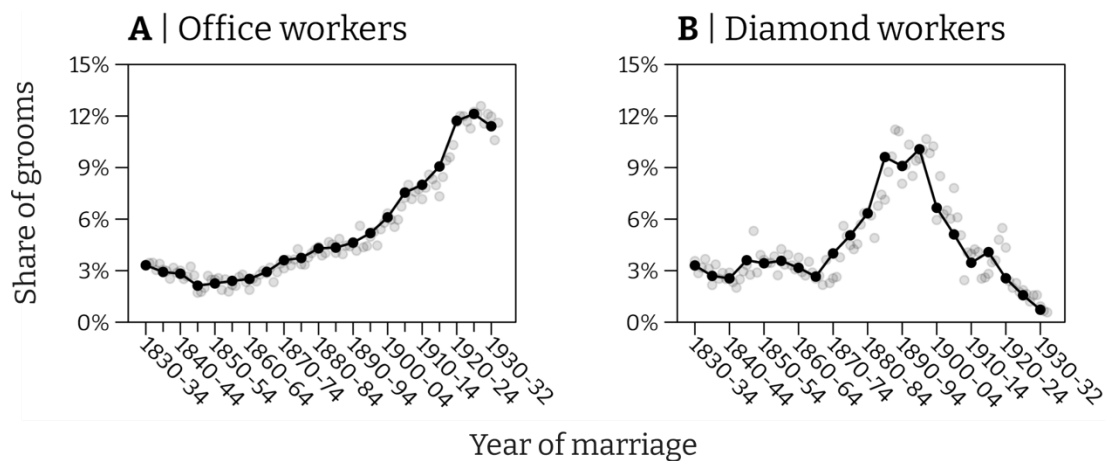


FIGURE 2.2 The share of grooms occupied in two rapidly changing occupations, Amsterdam 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release.

Note: the sample is limited to men marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; dark points and thick line represent five-year average (e.g. 1830-1834), grey points yearly values.

Overall, we see a widening of opportunities in Amsterdam. A variety of industrial occupations became more common in the nineteenth century, with the diamond industry at the forefront. Then, in the twentieth century, industrial and unskilled work was rapidly on the decline in favour of office and service work. To understand to what extent Jews were able to profit from these changes, we will now return to the eighteenth century to discuss how Amsterdam Jews' lives and occupational structure changed over time.

2.3 Jewish Emancipation and Legacies of Discrimination

The first Sephardic Jews to permanently settle in Amsterdam arrived at the start of the 'Golden Age' around 1600. The Ashkenazim arrived in the mid-seventeenth century and in larger numbers, especially in the first half of the eighteenth century.³⁹ The two groups were about the same size right before the turn of the eighteenth century but the Ashkenazim outnumbered the Sephardim nearly five times by 1750.⁴⁰ Both communities were struck hard by the economic decline at the end of the eighteenth century. Particularly the Ashkenazim, arriving more recently and with less wealth and trading connections, suffered economically. Guild exclusion forced them to take up one of few available occupations, especially petty trade.⁴¹ During this time, Jews were denied full citizenship in the Dutch Republic, including Amsterdam, and primarily seen as urban members of a 'Jewish Nation.'

This changed in 1795 during the Batavian Republic when the pro-*Patriotten* association *Felix Libertate* was founded with the goal to emancipate the Jews.⁴² Members were primarily

³⁹ Israel, "De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden tot omstreeks 1750," 102-7, 115.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 115.

⁴¹ Lucassen, "Joodse Nederlanders 1796-1940," 38.

⁴² Irene Zwiép, "De naties worden burgers. Joods leven in de Lage Landen in de schaduw van de Verlichting (1750-1814)," in *Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, ed. Johan Blom et al. (Amsterdam, 2017), 204.

of Ashkenazi origin, although one-third of members were non-Jews. The leaders of this organisation had struggled to win over the traditional Jewish leaders. The rabbis wanted to keep things as they had been before. Nonetheless, Felix Libertate succeeded in getting a vote for Jewish emancipation in 1796. The *Decreet over den Gelykstaat der Joden met alle andere Burgers* ('Decree for the Emancipation of Jews with all other Citizens') was accepted in the 'First National Meeting'⁴³ later that year. No longer was there a formal basis to exclude Jews from public office, voting rights, or limit their settlement across the country. Soon after, Hermannus Leonard Bromet (1724-1812) and Hartog de Hartog Lémon (1755-1823), co-founders of Felix Libertate, became the first Jewish parliamentarians. While the decree was accepted unanimously, numerous speakers questioned the double loyalty of Jews.⁴⁴ Other points of complaint raised were the economic competition that would be offered by Jews if they were to enter mainstream occupations. Nonetheless, on paper the emancipation provided Jews, as well as Catholics and other religious minority groups, with equal rights. After the decree had been accepted, members of the Felix Libertate asked for the statutes of the Jewish community to be revised. The *parnassiem*, leaders of the Jewish community, refused. The disagreement led to a temporary split of the Ashkenazi community into the traditional *Alte Kille* ('old community') and the progressive *Neie Kille* ('new community') in 1808.⁴⁵ The divide is symbolic for the divide in the community; not all Jews were in favour of emancipation.

Until then, Dutch-Jewish communities had always been independently governed; hence the 'Jewish Nations.' This had allowed them to act autonomously with regards to social care and legal and religious matters related to the 'citizens of the Jewish Nation.' Lodewijk Napoleon, the new ruler of the Kingdom of Holland, aimed to end this dichotomy. In 1808 this led to the *Oppeerconsistorie* ('Supreme Consistory'), a new Jewish governing body following the lead of the French *Consistoire Central* formed earlier that year. This *Oppeerconsistorie* had to govern the country's Jews; the new governors were predominantly enlightened and progressive Jews, led by Jonas Daniël Meijer (1780-1834). Napoleon merged the two Ashkenazi communities and gave preferential positions and treatment to the leaders of the *Neie Kille*. This was aimed at getting rid of the poverty connected to the Dutch Jews, as well as to aid their integration into new Dutch society. In 1810, when the Kingdom of Holland was merged with France, the *Oppeerconsistorie* was replaced with the *Consistoire Central*.

Willem Frederik of Orange, the next ruler of Holland since 1813, needed to deal with the divide created in the Jewish community and find a replacement for the *Oppeerconsistorie* and *Consistoire Central*. Traditional Jewish leaders wanted to return to pre-Emancipation conditions; enlightened leaders wanted to continue building on their newly acquired rights. Willem Frederik supported the latter group and established the new *Israëlitisch kerkgenootschap* ('Israelite Church Community') with the same governing structure as the Protestant churches. The 'Israelite church,' like the other churches, fell under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The government was therefore able to push for and implement enlightened policies regarding religion directly. Both the *Alte* and *Neie Kille* as well as the Sephardic community were now merged into one.⁴⁶ This new community was moderately Orthodox but its' leaders had as goal to fully incorporate

⁴³ This was a temporary parliament in 1796 until 1797.

⁴⁴ Zwiep, "De naties worden burgers," 203.

⁴⁵ Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld and Bart Wallet, *Canon van 700 jaar Joods Nederland* (Zutphen, 2023), 109.

⁴⁶ Wallet, "Godsdienstzin, beschaving en arbeidzaamheid," 228–31.

Jews into Dutch society. They aimed for Jews to build a new identity where Jews were Jewish *and* Dutch, as well as patriotic. While this new structure came under pressure through a new constitution in 1848, which separated church and state, a new structure was not introduced until 1870.

2.4 Jewish Population Dynamics in Amsterdam From the 18th Century Onwards

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the population of Jews in Amsterdam had grown considerably. Since the mid-eighteenth century, the Amsterdam-Jewish community was the largest relative representation of Jews in a Western European city. Roughly half of all Dutch Jews lived in Amsterdam. From the moment of Jewish emancipation in 1796 until 1941, the Amsterdam population quadrupled from roughly 200,000 to nearly 800,000 inhabitants. Jews continuously comprised between 8 and 12 percent of that population (Table 2.2).

The first development to note is a decline in the percentage of Jews in Amsterdam in the first half of the nineteenth century. Since the emancipation abolished limitations on Jewish settlement across the country, Jews could now legally settle anywhere they pleased. Economic hardships in Amsterdam motivated nearly 20 percent of the Amsterdam-Jewish population to emigrate to other places in *de Mediene* ('the countryside' in Dutch Yiddish)⁴⁷ between 1796 and 1859. There they often acted as commercial middlemen, supplying goods produced in urban centres to rural localities and selling products from the countryside in the cities. This would also help Jews build newer economic niches later on.⁴⁸ These rural Jewish communities required Jewish butchers and bakers for 'traditional food' according to Jewish dietary laws, as well as Jewish educators. During the same period, Amsterdam Jews also moved to Britain, the United States, and the Dutch colonies.⁴⁹ Here they generally continued their industrial work as cigar makers or diamond cutters. However, economic progress in Amsterdam as well as expanding train networks, which increased connectivity between urban and rural centres, eliminated the viability of such middlemen positions.⁵⁰ In the second half of the nineteenth century, most Jews who had left for the countryside or England, or their offspring, returned to Amsterdam. The growth of the diamond industry may have been another pull factor, but only after 1870. By 1920, the Amsterdam-Jewish community was larger in relative terms than it had been a century earlier.

⁴⁷ In this *Mediene* was used more generally to mean the hinterland of a place, such as 'Zwolle and its mediene.' See Ibid., 225.

⁴⁸ Henriëtte Boas, "Joden en de Nederlandse textielindustrie," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 25.1 (1991): 83–90.

⁴⁹ Wallet, "Godsdienstzin, beschaving en arbeidzaamheid," 226; Robert Swierenga, *The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora* (Detroit, 1994), 41–42.

⁵⁰ Kruijt, "Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving," 203–4.

TABLE 2.2 The total and Jewish populations of Amsterdam, 1795-1941

Year	Amsterdam population	Jews in Amsterdam	Jews as % of Amsterdam population	Ashkenazi Jews as % of Amsterdam Jews	Jews in the Netherlands	Amsterdam Jews as % of Dutch Jews
1795	221,000	25,000	11.31		<i>40,000</i>	<i>62.50</i>
1809	201,714	21,441	10.63			54.15
1840	223,114	23,176	10.39		52,245	44.36
1849	224,035	25,156	11.23	89.1	58,626	43.08
1859	243,304	26,725	10.98	89.9	63,790	41.89
1869	264,694	29,952	11.32	89.3	68,003	44.04
1879	317,011	40,318	12.72	91.8	81,693	49.36
1889	408,061	54,479	13.35	91.7	97,324	55.97
1899	510,853	59,065	11.56	91.7	103,988	56.41
1909	566,131	60,970	10.77	92.1	106,409	57.30
1920	647,427	67,249	10.39	92.8	115,223	58.36
1930	757,386	65,523	8.65	93.1	111,917	58.55
1941	800,541	79,497	9.93		<i>140,000</i>	<i>56.78</i>

Source: Volkstellingen 1795-1930; Gemeentelijst 1941; Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden* (1936): 17; Michman, Beem, and Michman, *Pinkas* (1985): 284.

Note: numbers in *italics* are estimates.

The increasing share of Ashkenazim amid the Amsterdam Jews between 1849 and 1889 suggests that these migration flows to and from the *Mediene* were dominated by Ashkenazi Jews. The Ashkenazim also more generally settled outside of Amsterdam. While the Sephardim comprised 5 percent of Dutch Jews nationally, their share of Amsterdam Jews in the mid-nineteenth century exceeded 10 percent. As most Ashkenazi Jews returned to Amsterdam from their temporary rural residences across the country, their percentage rose again to 93 percent by 1930. Since the end of the nineteenth century, marriages between Sephardim and Ashkenazim saw the Sephardim's share drop even further.⁵¹

2.4.1 *Pioneers in demographic changes*

In historical research, Jews have been described as pioneers of several demographic patterns.⁵² Before the first demographic transition—a period of rapid mortality and fertility decline⁵³—Jews married at relatively early ages and had larger families than

⁵¹ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 21, 65–66.

⁵² Livi-Bacci Massimo, "Social-Group Forerunners of Fertility Control in Europe," in *The Decline of Fertility in Europe*, ed. Susan Cotts Watkins (Princeton, 1986), 182–200.

⁵³ For a discussion of fertility decline during the first demographic transition in the Netherlands, see Hilde Bras, "Structural and Diffusion Effects in the Dutch Fertility Transition, 1870-1940," *Demographic Research* 30 (2014): 151–186.

Gentiles.⁵⁴ Their marriages showcased stronger connections with family⁵⁵ and Jewish mothers were known to breastfeed more frequently and for longer periods,⁵⁶ a phenomenon that has been used to explain lower Jewish infant mortality despite higher levels of population density and residential deprivation in Jewish neighbourhoods.⁵⁷ Although conclusions regarding Dutch Jews' pioneering status in the first demographic transition are mixed, it is clear that Jews underwent some of the most intense changes over time. After the transition, which occurred sometime during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Jews were more likely to remain unmarried, married at older ages when they did—compared with both earlier generations of Jews and the average Gentile—had smaller families, and showed greater increases in birth spacing and earlier birth stopping.⁵⁸ These trends were especially pronounced for more integrated Jews.⁵⁹

High life expectancy and low levels of childbirth caused the Jewish population, which was older due to their migration patterns in earlier centuries, to become even older on average.⁶⁰ The Jewish population was also skewed towards a greater number of women. Since intermarriage rates indicate that Jewish women were less likely to out-marry than Jewish men, Jewish women instead remained unmarried more frequently.⁶¹ These women were therefore in greater need for work to sustain themselves and their aging parents. How this affected their career chances and (co-)residential trajectories will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.4.2 German and Eastern European Jews

International Jewish migrants and refugees more clearly preferred urban centres. While the autochthonous Jewish community in Amsterdam could have made it an attractive location for Jewish newcomers, other large European cities offered more appealing opportunities. Thus, few Eastern European Jews settled in Amsterdam after the 1881 pogroms in the Pale of Settlement.⁶² While many Jews passed through the Netherlands, most of them were on route to the United States, Great Britain, or Latin America. These

⁵⁴ Jona Schellekens and Frans van Poppel, "Religious Differentials in Marital Fertility in The Hague (Netherlands) 1860–1909," *Population Studies* 60.1 (2006): 23–38.

⁵⁵ Frans van Poppel and Marloes Schoonheim, "Measuring Cultural Differences between Religions Using Network Data. An Example Based on Nineteenth-Century Dutch Marriage Certificates," *Annales de Démographie Historique* 109.1 (2005): 173–97.

⁵⁶ Abraham Israëls, "De sterfte der kinderen in de drie eerste jaren des levens te Amsterdam, in de jaren 1850–1859," *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* 6 (1862): 289–99; Herman Pinkhof, "Onderzoek naar de kindersterfte onder de geneeskundig bedeeiden te Amsterdam," *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* 51 (1907): 1174–83.

⁵⁷ Peter Ekamper and Frans van Poppel, "Infant Mortality in Mid - 19th Century Amsterdam: Religion, Social Class, and Space," *Population, Space and Place* 25.4 (2019): 1–21; Tim Riswick, Sanne Muurling, and Katalin Buzasi, "Exploring the Mortality Advantage of Jewish Neighbourhoods in Mid-19th Century Amsterdam," *Demographic Research* 46 (2022): 723–36.

⁵⁸ Jan Van Bavel and Jan Kok, "Birth Spacing in the Netherlands. The Effects of Family Composition, Occupation and Religion on Birth Intervals, 1820–1885," *European Journal of Population* 20 (2004): 119–40.

⁵⁹ Peter Tammes and Frans van Poppel, "The Impact of Assimilation on the Family Structure of Jews in Amsterdam, 1880–1940," *Journal of Family History* 37.4 (2012): 395–416.

⁶⁰ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 43–44.

⁶¹ Jan Kok has argued that Jews were not more but less prone to celibacy. However, this of course depends on the local marriage market. See Kok, "Church Affiliation and Life Course Transitions," 71–72.

⁶² Karin Hofmeester, "De immigratie van Oost-Europese joden in Amsterdam: omvang, aard en vestiging," in *Oostjoodse Passanten en Blijvers. Aankomst, opvang, transmigratie en vestiging van Joden uit Rusland in Amsterdam en Rotterdam, 1882–1914*, ed. Peter Tammes (Amsterdam, 2013), 51–72.

Jews predominantly travelled through Amsterdam and Rotterdam.⁶³ Dutch Jews established charitable organisations to help pay for their ongoing passages. Although small communities of Eastern European Jews formed in Amsterdam, they remained largely removed from the Amsterdam Jews. Eastern European Jewish newcomers were less acculturated, more Orthodox, and struggled to communicate due to the language barrier.⁶⁴ Between 1880 and 1914, an estimated 1200 Eastern European Jews settled in Amsterdam,⁶⁵ whereas the native Jewish community exceeded 60,000.

The end of this period marked the start of new Jewish international inflows. Belgian refugees, including many Jews, fled to the Netherlands during the First World War. Their temporary settlements were predominantly located in Scheveningen on the west coast of the Netherlands.⁶⁶ Among the refugees were a large number of diamond workers who started their own diamond industry in the coastal city. In the 1930s more German Jews arrived. Overall, however, the Amsterdam Jews were largely unaffected by these new migrant groups. Although their arrival raised new questions regarding their identification as Jews, interactions between native and refugee Jews were limited.

Other than refugees, Jews also arrived in Amsterdam seeking economic opportunities. Like German Jews, albeit in much smaller numbers than in earlier centuries, throughout the nineteenth century. The wealthier newcomers among them contributed considerably to the modernisation of the Amsterdam economy. Later in this chapter we will see how several German Jews became important employers of Amsterdam Jews in department stores and fashion houses.

2.5 Continuity and Change in the Jewish Occupational Structure

In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Amsterdam Jews' occupational structure was constrained by guild exclusion and lack of social ties in most industrial sectors. Jews therefore worked predominantly as merchants and traders or as peddlers.⁶⁷ Industrial work was limited to segments without guild interference, notably the processing of goods imported from colonial trade. Most importantly, these included the diamond and tobacco industries. Few Jews worked in the manufacturing process of sugar or cotton,⁶⁸ the latter being only a minor industry in Amsterdam. In the graphic industry, which was fuelled by the religious diversity of Amsterdam, Jews also excelled internationally. Nonetheless, these industries offered only limited employment to Jews. Far more often Jewish men and women worked as porters or carters, generally at the docks.⁶⁹ This occupational profile continued for at least another half century—except for several periods of booms and crises in the manufacturing of tobacco and diamonds which

⁶³ Peter Tammes, "Aankomst en opvang van Oostjoden in Amsterdam en Rotterdam," in *Oostjoodse Passanten en Blijvers. Aankomst, opvang, transmigratie en vestiging van Joden uit Rusland in Amsterdam en Rotterdam, 1882–1914*, ed. Peter Tammes (Amsterdam, 2013), 15–50.

⁶⁴ Eastern European Jews primarily spoke Yiddish, while Amsterdam Jews had largely replaced Yiddish with Dutch in the first half of the nineteenth century.

⁶⁵ Hofmeester, "De immigratie van Oost-Europese joden in Amsterdam," 55–57.

⁶⁶ For a discussion on Jewish life and Belgian diamond workers in Scheveningen, see Wim Willems and Hanneke Verbeek, *Hier woonden wij: hoe een stad zijn joodse verleden herontdekt* (Amsterdam, 2015).

⁶⁷ Lionel Kochan, *The Making of Western Jewry, 1600–1819* (Basingstoke, 2004), 149.

⁶⁸ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews*, 33–36, 36–40.

⁶⁹ These numbers should be considered carefully, since half of all relief-drawing Jews reported in this source were considered 'elderly,' 'ill,' or 'infirm.' It is unclear how many of the employed Jews belonged to these categories. See Van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity*, 107–12.

caused fluctuations in their labour forces—despite the emancipation of Jews and the abolition of guilds.⁷⁰

During the first half of the nineteenth century, repeated calls came for enabling artisanal work for Jews.⁷¹ In 1825, the *Nederlands Israëlitisch Armbestuur* ('Dutch Israelite Poor Relief Board') was introduced to curb the power of the *parnassijns* and to further the economic conditions of the Jews.⁷² Jews in dire poverty were sent to the 'Colonies of Charity,' rural areas where Jews could learn agriculture or a 'useful' occupation, or to Suriname.⁷³ In 1849 the *Maatschappij tot Nut der Israëlieten in Nederland* ('Society for the Public Welfare of Jews') was established in Amsterdam, based on a similar society founded in 1784 but which had excluded Jews from becoming members. The Jewish *Maatschappij tot Nut* had as goal to improve schooling, 'civilisation,' and social mobility of Jews.⁷⁴ They helped Jewish children to be placed with Gentile craftsmen. The Amsterdam section was, however, less successful than the one in The Hague. Jews who learned trades that had not been considered Jewish before were used as a symbol that Jewish economic and social integration was possible. However, their number remained numerically insignificant.

2.5.1 Occupations, social classes, and occupational scores of Jewish grooms since 1820

To get a better grasp of the exact changes that occurred and their timing, we now turn to longitudinal occupational changes of Jews and Gentiles. These changes over time can be observed through the marriage certificates. We have already seen how they can show the changing occupational structure and social classes of Amsterdam. Now we will split grooms into Jews and Gentiles based on their and their parents' given names and surnames.⁷⁵ This will enable us to study the changing occupational scores, classes, and specific occupational titles by ethno-religious group.

Jewish occupational changes

The occupational upgrading of Amsterdam Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was a story consisting of multiple parts. First, it required replacing unskilled work with higher-status manual labour. This occurred in the decades around the mid-nineteenth century when Jews increasingly found work as tobacco or diamond workers. The *Bahía hausse* (1845–1855) and *Cape Time* (1870–1876) periods first allowed hundreds and then thousands of Jews to enter the high-paying occupation of diamond worker. However, the share of grooms working in the diamond industry declined since 1900. This was the direct result of a temporary ban on apprenticeships implemented by the ANDB. The other significant industrial activity for Jews was the tobacco industry. This industry

⁷⁰ Sonnenberg-Stern, *Emancipation & Poverty*, 164.

⁷¹ These calls had already started in the seventeenth century. In 1642, the Sephardic organization Avodat Chesed aimed to help Ashkenazim learn a trade; Yosef Kaplan, "De joden in de Republiek tot omstreeks 1750: religieus, cultureel en sociaal leven," in *De Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*, ed. Hans Blom et al. (Amsterdam, 2017), 138–39.

⁷² Marco van Leeuwen, "Arme Amsterdamse joden en de strijd om hun integratie aan het begin van de negentiende eeuw," in *De Gelykstaat der Joden*, ed. Hetty Berg (Amsterdam, 1996), 55–66.

⁷³ Wallet, "Godsdienstzin, beschaving en arbeidzaamheid," 226, 253.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of this data, see Chapter 1.4 (Data) and Appendix A.

grew since 1830 after the import of raw tobacco increased from Java.⁷⁶ In 1850, nearly one in ten Jews worked in the tobacco industry and slightly more than one in five worked in diamonds. Since the 1870s, the tobacco industry became a good backup position for diamond workers in times of unemployment or if they could not find work in the diamond industry due to a lack of connections.⁷⁷

Figure 2.3 illustrates how the growth in the number of Jewish tobacco and diamond workers coincided with the decline in the two most important unskilled occupations Jews worked in: carters and peddlers. The tobacco and diamond industries allowed Jews, who would in an alternative timeline have worked as unskilled workers, to gain employment in a skilled occupation. Although a quarter of the Jewish poor had reported to work as carters in 1809,⁷⁸ by the 1870s virtually no young Jewish men reported working in this occupation anymore. Peddlers never disappeared completely but saw a massive reduction from the beginning of the 1820s, when one in five Jewish grooms worked as a peddler, up to 1870, when only one in thirty Jews peddled for a living. However, this is not the entire story, because the changes seen among carters and peddlers was partially a semantic one; we see much smaller declines, and even small increases, for porters and Jewish day labourers.⁷⁹

After 1900 the share of Jewish grooms that worked in the diamond industry saw a drastic decline. In the 1880s and 1890s over 40 percent of marrying Jewish men had worked in this industry. In the early 1930s only 5 percent did. This shift meant that other economic sectors were increasingly attracting Jewish men in the twentieth century. Figure 2.4 depicts four occupations that were on the rise among Jewish men at the end of the nineteenth century. Jews had always worked as merchants, but the share of Jewish merchants had declined during the growth of the diamond industry. From the 1890s onwards, Jews were increasingly listed as merchants again. More unique to the Jews was the occupation of ‘commercial traveller.’ This can be seen as an upgrading of the middlemen positions Jews had occupied since the start of the nineteenth century. These men travelled to other cities to sell products, generally for the growing number of firms in Amsterdam, but often at their own costs.⁸⁰ The related occupation ‘commercial representatives’ or ‘commissionaires’ saw a similar but less dramatic growth among Jews. They travelled to represent companies in other cities.

⁷⁶ This was the result of the Cultuurstelsel, see Bosma, “The Cultivation System.”

⁷⁷ Knotter, *Economische transformatie*, 190.

⁷⁸ Van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity*, 111.

⁷⁹ See Figure B2 in Appendix B for the overall group of Jewish unskilled workers. See Figure B1 in Appendix B for the figures for each (important) occupational title.

⁸⁰ Bob Reinalda, “Bedienden georganiseerd. Ontstaan en ontwikkeling van de vakbeweging van handels- en kantoorbedienden in Nederland van het eerste begin tot in de Tweede Wereldoorlog” (PhD diss., Groningen University, 1981), 136–39.

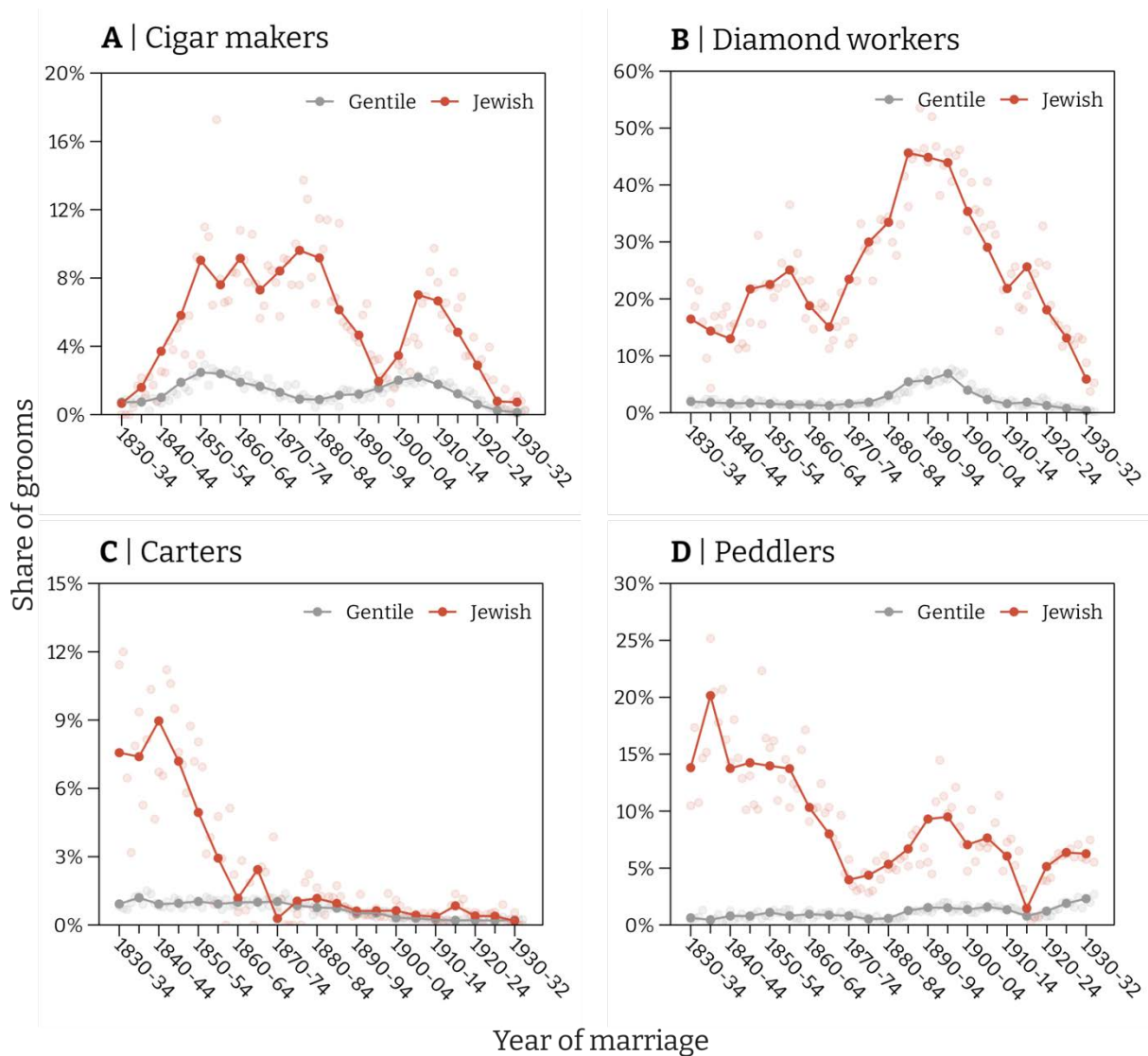


FIGURE 2.3 The share of Jewish and Gentile grooms occupied as cigar makers, diamond workers, carters, and peddlers, Amsterdam 1830-1932.
Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release and JNI approach.

Note: the sample is limited to men, identified as either Jew or Gentile, marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; dark points and thick line represent five-year average (e.g. 1830-1834), transparent points yearly values. The scale of the y-axis varies by panel.

Lower in the class distribution we find department store employees and tailors. Warehouse clerks' tasks are hard to define and range from stocking inventory and shelves to being a salesperson in a shop or department store. Initially not an occupation that Jews were overrepresented in, the result of few large Jewish employers in Amsterdam, this became an occupation that a larger percentage of Jews than Gentiles were found in the twentieth century. The rapid increase since the 1890s can be explained by the growing number of Jewish-owned stores. Several of these large stores were targeted towards clothing. Confection clothing was on the rise and Jews were able to obtain a large share of the employment in this industry. Jews were especially

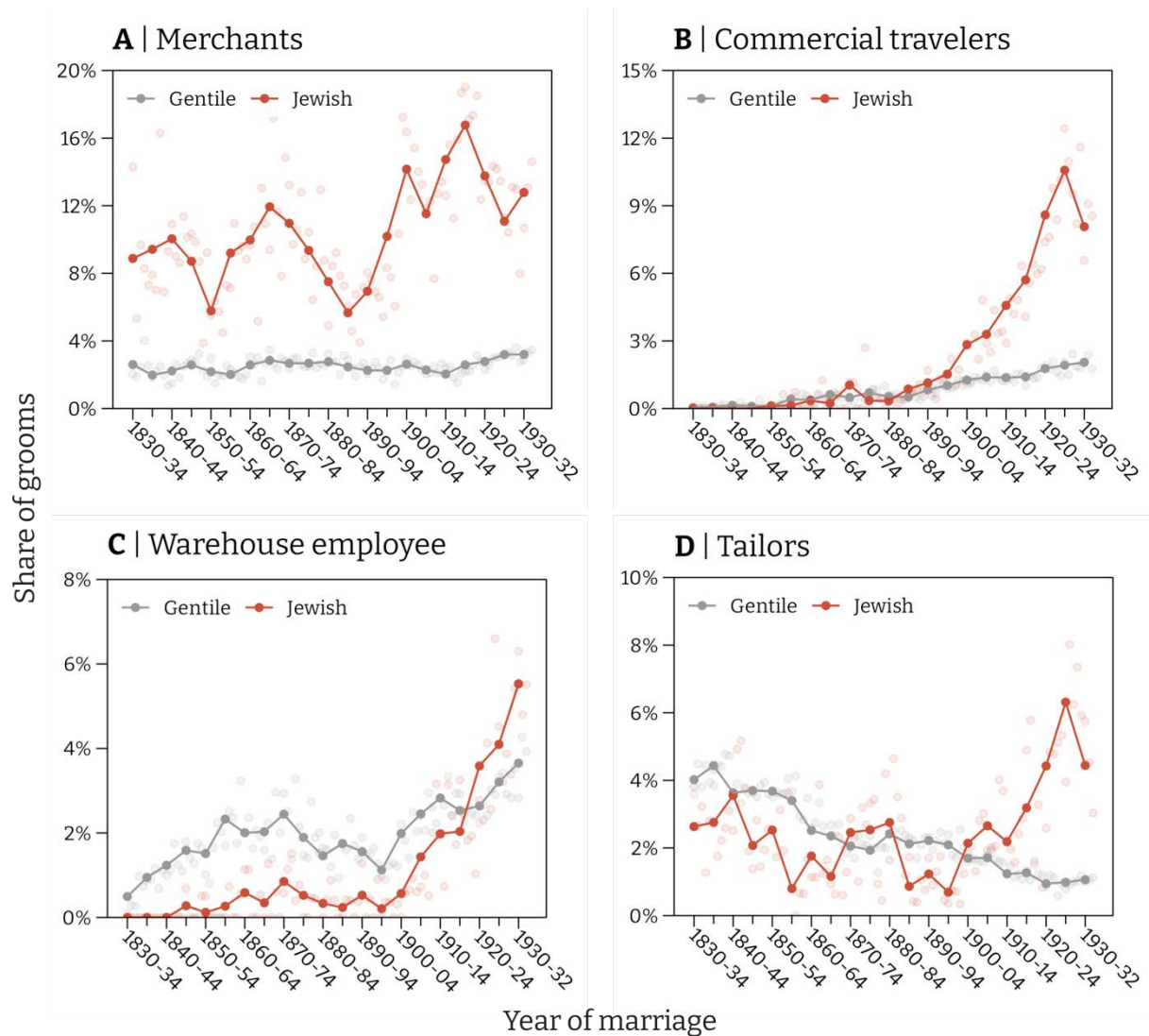


FIGURE 2.4 The share of Jewish and Gentile grooms occupied as merchants, commercial travellers, warehouse employees, and tailors, 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release and JNI approach.

Note: the sample is limited to men, identified as either Jew or Gentile, marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; dark points and thick line represent five-year average (e.g. 1830-1834), transparent points yearly values. The scale of the y-axis varies by panel.

concentrated in the production of fur clothing, underwear, hats and caps, and ready-to-wear garments for both men and women.⁸¹

Occupational upgrading in the Jewish community moved along different lines and evolved over generations. Whereas generations of men growing into adulthood in the nineteenth century increasingly entered the Jewish (semi-)skilled niches of tobacco and diamonds, subsequent generations of young men in the twentieth century increasingly found better work in commerce, such as commercial travellers and agents, while also widening their occupational distribution by entering new subsegments of occupational

⁸¹ Based on the occupational census of 1930. Within the category 'clothing and sanitation' Jews were over-represented in virtually all segments.

groups they had before been underrepresented in. This occurred in the clothing branch, among upholsterers, but also the production of wooden frames, among butchers and bakers, and in upper-class positions such as lawyers, doctors, journalists and teachers.⁸² Jews became less dependent on specific niches and became distributed more and represented better across the entire social stratification.

Changing occupational scores

The occupational scores allow us to put a numeric value on the average occupational status of Jews and Gentiles. This is helpful to summarise economic changes within a group over time in a single measure. More specific changes in social classes and in specific occupations will be discussed later. The evolution of the occupational scores for Jews (in red) and Gentiles (grey) are shown in Figure 2.5. Until 1850, the average occupational scores were roughly equal. After a brief peak in the mid-1850s we observe a sustained growth of Jews' status from 1870 onwards. Both this peak and the period of growth are the result of the expansion of the diamond industry, as we will see later on. Based on this figure, it appears that Jews, who had been an economically disadvantaged minority group throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, obtained higher average positions in society since 1860.

Others have assumed that Jews' economic conditions continued to be worse on average than those of Gentiles.⁸³ However, much of this is based on the quality of housing and misguided percentages of relief-drawing, rather than actual incomes.⁸⁴ Although the quality of housing was indeed lower among Jews until the twentieth century, this had much to do with their hesitation to leave behind the Jewish Quarter than their economic position.⁸⁵ Another potential issue may be the overrepresentation of Jews among merchants. Positions in trade are volatile both between individuals and within persons' lifetimes.⁸⁶ Therefore, one could argue that if Jews were generally on the lower end of the traders' income distribution, them being given the average score for traders would mean we are overestimating their average occupational scores.⁸⁷ A similar volatility exists in the diamond industry, since diamond workers were often unemployed due to recurrent crises. Diamond workers consistently earned the highest incomes of all skilled workers in Amsterdam when they worked, but their annual working hours varied significantly.⁸⁸ However, Jews overtaking Gentiles in terms of occupational scores is not

⁸² Jewish teachers had largely disappeared when religious poor schools were closed in favour of non-denominational public schools in 1857.

⁸³ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 217–22.

⁸⁴ Hofmeester has shown that Jews' economic relief-drawing was frequently overestimated by historians. Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 30–33.

⁸⁵ More on this discussion in Chapter 7. See also Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 141–42.

⁸⁶ The volatility of merchants' social position has been mentioned before in the case of The Hague, see Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens, "Religion and Social Mobility," 266–67; Paping and Pawlowski have suggested that the occupational titles "merchant" and "peddler" were often synonymous in Groningen, despite differences in corresponding social positions. See Richard Paping and Jacek Pawlowski, "Success or Failure in the City? Social Mobility and Rural–Urban Migration in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Groningen, the Netherlands," *Historical Life Course Studies* 6.1 (2018): 76.

⁸⁷ In The Hague, Jewish traders generally ran relatively small enterprises but were also represented in the top ranks of merchants. Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens, "Religion and Social Mobility," 257–58.

⁸⁸ Van Zanden shows that daily wages in the diamond industry were still the highest in 1816 after taking into account the prolonged periods of unemployment in the diamond industry. In 1906, daily wages in the diamond industry before incorporating unemployment was double the Amsterdam average. Van Zanden, *De industrialisatie in Amsterdam*, 90.

the result of overestimating scores in occupations where Jews were overrepresented. Lowering occupational scores for diamond workers, merchants, shopkeepers, and commercial travellers—four main occupations of Amsterdam Jews—only moves the timing of Jews’ scores exceeding Gentiles to the future; but the overtaking took place prior to 1940 regardless.⁸⁹

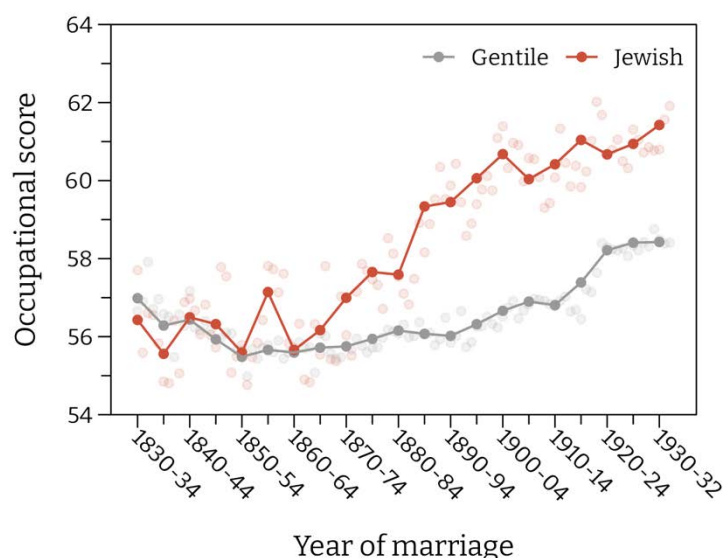


FIGURE 2.5 Occupational scores of Jews and Gentiles in Amsterdam, 1830-1932.

Source: author’s calculations using LINKS “Cleaned Civil Registry” 2022 release and JNI approach.

Note: the sample is limited to men, identified as either Jew or Gentile, marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; in total 27,967 Jewish grooms and 237,078 Gentile grooms; points and thick line represent five-year average (e.g. 1830-1834), thin lines yearly values.

Although we do not have data on individual or collective incomes, the timing presented in Figure 2.5 is supported by the work of Boudien de Vries.⁹⁰ In 1854, Jews were significantly underrepresented among the Amsterdam electorate. Voting rights depended on how much one paid in taxes; only between 6 and 7 percent of Amsterdam men ages 23 and over belonged to the electorate in the nineteenth century. In 1854, Jews comprised 8.6 percent of the electorate.⁹¹ This was 22 percent less than expected based on their population size. By 1884, their share in the electorate had risen to 17.6 percent, 31 percent more than expected based on the number of Jews in Amsterdam. The diamond industry was an important factor in this reversal. Roughly one quarter of all Jews in the 1884 electorate worked in either the manufacturing or trade of diamonds.⁹² Over half of them were Jews with no prior family connections among the electorate. Besides the diamond trade, Jews were increasingly successful in the textile and tobacco trade.

⁸⁹ These results are shown in Figures B1, B2, and B3 in Appendix B, along with a discussion of the lowered occupational scores.

⁹⁰ Boudien De Vries, *Electoraat en elite: sociale structuur en sociale mobiliteit in Amsterdam, 1850-1895* (Amsterdam, 1986).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 54, 113.

⁹² De Vries, “De joodse elite in Amsterdam,” 84.

Additionally, German-Jewish entrepreneurs were a growing group of the Jewish electorate. They stimulated further growth in the Amsterdam economy, particularly in banking and retail.

Overall, therefore, I am confident to state that the average Jewish man was able to improve their economic and social position considerably between the 1860s and 1930s.

New Jewish employers

The diversification of Amsterdam Jews' occupations were not entirely the result of greater integration. Even in the twentieth century Jews complained about hiring discrimination.⁹³ One important change was a growing number of large Jewish-owned business that could hire Jews in various occupations and at all levels of the corporate ladder. Many of these firms were started by Jews born outside of Amsterdam, oftentimes in Germany.⁹⁴ De Bijenkorf, a luxury department store that hired many Jews,⁹⁵ was opened by the Jewish businessman Simon Philip Goudsmit (1845–1889) who was born in Oud-Beijerland near Rotterdam. Fashion house Hirsch & Cie was started by two German-born Jews in 1882.⁹⁶ Maison de Bonneterie was opened by the German-Jewish Joseph Cohen (1860–1924). The graphic company Joachimstal was opened by two German-born Jewish brothers in 1867.⁹⁷ Fashion house Gerzon, another important employer of Jewish tailors and seamstresses, was started in 1889 by two Jewish brothers from Groningen. Both brothers had started their careers gaining experience in the field as commercial travellers before starting their firm. The textile company De Vries Van Buuren & Co. was another large Jewish employer and has been mentioned as a marriage market for Jewish employees.⁹⁸ It is an exception to the rule: the company was started in 1830 by an Amsterdam Jew. Another exception was the textile company Hollandia-Kattenburg. Jacob (Jacques) Kattenburg (1877–1947) was a successful Amsterdam-born Jewish tailor. In 1909 he started Hollandia-Kattenburg which specialised in producing rain clothing using 'gummi.' The Lippman, Rosenthal & Co. bank opened in 1859 and was a collaboration between an Amsterdam and a German-born Jew.

Many other, smaller firms were started by Amsterdam-born Jews. Besides being successful Jewish entrepreneurs themselves, their combined successes enabled large segments of the Jewish population to get hired in more mainstream occupations, who often struggled to find work due to observance of the Sabbath or labour market discrimination.⁹⁹

⁹³ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 242–43, 256–57, 315; For instance, Karel Polak and Elizabeth Stodel-Van de Kar commented it was difficult to find work where you could be free on the Sabbath. Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 44–45.

⁹⁴ Boas, "Joden en de Nederlandse textielindustrie."

⁹⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 46–47.

⁹⁶ Femke Knoop, *Hirsch & Cie Amsterdam (1882–1976). Haute couture op het Leidseplein* (Hilversum, 2018).

⁹⁷ Bart Wallet, Gerben Post, and Talma Joachimsthal, *Joachimsthal. Familie en firma 1823–1945* (Zwolle, 2023).

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Stodel-Van de Kar shared that De Vries van Buuren was "[a] very Jewish firm and a type of marriage market for girls at the same time, since the majority of girls who worked there married [male employees] of De Vries van Buuren." Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 44.

⁹⁹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 242–243, 256–257, 315; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 44–45.

ILLUSTRATION 2.1 Four important Jewish employers, 1870-1940.

Source: (a) De Bijenkorf ca. 1915, postcard, Stadsarchief Amsterdam 10137#353; (b) Maison de Bonneterie ca. 1912, postcard, winkelstories.-com/bonnet02.html; (c) Hirsch & Cie ca. 1882, postcard, Stadsarchief Amsterdam 10194#2706; (d) Hollandia Kattenburg, etched by Willem Wenckebach (1860-1937), year unknown, Stadsarchief Amsterdam 10097#2507.

A | De Bijenkorf



B | Maison de Bonneterie



C | Hirsch & Cie



D | Hollandia-Kattenburg



2.5.2 Summary

The gradual occupational upgrading of Jews can best be summarised in four periods. These periods, which contain approximately the same number of marriages, are shown in Figure 2.6. In the first period, between 1830 and 1869, 40 percent of Jewish grooms worked as unskilled workers (red triangle), compared with 26 percent of Gentiles. Jews were roughly equally represented among lower professionals (green circle)—those in services, office work, and in commerce—and among higher managers and professionals (blue cross). Roughly a quarter of Jews worked as skilled workers (yellow square), particularly in the diamond industry or in the processing and packaging of tobacco. In the next period from 1870 up to 1899, the Jewish share of grooms in skilled work increased to 42 percent. The increase came at the expense of unskilled, which dropped from 40 to 25 percent. This next generation of Jews replaced employment as porters, carters, and peddlers with the occupations in the diamond industry. Unskilled work continued to decrease in the Jewish community; in the first two decades of the twentieth century it fell to 15 percent. Occupational upgrading now increasingly occurred towards service work and new occupations in trade, including office work and commercial travelling. While skilled work was still the most common social class for this cohorts'

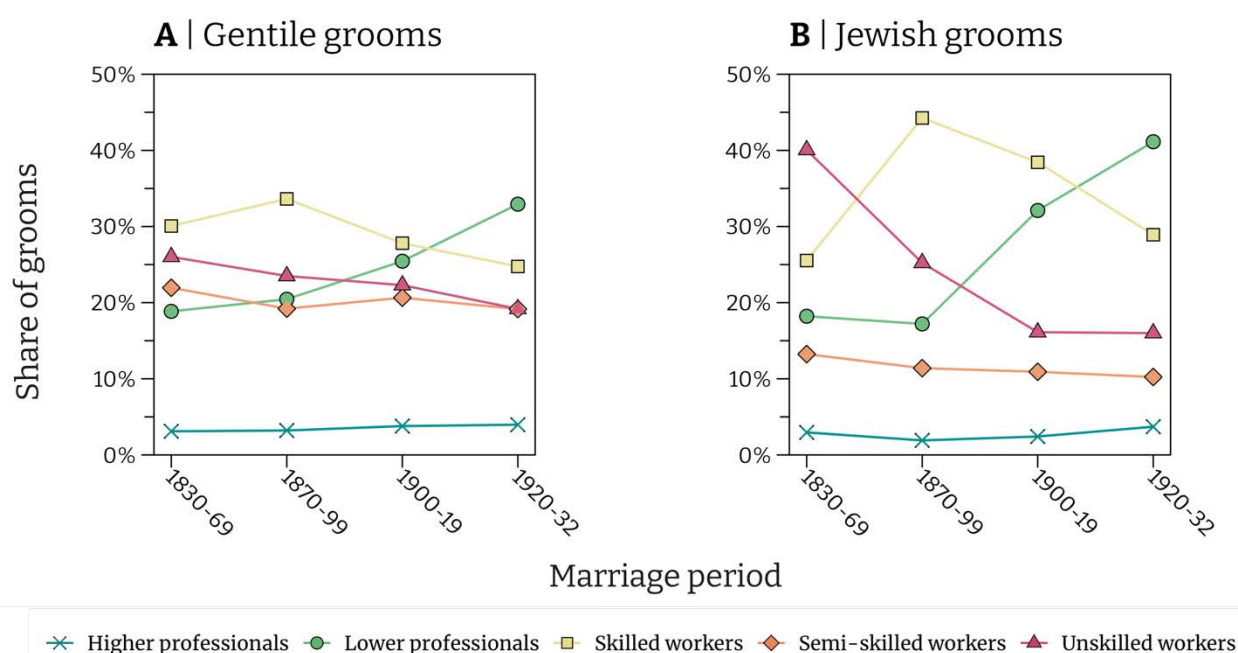


FIGURE 2.6 The share of Jewish and Gentile grooms per social class in four periods, 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release and JNI approach.

Note: the sample is limited to men, identified as either Jew or Gentile, marrying in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and listed with a valid occupation; in total 26,611 Jewish grooms and 225,928 Gentile grooms.

Jews, the gap between skilled work and lower professionals had nearly completely diminished. The final period, from 1920 until 1932, shows a further decrease in the share of Jewish skilled workers. Work in offices, in trade, and in services were now by far the most common types of employment for young Jewish men. The smaller dispersion of the shapes for Gentiles over time indicates that changes in their occupational distribution were much less drastic for non-Jews. While Gentiles only adapted to changes in the economy slowly, Jews readjusted much quicker. The occupations of Jews therefore largely reflected the changes in the Amsterdam economy more immediately. When the economy industrialised, so did the Jews. Then, when Amsterdam turned to services, the Jews followed. This second transition was based on Jews using new opportunities in schooling to continue their gradual social class upgrading. The next section will discuss what these opportunities looked like and to what extent Jews made use of them.

2.6 Educational Opportunities and Structure

In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, limited evidence suggests that Jews were more frequently illiterate than men and women in other religious denominations.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, while not all school-aged children attended primary school in early-nineteenth-century Amsterdam, the share of Jewish children attending is presumed to be lower than average.¹⁰¹ Combined, this trend suggests that Jews had worse educational attainment than Gentiles in the first half of the nineteenth century. This goes against the historical narrative that Jews had higher literacy and human capital attainment rates.¹⁰² Nonetheless, Jews were able to equalise and overtake Gentiles in terms of educational attainment by the 1930s. Non-denominational public schooling was an important development in this regard, offering non-religious and higher quality schooling than earlier options, while also stimulating Jews' social integration. Their educational successes were a precursor to, and paved the way for, Jews to continue their upward trend of intergenerational mobility going into the twentieth century.

2.6.1 Primary education

Already in the beginning of the nineteenth century, schools and schooling were important tools to help integrate Amsterdam Jews. Until mid-century, each religious denomination operated their own poor schools. Nearly all Amsterdam residents attended the public poor schools, while middle and upper-class Jews and non-Jews attended private schools or were taught privately at home.¹⁰³ Dodde estimates that Amsterdam counted 32 Jewish schools in 1811 educating over 600 Jewish pupils.¹⁰⁴ These schools were of particularly bad quality.¹⁰⁵ Schools of the Sephardim, fewer in numbers, were historically of much higher quality.¹⁰⁶

Until then, Jewish education was the responsibility of the Jewish community, leaving them complete autonomy regarding the material taught and the language of instruction. In schools intended for Ashkenazi children, the language was generally Yiddish. This changed, formally but not yet in practice, in 1814. To integrate the Jewish youth, Jewish

¹⁰⁰ The education historian Nantko Dodde estimated that in 1680, 68 percent of Jewish grooms and 70 percent of non-Jewish grooms were able to sign their name on their marriage bann. Jewish women only did so in 10 percent of cases, compared with 44 percent of Gentile brides. For 1780, Nantko Dodde estimates higher literacy rates for Jews: 84% for men and 31% for women. Nantko Dodde, *Joods onderwijs: een geschiedenis over het tijdvak 1200 tot 2000* (The Hague, 2009), 17; in samples of marriage banns between 1755 and 1810, 65.3% of Jewish grooms and 38.3% of Jewish brides placed a signature, a common measure for literacy, on the certificate. In the same period, 88.1% and 70.2% of Lutheran grooms and brides; 84.3% and 67.6% of Dutch Reformed grooms and brides placed a signature; 82.0% and 60.4% of Roman Catholic grooms and brides placed a signature. See René van Weeren and Tine de Moor, *Ja, ik wil! Verliefd, verloofd, getrouwd in Amsterdam, 1580–1810* (Amsterdam, 2019).

¹⁰¹ Bart Walleet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders: de integratie van de joden in Nederland 1814–1851* (Amsterdam, 2007), 138.

¹⁰² For historical overviews of this debate, see Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, "From Farmers to Merchants, Conversions and Diaspora: Human Capital and Jewish History," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 5.5 (2007): 885–926; Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70–1492* (Princeton, 2015); Sascha Becker, Jared Rubin, and Ludger Woessmann, "Religion in Economic History: A Survey," *The Handbook of Historical Economics*, 2021, 585–639.

¹⁰³ Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*, 141.

¹⁰⁴ Dodde, *Joods onderwijs*, 34.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰⁶ Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden, "Van segregatie tot integratie. Joods onderwijs in Nederland (1800–1940)," in *School en cultuur. Eenheid en verscheidenheid in de geschiedenis van het Belgische en Nederlandse onderwijs*, ed. Nelleke Bakker, Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden, and Jeffrey Tyssens (Assen, 2005), 56–57.

poor schools were expected to stop teaching in Yiddish and instead teach in either Dutch or Hebrew. Additionally, Jewish schools had to include societal courses on top of their predominantly religious education.

Since then, primary schools were split along three lines. The denominational poor schools, private schools for the middle and upper classes, and 'special' religious schools that offered additional religious schooling outside of regular school hours.¹⁰⁷ While a new law in 1817, aimed at aligning Jewish education with the national structure, formally enforced the Dutch or Hebrew language in Jewish poor schools, it was informally condoned until 1835.¹⁰⁸ The lack of Dutch-language schoolbooks and teachers who spoke Dutch—most Jewish teachers came from Germany and Poland and did not master the Dutch language—required attention first. Around 1835 the Jewish inspector Samuel Israël Mulder (1792-1862), one of the highest authorities on Jewish education,¹⁰⁹ travelled around the country to ensure Yiddish was no longer used.¹¹⁰ If Yiddish was spoken at a school, a threat was issued to revoke the school's subsidies. By 1850 more or less all Amsterdam-Jewish pupils spoke Dutch fluently, albeit with a 'Yiddish accent.' Only in Amsterdam was it possible to receive societal and religious education in the same schools.¹¹¹

In 1848, a new constitution was enacted in the Netherlands. It explicitly separated church and state and avoided state-interference in religious matters. Consequently, the education of the poor masses, which until now had taken place in denominational schools run by religious communities, was to be offered in public non-denominational schools. This was decided in a new 1857 law enforced in 1861. From then onwards the state, and no longer the church communities, were responsible for public primary education. Denominational schools lost their subsidies but could continue on private funding. Few Jewish poor schools in Amsterdam continued to exist. Samuel Sarphati (1813-1866) funded one of these schools until it turned into a 'special' religious school, limited to extra-curricular Jewish education, in 1870.

This 1857 law was met with resistance from several angles. Orthodox Protestants contested that public education offered by the state would not be religious enough.¹¹² They hoped that Jews would aid them in their protests. The public schools were meant to teach 'Christian virtues,' which Orthodox Protestants hoped would upset Jews. However, few Jews saw a problem with the change or the phrasing.¹¹³ Financially, supporting their own schools to continue the religious aspects was seen as a problem. In favour of the new law was the pro-integration attitude which had been imprinted top-down on Jews, as well as the considerably low standard of education at Jewish schools.¹¹⁴ If Jews were to receive the same education as Christian children, they were expected to

¹⁰⁷ Rietveld-van Wingerden, "Van segregatie tot integratie," 59.

¹⁰⁸ Wallet, "End of the Jargon-Scandal," 338-39.

¹⁰⁹ Dodde, *Joods onderwijs*, 54-55.

¹¹⁰ Wallet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders*, 139.

¹¹¹ Renate Fuks-Mansfeld, "Onderwijs en nationale identiteit van de joden in Nederland in de tijd van hun acculturatie," in *De eenheid & de delen. Zuilvorming, onderwijs en natievorming in Nederland, 1850-1900*, ed. Henk te Velde and Hans Verhage (Amsterdam, 1996), 148.

¹¹² Karin Hofmeester, "'Een teeder en belangrijk punt'. Opinions over openbaar onderwijs in joodse kring, 1857-1898," in *De eenheid & de delen. Zuilvorming, onderwijs en natievorming in Nederland, 1850-1900*, ed. Henk te Velde and Hans Verhage (Amsterdam, 1996), 157.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹¹⁴ Rietveld-van Wingerden, "Van segregatie tot integratie," 62; see also Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*, 290.

have better chances at finding work in the mainstream economy, too. Jewish schools that offered societal *and* religious education became rare; nearly all of them closed within years of the law and only three remained in the Netherlands in 1915.¹¹⁵ Many Jewish private schools in Amsterdam continued to be of low quality.¹¹⁶ The *Talmud Torah* continued to offer decent education for free but was mostly attended by Orthodox Jews.¹¹⁷ Herman Elte (1846–1925) opened the Herman Elteschool, a private primary school offering both societal and religion education, after he was rejected for a public school job for wanting free on Sabbath.¹¹⁸ It became so popular that it had to split in 1929, creating the Palacheschool, the third Jewish private school that existed prior to 1940.

In order to continue the Jewish religious education, specific religious schools were opened.¹¹⁹ These schools offered religious education, such as Hebrew and Jewish prayers, outside of regular school hours. The expansion of public schooling hours over time pushed the Jewish religious schools further to the margins. The student bodies of these schools decreased continuously.¹²⁰ A small reversal was seen since 1920, when Dutch ‘Pillarisation’ had been well on its way and ‘special’ denominational religious schools were able to get state subsidies again. Several new Jewish schools were opened then.

2.6.2 Secondary and university education

Unlike Jewish primary schools, which could and did exist through private or state funding before and after 1857, no general Jewish secondary school existed in Amsterdam until the twentieth century. Only the ‘Nederlands Israëlitisch Seminarium’ (NIS) could be counted as Jewish secondary education. In the eighteenth century, when Jews had limited occupational options and opportunities for secondary education were sparse, smart Jewish boys were trained to become rabbis. In order to receive the proper training they were sent to Germany or Poland. Most rabbis in Amsterdam were of non-Dutch origins. In order to produce native rabbis, in 1814 the NIS was founded by royal decree.¹²¹ The NIS taught both religious and societal courses. All Dutch rabbis from across the country were to be trained in Amsterdam. It succeeded in this regard: virtually all Dutch rabbis were educated in Amsterdam by the end of the nineteenth century. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the NIS added a gymnasium, a form of higher secondary schooling, which provided its students entry to university education. More generally, the NIS offered three levels of ‘religious educator’ training. The lowest of the three was the most popular.¹²²

We know less about Jewish advancements in more mainstream forms of secondary schooling. In the pre-World War II era, few pupils completed more than the mandatory years of primary schooling. Until 1863, the only form of secondary education available were the *gymnasiums*. The Secondary School Act of 1863 added the *Hogere Burgerschool* (HBS). In contrast to the gymnasiums, the HBS offered more modern curricula. Graduates of either type of school were granted access to university.

¹¹⁵ Rietveld-van Wingerden, “Van segregatie tot integratie,” 63.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁹ Nantko Dodde, “Joods onderwijs in Nederland 1815–1940,” in *Het Gelykstaat der Joden*, ed. Hetty Berg (Amsterdam, 1996), 74–75.

¹²⁰ Dodde, “Joods onderwijs in Nederland,” 76–77.

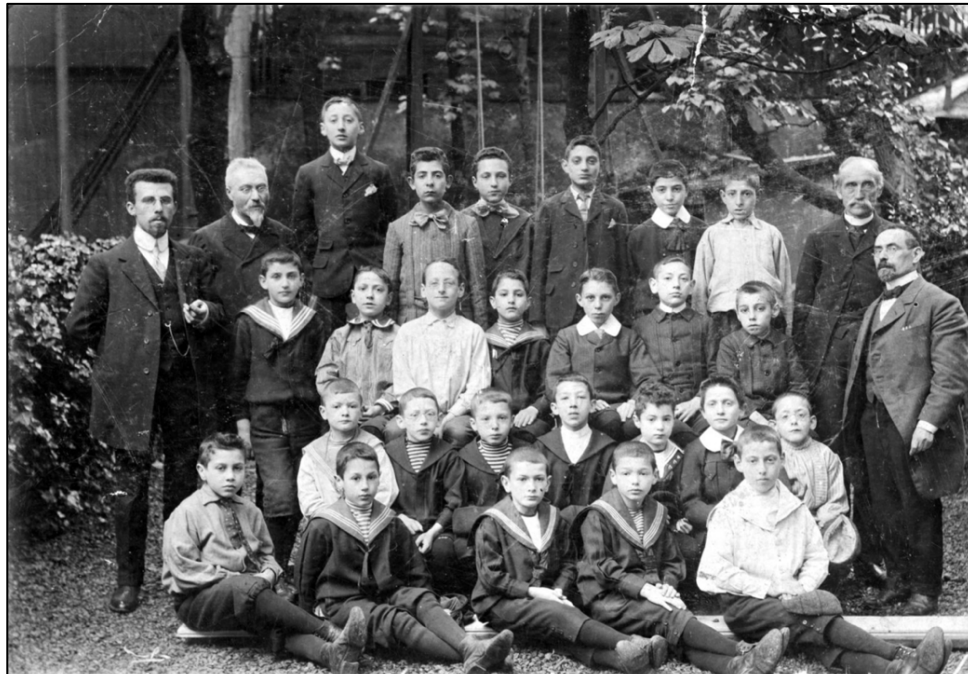
¹²¹ The school had already existed since 1714 as *Beth Hamidrassj Ets Haim*, founded by the Chief Rabbi Arjeh Leib.

¹²² Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, 31.

ILLUSTRATION 2.2 Boys' class of the Herman Elteschool, Amsterdam 1910.

Source: Joods Cultureel Kwartier #F000384.

Note: The man on the left is Lodewijk Hartog Sarlouis (1884-1942), son of a diamond worker and graduate of the *Nederlands Israëlitisch Seminarium*. In 1936 he became chief rabbi of Amsterdam. Next to him stands Herman Elte (1846-1925), the founder of the school.



Data at the national level suggest that Jews were overrepresented among secondary school students by a factor of 2.5 relative to their population share in 1880, and a factor of nearly 3 in 1920.¹²³ Figures for Rotterdam around 1880 suggest an even larger overrepresentation.¹²⁴ Only in Amsterdam, where the population of Jewish children was large enough, did segments of the Jewish community strive for a Jewish HBS.¹²⁵ School absenteeism of children observing the Sabbath were given as a particular reason for this; back then, schools continued on Saturdays, the Jewish rest day. Orthodox Jews also complained about the declining religiosity of Jews that attended the public HBS.¹²⁶ Eventually, it took until 1928 to open a Jewish HBS in Amsterdam. It only became a realistic option after state subsidies reopened to religious education in 1920.

The Jewish enlightenment of the eighteenth century had opened pathways for women's education. In the twentieth century, Jewish women outpaced Gentile women in terms of educational attainment more than Jewish men did Gentile men. Despite the coeducational nature of primary education, women were initially not allowed to attend the HBS. They could, however, attend secondary education in *Middelbare Meisjesscholen* ('secondary girls' schools') since 1867. Women's religious education was also more

¹²³ Mandemakers, "Gymnasiaal en middelbaar onderwijs," 615.

¹²⁴ Marjoke Rietveld-Van Wingerden, "A Dangerous Age? Secondary Education and Moral-Religious Training: The Case History of Dutch Jewish Secondary Education 1880-1940," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 24.1 (2003): 29.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹²⁶ Idem.

limited. Jewish girls more frequently attended extracurricular non-Jewish courses in knitting and needlework.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, Jewish women became overrepresented among female intellectual pioneers.¹²⁸ Jewish women also received more vocational education on average, regardless of class background.¹²⁹ Many Jewish women became secular or religious teachers in the last half of the nineteenth century.

With higher levels of secondary education, Jews were also more able to obtain university educations. For instance, the first Dutch woman to obtain a university degree was the Jewish woman Aletta Jacobs (1854–1929) in Groningen in 1871. Jews had a harder time obtaining positions in the universities, instead focusing on applied careers as lawyers or doctors.¹³⁰ In Amsterdam, higher education was offered at the *Atheneum Illustre*. Until it became recognised as an official university in 1877, many students attended university education here but concluded their studies elsewhere, commonly at Leiden University. Nonetheless, numerous Jews obtained degrees at the *Illustre*. Samuel Senior Coronel (1827–1892), a public health specialist who wrote several articles about the conditions of the diamond workers in the 1860s, was one of the graduates of the *Atheneum Illustre*; as was the 1911 Nobel Peace Prize winner Tobias Michael Carel Asser (1838–1913).¹³¹ In 1930, when the government included the attainment of university education in the census, Jews were overrepresented significantly. Jews made up roughly 1.5 percent of the country's population, but 2.5 percent of male university graduates and 3.8 percent of female university graduates.¹³² Their study directions differed somewhat. Jews more frequently studied medicine, specifically dentistry, and law or commercial sciences.

2.7 Social, Cultural, and Political Life

2.7.1 Politics

Jews were able to actively enter political life since their emancipation in 1796. Two members of the Felix Libertate did so immediately: Hermannus Leonard Bromet (1724–1812) and Hartog de Hartog Lémon (1755–1823) became the first Jewish members of the Lower House.¹³³ After their departure, it took until the mid-nineteenth century for a new Jewish member of the Lower House to arrive. Since then, Jewish representation in the Lower House was roughly equal to their population share.¹³⁴ In 1940, Jews were even overrepresented with eight out of 150 seats. Jews were politically active through two main political streams. Initially, Jews were predominantly progressively Liberal, while

¹²⁷ Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden and Nelleke Bakker, "Education and the Emancipation of Jewish Girls in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Netherlands," *History of Education Quarterly* 44.2 (2004): 210.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 214–215.

¹³⁰ For a discussion, see Hannah van den Ende, "'Vergeet niet dat je arts bent': Joodse artsen in Nederland 1940–1945" (PhD diss., Maastricht University, 2015).

¹³¹ Johan Westenberg, "Tobias Michael Carel Asser (1838–1913). Een pragmatisch jurist," in *Een brandpunt van geleerdheid in de hoofdstad. De Universiteit van Amsterdam rond 1900 in vijftien portretten*, ed. Hans Blom (Hilversum, 1992), 53–76.

¹³² Volkstelling 1930, Chapter 4, Table 3, pp. 166–167: "Aantal mannelijke en vrouwelijke academisch gegradueerden der onderscheidene kerkelijke gezindten per honderd mannelijke en vrouwelijke gegradueerden van elke studierichting."

¹³³ Zwiep, "De naties worden burgers," 205.

¹³⁴ Karin Hofmeester, "Jewish Parliamentary Representatives in the Netherlands: Crossing Borders, Encountering Boundaries?," in *Borders and Boundaries in and around Dutch Jewish History*, ed. Judith Frishman et al. (Amsterdam, 2011), 66.

later on Jews, especially those from working-class backgrounds, aligned with Social Democratic ideologies. To a lesser extent Jews were active in more extreme political streams, such as Communism.¹³⁵ Whether Liberal or Social Democratic, Jewish politicians were at the forefront of Jewish integration. Several had married non-Jewish spouses and few were buried in Jewish burial sites when they passed.¹³⁶

The success of Socialism among the Jews was felt most strongly in Amsterdam.¹³⁷ In neighbourhoods with many Jewish residents, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP) virtually always won. The Socialist movement moved in tandem with the ANDB. In no other occupational group could one find stronger support for the Social Democrats than among the diamond workers.¹³⁸ Jewish diamond workers were well-represented among successful SDAP politicians.¹³⁹ Henri Polak (1868–1943), the president of the ANDB, was also a Member of Parliament. Salomon de Miranda (1875–1942) had been a diamond worker and became an alderman for the SDAP in Amsterdam. Emanuel Boekman (1889–1940), another SDAP alderman, was the son of a diamond worker. When in 1933 four out of six aldermen were Jewish, albeit for three different parties, complaints were aired by Gentiles.¹⁴⁰ Since the late nineteenth century, Jews were evidently active and successful in both national and Amsterdam's local politics.

2.7.2 Residential segregation

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Jews moved into the islands Vlooienburg, Marken, Uilenburg, and Rapenburg. This neighbourhood became known as the *Jodenbuurt* ('Jewish Quarter'). Until the mid-nineteenth century, all of Jewish life took place here; only a small minority of Jews lived outside of this area. The Jewish Quarter, incorporating districts C, P, Q, R, and S in Map 7.1 in Chapter 7, spread out with the Weesperstraat and new canals built in the nineteenth century (district W). Since the 1860s, Jews increasingly moved to the Plantage (V) and De Pijp; although the latter was initially limited to diamond workers. In subsequent decades, Jews more frequently moved to newer neighbourhoods to the East and South of this part of Amsterdam. Between 1850 and 1930, the segregation of Jews declined by one-third.¹⁴¹ These neighbourhoods in East and South varied distinctly in their composition and the rate at which Jews became the dominant culture. For instance, Jews who were more strongly aligned with the Socialist movement lived predominantly in Amsterdam East. These differences are discussed in-depth in Chapter 7.

¹³⁵ See for example the Jewish diamond worker and co-founder of the Dutch Communist Party, Paul (Saul) de Groot. Jan Willem Stutje, *De man die de weg wees: leven en werk van Paul de Groot 1899–1986* (Amsterdam, 2000).

¹³⁶ Hofmeester, "Jewish Parliamentary Representatives," 67–68.

¹³⁷ Gans, "De kleine verschillen," 48–51.

¹³⁸ Paul van Horssen and Dick Rietveld, "Socialisten in Amsterdam 1878–1898. Een sociaal profiel van de SDB-en SDAP-aanhang," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 16 (1990): 387–406.

¹³⁹ Veldhuizen, "De partij," 60–65.

¹⁴⁰ Salomon Kleerekoper, "Het joodse proletariaat in het Amsterdam van de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw en zijn leiders," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 3.2 (1969): 227.

¹⁴¹ Peter Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam on the Eve of the Shoah," *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011): 243–70.

2.7.3 Religious life and Jewish culture

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the largely Orthodox community of Amsterdam Jews had maintained Jewish traditions, including observing the Sabbath and attending the Synagogue. In the second half of the nineteenth century, increasing debates arose regarding the religious nature of the Jewish community and the increasing share of Jewish men who stopped observing the Sabbath for economic reasons. Influential here were the 1857 Education Law, which saw Jewish children attending non-denominational public primary schooling and thus connecting with non-Jewish children at a never-before seen pace; as well as the *Verzuiling* ('Pillarisation'). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Dutch society was increasingly based around four 'pillars' of vertical affiliation. Orthodox Protestants and Roman Catholics founded respective pillars which encompassed most social organisations, institutions and politics.¹⁴² Jews never formed such a pillar.¹⁴³ Consequently, lacking similar clubs and institutions while aiming to fully participate in social and political life, Jews increasingly aligned with the Socialist and Liberal pillars instead.¹⁴⁴ This fostered secular ideologies present in both pillars. It also led to stronger engagement with organisations that had significant Jewish memberships, such as the ANDB and the SDAP. Jews, and especially Jewish diamond workers, therefore received the 'civilising' messages from these entities more intensely.¹⁴⁵ Another factor was economic; the diamond industry paid such high wages that it became highly profitable to work on Saturdays.¹⁴⁶ Van Tijn believed these were the most important factors for Amsterdam-Jews' integration. In some cases, not observing the Sabbath for practical and economic reasons could lead to further reduction in traditions when met with adversity from the community.¹⁴⁷

The combined Jewish leadership of Orthodox Jewish rabbis and secularised Liberal Jewish elites gradually led to declining religious observance. Abraham Carel Wertheim (1832-1897), the most notable of the Liberal Jewish elites, stated that the Jewish community "has to be Orthodox or not at all" despite his own non-Orthodoxy. His lack of following the Jewish traditions and large wealth gap with the overall Jewish population increasingly created a divide between the poor Jewish masses and the Jewish leadership. Thus, since the mid-nineteenth century, Amsterdam's Jews started a process of secularisation. This accelerated at the end of the century as the *Verzuiling* continued to push through. While Protestants and Catholics had their own pillars they could use to keep the strength of their religion intact, Jews lacked such pillars. A discussion regarding the absence of a Jewish pillar can be found elsewhere.¹⁴⁸ Importantly, however, Jews aligned themselves with either of the two different pillars: the Liberals or Socialists. Whichever the Jews chose, secularisation was a part of it.

¹⁴² Schöffers, "The Jews in the Netherlands," 86–87.

¹⁴³ Hans Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch nation-building: the missing 'pillar,'" *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 93.2 (2002): 203.

¹⁴⁴ Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society," 55, 57; Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch nation-building," 203.

¹⁴⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 149–63; Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 110–11.

¹⁴⁶ Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*, 228.

¹⁴⁷ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 165–68.

¹⁴⁸ Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society"; Knippenberg, "Assimilating Jews in Dutch nation-building."

The declining religiosity of Amsterdam Jews was reflected in their declining Synagogue attendance and new Synagogue building. Instead, Amsterdam Jews who kept their faith often practiced their faith in smaller *hevra* synagogues located in a person's attic or above a business.¹⁴⁹ Only in the twentieth century, when Jewish residential mobility accelerated, and especially in the 1920s, new Synagogues were built.

2.7.4 Integration

Although religious secularisation became increasingly visible in the loss of traditions and lowering Synagogue attendance, these developments are hard to measure quantitatively, which is helpful if we want to observe changes over time. We therefore need indicators of integration and declining religiosity. In *Leaving the Jewish Fold*, Endelman lists conversion, religious disaffiliation, and intermarriage as three forms of 'radical assimilation.'¹⁵⁰ While conversion was extremely rare among Dutch Jews, with less than 1 percent of Jews choosing this route, religious disaffiliation and intermarriage were more common. Although few Jews married Gentile spouses in the nineteenth century, intermarriage rates increased rapidly in the twentieth century. The changing intermarriage rates and the characteristics of intermarrying Jews and Gentiles are discussed in Chapter 5. Below we will look at religious disaffiliation and, in particular, how it differed by age and social class.

Religious denominations were reported for all Amsterdam Jews in the 1941 'municipal list' of Amsterdam.¹⁵¹ Table 2.3 presents the distribution of Jewish disaffiliation—measured as stating a religious membership other than the Dutch or Portuguese Israelite communities—by social class and age for the (predominantly male) heads of households.¹⁵² Out of 18,539 household heads, 9 percent had disaffiliated from their Synagogues. To separate heads of households by social class I took a random sample of 10 percent (1854 entries). After cleaning the occupational titles we are left with 1814 household heads with valid occupations. I split these into five social classes as discussed in Chapter 1.4 and distinguish between heads born in the nineteenth and those born in the twentieth century.

There were clear class differences in disaffiliation by social class. Nearly one in three higher managers and professionals had disaffiliated in 1941. This was three times more frequent than the average. Lower professionals and managers also had above average disaffiliation rates, but with a percentage of 11.2 they were much closer to the average than higher professionals. Skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers were much closer together; for them, approximately 6 percent disaffiliated. However, there are also age differences. Within the group of lower professionals that did not work in trade, older men were much more likely to be disaffiliated than younger men. Since these were mostly office workers, a plausible explanation may be that Jewish office workers felt a greater incentive to disaffiliate prior to 1920. This mirrors experiences of discrimination told by Siegfried van Praag and Jacques Presser, discussed in Section 4.5 of this

¹⁴⁹ Saskia Coenen Snyder, *Building a Public Judaism: Synagogues and Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012), 153–54.

¹⁵⁰ Todd Endelman, *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton, 2015).

¹⁵¹ See Chapter 1.4 for a discussion.

¹⁵² The sample is limited to the heads of households since their information was most likely to be recorded accurately. Moreover, their occupations were listed, enabling a division by social class.

dissertation. The age differences among diamond workers tell a different story. While among ‘older’ diamond workers 7.1 percent had disaffiliated, none of the 31 ‘younger’ diamond workers had done so by 1941. This is likely explained by the changing selection into the diamond industry. Those who witnessed the successes of the union were most strongly aligned with Socialism. Meanwhile, those who joined the diamond industry after 1920 and stayed there until 1941 were more frequently Jews with lower levels of educational attainment who could not find work outside of the Jewish economy. Hence, they turned to the deteriorating diamond industry.

Lastly, we see an uptick in disaffiliation in the unskilled group. This is explained by lower shares of peddlers, who were among the least likely to disaffiliate, and a larger number of department store employees in the younger group. Employees of department stores in both the young and old groups were more likely to disaffiliate; perhaps because they were more closely exposed to the mainstream economy through Gentile clientele.

TABLE 2.3 Religious disaffiliation of Jewish heads of households by social class and cohort, Amsterdam 1941

	Older men Age 42-64 (Born 1877-1899)		Younger men Age 20-41 (Born 1900-1921)		All men Age 20-64 (Born 1877-1921)	
Social class	<i>N</i>	Disaff. (%)	<i>N</i>	Disaff. (%)	<i>N</i>	Disaff. (%)
Higher professionals	75	32.0%	38	28.9%	113	31.0%
Lower professionals	486	10.7%	407	11.8%	893	11.2%
<i>Excl. trade</i>	95	20.0%	134	11.9%	229	15.3%
<i>Only trade</i>	391	8.4%	273	11.7%	664	9.8%
Skilled workers	193	7.3%	139	5.0%	332	6.3%
<i>Excl. diamond workers</i>	95	7.4%	108	6.5%	203	6.9%
<i>Only diamond workers</i>	98	7.1%	31	0.0%	129	5.4%
Semi-skilled workers	121	7.4%	148	4.7%	269	6.0%
Unskilled workers	121	3.3%	86	10.5%	207	6.3%
Total (sample)	996	10.3%	818	10.0%	1814	10.2%
Total (all hh. heads)	10,183	9.1%	8356	8.8%	18,539	9.0%

Source: author’s calculations using the 1941 ‘municipal list’ of Amsterdam.

Note: disaffiliation measured as having either no religious affiliation or a non-Jewish affiliation. Italics indicate subgroup of social class.

Overall, Table 2.3 reflects the stratified story of Jewish integration in the twentieth century. Jews in elite social positions were highly integrated into Dutch high society, intermarrying often and denouncing their Jewish faith explicitly. Whether they did so for economic reasons, or disaffiliation was a result of their upward mobility, remains unclear.¹⁵³ New research suggests both scenarios happened and could interact with one another. For the rest of Amsterdam’s Jewish social stratification, such explicit ‘radical

¹⁵³ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 131–33, 268–69.

assimilation' was rarely needed for their careers. Nonetheless, a growing divide could be seen in the twentieth century. Jews in new, modern careers, increasingly getting exposed to Gentiles through work and residence, were more likely to disaffiliate—and, as we shall see in Chapter 5, to enter interfaith marriages. It is important to note that these measures can only tell part of the story. For each Jew who decided to go through the bureaucratic effort to report their disaffiliation to the local government, many others may have identified as equally secular but have considered the benefits of disaffiliating too marginal to follow through with disaffiliation. In contrast, disaffiliation or intermarriage did not always imply the loss of Jewish self-identification; and especially so for how Jews were perceived by others. Differences in radical assimilation by occupations and social classes does, however, suggest that integration was commonly associated with more modern ways of thinking, higher levels of education, and greater exposure to Gentiles; developments that were increasingly characterizing Jews in twentieth-century Amsterdam.

2.8 Amsterdam: An Atypical Jewish Centre

Taken altogether, Amsterdam was a unique city and Jewish centre in the nineteenth century. Dutch Jews politically emancipated at the end of the eighteenth century. At that moment, Jews comprised approximately 10 percent of the Amsterdam population, the largest relative representation of Jews in Western Europe. Despite their economically backward position compared to, for instance, French and German Jews at the time,¹⁵⁴ emancipation did little to improve the economic situation of Dutch Jews over the next half-century.¹⁵⁵ In the next 100 years, however, Dutch and Amsterdam Jews saw great strides in their processes of integration and upward mobility. These patterns were evident in all facets of life, lending more credibility to the accounts by Blom and Cahen,¹⁵⁶ and Lucassen and Lucassen,¹⁵⁷ than to those by Leydesdorff.¹⁵⁸ But which factors were most important for these gains, and how did these factors compare to other Jewish centres? Three main differences can be identified.

One, Amsterdam Jews were autochthonous and learned the host language before economic opportunities opened up to them. For a long time after their initial settlement, Jews did not speak Dutch, and when they did, it did not immediately translate to better socioeconomic chances. However, knowledge of Dutch was a key prerequisite to benefiting from the economic growth that ensued since the mid-nineteenth century. Relatively early arrival and adaptation of the local language made Dutch Jews acculturate more gradually than Jews in other European cities. Across Europe, Jewish newcomers faced greater pressures to acculturate quickly, spurring antisemitism. In Vienna, for instance, Jews acculturated rapidly in the nineteenth century as a result.¹⁵⁹ Early adaptation of the language also helped Jews join and create non-denominational societies in the nineteenth century.

Two, Amsterdam Jews had access to a profitable, skilled occupational niche. While occupational niches are not uncommon in Jews' histories across the globe, the diamond

¹⁵⁴ Birnbaum and Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer."

¹⁵⁵ Sonnenberg-Stern, *Emancipation & Poverty*.

¹⁵⁶ Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders."

¹⁵⁷ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*.

¹⁵⁸ Leydesdorff, "The Veil of History"; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*.

¹⁵⁹ Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (New York, 1984), 195–96.

industry was a particularly strong one. Unlike the production of textiles, where Jewish families progress through intergenerational upgrading of a business and taking up auxiliary occupations,¹⁶⁰ booms in the diamond industry brought immediate wealth to the hands of Jewish labourers. Moreover, although working in the diamond industry had the same volatility as working in trade at times, it aided in the erasure of Jewish stereotypes as peddlers and traders.¹⁶¹ The diamond industry also offered plenty of employment. At its peak, roughly 7,000 Jewish workers were gainfully employed here. Due to their proficiency in the Dutch language and culture, the Jewish diamond workers were able to create an alliance with Gentile workers, unlike Jews in other centres like Paris and London, where Jews formed Jewish labour unions.¹⁶² This helped Jews gain further political and societal participation.

Three, Amsterdam attracted few foreign Jews at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century.¹⁶³ This partially highlights the limited opportunity structure in Amsterdam. In Berlin, Paris, and Brussels, Eastern European Jews settled in far greater numbers due to better economic opportunities.¹⁶⁴ For Amsterdam Jews, this avoided problems of association with a more distinct, less acculturated Jewish group. Amsterdam Jews therefore did not have to accelerate their pace of acculturation and integration. It also relates to the lacking culture of Zionism in the Netherlands, where Social Democratic politics held the tight grip on the Amsterdam Jewish community.¹⁶⁵

In short, Amsterdam Jews were able to continue on their own path, undisturbed by coerced acculturation and changing group dynamics. They were also fortunate enough to have access to an occupational niche that created wealth and opportunities, as well as societal participation, for thousands of Jewish families.

¹⁶⁰ As discussed for the garment industries in London and New York. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*.

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of such stereotypes in the European context, see Penslar, *Shylock's Children*.

¹⁶² Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 342–43.

¹⁶³ Hofmeester, "De immigratie van Oost-Europese joden in Amsterdam."

¹⁶⁴ Tobias Brinkmann, "From Hinterberlin to Berlin: Jewish Migrants from Eastern Europe in Berlin before and after 1918," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 7.3 (2008): 339–55; Nancy Green, *The Pletzl of Paris: Jewish Immigrant Workers in the Belle Epoque* (New York, 1986); Frank Caestecker and Torsten Feys, "East European Jewish Migrants and Settlers in Belgium, 1880–1914: A Transatlantic Perspective," *East European Jewish Affairs* 40.3 (2010): 261–84.

¹⁶⁵ Gans, "De kleine verschillen," 13, 31–32; see also Lidwina Giebels, "De Zionistische beweging in Nederland, 1899–1941" (PhD diss., Nijmegen University, 1975).

3

The History and Dynamics of the Amsterdam Diamond Industry and Union

“When the bosses give us the sack, we turn to Henri Polak. If Henri we should ever lose, we'd be walking on worn-out shoes.”
— Meyer Sluyser¹

3.1 Introduction

The diamond industry was, by far, the most important industrial activity for Amsterdam Jews from the seventeenth until the twentieth century. While conditions and labour relations in the industry changed over time, from the eighteenth century onwards Jews became and remained the main producers. Throughout these centuries, fortunate actors in this industry were able to amass personal wealth and contributed generously to Jewish charities. Both employers, nearly all of Jewish descent, and workers, where the Jewish share ranged from 50 percent in the mid-eighteenth century up to 85 percent a century later, were predominantly Jewish. In this chapter, the history of the industry from the sixteenth century until 1940, with a particular focus on the post-1850 period, will be provided.² Understanding the changing nature of the industry's work, conditions, and composition will allow us to better analyse and contextualise workers' life course trends in subsequent chapters.

3.2 A Historical Background

3.2.1 Origins: Pre-1800

Diamonds were first discovered, mined, cut, polished, sold, and worn in India.³ Trade with the Romans brought diamonds from the Golconda region to Europe. During the

¹ Meyer Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, trans. Mels Sluyser (Chandler, 2005), 57.

² For other overviews, see Samuel Senior Coronel, “De diamantwerkers te Amsterdam: eene sociale studie,” *De Economist* 14.1 (1865): 73–106; Henri Polak, *De strijd der diamantbewerders* (Amsterdam, 1896); Felix Leviticus, *Geïllustreerde encyclopaedie der diamantnijverheid* (Haarlem, 1908); Henri Polak, *De invloed van den oorlog op de diamantindustrie* (Purmerend, 1917); Mozes Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij te Amsterdam: 1845–1920* (Amsterdam, 1920); Cornelis van der Velde, *De A.N.D.B. Een overzicht van zijn ontstaan en ontwikkeling en beteekenis* (Amsterdam, 1925); Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*; Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*; Van Tijn, “De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond”; Theo Van Tijn, “Geschiedenis van de Amsterdamse diamanthandel en -nijverheid, 1845–1897 I,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 87 (1974): 16–70; Theo van Tijn, “Geschiedenis van de Amsterdamse diamanthandel en -nijverheid, 1845–1897 II,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 87 (1974): 160–201; Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...”; Hofmeester, “Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing”; Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*; Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry”; Metz, *Diamantgracht*; Hofmeester, “The Amsterdam Diamond ‘Marketplace’ and the Jewish Experience.”

³ Karin Hofmeester, “Diamonds as Global Luxury Commodity,” in *Luxury in Global Perspective: Objects and Practices, 1600–2000* (Cambridge, 2016), 56.

Middle Ages, Indian diamonds emerged in Venice through trade, which subsequently is believed to have become the main diamond cutting centre in the fourteenth century;⁴ cutting being the act of shaping the diamonds facets.⁵ Pioneering new and shorter sea routes to India, the Portuguese became the main diamond traders in the sixteenth century. In the fifteenth century, the important industrial city Bruges became the main diamond cutting centre.⁶ With Portuguese merchants shipping diamonds to Antwerp, the main trading hub for their colonial goods, diamond production gradually shifted to Antwerp.⁷ With the blockade of Antwerp's harbour in 1584 and the growing threat of the Spanish Inquisition, Sephardic Jews and *Conversos*—Jews forced to convert to Catholicism—increasingly migrated to Amsterdam, pushed by religious persecution and attracted by optimistic trading perspectives.⁸ The Dutch East Indies Company later became an important player on the diamond trading scene in the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁹

In Amsterdam, the processing of diamonds was initially performed by Protestant assistants of Sephardic traders. In 1611, the first mention is made of a Jewish labourer in the trade; a Sephardic Jew in training with a Protestant instructor.¹⁰ Early on, Jewish newcomers in the industry adopted the know-how from the Gentile workers who had arrived with their Sephardic employers. Subsequent generations then learned the trade's inner workings as production was centred around the household. Fathers worked together with their wives, sons, and daughters to produce the finished luxury product to be sold to European nobility and increasingly the *bourgeoisie* and elites across Europe. The Jewish share among the workers increased as Sephardic Jewish orphans, as well as Ashkenazi Jews arriving as early as 1630, were trained and hired as a form of charity.¹¹ Subsequently, the Ashkenazim became the main actor in the production of diamonds in eighteenth-century Amsterdam.

Until 1727, significant diamond extraction was only found in India and, to a much smaller extent, in Borneo.¹² The discovery of diamonds in the Minas Gerais district of Brazil shifted global hubs of diamond extraction and trade. Several times more abundant than diamond mines in Golconda, Brazil's mines now became the main global source of 'rough' (i.e. uncut) diamonds.¹³ In Amsterdam this transformed the diamond industry from a small niche employing a mixture of Gentile and Jewish families to one that provided livelihoods for roughly 600 households. The degree to which these households were able to profit from the growing global rough diamond production was directly tied to the ability of merchants and traders to import the stones to Amsterdam. While Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam had strong ties with Brazil, obtaining the monopoly trading rights on Brazilian diamonds established in 1753 by the Portuguese crown

⁴ Jack Ogden, *Diamonds: An Early History of the King of Gems* (New Haven, 2018), 82–83.

⁵ According to Ogden, no direct evidence is available that diamond cutting took place in Venice. However, cut diamonds were mentioned at that time, and Venice was the most likely location for this to occur.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 108–9.

⁷ Godehard Lenzen, *The History of Diamond Production and the Diamond Trade* (Westport, 1970), 73; Hofmeester, "Diamonds as Global Luxury Commodity."

⁸ Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (Oxford, 1989).

⁹ Hofmeester, "Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing," 27, 30.

¹⁰ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 15.

¹¹ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews*, 41; Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare among the Portuguese Jews in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Liverpool, 2012), 106; Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 31–32.

¹² Hofmeester, "Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing," 27–28.

¹³ Lenzen, *The History of Diamond Production*, 121.

proved a difficult task.¹⁴ However, the Dutch consul in Lisbon was able to agree to such a monopoly, supported by the brothers Brettschneider, successful Dutch diamond traders, and the bank Hope and Co.¹⁵ A continuous battle for monopoly rights to the Brazilian diamond production continued throughout the century.¹⁶ However, as shown in Table 3.1, by the turn of the eighteenth century the production in Brazil was limited, leading to greater periods of unemployment in Amsterdam in between imports.

TABLE 3.1 Average annual production of Brazilian diamonds in carats (ct.), 1730-1822

Period	Annual production
1730-1740	20,000
1740-1772	52,000
1772-1806	26,800
1811-1822	12,000

Source: Lenzen, *The History of Diamond Production and the Diamond Trade* (1970): 121, 150-1.

Diamonds extracted from Brazil were of a lower quality than the ones that had been imported from India and Borneo.¹⁷ An intensification of certain modifications was therefore needed to obtain optimal results. Jewish and Gentile households active in the diamond industry had, until then, focused on the cutting, which created the famous facets we still admire today; and polishing, smoothening the facets created by cutting. In earlier times in India, another act, that of sawing, was practiced.¹⁸ Sawing was needed to make large diamonds more manageable but was no longer practiced for being too labour intensive. Brazilian diamonds, which had more fault lines, needed to be reduced in size by more skilled techniques.¹⁹ Consequently, in the eighteenth century a small subset of skilled workers called cleavers emerged. Cleaving had already been discovered in the seventeenth century but had not been used as intensively before.²⁰ As the name indicates, these workers cleaved diamonds along their natural fault lines, reducing the imperfections and waste in diamonds.

A tax register in Amsterdam indicates that there were 32 diamond workers and 95 jewellers in 1742 who earned above the threshold to be taxed.²¹ Based on their names and residential spread across Amsterdam, seven of these 32 workers were Jewish, suggesting that Gentile workers remained more prosperous in the industry than their Jewish

¹⁴ Hofmeester, "Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing," 41–42.

¹⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 20.

¹⁶ Yogeve, *Diamonds and Coral*; Tijl Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth: The Struggle for Control over the World's Diamonds Throughout History* (London, 2021).

¹⁷ Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews*, 40.

¹⁸ Ogden, *Diamonds*, 125.

¹⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 21; Ogden, *Diamonds*, 325–26.

²⁰ Ogden, *Diamonds*, 124–25.

²¹ W. F. H. Oldewelt, ed., *Kohier van de personeele quotisatie te Amsterdam over het jaar 1742*. Deel I: inleiding en registers (Register of personnel assessments in Amsterdam for the year 1742. Part I: introduction and registers), Amsterdam: Genootschap Amstelodamum, 1945, unpaginated. Note: the workers are mentioned as *diamantslijpers* (diamond polishers), but this term was used as an umbrella term for all workers, including cleavers, in the eighteenth century.

counterparts.²² Only the Jewish polisher David de Zousa earned in the same range as the top-earning Gentile workers; however, he had 14 children to feed with his estimated 800 guilders per year income.²³ Nonetheless, Gentile families that had worked in the industry since its inception were increasingly disillusioned by Jewish competition and demanded change. In 1748, several representatives of ‘Gentile diamond polishers, cutters, and cleavers’ in Amsterdam approached the city council with a request to establish a guild in the diamond industry.²⁴ In recent years, they argued, the industry has worsened due to “foreigners, for a large part from the Jewish Nation,” who did not maintain proper working conditions.²⁵ The “starvation wages” and conditions that Jewish diamond workers were willing to work for—“like swines, with 10 to 12 in a cage”—put the 300 Gentile diamond workers’ households at risk of poverty.²⁶ While a number of guilds excluded Jews from working in industrial activities, the diamond industry was one of few that had not yet established a guild. The city council ruled in favour of the Jewish households and against a guild; proclaiming that “the Jews founded this trade in our city.”²⁷

Although this Jewish victory was followed by half a century of growth in the industry,²⁸ the end of the century brought it to ruins. Decreasing rough diamond production from Indian and Brazilian deposits, combined with a weakening of Dutch international trading relationships, had already diminished livelihoods in the Amsterdam diamond industry. The French Period (1795–1813) in the Dutch Republic was rumoured to have brought the industry to a complete standstill.²⁹ These rumours, although demonstrably false—Heertje also rejects them³⁰—do highlight the rapid decline of the industry. Nor did these rumours foresee the explosive changes that were to happen in the industry over the next century.

3.2.2 Early Industrialisation: 1800–1870

While the production of diamonds never disappeared from Amsterdam, the number of workers dropped precipitously. In 1748 the industry had been home to roughly 600 families; in 1808 circa 200 families remained.³¹ Predominantly Gentile workers, faced with fewer occupational barriers and less societal prejudice, changed to new careers wherever possible. When the Amsterdam municipal government counted workplaces for diamond production in 1820, a total of 49 home-workplaces were located; 42 of which in the *Jewish Quarter*, a neighbourhood where nearly all Jews and only a limited number of Gentiles lived.³² Compared with the equal split suggested by the guild appeal in 1748,

²² Daniël Metz and Karin Hofmeester, “Amsterdam diamantstad. Een nieuwe industrie,” in *Een schitterende erfenis: 125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkersbond*, ed. Karin Hofmeester (Zutphen, 2020), 17.

²³ Kohier van de personeele quotisatie te Amsterdam over het jaar 1742; David de Zousa #3902, 340 guilders rent, 800 guilders income, 14 children.

²⁴ Amsterdam City Archive, *Archief Schout en Schepenen*, 5061#694, pp. 249–256.

²⁵ Idem.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Hofmeester, “The Amsterdam Diamond ‘Marketplace’ and the Jewish Experience,” 59–61.

²⁸ Van der Velde, *De A.N.D.B.*, 2. Van der Velde estimates the number of persons dependent on the industry at 3000, including non-employed dependents.

²⁹ Idem.

³⁰ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 24.

³¹ Metz and Hofmeester, “Amsterdam diamantstad,” 17–18.

³² Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 33.

it is clear that the disastrous times in the diamond industry strengthened the Jewish niche characteristics of this occupational group.

The count of workplaces took place right before a major transformation in the industry. The diamond industry had been a fairly common cottage industry, one of many in Amsterdam, with production taking place at home. It became one of the first industries in Amsterdam to industrialise in 1822, when affluent Jewish jeweller Joseph Machiel Posno (1784–1865) established a horse-powered factory on *Roeterseiland*, a backstreet of the Jewish Quarter.³³ In this factory, horses replaced the labour of *mill spinsters*, women who powered diamond polishers' tools.³⁴ While women had always been a part of the production process of diamonds, either as mill spinsters, cutters,³⁵ or assisting their fathers and brothers, industrialisation in the nineteenth century increasingly implicated the departure of women from the polishing industry. With more horse-powered diamond factories opening in 1824, 1828, and 1840, female mill spinsters were unable to compete with their equine competitors, which were able to power the tools of between 10 and 20 men simultaneously.³⁶ However, despite providing immediate economic gains, the horses also introduced a number of logistical problems. Horses were relatively costly, required food and board even during the regular periods of downtime in the industry, and worsened hygienic conditions in the workplace.³⁷ Nonetheless, by 1855 the number of horse-powered factories in the Amsterdam diamond industry had increased to 9, providing 400 powered polisher mills at its peak.³⁸

Diamantslijperij Maatschappij and Bahía hausse

The 1840s welcomed two milestones in the history of the diamond industry. First, a patent for the use of steam power in diamond factories was granted to one of the horse-powered factory owners. Soon after, the factory was sold to veteran jewellers Marchand and the d'Israel Rosen brothers.³⁹ Second, a large steam-powered factory, established and financed by a collective of 53 jewellers and other investors, opened in 1845.⁴⁰ A year prior, Jacob Joseph Posno's (1810–1882) diamond factory, which had been the first horse-powered diamond factory in Amsterdam, burned to the ground. To modernise and expand his production, Posno established an investment company to build a more impressive factory. Together with business partner Jonas Ephraïm Dresden (1793–unk.), who would be the vice president, and 51 other jewellers and manufacturers, the *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij* was born. The company merged several factories, including the one owned by Marchand, who would act as the secretary of the new company, and the d'Israel Rosen brothers, providing the *Maatschappij* with patent rights to using steam power in their future factory.

³³ Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, 16–17; Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 33–36.

³⁴ Myriam Everard, "Verandering en continuïteit in de arbeid van vrouwen. Keetvrouwen en molendraaisters in het huiselijkheidsideaal, 1750–1900," *TSEG-The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 2.3 (2005): 81–102.

³⁵ Hofmeester, "The Amsterdam Diamond 'Marketplace' and the Jewish Experience," 53–54.

³⁶ *Jaarverslag 1918–1921*, 2. The factories are located in the Valckenierstraat, the Weesperstraat, the Zwanenburgerstraat, and the Rapenburgerstraat, all by Jewish entrepreneurs in the Jewish Quarter.

³⁷ Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, 16–17; Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 36.

³⁸ Everard, "Verandering en continuïteit in de arbeid van vrouwen."

³⁹ Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, 17.

⁴⁰ *Nederlandsche staatscourant* 09–04–1845, "Naamloze vennootschappen."

While not all of the city's jewellers joined the *Maatschappij*, the collective of 53 investors provide an important glimpse in the ethno-religious distribution of employers in the industry at the mid-way point of the nineteenth century. The founding record states the names and addresses of all jewellers involved. Hofmeester and Metz summarise the information provided on this record: other than jewellers, merchants, and rentiers, seven diamond workers are found on the list, all Jewish.⁴¹ Jacob Joseph Posno owned the largest share of stocks; together with his family members he owned 128, of which 70 belonged to him. Most others owned a single or a handful of stocks, valued at 1000 guilders each, several times higher than the annual income of skilled workers in Amsterdam. Moreover, 46 of the 53 investors were Jewish. Gentile investors included four members of the De Voys' family, two from the family Cocx, and the merchant Wijnand Kluijtenaar. Together they owned a mere 12 stocks. The *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, one of the largest factories in the city, was thus a more or less completely Jewish establishment.

Until 1870, there would be only one significant competitor to the *Maatschappij*: Mozes Elias Coster (1791–1848), a Jewish diamond cutter who started his own firm in 1840.⁴² Coster's business model differed starkly from the *Maatschappij*'s operations. The latter provided a large number of steam-powered mills to be rented to jewellers who sublet them to their workers at a day rate. Coster, instead, had a permanent set of employees working in his factory. Despite these differences, both workplaces were home to pioneering movements in the labour movement. The changing geography of the work of most of the industry's workers away from the home and into the factories led to growing collaborative pleas for improved working conditions.⁴³ Directors of the *Maatschappij* started the *Diamantslijpersfonds* (Diamond Polishers' Fund), aimed at providing for diamond workers' families in case of injuries or worse. Since eligibility was set after a minimum of five years of employment, the workers started their own fund in 1848. Coster's workers soon followed suit.

The developments of growing industrialisation and collective action happened concurrently with an expansion of the global rough diamond supply. In the Bahía region of Brazil, new diamond discoveries led to another growth spurt in the Amsterdam diamond industry. Between 1845 and 1870, the Bahía mines provided an average of 200,000 carats of diamonds.⁴⁴ This newfound supply led to a greater demand for diamond workers in Amsterdam, who were now able to have more stability in their work. The industry subsequently grew by 50 percent, from roughly 1000 workers in 1848 to nearly 1500 in 1859.⁴⁵ However, while these developments combined for greater prosperity among diamond workers and their employers, contemporary public health specialist Samuel Senior Coronel reported that the shift from cottage industry to factory work had been immensely detrimental to the health of the diamond workers.⁴⁶ This was especially true among polishers and setters, the lowest-paid workers. In his surveys of three diamond factories, Coronel finds high rates of tuberculosis and eye-related

⁴¹ Metz and Hofmeester, "Amsterdam diamantstad," 20–21.

⁴² Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, 19.

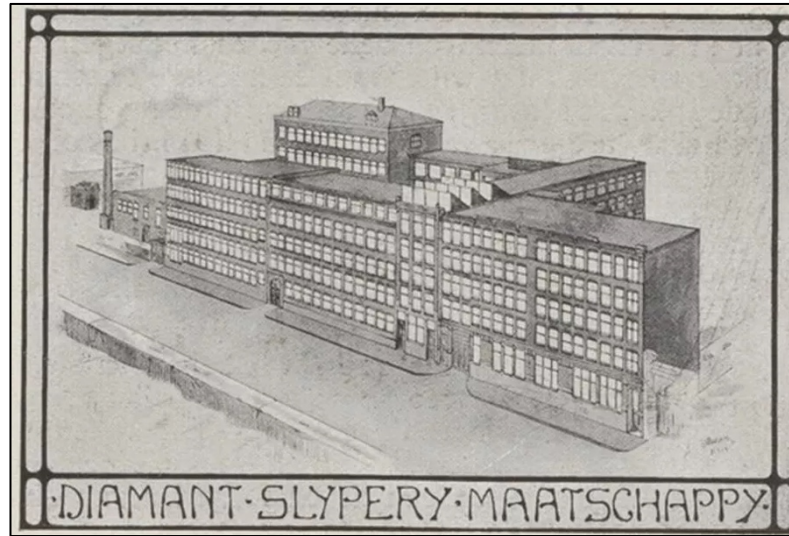
⁴³ Dirk Hudig, *De vakbeweging in Nederland, 1866–1878* (Amsterdam, 1904), 221.

⁴⁴ Lenzen, *The History of Diamond Production*, 121.

⁴⁵ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 14–15.

⁴⁶ Samuel Senior Coronel, "De diamantwerkers te Amsterdam: eene hygiënische studie," *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde* 8 (1864): 633–50.

ILLUSTRATION 3.1 The *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij* ca. 1920.
Source: Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij te Amsterdam* (1920), 106.



injuries.⁴⁷ The impact of these developments, i.e. the expansion and growing industrialisation, on overall wellbeing, both economic and health-wise, is therefore unclear.

Tumultuous 1850s and 60s

Successes in the industry, fuelled by steam-powered factories and a renewed supply of rough diamonds, were soon followed by more turbulent times. In 1851, during the World Exhibition in Paris, Amsterdam won a prize for the outstanding quality of its diamond industry. However, since 1853, the supply of diamonds from Brazil started diminishing.⁴⁸ The Crimean War (1853–1856) followed by a bank run in the United States (1857) and the Indian Rebellion (1857), which affected investors' willingness to spend and reduced Indian production of rough diamonds, led to great instability in the global market for diamonds. Around this time, also, Coster starts training women as cutters, who could be employed for lower wages.⁴⁹ Times were so unstable that Posno, the leading diamond merchant in Amsterdam, filed for bankruptcy in 1864. Increasingly, workers feared a relocation of the diamond industry to Paris, where diamonds could be produced more affordably. The *Diamantslijpers Vereeniging* ('Diamond Polishers' Society') was established with, as their main aim, to improve the working conditions for diamond workers, especially those seriously considering migrating to France.⁵⁰ Although the shift to Paris did not conclude, the 1860s, ending with the American Civil War (1861–1865), Prussian-Austrian War (1865), and the French-German War (1870–1871), was nonetheless a time of great instability and frequent unemployment for the workers. The

⁴⁷ Ibid., 642–43.

⁴⁸ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 10.

⁴⁹ Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 39.

⁵⁰ As explained in a brochure published in 1869 regarding the situation in the diamond industry and the organisation's achievements; ARCH00210 #39, "Diamantslijpers-Vereeniging te Amsterdam."

Algemeen Handelsblad, a leading financial newspaper, regularly published requests to financially support the city's diamond workers.⁵¹

3.2.3 *Kaapse Tijd and Aftermath: 1870–1887*

Although rumours about diamonds being discovered in South Africa had started spreading corners since 1866, at the start of 1870 the future conditions in the Amsterdam diamond industry look dire. France and Prussia were still at war, lowering demands for luxury diamonds, and the supply of rough diamonds from India and Brazil had largely disappeared. Until South African diamonds finally arrived in Amsterdam in the winter of 1870, the true size of the supply remained unknown. Reports by the *Algemeen Handelsblad* were mixed. In July, it reported that “[t]he diamonds... sparkled more than ever in the eyes of the Cape, or preferably, free state residents;”⁵² two months later, it wrote about the confusion surrounding the size of the supply; and in October, the German–France War reportedly led to a decline in ‘diamond fever.’⁵³ However, less than two weeks later, the tone of the reports changed drastically: “[r]egarding the news of diamonds, it is as *sparkling* as can be” the newspaper wrote when it reported on a ship carrying 15,000 carats of diamonds to London, an amount equal to an annual supply in the recent past.⁵⁴ In the following years, the South African diamonds created a scramble for jewellers to find workers to cleave, cut, and polish. After the conclusion of the American Civil War, economic conditions in the U.S. prospered, and the end of the French–Prussian War re-established peace in Europe. Employers had vacancies for roughly 2000 workers, but at most 1100 were still active in Amsterdam.⁵⁵ The immense bargaining power in the hands of the workers allowed them to push wages up to astronomical heights. The quality of the manufactured diamonds dropped concurrently, with the stereotypical motto “as long as it sparkles.”⁵⁶ Barents estimates the wages of diamond polishers at 150 to 200 guilders per week;⁵⁷ cleavers are said to have earned upwards of 1000 guilders.⁵⁸ In contrast, typographers, another group of skilled workers with early collective action, earned roughly six guilders per week.⁵⁹ Workers who had left the diamond industry in the uncertain 1860s returned to the industry, fathers brought in their sons, and thousands of workers entered the industry as new entrants. Inevitably, the inflow of such quantities of workers returned the balance in the bargaining position between workers and employers. Wages fell in 1873 and again in 1876 (by 30%), and by the 1880s wages had returned to their pre–Cape Time levels. To supplement their waning incomes, the recruitment of apprentices became a profitable business, since the prospect of high wages induced parents to pay hundreds of guilders to have their children trained in the industry.

⁵¹ For example, *Algemeen Handelsblad* 23–04–1868, *Binnenland*.

⁵² *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 01–07–1870.

⁵³ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14–10–1870.

⁵⁴ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 25–10–1870. Compare with Table 2.1.

⁵⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 32.

⁵⁶ Saskia Coenen Snyder, “‘As Long as It Sparkles!’: The Diamond Industry in Nineteenth–Century Amsterdam,” *Jewish Social Studies* 22.2 (2017): 48.

⁵⁷ Barents, *De Diamantslijperij Maatschappij*, 57.

⁵⁸ Polak, *De strijd der diamantbewerkers*, 12.

⁵⁹ Hudig, *De vakbeweging in Nederland*, 5.

One way we can visualise the growth in the number of workers during this time is to look at the changing number of conscripts, 19 or 20 years old, who were listed as working in the diamond industry at the time of their medical check-up.⁶⁰ This data on the occupation of Amsterdam conscripts has been collected from 1830 to 1900. For a longer timespan, we can also include grooms at the time of their marriage. All marriages in Amsterdam are available between 1811 and 1932. Panel A of Figure 3.1 presents the changing shares of conscripts and grooms that worked in the diamond industry. Outside of the *Bahía hausse*, roughly 1845–1855, between one and two percent of conscripts and grooms worked in the diamond industry before 1870. This rapidly increased from 2 percent in 1872 up to 15 percent of conscripts and 10 percent of grooms in 1891. When the industry reached its full capacity, the share of conscripts and grooms working in the diamond industry continued to fall to less than 2 percent in the 1930s. These declines signify a reduction in the number of newcomers, suggesting that the workers in the industry were getting older on average. Among the grooms, differences between Jews and Gentiles were already reported in Chapter 2. There we saw that both Jews and Gentiles saw large increases in the share of grooms that worked in the diamond industry at the time of their marriage, but the share was much higher for Jews. The comparison between conscripts, who were on average aged 19, and grooms, aged 18 to 39, suggests that not all 19-year-olds who joined the diamond industry were still in this occupation by the time they married.⁶¹

Panel B of Figure 3.1 shows the number of diamond polishing factories and, within those factories, the number of polishing mills (multiplied by 100). In 1871, Amsterdam counted three diamond polishing factories with roughly 1000 mills. By 1890, this had grown to nearly 70 factories and over 7000 mills. Separate factories were established for—and by—Jews and Gentiles, with Gentile factories being smaller on average.⁶²

The landscape of the diamond industry in Amsterdam changed completely due to the *Cape Time* boom. For 30 years, the industry had only known two main workplaces: the *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij* and Coster's factory. The exuberant wages earned during this time not only allowed workers to bargain with their employers, but some even started working for themselves. "The workers nowadays work for themselves and bring a sensitive competition to the merchants" wrote the Chamber of Commerce in 1873.⁶³ In the same year the *Slijpersvereeniging* collectively bought land to build the Amsterdam Diamond Polishing Factory (*Amsterdamsche Diamantslijperij*), which opened on 16 February 1873.⁶⁴ Although this factory only offered workspaces to the members of the *Slijpersvereeniging*, it marked the end of the oligopoly of the *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij* and Coster on the production capacities. New factories sprouted like mushrooms, both in the Jewish side of town—to the east and southeast of the city centre—and elsewhere in the city. Successful workers became merchants, traders, and factory owners,

⁶⁰ Following the methodology of Knotter, *Economische transformatie*.

⁶¹ The marriage certificates, being recorded further away from occupational choices in one's early adolescence, should illustrate a longer period of relatively high shares of diamond workers beyond the mid-1890s. However, the share of diamond workers among grooms falls roughly as quickly as the same share among conscripts. This leads us to believe that a considerable number of conscripts left this career prior to their marriage.

⁶² Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 42.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁴ Soon after, the *Slijpersvereeniging* could no longer afford the building. They sold the factory to Bottenheim, who became one of the most important employers in the industry.

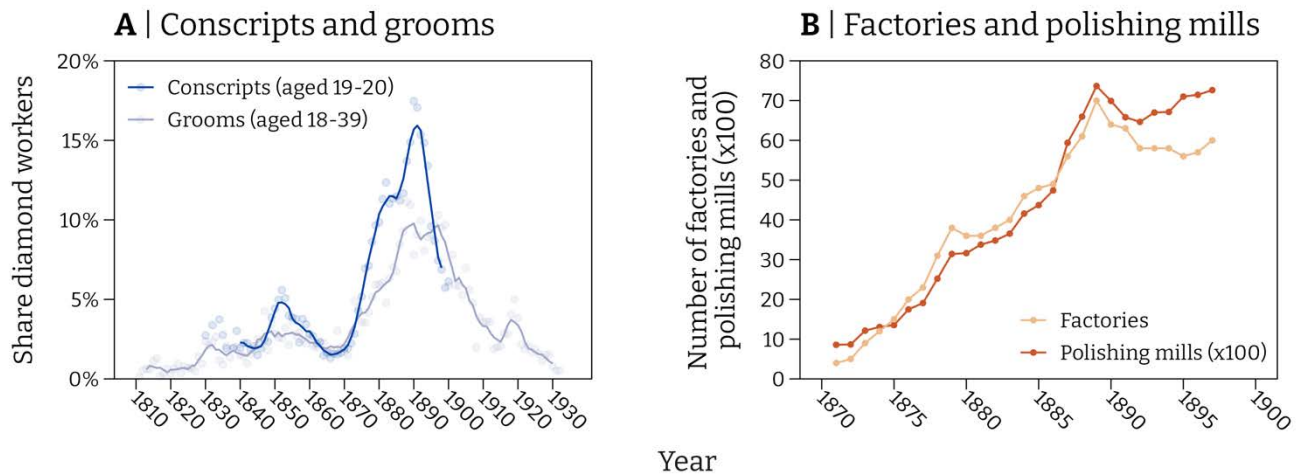


FIGURE 3.1 The share of all Amsterdam conscripts (1830-1900) and grooms (1811-1932) that worked in the diamond industry (panel A); the number of factories and polishing mills (1871-1897) in Amsterdam (panel B).

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release; Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant 1845-1897* (1976); Knotter, *Economische transformatie en stedelijke arbeidsmarkt* (1991).

Note: Panel A is based on 153,067 conscript records and 320,157 marriage certificates.

evidenced by increasing memberships of the 'Central Diamond Traders' Union' (*Centraal Diamant-Handelsbond*), which grew to nearly 1000 members in the late 1880s.⁶⁵ By 1885, the 'old generation' of employers had practically been replaced by the 'new' generation of employers. Among them were the Boas brothers, the first jewellers to construct their own factory in Amsterdam in 1879. Their factory was the largest in the city—as well as the largest diamond factory globally—home to 357 polishing mills.

Although this self-employment by workers led to upward mobility, the greater competition of *eigenwerkmakers* ('own-work-makers') also pushed down wages and stimulated downward and horizontal social mobility of many earlier employers. This older generation of diamond traders was frequently forced to do business in other products. The growing rates of self-employment also set the stage for impending crises: Amsterdam's diamond centre became a landscape of jewellers and traders with little capital to their names who, in the near future, would struggle to compete with the more capital-intensive traders in competing centres abroad. The most significant profits were booked in London and Paris by diamond wholesalers and middlemen.⁶⁶ A partial displacement to Antwerp was already seen in the 1880s as a result of this weakening position of employers and traders in Amsterdam.⁶⁷

3.2.4 Crises in the industry and growing labour actions: 1888-1894

The late 1880s were characterised by another expansion, namely in *chips*. These were small 'splinters' of diamonds which would previously have been turned to powder to polish diamonds but were now increasingly produced into tiny brilliants. While the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 27.

economic downturn led to much unemployment among workers producing larger diamonds,⁶⁸ *chips* workers had steady employment in the crisis years of 1887 and 1888. As Jews had cornered the market for larger diamonds, known as ‘grof,’ *chips* workers were predominantly Gentiles. Moreover, since factories remained still either Jewish or Gentile—mixed factories become more common later, in the early twentieth century—we see a growth in the number of Gentile factories during this time. In 1889 Amsterdam counted more Gentile factories, closed on Sundays, than Jewish factories, closed on Saturdays, despite over two-thirds of diamond workers being Jewish. The simultaneous displacement to Antwerp, where jewellers could afford larger stones, meant that Amsterdam temporarily became more specialised in smaller stones, including *chips* and roses, while Antwerp concentrated on larger rocks.⁶⁹ Within Amsterdam, Jewish traders and jewellers were able to obtain the best diamonds. In response, Gentile jewellers introduced an ‘own-cost-system,’ where workers received a fixed price for the finished stone after deducting the labour costs of setters and journeymen, mill rental, *boort*, lighting, and a profit margin for the jewellers.⁷⁰ Gentile employers often gained poor reputations for milking their workers for all they were worth.⁷¹

In the 1880s we not only see a great expansion in the share of Gentile men, but also among women, particularly Jewish women. The share of women in the industry had been growing gradually since the 1850s, when Coster started training women as cutters, but saw an acceleration in the 1880s. Rose-cutting was the first specialisation to ‘feminise’; later brilliant-cutting saw more female workers too. Nearly all of these women worked from home, for lower wages despite long workdays.⁷² Unsurprisingly, the growing share of female cutters, who were paid less for their work, caused the wages of male cutters to fall. Female cutters profited from training young girls, as indicated by the occupational census of 1889, which counts a much larger share of women among diamond cutters under the age of 18.⁷³ Women also worked as cleavers. Although Van Tijn doubted whether this was true,⁷⁴ evidence from marriages and newspaper adverts support it.⁷⁵

With a continuously growing workforce, including a growing share of women, wages continued to fall. When interviewed for the Labour Survey of 1889, diamond workers’ union pioneer Jos Loopuit (1864–1923) claimed that wages varied strongly by the skill of the worker.⁷⁶ Skilled workers, he alleged, earned much more than the average labourer in the city. Nonetheless, for a majority of the industry’s workers, wages had fallen to near-subsistence levels in the late 1880s. Increasingly, polishers’ and setters’ apprentices stopped having to pay *leergeld*, apprenticeship fees, for their apprenticeships. Instead, they paid with discounted labour at the end of the contract to repay their instructors.

⁶⁸ Economic instability always affected producers of the larger, more expensive diamonds more.

⁶⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 146; Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 27; Historically, Antwerp cutters had specialised in smaller stones. Hofmeester, “Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing,” 39.

⁷⁰ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 45–46.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷² *De diamanthuisindustrie te Amsterdam* (1914), 13–17.

⁷³ *Beroepentelling* 1889.

⁷⁴ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 47.

⁷⁵ For instance, Betje Jessurum Lobo (1862–1940) was listed as a diamond cleaver when she married the diamond polisher Benjamin Lobo (1855–1914) in 1879. Noord-Hollands Archief, 358.6#603.

⁷⁶ Jacques Giele, ed., *De arbeidsenquête van 1887. Deel 1: Amsterdam* (Nijmegen, 1981), 149–51.

In the decades before the ANDB was established, diamond workers' reputation worsened. *Parvenus* from the Cape Time were considered loud, uncultured, untrained. In those days, persons worked for 12 hours per day with no time for lunch; they did not even wash their hands before eating.⁷⁷ "The majority of my colleagues are an unruly bunch," stated Loopuit in the interview, "people who do not want to hear about any improvement whatsoever."⁷⁸ Herman Kuijper referred to the Amsterdam diamond workers, to which he belonged as a future co-founder of the ANDB, as "the dumbest workers in Amsterdam."⁷⁹

The Labour Survey also raised the point of theft, usually done by exchanging larger diamonds received from the employer with slightly smaller diamonds. By doing this continuously, a worker could end up with a single large and expensive diamond. According to Herman Kuijper the trade in stolen diamonds engaged hundreds of merchants.⁸⁰ However, Kuijper and others attested this was due to very low wages paid, and not poor moral characters of the workers, who had little choice but to steal.

The late 1880s and early 1890s were a period of fluctuating profitability in the industry. A shift occurred when the De Beers Diamond Consortium was established in 1888. This consortium established a near monopoly on South African diamonds, controlling over 80 percent of the rough diamond trade. Amsterdam actors were hopeful that this would lead to a stabilization of diamond extraction, exports, and prices. However, only a year after its founding, De Beers reduced extraction by 40 percent to raise prices. It succeeded, doubling prices for rough diamonds leading to catastrophic consequences for Amsterdam jewellers and diamond workers. The capital-weak Dutch employers could not afford to purchase additional supplies, leading to widespread unemployment in Amsterdam when inventories dwindled.⁸¹ In 1890, a large fundraiser to support diamond workers raised 30,000 guilders.⁸² However, despite global instability, including another bank run in the U.S. in 1893, Amsterdam diamond workers were able to ask for a wage raise for the first time since 1873 in May of 1894. What can explain this drastic change? According to Van Tijn, the years leading up to 1894 were "a cleansing," as the least skilled or connected diamond workers could only rarely find work, but also a period of "proletarianisation," as conditions worsened even for the most skilled workers.⁸³ As conditions worsened, workers were more desperate to reestablish their former wages when the situation was ripe for negotiations.

This period of proletarianisation reinvigorated interest for labour associations. When the number of factories was limited to Coster and the Diamantslijperij Maatschappij, collective action was more easily organised. While the 1860s saw the creation of more interventionary organisations, such as the ones for each specialisation, these gained little influence with the astronomical increases in wages during the *Cape Time*. In the 1880s, new attempts emerged, particularly among skilled Gentile workers who were early adapters to the Socialist movement. In 1888, Jan van Zutphen, co-founder of the

⁷⁷ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 57.

⁷⁸ Giele, *De arbeidsenquête van 1887. Deel 1: Amsterdam*, 151.

⁷⁹ *Enquête gehouden door de Staatscommissie benoemd krachtens de wet van 19 januari 1890. Staatsblad 1, derde afdeeling* (Amsterdam), 78.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸¹ Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*, 71.

⁸² Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben....," 45–46.

⁸³ Van Tijn, "De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerkerbond," 415–16.

future ANDB, and Cornelis van der Velde, future board member and historian of the ANDB, founded the *Sociaal-Democratische Diamantbewerkersvereniging* ('Social Democratic Diamond Workers' Association'), a small subsection of the *Sociaal-Democratische Bond* ('Social Democratic Union').⁸⁴ To encourage Jewish workers—who had not yet become strong adherents of Social Democracy—the name was soon changed to the *Nederlandsche Diamantbewerkers-Vereeniging* (NDV; 'Dutch Diamond Workers' Association') and Bernard Wins, a Jewish diamond worker, was chosen as its president. Free membership to any unemployed diamond worker to attend a meeting enticed 1200 diamond workers to join.⁸⁵ However, they were unable to maintain the momentum, leaving only 200 diamond workers to remain members by 1890. Yet this organization would become the training ground for the ANDB as several future leaders, including the co-founders Jan van Zutphen, Herman Kuijper, and Henri Polak, met here to discuss their plans for the future.

3.3 Specialisations⁸⁶

A clear trend towards specialisation in the diamond industry took place throughout the eighteenth century.⁸⁷ While individual specifications were less common in earlier times, by the nineteenth century they were clearly defined and professionalised. Apprentices were trained with clear professional specialisations in mind. Apart from advancing to higher positions through entrepreneurship, such as becoming a *commissionair* or trader in diamonds, workers remained within their specialisation for their entire careers; that is, if employment opportunities allowed for it. Thus, unlike certain other professions where occupational ladders stimulated career advancements,⁸⁸ no such upward pathways existed for diamond workers. Instead, apprenticeships were lengthy, ranging from 18 months up to five years, and fortunate workers continued in their specialisation their entire lives. Within and between these specialisations, a distinct hierarchy was present that was reflected by social status and wages and noted by both contemporaries and historians.⁸⁹ Regrettably, not all differences are visible in our data, especially those occurring within specialisations. Transparency regarding these invisible differences therefore becomes all the more important in order to understand the positions that individual diamond workers were in.

3.3.1 Cleavers

The workers in closest contact with the jewellers were the cleavers. They worked in close physical proximity to the jewellers, from whom they were the first to receive the unprocessed diamonds. Due to their expertise, cleavers worked most independently among the diamond workers. Cleavers were tasked with downsizing diamonds, cleaving them along natural fault lines in order to reduce the number of imperfections—such as

⁸⁴ Metz and Hofmeester, "Amsterdam diamantstad," 31.

⁸⁵ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 45–46.

⁸⁶ I present a brief overview of the different specialisations in the diamond industry. For a more technical discussion, see Eddy Vleeschdrager, *Hardness 10* (Antwerp, 1998). For historical descriptions, see Hofmeester, "Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing"; and Ogden, *Diamonds*.

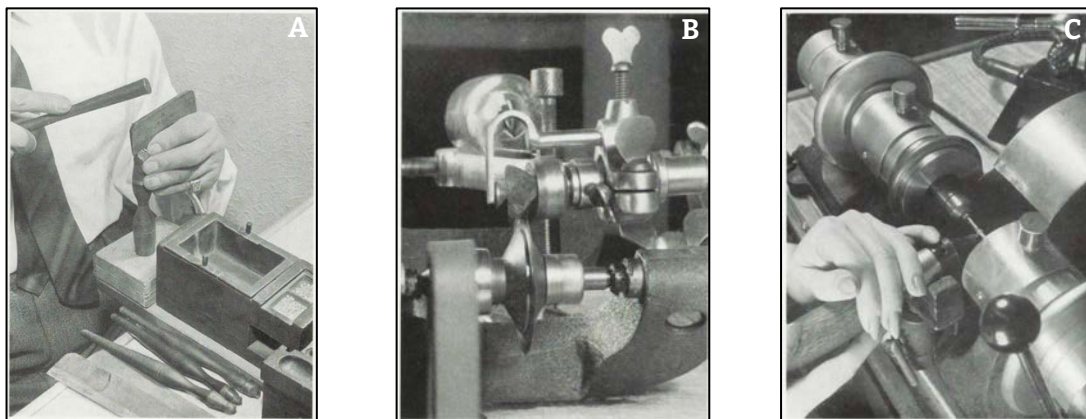
⁸⁷ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 12–13.

⁸⁸ Andrew Miles and Mike Savage, "Constructing the Modern Career, 1840–1940," in *Origins of the Modern Career*, ed. David Mitch, John Brown, and Marco van Leeuwen (Aldershot, 2004), 79–100.

⁸⁹ Coronel, "De diamantwerkers te Amsterdam," 1865; Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 60–62.

inclusions, comparable to birthmarks—and shape the ideal size for the intended type of cut of the diamond. Recognising these fault lines required intensive training and patience; as one mistake could ruin a valuable diamond, these workers also dealt with the highest risks. Cleavers therefore started by inspecting the diamonds thoroughly. Once fault lines and imperfections were identified, an incision was made using a sharp edge of another rough diamond, indicating where it needed to be cleaved. The diamond was then split using a blunt blade and significant force, as illustrated in panel A of Illustration 3.2. An extreme example of the duress these workers could be under is exemplified by Joseph Asscher (1886–1976), in his time the most esteemed diamond worker in the world, who was tasked with cleaving the Cullinan, the largest rough diamond ever discovered at 3106 carats, purchased as a gift for King Edward VII for £1,800,000.⁹⁰ It took months to prepare for the actual cleaving and rumours state that when Asscher delivered the first strike to cleave the diamond, the knife shattered. Believing he ruined the diamond, Asscher “fell to the floor in a faint.”⁹¹

ILLUSTRATION 3.2 Examples of specialisations in the Van Moppes factory, ca. 1930.
 Source: Emeis Jr., *A. van Moppes & Zoon, Amsterdam-Holland, 1809-1959* (1959): 24-5.
 Note: tools used during (a) cleaving, (b) sawing, and (c) mechanical cutting.



From the eighteenth century, when this specialisation was introduced, until the 1930s, cleavers were the elite among the diamond workers. Numerically they made up the smallest group, excepting ‘cleaved stone workers,’ discussed later on. Practicing their professions in workplaces provided by jewellers, often above the latter’s offices, they had the most elite networks and earned the highest wages. These workplaces tended to have better lighting, were less crowded, and did not suffer from the same poor air quality as the polishing factories.⁹² Heertje referred to them as the “aristocrats” of the industry, based on their social background, the way they dressed, and their better working conditions.⁹³ Sluyser believed that this made them feel superior to the rest of the workers, creating anonymity from other diamond workers: “[y]ou cleavers do not really form the *elite*, only the *Isra-elite*!”⁹⁴ The slow entry of cleavers into the union may

⁹⁰ Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10, 14.

⁹¹ Glenn Klein, *Faceting History: Cutting Diamonds and Colored Stones* (Bloomington, 2005), 67.

⁹² Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 27.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁹⁴ Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 27.

attest to this feeling of superiority. Due to the limited number of positions for cleavers, personal connections were a high requirement for entry, virtually closing the rank for non-Jews. However, their relative 'elite' position in comparison to the rest of the industry's workers declined after 1920. Sawyers, making use of machines to accomplish similar tasks in less time and requiring less skill, introduced steep competition to the diamond aristocrats. Many cleavers migrated to Antwerp in the 1920s and 1930s in the hope of finding work there. Amsterdam cleavers were in high demand due to the greater quality and expertise of diamond craftsmanship in Amsterdam. Eva de Vries (1883–1941), one of the few female cleavers, was one of them, moving to Antwerp in 1921 and in 1928 to work for her brother Jules, a diamond trader.⁹⁵ While Eva was able to successfully continue working in Antwerp through her family connections and migration, many other cleavers were less fortunate. By the eve of World War II, cleavers no longer out-earned the rest of the industry.

3.3.2 Sawyers

While the art of sawing had been developed and introduced during the Renaissance,⁹⁶ in Amsterdam it had not been in use until the late nineteenth century. Similar to cleavers, sawyers sectioned stones into two or more parts. However, in practice the two specialisations were not at all alike. Cleavers used a small number of tools, relying on skill, experience, and technique to obtain desired results in one swift movement. Sawing originally involved cementing diamonds in small wooden blocks, fixed to a table, after which a division was created in the diamond. Sawing for days on end, large diamonds could take up to 10 months to complete.⁹⁷ In the twentieth century, sawyers instead depended on new inventions, particularly the sawing machine, which facilitated the work and was many times more efficient. Moreover, sawyers often split parts of the diamond that would otherwise be used as *boort*, i.e. diamond powder,⁹⁸ a required ingredient in most of the diamond manufacturing processes, whereas cleavers more often created two suitable diamonds out of one.⁹⁹ Sawyers worked in new, long workplaces, such as seen in Illustration 3.3, often containing hundreds of sawing machines. Experienced sawyers could operate between 10 and 30 machines, depending on the size of the diamonds and the skill of the worker. Compared with cleaving, sawing required little skill, and thus sawyer apprenticeships rarely lasted more than two years. This specialisation allowed new families to enter the diamond industry without competing with workers from families with generations of experience.

The main instrument of the sawing machine was a thin vertical disc, seen in panel B of Illustration 3.2. This disk was covered in oil and *boort* which allowed diamonds to be modified. Rather than make a sketch in the diamond using another diamond, sawyers used ink to indicate the placement of the splitting. Spinning at 4500 to 5000 rounds per minute, the disc could split a diamond, which was suspended above it and subsequently lowered onto the disc, in less than a day.¹⁰⁰ After inspecting whether the diamond was correctly placed on the disc, the sawyer moved on to the next machine. The number of

⁹⁵ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 968#10373 and 481#91349, "Eva de Vries."

⁹⁶ Ogden, *Diamonds*, 124.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁹⁸ Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10, 113.

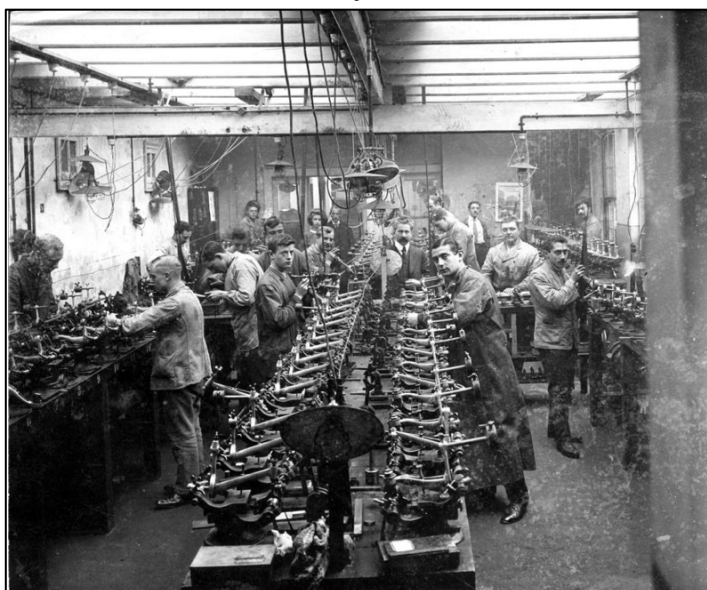
⁹⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 44–45.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

ILLUSTRATION 3.3 Diamond sawyers in sawing factory
'Zeldenrust,' 1911.

Source: Spaarnestad Photo, Het Leven, SFA001004222.

Note: the Zeldenrust factory counted 180 machines.



machines operated varied significantly. A survey of diamond sawing factories in 1909 shows that apprentices and new sawyers generally operated up to five machines, the average worker operated between 12 and 18, and the most skilled workers worked with 30.¹⁰¹ Only 10 of 113 sawyers surveyed had been diamond workers before, retraining themselves into a new specialisation, while the rest had come from other occupations or started sawing as their first job. Sawyers that had been diamond workers in the past, mostly brilliant polishers, were over-represented among the most efficient sawyers. Nonetheless, the high share of sawyers that had previously worked in another occupation, often already in industry—fitters (Dutch: *bankwerkers*) being by far the most common—but also as office clerks, photographers, and commercial travellers, shows that this specialisation allowed for occupational mobility and an entry into the diamond industry for outsiders. The relative novelty of sawing factories also allowed new factory owners to emerge, although over the years existing manufacturers increasingly built their own sawing factories.

3.3.3 Cutters

After a diamond was cleaved or sawed, it was passed along to cutters, responsible for cutting off rough edges and creating the pre-form of facets in the diamonds. Cutters generally worked in the same workplaces as the cleavers, although with the introduction of more modern factories in the twentieth century, some cutters started to work in workplaces within factories as well. Illustration 3.4 depicts cleavers and cutters working side by side in a general *atelier* provided by jewellers at the start of the twentieth century. By rubbing two diamonds together, cutters were able to create the shape and desired

¹⁰¹ See ANDB archive, ARCH00210 #5133, "Gegevens zagers."

number of facets in the diamonds. In this process, residual diamond powder or *boort* is created that is reused in the sawing and polishing stages.¹⁰²

Cutters held high positions in the industry. When Henri Polak, future president of the ANDB, needed to contribute to the household income at the age of 13, he preferred the company of the more civilised cutters over the “black-smeared, shouting and screaming polishers” he had seen when visiting his diamond-polishing father’s factory.¹⁰³ Not working in the loud and dirty factory halls was not only met with higher societal esteem, but also delivered a significant health premium, allowing cleavers and cutters to have longer careers on paper. While all cutters in mid-nineteenth century Amsterdam had been male,¹⁰⁴ by the twentieth century a large majority of cutters were women. Approximately 95 percent of rose cutters and 80 percent of brilliant cutters were female,¹⁰⁵ while only comprising about 20 percent of the members. Women had historically been active as cutters already in the seventeenth century,¹⁰⁶ but largely lost this position with the formalisation of factory work. Female cutters were reintroduced in the 1860s, when Coster’s firm started training women in this specialisation.¹⁰⁷ With smaller hands, women were deemed more efficient in this skilled and diligent work. Women could also be paid lower wages, as most women’s incomes were seen as a supplement to their husband’s or parents’ incomes. The ANDB put a stop to this, enforcing equal wages for equal work at the start of the twentieth century due to the continuous efforts of sisters Sophie and Betje Lazarus.¹⁰⁸

Many women employed as cutters worked from home, continuing the cottage industrial work that had started disappearing from the industry since industrialisation. A 1910 survey on the activities of diamond workers employed from home, containing 477 interviewees, included 169 brilliant cutters (among which 29 men) and 192 rose cutters (1 man).¹⁰⁹ The 343 female cutters were evenly split into married and unmarried, indicating that marital status was not a main driver of home-based work nor a reason to stop working. Nearly all these women started working between the ages of 12 and 15, while a small minority started at 11 or younger or 16 or older. According to the survey, some of these women continued to work in this industry and remained members of the union only to allow entry for their children in the future.¹¹⁰ More pressing of a reason was their high earnings potential. It is not uncommon, the report states, that their husbands earned less than them and are not especially incentivised to find better work.¹¹¹ When asked for the reason for their employment, both brilliant and rose cutters most frequently responded insufficient income of their husbands, to save for worse financial times, or to take care of their (extended) family. Many of these women also had small

¹⁰² Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10, 113.

¹⁰³ Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 21.

¹⁰⁴ Based on the population register of Amsterdam, 1851–1853.

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of rose and brilliant cuts, see Section 3.6.

¹⁰⁶ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 23.

¹⁰⁷ According to Alex Daniels. See “De diamant en de diamantbewerking,” *Eigen haard*, 1875, 419.

¹⁰⁸ Ulla Jansz, “Betje Lazarus (1870–1933),” in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, 2017; Margreet Schrevel, “Een stem in het kapittel. Diamantbewerkers organiseren zich,” in *Een schitterende erfenis. 125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkersbond*, ed. Karin Hofmeester (Zutphen, 2020), 35–56. For life stories of these sisters, go to <https://diamantbewerkers.nl/en/levensverhalen/betje-sophie-lazarus>.

¹⁰⁹ Rapport over huisindustrie uit 1914. Hoofdstuk 10, De diamanthuisindustrie te Amsterdam.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹¹ *Idem*.

ILLUSTRATION 3.4 Cleavers' and cutters' work-space

Anonymous, drawing ca. 1901-1903

Source: Koninklijke Verzamelingen, The Hague.



children, showing that women could work *and* have families. In about a third of cases, the family made use of a maid, less costly than the incomes of female cutters. Unlike men, who worked fulltime nearly all the time, women more often worked fewer hours, potentially explained by the gendered demands of parenting. Consequently, male cutters earned more on average than female cutters, and unmarried women, who worked longer hours on average compared to married women, earned higher wages than their married counterparts. Per hour, women earned less (ca. 0.50 guilders) than men (0.60 guilders), suggesting that men were slightly more productive on average.

3.3.4 Polishers and setters

The majority of the workers were polishers. Together with the diamond setters (or adjusters, Dutch: *diamantverstellers*) they made the last modifications to the diamonds before they were sent out for their respective purposes. Polishers smoothened facets, created by cutters, to allow more light to enter the stones and for them to be placed in jewelry or machinery.¹¹² Large discs or scaifs, spinning horizontally at 2200 to 3000 rounds per minute, were their main tool.¹¹³ Diamonds were fastened in lead cups (*doppen*) using solder and attached to copper rods. Next, a combination of oil and *boort* (diamond powder) were spread on the disc. Polishers then pushed the diamonds on the disc, using specialised pliers weighted down with lead or iron to add pressure, until a facet was smoothened. After each facet was polished, the diamond setter took the rod, placed the cup in a hot oven to melt the solder, and rotated the diamond to centre the next facet. Speed and remuneration varied by worker, as skilled polishers could operate multiple tongs simultaneously.

¹¹² Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10, 229.

¹¹³ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 48, 206.

Illustration 3.5 shows the polishing hall of factory *De Overtoom*, operating in Amsterdam since 1888. On the right we see large windows which allowed an abundance of light to enter the hall. In the middle, mills powered by steam-power, later electricity, spun the polishers' discs. Historically, these mills were attached with large leather belts, creating additional hazards.¹¹⁴ In these factories, polishers and setters suffered most from unhealthy working conditions.¹¹⁵ Poor ventilation in the factories increased risks of developing tuberculosis, while small diamond particles, pushed into the air through the polishing process, worsened respiratory conditions if inhaled. Polishing also required good eyesight, which could be ruined when directly impacted by tiny diamond projectiles.¹¹⁶ It was not uncommon that polishers had to retire early due to worsening eyesight. Setters additionally suffered from lead poisoning from the continuous heating up and cooling down of lead cups and, due to a lack of breaks, eating lunch with unwashed hands.¹¹⁷

Next to the polishers were the setters, positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy. Although these workers were, on average, rather skilled, they themselves did not modify the diamonds directly. Instead, they assisted polishers, often three or four simultaneously, in the polishing process. Skilled setters could additionally help in planning the polishers' work, marking the required polishing techniques in the solder. To polish all 58 facets of a brilliant-cut diamond, a setter needs to 'set' the diamond at least 18 times. The heat and fumes involved in setting made it dangerous and unhealthy work. After a diamond was retrieved from the oven, it was placed in a pool of water to cool down. To assist multiple polishers at the same time, who each worked on multiple diamonds per day, setters' work was often done in a hurry. Skilful setters could therefore earn relatively high wages depending on the number of polishers they assisted. They were, however, clearly below the polishers in the hierarchy. Setters were frequently the bud of polishers' jokes. For instance, according to Sluyser some polishers called setters their "fart catchers,"¹¹⁸ since they were seated back-to-back, as illustrated on the left of Illustration 3.5.

Technical innovations in the twentieth century hit setters the hardest. The 'mechanical cup' (*mechanische dop*), invented in 1904, was able to tighten and loosen diamonds in cups more easily and without using solder. Polishers could operate these mechanical cups autonomously, saving on time, labour costs, and solder. Despite these benefits, the mechanical cup was not introduced widely in the Netherlands, where the historical usage of setters continued. In Germany and France, where polishers had historically done their own setting, and in Antwerp, where relatively small diamonds were produced, the mechanical cup was introduced earlier and implemented more widely.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ In 1853, a 15-year-old girl got stuck in the machinery and soon after died from the injuries. *Algemeen Handelsblad* 07-11-1853.

¹¹⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 251–52.

¹¹⁶ Coronel, "De diamantwerkers te Amsterdam," 1864, 638.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 640–41.

¹¹⁸ Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 28.

¹¹⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 51.

ILLUSTRATION 3.5 Diamond polishing factory 'De Overtoom,' 1917.

Source: Spaarnestad, Het Leven, SFA022809151.



3.3.5 Cleaved stone workers

The union counted one more group that is often overlooked in the literature. So-called cleaved stone workers (*kapbewerkers*) specialised in pieces of diamonds that were removed during the cleaving process. Although Heertje's dissertation is rather detailed regarding the industry and its various specialisations, he only makes one brief mention of this group.¹²⁰ Similarly, the exhaustive publication on the diamond manufacturing process by Vleeschdrager makes little mention of this group.¹²¹ In practice, only few workers specialised in this category; less than one percent of apprentices became cleaved stone workers and no more were added after 1911.

3.3.6 Diamond cuts

While sawyers and cleavers worked with rough diamonds, the rest of the workers were specialised in specific cuts. In Amsterdam, two main cuts were produced: brilliant and rose cuts. Brilliants, shown in panel A of Illustration 3.6, were larger diamonds cut to have a pointy bottom, maximising the amount of light that could enter and return through the diamond, allowing the diamond to sparkle more. Brilliants consisted of two pyramid-like shapes that meet at the middle (*rondist*) and counted 58 facets; 32 in the top half (known as *crown* or *tableside*), 24 in the bottom half (*kollet*-side), one for the top of the brilliant (*table*) and one for the bottom (*kollet*). The majority of the Amsterdam diamond industry specialised in brilliant cuts.

The rose cut was the older cut of the two, being developed in 15th century India; brilliants were developed in 17th century Italy.¹²² Cleaving a rough diamond often

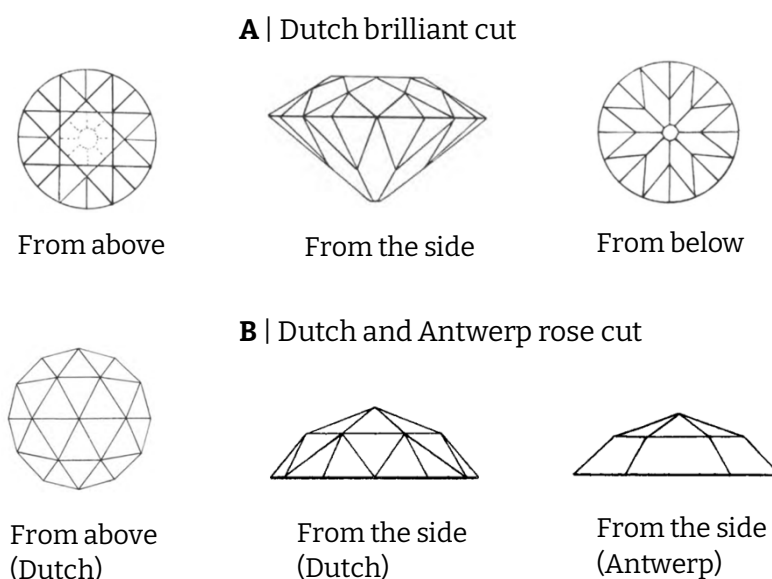
¹²⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹²¹ Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10.

¹²² Ogden, *Diamonds*, 164, 170.

created a flat surface, which was used for the bottom of roses. Roses were generally produced from diamonds deemed too flat or small to create a brilliant, which were made from larger and higher-quality diamonds.¹²³ Due to their flat bottom, Dutch roses only counted 28 facets, making it easier to produce than the larger and more complicated brilliants. Cutters, polishers, and setters were split in brilliant and rose-specialists; the former were, on average, more skilled and received higher wages. Among cutters, women came to dominate the rose-branch earlier than the brilliant-branch.

ILLUSTRATION 3.6 Diamond cuts by angle and view with Antwerp rose-cut as comparison.
Source: Leviticus, *Geïllustreerde encyclopaedie der diamantnijverheid* (1908): 85, 174, 328.



Brilliant cuts were the same in Antwerp and Amsterdam, but rose cuts differed between the two cities. Antwerp roses were less complicated than the Dutch roses, containing only 12 facets.¹²⁴ The difference between the cities' cuts is characteristic for the differences in quality between the two places. Amsterdam diamonds were produced from larger and higher-quality diamonds and required more skill to produce, while Antwerp specialised in smaller diamonds for a larger market.

A third category should be mentioned when describing the Amsterdam diamond industry's composition. Since the 1870s, a large number of Gentiles entered the industry by specialising in *chips*, small residual 'splinters' that were cleaved from rough diamonds.¹²⁵ Chips had irregular sizes and shapes, making them hard to work with, while also being less profitable due to their small sizes. In the past, chips were not considered worthy of production, instead being turned into *boort*. From the Cape Time onwards, chips were primarily produced by Gentiles employed by chips' jewellers in separate factories and produced into either brilliants or roses. These predominantly Gentile workers were paid by their production, whereas the rest, mostly Jewish, workers more

¹²³ Vleeschdrager, *Hardness* 10, 145.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 342; Ogden, *Diamonds*, 160.

¹²⁵ Leviticus, *Geïllustreerde encyclopaedie der diamantnijverheid*, 101.

commonly received fixed hourly wages. Chips workers received lower wages on average, but generally enjoyed more stable employment resulting from working on smaller diamonds, which were less affected by global economic instability. When the industry-wide strike that led to the union in 1894 began, it started in a Gentile chips factory under the lead of Jan van Zutphen, a specialist in chips.¹²⁶

3.3.7 Hierarchy in the industry

Based on this overview, a clear hierarchy can be constructed supported with temporally spread wage estimations. This hierarchy, divided by the share of Jewish and female apprentices, are presented in Table 3.2. Cleavers, who made up the most elite members of the diamond industry, was the specialisation with the highest percentage of Jewish workers. The smallest group of workers outside of the cleaved stone workers, the predominantly Jewish cleavers had been able to bar most Gentiles from their profession. Remarkable is the over-representation of female apprentices in this group. While stereotypically cutting had become known as a woman's job—which, looking at the shares of women among cutters, was largely true—cleaving was another specialisation where women had some opportunities. In line with the share of Jews, 90 percent of female cleavers were Jewish, compared with 88 percent of male cleavers. Outside of the top three positions in the hierarchy, which took place in small-scale *ateliers* above jewellers' offices or in separate rooms of the modern factories, virtually no women worked in other sections. Whether women should be barred from factories or discouraged from working in the industry altogether—for moral or hygienic reasons—was a continuous discussion in the first decades of the union's existence.¹²⁷

TABLE 3.2 The position in the hierarchy, share of Jews, and share of women per specialisation among apprentices, 1904-1940.

Rank	Specialisation	Pct. Jews	Pct. women	Apprentices
1	Cleavers	88.2	30.4	102
2	Brilliant cutters	70.8	83.3	750
3	Rose cutters	75.4	97.4	532
4	Sawyers	70.5	3.2	339
5	Brilliant polishers	66.6	1.0	3346
6	Rose polisher	78.4	5.8	616
7	Cleaved stone workers	50.0	0.0	56
8	Brilliant setters	30.8	4.9	610
9	Rose setters	48.2	5.9	255
Total		65.2	19.0	6606

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Apprentice Cards," release 2019.

Note: numbers are limited to apprentices where a valid specialisation, religion, and gender could be deduced. 833 apprenticeship cards did not report the section of the apprentice; for 231 religion could not be deduced; 27 had insufficient information to distinguish gender.

¹²⁶ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 73.

¹²⁷ See, for instance, *Weekblad* 28-12-1917, "Vrouwenarbeid na de oorlog," regarding the future of women's work after the war.

Jews made up two-thirds of the apprentices but less than half of all setters and less than a third of brilliant setters. While it is possible that this was the result of a growing need for setters in the Gentile diamond factories, specialised in *chips*, it may also reflect a growing cooperation between Jewish polishers and Gentile setters. One suggestion for the latter is a letter from Maurits del Valle (1872–1942), a long-term Jewish member of the union, published in the *Weekblad* in 1932. Maurits remarked on the growing share of Gentile workers in Jewish factories in the previous 20 years, and a noticeable lack of the reverse.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, a clear division remained, where Jews and women occupied the highest positions in the industry, predominantly working outside of the factories, while Gentile men worked in the lowest positions more frequently.

3.4 ANDB and her members: 1894–1919

On November 11, 1894, the industry-wide strike started by Gentile polishers and coopted by Jewish workers had successfully come to an end. Using their combined numbers, the diamonds workers continued their joint efforts and started the *Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond* (ANDB; ‘General Dutch Diamond Workers’ Union’) on the 18th of November 1894. Immediately, the union counted over 6000 members, a number that grew up to 10,000 by the end of the century. The board of the union consisted of three of the strike leaders: the Jewish Henri Polak as president, the Gentile Jan van Zutphen as vice-president, and the Gentile Herman Kuijper as secretary. The board members were instated full-time in 1895, receiving a weekly wage of 24 guilders and making the ANDB the first modern union in the Netherlands.¹²⁹ Although Jewish and Gentile workers stood side-by-side during the strike and were both represented in the new union’s board, one of the first problems the union had to overcome was the lack of solidarity between the two groups.¹³⁰ Jews earned more, even after years of falling wages, and had maintained the highest positions in the industry, leading to envy from Gentile workers.¹³¹ One form in which this was presented to the world were antisemitic slurs towards the Jewish members, including even the president Polak.¹³² Less than a year after the strike, Henri Polak and the other board members resigned from their positions, quickly followed by a plea from the members for them to be reinstated.¹³³ Polak faced much less antisemitism and more cooperation after this act, although ethno-religious tensions never completely disappeared from the union.¹³⁴

In 1895, in response to growing demands by diamond workers, a collective of jewellers and factory owners establish the *Algemeene Juweliersvereniging* (AJV; ‘General Jewellers’ Association’), an organisation to represent the employers in their negotiations with the workers.¹³⁵ In the decades to follow, the ANDB and AJV would continuously clash about working conditions and limits to entry for new workers. The AJV lobbied for lower minimum wages and more apprentices, which would lower the production costs for the employers, while the ANDB mainly aimed for higher wages, shorter workdays, and fewer

¹²⁸ Maurits del Valle, *Weekblad* 23–12–1932, “Joodsche en Christen werklieden.”

¹²⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 80.

¹³⁰ Schrevel, “Een stem in het kapittel,” 40.

¹³¹ Hofmeester, “The Amsterdam Diamond ‘Marketplace’ and the Jewish Experience,” 64–65.

¹³² Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 76.

¹³³ Schrevel, “Een stem in het kapittel,” 41.

¹³⁴ Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 101–2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

apprentices. Their first major showdown occurred in 1897, when the ANDB demanded a complete stop from accepting new apprentices. This was a remarkable step, since fathers and uncles had trained their sons and other family members as diamond workers for centuries, and was met with complaints from union's own members.¹³⁶ However, the *Leerlingbesluit* ('Apprentices' Decision') had to avoid an overcrowding of the industry, which now counted in excess of 10,000 workers. Apprentices under the age of 14, 700 out of 1600 total apprentices, were directly sent away, while older apprentices had to pass health examinations, primarily focused on their eyes, and obtain diplomas more formally.¹³⁷ Until 1904, no new apprentices were accepted, although some 'clandestine' apprentices did sneak into the industry. The union retaliated harshly against members accepting such unauthorised apprentices. The weekly paper called out each rule-breaker by name and address and harassed clandestine apprentices, workers, and their families at home and on the streets. Benima tells the story of one of her interviewees' sister—an educated woman working at Leo Hirsch's office, a co-founder of Jewish-owned fashion house *Maison Hirsch & Cie*—who secretly trained to become a brilliant cutter without becoming a member of the union.¹³⁸ When the union found out, her father was told to evict her from his house, since ANDB members were not allowed to co-reside with clandestine workers. Her father, Maurits, refused and was subsequently kicked out of the union. To continue earning a living, Maurits started producing diamonds in his attic, arousing further ire among union leadership. Soon after, union enforcers patrolled around his house—as happened to other rule-breakers and clandestine workers—and used violence in case of retaliation. Harassment by the organisation forced defiant workers like Maurits and others to decide between joining the union or finding other forms of gainful employment.

3.4.1 *The Beschavingsoffensief of the ANDB*

The ANDB not only used their immense power on the industry to keep their members in line, but also to increase diamond workers' material conditions. Additionally, the union and its leaders made it a primary aim to 'uplift' and 'civilise' the workers.¹³⁹ This was recorded in its statutes from the start and was envisioned through various avenues.¹⁴⁰ Physically, it was seen in the construction of their headquarters, nicknamed *De Burcht* ('The Fortress'). The union additionally offered courses, organised seminars, established clubs for sports and arts, opened a library when public libraries had not yet become commonplace—or had even started in the Netherlands—and provided a weekly newspaper which informed members about the conditions of the diamond industry and trade around the world, but also propagandised better ways of living and offered (translated) fiction. The impact of this *beschavingsoffensief* ('civilising offense') has often been noted by contemporaries and historians.¹⁴¹ For instance, on the 25-year

¹³⁶ Henri Polak advised against such complaints: "those among us who, given the circumstances, still protest against the *leerlingbesluit*, are nothing than the worst enemies of themselves, their colleagues, and the apprentices." *Weekblad ANDB* 23-09-1898, "Dreigende gevaren."

¹³⁷ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 89–90.

¹³⁸ Tamarah Benima, *Kippesoep was ondenkbaar zonder saffraan. Joods leven in Nederland vóór 1940* (The Hague, 1983), 12–14.

¹³⁹ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben....," 110.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁴¹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 151.

anniversary of the ANDB in 1919, the Amsterdam city government praised Henri Polak directly for his prolific efforts to improve the material, mental, and intellectual wellbeing of Amsterdam's working classes:

"If someone says Henri Polak in the Netherlands, then that means: organisation. It also means development, capabilities, and science. It has never been your goal to strive [only] for higher wages and shorter workdays, it was a means to an end: to reach 'civilisation.'" ¹⁴²

Some have remarked that the uplifting influence the union had on its workers had a greater impact on Jewish than Gentile workers.¹⁴³ How this affected the integration of Jewish workers and the differences in social mobility patterns between the groups will be one of the main topics in the chapters to come. Here, I will provide a detailed account of the opportunities available to the workers.

De Burcht

After the union was founded, board meetings were organised in small rooms above local cafes (panels A and B of Illustration 3.7). After some successful years, however, the union decided to invest in their own headquarters. In 1898, the union purchased a plot of land for 26,000 guilders in the Plantagebuurt, a neighbourhood of Amsterdam that had historically been used for community gardens but had opened up for (upscale) residential housing in the 1860s. The union hired famous architect Hendrik Berlage (1856–1934) to design and build their headquarters. After two years of construction, building concluded in July 1900 and *De Burcht* (panel D) opened its doors for union members. The building is impressive in its own right, but especially so considering no union in the Netherlands had owned their own office space before. The fortress-like facade and imposing stairs acted as symbols for the elevation and the power of the workers;¹⁴⁴ many diamond workers have, in their memories, remarked about the stature of the building and these characteristics.¹⁴⁵ The interior of the building was no less remarkable.¹⁴⁶ Stately wall paintings by leading artist Richard Roland Holst depicting the ideal combination of work, sleep, and learning; poetic writings by leading Socialist thinker Henriette Roland Holst; stained glass windows; and, since 1919, an imposing chandelier purchased and gifted by the members of the union.¹⁴⁷ The large expenses for the building, which opened at the time of an economic crisis in the industry, led to complaints about the financial decision-making early on.¹⁴⁸ Yet, today it remains a testament to the lasting influence the union had on its workers, their families, and Amsterdam as a whole. In the words of Sluyser, who grew up in the diamond workers' milieu as the son of a Jewish diamond worker:

¹⁴² Ibid., 172.

¹⁴³ De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 733; Kleerekoper, "Het joodse proletariaat," 220; Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 645.

¹⁴⁴ De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 743.

¹⁴⁵ Meyer Sluyser, *Als de dag van gisteren...* (Utrecht, 1958), 147–48; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 153, 154.

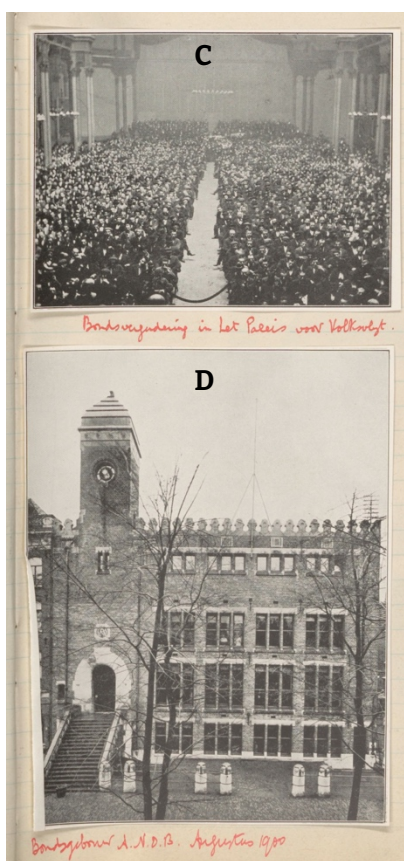
¹⁴⁶ Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 326, 494.

¹⁴⁷ Schrevel, "Een stem in het kapittel," 46. The lamp is depicted on the cover of Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*.

¹⁴⁸ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 98; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 150–51.

“The city was proud of Berlage’s creation. But for the members of the union, *De Burcht* was a Temple.”¹⁴⁹

ILLUSTRATION 3.7 Clippings from Henri Polak’s picture book
Source: ARCH00210, #8011.



A | ANDB office
Nov. 1894 – April 1895

B | ANDB office
April 1895 – August 1900

C | Union meeting in
Paleis voor Volksvlijt
(‘Palace for Industry’)

D | ANDB headquarters
August 1900 onwards

The library

Besides its emancipatory outward beauty, another considerable benefit for the workers was housed inside *De Burcht*. Since November 1895, a development club *Kennis is Macht* (‘Knowledge is Power’) formed among union members with the goal to initiate a library for diamond workers. This was highly unusual since, at this time, public libraries did not yet exist in the Netherlands. Small-scale initiatives were started by union factions, most notably the brilliant polishers, and these libraries merged and became open to all members in the main library in the *De Burcht* in 1902. Beyond the ever-growing quantity of books, a particular emphasis was placed on the quality of the books: the library’s catalogue was co-established by a long list of professors, doctorates, and authors and Socialist works and non-fiction were especially promoted.¹⁵⁰ Particular favourites were plays by Herman Heijermans and Victor Hugo, consistently ranking as the most-read

¹⁴⁹ Sluysers, *Als de dag van gisteren...*, 146.

¹⁵⁰ Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*, 152.

authors.¹⁵¹ The non-fiction included many topics, including virtually all works published globally on diamond production.¹⁵² The library showcased extensive activity from its inception. In 1900, it counted seven committee members, lent out 8000 books, and was home to the *Snijdsters-Ontwikkelingsclub* ('Female Cutters' Development Club'), which motivated female diamond workers to join the union.¹⁵³ The number of readers and books read increased steadily over the year. In 1906, over 16,000 books were lent; a year later nearly 22,000; and in 1908 close to 40,000. This steep increase was the result of a crisis and unemployment, suggesting that periods of downtime encouraged workers to apply oneself to literature to pass the time. Thus, thousands of workers, among which many women—who were always equally or over-represented among the readers¹⁵⁴—made great use of the library over the years. The impressive numbers presented by the union, however, undercount actual readership, since children and other family members frequently read the works borrowed by their diamond worker relative.¹⁵⁵

Besides the availability of the books, the power of ANDB's library was spread by the persons who worked in it. The administrators "did their work out of love for the *belles-lettres* and sciences" and "knew the catalogue by heart," praised Sluyser.¹⁵⁶ The introduction to the catalogue was written by Michel van Campen—a diamond worker turned librarian, editor of ANDB weekly *Het Jonge Leven* ('Young Life'), and literary critic. In the catalogue, Van Campen added hundreds of notes describing certain authors and their works.¹⁵⁷ Like Polak, he contributed immensely to the 'civilisation' of the diamond workers and the working classes at large.¹⁵⁸ Thanks to the efforts of people like Henri Polak and Michel van Campen, "those people awakened... and started reading."¹⁵⁹ They not only made use of the ANDB's library, were also inspired to start their own, as was true for Jacques Presser's and Meyer Sluyser's fathers. For some, this was an immense change from the past. Joop Voet tells of his father, future ANDB administrator and president Herman Isidore Voet, that there had been a "hiatus" in his life after finishing primary school and commencing work in a diamond factory.¹⁶⁰ "He did not read, he did not write, until he came in touch with the ANDB... The ANDB pushed people to continue developing themselves."¹⁶¹ The immense impact of the library as a cultural and intellectual institution was not lost on Henri Polak; the first suggestion he made as president of the newly-established federation of trade unions in 1905 was to start a library.¹⁶²

¹⁵¹ *Verslag van de verrichtingen der Commissie voor het Maatschappelijk Werk over het jaar 1915*, 88–93.

¹⁵² Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 152.

¹⁵³ Schrevel, "Een stem in het kapittel," 47.

¹⁵⁴ Based on statistics published in annual reports of the ANDB between 1901 and 1923. For instance, in 1907 women made up 25 percent of the 679 subscribed readers, and in 1914 they were 20 percent of the 1423 readers of the main library. In contrast, women made up roughly 19 percent of all ANDB members.

¹⁵⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 155–56.

¹⁵⁶ Sluyser, *Als de dag van gisteren...*, 139–41.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁵⁸ He was also credited with discovering author Maurits Dekker. In Dekker's biography, David de Jong (1898–1963), himself the son of a Jewish diamond worker, wrote about Michel's societal contributions. David de Jong, *Maurits Dekker. Zijn persoon en zijn werk* (Leiden, 1946), 32–33; See also De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 736.

¹⁵⁹ Philo Bregstein, *Gesprekken met Jacques Presser* (Amsterdam, 1972), 12.

¹⁶⁰ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 152–53.

¹⁶¹ *Idem.*

¹⁶² De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 735.

Weekblad van den ANDB

The ANDB further spread the love for the written word through their periodical. From the start, the ANDB shared information regarding the different types of ANDB board meetings and news from global diamond trade and production centres with their members through the *Weekblad van den ANDB* ('ANDB Weekly'). In 1895, the weekly already had a circulation of 7000.¹⁶³ The header of the newsletter was designed by Berlage by special request from Henri Polak.¹⁶⁴ Henri Polak combined his presidency with the role of editor uninterrupted from 1895 until 1940. In the weeklies, Polak used his oratory prowess to connect with the members in a language everyone could understand.¹⁶⁵ By allowing them to also publish their life events—birth, marriages, and bereavement—the *Weekblad* read like a family paper.¹⁶⁶ Also important were the letters by members published by the weekly commonly with a response from Polak or another board member.¹⁶⁷ Early on, Polak included translated English fiction and published these as *feuilletons* in part.¹⁶⁸ Later, these were replaced by more practical and non-fiction articles to the benefit of the workers, such as “the hygiene of the eye” by a medical professional to deal with the common eye problems among diamond workers.¹⁶⁹ Polak also asked others to contribute with notable examples including Henriëtte van der Meij, who frequently wrote about the plight of women and their role in industrial labour and society,¹⁷⁰ and David Vieijra, a diamond worker with an affinity for archival work who expounded on the industry’s history.

However, Polak also used the newsletter to put the workers in their place when he felt it was needed. Those fined or expelled for breaking union rules were publicly announced in the weeklies. When members showed little interest in the activities or events of the union, the editor could be ruthless in his denouncing words, describing them as “unworthy and ridiculous *parvenus*.”¹⁷¹ He was also clear in his attempts to civilise the workers through his articles, educating them grammar, the dangers of alcoholism, the best types of furniture, and most frequently the need for Social Democracy.¹⁷² In later years he also became more vocal about the value of education, the arts and sciences; especially in *Het Jonge Leven* ('Young Life'), a second weekly introduced in 1910 aimed at more adolescent diamond workers who had not witnessed the union’s successes so personally.¹⁷³ This publication was also read more outside of the diamond workers’ circle.¹⁷⁴

The library, weeklies, and all other educational activities—of which there were too many to list—led to the moral and intellectual uplifting of the workers. They transformed the diamond workers, who had been known as “the rotting cabbage at the

¹⁶³ Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 72.

¹⁶⁴ Idem.

¹⁶⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 150–51.

¹⁶⁶ Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 109.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁶⁸ Idem.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 110–11.

¹⁷⁰ For instance Henriëtte van der Meij’s series on female labour in Germany published between 31-01-1908 and 05-06-1908 and labour force participation of married women published on 07-10-1910 and 14-10-1910.

¹⁷¹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 156.

¹⁷² Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 111, 114, 507.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 317, 499–502; Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 111.

¹⁷⁴ Kleerekoper, “Het joodse proletariaat,” 219.

greengrocer,” to a union of workers worthy of envy and respect which, according to Henri Polak, “was thanks only due to the civilising, uplifting power of the organisation.”¹⁷⁵ Even in the worst of times, the union always ensured that cultural and intellectual development activities were the last categories to face budget cuts.¹⁷⁶ Personal stories attest that diamond worker’s children reaped the benefits of this.¹⁷⁷ Salomon Mok, a clear example of this intergenerational progress—a lawyer and alderman born in a Jewish diamond worker’s family—speaks for all his peers who, like him, was able to gain an education thanks to the union’s efforts to keep wages liveable and motivated a generation of workers to invest in themselves and their offspring.¹⁷⁸

While the above discussion evidences the emancipatory impact of the union on the workers and their families, so far little is known regarding the impact on their children’s life outcomes.¹⁷⁹ This will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 8, whereas changes in the lives of the diamond workers themselves are examined in Chapters 5 through 7. Below we will continue with our discussion of changing conditions in the diamond industry.

3.4.2 *Fluctuating employment until World War I*

In his dissertation, Heertje refers to the years 1894 up to 1904 as the ‘romantic period.’¹⁸⁰ In these early years, the union booked many successes: unionising the workers, setting minimum wages, providing them with unemployment benefits, opening their headquarters, and avoid destabilisation of the industry by banning additional apprentices. Although crises did not disappear, such as the one caused by the Third Boer War (1899–1902), generally these years are considered among the best for the diamond workers. In fact, after the war in South Africa ended and employment in Amsterdam was at full capacity in 1903, the AJV demanded to introduce new apprentices to the industry. The ANDB board and members are opposed to this; employment is steady and wages are increasing. In Antwerp, where the same discussion is taking place between employees and employers, the latter hold the opinion that they alone can decide the number of apprentices. When Belgian employers place a number of apprentices in their factories, the Belgian workers strike, quickly followed by the solidary members in Amsterdam.¹⁸¹ In Belgium, the smaller ADB with lower contribution payments has less bargaining power than the Amsterdam ANDB. Consequently, the ANDB has to financially support the strike in Belgium too. In Amsterdam, solidarity and financial support is asked from workers in other industries, which allows the strike to continue for a considerable length. The strike in Antwerp ended in June of 1904, with workers accepting conditions to introduce 300 apprentices in trade for a 9.5-hour workday immediately and a nine-hour working day starting in 1905. In Amsterdam, the compromise is similar: 500 apprentices for 9.5-hour workday, higher wages, and an unbiased committee to select and place the apprentices. This makes the diamond workers in Amsterdam and Antwerp

¹⁷⁵ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 23–11–1900, “Uit den goeden ouden tijd.”

¹⁷⁶ De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 739.

¹⁷⁷ For more personal stories regarding the impact of the diamond industry and the union, see Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 48–58, 149–63.

¹⁷⁸ Salomon Mok, *Weekblad* 16–11–1934, “Een woord van dank.”

¹⁷⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*, 225–26; De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 742.

¹⁸⁰ Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*, 79.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 105; Martine Vermandere and Karin Hofmeester, “Internationale solidariteit uit zelfbehoud. Antwerpen onttoont Amsterdam,” in *Een schitterende erfenis. 125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkerbond*, ed. Karin Hofmeester (Zutphen, 2020), 84–86.

the first workers in Europe to attain an official nine-hour workday. Their working conditions, including the high wages, unemployment benefits, and their library, make the Amsterdam diamond workers among the most envied in Europe.

Although their working conditions were improving, recurrent instability, caused by economic crises and political conflicts around the world, increased scepticism about the future of lapidary employment in Amsterdam. In the 1910 annual review of the union, the board writes:

“During all of 1910 employment was frequent; unemployment was of little meaning, and some branches were exceptionally lively. [...]. Yet nobody felt especially cheerful in these 12 months. People almost continuously had the indefinable feeling that something threatening was lurking.”¹⁸²

The Knickerbocker Crisis in the United States (1907–1908), Xinhai Revolution in China (1911), Russo–Persian War (1911), Italo–Turkish War (1911–1912), and the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) all contributed to this continuous feeling of a lurking threat. Nonetheless, significant victories were attained amidst these global crises. In 1910, the union announced the introduction of the first unpaid vacation week. They also achieved the first eight-hour working day in Europe in 1911, a feat that is abundantly celebrated in factories across the city.¹⁸³ Well-attended concerts in Artis, the *Paleis voor Volksvlijt* and the *Concertgebouw* mark the peaks of the celebrations. This period, therefore, was characterised by both ups and downs; a strengthening of the workers’ labour conditions with worsening future prospects.

The First World War destabilised the global diamond trade. This led to a complete standstill in the Amsterdam diamond industry. Thanks to state assistance, diamond workers received unemployment benefits without immediately burning through their union treasury.¹⁸⁴ While the Netherlands was able to remain neutral, Belgium was invaded in 1914. As Belgian workers were mobilised to protect their country, the Amsterdam diamond industry was able to continue production in 1915. Demand was created in the United States through war profits.¹⁸⁵ Many Belgian refugees sought refuge in the Netherlands. Flemish Belgians fled to Amsterdam, while ‘foreign Belgians’—predominantly Austrian, German, and Russian Jews—settled in Scheveningen.¹⁸⁶ There, Belgian employers paid workers wages under subsistence level.

After the war ended, the Antwerp diamond centre extended great effort to get their dispersed workers and traders back. During this recovery period, the Amsterdam diamond centre thrived. In 1919, one year after the war ended, the diamond centre in Amsterdam celebrated stable employment and the 25-year anniversary of the ANDB. While the industry in Antwerp was still recovering from the war, the Amsterdam industry was able to run at capacity.¹⁸⁷ The year is therefore characterised by festivities by the then nearly 11,000 grateful members of the union during a two-week celebration. To celebrate the ANDB’s anniversary, members re-enacted the 1894 strike, and

¹⁸² *Jaarverslag 1910*, 1.

¹⁸³ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 142.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁸⁶ Vermandere and Hofmeester, “Internationale solidariteit uit zelfbehoud,” 92.

¹⁸⁷ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 170.

presented the board with a lamp, created by the award-winning designer Jan Eisenloeffel,¹⁸⁸ for the headquarters.¹⁸⁹ In the decades to come, the industry would not see another year as good as this one.

3.5 A Rapid Decline: 1920–1940

The triumphant year of 1919, which marked the 25th anniversary of the ANDB and a golden year in terms of employment, was followed by a catastrophic 1920. The disastrous conditions started as a slowdown in the winter of 1919, but by 1920, “[the] setback grew into a formidable crisis at a frightening speed, one that would last longer and would be larger than any other the current-day workers have ever known.”¹⁹⁰ In the first weeks of the year, an average of 2000 (out of 11,000) were unemployed per week. This number grew steadily, surpassing 6000 in April. Prices for rough diamonds were increasing, the result of the De Beers company’s limiting of diamond extraction, simultaneous with a decline in demand for polished diamonds, dampening profit margins of employers at the cost of the workers.¹⁹¹ This crisis, attenuated by various factors, marked the end of Amsterdam’s 300-year reign as the premier diamond production centre, making place for Antwerp to overtake them. Why was Antwerp, which faced the same global economic fluctuations, able to achieve dominance?

While Amsterdam and Antwerp both faced the same price policies of the De Beers company, the latter was able to recover much more easily. The growing power of the Antwerp centre as a result became the main reason for the downfall of the Amsterdam diamond industry. Initially, the resurgence of the diamond industry in Antwerp had been of little consequence to Amsterdam. Since the discovery of diamonds in South Africa, Antwerp’s centre had grown gradually. In 1895, the ANDB assisted their Belgian colleagues in establishing the ADB, the Belgian equivalent of the ANDB, in hopes to standardise work conditions and remuneration across borders, thereby eliminating international wage competition. One of the main reasons for the demise of Amsterdam’s diamond industry, as a result of the resurgence of Antwerp’s diamond centre, was the relative strength in these two unions. In Amsterdam, the union was strong and booked many victories in improving the living and working conditions of their members. In Antwerp, the union was weaker and unable to prevent workers from working below minimum wages. Consequently, the ANDB was unable to compete with the low wages offered in Antwerp.

In Amsterdam, diamond workers were predominantly Jewish and native Dutch. In Antwerp and surrounding areas, workers consisted of three groups: Dutch and Flemish diamond workers with a history in the industry, Eastern European Jews that moved to Belgium since 1881, and Belgian farmers in the Antwerp countryside. While the first group generally joined the ADB, the other two groups hardly unionised or did so in their own organisations. The Jews and countryside workers worked long hours on average for low wages and were unable to be stopped by the union. With weaker control of the union

¹⁸⁸ Jan Eisenloeffel (1876–1957) was an Amsterdam-born goldsmith and designer. In 1900 his designs won a gold medal at the 1900 Paris Exposition.

¹⁸⁹ Displayed on the cover of Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*.

¹⁹⁰ *Jaarverslag 1918–1921*, 2.

¹⁹¹ Esther Göbel and Daniël Metz, “Diamantjoden. Teloorgang van de industrie en de Bond,” in *125 jaar nalatenschap van de Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkersbond*, ed. Karin Hofmeester (Zutphen, 2020), 105.

on the apprenticeship system, Belgian diamonds were generally of worse quality. Antwerp had already specialised in the production of smaller diamonds.¹⁹² They were enabled in avoiding wage policies by a wide electricity network, introduced in the early-1920s, which created opportunities for such a decentralised industry. Farmers with seasonal unemployment were able to redesign their barns into small diamond polishing workplaces. Furthermore, whereas Amsterdam traders and jewellers depended on diamonds from the De Beers Syndicate, the more capital-intensive Belgian traders—supported by Belgian banks—were also able to obtain diamonds at more affordable prices by buying in larger quantities and were additionally aided through buying directly from diamond mines in Congo.¹⁹³

On top of this, living conditions were generally more expensive in Amsterdam. The devaluation of the Belgian franc and lower tax rate made the average living costs in Antwerp much lower than in Amsterdam. As a result, production in Antwerp could always be performed more profitably—and workers accepted lower wages—even if minimum wages were lower in Antwerp than in Amsterdam. Thus, when the AJV enforced lower wages in 1920, so did the ADB, creating the same employment situation with worse pay for all workers. Only the quality and historical significance of Amsterdam, which still was the main producer of larger and higher-quality diamonds, allowed it to continue production in the 1920s. However, demand for diamonds increasingly shifted, or was limited, to smaller and cheaper diamonds, especially after the *Great Depression*, which lowered trust in minerals and jewels as an investment or saving device.

The crisis in the 1920s led to a stark reduction in the number of workers and members in the Amsterdam diamond industry and union. The union counted over 10,000 members in 1919, which dropped below 6000 by 1924. As Figure 3.2 illustrates, members from all sections of the union left at more or less the same speed, although cutters appeared to leave at quicker rates than setters. Sawyers were somewhat of an exception in the overall trend. While they saw a steep decline between 1919 and 1922, the sawyers recovered earlier; by 1926, sawyers were more numerous than they had ever been. The shrinking share of cleavers suggests that sawyers increasingly replaced the work of cleavers.

One way Amsterdam diamond workers combatted the faltering employment opportunities in their own city was to migrate to Antwerp. While this migration had been common as a way to deal with temporary unemployment or as a means to move upward in the industry, it peaked in the 1920s despite increasing union bans on moves to Antwerp. Between 1919 and 1924, thousands of diamond workers migrated once or several times to Antwerp to deal with their unemployment.¹⁹⁴ As employment recovered in 1924 for the now much smaller group of workers in Amsterdam, migration to Antwerp fell. After 1930, migration to Antwerp was rarely used as a strategy. Figure 3.3 demonstrates that it was particularly cleavers and brilliant polishers that left for Antwerp. Employment opportunities for rose-cut workers had already been on the decline in Amsterdam before the 1920 crisis and would disappear almost entirely due to changes in the taste for diamonds.

¹⁹² Eric Laureys, *Meesters van het Diamant* (Tielt, 2005), 70.

¹⁹³ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 179; Laureys, *Meesters van het Diamant*, 71.

¹⁹⁴ See the Figure in Chapter 6.4.

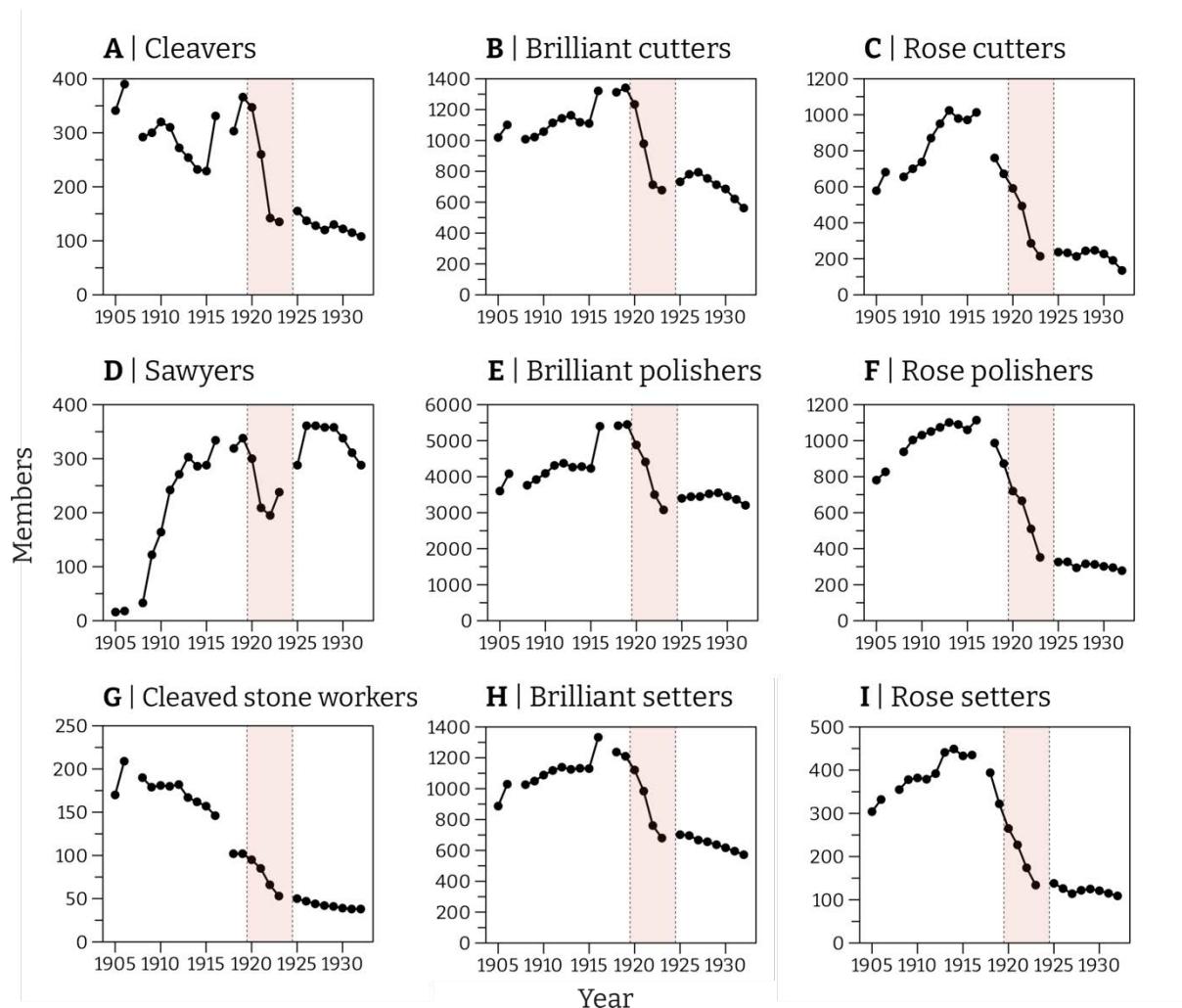


FIGURE 3.2 Members per specialisations at the start of each year, 1905-1932.

Source: annual reports ANDB and ANDB *Weekblad*.

Note: no counts available for 1907, 1917, and 1924.

However, moving to Antwerp was rarely a long-term solution. It entailed leaving behind one's family, friends, and overall support system. It also meant accepting worse working conditions for lower wages than one was used to. Moreover, Amsterdam diamond workers were rarely met with enthusiasm in Antwerp. While diamond workers, especially Jewish ones, were able to use their networks in Amsterdam, in Antwerp these networks had little impact. Jews in the Antwerp diamond industry were mostly of Eastern European descent and made up at most 30 percent of workers. They had their own organisations and mainly spoke Yiddish;¹⁹⁵ in Amsterdam, Jews had largely stopped speaking Yiddish since the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, the lacklustre employment opportunities combined with social isolation often meant that workers returned within a couple of months. Figure 3.4 shows the distribution of the number of months until return migration happened; over half of diamonds workers returned within half a year, although most frequently they returned within a month or two.

¹⁹⁵ Janiv Stamberger, "Dutch Jews and the Dutch Jewish Colony in Antwerp during the Heydays of Eastern European Jewish Immigration to Belgium, 1900-1940," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 47.2 (2021): 154.

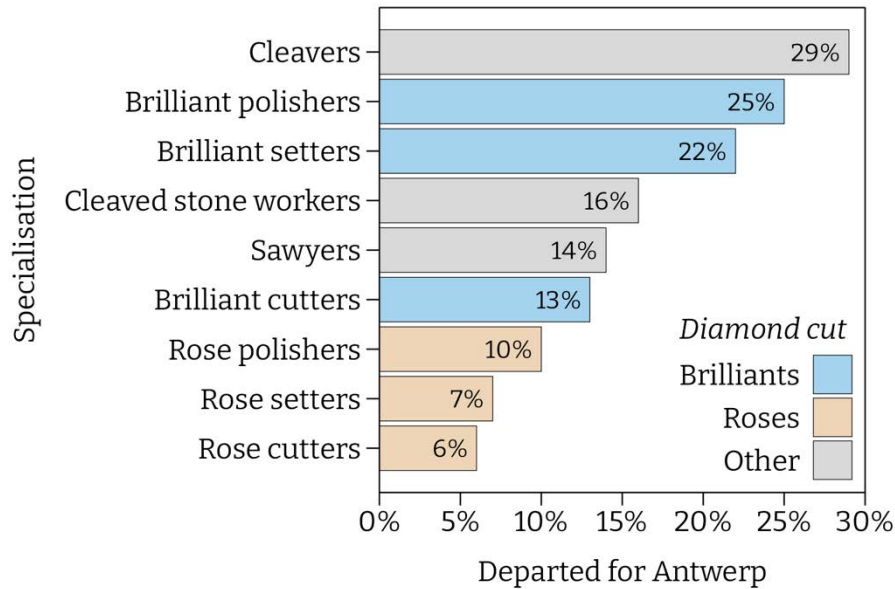


FIGURE 3.3 Share of workers departing for Antwerp per specialisation, 1898-1940.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: migration to Antwerp is measured during union memberships, not complete life courses, and should therefore be considered as lower-bound estimates of out-migration. For lifetime migration, see Figure 6.10.

In the 1930s, the diamond industry offered a decent existence only for a select few. By 1940, most diamond workers had left for greener pastures. In Chapter 4 we will discuss where their children ended up. In Chapter 6 we shall see how the diamond workers themselves moved on to new careers.

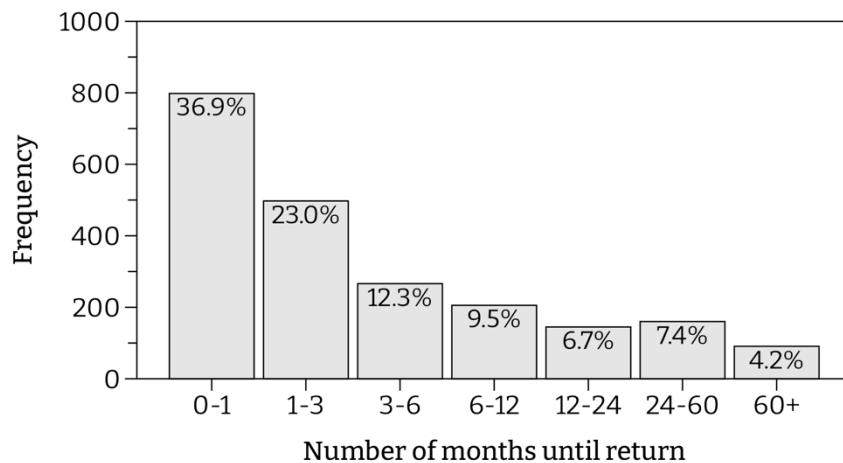


FIGURE 3.4 Months until return migration from Antwerp, 1898-1940

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Membership Cards," release 2021.

Note: included are all ANDB members who migrated to Antwerp with a certificate granted by the union and a recorded return date; percentages inside the bars are relative frequencies based on 2163 return migrants.

3.6 What makes the diamond industry special?

This dissertation aims to study the social mobility and integration trajectories of Jewish diamond workers across different life domains, for both men and women, and examine how they navigated the conditions in the diamond industry and larger society to improve their chances of upward mobility. In this chapter overviewing the history of the diamond industry and the characteristics of its workers, we have found several aspects to the diamond industry that may have impacted their mobility trends in a way different from other industries or occupational groups. Before we turn to Part II of this dissertation, covering our in-depth analyses of mobility, let us take a moment here to summarise the unique characteristics of the diamond industry relevant for those analyses.

1. *The diamond industry was a historical Jewish economic niche.*

Although the diamond industry had been home to Jewish workers since the seventeenth century, and was dominated by Jewish traders since its arrival, the industry can be considered most Jewish between 1748, when the Amsterdam city council refused to allow a guild to operate in the industry, until 1870, when thousands of Gentile diamond workers joined the ranks of diamond workers. This century of near-complete domination allowed Jewish diamond workers to reinforce their positions at the top of the industry's hierarchy. Cleavers, the 'aristocrats' of the industry, was a rank of workers virtually closed to Gentiles. This group, earning the highest wages and with the strongest connections, were in the best position to achieve upward mobility in the future. The position of Gentile workers at the bottom rungs of the industry, over-represented among the setters and polishers, likely affected their mobility rates negatively. In the terminology of Charles Tilly,¹⁹⁶ this process of 'opportunity hoarding' was rather unique: in few cases was it the minority group of Jews, rather than the mainstream group of Gentiles, that was able to hoard opportunities within an industry. However, while the high concentration of Jews placed them in better positions for social mobility, it may also have hampered their integration into wider Dutch society, as it allowed them to remain isolated from the Gentiles population. After all, in the diamond factories both their employers and co-workers were nearly exclusively Jewish. This will be further discussed and tested in further chapters.

2. *The diamond industry was home to the strongest union in the country.*

Before the union was founded, the reputation of diamond workers was in shambles. Astronomically high wages during the *Cape Time* presented them with unfamiliar financial decisions. While some were able to save their earnings or invest it successfully, others lost all their money in poor housing investments, booze, and prostitutes.¹⁹⁷ The latter group, condescendingly referred to as *Capers*, became the stereotype for diamond workers, one that often would be referred to by board members of the union to reemphasise their own role in 'civilising' the workers:

"What reputation we had then in all social circles, as well as labourers from other trades? *The diamond worker was an example of debauchery, wanton, vulgarity and frivolity.*

¹⁹⁶ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley, 1998), 153–54.

¹⁹⁷ Polak, *De strijd der diamantbewerders*, 16–17.

How our reputation has changed! ... A diamond worker is no longer a beast in everyone's eyes; he has become a man, aware of his own self worth."¹⁹⁸

— Adolf Samson de Levita, 1899

"The diamond workers used to be known as the *rotten cabbage* at the greengrocer. [...]. Now nobody would think of speaking of the diamond workers in such a contemptuous manner... *thanks to the educative and uplifting power of the organisation.*"¹⁹⁹

— Henri Polak, 1900

Even after the diamond industry collapsed and few workers remained in the industry, the board and members frequently referred to their past achievements. "We are proud that, despite all that we have lost, we still have our working hours" wrote David Kuijt in 1935.²⁰⁰ To Selma Leydesdorff, historian of the Jewish working-class, the "educative and uplifting power" Henri Polak refers to was little more than a thin layer of paint: "[w]hat was once the proud culture of the diamond workers steadily degenerated into the lost glory of an increasingly rough group of hard-core unemployed."²⁰¹ But even Leydesdorff, who did not believe strongly in the lasting impact of the ANDB's civilising work, attests that "[a]t the most, there were differences in attitudes towards the education of the children and in the attempts to ensure that the children would get on in life."²⁰² While most of the prestige of the diamond industry and the union had dissipated in the 1920s, others, especially skilled workers in Amsterdam, continued to respect what the union had done for the labour movement as a whole. Political figures such as Henri Polak and Monne de Miranda, descendants from Jewish diamond worker families, continued to showcase the workers' achievements on a larger stage by being living examples.

Through its organisation, the ANDB aimed to uplift the workers and inspire their continued self-development. If nothing else, the messaging from the union and possibilities created by them increased the desire for further learning among workers and their offspring. On large murals in the board room of the union, periodically open to contemporary visitors, three persons are depicted, symbolising work, study, and sleep. Reductions in daily work hours allowed workers more time for self-improvement. The library that the union founded presented the workers and their children the unique opportunity to do so. "The library was not just there for lending out books," Meyer Sluyser, writer and son of a Jewish diamond worker, wrote, "but also to instruct in the fine arts and sciences."²⁰³ When new union members first arrived at the library, the librarian would do his best to send him on a journey of self-discovery. Meyer, like many other sons and daughters of diamond workers,²⁰⁴ read all the books that his father gathered. The ANDB's *Commissie voor Maatschappelijk Werk* ('Committee for Social Work') provided further opportunities, offering classes, study trips, and a plethora of clubs related to academics, art, and sports, which enabled workers to pursue their

¹⁹⁸ Adolf Samson de Levita, *Weekblad* 02-06-1899, "Onze toekomst."

¹⁹⁹ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 23-11-1900, "Uit den goeden ouden tijd."

²⁰⁰ David Kuijt, *Weekblad* 15-03-1935, "Ongelooflijk, maar waar gebleken."

²⁰¹ Leydesdorff, *We Lived with Dignity*, 61.

²⁰² Idem.

²⁰³ Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 58-59.

²⁰⁴ Benima, *Kippesoep was ondenkbaar zonder saffraan*, 50-51.

interests. A significant share of workers, when faced with long bouts of unemployment, were able to turn these interests into careers.

The strong union also benefited women specifically. Women were able to join the industry, and through the efforts of pioneering women, the union also maintained equal wages for men and women in the twentieth century. As a result, working in the diamond industry became an especially attractive position for mainly Jewish women. The union administration provides uniquely informative overviews of women's careers, who otherwise are often left under-reported or ignored.

3. Jewish diamond workers were often unemployed.

Paradoxically—unemployment can hardly be described as a positive thing—the frequent periods of unemployment may have benefitted diamond workers, and their children, in the long run. During periods of unemployment, unemployment benefits provided diamond workers with time to spend. Many diamond workers turned to reading when unemployed, illustrated by rising activities at the union library during slumps. Additionally, their unstable employment regularly forced diamond workers to consider their own and their children's future. This was especially true for Jewish workers, who specialised in larger diamonds for higher wages but lower work stability. “For the former diamond workers, the crises and labour conditions in the diamond industry were a good bridge that brought them to other occupations” wrote Heertje about the effect of regular unemployment.²⁰⁵ Increasingly, Henri Polak and the ANDB board advised young workers and parents to consider other employment opportunities alongside educating their children.²⁰⁶ This shaped how the workers felt about the future. When Jules Schelvis, son of a Jewish diamond worker, informed his father he wanted to work in the printing industry in 1932, his father suggested that he continue his education first: skilled workers that had knowledge, good language skills, and a proper education beyond their job would have better future prospects.²⁰⁷

Summary

The diamond industry played a central role in the economic lives of Amsterdam Jews since the seventeenth century. Early on, it provided Jews with a trade when few others were open to them. During the *Cape Time* and subsequent years, thousands of Jews—and Gentiles—were able to move up the social ladder by forgoing their prior professions and entering the diamond industry. Many of their children thereafter followed them into the diamond industry in the 1880s and 1890s. For many women entering the industry, this career provided much better conditions than they could have obtained elsewhere; female breadwinners were not uncommon in the industry.

Since 1894, with the establishment of the union, working conditions improved significantly in the diamond industry, which affected several factors that could allow for increased future mobility.²⁰⁸ Each of these factors may have pushed diamond workers to have greater career and intergenerational mobility. With more time and better resources

²⁰⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 225.

²⁰⁶ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 20-08-1920, “Het zoeken van werk in een ander bedrijf.”

²⁰⁷ Jules Schelvis, *Een jeugd in Amsterdam: herinneringen van een overlevende van Sobibor* (Amsterdam, 2011), 83.

²⁰⁸ Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 63.

to invest in education, greater incentives to invest in self-improvement and educating themselves and their children, and more frequent occasions at which unemployment asked them the question of social mobility, Jewish diamond workers were likely more aware and pre-occupied with the future than Amsterdammers in other occupational groups. Stronger networks and positions within the industry, bound by both strong and weak ties commonly between co-ethnics,²⁰⁹ provided more capital to be invested in these futures. Salomon Mok, son of a Jewish diamond worker, thanked the union in a personal letter in 1934 for providing his father, and other diamond workers like him, the possibility to send their children to university.²¹⁰ Political ties, particularly with the Socialist SDAP, created new opportunities for upward mobility as well as societal credibility. Thus, with the influence of the union, it is unsurprising that diamond workers were over-represented in several clubs and societies, including members of the Socialist political parties,²¹¹ members of art club *Kunst aan het Volk* ('Art to the People'),²¹² and chess players.²¹³ Compared to other Jewish workers, those with backgrounds in the diamond industry were in especially good positions to avoid downward mobility, obtain better societal positions, and offer their children a better future. The upcoming chapters will examine whether this indeed led to more social mobility and quicker integration.

²⁰⁹ Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78.6 (1973): 1360–80.

²¹⁰ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 226–27.

²¹¹ Van Horssen and Rietveld, "Socialisten in Amsterdam."

²¹² Marc Adang, *Voor sociaal-democratie, smaakopvoeding en verheffing. De Amsterdamse vereniging Kunst aan het Volk, 1903-1928* (Amsterdam, 2008), 60.

²¹³ Eddy van Amerongen, *Nog slechts herinnering... Mijn vooroorlogs Joods Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 2002), 65–70.

4

Bright Prospects or Dull Realities? Occupational Following and Intergenerational Mobility

“But there is still another group of intellectuals and artists, who owe gratitude to the union and rightfully do not withhold their appreciation. *These are the sons and daughters of diamond workers*, who were able to enjoy an academic education, since the union had paid [their parents] sufficiently to afford such an education.”
(Emphasis mine)

— Henri Polak¹

4.1 Introduction

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, working-class parents faced a challenging decision when their children completed compulsory primary schooling. If they had the necessary funds, parents could send their academically gifted children to secondary schools and beyond. Pupils that were less promising, or those whose parents did not have the capital to afford their continued education, had to start working to contribute to the household income. Henri Polak, who later became senator for the main Socialist party and president of the ANDB, was one of these gifted but unlucky pupils. With eleven children, his father Mozes (1839–1903) believed he could not afford further education for Henri, the eldest child. Thus, Henri started working from the age of 13.² Thousands of other Jewish and Gentile families faced these same decisions regarding children's future careers in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Amsterdam.³

Mozes, the descendant of generations of illiterate Jewish peddlers, had been the first to learn a trade in his patrilineage.⁴ He had begun working in the Amsterdam diamond industry as a diamond polisher a decade before the *Cape Time* period brought unparalleled wealth to incumbents of this industry. Despite the high wages paid in the diamond industry, when Henri turned 13 in 1881, Mozes was unable to pay for his continued education *and* feed his eleven children. Mozes pushed his son to follow in his

¹ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 02-11-1934, “Overpeinzingen.”

² Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 20–21.

³ Joop Voet, the son of a Jewish diamond worker, mentions a similar story about his father: “My father was a diamond worker. He was an intelligent man, but when he completed primary schooling at the age of 12, his schooltime was finished. Then there were two options: or you studied, becoming a doctor or lawyer—but there was no money for this—or you learned a trade. And for Jews that trade was very often the diamond trade.” Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 49.

⁴ Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 19.

footsteps and become a brilliant polisher like himself.⁵ Henri, who had seen the “black-smearing, hollering and screaming polishers,” preferred the company of the “dignified” cutters, and was trained by his uncle Ben, a diamond cutter, instead.⁶

It were particularly Jewish families who faced the dilemma of sending their children to school or into the diamond industry which, around the turn of the twentieth century, was the largest employer of Amsterdam Jews.⁷ High poverty rates throughout the nineteenth century required many Jewish sons and daughters to contribute to the family income from a young age. Concurrently, the lack of historical guild restrictions and a robust international network enabled Jews to secure and retain prominent positions within the diamond industry and, in later years, within labour organisations associated with it. Yet, despite detailed discussions on the diamond industry and its union,⁸ there is still much unknown about the intergenerational social and occupational mobility of these workers and their offspring. Some elements we *do* already know. Throughout the nineteenth century, there was a significant influx of Jewish and Gentile families entering the diamond industry, while many other sons and daughters followed family members who were already in the trade into the same occupation. Furthermore, since 1920, when Antwerp became the world’s primary production hub for cut-and-polished diamonds, diamond workers’ children had a growing tendency to forgo entry into the industry in favour of other careers. This chapter will provide new knowledge on Jewish and Gentile intergenerational mobility in and around the diamond industry and union in Amsterdam. It will contribute through using new and larger datasets, supplemented with qualitative evidence, and examine unexplored dimensions of diamond workers’ and their offspring’s social origins and destinations within or outside this crucial ethno-religious niche.

Even when children followed their parents into the diamond industry, their destination was not always identical. Numerous sons and daughters of diamond workers pursued other specialisations. For instance, while Henri Polak had followed his father into the same industry, he received training for a more advanced and esteemed position. Following parents was common among the offspring of diamond workers, especially in comparison to the offspring of other skilled workers. In fact, after 1904 only sons and daughters of diamond workers, as well as their employers’ *protégés*, were ‘officially’ allowed to join, although in practice apprentices varied more in social backgrounds as we shall see later in this chapter. Apprentices following their parents into the industry had become increasingly common after the opening of the first steam-powered factories and following the *Cape Time* boom but declined in frequency in the 1890s.⁹ In the early twentieth century even fewer children followed their parents, even after the ANDB apprenticeship stop ended in 1904.¹⁰ Nonetheless, most new entrants in the

⁵ Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1993, 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20–1.

⁷ Hofmeester, “Shifting Trajectories of Diamond Processing,” 43–44; Van Zanten, “Eenige demografische gegevens over de joden te Amsterdam,” 9.

⁸ See the discussion in this dissertation in Chapter 3 and Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*; Van Tijn, “De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerkerbond”; Van Tijn, *Amsterdam en diamant*; Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*.

⁹ See Chapter 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 for a discussion on the introduction of the steam-powered factories and the *Cape Time* boom.

¹⁰ The *Leerlingbesluit* actively blocked the entry of prospective apprentices between 1897 and 1904. For a discussion, see Chapter 3.4.

diamond industry continued to originate from diamond worker families. As president of the ANDB, Henri Polak worked hard to educate not only the workers, but also the workers' children.¹¹ Many children of these workers were believed to have surpassed their parents in social standing and education by the 1930s with many attaining secondary and even tertiary education.¹² Consequently, numerous sons and daughters found themselves in more steady, white-collar occupations. While this is partially true, this story masks the experiences of sons and daughters who did not climb the social ladder, instead falling back in positions common among Jewish and Gentile workers discussed in Chapter 2. It is therefore important to analyse trends across the entire industry, rather than focus primarily on anecdotal success cases, to understand the direction and magnitude of Jewish and Gentile sons' and daughters' mobility.

This chapter is divided into two parts, each studying a different facet of intergenerational mobility in the diamond industry. First, using a large dataset of father-son linked marriage certificates, it explores the intergenerational occupational and class mobility of diamond workers' sons. General trends are split into Jewish and Gentile sons to unravel the differential entry into and exit out of the diamond industry. By comparing the sons of diamond workers with sons from different social backgrounds, these trends give a strong indication of specific developments in the diamond industry and differences between Jews and Gentiles more generally. Second, since standardised occupational titles such as 'diamond worker' may mask more detailed developments in micro-mobility, I employ ANDB apprenticeship cards, which provide information on both apprentice and parent, to study intra-industry mobility. Apprenticeship cards cover more detailed individual information on a subset of children that all joined the industry. More notably, it allows us to include women in the analysis. As we will see, many daughters followed their parents into the industry and attained occupational upgrading in the process. While few marriage certificates listed women as working—correctly or incorrectly¹³—all female apprentices were recorded as being in training for gainful employment in the diamond industry. Apprenticeship cards therefore provide an optimal opportunity to compare across both ethno-religious background *and* gender. A third facet of intergenerational mobility, education, is examined in Chapter 8. Since both the apprenticeship cards and marriage certificates do not report any information about formal schooling—diamond industry apprenticeships can be considered vocational schooling but were rarely listed as such—additional sources are needed to incorporate education into our story. For this reason, I analyse conscription records between 1919 and 1940 for diamond workers' sons present in our life course data. These records

¹¹ Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 500–502; Hofmeester, "The Amsterdam Diamond 'Marketplace' and the Jewish Experience," 67–68.

¹² Salomon Mok, *Weekblad* 16–11–1934, "Een woord van dank."

¹³ The absence of women's occupations on marriage certificates has been explained through different arguments. Some have argued that it was the spread of a 'housewife' social norm, where it was seen as more respectable to have a wife who could focus on homemaking. However, the extremely low percentage of marrying women listed with an occupation in Amsterdam—less than 10 percent—between 1890 and 1929—suggests that women were being underrecorded. Comparing occupational information from diamond workers' marriage certificates and their union records shows that over half of brides were inaccurately listed without an occupation. Frans van Poppel, Hendrik van Dalen, and Evelien Walhout, "Diffusion of a Social Norm: Tracing the Emergence of the Housewife in the Netherlands, 1812–1922," *The Economic History Review* 62.1 (2009): 99–127; Corinne Boter, "The Emergence of the Dutch Housewife Revised. How Shifts in Local Labour Market Structures Shaped Dutch Unmarried Women's Labour Force Participation, 1812–1929," *Historical Life Course Studies* 10 (2021): 130–34.

reported educational attainment and current occupation for all 19-year-old men at the time of their mandatory health check-up. This allows us to look at the role of education in intergenerational mobility, as well as study the intergenerational mobility for one additional generation.

To get a better understanding of the occupational possibilities for the sons and daughters of diamond workers, I first discuss the different pathways children took and overall trends of intergenerational mobility for the Dutch population at that time. Next, I look at the larger trends dating back to 1850 using the marriage certificates. Once I have outlined the long-term trends, I focus on the diamond workers who followed, analysing intra-industry mobility through apprenticeship cards. Then, after a brief discussion of educational options in the early twentieth century, I will discuss the different educational attainment of Jewish and Gentile sons by the occupational background of their fathers.

4.2 Pathways of Intergenerational Mobility

4.2.1 Overall trends

Earlier research has shown that the nineteenth-century Netherlands was a country of limited intergenerational mobility. In the first half of the nineteenth century in Zeeland, the significance of fathers' characteristics on their children's occupational outcomes increased, but in the second half of the century, marked by rapid modernisation and industrialisation, this importance declined.¹⁴ A more recent dissertation supported these findings after incorporating additional provinces and found that family connections beyond the father also mattered.¹⁵ The weakening importance of fathers' characteristics suggests an increase in intergenerational mobility and a growing focus on achievement over ascription; that is, one's own achievements became more important than one's social background.¹⁶ However, while absolute mobility, the direct comparison of class status between father and son, may have been increasing, comparing their relative positions in the class distribution, or relative mobility, was lower than in other European countries.¹⁷ While sons generally fared better than their fathers due to structural labour market improvements, those with fathers in the lower ends of the class distribution often stayed at the bottom themselves. However, much of this 'closedness'—the inability of sons from lower classes to break through a class ceiling—is explained by the prominence of farmers, who were completely absent in Amsterdam.¹⁸ Yet, an earlier analysis of the 'openness' of Amsterdam's upper classes in the second half of the nineteenth century showed no signs of increasing mobility.¹⁹ This scenario was likely quite different for Amsterdam Jews. Their historical exclusion by guilds and other institutions until their political emancipation had economic consequences lasting well

¹⁴ Richard Zijdemann, "Like My Father before Me: Intergenerational Occupational Status Transfer during Industrialization (Zeeland, 1811–1915)," *Continuity and Change* 24.3 (2009): 455–86.

¹⁵ Knigge, "Sources of Sibling Similarity," 122–23.

¹⁶ David Treiman, "Industrialization and Social Stratification," *Sociological Inquiry* 40.2 (1970): 207–34.

¹⁷ Maas and Van Leeuwen, "Toward Open Societies?"

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 865.

¹⁹ Marco van Leeuwen and Ineke Maas, "Log-Linear Analysis of Changes in Mobility Patterns: Some Models with an Application to the Amsterdam Upper Classes in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 24 (1991): 66–79.

into the nineteenth century.²⁰ As these disadvantages disappeared and Jewish integration into Dutch society accelerated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their mobility rates likely moved up quicker than those of the overall population.²¹ In the United States, Russian Jews and other immigrants arriving with disadvantaged backgrounds often performed better in subsequent generations by moving to places with more opportunities for upward mobility; large urban locations, similar to Amsterdam.²² In Amsterdam, the Jewish presence in the diamond industry contributed significantly to this story. Between 1854 and 1884, Jews went from under-represented to over-represented among the Amsterdam electorate, largely due to the upward mobility of many Jews through the diamond industry.²³ Moreover, the limited research on the relationship between Jews' integration and career achievements suggest that greater integration between 1870 and 1940 may have led to better career outcomes.²⁴ Additional research using data covering longer time periods and incorporating different segments of the Jewish and non-Jewish population is needed to fully understand the social mobility trends of Amsterdam and Dutch Jews in a longitudinal and comparative perspective.

4.2.2 Trends in the diamond industry

The career options for the sons and daughters of diamond workers were, historically, rather limited. Traditionally, sons followed their fathers into the same industry, sometimes continuing lineages spanning multiple generations in 'the trade.' These lineages could have specialised in the same skills within the industry, or experienced gradual steps upwards along the industry's hierarchy. Saul (Paul) de Groot (1899–1999) was one example of taking the same position. Although his father, a brilliant polisher in Antwerp, earned enough to send his bookish son to secondary school, he feared Saul would be unable to find work in an intellectual field as an outsider—being Dutch and Jewish in Antwerp—and instead placed him in an apprenticeship in the diamond industry at the age of 13.²⁵ Upgraders included Henri Polak, who made the step from brilliant polisher to cutter and the accomplished brilliant cutter Suze Frank (1907–1988), who made the same step.²⁶ Fortunate and studious descendants may have been able to continue their education, rather than start working at the age of 13 or 14, allowing them to enter white-collar occupations with greater ease. Siegfried van Praag (1899–2002) and Jacques Presser (1899–1970) are two additional examples. Their fathers had started their careers as diamond workers and moved up to positions as small-scale diamond merchants. Their sons enjoyed university education, became office workers, and later educators. Historian of the diamond industry, Henri Heertje (1913–1943), followed a

²⁰ Lucassen, "Joodse Nederlanders 1796–1940," 14–15.

²¹ For a background on the growing integration of Amsterdam Jews, see Tammes and Scholten, "Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands." In preliminary work with Kees Mandemakers I find that relative upward intergenerational mobility among Jews increased quicker than among Gentiles in late-nineteenth-century Amsterdam; in alignment with their increasing integration.

²² Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustán, and Santiago Pérez, "Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants in the United States over Two Centuries," *American Economic Review* 111.2 (2021): 580–608.

²³ De Vries, "De joodse elite in Amsterdam," 87–88.

²⁴ Tammes, "'Hack, Pack, Sack'"; Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 81–82.

²⁵ Stutje, *De man die de weg wees*, 24.

²⁶ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 53–54; see also Suze Frank's life story: <https://diamantbewerders.nl/en/levensverhalen/suze-frank>.

similar path, although his father Meijer Heertje (1888–1945) had not made the jump to diamond merchant.²⁷ All three were able to attend secondary and higher education. While not all sons became academics, like Jacques Presser and Henri Heertje, or writers with university degrees, like Siegfried van Praag, many of them were able to attend secondary education and get safe and healthy white-collar jobs. Another pathway for success was through the arts. Part of the ‘uplifting’ of the union had been to advance the diamond workers culturally.²⁸ Notable offspring of diamond workers in this category include the cartoonist Elias (Eli) Smalhout,²⁹ illustrator Frederika (Fré) Cohen (1903–1943), the author Israël Querido (1872–1932) and writer-publisher Emanuel Querido (1871–1943), painter Salomon (Sal) Meijer (1877–1965), comedian Eduard Jacobs (1867–1914), singer Joseph (Jef) Judels (1871–1942), and violinist Jo Juda (1909–1985). Sports were also encouraged by the union and diamond workers’ children exceeded here too.³⁰

Other children were less fortunate. Without the opportunity for additional education, success in cultural fields, or following their parents into the diamond industry, this group frequently had to rely on semi-skilled or unskilled manual work. Jewish workers were generally at a disadvantage here since most of the skilled workers in their community were active in the diamond trade, creating few ties to other industries. Without education or ties in other industries, in less fortunate times these sons and daughters were forced to take any gainful employment to supplement the household income. The early death of a parent, not uncommon at this time, could significantly disrupt possibilities for upward mobility.³¹ Jacob Valensa’s (1889–1942) father, David (1855–1897), had been a diamond worker through the *Cape Time* but unable to keep his amassed fortunes. When he died in 1897, his young sons needed to find work quickly. When Jacob was old enough, he took odd jobs as a day labourer. Others in his position may have reverted back to occupations more common among earlier generations, such as peddling on the streets of Amsterdam, thereby reversing the positive influence on social positions the diamond industry may have had on these families, including the high incomes and access to the ANDB library.³² Yet another group may have voluntarily left the intergenerational lineage of diamond workers for other skilled work, even when their parents had enough wealth to send them to further education. Jules Schelvis (1921–2016) knew from a young age that he wanted to work in the printing industry, yet his

²⁷ Meijer left the diamond industry in 1922 following prolonged unemployment. He then became a commercial traveller selling sponges. ANDB archive ARCH00210.9432 648–649; Gezinskaart Meijer Heertje (05-04-1888).

²⁸ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 172; De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*; Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 58–61.

²⁹ Elias’ son Bob Smalhout (1927–2015) became a professor in anaesthesiology after the war, indicating that intergenerational mobility could move from cultural to academic over generations.

³⁰ Isidore Goudekete (1883–1943) was diamond-working gymnast who participated in the 1908 London Olympics. See Erik Brouwer, *Spartacus: de familiegeschiedenis van twee joodse olympiërs* (Amsterdam, 2009). Two other gymnasts who attended the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam and came from the diamond workers’ milieu were Elias Hijman Melkman (1903–1942) and Israel Wijnschenk (1895–1943). Salomon (Salo) Landau (1903–1944) was a diamond worker with a talent for chess; in 1936 he became Dutch chess champion. Eliazer (Leo) van der Kar (1913–1992) was not a professional athlete himself—although he did compete at a national level as a runner—but an entrepreneur from a diamond-working family who started one of the largest sporting goods enterprises in the Netherlands.

³¹ Rosenbaum–Feldbrügge’s dissertation goes into detail on the adverse effects of young parental deaths during this period. Matthias Rosenbaum–Feldbrügge, “Dealing with Demographic Stress in Childhood: Parental Death and the Transition to Adulthood in the Netherlands, 1850–1952” (PhD diss., Radboud University, 2019).

³² See Chapter 3 for the intergenerational benefits of working in the diamond industry.

diamond-working father made sure he first continued his education before commencing his career.³³

In summary, the children of diamond workers could realistically maintain their forefathers' status or move in either downward or upward directions. However, the relatively high wages paid to diamond workers in time of prosperity and the continued encouragement to engage with cultural and intellectual life, pushed many of their sons and daughters into the arts and sciences. Strong ties with political movements enabled civic careers, which were also important for women.³⁴ Overall, it is therefore plausible to expect that Jewish diamond workers saw upward mobility frequently, either within or outside the industry, and in greater degrees than Jews and Gentiles originating from other social backgrounds.

4.3 Broad Trends in Intergenerational Mobility

Over time, the occupational choices made by the descendants of diamond workers varied. While prosperous times for the industry brought more wealth, incentivising both following into the industry and investments in education, poor times may have spurred more downward mobility. To understand these changing rates in following into the same occupation as one's parents on the one hand, and being mobile on the other, I examine marriage certificates linking fathers and sons.³⁵ In short, I compare sons' occupations on marriage certificates with those of their fathers, evaluating occupations at similar points—i.e. the time of marriage for each man—and summarising the connections per decade of the groom's marriage. By using the names of the grooms and their parents, I establish the ethno-religious backgrounds of the grooms' families, enabling a comparison between Jewish and Gentile grooms.³⁶ Marriages included in the analyses are limited to grooms aged 18 to 39, who married in 'larger'³⁷ Amsterdam, and where both father and son had valid occupations on their respective marriage certificates. Next to our sample of lapidary fathers, three comparison groups are constructed where the father had a different social status: semi-skilled and unskilled workers ("Lower skilled"), skilled workers excluding diamond workers ("Skilled workers"), and the entire Amsterdam population ("All"). To minimise the number of comparisons, semi-skilled and unskilled workers are clustered³⁸ and lower and higher white-collar workers are excluded since their trends are visible from the difference between the entire Amsterdam population and the groups of manual workers. We compare the father's social class, as measured by HISCLASS,³⁹ with the social class of their sons. Sons either had a higher social class (upward mobility), a lower social class

³³ Schelvis, *Een jeugd in Amsterdam*, 83.

³⁴ For the presence of Jewish women in Dutch labour movements at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, see Karin Hofmeester, "Roosje Vos, Sani Prijes, Alida de Jong, and the Others, Jewish Women Workers and the Labor Movement as a Vehicle on the Road to Modernity," in *Dutch Jewry in a Cultural Maelstrom, 1880-1940*, ed. Judith Frishman (Amsterdam, 2007), 155–67; Jansz, "Betje Lazarus (1870-1933)"; Van der Veen, "'Je had als vrouw al een achterstand'."

³⁵ A description of the linking process and dataset is provided in Chapter 1.

³⁶ This methodology is explained in-depth in Appendix A.

³⁷ Including Zaandam, Weesp, and Watergraafsmeer.

³⁸ I have chosen to cluster unskilled and semi-skilled workers, rather than semi-skilled and skilled workers—as is common when using HISCLASS—to separate skilled workers from the rest. This facilitates comparisons between diamond workers and other skilled workers without the inclusion of semi-skilled workers.

³⁹ See Chapter 1.4 for a discussion.

(downward mobility), or the same social class (immobility). In the last case, occupational titles—standardised using the HISCO scheme—could be the exact same, for instance when both son and father were diamond workers, or could have been different, e.g. when the father was a diamond worker but the son worked in another skilled occupation. I therefore distinguish between father-son pairs who have the same HISCLASS but varying HISCOs *and* those who have the same HISCLASS and HISCO codes.

In the next subsection we will look at various aspects of intergenerational mobility. The figures, each consisting of three panels, compare trends within and between ethno-religious groups and social class backgrounds, placing the sons of Jewish and Gentile diamond workers at the centre of these comparisons. Together, they not only show how Jews' intergenerational mobility differed from Gentiles' mobility, but it will also highlight how this was stratified by social class. By distinguishing diamond workers from other skilled workers we can tell whether the diamond industry was special in its mobility trends, or whether it saw the same developments as other skilled workers. These comparisons are only possible using large longitudinal datasets, such as the Amsterdam marriage certificates included in LINKS, and innovative techniques to identify Jews and Gentiles, such as the *Jewish Name Index* approach.⁴⁰

4.3.1 Trends in absolute class mobility

Before contrasting diamond workers' sons trajectories with those of sons with other social backgrounds, we first need to establish their own trends. I therefore plot rates of upward (green line), downward (red), and immobility—either same social class (black) or exact occupation (grey)—for diamond workers' sons in Figure 4.1. Rates are calculated for ten-year marriage cohorts of sons, e.g. 1870–1879. Panel A presents rates for all sons of diamond workers, regardless of whether grooms were identified as Jewish or Gentile. Panels B and C show the same rates for only Jewish (B) and Gentile (C) sons.

The figure displays important trends and differences between groups. For instance, the share of occupational following among all diamond workers' sons was rising quickly between 1870 and 1889, seen by the rising grey line in panel A. This period was characterised by a significant expansion of the diamond industry, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, during which the number of workers increased from 1500 to 10,000. While fathers had already been likely to train their sons in the same occupation, evidenced by following rates of over 40 percent prior to 1870, this following rate now rose to nearly 80 percent. High wages during this time incentivised parents to send their children into the same careers. However, after the 1890s occupational following declined steadily, dropping from 70 percent to below 20 percent in the early 1930s. Not occupying the same profession as their fathers, these sons were increasingly mobile in both up- and downward directions, although upward mobility (green) outweighed downward mobility (red) during this period. The growing share of upward mobility, seen in the increasing green line since the 1890–1899 period, suggests that diamond workers had been able to send their children off to better futures. Since our social class categorisation only ranks lower and higher-white collar work above skilled labour, these upwardly-mobile sons ventured into white-collar occupations. Indeed, a growing share of sons worked as office clerks and commercial travellers, two occupational titles that masked

⁴⁰ The Figures in Chapter 4.3 are based on 196,301 father-son linked marriages. For a discussion on marriage certificates, see Chapter 1.4.3. More information on the *Jewish Name Index* can be found in Appendix A.

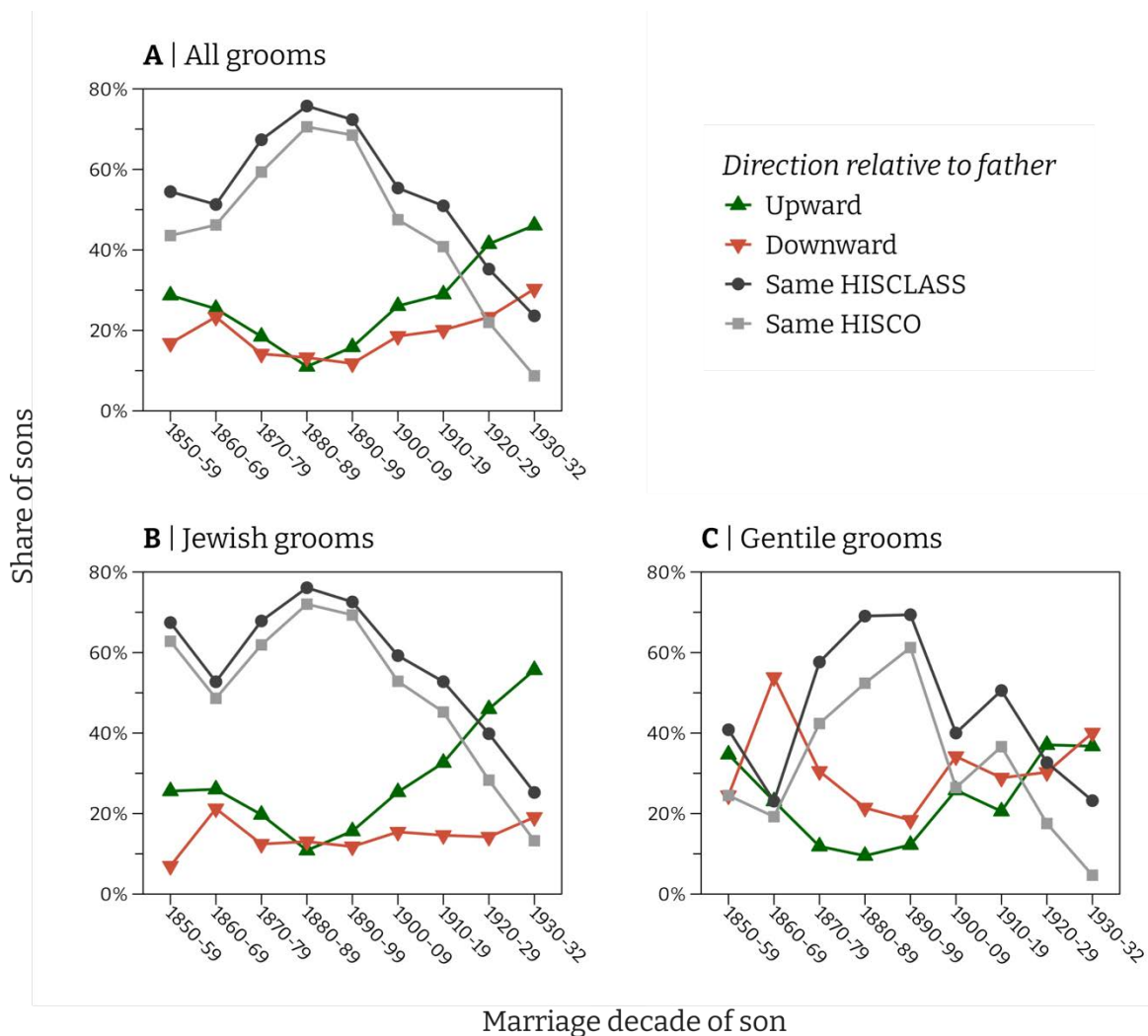


FIGURE 4.1 Intergenerational mobility of diamond workers' sons by ethno-religious background and fathers' social class, 1850-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Linked Civil Registry, Netherlands – marriages only" 2020 release; <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/MR4GPS>; and JNI approach.

Note: panel A includes all men who married in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and were listed with a valid occupation; panels B and C use only those who were identified as either Jewish or Gentile, respectively.

large socioeconomic variance within them but could be considered to offer a more stable future than the deteriorating post-1920 diamond industry. However, increasing downward class mobility—the red line—suggests that this was not possible for everyone. When the industry reached its capacity around the turn of the century, which led the union to introduce a temporary halt on apprentices, some sons (and daughters) had to accept lower positions when further education was not a viable choice. The decreasing likelihood of following in the 1920s, coinciding with the collapse of the Amsterdam diamond industry, implies that mobility was not always a choice, as the diamond industry lost its appeal compared to the nineteenth century.

Comparing Jewish and Gentile sons of diamond workers (panels B and C) reveals differences in these trends based on the family's ethno-religious background. Although there were few Gentile sons of diamond workers before 1870—most Gentiles entered the

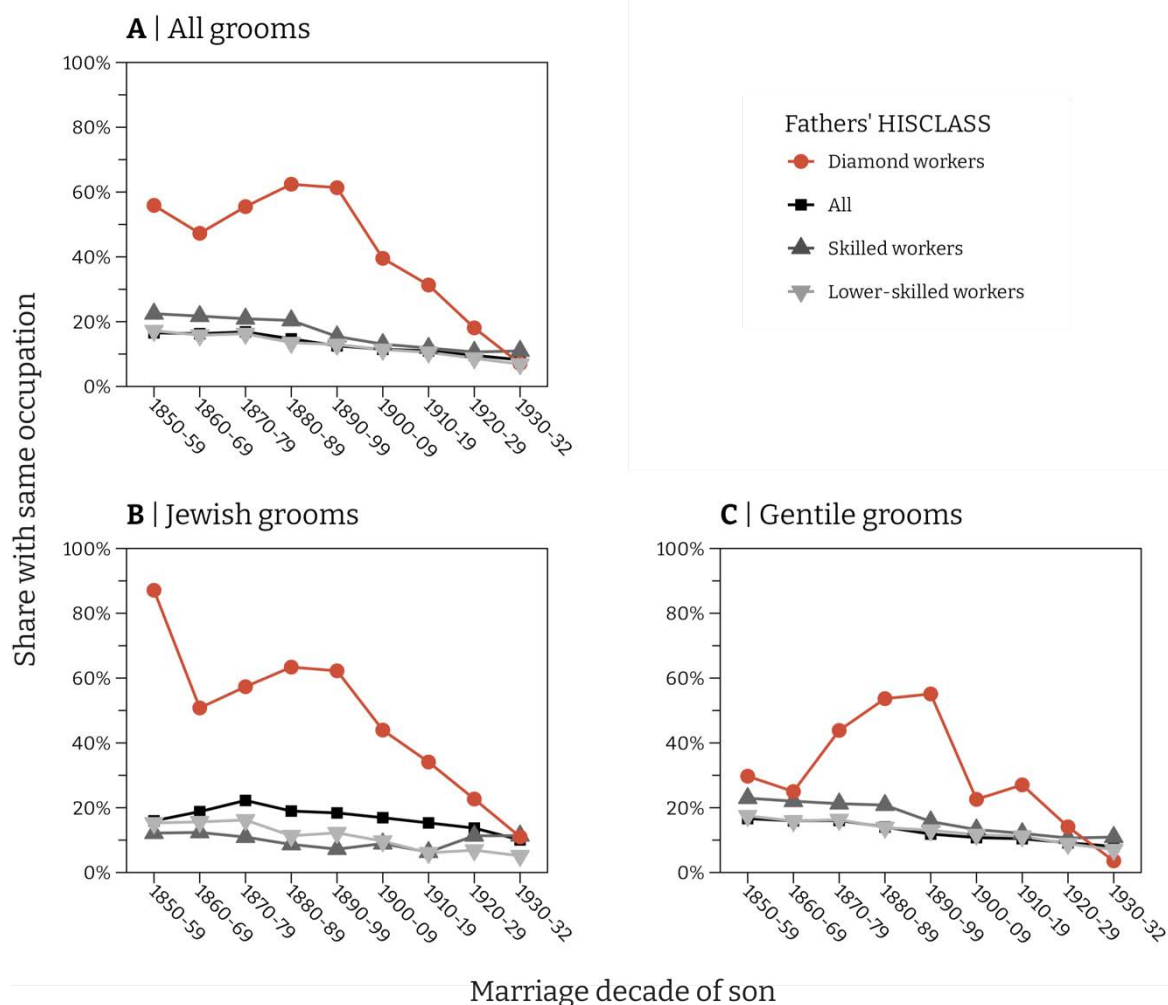


FIGURE 4.2 Occupational following by ethno-religious background and fathers' social class, 1812-1940.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Linked Civil Registry, Netherlands – marriages only," 2020 release; and JNI approach.

Note: panel A includes all men who married in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and were listed with a valid occupation; panels B and C use only those who were identified as either Jewish or Gentile, respectively. Diamond workers are excluded from Skilled workers.

industry during the late 1870s and 1880s—the comparisons from 1870 onwards provide worthwhile information. First, Jews were slightly more likely to continue following their fathers into the diamond industry. This was already true prior to 1870, when Jews had following rates upward of 50 percent, but continued to hold throughout the entire period. Jews held higher positions in the industry and had fewer outside options, which contributed to this trend.⁴¹ We also notice a trend towards more upward mobility among Jewish sons than among Gentile sons since 1890. In the 1920s, almost 50 percent of Jewish diamond workers' sons had a higher social class than their fathers, and less than 20 percent had a lower social class. For Gentiles, downward mobility (30%) was closer

⁴¹ Based on their limited occupational diversification; see Tammes, "Hack, Pack, Sack."

to upward mobility (37%). Thus, it appears that Jewish sons of diamond workers were more successful in seizing opportunities in the twentieth century than their Gentile peers. However, we cannot directly determine whether this is due to Jews' higher wages, greater motivation for education, or other factors.⁴²

Figure 4.1 compared the rates of upward, downward, and immobility among sons of Jewish diamond workers to those of Gentile diamond workers. Figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 will examine each of these directions of mobility, adding comparisons to sons with other social backgrounds within each group. In Figure 4.2 we see that the 'direct following rates' of diamond workers' sons were considerably higher than those of sons from other social backgrounds. A son is considered to 'follow' if, at the time of their respective marriages, the father and son worked in the same occupation. The diamond industry was known as an occupation where family ties were important; at times, direct family connections were prerequisites to entry.⁴³ While most workers remained in the same class as their fathers, a minority followed into the same occupational group. Such 'direct following' became less common throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century; for the overall Amsterdam population (black squares in panel A) it fell from 15 percent in the 1850s to 7 percent in the early 1930s. Thus, the average Amsterdam son increasingly started working in occupations dissimilar from their father. Here, too, we observe small but important differences between Jews and Gentiles. Among Gentile sons (panel C), those with skilled fathers were most likely to 'follow' their fathers, although less than a quarter did. Jewish sons (panel B) of skilled workers not in the diamond industry followed their fathers even less frequently. Thus, Gentiles appear to have been in a better position to transfer their skilled (artisan) work to their children, which allowed them to build greater familiarity with skilled trades over generations. Nonetheless, both Jewish and Gentile sons were unlikely to follow 'directly' into the same occupation in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and in the diamond industry rates after 1890 were similar across groups. The same became true for diamond workers' sons, who by 1930–1932 had similar or lower following rates than their peers.

Figure 4.3 focuses on upward mobility. Naturally, sons of lower-skilled fathers—the grey line—positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy, had more opportunities for upward class mobility than other sons. High occupational following in the late nineteenth century meant that sons of diamond workers rarely experienced upward mobility; nearly all sons of diamond workers became diamond workers. Upward class mobility increased for diamond workers' sons in the 1890s. As the industry reached its limit around the turn of the century, following rates among diamond workers decreased. At the same time, the introduction of the ANDB potentially catalysed upward mobility. In the 1880s, diamond workers' sons were less likely than sons of skilled workers to achieve a higher social class than their fathers; by the 1920s and early 1930s diamond workers' sons were much more likely to do so. Again, an important difference between Jewish and Gentile sons is evident. This pattern is particularly pronounced for Jewish sons of diamond workers. Their rates of upward mobility outpaced those of Jewish skilled workers since the 1900–1909 period. They also outpaced Gentile diamond workers' sons, who exhibited patterns worse or identical to Gentile skilled workers' sons.

⁴² The discussion at in Chapter 8 suggests that higher educational levels of sons is a reasonable explanation.

⁴³ Such rules were implemented by the various trade movements in the industry; whether these rules were followed is less known. Several contemporaries commented on the closedness of the industry for those without family connections; see Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 48–51.

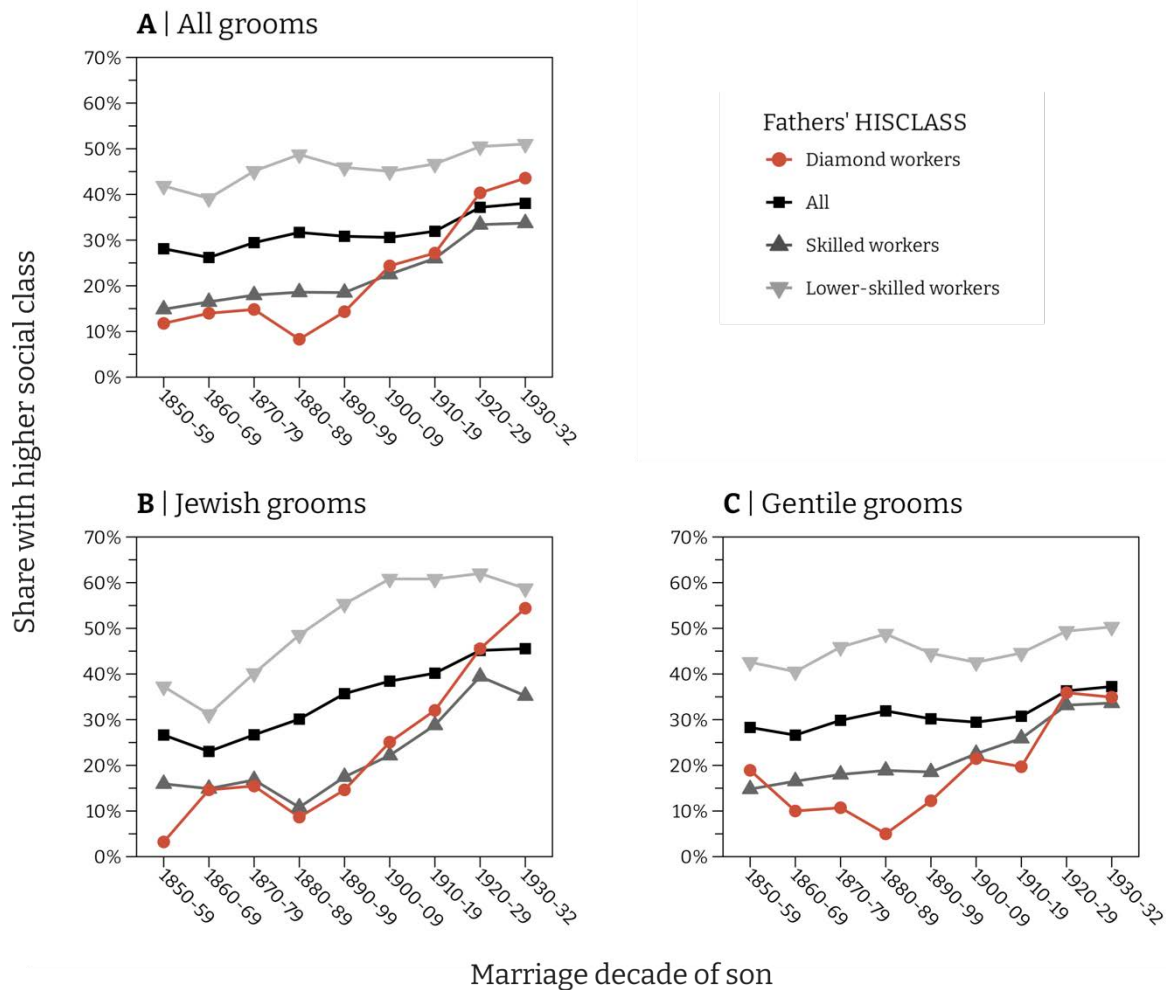


FIGURE 4.3 Upward mobility by religious background and fathers' social class, 1850-1932
Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Linked Civil Registry, Netherlands – marriages only" 2020 release and JNI approach.

Note: panel A includes all men who married in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and were listed with a valid occupation; panels B and C use only those who were identified as either Jewish or Gentile, respectively. Diamond workers are excluded from Skilled workers.

Seemingly, the diamond industry was a unique vehicle for upward mobility for Jewish diamond workers' sons, whereas it was just another industry for Gentiles. While Jews knew work in the diamond industry as 'the trade,' the same connotations were not present for Gentiles.⁴⁴ Moreover, we also note a more general trend when looking at the other sons from each ethno-religious background. The rate at which Jewish sons achieved upward class mobility started rising much faster than the Gentile pattern since the 1880s, regardless of class background. During this time, the *Cape Time* introduced new wealth into the Jewish community.⁴⁵ It also marks a period during which improvements in their social position and societal integration was accelerating.⁴⁶ Jewish

⁴⁴ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 48–51.

⁴⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 37.

⁴⁶ For a discussion, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation or Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders."

fathers increasingly had experienced general education and were less likely to follow Jewish traditions, such as observing the Sabbath, which improved the possibilities for occupational diversification for their sons. While many Jewish sons faced similar limited occupational options as their fathers had until the 1850s, from the 1880s onwards—mostly for sons born since the 1860s—Jewish intergenerational class upgrading occurred at much greater rates than in the overall Amsterdam population. These sons increasingly moved to new professions, including the expanding sector of office work,⁴⁷ with stable employment and safer working conditions.

Figure 4.4 examines trends in downward mobility. As a general trend, downward mobility for the average Amsterdammer was considerable. Between 1850 and 1932, between 30 and 40 percent of all grooms moved down relative to their fathers. These percentages are roughly equal to the share of upward mobility, suggesting that, on average, Amsterdam was rather stable in its mobility. Lower-skilled workers, who could hardly move down, and diamond workers, who disproportionately followed their fathers, initially saw the least downward mobility. However, in the twentieth century the downward mobility rates of diamond workers increased and equalised with the rates of other skilled workers. When comparing Jews and Gentiles, we see that this was predominantly the result of downwardly mobile Gentiles. While Jewish diamond workers' sons saw an increase in downward mobility up to 20 percent in 1930–1932, for Gentile diamond workers' sons this was 40 percent. We also see that Gentiles had higher rates of downward mobility on average. Upward and downward mobility remained on equal footing for Gentile sons of diamond workers and increases in either direction often followed from a decline in occupational following. Such absolute class mobility was stimulated by industrialisation and modernisation, which changed the occupational structure of Amsterdam and complicated having the same occupation or social class as one's parents. Gentiles also had more a more diverse occupational structure and were spread more evenly across all social classes than Jews. Thus, the step from skilled work to lower-skilled work, for instance in carpentry, was easier for Gentiles than Jews. For Jews, socioeconomic conditions were changing more drastically from one generation to the next. When forced to take up a career different from their fathers, they often chose positions in trade. In the past, this would predominantly have been peddling, but in the late nineteenth century this was more frequently as merchants or commercial travellers and agents.

⁴⁷ Knotter, *Economische transformatie*, 58–59.

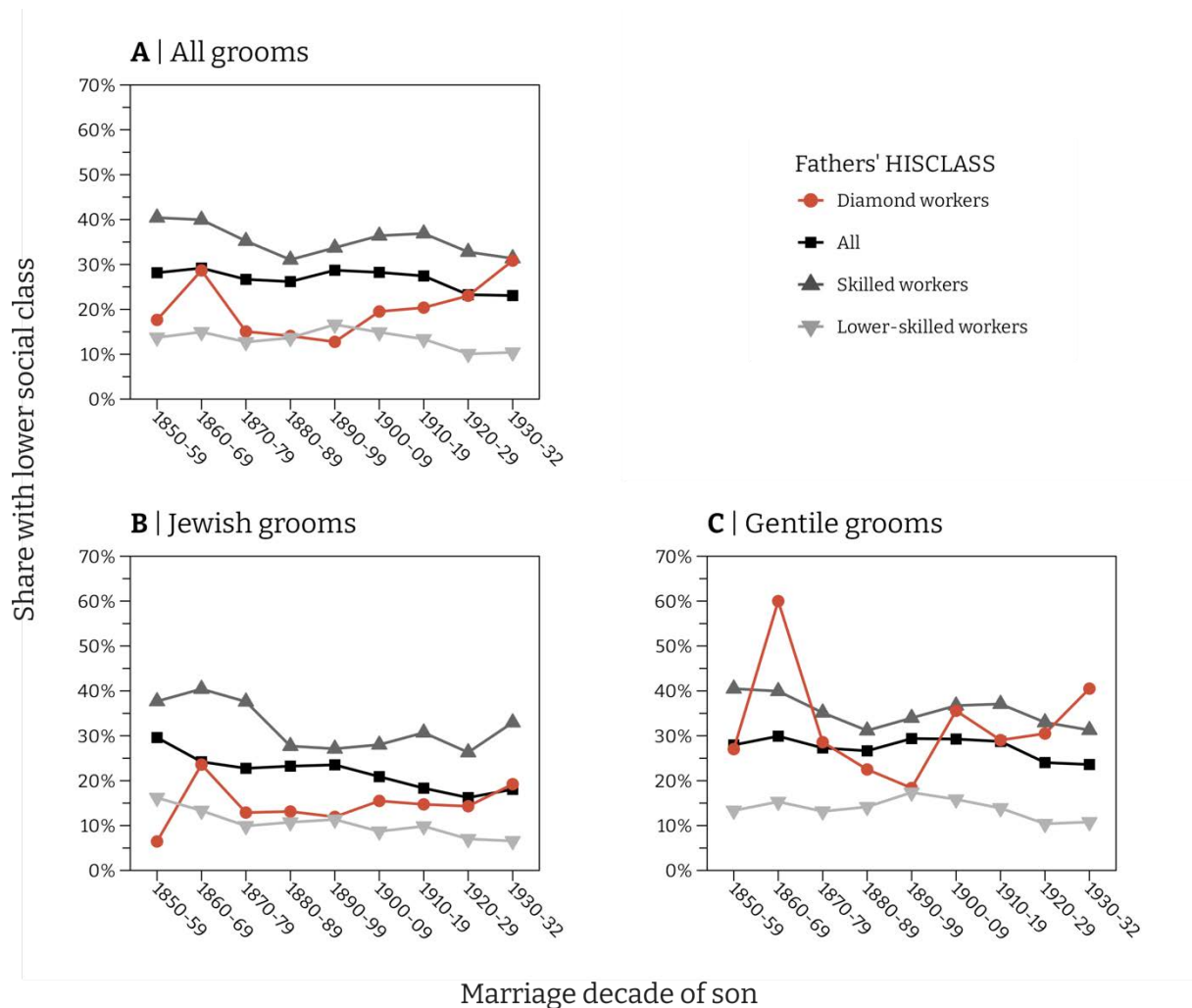


FIGURE 4.4 Downward mobility by religious background and fathers' social class, 1850-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Linked Civil Registry, Netherlands – marriages only" 2020 release; and JNI approach.

Note: panel A includes all men who married in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and were listed with a valid occupation; panels B and C use only those who were identified as either Jewish or Gentile, respectively. Diamond workers are excluded from Skilled workers. Downward mobility for Lower-skilled workers comprises the Semi-skilled fathers within this group.

Lastly, Figure 4.5 shows the percentage of sons from each group who achieved an 'elite' or upper-class position based on HISCLASS scores.⁴⁸ This select group, including doctors, lawyers, and factory owners, comprised 3 to 4 percent of Amsterdam's grooms from 1850 to 1932, with many being direct descendants of those already in those positions. In many cases, these sons completed university education or were uniquely successful in business. In the second half of the nineteenth century, less than 2 percent of diamond workers' sons achieved such positions. This is not entirely surprising given their tendency to follow their fathers into the diamond industry. However, comparing

⁴⁸ For a discussion on a wider Jewish 'elite,' see Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 16–21.

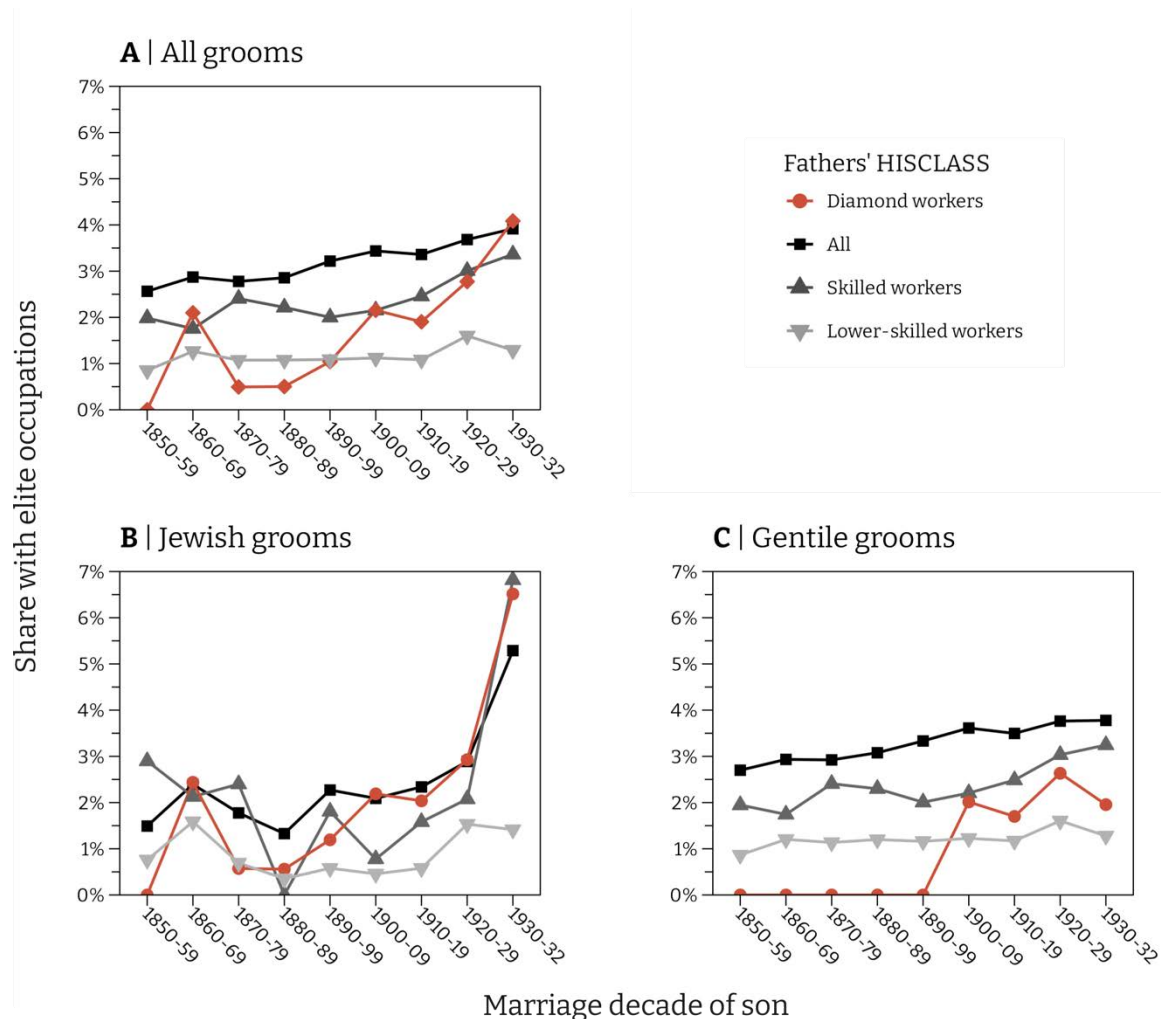


FIGURE 4.5 Share of sons with upper-class occupations, 1812-1932

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Linked Civil Registry, Netherlands – marriages only" 2020 release; and JNI approach.

Note: panel A includes all men who married in Amsterdam between the ages of 18 and 39 and were listed with a valid occupation; panels B and C use only those who were identified as either Jewish or Gentile, respectively. Diamond workers are excluded from Skilled workers. 'Elite occupations' are defined as having a 12-tiered HISCLASS of 1 ("Higher managers and professionals") or 2 ("Higher professionals or professionals").

diamond workers' sons and other skilled workers' sons directly reveals that, until the 1930s, diamond workers' sons were less likely to reach these high positions, even though they surpassed the rates of upward mobility of the latter since 1890. As was the case for upward mobility in Figure 4.3, the increasing trend (or 'catch up') is likely explained by rising incomes during the *Cape Time* period and increased motivation to invest in children's education when the union formed. However, the lower percentage throughout every decade in the period suggests that something may have blocked diamond workers from obtaining an elite status. While at first discrimination against Jews and Jewish diamond workers may sound like a plausible explanation, this was decidedly not the case: the panels showing trends for Jewish and Gentile grooms (panels B and C) illustrate the exact opposite. Gentile diamond workers' sons were much less likely than the average Gentile son, or the average Gentile skilled workers' sons, to achieve such elite positions.

Meanwhile, Jewish diamond workers' sons always had a higher or equal chance of making it to the highest social class when compared with Jewish skilled workers' sons. However, the black lines in panels B and C indicate that, until the 1930s, the average Jewish groom was much less likely to attain an elite position than the average non-Jewish groom. Some of this may be explained by discrimination in elite positions. Another, important factor could be that due to Jews' overrepresentation in trade, many Jewish merchants and shopkeepers, who could economically be considered among the top of Amsterdam's stratification, were not counted to this elite social class. Unfortunately, without income data we cannot distinguish between wealthy and poor merchants, nor can we observe changes in the composition of top income earners.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, within the Jewish community, sons of diamond workers and other skilled workers seem to be among the groups that broke through a glass ceiling in the decade before World War II, while Jewish sons of lower-skilled fathers did not experience the same successes.

4.3.2 *Intergenerational trends summarised*

For the entire Jewish community and for each class background we see increasing rates of upward class mobility over time. In the two decades before World War II, Jews, regardless of their class background, showed a higher likelihood of upward mobility and a lower likelihood of downward mobility compared to their fathers in the early stages of their careers. However, this does not necessarily translate to higher positions at the end of their careers; a topic explored in Chapter 6 on career mobility. In the 1930s, Jewish sons of upper-working and middle-class fathers were also more likely to obtain 'elite' positions. There is little suggestion that Jewish fathers were, on average, wealthier than the average Gentile father at this time. In fact, the discussion regarding the position of Jews up to World War II has centred around their relative poverty, rather than their relative prosperity.⁵⁰ If wealth cannot be used as an explanator for the greater upward mobility rates among Jews, another reason must be found. Two characteristics widely ascribed to Jewish populations across the Diaspora may have contributed: (i) a greater emphasis on *lernen* ('learning') and *lehren* ('teaching');⁵¹ and (ii) higher rates of self-employment and entrepreneurship.⁵² Though education was not given as a reason for higher rates of upward intergenerational mobility of Russian-Jewish immigrants by Abramitzky and co-authors,⁵³ several other researchers have identified it as a crucial factor in explaining the rapid economic ascent of European and American Jews.⁵⁴ That

⁴⁹ De Vries has shown with their study of the Amsterdam electorate that Jews were increasingly becoming top earners at the end of the nineteenth century. De Vries, *Electoraat en elite*.

⁵⁰ For discussions on the relative poverty of Jews, see Van Leeuwen, "Arme Amsterdamse joden"; Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben..."; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*.

⁵¹ Mozes Heiman Gans, *Memorboek. Platenatlas van het leven der joden in Nederland van de middeleeuwen tot 1940* (Utrecht, 1971), 387; Paul Burstein, "Jewish Educational and Economic Success in the United States: A Search for Explanations," *Sociological Perspectives* 50.2 (2007): 209–28.

⁵² Kruijt, "Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving," 215–18; Godley, *Jewish Immigrant Entrepreneurship*; Burstein, "Jewish Educational and Economic Success."

⁵³ Abramitzky, Boustani, and Pérez, "Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants."

⁵⁴ Studies include but are not limited to Jerold Auerbach, "From Rags to Robes: The Legal Profession, Social Mobility and the American Jewish Experience," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 66.2 (1976): 249–84; Stephen Steinberg, "The Rise of the Jewish Professional: Case Studies of Intergenerational Mobility," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 9.4 (1986): 502–13; Jean-Paul Carvalho, Mark Koyama, and Michael Sacks, "Education, Identity, and Community: Lessons from Jewish Emancipation," *Public Choice* 171 (2017): 119–43.

the Jewish concept of *lernen* spurred Jews' human capital attainment beyond those of others was most boldly argued for by economic historians Botticini and Eckstein, who made the argument that the fall of the Temple in 70 CE made Jews value learning more.⁵⁵ They believed this to have a long-run effect and still be visible in the twentieth century;⁵⁶ however, empirical evidence has been mixed.⁵⁷

Mendelsohn, who studied the Jewish occupational niche of the rag trade in the U.K. and U.S., found that intergenerational transmission of skills as well as greater academic achievements allowed for faster intergenerational occupational upgrading.⁵⁸ However, the smaller workplaces in New York facilitated upward mobility through entrepreneurship more than in London, where factories were larger on average and barriers to entrepreneurship were larger. Similarly, Amsterdam diamond factories were large and becoming an employer in this industry was difficult, especially after the union banned smaller 'own work makers' to operate. Whereas Jewish sons of rag traders in the U.S. were more likely to continue in a self-employed or employer fashion, and the same sons continued at a smaller scale with less upgrading in the U.K., Amsterdam diamond workers instead invested more in other careers, including academic ones, to avoid intergenerational stagnation in the diamond industry. With the general trends towards higher education among Jews—they were over-represented among Dutch university-educated men and women in 1930⁵⁹—Jews increasingly left behind the desperate economic conditions common among their (grand)parents. These forces appear to have been even stronger among the sons (and likely daughters) of Jewish diamond workers; despite their lower rates of integration as was discussed in Chapter 1 and will be discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, which indicate that Jewish diamond workers were less likely to intermarry and disaffiliate from Judaism but were pioneers in moving to neighbourhoods with fewer Jewish residents.

4.4 Micro-mobility within the diamond industry

Until now, we have looked at flows in and out of the industry, taking as starting point a father who had, at the time of his marriage, worked in the diamond industry. Here, we switch our perspective: while the share of diamond workers' sons who also went into the diamond industry was declining rapidly since the end of the nineteenth century, as we saw in Figure 4.2, the share of diamond workers' fathers that had also worked in the diamond industry was actually increasing, as we have already seen in Chapter 3. Although the diamond industry had been an important vehicle for upward mobility of the Jewish and Gentile working classes in the 1870s and 1880s, it started closing off in the 1890s. This began with a complete halt on apprenticeships from 1897 to 1904,

⁵⁵ Botticini and Eckstein, *The Chosen Few*, 73–75.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 268–73.

⁵⁷ For instance, Spitzer argued that Jews in the Pale of Settlement had similar rates of educational attainment as non-Jews wherever they lived, and Becker and Cinnirella found no higher education levels for cities where many Jews lived in Prussia. Abramitzky and Halaburda found higher education levels of Jews than non-Jews in interwar Poland, but this effect was driven by Jews more commonly living in areas with higher levels of education. Yannay Spitzer, "Pale in Comparison: Jews as a Rural Service Minority" (CEPR, 2020); Sascha Becker and Francesco Cinnirella, "Prussia Disaggregated: The Demography of Its Universe of Localities in 1871," *Journal of Demographic Economics* 86.3 (2020): 259–90; Ran Abramitzky and Hanna Halaburda, "Were Jews in Interwar Poland More Educated?," *Journal of Demographic Economics* 86.3 (2020): 291–304.

⁵⁸ Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*, 224.

⁵⁹ Volkstelling 1930, Chapter 4, Table 3, 166–167.

followed by stricter apprenticeship placements. Simultaneously, the industry's fluctuating nature transformed into one where upward mobility was no longer assured. In the twentieth century, wages considerably dropped compared to the *Cape Time*, which had incentivised thousands to join the industry. Gradually, alternative options, such as the growing office work sector, became more appealing for parents to send their talented children to. No longer did everyone want their child to enter the diamond industry regardless of their personal connections to the industry. Thus, in a time where fewer and fewer sons followed their fathers into the diamond industry, those who *did enter* the diamond industry were almost exclusively the children of diamond workers. This did not necessarily imply stagnation over generations, as the industry was home to a range of specialisations, each with distinct differences in social status, income levels, and working conditions. Sons and daughters could follow their parents into the industry but work in completely different positions, both better or worse. However, they were constrained in doing so by the demands of the ANDB and the *Algemene Juweliers Vereniging* ('General Jewellers' Association', AJV), the union of diamond industry employers.⁶⁰ We will focus on the differences in the parent-child transitions *within* the industry by gender and ethno-religious background, but first we will first discuss the recorded characteristics of apprentices' and their parents.

4.4.1 Apprentices' parents

The apprenticeship cards contain information that tell us about their parents' work situations. Thus, to get an idea of who these parents were, I turn to the complete collection of apprenticeship cards issued between 1904 and 1940 and described in Chapter 1.4. A few adjustments are needed to get a proper overview. First, I remove apprenticeships that commenced after 1940 since they fall outside of the period studied in this dissertation. I further exclude roughly 300 apprentices placed as *protégés* of AJV members. These employers were allowed to have one or two apprentices in the industry to learn the ins and outs of the business before becoming diamond traders.⁶¹ These apprentices rarely intended to work as diamond workers after their apprenticeships concluded and few of their cards provided information on their parents; listing the AJV member instead. Moreover, I evaluated parents' employment situations on the cards only if a name of a parent was recorded. This information could be one of the following: works in the diamond industry including their specialisation; works in another occupation; experienced a workplace injury or illness; deceased; or no information was given. The detailed information available on the parents of apprentices highlights the immense control the union had over the industry and its labour market.⁶²

How often these different categories occurred on the apprenticeship cards by gender and ethno-religious background is presented in Figure 4.6. The columns show the percentage of parents that were not also listed as a diamond worker, which was by far the most prevalent. Slightly more than three quarters of apprentices' parents worked as diamond workers, ranging between 75 percent for male Jewish apprentices' parents to

⁶⁰ In 1926, for the first time since the 1920-crisis, hundreds of new apprentices could enter the industry. Due to the need for polishers, 278 out of 288 new apprentices were specialised in this section. See *Jaarverslag 1926*, 21–22. With less demand for setters, who were increasingly getting replaced by machinery, opportunities for intra-industry downward mobility were also on the decline.

⁶¹ Schijf, "De leerlingen van de ANDB," 70–71.

⁶² Hofmeester, "The Impact of the Diamond Industry," 53.

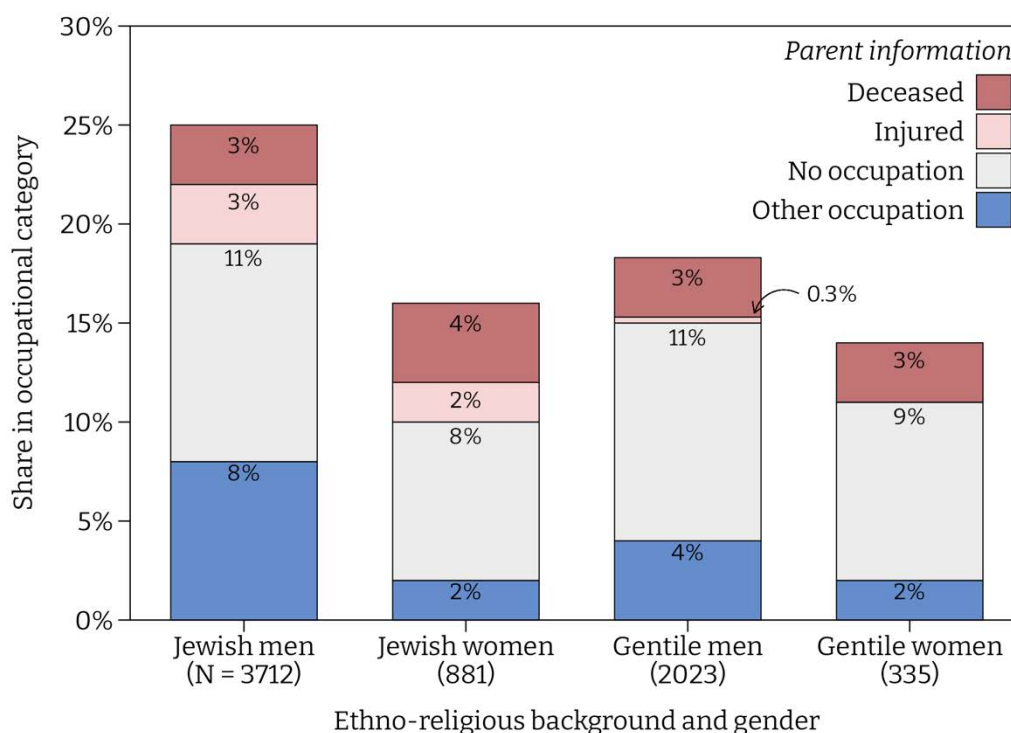


FIGURE 4.6 Occupational information of apprentices' parents by gender and ethno-religious background.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Apprentice Cards," release 2019; and JNI approach. Note: bars only show parents who were not working as diamond workers; all remaining parents were diamond workers. For instance, in the first column (Jewish men), 75 percent of parents worked as diamond workers. Total count by group given in parentheses underneath x-axis.

86 percent for Gentile women.⁶³ The fact that Jewish men more commonly had parents without a background in the diamond industry, relative to Gentiles, is indicative of either the fact that Jews had more access to extended family in the industry—like in Henri Polak's case, whose uncle enabled him to enter the cutting specialisation—or were interested in entering the diamond industry even when they did not have direct family connections. Owing to the significantly higher representation of Jews in the diamond industry, Jews could depend on a more extensive network of indirect kin employed in the diamond industry. Furthermore, Jewish orphanages were tools to increase the share of skilled workers among Amsterdam Jews.⁶⁴ Since most Jewish skilled workers in Amsterdam worked in the diamond industry, it was an easy choice to train them for this occupation. This continued a centuries-old tradition of sending Jewish orphans to the diamond industry.⁶⁵ However, we do not observe an over-representation of Jewish

⁶³ The difference between 100% and the sum of all other occupational categories in Figure 4.6.

⁶⁴ Sonnenberg-Stern, *Emancipation & Poverty*, 149–50.

⁶⁵ Sephardic Jews had trained both Ashkenazi and Sephardic orphans as diamond workers already from the seventeenth century. See Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare among the Portuguese Jews*, 100–106; The Diamantslijperij Maatschappij and other firms had started funds for orphaned diamond workers' offspring since the 1840s; Mozes Barents, *Het Onderling Diamantslijpers Weduwen- en Weezenfonds (1848-1916): een stuk maatschappelijk werk uit de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1927); Although these funds were often non-

orphans in Figure 4.6, likely due to the fact that orphans commonly did not have their parents' names listed on the apprenticeship cards and were therefore excluded from the calculations.

That male Jewish apprentices were twice as likely to have had a father with a non-diamond-worker occupation than male Gentile apprentices, illustrates that, for Jews, the diamond industry remained an option for some children whose parents were not involved in the diamond industry, whereas for Gentiles, the diamond industry was predominantly confined to the offspring of diamond workers. The listed occupations varied significantly based on ethno-religious background. Among Gentiles, occupations often included other (semi-)skilled work like carpenters, plasterers, and painters (not in art). In the case of Jewish fathers, employment was more frequently associated with respectable trading positions, such as diamond merchants, or commerce at a lower status, such as peddlers. For Jews, semi-skilled labour was found in the form of disc sanders, an auxiliary occupation to the diamond industry,⁶⁶ and cigar makers. The status of these occupations are weakly correlated with the positions held by the apprentices within the industry. Apprentices undergoing training in higher specialisations tended to have fathers with higher positions outside of the industry. However, the limited sample sizes make it challenging to draw conclusive relationships in any direction.

4.4.2 Completion of apprenticeships

Not all individuals who commenced an apprenticeship successfully completed these, but this does not impact our current analysis, as our focus is on the entry into specializations rather than the outcomes. A more detailed discussion on the career trajectories of apprenticeship dropouts is provided in Chapter 6 on career mobility. On average, girls were more inclined to complete their apprenticeship and did so in less time. This can be attributed to the over-representation of women among cutters, where apprenticeship fees were typically paid upfront, in contrast to the additional year of labour at the end of apprenticeships common for polishers and setters to pay off their apprenticeship debt. When we compare the young men and women within the same specialisations, they took approximately the same time to finish. Differences by ethno-religious background were also limited.

However, while girls took the same amount of time to finalise their apprenticeships, they more frequently completed their apprenticeships. One possibility is that they were better apprentices. After all, barriers to entry remained higher for women than for men, meaning only the most talented girls—or those with the best-connected parents—would be accepted. Alternatively, as many other well-paying occupations were closed for girls, and the diamond industry being one of few they could enter, boys had more outside options to choose from and could switch careers more easily while still at the stage of apprentice. For girls, the most common alternatives were to become seamstresses or maids, who earned significantly less than diamond cutters and were therefore less attractive options. For instance, the aforementioned Suze Frank worked as a seamstress

denominational, separate endeavours in the Jewish community boosted their numbers. For example, 16 out of 43 orphans moving out of the Dutch Israelite Orphanage between 1836 and 1850 were trained in the diamond industry; Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 28; Gentile orphans were, in turn, pushed to other occupations more commonly performed by Gentiles; Nelleke Bakker, Jan Noordman, and Marjoke Rietveld-Van Wingerden, *Vijf eeuwen opvoeden in Nederland: idee en praktijk 1500–2000* (Assen, 2006).

⁶⁶ Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 148–49.

and as a clerk in the paper industry before retraining as a brilliant cutter. She felt that both occupations paid poorly relative to the diamond industry.⁶⁷

4.4.3 *Parent-child matrices*

Next, we limit ourselves to apprentices whose parents were also listed with a specialisation in the diamond industry; constituting a majority of apprentices at 75.8 percent. This yields 5124 parent-child combinations where both were engaged in the diamond industry. Note, however, that I am not limiting the sample to those who completed the apprenticeships. The emphasis here is on examining the placements, not the outcomes, of the apprenticeships. Each parent and child held one of nine specialisations. Parent-child combinations can therefore be presented in 9-by-9 ordered matrices where each cell counts the number of occurrences for these combinations. Figure 4.7 shows these matrices by gender and ethno-religious background. Parents' specialisations are listed horizontally on the X-axis; those of apprentices vertically on the Y-axis. Each axis is ordered by rank in the position of the hierarchy described in Table 3.2, with cleavers at the top and rose setters at the bottom of this hierarchy. Running diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right of each diagram, we observe 'specialisation following:' both parent and child were engaged in the same specialization. For instance, the top-left cell shows the number of parent-child combinations where both the parent and the child worked as a cleaver. While this combination occurred 25 times for Jewish sons and 12 times for Jewish daughters, it only occurred three times for Gentile sons and once for Gentile daughters. All cases to the left of the diagonal show cases of downward mobility—these apprentices held a lower position in the industry than their parents—and to the right of the diagonal we see upward mobility. The total number of parents and children in each specialisation are listed in the uncoloured sum at the end of the axes; for parents this is the sum of the column, for apprentices the sum of the row. For example, we can see that 61 of the Jewish sons' parents were specialised as cleavers, compared with only four of Gentile sons' parents. The darkness of the red colour indicates, per column, the share of apprentices with that cell's specialisation.

The first trend evident in Figure 4.7 for men is the high occurrence of following along the diagonal. Particularly the combination where both parent and apprentice were brilliant polishers, the exact middle point of the matrices, is highly prevalent, constituting nearly 40 percent of Jewish men's and 46 percent of Gentile men's combinations.⁶⁸ Since the position of brilliant polisher was so common, for both Jews and Gentiles we see that it was not rare for fathers in higher positions, such as brilliant cutters, to have children who apprenticed as brilliant polishers. This is reflected by the red horizontal lines starting at brilliant polisher; regardless of parents' position, in nearly all cases their sons were most likely to go into brilliant polishing. However, the Jewish sons of brilliant polishers rarely became setters—only 54 out of 1199 (4.5%) brilliant polishers' sons were either brilliant or rose setter apprentices⁶⁹—compared with 217 out of 1010 (21.5%) of Gentile sons.⁷⁰ The same pattern is seen for rose polishers'

⁶⁷ For her life story, see <https://diamantbewerker.nl/en/levensverhalen/suze-frank>.

⁶⁸ $983 / 2526 = 38.9\%$; $720 / 1569 = 45.9\%$.

⁶⁹ $36 + 18 = 54$.

⁷⁰ $198 + 19 = 217$.

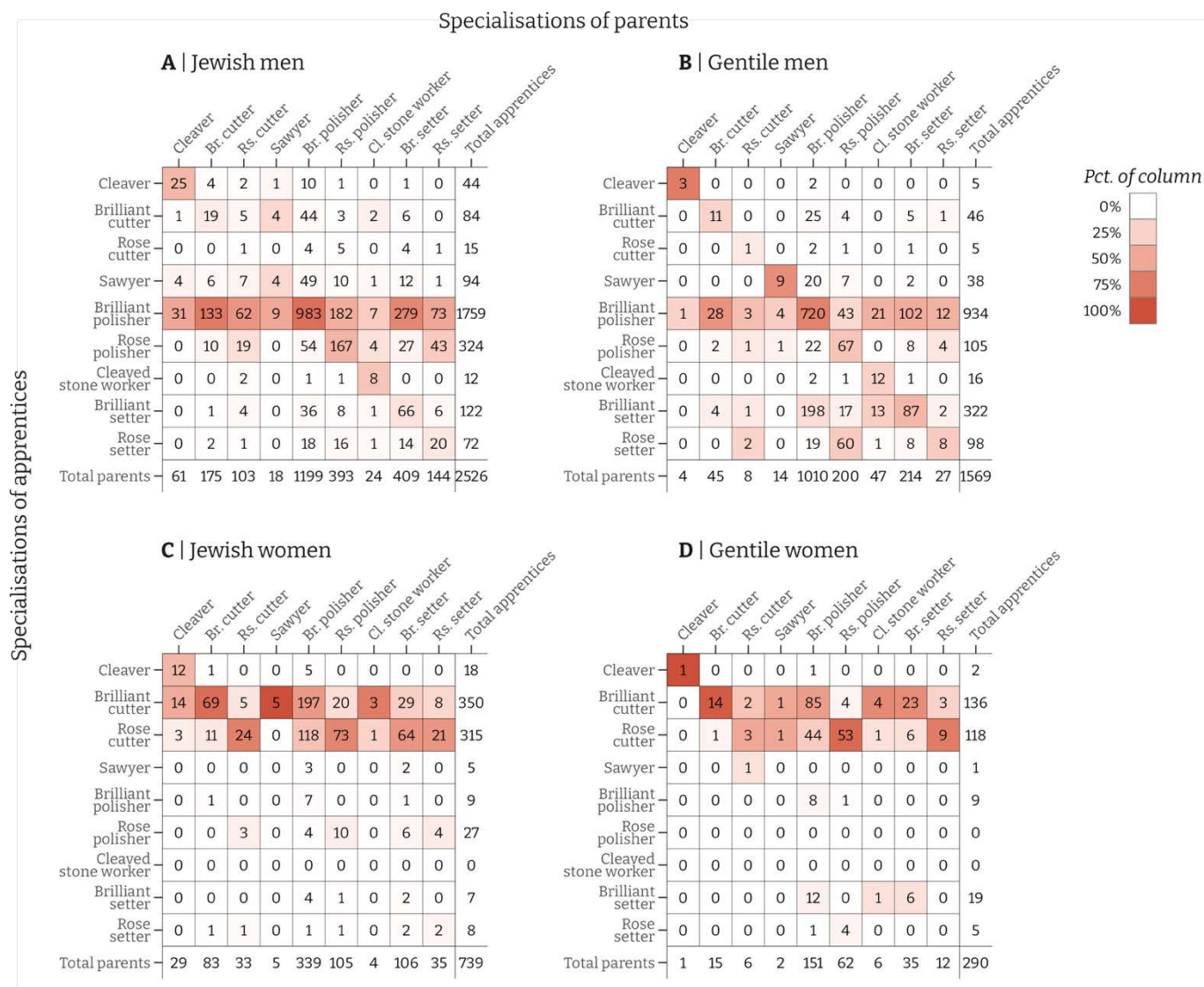


FIGURE 4.7 Intra-industry mobility by gender and ethno-religious background, 1904-1940
Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Apprentice Cards," release 2019; and JNI approach.

sons, although here Gentile sons are more likely to end up as rose setters rather than brilliant setters. In general, Jewish men exhibited higher rates of intra-industry upward mobility compared to downward mobility, while Gentile men were more prone to downward intra-industry mobility than upward.

A distinctive pattern is observed for sawyers, a relatively recent specialization with limited parental involvement. Many apprentices became sawyers, a specialisation that could be used as a significant jump. While most sawyers had been the sons of brilliant polishers, Jewish sawyer apprentices saw a greater spread in the specialisations held by their parents. After 1920, we see more Gentile fathers that worked as sawyers have their sons follow them as sawyers. A handful of women were also trained as sawyers, but never the daughters of sawyers.

Women had entirely different patterns. Since women worked almost exclusively as brilliant and rose cutters, and, to a lesser extent, as cleavers, few of them are seen in lower positions. Consequently, any parent employed in the diamond industry and

planning to send their daughter into the diamond industry had only one choice: sending them to an *atelier* to be a cutter or a cleaver. Daughters of diamond workers therefore saw much higher rates of intra-industry upward mobility, with close to zero daughters experiencing downward mobility.

Table 4.1 summarises the matrices into the shares of each group following or changing positions within the industry and separates the latter into those where the apprentices have higher and lower positions than their parent(s). It also splits the period in half—taking as a break point the crisis that started in 1920—to examine temporal changes. Over the entire period, we see that Gentile men were more likely to have the same position as their parents compared with Jewish men, but Jewish men followed their parents more than Gentile women. For the women, this can be explained by the greater numbers of Jewish women in the industry, which allowed female apprentices to follow mothers, and the higher percentage of Jewish fathers among cutters than Gentile fathers. For the men, the difference arises from their varying in up- and downward mobility patterns. When parent and apprentice had different specialisations, Jewish sons more frequently had higher positions than their parent, whereas Gentile men more commonly moved down. Most apprentices started before 1920. After 1920, the ANDB recruited more brilliant polishers to replace the workers who had left; cutting was increasingly outsourced to Antwerp. As a result, opportunities for upward mobility increased for Gentile sons of lower positioned diamond workers, while they decreased for sons of higher-positioned Jews. This is reflected in the higher rates of upward mobility among Gentile men.

Mothers

Parents were not exclusively fathers; a small yet noteworthy number were mothers. On apprenticeship cards where the ‘father or mother’ field was entered, 160 mothers were counted, versus 4176 fathers.⁷¹ In most cases, these women were rose cutters. Women were not exclusively listed for female apprentices. In fact, mothers were evenly distributed as parents of both male and female apprentices. Given the nature of the specialisations, nearly all girls ‘followed’ their mothers into cutting—daughters of female brilliant cutters always went into brilliant cutting; daughters of rose cutters in either rose and brilliants with a preference for the former—whereas boys rarely followed their mothers into cutting. Instead, sons of female cutters disproportionately apprenticed in polishing, the most common position in the industry. While male apprentices rarely moved up from their mothers’ positions, their downward mobility was limited as few sons of female cutters became setters.

⁷¹ Based on this share (3.69%) we would expect a total of 284 mothers on 7695 apprenticeship cards.

TABLE 4.1 Intra-industry mobility of diamond worker apprentices by gender, religion, and period

	Male apprentices		Female apprentices	
	Jewish	Gentile	Jewish	Gentile
A Entire period: 1904-1940				
No. of apprentices	2526	1569	739	290
Same specialisation	51.2%	58.5%	17.1%	11.0%
Different specialisation	48.8%	41.5%	82.9%	89.0%
Upward (rel. parent)	31.3%	16.8%	76.6%	82.1%
Downward	17.5%	24.7%	6.4%	6.9%
B Pre-crisis: 1904-1919				
No. of apprentices	1953	1340	540	250
Same	51.5%	57.7%	16.7%	11.6%
Different	48.5%	42.3%	83.3%	88.4%
Upward	29.6%	14.3%	76.3%	80.4%
Downward	18.9%	28.1%	7.0%	8.0%
C Post-crisis: 1920-1940				
No. of apprentices	558	212	192	38
Same	49.8%	63.7%	18.8%	7.9%
Different	50.2%	36.3%	81.2%	92.1%
Upward	37.6%	32.5%	76.6%	92.1%
Downward	12.5%	3.7%	4.7%	0.0%

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Apprentice Cards," release 2019; and JNI approach.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at rates of occupational following and mobility for sons and daughters of diamond workers from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1930s. It showed that occupational following was a common pattern of status attainment, not only among diamond workers, but also throughout the rest of the Amsterdam population. This differs from the experiences of Jews in The Hague, who more frequently started at the bottom of the occupational distribution.⁷² However, with the exception of the 1930s, rates of occupational following were much higher among sons of diamond workers than sons of other skilled workers. During the final decades of the period studied, sons of Jewish diamond workers exhibited higher rates of intergenerational upward mobility compared to the sons of other Jewish skilled workers. Meanwhile, sons of Gentile diamond workers did not achieve the same rates of upward mobility. Thus, the sons of Jewish diamond workers were characterised by exceptional rates of upward mobility, both within the Jewish community and Amsterdam as a whole.

A similar trend is seen among occupational followers in the diamond industry. While Jewish sons and daughters were able to advance their positions within the diamond industry over generations, male Gentile diamond workers often found themselves in worse positions than their parents and Jewish counterparts. Jewish and Gentile women experienced upward intra-industry mobility especially frequently. Whereas men could, on paper, work in any position in the industry, women virtually only worked as cleavers

⁷² Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens, "Religion and Social Mobility," 265–66.

or cutters, employed outside of the factories. These same occupations were among the highest skilled and best-paid in the industry. Thus, no matter which specialisation the girls' fathers worked in, if the girls entered the industry, they could only end up in the higher echelons of the hierarchy.

Thus, whether sons or daughters followed their parents into the diamond industry or pursued separate careers, Jews attained higher positions than their parents more commonly than Gentiles. The historical position of Jews in the diamond industry explains their higher status within the industry's hierarchy. Through their occupational concentration, Jewish workers had stronger familial and social networks in the industry. Also of great importance was the influence of the union. Union leaders urged workers to educate themselves and their children. The achievements of the ANDB, including the first European eight-hour working day in 1911 and stabilised incomes, made such investments in education a real possibility. Many workers were therefore encouraged to invest in their children's education. Jews may have been especially willing to listen to this message. They admired the union president, Henri Polak, whose influence on the Jewish workers led to his nickname "rabbi of the diamond workers."⁷³ Jews also made up a majority of the union, providing them with stronger and larger networks amongst the members. Moreover, while Jews considered working in the diamond industry as a point of pride,⁷⁴ for Gentiles, who often had similar career opportunities in other forms of skilled labour, the pro-education messaging of the union may not have had the same impact. Lastly, Jews held higher positions in the diamond industry, which often granted them better financial positions to invest in children's education.

Competition from the Antwerp diamond centre drastically altered patterns of intergenerational mobility. As diamond work became harder to attain in Amsterdam, occupational following diminished. While the industry had attracted many talented sons up to this point, as evidenced by the frequency of white-collar Jewish fathers sending their sons into diamond work until 1900, the period afterward saw an increasing trend toward the recruitment of apprentices from lower social backgrounds. At the same time, fathers who would have sent their children to the diamond industry in the past, now pushed them to find more stable employment in the long run. After 1920, it was increasingly the sons and daughters of diamond workers at the bottom of the industry's hierarchy, as well as those with parents who struggled to provide education for their children, who joined the diamond industry. Although the restructuring of the industry that followed after 1920 favoured Gentile apprentices, who could become polishers more easily, it had an especially negative impact on women. Daughters increasingly lost access to an occupation that offered them high-status employment with equal wages to men. While men could switch to new careers or direct their sons to other occupations, women often had to rely on traditional employment that had been common among Jewish women for centuries, such as seamstresses and maids. However, as Chapter 6 will show, Jewish daughters of ANDB members also benefitted from increased investments in education, with successive cohorts of Jewish women achieving higher-status positions early in their careers. The next chapter will first discuss the possibilities for marriage to change intergenerational patterns.

⁷³ Jaap Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto. Wandelingen door de Amsterdamse Jodenbuurt* (Amsterdam, 1978), 134–35.

⁷⁴ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 48–51.

5

“Mazzel and Broche for the Whole Misjpoge”¹ Social Exogamy, Intermarriages, and Social Networks

“I need a man in ‘*the trade*’² for my daughter. Only he will let her buy the most beautiful costumes whenever she wants. Only he will not let her miss any opera; he alone will allow her to experience every concert, wonder, and light.”

— ‘Dr. Toby’³

5.1 Introduction

Family was an important part of life for Jews in nineteenth and twentieth-century Amsterdam.⁴ It was especially important for Jews employed in the diamond industry.⁵ Before diamond polishing factories opened in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, production in this industry was centred around the household with each family member contributing to the finished product. Fathers and sons polished while mothers and daughters powered the men’s tools and cut facets onto the gems.⁶ Even after the different stages of the diamond manufacturing process were relocated to separate workplaces, family connections remained key. Chapter 4 provided evidence for this – a majority of apprentices in the early-twentieth-century diamond industry had family ties within the industry and used these directly through tutelage and employment ties, or indirectly through valuable information networks. During prolonged periods in the diamond industry’s history, new entrants were only welcomed if they were the direct offspring of incumbent workers.⁷ Upon completing their apprenticeship, often under the supervision of a family member or established through kin connections,⁸ many diamond workers collaborated with direct or extended kin as family members often served as employers or provided information on employment opportunities during economic

¹ “Mazzel en broche,” Yiddish for luck and blessings, was a common term to conclude business deals in the diamond industry. “Mazzel en broche voor de hele misjpoge” (‘Mazzel and broche for the whole Mispoge’), misjpoge being Yiddish for family—thus meaning luck and blessings for the whole family—was also used in the Jewish community to bless someone’s weddings. See also Sluyser, *Hun lach klinkt zo ver...*, 47–48.

² ‘The trade’ is how Jews referred to the diamond industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 49.

³ Dr. Toby, *Het diamantvak en zijne belijders* (Amsterdam, 1880).

⁴ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 125–35; Robert Cohen, “Family, Community and Environment: Early Nineteenth-Century Dutch Jewry,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 19.2 (1985): 321–41; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 175–78.

⁵ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 239.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23; Everard, “Verandering en continuïteit in de arbeid van vrouwen,” 94–95.

⁷ See Chapter 3 for a discussion on these periods.

⁸ Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 56; Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 31–32.

downturns. Marrying into better-positioned families in diamond manufacturing could therefore bolster employment opportunities within the industry. Through information exchange, having a successful father- or brother(-in-law) in the industry could mean the difference between employment and unemployment during the recurrent crises. Additionally, marriages could function as pathways to alternative career paths if the spouse's family members worked in other professions. Sons of diamond workers seeking careers different from their fathers could benefit from marrying daughters in other social classes, such as that of white-collar workers, who could assist in securing work in another employment sector.⁹ Furthermore, marrying a Gentile spouse could, hypothetically, improve the chances of Jews to enter occupations that were previously informally closed to them through lacking social networks or stronger societal pressures of exclusion.¹⁰ A non-Jewish partner might also have reflected intermarried Jews' more advanced stages of integration or symbolised a greater willingness to integrate to potential employers.¹¹ In this chapter we will test whether ethno-religious intermarriage indeed facilitated upward mobility.

The current chapter focuses on two forms of intermarriages—between spouses varying in social classes and between spouses belonging to different ethno-religious groups. While both have been referred to as intermarriage, I will refer to marriages across social classes as 'social exogamy' or 'marital mobility'¹² and marriages across religious lines as 'intermarriages,' 'interfaith marriages,' or 'mixed marriages.' Furthermore, 'in-marrying' will refer to persons marrying partners from their own group, whereas 'out-marrying' indicates intermarrying persons. Social exogamy has been used as a measure for the social fluidity in a society.¹³ If only a few people marry outside of their social class in a society, then that society is likely characterised by strong class boundaries.¹⁴ Marriages in such immobile societies provide little room for social mobility. However, if persons frequently married individuals from different social classes, this would indicate that meaningful interactions and connections were made across social classes and marriages could help socioeconomic advancement. Marital mobility is generally studied using one or several of the following comparisons: comparing (i) grooms' fathers with fathers-in-law, (ii) grooms with fathers-in-law, and (iii) grooms with brides.¹⁵ Historical sources often report few women's occupations, commonly underreporting them.¹⁶ This confines researchers to the first two com-

⁹ Consistent with the concept of "bridging ties." See, for instance, Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties"; and Nan Lin and Mary Dumin, "Access to Occupations through Social Ties," *Social Networks* 8.4 (1986): 365–85.

¹⁰ Delia Furtado and Nikolaos Theodoropoulos, "Why Does Intermarriage Increase Immigrant Employment? The Role of Networks," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 10.1 (2010).

¹¹ Xin Meng and Robert Gregory, "Intermarriage and the Economic Assimilation of Immigrants," *Journal of Labor Economics* 23.1 (2005): 135–74.

¹² Van Leeuwen and Maas, "Historical Studies," 440.

¹³ Marco van Leeuwen and Ineke Maas, "Endogamy and Social Class in History: An Overview," *International Review of Social History* 50.S13 (2005): 1–2.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Jan Van Bavel, Hilde Peeters, and Koen Matthijs, "Connections between Intergenerational and Marital Mobility: A Case Study: Leuven, 1830–1910," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 31.3 (1998): 122–34.

¹⁶ For a discussion on the historical undercount of women's occupations, see Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasúa, "Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labor Force Participation in the European Past," *Feminist Economics* 18.4 (2012): 39–67.

parisons.¹⁷ Nineteenth-century Dutch marriage certificates indeed rarely mentioned women's occupations, especially in Amsterdam.¹⁸ Furthermore, if one group advances in social status more quickly than another, than comparisons across generations become biased. In Chapter 2 we observed that Amsterdam Jews advanced more rapidly in terms of occupational status than Gentiles; Chapter 4 showed Jews had higher rates of intergenerational mobility. Thus, if we were to compare grooms with their fathers-in-law, Jewish grooms would appear more downwardly mobile than if we compared grooms' fathers with the grooms' fathers-in-law. The current chapter will therefore compare the social origins of grooms and brides in the same generation, thereby avoiding biases from differing intergenerational mobility trends. While such comparisons between grooms' and brides' fathers has been referred to as 'intra-generational' marital mobility,¹⁹ I will refer to it as simply 'marital mobility' throughout this chapter. The term 'social background' or 'social origins' will indicate the social class or occupational scores of the fathers of grooms and brides.²⁰

The other main comparison in this chapter concerns ethno-religious differences between spouses. Religious intermarriages reflect contact and interactions between various ethno-religious groups in a society.²¹ In new assimilation theory, intermarriages are seen as the "litmus test" of integration and represent "the visible tip of a denser mass in interethnic contacts."²² While not all interactions lead to marriage, a higher intermarriage rate often follows from increasing exposure between groups. Moreover, for individuals outside the majority group, intermarriage itself can be seen as the greatest form of acceptance by at least one member of the host society. Intermarriages also expand the ethnic heterogeneity of social networks for the individuals involved.²³ While it is frequently taken as a direct measure of—or, to some, even a requirement for—complete integration, it also affects integration in other domains of life. For instance, intermarried couples may choose to move further away from the Jewish residential centres and instead settle in more mixed-ethnicity neighbourhoods.²⁴

Intermarriage as a measure of integration has been critiqued by sociologists and historians.²⁵ Song, for instance, points to potential inequalities between intermarried partners, lack of acceptance by family members, and experiences of discrimination of mixed offspring.²⁶ In the case of Dutch Jews, the impact of intermarriages on the personal lives of Jews and the degree to which they were accepted by both mainstream

¹⁷ Maas and Van Leeuwen, "Partner Choice in the Netherlands."

¹⁸ Boter, "The Emergence of the Dutch Housewife Revised."

¹⁹ Bavel, Peeters, and Matthijs, "Connections between Intergenerational and Marital Mobility," 123.

²⁰ As measured through HISCLASS and HISCAM. For a discussion, see Chapter 1 or Van Leeuwen and Maas, *HISCLASS*; Lambert et al., "The Construction of HISCAM."

²¹ Alberto Bisin, Giorgio Topa, and Thierry Verdier, "Religious Intermarriage and Socialization in the United States," *Journal of Political Economy* 112.3 (2004): 615–64.

²² Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 90.

²³ Stanley Lieberson and Mary Waters, *From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America* (New York, 1988), 162.

²⁴ Residential patterns of intermarried Jews are discussed in Chapter 7. See also Ceri Peach, "Ethnic Segregation and Intermarriage," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70.3 (1980): 371–81; Tammes' results indicate that intermarried Jews were more likely to live outside of the common Jewish districts in adolescence and during adulthood. Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam," 257, 261.

²⁵ For a discussion from the sociology perspective, see Miri Song, "Is Intermarriage a Good Indicator of Integration?," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35.2 (2009): 331–48.

²⁶ Song, "Is Intermarriage a Good Indicator of Integration?," 337, 341.

and Jewish society have been debated broadly. The Jewish politician and demographer Emanuel Boekman saw intermarriage as a *departure* from Jewish society.²⁷ Jaap Meijer, historian of Dutch Jews and the son-in-law of diamond workers Maria Boom and Isidore Herman Voet, argued that intermarriages made Jews *disappear* from Judaism and be absorbed in the “large masses.”²⁸ He believed this was celebrated by ‘assimilants’—Jews in favour of integration—as a pathway to complete emancipation.²⁹ Other historians have argued that intermarriages did not lead to greater acceptance by mainstream Gentile society, but instead led to weaker acceptance by both Gentile and Jewish communities. Based on interviews with Jewish Holocaust survivors and personal pre-war experiences, respectively, Leydesdorff and Gans believed that Jewish-Gentile intermarriages did not lead directly to entry into Christian society.³⁰ Rather, they argued interfaith couples were more frequently ostracised by both Gentiles *and* Jews and therefore marginalised from both communities. Nonetheless, the share of Jews with Gentile spouses increased rapidly in the twentieth century.³¹ The strong correlation between intermarriage and religious disaffiliation suggests that many out-marrying Jews had already partially left the ‘Jewish fold’ prior to their mixed marriages.³²

In contrast to the expansive discussion on Jewish-Gentile intermarriages, little has been written about the social fluidity of the Jewish community of Amsterdam. It is therefore unclear whether Jews utilised marriage as a strategy for upward mobility through marrying someone with a higher social background. Furthermore, although we know that Amsterdam Jews were increasingly intermarrying with Gentiles in the twentieth century—an increase from 6 to 17 percent of all marrying Amsterdam Jews between 1901 and 1934³³—the sources used did not enable a study on the social background of these out-marrying Jews or their non-coethnic partners. Thus, we also do not know if Jews intermarried with Gentiles to progress their integration or achieve upward mobility. Furthermore, the statistics used by Boekman and Tammes to study intermarriage require some nuance. While providing yearly information, the Statistical Yearbooks of Amsterdam are limited to the twentieth century and are based on classifications along religious denominations. For Boekman, marriages where one or both members were religiously unaffiliated were not counted as intermarriages. Tammes interprets marriages between a Jewish person (based on ancestry) and a disaffiliated Jew (based on religious affiliation) as an intermarriage. This presumes different measures of identification for different groups. In order to address this important question, I turn to the full-count marriage certificates of Amsterdam between 1830 and 1932.³⁴ Using the *Jewish Name Index* approach which I developed for the Dutch case,³⁵ I can identify both the groom and the bride as either Jewish or Gentile for nearly

²⁷ Gans, “De kleine verschillen,” 107.

²⁸ Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, 15. For a discussion on the word “assimilant” in the Dutch-Jewish context, see Chapter 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

³⁰ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 316; Mozes Heiman Gans, *Het Nederlandse Jodendom: de sfeer waarin wij leefden* (Utrecht, 1985), 30.

³¹ Tammes, “Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage in Pre-War Amsterdam.”

³² Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 147–48; Endelman, *Leaving the Jewish Fold*, 166.

³³ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 59.

³⁴ The marriage certificates are available since 1811, but certificates in the first two decades inaccurately report occupations at time. I therefore limit the sample to marriages that occurred since 1830. A discussion of this source can be found in Chapter 1. Alternatively, see Mandemakers et al., “LINKS.”

³⁵ Discussed in Appendix A.

60 percent of all Jewish marriages. This technique avoids the above problems related to classification of ethno-religious affiliation.³⁶

In the first part of this chapter, we will look further into partner choices, study the rates of marital mobility and interfaith marriages, and observe to what extent Jews were able to marry Gentiles of equal status—or whether they had to ‘pay status premiums,’ that is: have higher social status backgrounds than their spouses, to enter mixed partnerships.³⁷ The second part of this chapter addresses social networks. It will examine the occupational overlap between grooms, their fathers, and their fathers-in-law to see whether Jews and Gentiles strengthened or widened their family networks in their occupational categories. These networks are an important side effect of marriages and will also be important for understanding the career mobility of Jews in Amsterdam discussed in Chapter 6.

First, however, I will begin by discussing how sociological and historical literature have approached these topics. An overview of how the context of the Amsterdam Jews and the diamond industry may have affected trends over time will be laid out next. We then address social exogamy and intermarriage separately, comparing the expected experiences of Jews, Gentiles, and diamond workers in each. After establishing these trends by group, we will estimate the status premiums involved in mixed marriages and examine their trends over time. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion on these patterns and reflect on what they tell us about the changes in the Jewish community, the diamond industry, and the acceptance of Jews in Amsterdam as a whole.

5.2 Who (Inter)Marries Whom?

A sizable sociological literature has explored the question of who marries whom to better understand aggregate and individual-level trends in partner choices across ethnic groups and social classes.³⁸ Historically, individuals predominantly married within their own religious group and social class.³⁹ However, to what extent—and how—has this changed towards the end of the nineteenth century and beginning the twentieth century for the context of Amsterdam and its Jewish community? Which determinants can explain the changes in social fluidity, the increasing number of marriages between individuals from varying class backgrounds, and marital unions of persons belonging to different religious denominations? The next section will introduce the existing sociological literature and provide insights for the case of Amsterdam and its Jewish community.

³⁶ However, it is not free of faults. While false negatives in the identification are extremely scarce, as has been shown in Appendix A, the approach cannot identify all grooms and brides as either Jewish or Gentile. Moreover, more integrated Jews with names that sounded less Jewish had a smaller chance of getting identified as either and were more likely to be listed as ‘ambiguous.’ The estimated intermarriage rates in this chapter can therefore be seen as a lower bounds for the actual intermarriage rates.

³⁷ Xuanning Fu, “Interracial Marriage and Family Socio-Economic Well-Being: Equal Status Exchange or Caste Status Exchange?,” *The Social Science Journal* 45.1 (2008): 132–55.

³⁸ For overviews, see Matthijs Kalmijn, “Assortative Mating by Cultural and Economic Occupational Status,” *American Journal of Sociology* 100.2 (1994): 422–52; Matthijs Kalmijn, “Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24.1 (1998): 395–421; Daniel Lichter and Zhenchao Qian, “The Study of Assortative Mating: Theory, Data, and Analysis,” in *Analytical Family Demography*, ed. Robert Schoen, vol. 47 (New York, 2019), 303–37.

³⁹ Van Leeuwen and Maas, “Endogamy and Social Class in History.”

5.2.1 *Partner Choice Theory*

Partner choice theory has identified three main clusters of determinants to explain social endogamy: (i) marital candidates' personal characteristics and preferences for partners' characteristics; (ii) the values and opinions of 'third parties' surrounding marital candidates; and (iii) constraints on the (local) marriage market(s).⁴⁰ These three clusters can be used to understand both social exogamy and ethno-religious intermarriages.

Persons looking for a spouse are more likely to marry individuals with characteristics they prefer. In the past and in modern days, these included height and income,⁴¹ as well as education and cultural or religious similarity.⁴² More generally, preferences can be split into socioeconomic and cultural capital. If different social classes have distinct cultures or characteristics that are not preferred by members of the other social class, than social exogamy may be limited as a result. Third-party influences can be separated into institutional barriers, such as laws against marriages between certain groups, institutional voices (such as 'the Church' or Synagogue), and the role of the family and the neighbourhood in which a person grew up. This last one functions separately from the opportunity of meeting, for instance by living in the same street. Instead, the neighbourhoods a person grows up in, shape their self-identification in terms of social class or religious belonging. Moreover, persons living amid high concentrations of co-ethnics are more likely to identify in similar terms to their parents and neighbours.⁴³

Marriage markets cover two key elements. The first is the likelihood that two individuals from different groups meet. This depends on the relative size of the groups and the characteristics of each group. The second element is the actual 'local marriage markets' where people meet. This refers to the physical spaces which allow people to interact amongst each other and includes area of residence, schools, workplaces, and social clubs. Such local marriage market may affect the characteristics of the couples through a selection effect. For instance, couples that meet through close proximity in their residence tend to be more homogeneous to their parents' characteristics than if they were to meet at school.⁴⁴

5.2.2 *Expected directions of social exogamy and intermarriages*

On top of the overall expectations for changes in social exogamy and ethno-religious intermarriages during the nineteenth and twentieth century—periods of modernisation and industrialisation—there have also been changes specific to the Jewish community of Amsterdam. These can be summarised into five categories: (i) Jewish culture and

⁴⁰ Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy"; Zhenchao Qian and Daniel Lichter, "Marriage Markets and Intermarriage: Exchange in First Marriages and Remarriages," *Demography* 55.3 (2018): 849–75.

⁴¹ Michela Ponzo and Vincenzo Scoppa, "Trading Height for Education in the Marriage Market," *American Journal of Human Biology* 27.2 (2015): 164–74; Kristina Thompson, Xander Koolman, and France Portrait, "Height and Marital Outcomes in the Netherlands, Birth Years 1841–1900," *Economics & Human Biology* 41 (2021): 100970.

⁴² For example, Martin Dribe and Christer Lundh, "Status Homogamy in the Preindustrial Marriage Market: Partner Selection According to Age, Social Origin, and Place of Birth in Nineteenth-Century Rural Sweden," *Journal of Family History* 34.4 (2009): 387–406.

⁴³ Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy," 401.

⁴⁴ Matthijs Kalmijn and Henk Flap, "Assortative Meeting and Mating: Unintended Consequences of Organized Settings for Partner Choices," *Social Forces* 79.4 (2001): 1289–1312.

secularisation; (ii) the changing meaning of the diamond industry and its union; (iii) the political climate; (iv) the growing educational attainment of Jews; and (v) residential (de)segregation. Additionally, the small and unchanging relative population size of Jews combined with their social isolation made it difficult for Jews and Gentiles to meet. Jews also had parents that lived longer due to lower adult mortality among Jews.⁴⁵ This may have affected the rates of endogamous marriages, since research has shown that the presence of living parents increased the likelihood that persons married similar people.⁴⁶

(i) Jewish Culture and Secularisation

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the Jewish community of Amsterdam was 'moderately Orthodox.'⁴⁷ While religious leaders, like Abraham Carel Wertheim, preached for Orthodoxy despite being secular and non-practicing, the strong religious undertones that persisted in Jewish society made religious intermarriages difficult. Most Jews continued to observe key Jewish traditions, such as the Sabbath, until the twentieth century and the circumcision of boys for even longer.⁴⁸ These traditions created a divide between Jews and Gentiles who might prefer to live and interact with culturally similar individuals. This rift, however, diminished in the second half of the nineteenth century due to increasing secularisation in both groups.⁴⁹ A growing share of the Jewish community stopped observing the Sabbath and attending Synagogue services. This affected not only the preferences for a spouse, who now was not required to observe the same religious traditions, but also weakened the third-party influences of the Synagogue. While notable rabbis continued to spread anti-intermarriage messaging well into the twentieth century, these messages were received by a declining share of Amsterdam Jews. Meanwhile, regardless of the degree of religiosity, Jews' partner choices were still strongly influenced by their family. Several Jews in high social positions remarked that they continued to observe certain special Jewish traditions, such as *chuppahs*, Jewish religious weddings, to please their less secularised family members.⁵⁰

Growing secularisation also affected the possibilities for social exogamy within the Jewish community. Jews in higher social classes tended to be more secularised and adhered to fewer common traditions. When few working-class Jews possessed these characteristics, middle and upper-class Jews seeking culturally similar people were limited to their class peers. We can see these temporal changes clearly for Sephardic Jews. The Sephardim had, on average, always been wealthier than the Ashkenazim until the nineteenth century. During those times, marriages between Sephardic and

⁴⁵ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 112.

⁴⁶ Frans van Poppel, Jurjen de Jong, and Aart Liefbroer, "The Effects of Paternal Mortality on Sons' Social Mobility: A Nineteenth-Century Example," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 31.3 (1998): 101–12; Van Leeuwen and Maas, "Historical Studies," 441.

⁴⁷ Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders," 264–65.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 298–99.

⁴⁹ Jakob Kruijt, *De onkerkelijkheid in Nederland: haar verbreiding en oorzaken* (Groningen, 1933); Hans Knippenberg, "Secularization in the Netherlands in Its Historical and Geographical Dimensions," *GeoJournal* 45 (1998): 209–20.

⁵⁰ Gans, "De kleine verschillen," 134–135. For a discussion on the high levels of such ordained weddings, see; Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders," 299.

Ashkenazi Jews were uncommon. As the relative social position of Ashkenazi Jews rose,⁵¹ and the Sephardic community remained too small to continue in-marrying, marriages between the two groups increased rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁵²

(ii) The diamond industry and ANDB

Between 1850 and 1900, the diamond industry expanded from 1500 to 10,000 workers while the share of Gentiles increased from 15 to roughly 30 percent. The non-denominational ANDB, created through combined collective action of Jews and Gentiles, was the strongest union of its time and significantly 'emancipated' the workers.⁵³ The union raised the status of diamond workers and provided them means to acquire additional forms of social, cultural, and human capital. The library, lectures, cultural clubs, and informative weekly newsletters are clear examples of the options for self-improvement advocated for, and offered by, the union.⁵⁴ The eight-hour working day obtained in 1911 was believed to open up eight hours for learning. The increases in status and various forms of capital should, in theory, have increased rates of upward marital mobility since marrying a partner working in the diamond industry became more attractive. Moreover, the growing share of Gentiles in the industry and the expanding opportunities to meet them—at the union headquarters, in the library, or at union meetings—increased exposure between Jews and Gentiles. This increase in exposure could, in turn, have led to more intermarriages.

(iii) Pillarisation and Socialism

As the diamond industry expanded, Dutch society increasingly built around religious and political 'pillars.' While Jews did not construct such a pillar of their own, they aligned closely to the Liberal and Socialist pillars.⁵⁵ This may have further weakened their group identity but also made them culturally closer to like-minded Gentiles. For some, Socialism was seen as the replacement of Judaism.⁵⁶ Fittingly, Henri Polak, a Jewish senator of the SDAP and the president of the ANDB, was called the 'rebbe' of the diamond workers.⁵⁷ Bram Reens, a young Jewish diamond worker who played an important role in getting Jews to join the Social Democratic movement, exclaimed in 1894 "[w]e have stopped being Jews and have become Socialists."⁵⁸ A generation later, Alida de Jong, the daughter of a diamond worker and a leading woman in the Dutch labour movement, spoke the words "[a]s a Socialist, not as an Israelite" to protest at the congress of Social Democratic Women's organisations against religious undertones in Socialist news-

⁵¹ Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 16, 36, 130.

⁵² Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders," 301–3.

⁵³ See Chapter 3 for examples of the emancipatory pressure of the union. Alternatively, Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 114–16, 149–51, 317–19, 325–26, 500–502, 507–8, 644–48.

⁵⁴ Hofmeester, "The Impact of the Diamond Industry," 59.

⁵⁵ Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society," 55.

⁵⁶ For instance, Emmanuel Aalsvel describes how Jewish children no longer identified as Jews, but as Socialists. "There was no difference between Jews and Christians, there we simply lived next to one another. There was a difference with the Smitstraat, because the Catholics lived there. We played football against them, but not as Jews, but as Socialists." Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 182.

⁵⁷ Meijer, *Hoge hoeden, lage standaarden*, 22.

⁵⁸ Jaap Cohen, *De onontkoombare afkomst van Eli d'Oliveira: een Portugees-joodse familiegeschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 2015), 202.

papers.⁵⁹ The Jewish alignment with Socialism also helped create new co-ethnic spaces which enhanced exposure between the two groups.⁶⁰ The *Arbeiders Jeugdcentrale*, the youth organisation of the SDAP, is repeatedly mentioned in the historiography as an interfaith dating pool for the offspring of Jewish and Gentile socialists.

However, while growing allegiance to political movements brought ideologically similar Jews and Gentiles closer together, it widened differences between working-class and white-collar Jews. The latter were predominantly aligned with Liberalism and, over time, felt less connected to Jews with other political worldviews.⁶¹ As Gentile society and its organisations became structured more strongly around their religious pillars, Jewish society became more separated by class and less bounded by religion. Thus, the growing affiliation between the Jewish working class and Socialism is predicted to have increased religious intermarriages and decreased social exogamy.

ILLUSTRATION 5.1 Members of the AJC dancing at the May dance, Watersgraafsmeer 1935.

Source: Amsterdam Archive City, 10003, #47749.



(iv) Educational attainment of Jews

Another factor that impacted both social exogamy and intermarriages was the educational attainment of Jews. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the quality of Jewish-denominational schools was particularly poor. Working-class Jews sent their children to specific 'poor schools' subsidised by the municipal government, while higher-status Jews more frequently sent their children to private schools.⁶² Since the Education Act of 1857, Jews from all social classes increasingly enrolled their children in

⁵⁹ Margreet Schrevel, "Als Socialist, niet als Israëliet." *De SDAP en het 'Joodse vraagstuk'*, *De Gids* 156 (1993): 501–9.

⁶⁰ For instance, Heertje writes: the socialist movement has, through intermingling at meetings and events, led to secularisation and marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 266.

⁶¹ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 59; Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 130–31.

⁶² See Section 2.6 of this dissertation and Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden and Siebren Miedema, "Freedom of Education and Dutch Jewish Schools in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Jewish History* 17.1 (2003): 33.

public non-denominational schools. These were of higher quality than the Jewish poor schools; many religious private schools disappeared with the loss of subsidies for denominational education. The Education Act and the non-denominational schools that were opened as a result therefore increased the inter-mingling of pupils from different social classes and religious groups. While Jews had lagged behind other ethno-religious groups in terms of educational attainment until the mid-nineteenth century, Jews increasingly became over-represented in higher levels of education. This was observed in both secondary education and among university graduates⁶³—and will also be seen in our discussion of educational attainment in Chapter 8.

Higher levels of education raised the status of Jews, provided them with various forms of desired social and cultural capital, and made Jews more attractive partners to non-Jews. Their higher educational attainment, however, also diminished the group identity of Jews.⁶⁴ As successive generations of Jews became more highly educated, the parents of each cohort also had more human capital. If we follow the argument that education decreased group identity, then parents with higher levels of educational attainment felt less negatively towards intermarriage. The influence of the diamond workers' union would have given diamond workers in particular more informal human capital, a positive influence on their social exogamy rates.

(v) Residential segregation

In terms of meeting places and exposure, residential segregation was one of the largest changes in Amsterdam. Until the mid-nineteenth century, Jews lived segregated along ethno-religious lines.⁶⁵ Virtually all Jews, except for a minute segment of acculturated and high-class Jewish elites, remained concentrated around the Jewish Quarter. Inadvertently, this religious segregation maintained a small geographical distance between Jews of various social classes. Gentiles, who resided in a much larger geography of Amsterdam, had greater possibilities to segregate by class. This is also what we observe among Jews since the second half of the nineteenth century. Successful Jews who saw social advancement through occupational upgrading increasingly moved to neighbourhoods with better housing, predominantly in the east and later the south of Amsterdam. This implied religious desegregation as Jews and Gentiles moved to the same neighbourhoods, but also greater residential separation by class within the Jewish community. Jews and Gentiles in similar social classes now living in closer proximity, raising their exposure to one another, was likely a positive influence on their intermarriage rates. However, growing class segregation in the Jewish community is expected to have diminished social exogamy of in-marrying Jews. Well-to-do Jews more frequently moved to the southwest of Amsterdam, residing in the Apollobuurt, Concertgebouwbuilt, and Rivierenbuurt, whereas working-class and segments of middle-class Jews moved to the Oosterparkbuurt and Transvaalbuurt. The 'sanitation'

⁶³ Mandemakers, "Gymnasiaal en middelbaar onderwijs," 615. See also Dutch census of 1930.

⁶⁴ In Chapter 2 we saw that Jews in the highest social class, the category including most university graduates, were most likely to have explicitly unidentified as Jewish in the official population registers. For a discussion on the educational attainment of Dutch-Jewish elite, see Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 111–16.

⁶⁵ Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, "Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940"; Van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity*, 39, 44; Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam"; Clé Lesger, Marco van Leeuwen, and Bart Vissers, "Residentiële segregatie in vroegmoderne steden. Amsterdam in de eerste helft van de negentiende eeuw," *TSEG–The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 10.2 (2013): 102–32.

of the old Jewish Quarter starting with Uilenburg in 1916 placed the lowest social classes of Jews nearer to the upper-working-classes. Thus, Jewish peddlers, carters, and porters lived nearer to Jewish diamond workers and cigar makers in the east of Amsterdam than Jewish office workers, lawyers, and doctors living in the south. We might therefore expect more marriages within the type of work—that is, within white-collar and non-manual occupational groups on the one hand and blue-collar and manual groups on the other—while less so between those two.

Summary

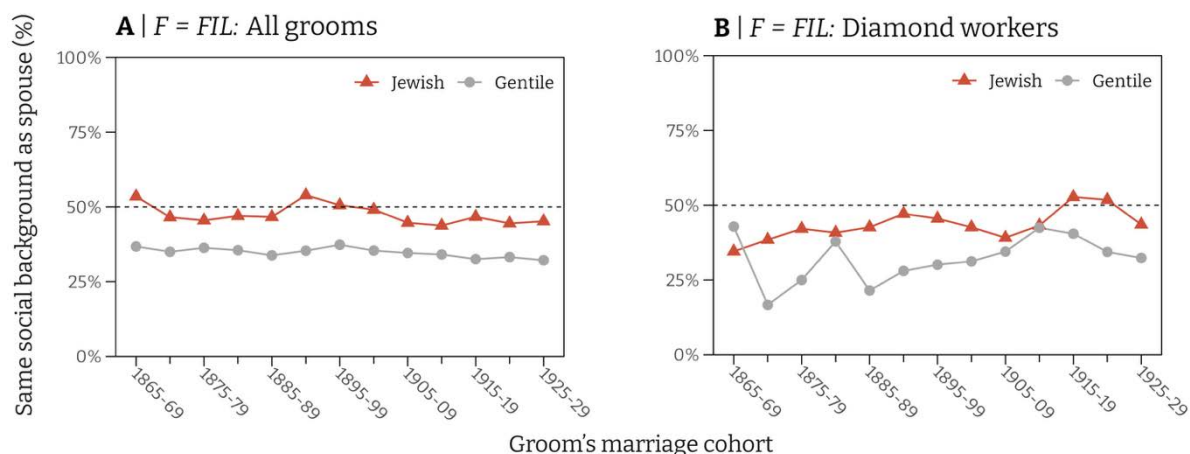
All changes discussed above suggest that Jews would increasingly intermarry with Gentiles. Within the Jewish community, however, various forces pushed the possibilities for social exogamy in different directions. While Jewish diamond workers were becoming more educated and possessed more social and cultural capital with the introduction of the union, they also diverged more in terms of living area and political ideology compared to Jewish white-collar workers. We therefore turn to the marriage certificates to see in what direction the social fluidity of Amsterdam's Jews moved.

5.3 Social Exogamy

As the occupational distribution of Jewish men diversified over time, the potential overlap between grooms' fathers and fathers-in-law decreased. This meant that successive cohorts of the grooms' fathers had more varied occupations, with social classes that potentially differed from the grooms' fathers-in-law. Rates of overlapping occupations, however, consistently remained higher for Jews than for Gentiles. The question we ask here is: to what extent did Jewish and Gentile grooms marry brides from the same or better social upbringings?

Figure 5.1 shows the share of Jewish and Gentile grooms in Amsterdam between 1865–1929, based on whether their fathers and fathers-in-law had the same social class or not. The figure also presents separate plots referring to two different samples: all grooms or grooms in the diamond industry at the time of marriage. Part 1 compares the share of grooms whose fathers and fathers-in-law belonged to the same social class, otherwise referred to as intergenerational marital *immobility*, between Jews and Gentiles. The left plot looks at these shares for all grooms, and the right for grooms who were diamond workers at marriage. From 1870 to 1929, roughly half of all Jews entered a marriage where their father-in-law had the same social class as their own father. For Gentiles, this percentage fluctuated between 30 and 40 percent. Thus, the Gentile community showed more social fluidity than the Jewish community. While we expected that the residential clustering of Jews, regardless of class status, would have helped their social exogamy rates; their occupational clustering, which was expected to lower their exogamy rates, appears to be more important as a determinant. We see similar trends among Jewish diamond workers, one of the largest occupational concentrations of Jews. Although Jewish diamond workers did not exhibit a stronger tendency to marry partners with the same class origins compared to the average Jewish groom, they did consistently show greater rates of such immobility than Gentile men working in the diamond industry.

Part 1 | Grooms' fathers and fathers-in-law in same social class



Part 2 | Grooms' fathers in higher social class than fathers-in-law

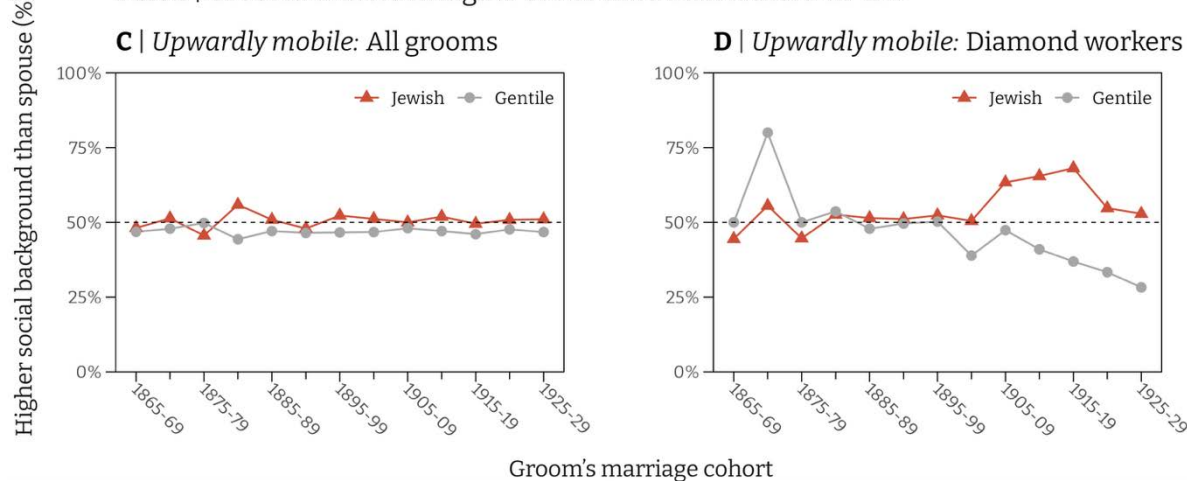


FIGURE 5.1 Share of grooms whose fathers and fathers-in-law have the social class (part 1); and the share of upwardly-mobile grooms when the fathers did not have the same social class (part 2); by ethno-religious background, Amsterdam 1865-1929.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release; and JNI approach.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. F = father; FIL = father-in-law. N = 22,822 (part 1) and 41,087 (part 2).

Part 2 of Figure 5.1 focuses on grooms whose father and father-in-law did *not* have the same social class. These are considered to be 'mobile' grooms and could therefore be either upwardly or downwardly mobile. The plots in this panel present the share of all 'mobile' grooms that married a partner from a higher social class background than their own. For all Jews and Gentiles, this percentage fluctuated around 50 percent. Thus, when Jews and Gentiles were 'mobile,' they were equally likely to move up or down. However, the trends of diamond workers diverged. Except for the peak of Gentile diamond workers' upward marital mobility between 1870-1874—which is the result of a low sample size and early entrants profiting disproportionately from the *Cape Time* boom—Jewish diamond workers consistently were more likely to marry up than Gentile diamond workers. This accelerated in the twentieth century when over 60 percent of

Jewish diamond workers moved up through marriage. In the years 1915–1919, two-thirds of ‘mobile’ diamond workers moved up, meaning only one-third of ‘mobile’ grooms moved down. In contrast, three out of eight Gentile diamond workers (37.5%) moved up in social class and five of eight moved down. Two changes during this period can explain the increasing upward marital mobility of Jewish diamond workers. First, their union had a disproportionately positive impact on Jewish workers in the industry in contrast to their Gentile counterparts. For Jews, the diamond industry was ‘*the trade*,’ rather than one of many. Additionally, the growing Jewish middle class—discussed in Chapter 2—expanded the opportunities for Jewish diamond workers to marry partners from higher social backgrounds.

Thus, the Amsterdam-Jewish community was less socially fluid than Gentile Amsterdam. The most reasonable explanation is the occupational concentration of Jews, which led to higher rates of within-class marriages. The fact that Jewish parents lived longer—and, initially, Jews married at a younger age—also increased the rate of endogamous marriages.⁶⁶

5.4 Intermarriages

Although precise aggregated numbers of Jewish–Gentile intermarriages are available for the twentieth century, these figures do not allow one to observe individual characteristics of out-marrying Jews and do not trace back to the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ Therefore I use the full-count marriage certificates in LINKS, distinguishing between Jews and Gentiles on the basis of their names. I limit the marriages to those where both the groom and bride can be distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile.⁶⁸ The intermarriage rate, the share of Jews that married Gentile partners and vice versa, is summarised for each 10-year marriage cohort from 1850–1859 up to 1920–1929. Table 5.1 presents these figures for the overall population of Jewish grooms, as well as all Jewish grooms employed in the diamond industry at the time of their marriage.

In the 1850s, Jewish–Gentile marriages were a rarity. Only one in fifty Jewish grooms married a Gentile partner in that decade. Since then, intermarriage rates increased rapidly. By the end of the nineteenth century it had become three times as common, and by the 1920s one in seven Jewish men entered interfaith marriages. These levels remained lower than in other European cities best explained by Amsterdam’s high rate of residential segregation.⁶⁹ Although the diamond industry could be expected to be a

⁶⁶ Van Poppel, De Jong, and Liefbroer, “The Effects of Paternal Mortality on Sons’ Social Mobility”; Van Leeuwen and Maas, “Historical Studies,” 441.

⁶⁷ Boekman and Tammes both made independent use of the Statistical Yearbooks of the Amsterdam municipality, which have been published since 1895. These provide information on the religious denominations of brides and grooms starting in 1901. Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*, 57–63; Tammes, “Jewish–Gentile Intermarriage in Pre-War Amsterdam,” 302.

⁶⁸ Between 1850 and 1929 this concerns 181,330 marriages, or 58.9% of total marriages. Individuals with lower likelihoods of being identified using our methodology include those with more ambiguous (i.e. less Jewish-sounding) names and those of intermarried parents. If we assume that these groups were more likely to intermarry than the average Jewish or Gentile person, then the results presented in Table 5.1 can be interpreted as the lower bounds.

⁶⁹ Ultee and Luijkx, “Jewish–Gentile Intermarriage in Six European Cities,” 171, 184–85; Steven Lowenstein, “Jewish Intermarriage in Germany and Austria,” *Modern Judaism* 25.1 (2005): 23–61.

TABLE 5.1 Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rates of all Jewish grooms and Jewish diamond workers, Amsterdam 1850-1929.

Period	All Jewish grooms		Jewish diamond workers		<i>p</i> -value
	Intermarried/ <i>N</i>	Pct.	Intermarried/ <i>N</i>	Pct.	
1850-1859	30/1532	1.96%	1/318	0.31%	***
1860-1869	39/1652	2.36%	2/249	0.80%	***
1870-1879	56/2073	2.70%	2/548	0.36%	***
1880-1889	74/2236	3.31%	8/828	0.97%	***
1890-1899	130/2228	5.83%	37/930	3.97%	**
1900-1909	231/2922	7.91%	64/926	6.91%	
1910-1919	380/3478	10.93%	57/837	6.81%	***
1920-1929	474/3369	14.07%	56/566	9.89%	***
1850-1929	1414/19,490	7.26%	227/5202	4.36%	***

Source: author's calculations using LINKS 2022 "Cleaned Civil Registry" release; <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/ONOSRY>.

Note: *N* are all marriages within the group. The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. *p*-value measures whether the shares of intermarrying Jewish diamond workers were statistically different from the intermarriage rates of all Jewish grooms; *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$.

sector where Jews were more likely to intermarry—after all, they were forerunners in adapting Social Democratic ideology, among the first to move out of the old Jewish Quarter, and their high incomes could have functioned as status premiums—we instead observe that diamond workers were consistently less likely to marry a non-Jewish partner. Only in the period 1900–1909 were differences small enough that, statistically, we cannot say for certain that diamond workers intermarried less.

Which factors could explain both the increasing likelihood of intermarriage among Jews and the low rates of intermarriage among Jewish diamond workers? A possible explanation could be that diamond workers faced more antisemitism than other Jews. One example of this is Samson (Sem) Bonn (1906–1995), a secularised Jewish son of a diamond worker, who experienced his first instance of antisemitism when he met his future parents-in-law, two Gentile diamond workers, for the first time in 1928.⁷⁰ His future mother-in-law told him she believed Jews “used and discarded” Gentiles, while his father-in-law remarked “I am not antisemitic, but I do hate the Jews.”⁷¹ While such anecdotes reveal that antisemitism affected Jews regardless of one's occupation, no systematic evidence exists that suggests that Jewish diamond workers were at greater risk of antisemitic discrimination. We therefore should consider seeking for alternative explanations.

Another possibility is social class. If only Jewish white-collar workers and professionals entered mixed marriages, while diamond workers and other (un- or semi-)skilled workers did not, then Jewish diamond workers' low intermarriage rates would simply be explained by their status. To test this, Figure 5.2 presents Jewish intermarriage rates by social class. It demonstrates that, while social class certainly was correlated with

⁷⁰ Gans, “De kleine verschillen,” 139.

⁷¹ Idem.



FIGURE 5.2 Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rates by for Jewish grooms by social class of the groom at the time of marriage, Amsterdam 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release; and JNI approach.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. $N = 24,418$ marriages where the groom is identified as Jewish and the bride is identified as either Jewish or Gentile.

intermarriage rates, it did not explain why Jewish diamond workers intermarried less. Despite having a social class in the middle of the social hierarchy—and above other skilled workers—Jewish diamond workers were the least likely to intermarry, echoing trends in religious disaffiliation seen in Chapter 2.7. Their intermarriage rates were lower even than Jewish grooms who worked as unskilled workers. We can also note only a small difference between the diamond workers at the top of their industry, the cleavers and cutters, and the rest of the regular diamond workers. These top workers of the diamond industry had slightly higher levels of intermarriage, but also worked in more religiously mixed environments, were more highly esteemed by their colleagues, and earned higher wages than those diamond workers who worked in the factories. Nonetheless, they too intermarried less commonly than expected by their social class.

Since the late nineteenth century especially higher white-collar workers, and since the start of the twentieth century also the lower white-collar workers, were most prone to enter interfaith marriages. Remarkable also are the semi-skilled workers with intermarriage rates in the twentieth century exceeding those of diamond workers, skilled workers, and merchants. Their rates were particularly boosted by the high likelihoods of intermarriage among Jewish coachmen, drivers, and waiters. In these

occupations, characterised by generally low status and high levels of exposure to Gentiles, over 20 percent of Jews intermarried in the early twentieth century.⁷²

Findings suggest that the lagging intermarriage rates of Jewish diamond workers was not a story of class, but instead a story of exposure. In the diamond industry, most Jews worked only with Jewish co-workers in Jewish factories in predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods.⁷³ While the diamond workers' union and Socialist party to which the Jewish diamond workers were so strongly aligned with created new places to interact with Gentiles —underlined by the peak growth in intermarriages between 1890 and 1909—they still met Gentiles much less frequently than the average Jew. The reverse comparison corresponds with this trend. While few Gentiles married Jewish partners, intermarriage rates of Gentile grooms working in the diamond industry were higher than the Gentile average. The relative figures (presented in Table C1 in Appendix C) highlight that the diamond industry was characterised by above average exposure to Jews.

If the lack of intermarriages was instead due to preferences for more in-marriages by Jewish diamond workers, rather than their lower exposure to Gentiles, then we expect that at least some of these preferences would be transmitted to their children.⁷⁴ In this case, the children of Jewish diamond workers should also be less likely to intermarry than the average Jewish son or daughter. Tables C2 and C3 in Appendix C show that this was not the case. The sons of Jewish diamond workers were roughly as likely to intermarry with a Gentile spouse as the average Jewish son, while Jewish daughters of diamond workers were more likely than the average Jewish daughter to intermarry. Since occupational following had become rather uncommon in the twentieth century, even among the diamond workers, this period is more characterised by the transferring of preferences than the transferring of occupations. Thus, it does not appear that Jewish diamond workers preferred marrying Jews, or not marrying Gentiles, a value they could have passed to their next of kin. Rather, they met potential Gentile partners less frequently. Additionally, we have documented an increase in intermarriages among Jewish diamond workers during the 1920s, a period when the average income of diamond workers was falling due to a major industry-wide crisis. Since intermarriage rates for this group continued to rise instead of fall, despite falling absolute incomes, their financial power does not appear crucial for determining their intermarriage rates. Taken altogether, these observations strongly suggest that (the lack of) exposure to Gentiles was the biggest contributor to the below-average intermarriage rates among Jewish diamond workers.

⁷² That exposure in and around work is important is also seen in the case of Jewish-owned businesses, which often functioned as a marriage market for young men and women. Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 44.

⁷³ The idea of Jewish neighbourhoods is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

⁷⁴ Kalmijn and co-authors argue that most of the absence of Jewish-Gentile intermarriages in post-World War II Netherlands was the result of the intergenerational transmission of preferences for endogamous marriages. Matthijs Kalmijn et al., "The Family Factor in Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage: A Sibling Analysis of the Netherlands," *Social Forces* 84.3 (2006): 1347–58.

5.5 Status premiums

5.5.1 All Jews

The growing rates of intermarriage reflect growing interactions between Jews and Gentiles. But to what extent were they considered equals in these marriages? If intermarriages only occurred when Jewish spouses offered greater resources, such as higher occupational status, than this imbalance reflects an ethno-religious hierarchy in the labour market and possibly society at large.⁷⁵ We can measure whether this was the case by comparing the social backgrounds of in- and out-marrying Jews and Gentiles. If Jews marrying Gentiles consistently came from higher social backgrounds than their spouses, and Gentiles marrying Jews a lower social background than their spouse, an inequality exists. The HISCAM occupational scores,⁷⁶ with values ranging from 40 to 99 reflecting relative social status of the fathers of brides and grooms allow us to measure these backgrounds numerically. Earlier we saw that roughly 35 percent of Gentiles and 50 percent of Jews married partners with the same social class background. On average, Jews and Gentiles who married spouses within their own group married partners with the same status. Since partners tend to be similar in terms of age, social class, and ethno-religious background, differences in certain characteristics can be compensated by differences in other areas.⁷⁷ For instance, a large age gap can be compensated with greater wealth.

To examine whether being Jewish was one such factor that required compensation on the marriage market, I calculate status premiums for different Jewish and Gentile partnerships. To observe the trends over time, I split the marriages into three cohorts: 1870–1899, 1900–1919, and 1920–1932. We start in 1870 since the number of intermarriages and diamond workers are limited before then. Each cohort contains roughly the same number of marriages and reflect key periods in the diamond industry: an expansionary, pre-union period; relative prosperity up to 1919; and rapid decline from 1920 onwards.

The status premiums themselves are calculated as follows. For each possible marriage combination of Jewish and Gentile grooms and brides—i.e. Jewish-Gentile, Gentile-Gentile, Gentile-Jewish, and Jewish-Jewish—we calculate the average status difference in backgrounds. These status backgrounds are approximated using fathers' social status at the time of their child's wedding. The status difference is calculated as

$$\text{Status difference} = [\text{occupational score groom's father}] - [\text{occupational score bride's father}]$$

If the groom and bride have a similar social background, status differences gravitate to 0. If instead grooms and brides came from distinctly different social backgrounds, status differences turn positive or negative. Table 5.2 reports the social background for each groom and bride, and their respective status differences, by period.

The status differences are used to calculate *status premiums*. The starting point for each of the three status premiums is the status difference between Jewish grooms and their Gentile brides. This status difference tells us whether Jewish differed from or were

⁷⁵ Matthijs Kalmijn, "Educational Inequality, Homogamy, and Status Exchange in Black-White Intermarriage: A Comment on Rosenfeld," *American Journal of Sociology* 115.4 (2010): 1252.

⁷⁶ Explained in detail in Chapter 1.4.

⁷⁷ Fu, "Interracial Marriage and Family Socio-Economic Well-Being," 133.

similar to their Gentile spouses in terms of social backgrounds. These are reported with grey outlines in the first row of each period in Table 5.2. In each period we see a large and positive status difference. Thus, intermarrying Jewish grooms had higher social backgrounds than their Gentile spouses.

We compare the status differences of out-marrying Jewish grooms with those of in-marrying Gentile grooms, in-marrying Jewish grooms, and out-marrying Gentile grooms to examine if this is the result the characteristics of Jewish and Gentile grooms and brides, or specifically the result of their marital combinations. These comparisons result in the following three status premiums:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Status premium 1} = & \\ & [\text{status difference Jewish groom and Gentile bride}] - \\ & [\text{status difference } \mathbf{Gentile} \text{ groom and } \mathbf{Gentile} \text{ bride}] \end{aligned}$$

The first status premium, shown at the end of the second row for each period in Table 5.2, extracts whether Gentile brides always had partners with higher social backgrounds than themselves. This appears not the case. Gentile brides only had lower social backgrounds when their partners were Jewish.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Status premium 2} = & \\ & [\text{status difference Jewish groom and Gentile bride}] - \\ & [\text{status difference } \mathbf{Jewish} \text{ groom and } \mathbf{Jewish} \text{ bride}] \end{aligned}$$

The second status premium, shown in the third rows, asks whether Jewish grooms also had higher statuses than their Jewish brides. This was not the case; Jewish grooms and Jewish brides had similar social backgrounds. This indicates that Jewish grooms only had higher social statuses than their brides if the brides were non-Jewish.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Status premium 2} = & \\ & [\text{status difference Jewish groom and Gentile bride}] - \\ & [\text{status difference } \mathbf{Gentile} \text{ groom and } \mathbf{Jewish} \text{ bride}] \end{aligned}$$

The third status premium, found in the fourth rows, indicate whether other intermarriages also led to high status differences in favour of grooms, or whether this was only true for Jewish grooms and Gentile brides. The latter seems to be true. In fact, Gentile grooms often had *lower* social backgrounds than their Jewish spouses when they intermarried. Thus, while Jewish grooms ‘paid’ a status premium to marry Gentile spouses, Gentile grooms ‘received’ a status premium by marrying Jewish spouses.

The results presented in Table 5.2 indicate that being Jewish was one of such factors that was compensated for on the marriage market. Jews had to ‘pay’ a ‘status premium’ to marry a non-Jewish partner. In other words, the average Jewish groom required a significantly higher social status background than their partner to marry Gentile spouses. As an example, we will first discuss the results for the period 1870–1899 in detail. In the first row of Table 5.2 we find the average social backgrounds of Jewish husbands and their Gentile wives marrying between 1870 and 1899. In this period, Jewish men marrying Gentile wives had fathers whose occupational score averaged 64.2, while the fathers of their Gentile brides averaged a score of 57.5. Thus, Jewish men entering interfaith marriages had social backgrounds that were 6.7 occupational points higher

TABLE 5.2 Average social status origins, differences between spouses, and status premiums by combinations of Jewish and Gentile spouses, Amsterdam 1870-1932.

Period	N	Partner combinations		Social background		Status difference	Status premium
		Groom	Bride	Groom	Bride		
1870-1899	59	Jewish	Gentile	64.2	57.5	6.7	
	11,564	Gentile	Gentile	55.1	54.7	0.4	#1.6.3
	2484	Jewish	Jewish	57.2	57.5	-0.3	#2.7.0
	30	Gentile	Jewish	60.0	59.8	0.2	#3.6.5
1900-1919	161	Jewish	Gentile	62.8	57.4	5.4	
	17,720	Gentile	Gentile	55.6	54.9	0.7	#1.4.7
	2346	Jewish	Jewish	60.4	60.5	-0.1	#2.5.5
	88	Gentile	Jewish	58.0	62.8	-4.8	#3.10.2
1920-1932	235	Jewish	Gentile	62.3	57.9	4.4	
	16,662	Gentile	Gentile	56.4	55.7	0.7	#1.3.7
	1588	Jewish	Jewish	60.9	61.0	-0.1	#2.4.5
	169	Gentile	Jewish	57.6	59.7	-2.1	#3.6.5

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release.

Note: the sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. Social background measured as the HISCAM-score of the father of the groom and bride at the time of marriage. All status premiums significantly different from 0 with $p < 0.01$.

than their Gentile spouse. This was a sizable difference, roughly equal to the difference between a government clerk (69) and a diamond worker (63) or a diamond worker and a mechanic (57). Many of these Jewish grooms had fathers that worked as merchants, while their fathers-in-law worked in a variety of occupations, but most generally as semi-skilled workers.

In the next line of Table 5.2, we observe that Gentile husbands had a score that was on average 0.4 points higher than their Gentile spouses. Jewish men, who had social backgrounds averaging 6.7 points higher than their Gentile spouses, therefore 'offered' statuses 6.3 points higher to marry a Gentile bride when compared to in-marrying Gentile men.⁷⁸ Since Jewish men marrying Jewish women (line 3) had social backgrounds 0.3 points lower than their spouse, the status premium of out-marrying Jews was 7.0 in comparison to in-marrying Jews.⁷⁹ In contrast, out-marrying Gentiles only had social backgrounds 0.2 higher than Jewish spouses. Hence, the third status premium, comparing out-marrying Jews with out-marrying Gentiles, is 6.5.⁸⁰ While endogamous partners came from similar backgrounds, and Gentiles grooms' backgrounds were not higher than their Jewish brides' backgrounds, Jewish men had come from much higher status backgrounds than their Gentile partners.

If all three status premiums are positive and significant this indicates the existence of a 'caste-status exchange'—the 'caste' of Jews was seen as a negative attribute on the

⁷⁸ $6.7 - 0.4 = 6.3$.

⁷⁹ $6.7 - (-0.3) = 7.0$.

⁸⁰ $6.7 - 0.2 = 6.5$.

marriage market and needed to be compensated for with higher social status or backgrounds.⁸¹ This appears to be the case throughout the period studied; in all three periods all three status premiums are positive and significant. However, the size of these premiums were declining over time, suggesting that the relative position of Jews was improving. One exception is found when comparing out-marrying Jews with out-marrying Gentiles. Gentile men marrying Jewish spouses in the 1900-1919 period had significantly lower status backgrounds than their partners. During this period, a growing number of working-class Gentiles started intermarrying, while concurrently the average status background of Jews was increasing. Thus, while the background of the average intermarrying Jew was increasing, the status of the average intermarrying Gentile was decreasing. Occupational upgrading in the Jewish community meant that the average Jew had achieved a higher status than the average Gentile,⁸² leaving fewer chances for upward mobility through intermarriage.

5.5.2 *Jewish grooms in the diamond industry*

The small number of Gentile men working in the diamond industry *and* marrying Jewish partners makes it statistically impossible to compare the general results of Table 5.2 with the same numbers for Jewish and Gentile grooms working in the diamond industry. However, we can still compare the status premiums of male Jewish diamond workers intermarrying with Gentile spouses relative to in-marrying Jewish and Gentile diamond workers. This allows us to compare the status premiums of general Jews from Table 5.2 with the status premiums of diamond workers to see if the latter provided smaller or larger premiums to marry across ethno-religious lines.

Table 5.3 reports the status premiums of Jewish grooms working in the diamond industry and compares them to the status premiums of all Jewish grooms reported in Table 5.2. In the 1870-1899 period, status premiums of Jewish diamond workers were much lower than those of the average Jew. Although only a limited number of Jewish diamond workers intermarried during this period, the ones who did had much smaller differences in social backgrounds with their spouse. While the status premiums became smaller for all Jews in the subsequent period, they grew larger for the diamond workers. The growing number of Jewish diamond workers marrying Gentile brides now had fathers with occupational scores 7.3 points higher than their brides' fathers. It is this period where Jewish diamond workers saw a boost in their intermarriage rates *and* increasingly aligned themselves with the Social-Democratic movement. If we believe that these intermarrying Jewish diamond workers met through the Socialist youth clubs or organisations, then this growing divergence between the social background of the Jewish diamond workers and their spouses are unsurprising. After all, the Socialist movement in Amsterdam was a mostly working-class endeavour, and the Jewish diamond workers were the elites of this class of manual workers. In the final period we see smaller differences between all Jewish men and Jewish diamond workers. We also observe a negative status premium for the latter group. These can be explained by the worsening economic position of diamond workers following the 1920 crisis. After 1920,

⁸¹ Fu, "Interracial Marriage and Family Socio-Economic Well-Being," 141.

⁸² See Chapter 2.4.

TABLE 5.3 Average status premium and status premium differences between Jewish diamond worker grooms and all Jewish grooms, by combinations of Jewish and Gentile spouses, Amsterdam 1870-1932.

Period	Partner combinations		All grooms		Diamond workers		Difference in status premiums
	Groom	Bride	Status diff.	Status premium	Status diff.	Status premium	
1870-1899	Jewish	Gentile	6.8		1.3		
	Gentile	Gentile	0.4	6.4	0.6	0.7	5.7
	Jewish	Jewish	-0.3	7.1	-0.1	1.4	5.7
1900-1919	Jewish	Gentile	5.5		7.3		
	Gentile	Gentile	0.7	4.8	3.8	3.5	1.3
	Jewish	Jewish	-0.1	5.6	-0.1	7.4	-1.8
1920-1932	Jewish	Gentile	4.3		6.7		
	Gentile	Gentile	0.8	3.5	7.4	-0.7	4.2
	Jewish	Jewish	-0.1	4.4	1.8	5.9	-1.5

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process; social background measured as the HISCAM status of the father of the groom and bride at the time of marriage.

primarily less talented Jews entered the diamond industry given regressing conditions and prospects in the industry. While Jewish diamond workers still had much higher status backgrounds than their Gentile partners, the Gentile diamond workers marrying Gentile partners had even larger discrepancies. In comparison to the previous period, Gentile diamond workers' fathers' status had increased significantly, but this cohort of diamond workers married spouses with the same social backgrounds as before.

The results in Table 5.3 suggest that Jewish diamond workers were, through the improvements in their social standing in the late nineteenth century, in a better position to marry Gentile spouses. However, the industry they worked in created few opportunities to meet such Gentile partners. In the beginning of the twentieth century, auxiliary organisations surrounding the diamond industry created new pathways for Jewish diamond workers to meet non-Jewish brides.⁸³ This opened up opportunities for Jewish diamond workers to meet Gentile partners who, on average, came from lower social backgrounds than themselves. As the relative standing of diamond workers declined in the period after 1920, both Jewish and Gentile diamond workers saw growing differences between their own and their spouses' social background, but this increase was smaller for the Jewish diamond workers. The existence of status premiums suggests that Jews and Gentiles were not equal on the interfaith marriage market. Jewish men who married Gentile women had considerably higher status backgrounds than Gentile men marrying Gentile women; and Gentile women who married Jewish men had significantly lower status backgrounds than Jewish women marrying Jewish men. Part of this can be explained by hesitance of Gentile women to marry Jewish men. Anecdotes

⁸³ These meeting spaces were not exclusive to Jewish men and non-Jewish women; Jewish women could also meet Gentile husbands here and vice versa.

like Sem Bonn's story suggest that certain Gentile parents did not want their daughters to marry Jewish men. In these cases, bringing home Jewish boyfriends with higher incomes or class backgrounds could have made Gentile parents more lenient to potential Jewish sons-in-law. However, the story is not exclusively explained by discrimination, which declined over time according to Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Instead, a key part of this story can be attributed to the increasing upgrading of the social position of the Amsterdam-Jewish community as a whole. As the average status background of Jewish men and women increased more rapidly than for Gentiles, increasing intermarriage rates would near-inevitably be paired with increasing social differences between the two groups. This also meant that for most Jews who entered interfaith marriages, an immediate upgrade in their social status was uncommon. From the Jewish perspective, Jewish-Gentile intermarriages rarely occurred as a short-term strategy for improving one's material conditions, although these marriages could still prove beneficial long-term through increased integration and changing networks.

5.6 Social Networks

We now turn to another aspect of marriages. So far, we have compared the social class of grooms and brides' fathers with their fathers-in-law. We saw that Jewish diamond workers were able to 'marry up' more frequently than the average Jewish groom or Gentile diamond workers. However, even when marriages were neither a social move up or down, they could still exhibit a diversification or strengthening of existing social networks for the person about to get married. Even if one's father-in-law had the same class standing as their own father, if the father-in-law had a different occupation than their father this could prove advantageous when one needed to change careers. Crises in the diamond industry frequently confronted diamond workers with the question of changing careers, and numerous diamond workers had secondary occupations to fall back on when unemployed.⁸⁴ If, on the other hand, the father and father-in-law of a groom worked in the same occupational group, this could instead help one remain or move upward in their current industry. Diamond workers who married daughters of diamond workers strengthened their networks in the diamond industry which could help avoid unemployment in times of crises. If Jews more generally married primarily within their own occupational group, this would reinforce their existing occupational choices and niches, limiting economic integration through occupational concentration. Although potentially rewarding in times of crises, continuous reinforcements of this kind could create an entrenchment within a social group or class which increasingly became harder to escape.

In Chapter 4 we learned that both Jews and Gentiles were likely to have the same occupation as their father at the time of their respective marriages. We build further on this by examining the occupational overlap of grooms, grooms' fathers, and grooms' fathers-in-law at the time of the grooms' weddings. To accomplish this, I have selected all marriages in 'larger' Amsterdam between 1850 and 1932 where (i) both the groom's father and father-in-law were still alive; (ii) the groom, groom's father, and father-in-law all had a valid occupation; and (iii) grooms had an occupation that occurred at least

⁸⁴ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 27. A discussion of the practice of secondary occupations is presented in Chapter 7.

100 times among both Jewish and Gentile grooms.⁸⁵ Out of 415,597 marriages in ‘larger’ Amsterdam, 327,608 occurred between 1850 and 1932; of which 91,568 had living fathers and fathers-in-law with valid occupations; of which 9002 could be identified as Jewish grooms and 64,219 as Gentile grooms.⁸⁶ For each major occupational group—the first two digits of the HISCO-classification—I calculate the share of grooms that belong to the same occupational group as (a) their father, (b) their father-in-law, and (c) both their father and father-in-law. Those percentages are presented in Table 5.4. Using occupational groups, rather than exact occupations, means that occupational titles and relative positions can vary within the group. Merchants are clustered with shopkeepers; primary school teachers with secondary school teachers; and other occupational groups are similarly comprised of similar, related occupational titles.

Jews were more likely to belong to the same occupational group as their father *and* as their fathers-in-law at the time of the groom’s wedding. In other words, the average Jewish groom possessed stronger direct kin networks in the occupations that they worked in. The strength of these networks varied significantly by social class. Among *Higher professionals and managers*, Jews less commonly belonged to such family networks; both in comparison to other Jews and to Gentiles in the same social class. We can see this most clearly in the occupational group of *Teachers*, an occupation in which Jews were heavily under-represented. While 1.7 percent of Jewish teachers had a father-in-law that also worked as a teacher, this percentage was 9.4 for Gentile teachers. Thus, while Jews had stronger family networks in the domain of work on average, they did not within higher white-collar positions. Instead, Jewish *Higher professionals and managers* may have married daughters with fathers in other professions but within the same social class. In the case of teachers, Jews most commonly had fathers-in-law working as merchants or diamond workers, while Gentile teachers more often married spouses whose fathers worked as office workers or teachers.

Jews had much stronger ties in the group *Lower professionals and managers*. For Jews, this category was dominated by positions in trade, comprising the large group of *Working proprietors*—a HISCO group with more variety in occupational titles—within which both Jews and Gentiles had strong networks. However, Jewish networks were demonstrably stronger: 38.6 percent of Jewish *Working proprietors* had a father *and* a father-in-law in the same category; this was true for less than 10 percent of Gentiles. However, within the category of *Clerical workers*—predominantly those working as office clerks—it was Gentiles who had stronger family ties. These weaker ties in office work help explain why Jewish sons of diamond workers were less likely to become office clerks despite higher levels of educational attainment, as we will see in Chapter 8.

⁸⁵ An exception was made for occupations within the social class *Higher managers and professionals* as the number of Jews in this group was otherwise too small. Here a minimum of 25 was used.

⁸⁶ Requiring both the father of the groom and the father of the bride to be alive and listed with a valid occupational title reduces the sample significantly. However, the share of Jews in the final sample (12.3 percent), roughly identical to the share of Jews observed in Amsterdam’s population according to the population censuses (see Chapter 2.3), suggests that there was little to no selection bias in favour of either group. Appendix D tests whether Jewish and Gentile men differed in their occupational scores if one or both of the fathers(-in-law) were missing. The results suggest that while Jewish men had higher average statuses at the time of marriage, whether fathers were present or not did not meaningfully impact this difference. In other words, there was little to no bias in terms selection by parents’ early bereavement. Moreover, since the ethno-religious identification based on names has error margins approaching zero (see Appendix A), there is no reason to suspect results based on a full sample to deviate significantly from the results presented here.

Due to the diamond industry, included in the occupational group *Gem cutters*, Jewish grooms were more likely to work in the category *Skilled workers* than Gentiles. Consequently, the diamond industry dominates the Jewish trends within this social class. One in six diamond workers had a father and father-in-law employed in the diamond industry. For Jewish tailors, another common Jewish occupation, this percentage was as low as 0.3 percent; over 50 times less likely than among diamond workers. In contrast, Gentile *Skilled workers* had high rates of following but only marginal rates of entering marriages where their fathers-in-law had similar occupations. In fact, whereas 61.2 percent of Jewish sons working as *Skilled workers* who followed their fathers had fathers-in-law in the same occupational group,⁸⁷ this was true for only 22.8 percent of corresponding Gentile sons.⁸⁸ This is the largest discrepancy between Jewish and Gentile sons across social classes. The limited occupational distribution of Jews, especially in skilled manual work, meant that they often built stronger family networks in those occupations, but had fewer ties to other industries. This was helpful when they could work in their trained profession, but disadvantageous when one had to switch careers; what disproportionately happened to Jewish diamond workers in the 1920s.

Jewish *Unskilled workers*—mostly *peddlers* and *porters*—had high rates of working in the same occupational group as their fathers and marry into similar families. Nearly half of Jewish peddlers married a peddlers' daughter. The occupational concentration of Jews within a limited number of occupations and the relative absence of marrying into higher social classes made it harder for them to enter new occupations. The group of Jewish *Unskilled workers*, which made up roughly 20 percent of the Jewish grooms in the sample, signifies a persistent poor Jewish working-class who were less able to improve their conditions intergenerationally going into the twentieth century. Within the category *Porters* for instance, 62 percent of Jews married a spouse whose father belonged to the social class of unskilled workers; compared with 42 percent of Gentiles. Due to Gentiles' wider occupational distribution, Gentile porters were more likely to marry into families where their fathers-in-law worked in (semi-)skilled labour. However, such differences between Jewish and Gentiles in favour of the latter were not true for all unskilled occupations. Among day labourers, an occupational group more common among Gentile men, Gentiles were similarly more likely to marry into (semi-)skilled families, but Jews were much more likely to marry into a merchant family. Thus, not all Jewish grooms at the bottom of the social ladder were unable to marry upwards; although this inability was particularly true for porters. For nearly 10 percent of Jewish porters' sons, the diamond industry was a way to move upward. Such marriages could aid upward social mobility of the next generation.

However, these patterns were also changing over time. Figures C1 through C3 in Appendix C show that by the 1930s only Jews working as *Lower professionals* or *Diamond workers* had family networks stronger than their Gentile peers. The declining overlap with family was especially pronounced for *Unskilled workers*, where variation over time for Gentiles was limited but fell rapidly for Jews. Clearly, Jewish social networks were changing across all social backgrounds.

⁸⁷ $0.216/0.353 = 0.612$ or 61.2%.

⁸⁸ $0.68/0.298 = 0.228$ or 22.8%.

TABLE 5.4 Share of grooms working in the same major occupational group as their fathers and fathers-in-law by ethno-religious background, Amsterdam 1850-1932.

<i>Social class</i> Occupational group	Jewish grooms				Gentile grooms			
	N	Occupational group overlaps with (%)			N	Occupational group overlaps with (%)		
		Father	FIL	Both		Father	FIL	Both
<i>Higher professionals and managers</i>	181	16.6	5.0	1.1	1960	20.9	6.6	2.4
13. Teachers	58	5.2	1.7	0.0	752	18.4	9.4	3.1
21. Factory owners	32	46.9	12.5	3.1	324	43.2	8.0	4.0
61. Doctors	26	19.2	3.9	0.0	174	14.4	2.9	1.2
<i>Lower professionals and managers</i>	2378	44.8	28.6	20.8	15,552	22.4	10.1	4.9
41. Working proprietors	1248	75.2	46.2	38.6	2806	45.8	17.9	9.7
43. Commercial travellers; agents	413	12.3	7.3	1.0	1039	14.1	4.4	0.8
39. Clerical workers	252	4.4	2.4	0.4	5093	13.2	7.0	1.5
17. Artists	117	22.2	10.3	2.6	311	17.7	6.1	1.0
<i>Skilled workers</i>	3406	35.3	21.6	11.9	18,992	29.8	6.8	2.8
88. Gem cutters	2501	41.7	19.4	15.8	1662	30.7	7.5	5.0
79. Tailors	296	15.9	3.7	0.3	1419	49.6	9.2	3.7
77. Food and beverage processors	231	25.1	9.1	2.2	1804	30.2	6.8	2.3
80. Cobblers and leather workers	144	10.4	4.9	2.1	939	36.2	6.7	3.1
<i>Semi-skilled workers</i>	1028	16.9	4.0	1.5	13,245	22.7	5.2	2.5
78. Tobacco workers	476	12.6	2.3	1.3	754	27.2	6.5	2.5
<i>Unskilled workers</i>	1977	51.9	32.9	24.5	13,876	34.0	23.0	12.2
97. Porters	706	49.2	37.0	26.6	2906	25.5	13.8	5.3
45. Street vendors	644	69.3	47.8	33.5	987	34.4	14.2	7.6
99. Day labourers	437	45.1	29.7	17.6	6520	47.3	38.6	21.8
Total	9002	39.3	23.9	15.7	64,219	28.1	11.6	5.6

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release.

Note: FIL = groom's father-in-law; digits preceding occupational groups represent first two units of HISCO codes.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at the social exogamy, intermarriages, and social networks of Jews and Gentiles in the diamond industry, comparing them with those from other social classes and occupational groups. We observed that there was less social fluidity in the Jewish community; most Jews married Jewish partners from similar social backgrounds. However, Jewish diamond workers were more likely than both the average Jewish groom and Gentile diamond workers to 'marry up.' This happened predominantly within the Jewish community since, contrary to what we anticipated, Jewish diamond workers were less likely to marry Gentile partners than the average Jewish man. The speed at which the intermarriage rates increased decade by decade suggests that Socialism and the ANDB had large positive influences on the intermarriage rates of Jewish diamond workers. Since the sons and daughters of diamond workers, who rarely followed their parents in the twentieth century, were just as likely to intermarry as the average Jewish groom or bride, perhaps even slightly more prone to mixed marriages, we deduced that diamond workers did not forego intermarriages because of preference. Nor was social class the determining factor, since the highly-skilled Jewish diamond workers intermarried less frequently than semi- and unskilled Jews. Instead, their lower intermarriage rates can be explained by their lower exposure to Gentiles through and around work. In the diamond industry, most workers were Jewish. Working in this industry meant an above average exposure to Jews for both Jews and Gentiles. In each decade studied, Gentile diamond workers were more likely to intermarry with a Jewish spouse than the average Gentile person. The diamond industry therefore helped Jews move up in society but did not bring them in closer contact to the Gentile population. In contrast, the diamond industry did not improve Gentiles' chances for upward marital mobility but did bring them in closer contact with the Jews of Amsterdam.

These two factors—upward marital mobility and mixed marriages—appeared to move in opposite directions. Intermarriages rarely coincided with upward marital mobility for Jews. In fact, most intermarried Jews married down in terms of social class. This is reflected in the high 'status premiums' offered by Jews marrying Gentile partners. Differences in socioeconomic backgrounds were significantly higher between a Jewish and a Gentile spouse than the differences in Jewish-Jewish and Gentile-Gentile couples. Evidently, Gentiles saw being Jewish as a negative characteristic on the marriage market, but one that could be compensated for by higher social status. This status gap between Jewish and Gentile spouses decreased over time, concurrent with rapid increases in the average social class positions of Jews that outpaced those of Gentiles. If there was no growing acceptance, and only a growing difference in status between Jews and Gentiles, then status gaps should have increased during this period. Thus, the results in this chapter suggest that the early twentieth century was one of growing acceptance between Jews and Gentiles. This contrasts the suggestion by Leydesdorff that intermarrying Jews were increasingly moving to the margin of Jewish society due to mutual exclusion.⁸⁹

Furthermore, marriages could be socially and economically advantageous even if they were neither to a spouse from a higher social class background or to a non-Jewish spouse. Jews more frequently married into families with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. This allowed them to build strong occupational networks. The

⁸⁹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 316.

strengthening of networks over time, particularly in the diamond industry and in commerce, helps explain the persistence of Jews in these occupational groups. These occupations, once taken up as a consequence of exclusion elsewhere in the economy, became more imbedded in Jewish circles through marriages and their impact on one's social networks. Such networks increased economic opportunities in the sector one worked in but also increased financial risks to the extended family in times of crises through lessened diversification. Thus, while Jews' overrepresentation in certain occupations and tendency to marry into families with similar occupations might have helped Jewish entrepreneurs to succeed in the twentieth century, it also meant that Jews in the lowest social classes, such as porters, struggled to provide their offspring with better futures. While Chapter 2 showed that the share of Jews in unskilled work dropped from 40 percent in the mid-nineteenth century to 15 percent in the 1920s, the remaining Jewish unskilled workers were predominantly marrying within their own social class and occupations. In these cases, social endogamy could hardly be seen as positive. How these networks affected future career outcomes for the different social classes of Jews is discussed in the next chapter.

6

Students of *the Trade* Career Trajectories and Life Course Mobility

“For the diamond workers, the verb “to work” only has one meaning: “work” you can only do in the diamond trade. In other professions you toil, slave, grind, drudge.”

— Meyer Sluyser¹

“You and I, Daan, we will get there... You and I will go up... Right now we are still nasty, direct descendants of the despised, stupid guild of *Capers*² and ourselves still *Capers* as practitioners of this trade... But you and I, man, we will get out...”

— Joost Mendes³

6.1 Introduction

Emanuel Querido was born when the *Cape Time boom* took hold of the Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam. He undoubtedly witnessed many neighbours switching their careers to become diamond workers during his youth. His own family entered *the trade* when his father Aron (1842–1899), the son of a disc sander,⁴ joined the industry at a young age. Whereas many Jewish workers in this field saved large amounts of money, translating into higher quality housing (see Chapter 7), increased education (Chapter 8) and new, more prestigious careers for their children (Chapters 4 and 8), Emanuel’s father was not one of them. However, he did manage to move his family out of the impoverished Jewish Quarter in the 1870s. Aron belonged to a generation with promising prospects in the diamond industry. This generation saw high rates of upward occupational mobility entering the lapidary world, but few career shifts subsequently. Only a select few were able to advance their careers by becoming diamond traders, merchants, or jewellers. Nonetheless, intergenerational transmission of occupations were common. Emanuel and his younger brother Israel, like droves of their peers, followed their father into the lapidary profession. In his semi-autobiographical magnum opus *Het geslacht der Santeljanos* (‘The Santeljano family’) and other works, Emanuel—using the pseudonym Mendes⁵—reminisced negatively about his time as a diamond worker. In his main work,

¹ Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 26; originally published in Meyer Sluyser, *Er groeit gras in de Weesperstraat* (Amsterdam, 1962).

² ‘Capers’ was a derogatory term for diamond workers originating from Cape Time expansion (ca. 1870–1876) in the diamond industry. During this term, diamond workers were known to be wasteful with their newly acquired capital. Polak, *De strijd der diamantbewerders*, 13–14.

³ Joost Mendes, *Het geslacht der Santeljano’s*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam, 1930), 274.

⁴ Disc sander was an occupation auxiliary to that of diamond workers. See Chapter 3 for a discussion.

⁵ While Mendes is a distinctively Jewish name, Joost is not. Emanuel may not have wished to erase the Jewish origins of his character, but simultaneously hoped to underline his assimilatory desires.

the protagonist Daan, based largely on the author himself, strongly expresses his hopes for upward mobility and to leave the diamond industry behind. As a writer, though less successful than his sibling Israel, and a renowned publisher, Emanuel eventually achieves this dream.⁶

While many diamond workers were able, or forced, to change their careers during their lifetimes, not all did. As quickly as the *Cape Time* boom had pulled thousands of Jews and Gentiles into diamond manufacturing, just as many were pushed out during disastrous times of prolonged unemployment in the early 1920s. Yet, despite many leaving the industry, the ANDB still counted over 3500 members by 1939.⁷ Clearly, not all had traded their tools for new beginnings. Some may have been reluctant to leave the industry and union they spent their lives building and paying contribution fees to. Others may not have had the means, wit, or skills to find worthwhile employment elsewhere. Furthermore, ethno-religious and social backgrounds likely influenced the decision to stay or leave the industry. Gentiles, with wider social networks comprised of more diversified (skilled) occupations, may have found it easier to find employment outside the diamond industry.⁸ Jews, clustered in a much smaller number of predominantly niche occupations, may instead have faced greater reluctance by non-Jewish employers. Coming from the diamond industry, known for its fluctuating conditions, did not help. In his dissertation, Heertje states that numerous former diamond workers hid their past employment in the diamond industry.⁹ Employers feared these applicants would return to their industry following times of unemployment, as they had done for centuries. In short, whether a person was able to find new employment, and in what type of sector, was therefore subject to a wide arrange of factors.

This chapter focuses on these differences in life outcomes by examining the careers and life course mobility of Jewish diamond workers. These are reconstructed using uniquely detailed career data from the union's membership administration, combined with the informative and continuous Dutch population registers. The latter enables comparisons between diamond workers and others in alternative careers. The next section provides detailed background on the causes and destinations of career changes in the diamond industry. A mixed-methods discussion of mobility in the diamond industry—and the larger Amsterdam area—provides the background for our analyses. We combine the aforementioned data sources with biographies, letters, and newsletter articles to establish and understand trends and motivations. We use apprenticeship cards as a starting point. Here, we find a natural control group: those who never completed their apprenticeships. These individuals did not experience full membership in the union but had similar social backgrounds to those who did. By linking apprenticeship cards to the municipal list of 1941,¹⁰ for both individuals who completed and those who dropped out, we can study how their life outcomes turned out differently despite their similar backgrounds. This serves as the starting point of our analyses. We

⁶ For a biography of Emanuel Querido, see Willem van Toorn, *Emanuel Querido: 1871–1943 een leven met boeken* (Amsterdam, 2016).

⁷ In the first *Weekblad* of the year (13–01–1939), the union counted 3587 members.

⁸ Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties.” See also Chapter 6 for a discussion on the wider occupational distribution of Gentiles' social networks.

⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*, 225.

¹⁰ A list of all Jews in Amsterdam collected in the first half of 1941 under orders of the German occupiers. See Chapter 1.4.2 for a more detailed description.

will then examine the longer and more detailed life courses, including analyses of the timing of entry into the diamond industry and the duration of their memberships, the propensity and outcomes of moving to Antwerp, reasons for discontinued memberships, and occupational mobility. Finally, we will conclude with a discussion relating occupational mobility, integration, and their connections to other life facets.

6.2 Background

6.2.1 Defining career mobility

Various phrases have been used to refer to social mobility over the life course. These terms include intragenerational mobility or occupational mobility,¹¹ job or career shifts (indicating individual changes in occupations),¹² job or career ladders (changes occurring within an occupational structure),¹³ career trajectories (the direction of career progression), career attainment or achievement (evaluating career outcomes),¹⁴ or the neutral ‘work histories.’¹⁵ While all refer to changing occupations within one’s lifetime, what constitutes a *career* has been disputed. Earlier researchers argued that only upward transitions constitute a career.¹⁶ More recent definitions have been more inclusive, arguing that downward mobility and immobility can be incorporated in a definition of career mobility.¹⁷ In this chapter, I will adhere to the latter and use the term career as follows:

“[T]he term career as used here will be in its broadest meaning of any series of work experiences over the life course. It includes the ‘modern’ career or formal career and other forms of highly structured paths for the work–life. It also includes the informal career.”¹⁸

I operationalise career mobility as any transition in occupational title. Or, in the words of the abovementioned, a new work experience that can be identified in a historical source. While work experiences of diamond workers may have changed regardless of occupational shifts—for instance, through improvements in their labour conditions,

¹¹ Aage Sørensen, “The Structure of Intragenerational Mobility,” *American Sociological Review* 40.4 (1975): 456–71.

¹² Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880–1970* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

¹³ Mike Savage, “Discipline, Surveillance and the ‘Career’: Employment on the Great Western Railway 1833–1914,” in Foucault, *Management and Organization Theory*, ed. Alan McKinlay and Ken Starkey (Thousand Oaks: Sage London, 1998), 65–92.

¹⁴ Wiebke Schulz, “Occupational Career Attainment of Single Women During Modernization: The Logic of Industrialism Thesis Revisited,” *European Societies* 17.4 (2015): 467–91.

¹⁵ Andrew Miles and David Vincent, *Building European Society: Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe 1840–1940* (Manchester, 1993).

¹⁶ Harold Wilensky, “Work, Careers and Social Integration,” *International Social Science Journal* 12.4 (1960): 253; Aage Sørensen, “A Model for Occupational Careers,” *American Journal of Sociology* 80.1 (1974): 45. For a discussion, see; Rachel Rosenfeld, “Job Mobility and Career Processes,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18.1 (1992): 40–41.

¹⁷ David Vincent, “Mobility, Bureaucracy and Careers in Early–Twentieth–Century Britain,” in *Building European Society. Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840–1940*, ed. Andrew Miles and David Vincent (Manchester, 1993), 225–26; David Mitch, John Brown, and Marco van Leeuwen, “The History of the Modern Career: An Introduction,” in *Origins of the Modern Career*, ed. David Mitch, John Brown, and Marco van Leeuwen (Aldershot, 2004), 6.

¹⁸ Mitch, Brown, and Van Leeuwen, “The History of the Modern Career,” 8.

most notably the first European eight-hour working day¹⁹—these will be part of our discussion but cannot be studied sufficiently in the data-driven analyses of this chapter. Similarly, horizontal mobility, such as the common shifts among diamond workers between employers and workplaces, will also not be studied quantitatively, but will be discussed using anecdotal evidence where available.

6.2.2 General prospects for career mobility

Studies on career mobility in nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe and the United States show divergent evidence on the frequency of upward lifetime mobility. Outcomes vary by place, time, source material, and length of persons' lifetimes under study.²⁰ Overall, however, career structures are believed to have changed since the late nineteenth century.²¹ This was driven by industrialisation, modernisation—including growing bureaucratisation—and expanding educational attainment.²² Around this time, these forces changed the Netherlands from a 'two-class society' to a 'three-class society' as a growing middle class emerged.²³

For Dutch Jews, historical exclusion and persistent antisemitism prior to their political emancipation in 1796 solidified long-term occupational differences.²⁴ Subsequent occupational specialization, passed on over generations, exacerbated this divide between Jews and Gentiles. While many Jewish parents aspired for their children to pursue careers as doctors or lawyers,²⁵ few had the financial, social, or cultural resources required to achieve these goals. Consequently, most Jewish children from less affluent backgrounds worked in petty trade, a small number of specific skilled trades, or lower- and unskilled occupations. The diamond industry emerged as the top choice for Jews aiming for skilled or artisan careers within this limited pool of options. Working in the diamond industry was seen as a significant social advancement compared to other industrial work and careers in commerce.²⁶ Consequently, many young Jews started their careers in the diamond industry. Where did these careers end up? And how did working in the diamond industry, with its powerful union at the start of the twentieth century, impact career destinations?

Theoretically speaking, working in the diamond industry offered favourable conditions for upward career mobility. During prosperous times, workers enjoyed substantial wages, affording them opportunities to invest in education, training, or

¹⁹ Hofmeester, *Een schitterende erfenis*, 53.

²⁰ Hartmut Kaelble, *Historical Research on Social Mobility* (New York, 1981), 36–37; Jean-Luc Pinol, "Occupational and Social Mobility in Lyon from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century," in *Building European Society. Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840–1940*, ed. David Mitch and David Vincent (Manchester, 1993), 119.

²¹ Mitch, Brown, and Van Leeuwen, "The History of the Modern Career," 4–5.

²² *Ibid.*, 14, 36.

²³ Izaak Johannes Brugmans, "Standen en klassen in Nederland gedurende de negentiende eeuw," in *Economische ontwikkeling en sociale emancipatie deel II*, ed. Pieter Geurts and Frans Messing (The Hague, 1977), 127; Marco van Leeuwen and Ineke Maas, "Economische specialisering en veranderende sociale verhoudingen in de 19e en 20e eeuw: Een studie op basis van de Nederlandse volkstellingen en huwelijksakten," in *Twee eeuwen Nederland geteld*, ed. Otto Boonstra et al. (The Hague, 2007), 181–206.

²⁴ Lucassen, "Joodse Nederlanders 1796–1940," 38–39.

²⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 59–60.

²⁶ In the words of Hartog Goubitz. *Ibid.*, 48.

entrepreneurial ventures.²⁷ Advancing one's human or cultural capital was also heavily promoted by the union.²⁸ Conversely, intermittent crises in the diamond industry acted as dual incentives for workers. In the short run, diamond workers sought alternative livelihoods directly, regardless of social esteem or remuneration. In the long term, diamond workers could combat future unemployment spells by retraining, investing in education, and seeking more stable gainful employment in another field. The achievements of the ANDB further facilitated job changes and mobility. Unemployment benefits, which could be rather lengthy based on membership tenure, provided workers with an income during joblessness. Educational courses and a pioneering library allowed for self-advancement while reductions in labour hours offered workers more time to pursue it. In the words of Henri Heertje:

“[P]eriods of slack advantaged thousands of [diamond workers] by forcing them to find new livelihoods. Schooled and self-assured by the development the ANDB gave them, and by conversations in the factories, which partly can be seen as perpetual self-education, we later find them in occupations of various natures, making good use of their acquired knowledge, often eloquent and outspoken.”²⁹

This suggests the diamond industry gave workers great prospects for upward mobility. However, as was already discussed in Chapter 3, these benefits may not have been as effective or universal in times of crises as Heertje's quote suggests. Career progression of diamond workers will be discussed in the following subsections. Their occupational outcomes are split into career growth within the diamond industry, reasons for leaving the industry, and the common occupational destinations of diamond workers who left.

6.2.3 Prospects within the diamond industry

When considering upward career mobility, we commonly think of workers growing within their respective sectors or firms.³⁰ These upward pathways gained prominence in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century.³¹ Clearly defined career lines were used to incentivise workers to remain with their factories and firms and were particularly common among non-manual occupations. In the Amsterdam diamond industry, however, such pathways were uncommon. While upward mobility within the diamond industry was possible through entrepreneurship or paid positions in the union, it was limited to a fortunate few. Nonetheless, among successful entrepreneurs in the diamond industry, most started their careers as workers.³² Isaac Asscher (1843–1902), the son of a shoemaker, started out his career as a diamond cutter and later founded what would become one of the most important diamond factories in Amsterdam.³³ Benjamin

²⁷ Similar conditions have been argued to explain above-average rates of upward career mobility among machine-building workers in Esslingen. Heilwig Schomerus, *Die Arbeiter der Maschinenfabrik Esslingen: Forschungen zur Lage der Arbeiterschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1977).

²⁸ For a discussion on the 'uplifting power' of the union and their propaganda for self-advancement, see Chapter 3.4.

²⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerker*, 224–25.

³⁰ Also known as 'job ladders'; Mitch, Brown, and Van Leeuwen, "The History of the Modern Career," 6.

³¹ Katherine Stovel, Michael Savage, and Peter Bearman, "Ascription into Achievement: Models of Career Systems at Lloyds Bank, 1890–1970," *American Journal of Sociology* 102.2 (1996): 358–99.

³² Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 50. See also Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

³³ Internationally renowned for where the Cullinan was cut, then the largest cut diamond in the world.

Soep (1860–1927) similarly began his career as a diamond polisher—his father was a porter at this time—and ultimately established one of the largest factories in the city. The Boas brothers, Israël (1840–1919), Marcus (1846–1934) and Hartog (1854–1894), sons of a warehouse clerk, started the largest diamond factory in the world in 1879 after amassing enough wealth working as diamond workers during the *Cape Time* boom.

Success stories of significant upward mobility in occupation, status, and wealth in the diamond industry are largely confined to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Outside of this *Cape Time* boom, a period with exorbitant wage increases, most diamond workers were unable to move upward within this luxury commodity chain. The distribution of workers and employers simply did not allow for many such moves.³⁴ Around 1900, the industry counted approximately 10,000 workers, 300 merchants or *jewellers*, and 100 factory owners, many of whom operated relatively small enterprises. In this regard, the diamond industry differed from other industrial occupations and Jewish occupational niches which allowed for more consistent transitions to ownership, such as the rag trade and garment manufacturing.³⁵ Since apprenticeships were lengthy and specialised, changing positions within the manufacturing process was rare. Intra-industry shifts were typically confined to switching diamond cuts, for instance by cutters moving from rose-cut diamonds to brilliants. The introduction of diamond sawing at the start of the twentieth century offered another avenue for changing specialisations.³⁶

The limited possibilities for occupational advancement within the diamond industry did not stop workers from aspiring to climb to the status of employer. The initial step of this process was ‘own-work-making’ (*eigenwerkmaken*), which means that one became a self-employed artisan with no or a limited number of employees.³⁷ These workers purchased rough or cut diamonds, cut or polished this inventory, and subsequently sold the diamonds again, often below market prices and to the same merchant they had purchased them from.³⁸ These self-employed workers now assumed financial risks previously borne by their employers while creating demand for their own labour. This practice tended to be more prominent in times of crisis with the primary goal to avoid unemployment.³⁹ In response to own-work-makers violating of minimum wages set by the ANDB, the union restricted own-work-making to employers with at least five employees.⁴⁰ The restrictions and disapproval of the ANDB led many of these worker-entrepreneurs to relocate to Antwerp, where the influence of the union over the industry

³⁴ According to Heertje, many Jewish diamond workers believed that diamond workers turned diamond merchants and jewellers had been lucky in their upward social mobility; those who did not make this transition believed they had the same characteristics. Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 84.

³⁵ De Vries, *From Pedlars to Textile Barons*; Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*.

³⁶ See ANDB archive, #5133, “Gegevens zagers.”

³⁷ Schrevel, “Een stem in het kapittel,” 37.

³⁸ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 93.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 137–38.

⁴⁰ Operating as a separate group between workers and employers, they started their own organization (*Eigenwerkmakers-Vereeniging*). This organization and its members, however, garnered disapproval from the ANDB. By 1912, a few hundred of these own-work-makers were active in Amsterdam. To address this issue, the ANDB only permitted own-work-makers with at least five *knechten* (‘workers’) to continue their operations, rendering it impossible to continue for roughly three quarters of this group.⁴⁰ This restriction was later reversed in 1921 during the peak of a crisis.

was less pronounced.⁴¹ The degree of success Jewish diamond workers achieved in Antwerp will be addressed further along in this chapter.

Most workers, however, remained as wage dependents and despite the stability of specialisations, they regularly transitioned from one employer or factory to another. Contracts between employers and workers were short, generally as long as it took to cut or polish a bag of diamonds, and thus remuneration was constantly (re)negotiated. Consequently, precarious workers had to seek new agreements often, implying a continuous flux in wages, employers, and workplaces. One example of such mobility was Anna Cok (1904–1936). Anna worked as a brilliant cutter and joined the union as a full member at age 16 in May 1920. Two days after starting her membership her first wage card was recorded (Panel A of Illustration 6.1). Initially she worked for “D.S. Granaat”⁴² in the large *Diamantslijperij Maatschappij* (“Maatschappij”), receiving a fixed but unrecorded percentage of her production’s profits. In July 1920, she started to receive a fixed wage of 20 guilders per week. Raises in September and January saw her wages double by the start of the next year. However, as the crisis worsened at the start of the 1920s, her wages gradually dropped back to 30 guilders in 1922.

ILLUSTRATION 6.1 An example of wage cards, ca. 1920–1929.

Source: ANDB archive, #9453.

Note: Anna Cok’s wages are described across nine wage cards. Presented here are the first and fourth.

A | Anna Cok’s wage card, no. 1

Werkgever	Basis	Werkplaats	I. vastgeld II. gewinst III. tarief	Uit- gereikt	In- geleverd
D.S. Granaat		Maatschappij I	10.5.20	27.5.20	
		II	28.5.20	14.6.20	
		III	21.0.20	24.6.20	
		IV	26.1.20	26.7.20	
		V	20.1.20	14.8.20	
		VI	16.8.20	15.9.20	
		VII	15.9.20	20.9.20	
		VIII	30.9.20	12.10.20	
		IX	2.5.20	15.10.20	
		X	4.0.20	2.11.20	
		XI	19.11.20	20.12.20	

B | Anna Cok’s wage card, no. 4

Werkgever	Chief	Werkplaats	I. vastgeld II. gewinst III. tarief	Uit- gereikt	In- geleverd
D.S. Granaat		Maatsch.	II	27.8.20	29.8.20
Erwtelman		"	55	4.9.20	27.10.20
D.S. Granaat		"	III	11.12.20	23.11.20
		IV	24.11.20	26.11.20	
		V	4.1.20	10.2.20	
		VI	20.2.20	4.2.20	
		Maatsch.	III	4.3.20	7.3.20
		IV	2.4.20	5.4.20	
		V	10.4.20	25.5.20	
		VI	27.5.20	3.6.20	
		Maatsch.	III	7.6.20	14.6.20

Anna would work at the same factory and for the same employer until 1928, when she made her first switch of employer, working for Erwtelman in the same factory—which rented workspaces to diamond traders—for two months, earning a guaranteed 55 guilders per week (Panel B). A few months later she switched to the Boas factory working for another employer. Until her death in 1936, Anna continued to work primarily for

⁴¹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 147.

⁴² David Soesman Granaat (1855–1928) was an important diamond trader and factory owner. He began his career as a diamond cleaver at the start of the Cape Time boom. He earned considerably during this time, allowing him to start a diamond trading firm together with Andries van Wezel in 1881. In 1895 he became one of the co-founders of the *Algemene Juweliers Vereniging*, and by 1920 David operated multiple diamond processing firms. Rein van der Wiel, *Van Rapenburgerstraat naar Amerika. De levenstijd van diamantbewerker Andries van Wezel (1856–1921)* (Zwolle, 2010), 41.

Granaat in the *Maatschappij*, sometimes switching to other employers in the same factory or to different factories when needed. Such switching was common for many of the industry's workers regardless of gender and ethno-religious background.

6.2.4 'Fall-back occupations'

In prosperous times, career transitions were more likely to be upward. In times of crises, diamond workers who did not move to Antwerp or start as own-work-makers generally became unemployed. Those ineligible for unemployment benefits or uninterested in remaining inactive turned to 'secondary' occupations. For instance, Ruben Groen (b. 1912) would take up alternative employment as a musician whenever there was unemployment in the diamond industry.⁴³ Nonetheless, for these temporary switchers the diamond industry frequently remained the main line of work. A common joke suggests this reality, with two Jewish diamond workers encountering each other while working as porters at the docks, one asking the other, "you are out of work as well?"⁴⁴

However, the idea that diamond workers could fall back on a second *occupation*, rather than a selection of odd jobs, is up for debate. ANDB president Henri Polak himself addressed this speculation numerous times in the union's *Weekblad*. In 1900, he argued that

"A separate occupation would be impractical [for diamond workers], since apprenticeships in the diamond industry require extensive training periods, whereas one needs several years of experience after their apprenticeships to obtain a sufficient routine."⁴⁵

Diamond workers did not have the time, money, or energy to learn a whole new occupation. Instead, Polak stated, unemployed diamond workers were much more likely to attempt to find livelihoods in petty trade.⁴⁶ The union was unable to help these workers find employment elsewhere. "We cannot shake a new industry from out of our sleeves. We cannot deliver those, who know no occupation other than polishing, cutting, cleaving, or setting diamonds, new work in a different occupation."⁴⁷ Indeed, the committee for unemployed diamond workers reported half a year later that, during a widespread crisis in 1900, only 23 percent of married and less than 10 percent of unmarried diamond workers who sought alternative employment were able to find a job elsewhere, "primarily as day labourers or in petty trade."⁴⁸ A greater pressure to provide for a family may explain why married diamond workers took these unskilled occupations more frequently.

Descendants of diamond workers highlight the perspective of lapidaries without secondary *skilled* careers, but instead turning to petty trade or informal work in times of crisis. For instance, Simon Emmering recounted that his father, facing unemployment in the early 1900s, resorted to renting a cart to sell his own books, which eventually

⁴³ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 57.

⁴⁴ Siegfried van Praag, *Een lange jeugd in joods Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1985), 10.

⁴⁵ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 29-06-1900, "Werk!"

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ *Weekblad* 01-02-1901, "Verslag Commissie van Werkelooze Diamantbewerders."

evolved into a thriving bookstore.⁴⁹ Similarly, Emmanuel Aalsvel's father, unable to find work in the diamond industry after returning from Antwerp during World War I, turned to selling pickled goods on the streets, later establishing one of the more famous pickled goods stores in the Dutch capital.⁵⁰ Ruben Groen, himself a diamond worker by training, used his musical talents to earn a living during periods of unemployment in the diamond industry.⁵¹ We should therefore be hesitant in referring to these emergency jobs, intended to be temporary, as *trades*. Instead, workers often relied on self-employment or unskilled labour to sustain themselves during periods of unemployment.⁵²

6.2.5 *New occupations*

By the early 1920s, as the largest known crisis hit the industry, discussions shifted from secondary occupations to completely new livelihoods outside of the diamond industry. In these discussions two decades later, Henri Polak continued to note the temporary nature of these secondary jobs.

“[A]s there are workers, who in some capacity, know a second occupation and are trying to profit from it now—which delivers us a fair share of bitter protests from cigar makers, musicians, shop clerks and other, who are not in the least pleased by the competition from their temporary colleagues.”⁵³

Polak urged young workers to explore employment opportunities beyond the lapidary profession,⁵⁴ yet young workers increasingly aired their frustrations at the inability to do so. Jewish diamond sawyer David Melkman (1895–1945) exemplified this frustration in his letter published in the *Weekblad*. “In one of your earlier articles you advise the unemployed, especially the younger ones, to find a new area of employment. That is easier said than done.”⁵⁵ Melkman continued by comparing his unsuccessful job search to the exclusion of Jews in the guild system era:

“I have read often, that in the historical guild system, the possibility for Israelites [JK: Jews] to join [an industry] was impossible, only because he was an Israelite. Well, history repeats itself, albeit it in a different way.”⁵⁶

Melkman implied that employers were reluctant to offer work to former diamond workers once they learned about their previous employment.⁵⁷ Henri Polak disagreed

⁴⁹ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 38.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁵¹ Ibid., 57.

⁵² In the nineteenth century, semi-skilled production of tobacco was another alternative. However, this had become uncommon in the twentieth century. See also the discussion on the tobacco industry by Knotter, *Economische transformatie*.

⁵³ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 02–07–1920, “Nuttelooze pogingen.”

⁵⁴ For instance, when Leen Rimini asked Polak if he should leave his job at building cooperation De Dageraad to work in the diamond industry ca. 1916, Polak responded: “If I can give you some good advice, keep what you have, because ‘het vak’ will never recover.” Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 160.

⁵⁵ David Melkman, *Weekblad* 20–08–1920, “Het zoeken van werk in een ander bedrijf.”

⁵⁶ Idem.

⁵⁷ Heertje discussed diamond workers hiding their former sphere of employment to increase their employment chances. Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 225.

with the comparison of Jewish exclusion by guilds and that of diamond workers in other domains of employment. To elucidate his comments, Polak responded:

“When I advised the young diamond workers to earn their bread in different industries, I absolutely did not mean this as a temporary solution, in order to return to the diamond industry once employment opportunities would return there. *I urged them to find a living elsewhere and to remain there*, even when the diamond industry would revive again.”⁵⁸ (Italics mine for emphasis)

While Polak believed the experience of David Melkman was not representative, Marcus Sturhoofd (1893–1936) disagreed in a letter published the following month:

“I, too, belong to those who seriously wish to turn their backs to the diamond industry and who believe they are capable of taking up work in an office, bank, or elsewhere, as they possess the knowledge required for this.”⁵⁹

Underlining the experiences described by David Melkman, Sturhoofd points to the representativeness of his story:

“In my family and among acquaintances I can point to numerous, who possess administrative and language skills, and who were almost able to start careers in offices, as they possessed the necessary skills, but then came the stereotypical question: “And what was your last occupation?”⁶⁰

With the last sentence, Sturhoofd hinted at the ‘discrimination’ diamond workers faced when applying for new work. Thus, while working in the diamond industry could have been theoretically helpful in finding new careers—through high wages, lowered work hours, and opportunities for (self-)education—in practice, the impact of having worked in the diamond industry was less clear. Eventually, both David and Marcus were successful in making permanent career transitions. David found work in the graphic industry, while Marcus became an office clerk.⁶¹

Not all diamond workers were as successful as David and Marcus in finding new livelihoods. Many experienced that new work frequently implied downward mobility instead. Nonetheless, a decline in labour conditions was accepted if it avoided recurrent unemployment. David Vieijra (1867–1924) shared stories of friends, “...escaped victims of the diamond industry” who, despite having to work hard for less prestigious work and lower wages, would not dream of returning to the diamond industry.⁶² “Moos is gone, Mies remains!”⁶³ Vieijra writes, encouraging his colleagues to follow suit: “Friends, stay out also! The likelihood of an unemployed diamond worker finding somewhat liveable work [in the diamond industry] is exceedingly rare!”⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 20-08-1920, “Het zoeken van werk in een ander bedrijf.”

⁵⁹ Marcus Sturhoofd, *Weekblad* 10-09-1920, “Het zoeken naar werk in een ander bedrijf.”

⁶⁰ Idem.

⁶¹ Persoonskaart David Melkman 25-07-1895; Gezinskaart Marcus Sturhoofd 01-06-1893.

⁶² David Vieijra, *Weekblad* 05-08-1921, “Aan twijfelaars, en wien het verder moge aangaan!”

⁶³ Moos is a nickname for Mozes, Mies for Maria. Vieijra possibly refers here to the departure of Jews from the diamond industry in the 1920s by referring to a Gentile name as the ones who stayed.

⁶⁴ Idem.

One way to get an idea of where unemployed diamond workers ended up is to examine who complained about the influx of diamond workers into their occupation. This changed over time. In the beginning of the twentieth century, it was often believed that it was peddlers, porters, and day labourers who dealt with increased competition by displaced diamond workers. In the 1910s and 20s, grievances increasingly came from commercial travellers and office clerks. “Never were there more workers in the diamond industry who aspired to be commercial travellers than now” wrote Henri Polak in 1915, during a crisis caused by World War I.⁶⁵ Here they would accept lower wages than experienced travellers, pushing down wages of established workers in this field. In the views of the ANDB, problems arose when unemployed diamond workers refused to become members of the trade unions in their new occupations.

“It is usual, especially in times of unemployment, that members of our union temporarily work in other sectors. In most cases they are employed as shop or warehouse clerks, or as commercial travellers, without becoming members of the union in that sector”

stated Polak in a board meeting in 1916.⁶⁶ The union council grappled with finding a solution to this problem, ultimately offering to pay a small annual fee to affected unions for displaced diamond workers who refused to become union members in their new employment and remained members of the ANDB.⁶⁷ This discussion often focused on commercial travellers, since Jews were overrepresented among both diamond workers and commercial travellers and many of the displaced Jews turned to the latter for temporary or permanent employment.

A long list of other occupations where unemployed diamond workers were found was reported in a review of financial aid given to diamond workers in 1921, ranging from flower peddlers to merchants, from police officers to violinists, and from cigar makers to sailors.⁶⁸ Additionally, out of 5300 workers who had requested financial support between November 1920 and May 1921, roughly 3500 were still receiving support at the end of May, while 510 had found work elsewhere and 38 had started their own business. Others had sufficient income (774 in total), stopped their memberships (133), had fraudulently requested financial aid (171), or did not receive aid for unspecified reasons (187). Thus, roughly 10 percent of workers were able to find adequate employment elsewhere, whereas a much smaller share opted for self-employment; long periods of unemployment were far more common.

6.2.6 Migration to Antwerp

Another way to continue one’s career in the diamond industry was to migrate to Antwerp. While Antwerp’s diamond centre was the reason for most of the unemployment in the Amsterdam diamond industry, it also offered greater possibilities for (temporary) work due to the much weaker influence of the union. In Amsterdam, union supervision was increasingly felt as stifling.

⁶⁵ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 08-10-1915, “Recht en Plicht.”

⁶⁶ *Weekblad* 13-10-1916, “Verslagen van Vergaderingen.”

⁶⁷ Idem. The ANDB paid 30 cents annually per member that refused to join the union in their new occupation.

⁶⁸ *Weekblad* 21-10-1921, “De steun aan de “Uitgetrokkenenen.””

“No wonder that everyone, who can, wants to go to Antwerp; although little is won there, people at least get a certain freedom to move around and have a beer, without fearing being spied on by a set of visitors’ eyes.”⁶⁹

While this diamond worker suggested that being employed in Antwerp was only marginally better than being unemployed in Amsterdam, in general we can expect that those who moved to Antwerp had had the least stable employment in Amsterdam; or those with the most initiative. However, given the lower wages, worse labour conditions, and lack of a social network in Antwerp, Dutch workers had little motivation to move to Antwerp if they could find work in Amsterdam.

6.3 Apprenticeships and career outcomes

While our discussion provides an idea about the size and direction of mobility, the aggregate numbers relate to short-term shifts and give us few personal characteristics to compare. For instance, it is unclear how many of the 510 career changers between November 1920 and May 1921—mentioned in Section 6.2.5—permanently changed their careers, nor do we know their age and tenure in the industry at the time of the crisis. We would ideally observe persons’ final occupations when examining career outcomes. The municipal list of 1941 helps us obtain such information. Matching diamond worker apprentices to their entries in this 1941 list provides us with career origins and destinations. Additionally, the municipal list allow us relate career outcomes to measures of integration, such as religious disaffiliation and mixed marriages. It also allows us to make comparisons to apprentices with similar early-life characteristics.

The municipal list registered all Amsterdam residents with at least one Jewish grandparent in the first months of 1941.⁷⁰ Gentiles were therefore not included. Thus, the discussion in this section is limited to Jewish apprentices. Using apprenticeship cards rather than memberships cards as the measure for early-life stage positions provides two key additions. One, apprenticeship cards provide information on apprentices’ parents. Two, apprenticeship cards also exist for early dropouts from the diamond industry. Examining apprentices who never completed their apprenticeships and therefore never worked in the diamond industry as a certified member creates a near-perfect comparison group to observe later-life outcomes.⁷¹ After all, they had similar backgrounds—they entered the same tight-knit industry at the same ages—but diverged early in their careers. We will therefore compare three groups of apprentices: (1) those who left without completing their apprenticeships; (2) those who completed their apprenticeships but switched careers before 1941; and (3) those who completed their apprenticeships and were listed as diamond workers in 1941. However, since married women were rarely listed with an occupation on the municipal list, the analyses will focus on male apprentices. The sample construction is discussed in Appendix F.

⁶⁹ *Weekblad* 07-04-1922, “Een jammerklacht.”

⁷⁰ Tammes, “Het belang van Jodenregistratie,” 51.

⁷¹ Such a comparison is not possible with our diamond workers’ life course data since sampling was performed on the membership cards. As a result, no ‘apprenticeship dropouts’ were included in this sample.

6.3.1 *Completing apprenticeships: career outcomes*

In Chapters 2 and 5 we observed that Jewish diamond workers were less likely to be religiously disaffiliated or intermarried than Jews in similar social classes. However, based on those sources we could not tell whether these diamond workers were less integrated before their entry into the diamond industry—i.e. a self-selection—or whether working in the diamond industry was the reason for their hampered integration. If the former is true, we expect to find no differences between Jews who left the industry soon after they joined and those who had lifelong careers working. If the latter is true, we will observe variation in integration outcomes based on the length of careers in the diamond industry. We can similarly test whether the duration of diamond-worker careers impacted later-life career outcomes.

Time spent in the diamond industry can be approximated using two points. First, whether a person completed their apprenticeship or not. Second, whether they still worked in the diamond industry in 1941. Those who completed their apprenticeships but did not work as a diamond worker in 1941 had switched careers in the meantime. There were several reasons why an apprentice could have left before completing their apprenticeship. An apprentice could either be too talented, receiving better career opportunities during the apprenticeship, or have too little talent, being incapable of successfully completing the apprenticeship examination. Two factors that are strongly associated with not completing an apprenticeship are parents employed outside of the diamond industry and growing up outside of the Jewish neighbourhood.⁷² For instance, Isaac Aa (1896–1973), the son of a clerk, grew up in a Gentile neighbourhood and became a department store clerk before being listed as an art dealer in 1941.⁷³ His premature departure from the apprenticeship can be presumed to have been due to his alternative career opportunities. To limit these differences, I will only compare apprenticeship graduates and dropouts whose fathers worked in the diamond industry and who grew up in the Jewish Quarter. Consequently, any differences between dropouts and graduates should be explained by the marginally lower ‘skill’ of the former.⁷⁴ Comparing average occupational scores in 1941 suggests that differences between the groups were minimal. The ‘immobile’ diamond workers had occupational scores of 63.0, those who left after completing apprenticeships 62.9, and those who left during apprenticeships 62.5.

More telling are the differences in social classes. These are presented in Figure 6.1. Since diamond workers were all in the same social class—i.e. skilled workers—the roughly 50 percent who worked as diamond workers in 1941 are excluded from this figure.⁷⁵ Instead, the figure presents the share of early leavers (red bars) and late leavers (grey bars) in each social class destination. The most common destination for both groups was work in commerce where we find many traders and commercial travellers. Early leavers, despite having more time to learn other trades, were found only slightly

⁷² The Jewish neighbourhood being defined as the old and new ‘Jewish Quarter,’ i.e. districts C, P, Q, R, S, V, and W, discussed in Chapter 7.

⁷³ Militieregister Isaac Aa 06–03–1896, SAA 5182, 4411.

⁷⁴ This appears evident when examining the reasons for leaving an apprenticeship early. Jozef Druif (1895–1945) and his siblings, who were trained by their regularly unemployed diamond-working father, were apprentices for long periods during which they failed their apprentice examinations multiple times before finally opting for other careers. However, it is unclear how these skills, or the lack thereof, transferred to other careers.

⁷⁵ Due to changing demands for specific diamond cuts, workers specialised in rose-cut diamonds were more likely to work in another industry than brilliant-cut diamonds in 1941.

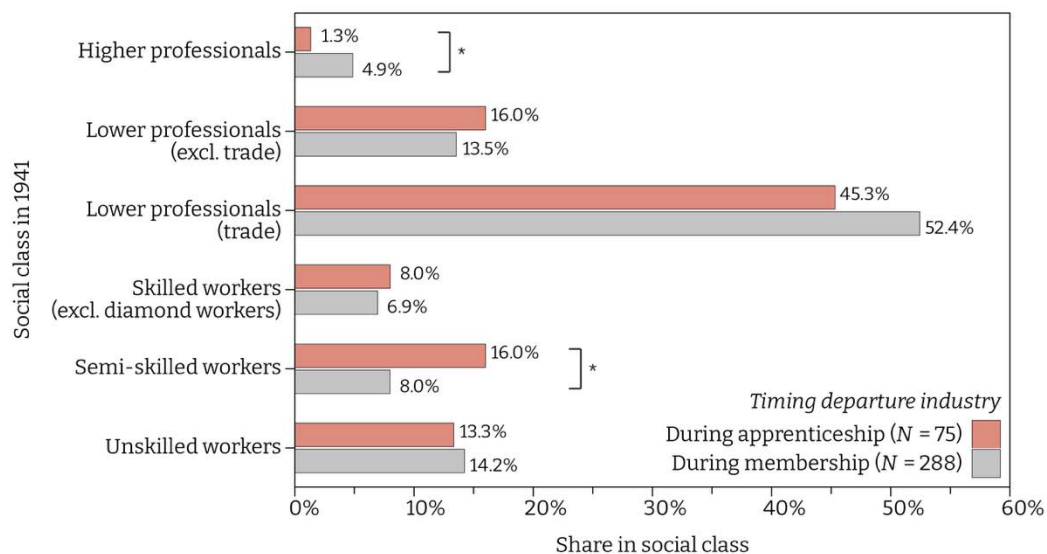


FIGURE 6.1 Social class in 1941 by timing of leaving of diamond industry.

Source: author's calculations using linked apprenticeship cards and *municipal list* of 1941.

Note: diamond workers who left during their memberships ($m = 0.049$, $sd = 0.215$) were more likely to work as *Higher professionals* in 1941 than those who left during their apprenticeship ($m = 0.013$, $sd = 0.115$); $t(222) = -1.92$, $p = 0.057$. Additionally, late-leavers ($m = 0.160$, $sd = 0.369$) were less likely to work as *Semi-skilled workers* than early-leavers ($m = 0.0799$, $sd = 0.272$); $t(96) = 1.76$, $p = 0.082$; * means the difference between the groups is statistically significant with $p < 0.10$.

more often among skilled workers. They were, however, twice as likely to work in semi-skilled work.⁷⁶ Here they often worked in the production and sanitation of clothing, leather goods, and tobacco; common occupations among working-class Jews. Spending more time in the diamond industry meant career switches increasingly turned to employment in commerce rather than other manual occupations with lengthy training periods. Potentially, this reflects the possibility to accrue more starting capital while working as a diamond worker. Another notable difference is spotted at the top of the figure. While only one out of 75 early leavers (1.3%) entered the social class of *Higher professional or managers*, 14 of the 288 late leavers (4.9%) ended up in this class.⁷⁷ The singular early leaver who made it to this highest social class was Leendert Groen (1893–1945), who was listed as a ‘manufacturer and merchant.’⁷⁸ Among the successful late leavers we find Isaac Coopman (1893–1952), who completed his apprenticeship in the diamond industry within two years, worked as a diamond worker for three years, then left for the Dutch East Indies. He later returned to Amsterdam to complete a doctorate in law and worked as a lawyer in 1941.⁷⁹ Meijer Hammel (1895–1965) became a popular

⁷⁶ Statistically different at $\alpha = 0.10$; p -value = 0.081.

⁷⁷ Statistically different at $\alpha = 0.10$; p -value = 0.057.

⁷⁸ His membership to the *Vereniging Beurs voor den Diamanthandel* since 1936 suggests he was involved in the diamond trade, at least later in life. See Leendert Groen on joodsmonument.nl.

⁷⁹ See Isaac's entry on albumacademicum.uva.nl.

singer and poet in the 1920s and was listed as the director of a theatre on the municipal list.⁸⁰ Other successful late leavers worked as factory owners, teachers, and accountants.

Overall, the limited differences between the groups highlight several aspects of the diamond industry. First, those who were excluded from the figure—the ‘never-leavers’ who worked in the diamond industry in 1941—accounted for slightly less than half of apprentices. In other words, over half of male Jewish apprentices that joined the industry between 1904 and 1913 no longer worked in the industry in 1941. Those who left earlier could have retrained for other skilled occupations. However, only 24 percent of early-leavers and 15 percent of late-leavers took up another skilled or semi-skilled occupation. Most Jewish men who entered diamond worker apprentices would later end up in trade, a common occupational group for Amsterdam Jews. Alternatively, they could end up in the highest social classes, either through the industry or another path, or end up as unskilled workers due to limited transferrable skills. The latter was more common among rose-cut specialists. Their departures from the industry were less likely to be voluntary, since their specialised cuts became less in fashion, and their specialisation in rose rather than brilliant cuts may reflect their weaker social networks. Since rose-cut specialists earned less, those with better connections generally managed to get trained as brilliant-cut specialists.

6.3.2 *Completing apprenticeships: integration*

Mobile Jews who left the diamond industry at a later stage entered elite positions more often. But how did the timing of leaving affect integration? We can compare the three groups—early leavers, late leavers, and never leavers/returners—across two indicators of integration: religious disaffiliation and intermarriage. This comparison is presented in Figure 6.2.

There existed a clear, linear relationship between the moment one left the diamond industry and the degree of integration. While only one in twenty of the never-leavers did not affiliate with a Synagogue in 1941, this was true for nearly one in ten early-leavers. Similarly, significant differences were seen in the rates of intermarriage between the three groups. Late leavers intermarried over 50 percent more frequently than never-leavers; early leavers 100 percent more often than those who worked in the diamond industry in 1941. While Figure 6.1 indicates a positive relationship between remaining in the diamond industry and career mobility, at least in terms of achieving elite positions, Figure 6.2 indicates a negative relationship between time spent in the diamond industry and the measures of integration. This is in line with our results from Chapter 5. There, low exposure to Gentiles was seen as the main reason for Jewish diamond workers’ lower rates of mixed marriages. Once again, occupations or class do not seem to be key. For instance, four out of 14 merchants (28.6%) who left the diamond industry prior to completing their apprenticeships intermarried, compared with eight out of 54 merchants (14.8%) who became merchants only after completing their apprenticeships. Time spent in the diamond industry was time spent surrounded by Jewish colleagues. In nearly all cases, leaving the diamond industry sooner meant increasing one’s exposure to Gentiles at an earlier career stage.

⁸⁰ Gezinskaart Meijer Hammel 15-06-1895; SAA 5422, 528. The theatre is likely to be Fritz Hirsch Operette. See his entry on theaterencyclopedie.nl.

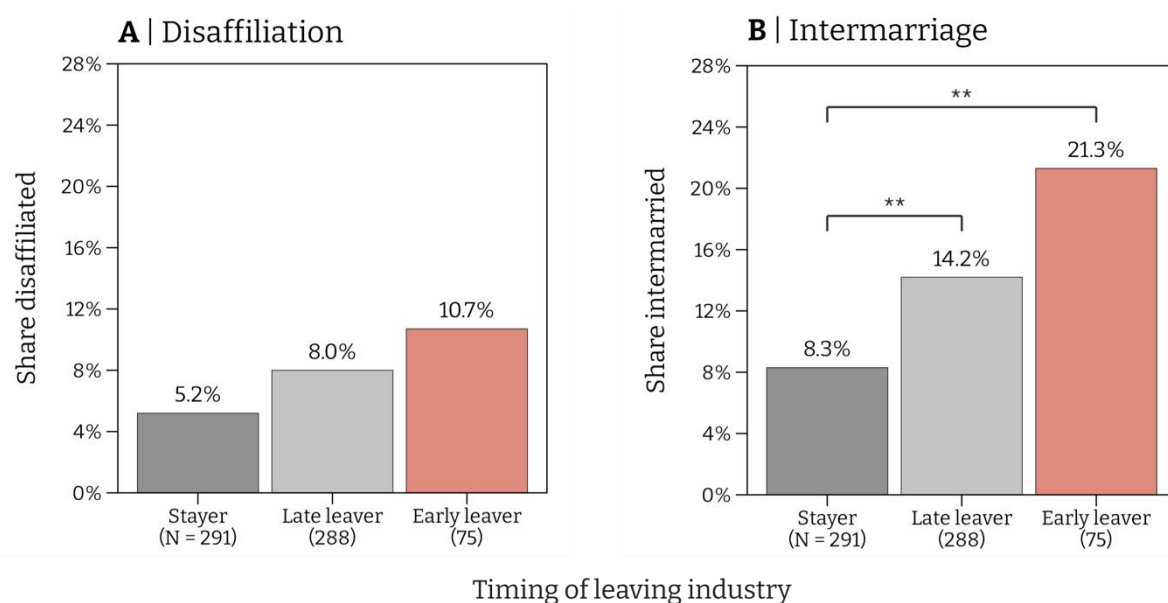


FIGURE 6.2 Share disaffiliated and intermarried male apprentices by the timing of leaving the diamond industry.

Source: authors' calculations using linked apprenticeship cards and *municipal list* of 1941.

Note: results are the same whether we exclude the less than 10 percent of individuals who never married prior to 1941. Results are the same when we exclude those with names that were not considered distinctive Jewish first names. Differences in religious disaffiliation are not statistically significant. Early leavers ($m = 0.213$, $sd = 0.412$) were statistically more likely to get intermarried than stayers ($m = 0.082$, $sd = 0.276$); $t(92)$, $p = 0.011$. Late leavers ($m = 0.142$, $sd = 0.350$) were significantly more likely to get intermarried than stayers; $t(544)$, $p = 0.023$. ** means the difference between the groups is statistically significant with $p < 0.05$. Total number per group in parentheses below x-axis.

The differences do also persist across and within apprenticeship specialisations. In the four largest groups of specialisations trained during this time—brilliant polishers, rose polishers, brilliant setters, and rose setters—we observe the same patterns. Notable, however, is the extreme difference among brilliant setters who completed their apprenticeships. Only one of the 24 (4.2%) brilliant setters still working in the diamond industry in 1941 married a Gentile spouse,⁸¹ compared to seven of the 15 (46.7%) who left after their apprenticeships finalised but before 1941.⁸² Similar differences were found among rose setters. Jewish diamond setters, assisting a small number of co-ethnic polishers, likely had the lowest exposure to non-Jews. This surprisingly high rates of integration among former diamond setters requires future study.⁸³

⁸¹ Levie Vieijra (1897–1942) married Helena Clasina Antonia Grolleman (1898–1989) in 1919.

⁸² Significant at $p < 0.01$ ($p = 0.007$).

⁸³ The small sample requires us to be careful to place too much weight on the high percentage of intermarrying former diamond setters. An explanation is not found in occupations held after leaving the diamond industry. Their occupations did not diverge significantly from brilliant polishers, who had much lower intermarriage rates.

6.4 Careers in the diamond industry

For each of the 800 persons in our diamond workers' life course sample we have at least one membership card. These cards provide great detail on individual careers within the diamond industry. Its downside for social mobility research is that it only pertains to time spent in a specific industry. The linked apprenticeship cards and municipal list of 1941 indicate that careers of diamond workers diverged over lifetimes. Earlier departures allowed former apprentices to retrain sooner and invest time in other careers. Moreover, diamond workers who left the industry later or never left were, on average, less integrated. Thus, a logical first step for examining life course mobility is to explore at which age individuals entered the diamond industry and how long their membership lasted.

6.4.1 *Age at first membership and duration of memberships*

Age at first entry

Most diamond workers started lapidary apprenticeships at a young age. Others joined the industry in their twenties or thirties. Especially in booming periods in the late nineteenth century, droves of men and women already gainfully employed elsewhere transitioned to diamond manufacturing. Some completed apprenticeships in Amsterdam while others clandestinely learned the trade in Antwerp or in one of the other global diamond centres. The ages at which the persons in our sample of life courses became full members of the union varied between 13 and 44. The youngest was Schoontje van de Kar (1885-1943), the daughter of a diamond polisher, who joined in 1898, had regular employment in the industry until 1914, then spent four years being unemployed before ending her membership in 1918. Simon Weijl, a shopkeeper's son, worked as a baker before he moved to Antwerp in 1898 where he learned to cleave diamonds. He briefly joined the ANDB between 1917 and 1919 before returning to Antwerp. Hartog de Jong (b. 1877), the son of a diamond polisher, was a dry goods retailer until he joined the diamond industry in 1918 to work as a diamond cleaver. Unlike Simon, Hartog spent another 19 years working in Amsterdam before ending his membership and moving to Antwerp in 1937.

Leaving aside rare outliers who joined the ANDB at later ages, the average diamond worker started their apprenticeship in their mid-teens and joined as full members in their late teens or early twenties. This is corroborated by Figure 6.3, which presents the mean, median, and distribution of ages at which diamond workers became full members of the union by 10-year birth cohorts, ethno-religious background, and gender. The mean estimates the average age at which members became full members, whereas the median pinpoints the age for the person in the middle of the distribution. Outside of the first birth cohort,⁸⁴ women's median age at becoming members—denoted by the vertical blue dashed lines in Panel C—was lower than for men.

⁸⁴ The membership cards were introduced in 1898. Several diamond workers had already joined between 1894, when the union was founded, and 1898 or had started working as diamond workers prior to 1898. However, the membership cards only counted membership years since 1898. This only affects those in the birth cohort from 1873 until 1882.

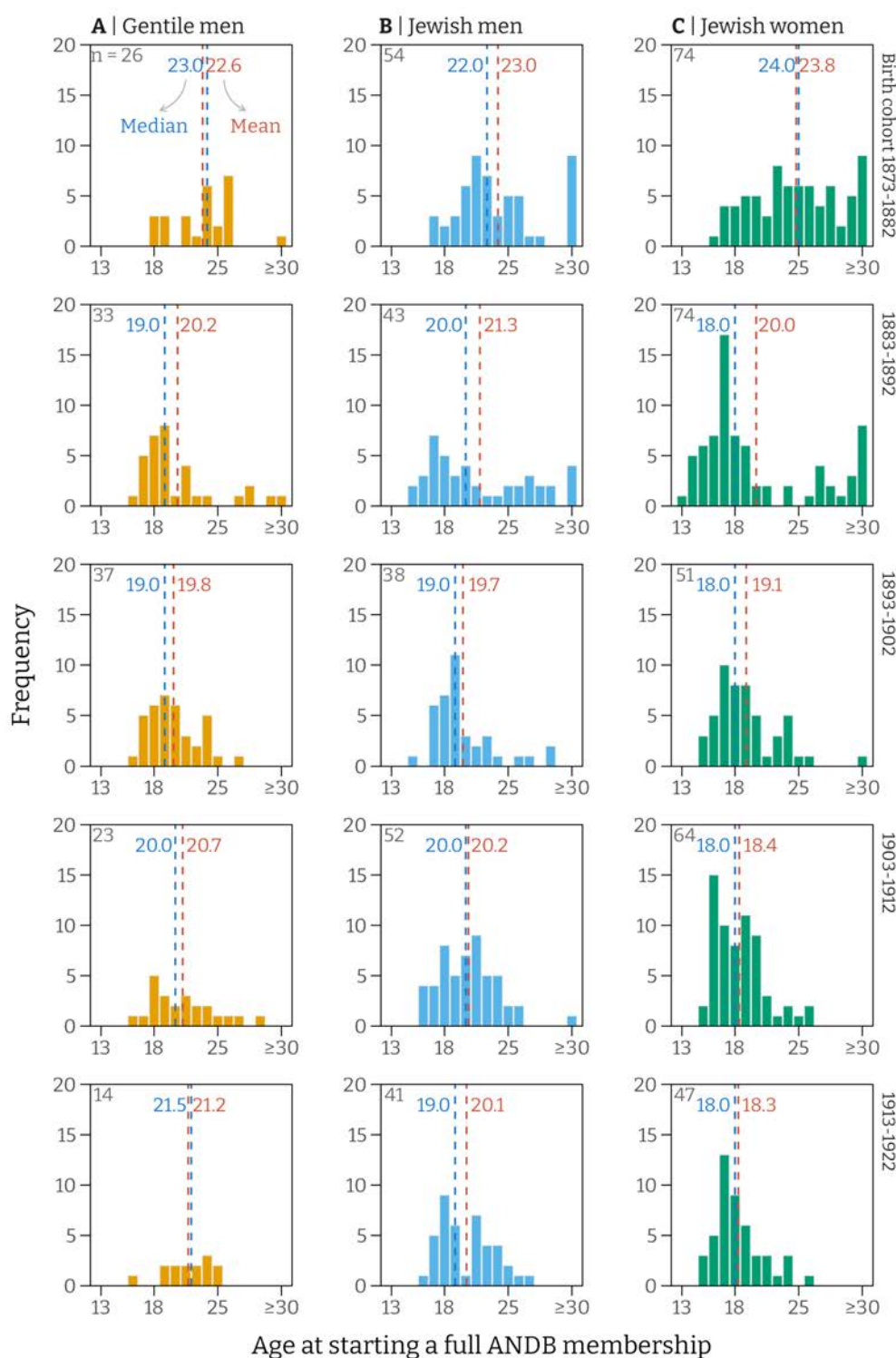


FIGURE 6.3 The age distribution of becoming a full ANDB member by birth cohort, religion, and gender.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: the number of individuals per plot is presented in grey in the top left corner of each plot. Blue numbers and vertical lines present the median age at full memberships; red the mean age. All ages 30 and above are added together in ≥30.

Women primarily worked as cutters, whose apprenticeships took between one and two years to complete. In comparison, men predominantly specialised as polishers and setters. Their apprenticeships lasted between three and four years.

In the first two cohorts, Jewish men and women more frequently joined the union over the age of 30. This was extremely uncommon among Gentile men. As we will see further in this chapter, a greater share of Jews held other occupations before moving into the diamond industry at a later age. By the third birth cohort these differences between Jews and Gentiles had dissipated. In the last two cohorts, however, the difference in the mean age at first membership had grown to nearly two years between Jewish men and women. Women had shorter apprenticeships on average, but were also less likely to work in other occupations before entering the diamond industry.

Additionally, the social background of workers had an impact on their starting age. Sons and daughters of manual workers joined the industry at younger ages, whereas workers with white-collar social backgrounds entered the diamond industry slightly later in life. This difference was especially pronounced for Gentile workers, among whom social backgrounds were less varied (see Chapter 4). In the few cases Gentile diamond workers originated from white-collar families, they generally started their careers considerably later. These individuals attempted other careers first but switched to the diamond industry when its conditions improved.

Length of memberships

On average, Gentile men had longer careers in the Amsterdam diamond industry than Jews did. The distributions, means, and medians are presented by group and birth cohort in Figure 6.4. Although it may appear paradoxical that Jews generally had shorter careers in what was undoubtedly a Jewish occupational niche, it is easily explained by several factors. First, Gentile diamond workers specialised in smaller diamonds. For this work they earned lower wages but received more job stability. Second, Jews more frequently picked up work in the diamond industry without an affinity for the work. For instance, the Jewish comedian Eduard Jacobs (1867–1914) joined the diamond industry without interest or skill for the work.⁸⁵ In contrast, Gentile workers only joined when they had a talent for the work or direct familial connections in the industry.

This is reflected in the figure, where we see a greater proportion of Jewish workers with careers that spanned less than five years. Few of these ‘early quitters’ had parents in the diamond industry already. Instead, several of them were the first in their families to enter the lapidary profession. These men and women often spent the first years of their memberships in sporadic and unstable employment before changing careers. Third, as we shall see later in this chapter, Jewish diamond workers were more likely to migrate to Antwerp, continuing their diamond careers there. Their total time spent in the Amsterdam diamond industry is therefore underestimated to a greater extent than Gentile’s careers.

⁸⁵ Alex de Haas, *De minstreel van de mesthoop. Liedjes, leven en achtergronden van Eduard Jacobs: pionier van het Nederlandse cabaret: 1867–1914* (Amsterdam, 1958).

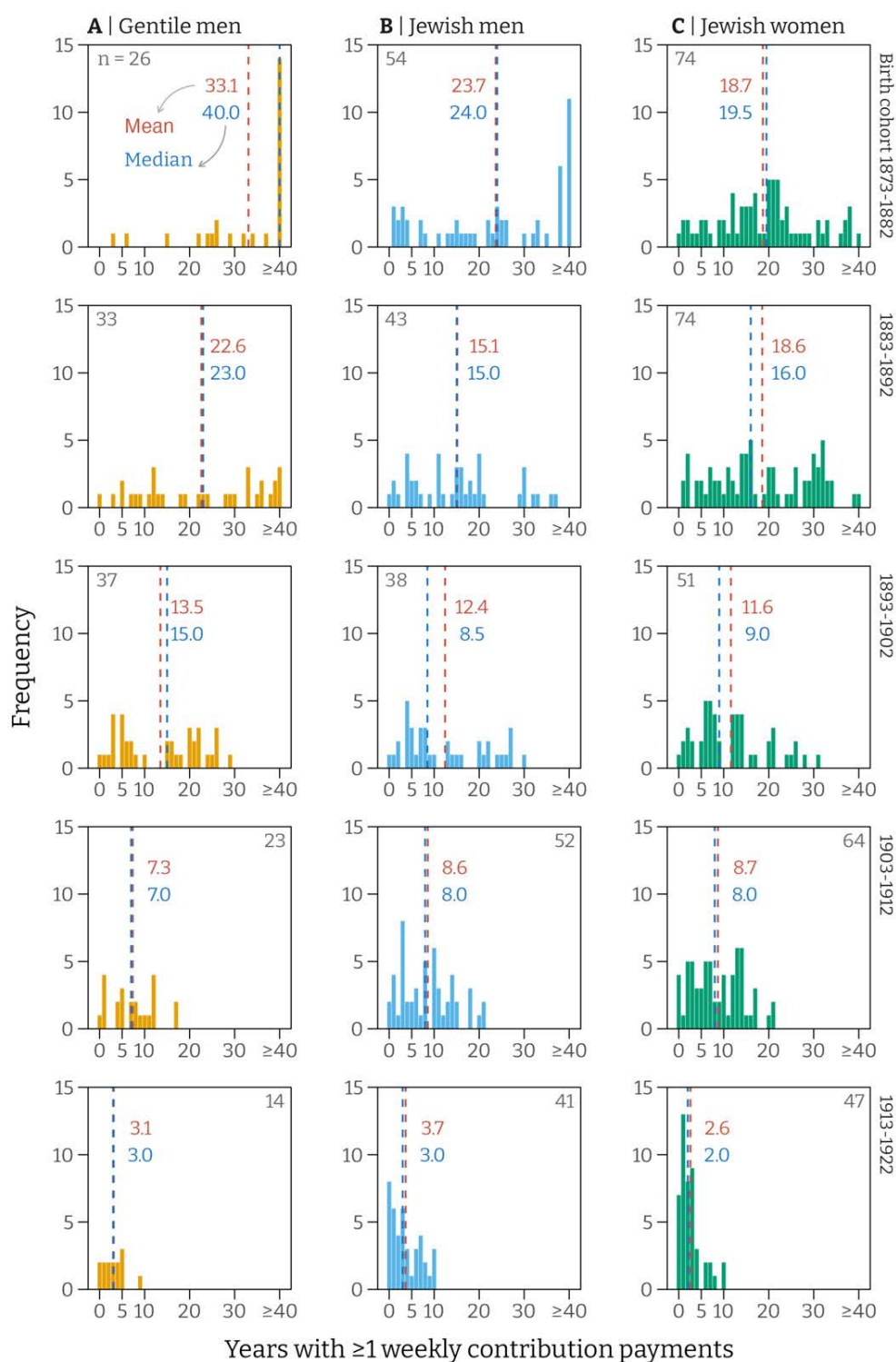


FIGURE 6.4 The distribution of membership duration, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious background

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: the number of individuals per plot is presented in grey in the top left corner of each plot. Blue numbers and vertical lines present the median age at full memberships; red the mean age. Durations of 40 and more years were grouped in ≥ 40 .

The figure also shows considerable differences over time. While Gentile men in the first three cohorts had careers that spanned longer than their Jewish counterparts, in the last two cohorts their time spent was shorter or equally long. By the time the latter two cohorts entered the labour market, the diamond industry had become less fortuitous. Therefore, fewer Gentiles joined the industry then. Unlike Gentiles, who had greater options for skilled work due to more diversified networks, Jews continued entering the diamond industry regardless of its prosperity.

6.4.2 Career characteristics

For each membership year, the backs of the membership cards enumerate the exact number of weeks a member was working as a diamond worker, unemployed, on sick leave, on strike, or in a lockout. Aggregated, this information provides a representation of workers' careers in, and the conditions of, the diamond industry. Figure 6.5 illustrates what this information looks like for a single individual: Rachel Gobetz (1873–1942). Rachel was born in a Dutch cigar maker's family in London in 1873 and moved with her parents to Amsterdam the following year. She became a member of the ANDB in 1902 and, after working full-time in the diamond industry for several years, she moved into her own apartment in 1905. Rachel never married and remained a paying member of the union until 1938. Her career displays several characteristics shared by most diamond workers at different points in time. Like all diamond workers at that time, Rachel was affected by the industry-wide lockout which occurred in 1904. She spent five weeks unable to work, for which she received 25 guilders in compensation from the union. In 1908, following the 'Great Panic' of 1907—a devastating bank run in the United States—Rachel spent 15 weeks without work.⁸⁶ In 1910 and 1911 she was unable to work for considerable parts of the year due to illness or injury. When World War I caused many of her colleagues to be unemployed for the majority of the year, she too was out of work. Rachel must have been a talented rose cutter, however, since she spent relatively little time unemployed during the disastrous crisis in the Amsterdam diamond industry between 1919 and 1924. Instead, she continued working nearly all weeks of the year until 1929. In that year, Rachel spent several weeks out on sick leave. Afterwards, from the age of 56, Rachel was no longer able to obtain stable employment in the diamond industry. The following eight years she was continuously out of work, with the exception of 1933, when she was able to work briefly for five weeks. In 1938, at the age of 65, Rachel revoked her membership.

Aggregating this information by ethno-religious group, gender, and cohort enables us to identify systematic differences in the careers of different groups. Those aggregations are presented in Figure 6.6. The white area shows the period in which persons had not yet been born. The lightest grey encapsulates the years in which a person was 0–12 years old and could not have legally worked. The next hue of grey refers to the time from when a diamond worker turned 13 until they became a full member of the ANDB for the first time. This includes time spent in school, working in other careers, and in apprenticeships prior to full memberships. Once a person became a member, their number of weeks worked are presented in green. Unemployment as a member of the union is shown in orange, while union time spent outside of work due to strikes, lock-

⁸⁶ Another factor in this unemployment was overproduction since 1904 due to employers' overoptimistic view of the conditions in the industry. *Jaarverslag 1907*, 2–3.

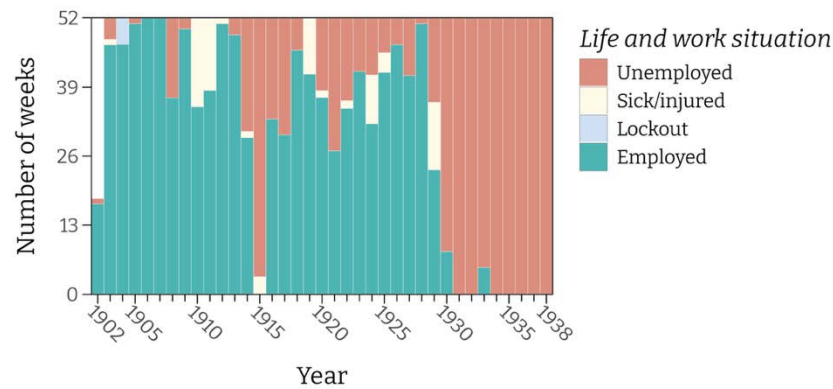


FIGURE 6.5 The lapidary career of Rachel Gobetz (1873-1942), including annual number of weeks employed, unemployed, sick, or in lockout during her ANDB membership. Source: ANDB archive, #9430.

outs, and indefinite leave resulting from illness or injury are colored pink, light blue, and yellow. After the first ANDB membership spell ended, a person could either return sometime later before 1940, presented by a darker hue of grey and considered a ‘temporary leave,’ or not return to the union before 1940, the case highlighted with the darkest grey and considered ‘permanent leave.’ Three important multi-year crises are marked with dashed red lines: the 1914 crisis following the start of World War I, the 1920 crisis, and the 1930 crisis of the Great Depression.

The category permanent leave functions as an accumulation of all persons who had left the industry; individuals who were potentially mobile. We observe that Jews, especially Jewish women, permanently left the Amsterdam diamond industry at earlier stages in their careers until the 1930s. Thus, Gentiles were more likely to remain with the industry, while Jewish men and women were more likely to depart until 1930. The reverse trend was seen after 1930; relatively more Gentiles than Jews left during and following the Great Depression. Networks within the diamond industry were therefore changing over time, with the share of Gentile diamond workers first rising and then falling. We see this most evidently in the fourth birth cohort (born 1903-1912). The 1929 crisis appears to hit them the hardest, and few Gentiles remained employed in the diamond industry after that point. The differences between the groups can be explained by their specialties—Gentiles focused on smaller diamonds which offered more stable employment at lower wages—and attachment to the industry—fewer alternative skilled occupations were available for Jews compared with Gentiles.

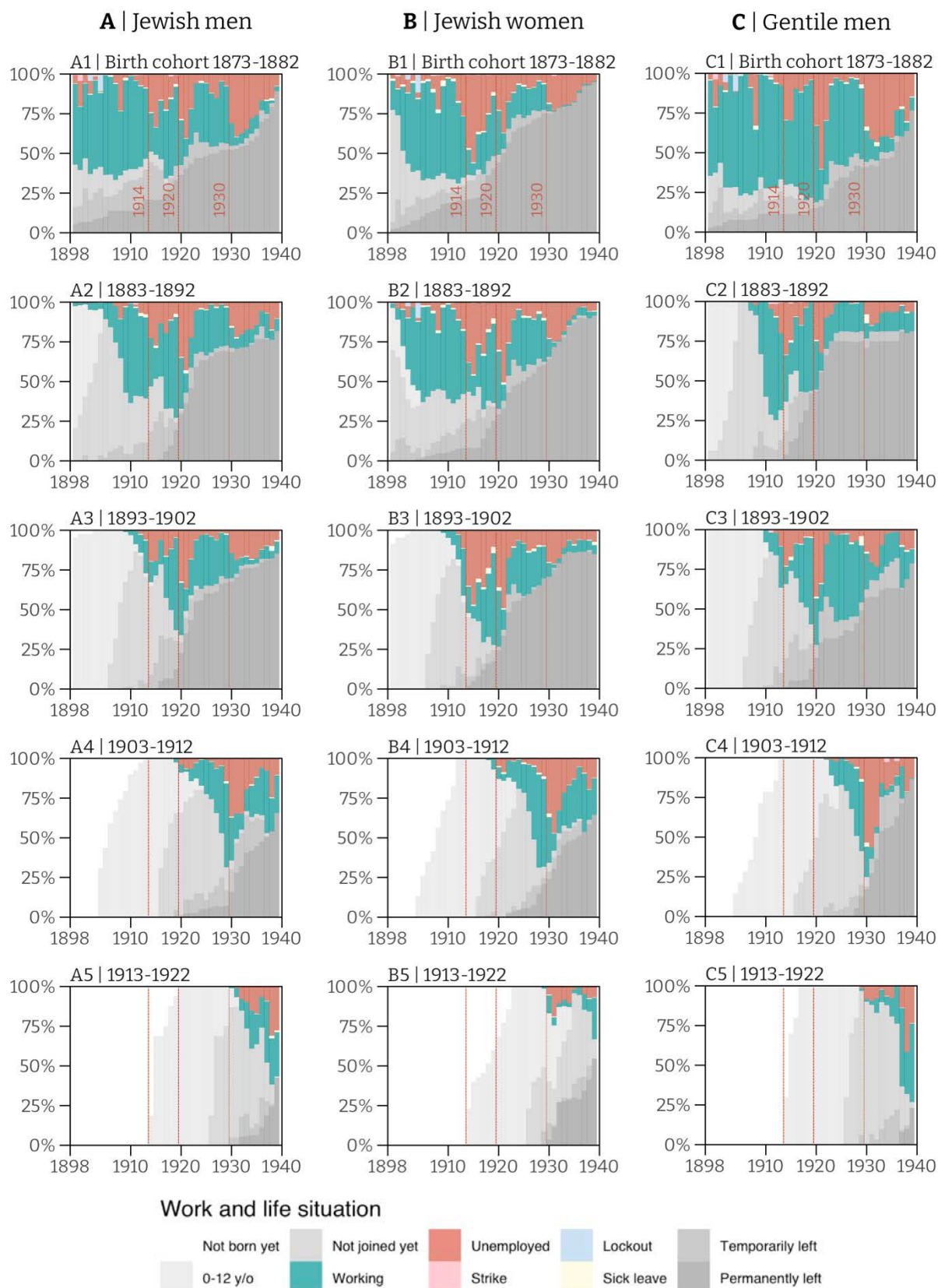


FIGURE 6.6 Annual number of weeks by employment type, gender, cohort, and ethno-religious background

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: red vertical lines indicate start of multi-year crises.

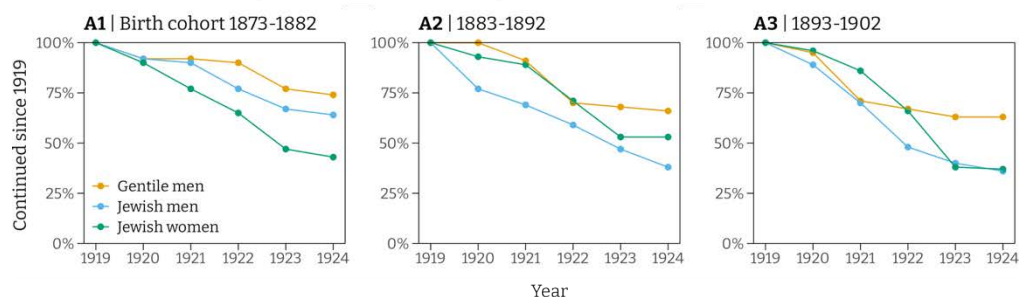
Impact of crises

The impact of the two main crises—covering the periods 1919–1924 and 1929–1934—can be studied more directly. For each group, we can examine only those individuals who had been members at the start of the crises and estimate, for each subsequent year, whether they remained members of the union. Departures include retirements, new careers, or migration to Antwerp. The shares of each group that continued year after year are shown per cohort and crisis in Figure 6.7. It reports clear group differences by group and crisis. In the 1919–1924 crisis, Gentile men consistently continued their memberships for more years than Jewish men and women. For Gentiles, between 60 and 75 percent of men remained members of the union throughout the crisis. For Jews, this varied between 35 and 65 percent. Thus, the 1919 crisis had a disproportionate impact on Jews due to their more volatile specialisations; although an additional factor may have been that working in trade, common among Jewish diamond workers' peers, required less formal training to enter.

The 1929–1934 crisis had less impact on these three cohorts. Diamond workers born between 1873 and 1882 who had remained or returned as members by 1929 rarely left as a result of this second crisis. For women, now in their 40s and 50s, departures from the industry were more common. They presumably stopped trying to find work sooner, possibly by relying on husbands' or next of kin's incomes. In the second cohort this was especially true. While virtually none of the men left, roughly half of the women who had remained did. For women, the impact of the crisis came combined with the implosion of the rose-cut diamond branch. As this part of the industry became increasingly desolate due to changing tastes in diamond cuts, these women were more likely to leave the industry over time. In the third and fourth cohort, notably, Gentile men suddenly appear to be leaving at higher rates than before. In fact, in the last cohort shown in Figure 6.7, nearly 80 percent of remaining men left the industry. This was the first cohort where Gentile men had shorter careers in the diamond industry than Jewish men and women (see Figure 6.4). The worldwide *Depression* lowered demand even for the smaller *chips* diamonds, incentivising younger Gentile diamond workers to switch to new careers when they still could.

Moreover, during this crisis we witness two trends. It was particularly older men and women who became unemployed during crises. This can also be witnessed in Figure 6.6. However, it was this older group of workers who were least likely to depart from the industry when crises arose. Instead, younger men and women with chances of obtaining long-term employment in other sectors left. Older workers, especially those who had weathered through earlier crises, were on average less likely to leave due to unemployment. We see this occur in both major crises. These men and women likely had fewer career options left and preferred to stay with the industry and union which offered unemployment benefits and prospects at a pension. Thus, career length, and the related need for career mobility, was in large part explained by the timing of crises during one's lifetime. Those struck by crises early on in their careers were more likely to be mobile. This was true for the third and fourth birth cohorts of diamond workers, who were aged 18 to 27 when a large crisis caused years of unemployment in industry. Their mobility outcomes will be observed later in the chapter.

Panel A | Membership continuations during the 1919-24 crisis



Panel B | Membership continuations during the 1929-34 crisis

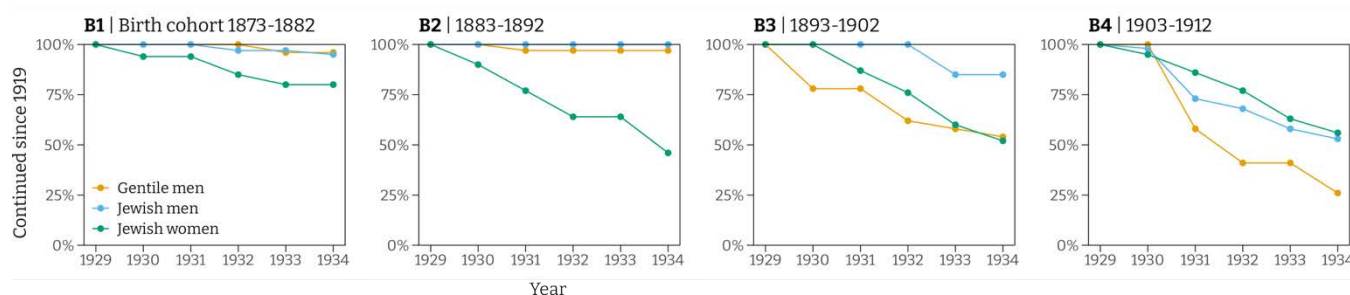


FIGURE 6.7 Share of diamond workers who were members at the start of the two main crises, by continued membership, gender, cohort, and ethno-religious group.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Reasons for leaving

Until now, we have focused on crises as the primary cause for leaving the industry. However, membership cards listed various reasons for temporary or permanent dissolutions of memberships. These reasons were recorded on the fronts of the membership cards. For our life course sample, I classified each of the 732 reports of union dissolutions into one of eight different categories. These are presented in Figure 6.8 by year, ethno-religious background, and gender. The figure shows that memberships were most commonly terminated through union decisions, labeled as 'Kicked out' (displayed in red). This cause was frequently used around the 1919-1924 crisis. Thus, in many cases departing during a crisis was not a voluntary decision made by members. Instead, the union was forced to remove members who stopped paying their membership dues. Others decided themselves to leave during this period because of the prolonged unemployment. These were listed as 'Unemployed' in the figure and were also most common around the 1919-1924 crisis, although only women were repeatedly listed with this reason. Rather, if men left the union on their own accord during this period, they were most frequently listed as starting a new form of employment, listed as 'New work.' Other voluntary departures include 'Migrated,' especially common among Jewish men throughout the entire period—i.e. both before and after crises—up to 1930. While women were sometimes listed as leaving due to marriage ($N = 10$) or because they stopped working (12) this occurred relatively rarely in comparison to all other reasons. Illness or injury (10) were reasons mentioned just as commonly for ending their memberships. This is suggestive of women's continued presence in the diamond industry even after marriage and during motherhood.

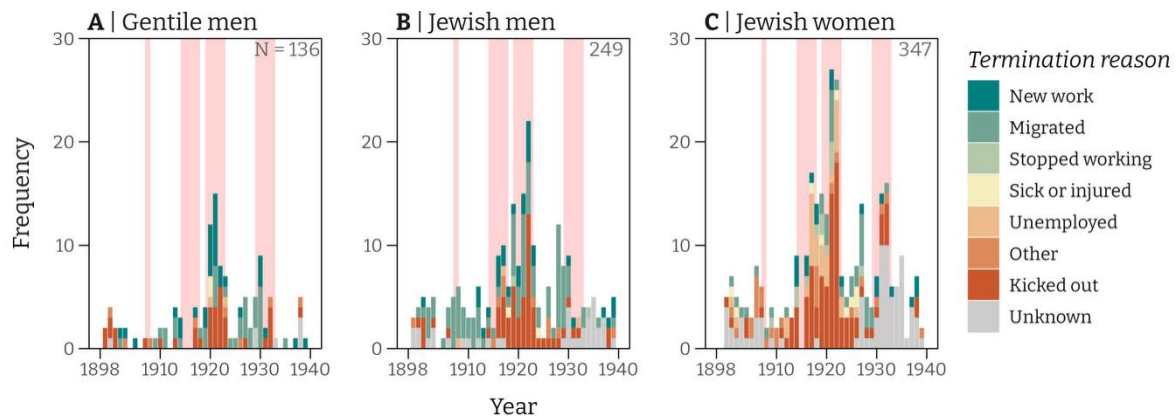


FIGURE 6.8 Reasons given for diamond workers' membership dissolutions, 1898-1939

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: 'Unknown' covers all dissolutions without specified reasons; 'Other' included uncommon reasons, e.g. those related to marriage.

6.4.3 Migration to Antwerp

When staying unemployed was no longer an option, for instance when members were unable to continue paying their contribution fees, out-of-work diamond workers were left with two options. They could either move to Antwerp, where work in the diamond industry was available for lower wages and under worse working conditions but where employment was easier to find. The ANDB morally supported migrants who left due to economic necessities, such as prolonged unemployment, but was against those who left only to increase their purchasing power, for instance in the hopes of higher wages or upward mobility.⁸⁷ Alternatively, they could seek new types of work altogether, switching to another economic sector common in Amsterdam. This latter option is discussed at the end of the chapter. Here, we will discuss diamond workers' experiences in Antwerp.

The timing of migrations suggests that labour migration to Antwerp was often a temporary measure designed to fight bouts of unemployment or as a means to move up the ladder within the industry.⁸⁸ ANDB members required a certificate from the union each time they migrated to Antwerp. Each month, the ANDB reported changes in the membership count, including departures and returns from Antwerp based on these certificates, in their weekly newsletter. The reported number of moves to and from Antwerp are presented in Figure 6.9 in green. Peak moments to migrate to Antwerp were

⁸⁷ The union did not condone migration of those who only sought higher wages abroad. Henri Polak communicated this clearly in the ANDB weeklies: "Every diamond worker who, without necessity, moves to Belgium because it is cheaper and easier there, and nearly tax-free, now knows that he will live on the sweat and blood of the masses of Belgian labourers." Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 02-12-1927, "Het goedkoope België II." The union did, however, morally support those whose livelihoods depended on migrating to places where work was available.

⁸⁸ A diamond worker uses the example of small-scale entrepreneurship as a reason for moving to Antwerp. Henri Polak argues that this is only possible through the exploitation of underpaid cutters, polishers, and setters. Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 09-12-1927, "Het goedkoope België III."

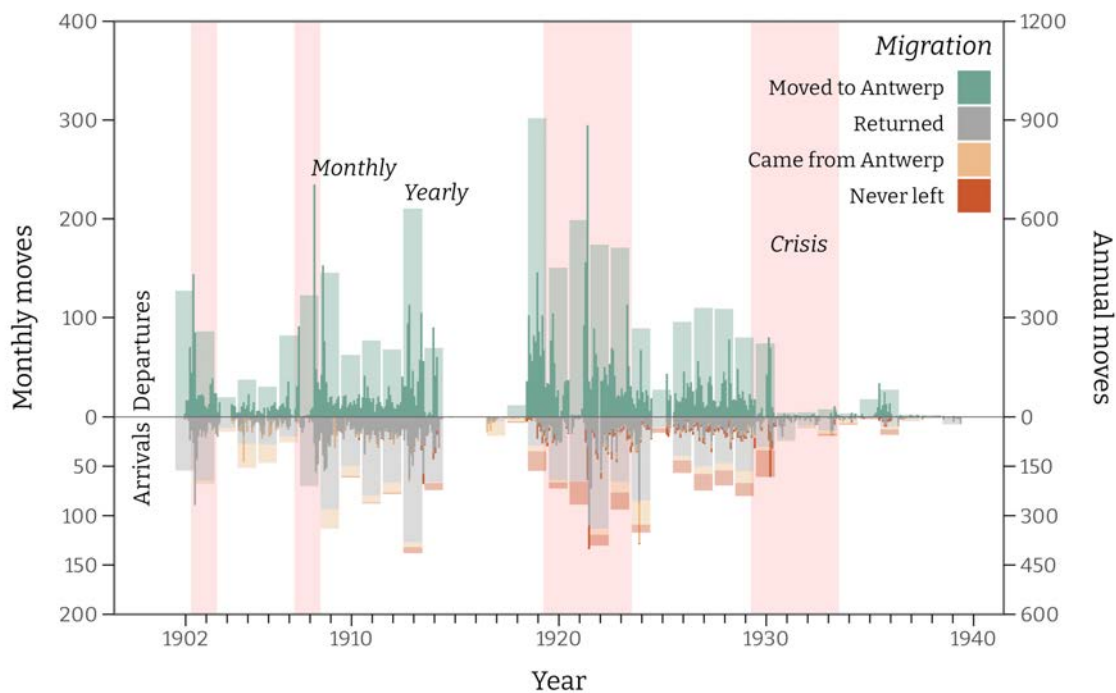


FIGURE 6.9 Official numbers of diamond worker migration to and from Antwerp, 1902-1940.

Source: monthly reports of membership changes published in the *Weekblad* 1902-1940.

Note: monthly numbers are reported as lines, yearly figures as bars. Industry-wide crises are highlighted by the red shaded area. Values above the horizontal line refer to departures from Amsterdam; values below cover returnees from Antwerp, Belgian migrants arriving in Amsterdam, and Amsterdam diamond workers who were given certificates to leave for Antwerp but never departed, i.e. corrections for previous overestimations.

in 1908 (crisis), 1913 (growing unemployment)—at the end of 1913 the ANDB issued a bar on emigration to Antwerp, as Amsterdam producers attempted to produce Amsterdam goods, using Amsterdam workers, in Antwerp⁸⁹—1919-1922 (crisis), and 1925-1927 (post-crisis). Returns from Antwerp are shown in grey. Many migrants returned within less than a month. In fact, over half of membership cards where a departure to Antwerp was reported, listed a return within the next three months.⁹⁰ Thus, only a minority of migrants remained in Antwerp indefinitely. Since the move to Antwerp was in almost all cases an economic decision, only those who managed to earn a decent living continued to live in the city on the Scheldt. Often, their partners joined them after employment was secured. Moreover, these migrations concerned primarily Jewish diamond workers. Gentiles in the industry spent less time unemployed up to 1930, the main incentivizing factor to move to Antwerp, and appear more likely to switch careers when they *did* become unemployed. These differences by ethno-religious background are somewhat surprising given the ethno-religious composition of workers in the Antwerp diamond industry. There, nearly all workers were non-Jewish, while

⁸⁹ *Jaarverslag* 1913, 25.

⁹⁰ Limited to cards that listed a return date.

Jews—predominantly of Eastern European descent—were a minority.⁹¹ However, in Antwerp, Amsterdam Jews could rely on primarily Dutch-Jewish diamond merchants and factory owners as employers (see subsection *Working in Antwerp* below).

Jewish men were much more likely to migrate than Jewish women and Gentile men. This can be seen in Figure 6.10. Throughout our period, 26 percent of eligible research persons moved to Antwerp, the neighbouring Berchem and Borgerhout, or another location in Belgium, at least once in their lives.⁹² This includes periods where they, as infants or young adults, moved together with parents active in the diamond industry.

Gentile men born between 1873 and 1882 infrequently departed for Antwerp, despite having lengthy careers with a median of 40 years (Figure 6.4). In contrast, over 40 percent of Jewish men in this cohort migrated. Among Jewish women, this percentage was roughly 20 percent. While the second cohort was the one in which Jewish men and women most frequently left for Antwerp, migration to Antwerp only became more common for Gentiles in the third and fourth cohorts. As we saw, these later cohorts of Gentiles were more directly affected by the 1919 and 1929 crises and therefore in greater need for employment. Unemployment, and subsequent migration to Antwerp as a response, thus varied by ethno-religious background.

Leaving for Antwerp took different forms. Some persons stayed only for a week or two while others met spouses in Antwerp and stayed there for the rest of their lives. Persons with partners either moved together, especially if both worked as diamond workers, or non-diamond working partners and children arrived later if work was secured. For others, like Saul (Paul) de Groot, Antwerp was only a temporary stop as they moved from diamond centre to diamond centre.⁹³ Paul grew up in Amsterdam and Antwerp, learning to cut diamonds in the latter. When he was forced to leave Belgium on the basis of communist political activities in 1923, he left for Hanau am Main where a small German diamond industry was situated. Three years later he would return to Amsterdam. More commonly, however, migrations to Antwerp were short-lived and migrants returned to Amsterdam within three months, often even sooner (Figure 3.4). Each migration to Antwerp, regardless of duration, was registered as a new registration of a foreign arrival in Belgium. These “foreigners’ files” (*vreemdelingendossiers*), kept at the Felix Archive in Antwerp, provide information on the last residence of the migrant, family members travelling with them, and their occupation.⁹⁴ For longer stays in Belgium, records also include information pertaining to employment processes and legal proceedings. I collected and analysed all digitally available foreigners’ files for research persons in our life course sample who departed for Antwerp at least once.⁹⁵ Below follows a discussion of their migration experiences and outcomes.

⁹¹ In 1914, 1000 Jewish workers comprised 15 percent of Antwerp’s diamond industry labour force. Laureys, *Meesters van het Diamant*, 51; Stutje, *De man die de weg wees*, 21–22. Most of the Dutch diamond workers were Jewish, whereas most of the Antwerp workers were Catholic.

⁹² 187 out of 719; eligible here refers to research persons we were able to observe and who became members of the ANDB sometime prior to 1940.

⁹³ Stutje, *De man die de weg wees*, 19–21, 46.

⁹⁴ For a more in-depth discussion of these sources, see Hilde Greefs and Anne Winter, “Alone and Far from Home: Gender and Migration Trajectories of Single Foreign Newcomers to Antwerp, 1850–1880,” *Journal of Urban History* 42.1 (2016): 61–80; and Hilde Greefs and Anne Winter, “The Democratization of Long-Distance Migration: Trajectories and Flows during the ‘Mobility Transition,’ 1850–1910,” *Social Science History* 48.3 (2024): 383–408.

⁹⁵ Due to privacy laws, not all foreigners’ files were available online.

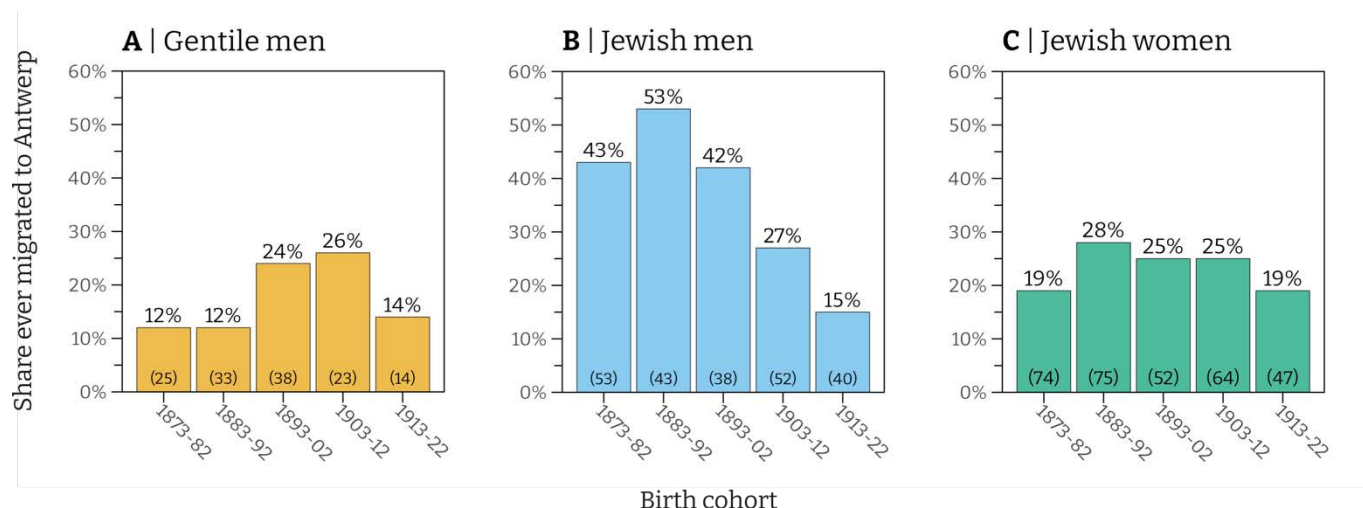


FIGURE 6.10 The share of diamond workers ever moving to Belgium, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious background.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

Note: total number of life courses per group in parentheses at the bottom of each column; shares of persons within a group ever migrating to Antwerp are presented above the columns.

Contact with others

Dutch diamond workers did not appear to have enjoyed moving to Antwerp. If not for the work, few would have stayed in Antwerp. Since contracts were not always agreed upon ahead of time, those who could not find work in Antwerp therefore swiftly moved back to Amsterdam. Jacob (Jacques) Presser, whose father was a diamond worker who moved his family to Antwerp from 1903 until 1907, recalls the opinions his father held towards Antwerpians: "a kind of picturesque, drunken and generally terribly bestial people."⁹⁶ On average, Dutch diamond workers, having received more formal and qualified training, earned higher wages than their Flemish and Eastern European colleagues in Antwerp.⁹⁷ Moreover, Jacques' father Gerrit did not pay any taxes in Antwerp, which further compensated for lowered wages earned and evidently helped in his social upgrading to a small-time employer. Evading taxes was not uncommon among Amsterdam diamond workers in Antwerp,⁹⁸ as evidenced by legal documents showing Isaac Löw (1890–unk.) was fined for not paying his taxes.⁹⁹ According to Henri Polak, avoiding Amsterdam taxes was one of the main incentives to migrate to

⁹⁶ Nanda van der Zee, *Jacques Presser. Het gelijk van de twijfel. Een biografie* (Amsterdam, 1988), 22; Eli d'Oliveira, another son of a diamond worker who moved to Antwerp at the start of the twentieth century, wrote similarly about the tensions between the Dutch and Flemish. Cohen, *De onontkoombare afkomst van Eli d'Oliveira*, 195–202.

⁹⁷ Dutch diamond workers were more skilled than the average Belgian worker. Stamberger, "Dutch Jews and the Dutch Jewish Colony in Antwerp," 143. See also the series of articles titled "Het goedkoope België" published by Henri Polak in the *Weekblad* in 1927 and 1928.

⁹⁸ Janiv Stamberger, "Jewish Migration and the Making of a Belgian Jewry. Immigration, Consolidation, and Transformation of Jewish Life in Belgium before 1940" (PhD diss., University of Antwerp, 2020), 60.

⁹⁹ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 1027#89, "Isaac Low."

Antwerp.¹⁰⁰ Although many Dutch diamond workers shared a Jewish background with their Eastern European colleagues, contact between the groups remained limited.¹⁰¹ Since Dutch Jews no longer spoke Yiddish and had acculturated much more than their Eastern European peers, a significant cultural barrier stood between them. A Dutch-Jewish emigrant in Antwerp lamented how Jews from Eastern Europe and Austro-Hungary increasingly displaced the Dutch-Jewish colony.¹⁰² Consequently, Dutch Jews progressively isolated themselves from the rest of the Jewish population there. Foreigners' files attest to the lack of interaction between the Dutch—predominantly Jewish diamond workers—and the Belgian population. “They primarily interact with compatriots” reads the records of Jansje Baruch (1884-1943) and her husband, Johan Sanders (1905-1940), two Dutch-Jewish diamond workers who arrived in Antwerp in 1927.¹⁰³ Nationalistic disdain was mutual. Joseph Antonius Kouwenberg (1891-unk.), a Gentile diamond worker who moved to Antwerp in 1923, mentions in a court case that his brothers were derogatorily referred to as “cheeseheads” (*kaaskoppen*), leading to a physical brawl.¹⁰⁴ Thus, both Jewish and Gentile diamond workers identified, and were identified as, Dutch. For the Jews this reflects their high degree of identificational integration.

Non-economic reasons for migration

Most migrants moved for economic reasons and commonly returned soon when they could not find work. Overall, 141 of the 179 migrants (78.8%) in Figure 6.10 returned to Amsterdam before 1940. Their economic conditions upon arrival were most astutely described in the case of Joseph Antonius Kouwenberg. Soon after his arrival in 1920, Joseph was arrested for stealing a pullover worth 195 Belgian francs at the *Grand Bazar du Bon Marché*.¹⁰⁵ In his testimony, he stated: “I stole [the sweater] because I am in need and no longer have clothes to put on.”¹⁰⁶ Others also turned to crime, such as Jacob Neeter’s (1886-1942) brother Maurice, who was prosecuted for fraudulent payments using illegitimate currencies in 1921.¹⁰⁷ The Jewish brilliant polisher Elias Querido (1895-1943) had committed crimes in the Netherlands and stayed in Antwerp to avoid a 3-month prison sentence.¹⁰⁸ The Gentile brilliant polisher Hendrik de Vries (1903-1974) had been sentenced to a full year in prison in Amsterdam for theft and fraud but moved to Antwerp before his imprisonment.¹⁰⁹ Others were motivated to stay in Antwerp by intimate relationships they formed after their arrivals. Although most of these led to marriages, several of the diamond workers were reported to have committed adultery. Mozes Hoepelman (1893-1942) was a man who, in particular, committed multiple offenses that were frowned upon by the Belgian authorities.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁰ Henri Polak, *Weekblad* 09-12-1927, “Het goedkoope België III.”

¹⁰¹ Stutje, *De man die de weg wees*, 20-21. Dutch Jews primarily interacted with other Dutch Jews.

¹⁰² Stamberger, “Dutch Jews and the Dutch Jewish Colony in Antwerp,” 144.

¹⁰³ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#192976, 994#1892, and 995#2640, “Jansje Baruch.”

¹⁰⁴ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#174377, “Joseph Antonius Kouwenberg.”

¹⁰⁵ Roughly a week’s wage for diamond workers in Antwerp.

¹⁰⁶ Idem. Among other problems, Joseph is accused of stealing a 1300-franc fur coat in 1939.

¹⁰⁷ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#83230, “Jacques Neeter.”

¹⁰⁸ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#166920 and 968#17498, “Elias Querido.”

¹⁰⁹ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#200261 and 1120#2279, “Hendrik de Vries.”

¹¹⁰ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#174924, 481#174925, and 968#11215, “Mozes Hoepelman.”

Working in Antwerp

Not everyone returned soon after their arrival or had unethical reasons for remaining in Antwerp. While most of the 38 stayers were able to find work in the diamond industry, some started new careers. Emanuel Komkommer (1893-1940) had been a diamond worker in Amsterdam but worked as a door-to-door peddler when he arrived in Antwerp in 1922.¹¹¹ When he returned to Amsterdam a year later, he was able to pick up his work as a diamond worker. Lena Hijman's (1909-1942) husband Mozes was a diamond worker in Amsterdam but worked as a runner in a diamond polishing factory in Antwerp.¹¹² When Rebecca Ritmeester's (1920-2006) father arrived, he intended to work as a diamond worker, but soon after he started a well-paying job as a commercial traveller for a British company selling leather hats.¹¹³ Philip de Vries (1891-1942) also came with aspirations of continuing his work as a diamond worker, but was later listed as a commercial agent for a Dutch furniture company.¹¹⁴ Jacob Neeter was listed as a diamond worker and commercial traveller upon his arrival in Belgium,¹¹⁵ while Leonard Sanders (1904-1943) was listed as a commercial traveller and tailor.¹¹⁶ Louis Kiek's (1891-1971) father came to Antwerp in 1906 as a diamond worker, but when he came a second time in 1926 he was listed as a door-to-door peddler.¹¹⁷ The problematic Mozes Hoepelman started a company with his brother selling bike parts and accessories and perfumes.¹¹⁸ In 1923 he earned 200 francs weekly with this, but in 1927 he is already listed earning 400 francs per week; additionally, he now ran an inn. Thus, numerous former diamond workers were able to temporarily or permanently replace their work in the diamond industry with another occupation abroad, although almost always within trade, an occupational group Amsterdam Jews were already concentrated in.

However, more frequently those who remained in Antwerp for longer than three months did so because they had found work as a diamond worker. Although it had become harder to find this type of work in Amsterdam, and working conditions were, on average, considerably worse, the Antwerp diamond industry—and the trade of diamonds especially—remained rather profitable according to authorities' comments on the records. Jacob Vischshraep (1890-1961), a Jewish brilliant polisher who repeatedly moved between Amsterdam and Antwerp throughout his life, was involved in a legal case after his cousin Hyam scammed him for the value of a watch.¹¹⁹ A description of his father, Leendert, goes: "The man is diamond trader, just like the majority of Jews here, an occupation that is usually quite profitable and for which incomes are hard to estimate. According to his wife's declaration, that he sends her 350 francs per week for upkeep, makes one assume that he is rather wealthy."¹²⁰

Several other former diamond workers were able to make the switch to the diamond trade in Antwerp. David Sousa (1893-1982), a diamond polisher in Amsterdam, was

¹¹¹ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#171329, "Emanuel Komkommer."

¹¹² FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#185829 and 994#2198, "Lea Hijmans."

¹¹³ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#153003, "Rebecca Ritmeester."

¹¹⁴ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#144578, "Philip de Vries."

¹¹⁵ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#83230, "Jacques Neeter."

¹¹⁶ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#225790, 968#20703, and 994#2681, "Leonard Sanders."

¹¹⁷ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#101326 and 1120#2646, "Louis Israel Kiek."

¹¹⁸ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#174924, 481#174925, and 968#11215, "Mozes Hoepelman."

¹¹⁹ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#67403, 481#162168, and 1120#1357, "Jacob Vischshraep."

¹²⁰ Idem.

listed as diamond merchant after he arrived in Antwerp for the first time in 1921. When he returned to Belgium a decade later, he again worked as a diamond polisher.¹²¹ Hartog de Jong (1877–unk.), the son of a Jewish diamond worker, uncharacteristically started his career as a diamond worker at a late age. As a cleaver he worked nearly full-time from 1924 up to 1929 but spent most of his time unemployed from 1930 until 1936. In 1930 he moved to Antwerp where he was listed as a diamond merchant.¹²² Meijer Boutelje (1892–1947), a Jewish brilliant polisher, moved to Antwerp in 1921 and was then listed a “diamond workers’ employer.”¹²³ He married a U.S.-born partner, moved to New York, and returned to Antwerp in 1925 with over 15,000 francs in savings. Nathan Maandag arrived in Antwerp in 1920 as a “merchant and manufacturer in diamonds.”¹²⁴ Later his father, who had also started his career as a brilliant polisher, was listed as a producer of diamonds also and recorded on Nathan’s registration.

Evidently, moving to Antwerp provided a pathway into entrepreneurship that was more accessible than it had been in Amsterdam. One structural explanation is that Antwerp had become more of a trading city than Amsterdam.¹²⁵ Additionally, it also reflects the individual self-selection to move and remain in Antwerp. Having the necessary know-how and capital to invest in diamond entrepreneurship was likely a significant driver for migration to Antwerp among this group. Many others simply worked as diamond workers in Antwerp. Among the research persons in our life course sample who stayed in Antwerp for longer periods, this was by far the most common occupation listed. This was also true for their co-migrating family members.

Throughout the foreigners’ files, numerous diamond employers are listed. This list includes names of Dutch, Flemish, and Eastern European origins: De Vries, Van der Horst, Voselaar, Uit den Bogaard, Rubinstein, Van der Wiecke, Nabarro, Weindling, Pender, Coorinkx, and Abas. However, by far the most commonly listed employer was Van Damme [sic], the Flemish spelling for one of Amsterdam’s largest diamond employers, the Jewish Eduard van Dam (1861–1920). Van Dam had started a diamond factory in Antwerp in 1899 and later expanded this enterprise in the Lamorinièrestraat.¹²⁶ That over half of the diamond workers who found work in Antwerp worked for a Dutch employer is indicative of the relationships between the Dutch and Belgian workers and employers and the importance of Dutch networks. Success as a diamond worker or merchant in Antwerp was heavily contingent on one’s social network there. Those with close ties to others in the industry were able to live and work in Antwerp for long periods. One example is Eva de Vries, a Dutch–Jewish cleaver who was able to earn high wages working for her brother, a diamond merchant, in Antwerp.¹²⁷ The importance of family ties is also observed in the high frequency of co-residing family members in Antwerp. Most of those who arrived as single diamond workers, including many unmarried women, returned soon after their arrivals, lacking the necessary networks to find employment in Antwerp.

¹²¹ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#89141, 481#255789, 968#9981, 968#18827, and 1120#25, “David Sousa.”

¹²² FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 968#22684, “Hartog de Jong.”

¹²³ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#159970, 481#171951, and 995#52, “Meijer Boutelje.”

¹²⁴ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#85070, 481#241811, and 995#2922, “Nathan Maandag.”

¹²⁵ Veerle Vanden Daelen, “In the Port City We Meet? Jewish Migration and Jewish Life in Antwerp During the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries,” *Les Cahiers de La Mémoire Contemporaine* 13 (2018): 66.

¹²⁶ *Weekblad* 21–09–1923, “Jubileum Eduard van Dam.”

¹²⁷ FelixArchief, *Vreemdelingendossiers*, 481#91349 and 968#10373, “Eva de Vries.”

In summary, migration to Antwerp offered some a temporary—and for a small minority, a permanent—solution to the problem of unemployment in the Amsterdam diamond industry. The extent to which this was possible depended on one's connections, skills, and social and financial means. In Antwerp, entry into entrepreneurship in the diamond industry was accessible for a wider population. However, only those with enough capital and who knew the right people could move up within the industry. Those with less capital but with family in Antwerp could use information networks to find work as a diamond worker, or in a lesser number of cases, as a commercial traveller or peddler. Very few of those who had lasting careers in Antwerp worked for Belgian employers, highlighted by the high number of workers at the Van Dam factory and those who worked for family members. The majority of the thousands of diamond workers who moved to Antwerp during the first three decades of the twentieth century did not have this capital, connections, or family relations to work gainfully in Antwerp. They soon took the train back, either attempting to find work in Amsterdam's faltering diamond industry or moving into other occupations.

6.5 Life course mobility

Until now, we have discussed diamond workers' careers during their incumbency in the industry. The union data have allowed us to study this in great detail. However, this data only covers their time in the industry and tells us little about their lives outside of work or their employment prior to or following work in the diamond industry. For this reason, we collected additional information from the Dutch population registers for a subsample of diamond workers. This is the same sample ($N = 800$) for whom complete membership cards were transcribed and have been discussed in this chapter. The additional information from the population registers enables me to study complete career histories, covering both career mobility into and out of the diamond industry. Importantly, using the combination of the union records and population registers allows us to study career mobility even when population registers do not mention employment in the diamond industry. This is a crucial addition to existing studies of career mobility using population registers, since many individuals, predominantly women, frequently had their work underreported.

6.5.1 Life course occupational information

A full description of the life courses is provided in Chapter 1. Here, the occupational information contained in the life courses are discussed. Occupations on the population registers were recorded following life changes and when individuals' information was moved to a new administrative source. Life changes include births, marriages, deaths, and residential moves. On average, individuals experienced these changes frequently. Additionally, new administrative registrations were introduced in 1874, 1893, and 1939 for everyone in Amsterdam. Persons moving from one household to another—for example, a person moving from their parents' household to a new household headed by themselves—were also recorded on a new registration. Thus, individuals' occupations could be reported on many occasions.

Nonetheless, persons were recorded with few occupational changes on average. Moreover, even when multiple occupations were recorded, the same occupational title could be repeated on subsequent registrations. The low number of unique occupational titles is suggestive, but not necessarily evidence, of low levels of career mobility. It is

therefore good to remember that life course analyses are limited to examining *observed* mobility. While few occupational titles should be missing, jobs worked for only brief periods of time may have gone unreported. In some extreme cases, mismatches between *true* and *observed* mobility were egregious, especially for women. One example is Marie Nol-Mulder (1882-1942). Marie was a member of the ANDB for 38 years but was not once recorded with an occupation in the population registers, despite enumerators' numerous opportunities to do so.¹²⁸ Of the 108 Jewish women who, like Marie, had lapidary careers exceeding ten years, 14 were never (legibly) mentioned as a diamond worker in the population registers.¹²⁹ However, we also note that most occupations that were held for considerable lengths were recorded, and missing information about lapidary careers can be added due to our unique combination of sources, leading to more complete work histories.

Our life course data counts 617 persons who (1) worked in the diamond industry prior to 1940, (2) were not Gentile women—this dissertation does not discuss the mobility of Gentile women due to their low share in the diamond industry; (3) had at least one entry of occupational information, and (4) resided in Amsterdam for long enough to be reported with an occupational change. These will be compared with 589 Gentile men in the HSN and 699 Jews from the JDJ¹³⁰ database—including both 'general' Jews and 'non-identifying' Jews—later on. First, we will discuss the life course mobility of diamond workers in more detail. Then, the discussion will shift to a comparison between Jewish and Gentile diamond workers and the general population. Lastly, since women have fewer occupational observations, their experiences are discussed separately.

6.5.2 *Mobility by entering the diamond industry*

All diamond workers sampled were employed in the diamond industry at one point during their life courses. They could, however, have had work histories prior to joining the diamond industry. These persons were mobile by entering the diamond industry. This mobility into the diamond industry could be considerable if persons previously worked in low status occupations. In this case, the diamond industry can be seen as a vehicle for upward mobility and joining the diamond industry could be seen as a priority for job seekers and their parents. Alternatively, prior occupations could be of similar status to that of lapidary professionals. Then, the diamond industry was simply an alternative occupation and less of a priority. Furthermore, if few people had careers prior to joining the diamond industry, then parents prioritised placing their offspring in the diamond industry at young ages. If, instead, many persons had prior work histories, then either the diamond industry was not open to them at earlier points in time, or parents did not prioritise their children to work in this industry.

¹²⁸ Besides omissions on her population register entries, Marie's work also went unreported on her marriage certificate in 1907, despite working full-time in that year, the five years preceding, and the five years following her marriage.

¹²⁹ See Figure E1 in Appendix E for the counts and percentages for each group. Illegible occupational titles can, unfortunately, not be considered. However, the inability to decipher the title was more common among those listed with many occupations on the same registration and rare among those with one or few occupations on a given source. Thus, illegible occupational titles are unlikely to affect trends in career mobility since they disproportionately affect those who would be considered mobile regardless.

¹³⁰ A discussion of this database can be found in Chapter 1.4.

Over a quarter of our sampled diamond workers had at least one occupation prior to joining the diamond industry. Jewish men were most likely to have worked elsewhere before. While Gentiles' decision to join the diamond industry was more dependent on the presence of direct family members in the industry, like parents and siblings, the Jewish men who worked in the diamond industry comparatively joined more frequently without such direct connections. Consequently, Gentile men commonly started their lapidary careers around age 14. In contrast, Jewish men with parents who had never worked in the diamond industry could follow their parents into their careers and consider joining the diamond industry at later points in their lives. For Jews, with stronger social networks in the diamond industry, entering the diamond industry at a later age always remained a prospect. For instance, the aforementioned Simon Weijl (1873–1942) started working as a diamond worker at the age of 46, after a lengthy career as a baker.

Occupations held prior to joining the diamond industry were, in nearly all cases, of considerably lower status than work in the diamond industry (see Figure E2 in Appendix E). Furthermore, although cases of downward mobility into the diamond industry occurred, large downward moves were rare. Jewish men and women and Gentile men hardly differed in the status of the occupations they worked before joining the diamond industry. Yet, the individual occupations differed. Jewish men who worked as unskilled workers before, often worked as peddlers, and in later cohorts increasingly in department stores. We also note more traders and commercial travellers among the Jewish men. Gentile men more often had previous experience as day labourers, plumbers, carpenters or as another (semi-)skilled occupation. Jewish women's work histories included seamstresses, maids, and salespersons. For most, moving to the diamond industry was a significant move upward.

Entry into the diamond industry at later ages became more common in later birth cohorts (i.e. born 1903–1922). This increased mobility through entering the diamond industry after employment elsewhere reflects the worsening conditions in the diamond industry. Parents either did not or could not prioritise placing their children in the diamond industry. For these birth cohorts, the diamond industry was in a recurrent state of crisis when it became time to choose a profession. Widespread unemployment plagued the diamond industry during World War I, from 1919 until 1924, and in the early years of the Great Depression. Thus, these young men and women started their careers in other occupations and switched once the diamond industry welcomed new apprentices or when crises were temporarily suspended.

6.5.3 *Post-entry mobility*

More generally, diamond workers started their lapidary careers between the ages of 14 and 18. Roughly 55 percent of our sampled workers did not have prior work histories. Among them, women are listed with limited mobility rates. Women were frequently reported with only one occupation—as diamond workers—and additional occupations were reported before, rather than after, lengthy careers in the diamond industry. For all groups, most mobility was observed in the middle three cohorts (born 1883–1912), seen in Figure E3 in Appendix E. Global and industry-specific crises affected these cohorts most directly and at younger ages, forcing them to change careers. The oldest generation of Jewish men (born 1873–1882) were also exceptionally mobile. Several of them had worked in careers prior to working in the diamond industry or had shifted occupations soon after starting as lapidaries (see Figure A6.2). In total, nearly one-third of sampled

diamond workers experienced mobility after entering the diamond industry. This varied between 42 percent for both Jewish and Gentile men and 11 percent for Jewish women. Since Jewish women's careers hardly differed in length from Jewish men's careers (Figure 6.4), the duration of their union memberships cannot explain this difference. Instead, women either stopped working, were correctly no longer observed in our life courses, or had occupations that went unreported. The average length of female diamond workers' careers suggests the last option is the most likely.

While most of the mobility into the diamond industry had been upward, mobility out of the diamond industry moved in mixed directions. Gentile men often worked in the same types of occupations that men worked in before entering the diamond industry. Thus, to Gentiles, the diamond industry was an occupation that was considered similar to other (semi-)skilled occupations, despite other occupations paying lower wages than the diamond industry. Gentile men's mobility was therefore nearly always downward in socioeconomic status (panel A in Figure A6.5). The career mobility of Jewish men, in contrast, shows greater diversity. Their average status upon leaving the diamond industry was much closer to working in the diamond industry. Jewish men were more likely to move upward in occupational scores, but upward moves were more marginal than downward moves. Thus, male Jewish diamond workers generally maintained their occupational status. One exception is the middle birth cohort of Jewish men (born 1893–1902). This generation of Jewish men was struck hard by both the 1919 and 1929 crises at early ages. Especially the latter crisis, which was not specific to the diamond industry, complicated starting a new career for young lapidary professionals. This generation of Jewish diamond workers was therefore more likely to end up in lower positions, commonly as department store and warehouse clerks, peddlers, or tailors.

Furthermore, although Jewish women were infrequently registered with another occupation besides diamond worker, the status of these other occupations increased considerably in later birth cohorts. In the nineteenth century, the diamond industry had been one of few occupations that allowed women to attain high socioeconomic positions. In the twentieth century, new occupational opportunities became available to women. Three examples illuminate women's upward career pathways. Judith Kischneider (1905–1943) grew up in a diamond workers' family. In 1924 she became an apprentice sawyer, a rare specialization for women. She became a full ANDB member in 1925 but only remained a member of the union for three years. Judith then worked as an office clerk and later as a typist. Celina Cohen (1909–1944) had a longer career in the diamond industry. After starting her apprenticeship in 1925 she became a full member from 1926 until 1936. When she got married to her Gentile partner in 1929, she was one of the few women recorded with an occupation, correctly listed as diamond worker. In 1938, after their divorce, she moved into her own household, which showed that she now worked as a journalist. Like Judith and Celina, numerous other Jewish women who were born after 1900 and worked in the diamond industry later worked in offices. Eva Peper (1914–2011) took another route. She apprenticed as a brilliant cutter in the *Concentratie II* factory in 1928, joined the union as a full member amidst the Great Depression in 1930, and discontinued her ANDB membership after a year of complete unemployment in 1931. She then became a seamstress, a common occupation among Jewish women. There she climbed the ranks, being reported as a supervisor (*controleur*) in 1939. While upward mobility in these ways was becoming more common for women, they were by no means universal. A majority of our sampled women either only experienced downward mobility

after leaving the diamond industry, predominantly by working in garment manufacturing, or went without a recorded occupation altogether.

Thus, differences between Jewish men and women can predominantly be attributed to differences in their opportunity structures. As women gained more opportunities in the Amsterdam economy, differences between Jewish men and women slowly diminished. Higher rates of downward mobility among Gentile men, when compared with Jewish men, are the result of their selection into the industry and social networks. Gentile men more commonly came from working-class families compared with Jews, whose social backgrounds were more widely spread. Comparable to their respective occupational structures, Jews took up more risky employment in commerce, for instance as traders or commercial travellers, while Gentiles preferred to work as manual workers. While Heertje was correct in stating that crises spurred diamond workers to change careers, the destination of this mobility was not always upward and changed over time.¹³¹ While the occupational structure of Gentile men changed only slowly over time, Jewish men increasingly moved away from commerce and took up more employment in the service sector, for instance by working in department stores, and in other skilled work. Increasing numbers of Jews therefore moved towards positions as wage workers rather than self-employment, historically the more common path for Jews.

6.5.4 Compared with the general population

Comparisons to the general population are needed to check whether the above trends by ethno-religious background and gender were specific to the diamond industry. I therefore compare the mobility of Jewish and Gentile diamond workers to general Jews and Gentiles. Additionally, a comparison to non-identifying Jews is made to see the relation of integration to career mobility.¹³² Since the general population does not benefit from uniquely detailed union administration, I compare the groups in a different way. First, I calculate the total percentage of persons who ever changed occupations or social class. I then split social class mobility into *ever* upward and *ever* downward. Second, to see how these mobility patterns affected people's social status over the life course, I calculate the average occupational score held by persons between the ages of 15 to 24, 25 to 39, and 40 to 54. These ranges reflect early, middle, and late career stages. By weighting for the length of an occupation, I remove the variance introduced by short-term and sporadic occupations. For instance, if a person worked as a diamond worker (occupational score = 63) from 25 to 39, but worked as a peddler (49) for one year during this period, the average score for the middle career stage will be 62.1.¹³³ This also facilitates comparisons between individuals with varying numbers of occupations.

Over their life courses, roughly half of the men changed occupations at least once.¹³⁴ This is slightly higher than the national average in the same period.¹³⁵ Jewish men were

¹³¹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 225. "For former diamond workers, the crises and labour conditions in the diamond industry have been a good bridge that took them to new occupations, notwithstanding the difficulties they had to overcome to 'get in' somewhere."

¹³² Intermarried, unaffiliated, or converted Jews as used Peter Tammes. For a discussion, see Chapter 1.4.

¹³³ $(14 \times 63 + 1 \times 49) / 15 = 62.1$.

¹³⁴ Measured as two unique HISCO codes.

¹³⁵ Ineke Maas and Marco van Leeuwen, "Van een dubbeltje naar een kwartje? Beroepsloopbanen van mannen en vrouwen in Nederland tussen 1865 en 1940," in *Honderdvijftig jaar levenslopen. De Historische Steekproef Nederlandse bevolking*, ed. Ineke Maas, Marco van Leeuwen, and Kees Mandemakers (Amsterdam, 2008), 187–88.

more likely to change their occupations than Gentiles. This was true both within and outside of the diamond industry. Diamond workers changed occupations less frequently than Jews and Gentiles in other careers. Working in the highest-paid skilled occupation in Amsterdam, diamond workers were minimally incentivised to leave their line of work unless upward opportunities presented themselves or crises forced them out. This is consistent with the national picture, which shows that skilled workers were least likely to change occupations.¹³⁶ Compared with skilled workers nationally, diamond workers were, in fact, more likely to change careers, reflecting the push factor of recurrent crises in the diamond industry.

Changing occupations did not always mean changing social classes. While diamond workers changed occupations less than the average Amsterdam resident, when they did change professions, this more often coincided with changes in social classes. 88 percent of Jewish diamond workers who ever changed occupations during their lifetimes, changed social classes, too. This was true for 69 percent of the general Jewish male population.¹³⁷ A similar pattern is observed among Gentiles with 84 and 73 percent, respectively. Furthermore, although general Jews and Gentiles were equally likely to experience upward or downward mobility—both experiencing slightly more upward than downward mobility (see Table E1 in Appendix E)—male Jewish diamond workers experienced significantly more upward mobility than Gentile diamond workers.

Jewish diamond workers rarely changed careers to other skilled occupations. Only a limited number of diamond workers turned to work as tailors, cobblers, or bakers.¹³⁸ Instead, most mobile Jewish diamond workers transitioned to work in commerce and services. In these new positions, diamond workers were more frequently listed with high-status job titles, such as merchant, commercial traveller, or office clerk, rather than the lower status titles of peddler or department store and warehouse clerk. Gentile diamond workers also rarely switched to other skilled work. Instead, they moved to work in commerce or, more commonly, to a wide variety of semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. Career transitions of Jewish diamond workers were therefore more homogeneous than Gentile diamond workers' transitions. Due to their limited number of occupations reported, women in the diamond industry were less often observed with an occupational change. Nonetheless, when these changes were observed, roughly the same share of occupational changes were upward and downward as was true for general Jewish women.

6.5.5 *Life course mobility*

We can gather the impact of these career changes on life course status by examining groups' average occupational status in different career stages. Did Jews' greater rates of upward class mobility lead to significantly higher occupational statuses in later careers? The short answer is no. Only half of the men observed in our life courses changed occupations at least once during their lifetimes, and even fewer changed social classes. Occupational statuses of persons therefore hardly changed. Instead, the differences in status between Jews and Gentiles were already pronounced at the start of their careers.

¹³⁶ Maas and Van Leeuwen, "Van een dubbeltje naar een kwartje?," 187–88.

¹³⁷ Statistically lower than Jewish diamond workers with $p < 0.10$ (p -value = 0.07).

¹³⁸ Nine Jewish diamond workers had worked in skilled occupations before joining the diamond industry; only five worked skilled occupations after leaving the diamond industry.

Since Jewish and Gentile diamond workers had similar early careers (ages 15–24), they started with near-identical early career statuses. Jewish men outside of the diamond industry had significantly higher positions than Gentile men.¹³⁹ This was especially true for non-identifying Jewish men, who started their careers with statuses similar to those of Jewish diamond workers. Jews had seen tremendous social upgrading in the final decades of the nineteenth century (Chapter 2), largely as a result of continued intergenerational upward mobility (Chapter 4). In other words, more Jewish sons started their careers in higher positions than their fathers when compared with Gentiles. Consequently, by the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish sons started their careers with higher occupational statuses than their Gentile peers.

As is commonly seen in life course studies, occupational scores rise as people reach the mid-career stage (ages 24–39).¹⁴⁰ Persons either attained enough experience to gain a promotion—for instance from worker to supervisor—or changed careers when conditions were favourable. We indeed observe a small increase in social status for each group going from the early to the mid-career stage (see Table E1 in Appendix E). Within birth cohorts, small deviations are observed. For instance, the third cohort (1893–1902) of Jewish men in the diamond industry saw a large decrease in status, as was discussed earlier (Section 6.5.3). We also note large increases for general Jews in the second birth cohort (1883–1892). In this cohort, both Jewish and Gentile men started their careers with remarkably low positions. For Jews, this can largely be explained by the diamond industry filling up, leading to an apprenticeship halt in 1897.¹⁴¹ Few other skilled manual options were open to them, while office work was not as common as it would become for future cohorts. Consequently, more Jews in this cohort turned to work as peddlers, cigar makers, or in other low-status positions. However, they were able to improve their status with age and experience. For instance, Meijer Bartels (1888–1943) started his career as a market vendor, became a merchant, and later operated his own store. Andries Blits (1890–1942) worked as a book merchants’ assistant, became a book merchant himself, and later worked as an attorney and publisher. Several others saw similar, consistent gains in their occupational status despite lower career starts.

After a peak in the mid-career, most cohorts show a small decline going into the late-career stage (40–54). These declines were small on average and slightly higher for the diamond workers, albeit minimally. Overall, however, life course status was rather stable, and no differences are observed between Jews and Gentiles as they moved across the life course. Diamond workers showed more variance in their life courses, some having long, constant careers in the diamond industry; others changing their careers both upward and downward. Gentiles showed more variation in the types of occupations they held, as Jews concentrated in a smaller number of professions. On average, however, their social status trajectories hardly differed throughout the life course.

Did integrated, ‘non-identifying’ Jews achieve more career mobility than the general Jewish population? This does not appear to be the case. In the two earliest cohorts (born 1873–1882 and 1883–1892), non-identifying Jewish men started their careers in higher positions than regular Jews, with occupational scores similar to those of diamond

¹³⁹ See Table E1 in Appendix E.

¹⁴⁰ Maas and Van Leeuwen, “Van een dubbeltje naar een kwartje?,” 188; Wiebke Schulz, “Careers of Men and Women in the 19th and 20th Centuries” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2013), 76–77.

¹⁴¹ In the first cohort of general Jewish men, 22.4 percent worked as diamond workers before the age of 25 (and 34.7 percent before 30). In the second cohort, this had dropped to 14.0 percent (18.6 percent).

workers. While they saw growth in their status over time, this exhibited the same upward pattern as general Jews. Furthermore, non-identifying men of the third and fourth birth cohorts (1893–1902 and 1903–1912) started and ended their careers at similar positions as general Jewish men. Integration had become more widespread and was no longer limited to middle- and upper-class Jews. Consequently, in twentieth-century Amsterdam, integration did not appear to affect the career outcomes of Jewish men; although this may have been different for Jews in elite positions.

6.5.6 *The changing occupational position of Jewish women*

For women, working in the diamond industry led to a significantly higher social status than obtained by the average Jewish woman. While few women were observed with a change in their occupations across the life course, across cohorts Jewish women saw much larger changes in their average starting position when compared to Jewish men. In the first cohort, Jewish women had an average early career status of 48.7, rising to 56.4 for the fourth cohort. These women were also able to maintain their higher status positions over the life course.

How did women's starting positions change so drastically across subsequent cohorts? A careful examination shows that the changing occupational structure of Jewish women was at the core of this change. In the first two birth cohorts (1873–1882 and 1883–1892), Jewish women predominantly worked in one of two occupations: more than three-fourths of women worked as domestic servants or as ('costume') seamstresses. In the second cohort we find only one woman who started her career in an office. Henriette Nerden (1888–1943) worked as an office clerk and would later work as an accountant. The third cohort of Jewish women was significantly different from the first two. Notably fewer women worked as domestic help, among seamstresses we see a switch from specializing in 'costumes' to underwear—suggesting adaptation to the market—and more women worked in shops and department stores as assistants or saleswomen. Moreover, now three women, 10 percent, started their careers as office clerks. In the fourth cohort, not a single woman started their career in domestic service. Instead, more Jewish women worked in department stores like *de Bijenkorf*, seamstresses moved to the ready-to-wear garment production, 11 women (30 percent) started as office clerks, and one worked as a typist. Like we observed for Jewish men, Jewish women decreasingly worked in unskilled work at the start of their careers, increasingly moving to work in sales and services. An important difference between Jewish men and women is the strong attachment to work in tailoring and clothing production. In contrast to employment in the diamond industry, work as a seamstress was more stable and required fewer career changes over time.

Why did women's occupations change so drastically? Education was undoubtedly a factor. As Chapter 8 shows, Jewish men had higher levels of educational attainment than Gentiles with similar social class backgrounds. The growth in the number of women working as saleswomen and office clerks suggests Jewish women saw comparable growth in their schooling. National census data attests this: Jewish women were more overrepresented among university graduates than Jewish men were in 1930.¹⁴² In the fourth cohort, 30 percent of Jewish women started their careers working in offices. The

¹⁴² Educational census of 1930.

growing number of Jewish employers was another factor. Jewish-owned department stores and shops allowed for more Jewish men and women to take up positions in these establishments. Similarly, the growing share of Jewish employers in the production of clothing helped women to continue working as seamstresses while production shifted to newer outputs. Once women attained these positions early in their careers, they saw little changes over time. Starting positions were therefore of utmost importance.

Among non-identifying Jewish women, we observe a similar but slightly different trend. This is because the selection into the group 'non-identifying' changes. In the first cohort, non-identification was limited to people with higher status backgrounds.¹⁴³ We therefore observe several women in this cohort who started their careers in high positions. These women predominantly worked as teachers or as governesses. Helena Catherina Posthumus (1876–unk.) even became the head of a school later in life. Over time, the non-identifying group started including more men and women from working and middle-class backgrounds. Consequently, fewer of these women worked in elite positions. Simultaneously, they experienced the same increases as the average Jewish woman. Thus, non-identifying Jewish women experienced similar patterns of life course mobility to general Jewish women, although several non-identifying women were in exceptional positions for upward mobility.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an in-depth examination of diamond workers' careers, contrasting Jews and Gentiles in the industry as well as their peers in alternative fields. Large jumps in social status were uncommon in this industry. The long and costly apprenticeships discouraged workers to switch positions in the hierarchy, and the industry's reverse funnel shape—numerous workers but only a small group of traders and factory owners—limited entrepreneurial opportunities. Meanwhile, diamond workers often faced periods of unemployment during crises or idle periods. While some have claimed that diamond workers typically had a second trade to fall back on, this was more likely a series of odd jobs, such as peddling, if receiving benefits was not an option. For most of these lapidary workers, maintaining stable employment in the diamond industry therefore remained ideal. Nearly half were able to achieve this. The other either found new careers voluntarily or were forced to do so, generally during crises, when job options were scarce and competition was high. Despite these unfavourable circumstances, most career switchers secured positions close in status to their former employment and commonly within their social networks of co-ethnics. Most Jewish diamond workers, contrary to Leydesdorff's suggestion,¹⁴⁴ did not fall into the Jewish 'proletariat' but instead maintained their status. The impact of the union, which had made workers more confident and had spurred self-development, cannot be underestimated here.

Clear differences between Jews and Gentiles emerged during their career mobility. Jewish diamond workers entered the industry more frequently without direct family members and more often transitioned from other work. Jews also specialised in larger

¹⁴³ Van der Veen illustrates that newcomers among the broader Jewish elite were less likely to be religiously disaffiliated than those who came from higher social backgrounds. Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 133–34.

¹⁴⁴ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 102–3, 236–38.

diamonds, which faced greater instability due to changing consumption patterns during crises. Consequently, large crises saw more Jewish diamond workers depart until the late 1920s, leading Jewish diamond workers to switch careers more often than Gentiles. Ethno-religious differences in social networks influenced career paths: Jewish workers more frequently pursued trade, while Gentiles turned to (semi-)skilled labour. This disparity underscores the unique role of diamond work as an important ethnic niche for Jewish workers, while for Gentiles, it functioned as just one of various options for skilled workers. Attached to their niche, Jews also migrated to Antwerp more often in hopes to continue their lapidary careers or become a diamond trader. However, similar to finding new work in Amsterdam, success as either a diamond worker or trader in Antwerp was strongly contingent on social networks. Migrants who moved together with family or had family already lived in Antwerp had much greater chances to find stable employment across the border. Dutch Jews rarely interacted with the local community or the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, largely due to language and cultural barriers. With the exception of a number of Amsterdam-Antwerp partnerships that formed, Dutch Jews connected and worked with or for other Dutch Jews. Although many returned to Amsterdam shortly after arrival, a noticeable group was able to use migration to Antwerp as a stepping stone to further or sustain their careers.

For the approximately half of Jewish diamond workers who found new careers, the timing of their exit strongly correlated with their degree of integration later in life. Jews who started but never completed apprenticeships were more than twice as likely to marry a Gentile partner or officially disaffiliate from Judaism than those who remained or returned to the industry by 1941. The impact of limited exposure to Gentiles, discussed in the previous chapter, is evident here. Yet, despite more advanced integration, Jews who left the diamond industry earlier in life did not experience more upward mobility. Instead, they were more likely to work in semi-skilled labour and less likely to advance to the social class of higher professionals and managers. This suggests once more that social mobility and integration did not necessarily cause one another, but were two distinct processes that could occur independently.

In contrast to Gentile career-switchers, Jewish diamond workers were less likely to experience downward mobility. However, for both groups, occupational status remained stable over the life course—for Gentiles by staying in the diamond industry, for Jews by finding careers of similar status. Similar trends were seen in the overall population. Jews generally started their careers with higher statuses than Gentiles but neither group saw large increases over time. Thus, while most gains in status were obtained inter-generationally, Jews' higher positions in society were maintained throughout their lives. Working in the diamond industry similarly seems to have conferred high status early in one's career, which persisted over time. Moreover, limited life course mobility made starting in the diamond industry all the more important, especially for women. Jewish women who started their careers in the diamond industry continued to have a higher social status during their lifetimes than women in other careers. Among general Jewish women, we see stark improvements in their career starting positions. Like Jewish men, Jewish women saw a considerable restructuring of their occupational structure, increasingly including white-collar work as typists, office clerks, and journalists. This was explained through changes in Amsterdam's economy, increasing shares of Jewish employers, and Jews' high educational attainment. Working in the diamond industry was an important element in this also, as it offered thousands of women a better alternative than working as seamstresses or domestic servants, providing social mobility oppor-

tunities for women earlier and more quickly. Yet, crises in the industry were generally more impactful for women than men, since men had a greater number of opportunities to maintain their status. The degree of women's downward mobility is, however, hard to measure. The administration of the diamond workers' union was unique in the detail of work histories it provides for women and requires additional study in the future.

Ultimately, the minimal changes in career status over the life course suggest that the Jewish community's social ascent was a gradual, generational process. Extreme success stories, such as that of Henri Polak—who rose from diamond worker to union president and senator—were rare. Instead, most workers maintained the status and living conditions they achieved as union members, with improvement occurring primarily intergenerationally, as discussed in Chapter 4 and explored further in Chapter 8. While career mobility, as measured through occupations and occupational scores, showed limited advancement, residential changes—such as moves to more esteemed neighborhoods—offered another avenue of upward mobility. The next chapter will examine how Jews' evolving residential choices reflected social mobility and integration.

7

From Rough to Polished Neighbourhoods? Residential Mobility and Spatial Integration

“In my youth I saw the slums of Marken and Uilenburg; I consider myself lucky to witness the spacious houses in the Transvaalbuurt in my older years.”

— Abraham Vaz Dias¹

7.1 Introduction

Perhaps the strongest indication of Jews' upward social mobility and increased integration can be seen in their widespread residential moves since the second half of the nineteenth century. As the city of Amsterdam expanded to fight overcrowding,² Jews relocated to newer and more sanitary and spacious newly-built housing. In doing so, they increasingly departed from the original Jewish centre. This created new Jewish and mixed, non-denominational streets and neighbourhoods. When, where, and why Jews moved to these types of neighbourhoods is essential in understanding their social trajectories throughout Amsterdam's history.

Thus far, the place of residence has been mentioned several times throughout this dissertation in our discussions of social mobility and integration. Residential mobility is perhaps one of the most visible expressions of *both* social mobility and integration. It has also been a topic that was among the easiest to measure in the first half of the twentieth century.³ Many strands of sociological research related to integration and assimilation have addressed residential choices and clustering.⁴ This literature has examined both the segregation of groups, measured in cross sections—aggregated and at different points in time—and the individual mobility of a person to and from one street, neighbourhood or city to another. For instance, the successive moves of American Jews from neighbourhood to neighbourhood were discussed in Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto*. There, he describes the desire of Jewish immigrants and their children to break free from the old ghetto and leave for a new “Jewish area of [s]ettlement, neighborhood[s] with a

¹ Abraham Vaz Dias, “Het Amsterdamse Jodenkwartier,” in *Gedenkschrift van Het Bouwfonds Handwerkers Vriendenkring* (Amsterdam, 1937), 15–40. Abraham (1876–1939) was the son of a Jewish shopkeeper in tobacco and cigars. He operated a tobacco factory and became well-known in the Jewish community as the treasurer for the Handwerkers Vriendenkring. Abraham wrote articles for the periodicals of the Handwerkers Vriendenkring and the weekly *De Vrijdagavond*; common topics included the history of the diamond industry and of Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam. For more about his life and work, see Lydia Sijes-Hagoort, “Leven en werk van A.M. Vaz Dias,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 29.2 (1995): 170–89.

² Michael Wagenaar, *Amsterdam 1876–1914: economisch herstel, ruimtelijke expansie en de veranderende ordening van het stedelijk grondgebruik* (Amsterdam, 1990).

³ Wirth, *The Ghetto*.

⁴ For an overview, see Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, “The Dimensions of Residential Segregation,” *Social Forces* 67.2 (1988): 281–315.

new complexion, unmistakably Jewish, though not quite as genuine as that of the ghetto itself.”⁵ These ideas were adopted by later theorists and, although ignored by Gordon’s classical assimilation theory,⁶ incorporated in modern and segmented assimilation theory,⁷ as well as the discussion on ethnic enclaves.⁸ For instance, Alba and Nee discussed residential mobility as a form of boundary blurring. In this sense, segregation created a boundary for the interactions between Jews and Gentiles. According to these authors, the biggest impact on residential desegregation has been the suburbanization of ethnics.⁹ Theoretically, it is important to distinguish between the impact of residential moves on integration and on social mobility as two separate processes. Massey and Denton, who discussed various aspects of residential segregation, believed that evenness—how evenly neighbourhoods were distributed across social or ethno-religious groups—was the most important aspect.¹⁰ They hypothesised a direct relationship between such spatial assimilation and socioeconomic mobility.¹¹ Whether this was the case in Amsterdam will be one element examined in the current chapter.

Within the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 1, moving to new areas of residence means changing, or expanding, social networks and potentially one’s opportunity structure. Moving neighbourhoods can therefore fuel integration, by moving closer to non-co-ethnics, or social mobility, by increasing one’s proximity to higher social classes. Either can be considered as forms of capital or resources to be used along integration and social mobility processes. However, relocating can also be the *outcome* of integration or social mobility. In that sense, a person’s current residence reflects previous or current levels of resources, whereas a change impacts future resources.

In this chapter we will look at the changing residential ‘settlements’ of Amsterdam Jews between 1859 and 1941. Between their emancipation in 1796 and 1859, few changes occurred in Jews’ housing patterns.¹² Only the wealthiest and most acculturated Jews were able to move away from the Jewish Quarter—albeit from the highest-quality housing in the area—or had never lived there in the first place.¹³ By 1941, however, also working and middle-class Jews were invariably more dispersed across the city than their ancestors one century earlier.¹⁴ Three main factors were at play here: the socioeconomic upgrading of Amsterdam Jews (discussed in Chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8), Jews’ growing integration (Chapters 2, 5, and 6), and the increasing availability of housing across the city.¹⁵

⁵ Louis Wirth, “The Ghetto,” in *On Cities and Social Life*, ed. Louis Wirth and Albert Reiss (Chicago, 1927), 94, 96–97.

⁶ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 29.

⁷ Min Zhou, “Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation,” *International Migration Review* 31.4 (1997): 975–1008; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 248–60.

⁸ Light and Gold, *Ethnic Economies*, 184–87.

⁹ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 84–85.

¹⁰ Massey and Denton, “The Dimensions of Residential Segregation,” 283–84, 307.

¹¹ Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, “Spatial Assimilation as a Socioeconomic Outcome,” *American Sociological Review* 50.1 (1985): 94–106.

¹² Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, “Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940.”

¹³ Jacqueline Vijgen, “Joden in Amsterdam. Assimilatie en segregatie van een etnische minderheid 1600–1933” (M.A. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1983), 63.

¹⁴ Tammes, “Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam.”

¹⁵ Henk Laloli, “Beter wonen: woningmarkt en residentiële segregatie in Amsterdam 1850–1940,” in *Twee eeuwen Nederland geteld: onderzoek met de digitale Volks-, Beroeps-, en Woningtellingen 1795–2001*, ed. Otto

The choice of residence was a multifaceted decision and both a cause and a consequence of social mobility and integration. It is also a story of inter- and intragenerational mobility. For Jews who left the Jewish Quarter willingly, relocation was often motivated by a search for better housing, which was in short supply in Jews' residential areas. In other cases, Jews moved as a deliberate expression of their desire to integrate, to pursue improved work opportunities, or as an attempt to evade social control from their tight-knit community. Some listed disagreements with the local Jewish community regarding observance of traditions,¹⁶ suggestive of the relation between integration and housing decisions. Those forced to leave when the Jewish Quarter was partially destroyed since 1916 listed numerous reasons for wanting to remain. Reasons included livelihoods tied to the neighbourhood (e.g. shopkeepers), habit, and old age.¹⁷ For them, their move to better housing with fewer coethnic neighbourhoods was neither an expression of integration nor social mobility. Yet, it signalled possible advancements in both for the future. While intentions are impossible to measure completely, a new approach, combining continuous life course information on residential moves with dynamic information regarding the ethno-religious composition and social class status of origin and destination neighbourhoods, can approach intentions as closely as possible.

Several previous studies have examined Amsterdam Jews' historical residential patterns. For instance, Vijgen and collaborators, Ultee and Luijkx, and later Tammes, have each discussed the process of desegregation starting in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ They found that residential segregation was declining from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. However, from 1930 up to 1941, Tammes identified an increase in the segregation.¹⁹ He suggests this was the result of Jews' residential moves towards the same neighbourhoods.²⁰ However, this result is based on data limited to religiously affiliated Jews, thus ignoring the increasing share of non-identifying Jews. As the author shows, non-identifying Jews lived predominantly in richer, more mixed neighbourhoods in Amsterdam Southwest.²¹ Tammes' discussion also ignores the impact of Gentiles' moves on segregation indices. As I will discuss further down this chapter, much of this pattern can be explained by Gentile out-migration from districts where Jews were arriving. We should therefore interpret past findings with care and discuss how the classification of Jews can impact the discussion of residential segregation and mobility.

The current chapter will not address segregation directly, instead it will focus on locations and moves. However, this chapter does add several new dimensions to the literature. One, I follow individuals over time using life course data, rather than study

Boonstra, Peter Doorn, and René van Horik (The Hague, 2007), 153–79; For a general discussion on housing availability and ethnic segregation, see Scott South and Kyle Crowder, "Leaving the 'Hood: Residential Mobility between Black, White, and Integrated Neighborhoods," *American Sociological Review*, 1998, 17–26.

¹⁶ Interview of Hartog Goubitz in Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 165–66.

¹⁷ Mandy Hakker, "De sanering van de Amsterdamse Jodenbuurt 1900–1940" (M.A. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2015), 40; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 120.

¹⁸ Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, "Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940"; Ultee and Luijkx, "Jewish-Gentile Inter-marriage in Six European Cities"; Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam."

¹⁹ Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam."

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 252–53.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

aggregations of Jews at different points in time. This allows me to not only say where Jews lived, but also specify where they lived before and examine related changes in characteristics. This is especially important if we want to consider *who* is moving and *why* they moved. Jewish diamond workers, for instance, have repeatedly been noted as the pioneers in residential mobility.²²

Two, this life course information starts in 1873 with the births of our first research persons. While aggregated sources have been able to offer the long-term change in residential distribution of Jews, for initial waves of desegregation it has only been possible to use information for 1851, 1859, and 1906.²³ It is during this 50-year period that not only the first, but also the second and possibly third waves of Jews left the Jewish Quarter. With detailed residential information starting in 1873, we can address the timing of these moves in part.

Previous studies have limited their scope to the share of co-ethnics in the neighbourhood. Thus, it has been a story of integration and ethno-religious (de)segregation, and not of social mobility. However, these stories were interrelated. Jews' moves were motivated by both assimilatory *and* socioeconomic reasons. To disentangle this, I classify neighbourhoods by both their share of Jews *and* a wealth proxy of the neighbourhood.²⁴ By combining individual-level information of movers with the characteristics of the neighbourhood, we can attempt to clarify the motivations for moving from one to another neighbourhood.

This chapter will first give a background on what should be considered a 'Jewish' or 'mixed neighbourhood.' Then, after discussing the data and sources used, I will describe the main 'mixed' and 'Jewish' Amsterdam neighbourhoods and examine how they evolved over time. This is combined with a discussion of the average wealth or status associated with those neighbourhoods. Then, having provided the needed background to understand the Amsterdam casus, we turn to a descriptive overview of Jewish diamond workers residential mobility patterns over time. Using ANDB administration data and information on factories, I will examine the location of diamond workers in 1898. Following, I will examine flows between residences at the end of each decade. That is, current residence in the years 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940.

7.2 Jewish Neighbourhoods and Jews' Residential Spread

From their settlement until roughly 1860, virtually all Jews resided in or adjacent to the 'Jewish Quarter.'²⁵ This 'Quarter' consisted of a number of distinct Jewish neighbourhoods and streets. While this district was increasingly referred to as a 'Jewish Ghetto' since the end of the nineteenth century—influenced by nostalgia and international romantic Ghetto literature²⁶—living in this district was not mandatory or enforced,

²² Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 122; Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 176.

²³ These are estimations of the entire population by religious affiliation in 1851 and 1859 and one contrasting between Jews and Gentiles in 1906. Van Zanten, "Eenige demografische gegevens over de joden te Amsterdam"; Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, "Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940"; Tammes, "Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam."

²⁴ Earlier work has employed similar methods in Amsterdam, but have not incorporated the share of Jews in the districts. De Vries, *Electoraat en elite*; Van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity*.

²⁵ In 1859, 65 percent of Jews lived in the 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter comprising districts C, P, Q, S, and R. An additional 27 percent lived in the contiguous Plantage and Weesper, in later times also considered part of the Jewish Quarter. Together this totals 92 percent of the Jewish community.

²⁶ For the Dutch context, see Herman Heijermans, *Ghetto* (Amsterdam, 1898).

making Ghetto an ill-suited label.²⁷ Although some elites departed from the Jewish Quarter after political emancipation in 1796, the first waves of non-elite Jews only moved out of the Jewish Quarter starting in the 1860s. Population expansion in the already crowded Jewish districts pushed many of them to find new homes in other neighbourhoods. Between 1859 and 1889, the number of Jews in Amsterdam doubled from 26,275 to 54,479 as a consequence of immigration from the provinces and natural population growth.²⁸ Meanwhile, the number of available houses in the already overpopulated Jewish Quarter remained the same.²⁹ As a result of Jews' exodus from the Jewish Quarter to new neighbourhoods across Amsterdam, several newer neighbourhoods became known as 'Jewish neighbourhoods.' How were these neighbourhoods defined by contemporaries and historians?

In 1924, the Jewish politician and demographer Emanuel Boekman discussed this very question in two articles published in *De Vrijdagavond* ['The Friday Evening'], a literary newsletter for the Jewish middle class.³⁰ In these articles, Boekman defined the five neighbourhoods with over 80 percent Jewish residents as 'Jewish neighbourhoods.'³¹ Mixed neighbourhoods, he wrote, were more complex, often containing both streets that were almost completely Jewish, as well as streets where no Jews lived. Boekman offered the example of the *Weesperzijde*, a late-nineteenth-century neighbourhood to the Southeast of the Jewish Quarter. There, the streets Swammerdamstraat, Blasiusstraat, and Ruyschstraat counted over 90 percent Jewish residents, but surrounding streets were much less Jewish.³² Residential clustering was therefore happening at two levels: the neighbourhood level, and within neighbourhoods at the street level.

Boekman essentially classified two types of neighbourhoods. One where Jews were 'concentrated' in the entire neighbourhood, and another where Jews clustered in one or multiple segments of the neighbourhood. Siegfried van Praag, the son of a Jewish diamond worker, a writer, and a contemporary of Boekman, used an apt analogy for this distinction. In *De oude Darsjan* ('The Old Preacher'³³), Van Praag distinguished between the *Jodenbuurt* ('Jewish Quarter'), and a *Joodse buurt* ('Jewish neighbourhood'), by comparing them to the human body.³⁴ The Jewish Quarter formed the spine of Jews' residences, while Jewish neighbourhoods functioned as the ribs of the body. In the spine, Jews were the main actors and constituted the dominant culture. In the ribs, Jewish culture was not always and everywhere universal. Although Van Praag referred to culture as a defining feature, a neighbourhood became Jewish through the share of Jews in the neighbourhood: "a Jewish neighbourhood is always only partially a Jewish neighbourhood. It is simply a neighbourhood where many Jews live."³⁵ Similarly, Boekman assumed that greater shares of Jews in a neighbourhood created a stronger

²⁷ Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto*, 7.

²⁸ See Chapter 2 or Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 23–24.

²⁹ Statistical Yearbook of Amsterdam 1900, Table XVI.

³⁰ Emanuel Boekman, "De verdwijning van het Amsterdamsche Ghetto," *De Vrijdagavond* 1.21 (1924): 324–26.

³¹ Emanuel Boekman, "Oude en nieuwe jodenbuurten te Amsterdam," *De Vrijdagavond* 1.22 (1924): 349–50.

³² In 1906, Weesperzijde belonged to district 'ZZ,' where 6.3 percent of residents were Jewish. In 1920, Weesperzijde was its own district. Then, 43 percent of residents were Jewish. In 1941, Jews comprised 46 percent of the district.

³³ *Darsjan* in Dutch-Yiddish referred to a preacher or interpreter of religious scripts.

³⁴ Siegfried van Praag, *De oude darsjan. Over Jodenbuurten en Joodse buurten*. (The Hague, 1971), 9.

³⁵ Idem.

'Jewish character' in the area.³⁶ Areas with large numbers of Jews were "complete Jewish neighbourhoods."³⁷ Van Velzen and Hendriks, charting Jewish areas and neighbourhoods in Amsterdam, followed the definitions of Boekman and Van Praag. They named the collective of the Jewish Quarter and the Jewish neighbourhoods "Jewish Amsterdam."³⁸

While both Boekman and Van Praag suggested population shares made neighbourhoods Jewish, neither offered a threshold for what should be considered a 'Jewish' neighbourhood, and at what point a neighbourhood is considered 'Mixed.' Moreover, while both used the term 'Jewish Quarter,' neither addressed the changing borders of this geographic area as the city expanded. Jaap Meijer, for instance, who referred to the Jewish Quarter as 'the Ghetto,' called new neighbourhoods in the east and the south of the city "Ghetto-East" and "Ghetto-South."³⁹ Leydesdorff argued that as the Jewish Quarter expanded, people no longer knew how to refer to it in positive terms, only in the negative, i.e. that what was *not* the Jewish Quarter. "Nobody knew where the Jewish Quarter *really* began... The association was always that many Jews lived there" (emphasis mine).⁴⁰ In terms of scope, Leydesdorff's own depiction of Jewish settlement areas was also too narrow: Amsterdam South, where 40 percent of Jews lived by 1940, is hardly addressed in her work, thereby underrating the degree of upward residential mobility. Additional problems come from municipal delineations that changed over time. The 'Jewish Quarter' initially comprised only the 'old Jewish core' around Vlooienburg, Uilenburg, Valkenburg, and the Waterlooplein and Jonas Daniël Meijerplein. These are shown in Map 7.1. Later, it also encompassed parts of Plantage and the *Oostelijke Eilanden* ('Eastern Islands') denoted by 'U' and 'T' (the latter on Map 7.2). While municipal records rarely include Weesperbuurt in the 'Jewish Quarter,' contemporaries and researchers have.⁴¹ Thus, over time, the concept of the 'Jewish Quarter' broadened to include other neighbourhoods as Jews progressively spread to other areas.

To avoid confusion, I will contrast between a *Jewish neighbourhood*, a district with a high percentage of Jews, and the *Jewish Quarter*, the combination of districts that comprise the original settlement area of Jews. I will use the term 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter to refer to districts C, P, Q, R, and S (Map 7.1).

7.3 Data and Sources

In accordance with the above discussion, this chapter will examine three aspects of the neighbourhood in which Jews, Gentiles, and diamond workers resided: (i) the area of the neighbourhood (i.e. Amsterdam East or South), (ii) the share of Jews in the neighbourhood, and (iii) the social standing of the neighbourhood. Using neighbourhood-level statistics wherever possible, I am able to reconstitute evolutions in Amsterdam city over time with regards to the last two categories.

³⁶ Boekman, "Oude en nieuwe jodenbuurten," 349–50.

³⁷ Ibid., 350.

³⁸ Ariane Hendriks and Jaap van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein. Nieuwe en oude joodse buurten in Amsterdam 1900–1944* (Amsterdam, 2004), 161.

³⁹ Jaap Meijer, *Het Jonas Daniël Meijerplein. Bezinning op drie eeuwen Amsterdams Jodendom*. (Amsterdam, 1961), 24.

⁴⁰ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 166.

⁴¹ Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto*, 131; Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 77.



MAP 7.1 A map of 'Jewish Amsterdam' ca. 1869.

Source: Amsterdam City Archive, 10035 #1155, produced by Schadd, K.H., Tresling and Co.

Note: scale 1:10,500. The yellow asterisk denotes the Nieuwmarkt in the city centre.

7.3.1 *The areas of residence*

For the purpose of this chapter, I distinguish between five parts of Amsterdam. First is the 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter. This consists of administrative districts C, P, Q, S, and R. These districts were the original settlement area of Amsterdam Jews and continued to be the main area of residence until the beginning of the twentieth century. The second area is Plantage/Weesper, containing the neighbouring districts Weesperbuurt and Plantage. In the last half of the nineteenth century, this became an important hub for Jews. The area is sometimes included in the definition of the 'Jewish Quarter,' but for descriptive purposes I separate the two entities. The Jewish Quarter and Plantage/Weesper are both located within the old city walls of Amsterdam. The third area is Amsterdam East. This includes some of the first expansions outside of the old city walls on the eastern side of the city. Districts included are the Oosterparkbuurt, Weesperzijde, and Transvaalbuurt, as well as areas where fewer Jews resided, such as the Dapperbuurt. Amsterdam South is the fourth area. Initially, this primarily contained De Pijp, also built outside of the old city walls, but later on new expansions further south—the Rivierenbuurt—and to the west—Concertgebouwbouwt—are included. The rest of the city is considered 'Other.' The lacking presence of Jews in these areas make it unnecessary to make further geographical distinctions.

7.3.2 The share of Jews

The share of Jews in a neighbourhood, or the religious affiliation of residents of a neighbourhood, are only reported at certain points in time. First estimates including the entire city and reporting district-level information originate from 1795.⁴² Virtually all Jews then lived in the ‘old Jewish Quarter.’ The introduction of population registers in 1849 added new information. They enabled new estimates for the share of Jews in ca. 1851.⁴³ In 1859, an overview was presented for the number of residents in a neighbourhood by religious affiliation. Although the quality of the total enumeration of this source has been questioned,⁴⁴ it does not appear to be biased in favour or against Jews. We can therefore use it as a starting point for the share of Jews by neighbourhood. I skip 1851 since it is too similar to 1859 and is further away from the next year for which we have information.

Since there were few neighbourhood-level counts by religion, the next available source dates to 1906. Van Zanten collected information from the population registers and reconstructed the share of Jews for each neighbourhood.⁴⁵ More formal enumerations were added in 1920 (by religion), 1930 (by religion), and 1941 (share of Jews).⁴⁶ Considering the availability of sources and following existing literature, I use five time points: 1859, 1906, 1920, 1930, and 1941. Although this leaves gaps in between measurements, notably in the late nineteenth century, we can use the estimates to classify the evolution of neighbourhoods as Jewish or mixed. Complementing this data with qualitative descriptions allow us to predict when neighbourhoods evolved over time.

Using this information, I classify neighbourhoods by their Jewish population shares. Naturally, neighbourhoods where (virtually) no Jews lived, should be considered Gentile neighbourhoods. Since Jews were only about 10 percent of the total Amsterdam population, districts with over half Jewish residents can be denoted as ‘Jewish.’ Between these types of districts, a variety of ‘mixed’ neighbourhoods are found, some where Jews played a minor role in the dominant culture, and others where they have a large influence. I therefore use the classification as presented in Table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1 Ethno-religious classifications of Amsterdam neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood classification	Share Jewish population
Gentile	0 to 5%
Mixed	5 to 15%
Jewish Influence	15 to 30%
Heavy Jewish Influence	30 to 50%
Jewish	50 to 100%

⁴² Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, “Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940.”

⁴³ Ekamper and Van Poppel, “Infant Mortality in Mid-19th Century Amsterdam.”

⁴⁴ Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam*, 107–8.

⁴⁵ Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, Vijgen, and Wagenaar, “Jewish Amsterdam 1600–1940.”

⁴⁶ Using the definition of the Nuremberg Laws, i.e. a person with at least two Jewish grandparents and a religious affiliation or Jewish partner or three Jewish grandparents. Ultee and Luijkx, “Jewish–Gentile Inter-marriage in Six European Cities”; Tammes, “Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam,” 247–48.

7.3.3 The status of the neighbourhood

The social standing of a neighbourhood can be measured in several ways. One can use some measure of deprivation or poverty, a measure of average wealth, or an indicator of upper-tail wellbeing. Measures include the share of poor housing, share of residents in need of assistance, the average rental value of a property, or the share of residents earning above a certain threshold. In our time period, the most consistent measure is the share of residents taxed above a threshold dependent on income. Using such tax data, we can consistently rank neighbourhoods over time relative to the average tax level in the city.

The first records we can use date to 1854. At that time, voting rights were dependent on the amount of taxes paid. The share of voters in a district is therefore a proxy for the number of high taxpayers. More specific tax data is available for the years 1878, 1898, 1915, and 1930. For these years, the information implicitly included three types of people: (a) those who were not taxed; (b) those taxed above a minimum rate; and (c) those taxed above a certain threshold. Since the last-named group is relatively small, we use a combination of (b) and (c) to measure whether a neighbourhood was low, middle, or high social class. From 1878, everyone with annual incomes above 600 guilders was taxed, while incomes above 2000 guilders were deemed high earnings and belonged to group (c). In 1898 and 1915 the latter value increased to 2400 and in 1930 to 3000 guilders.

To estimate the social class of the neighbourhood in relative terms, I compare the distribution of taxpayers in a neighbourhood to the overall Amsterdam distribution. By calculating the ratio for (a), (b), and (c) above, we can estimate whether a certain district had more or fewer members of each group. Table 7.2 presents the resulting classification of neighbourhood social classes. ‘Low’ neighbourhoods were those where the share of taxed persons was at least 20 percent lower than in Amsterdam as a whole. In ‘High’ neighbourhoods, both the general share of taxed persons and the share of people taxed at elite levels were at least 20 percent higher than the city average. ‘Middle’ neighbourhoods fall within the twenty percent margin in all taxes. If a ‘Middle’ neighbourhood has a high percentage of elite earners, it is considered ‘Mid-High.’ If it is slightly above the average, it is considered ‘Mid-Mid.’ And if a district has relatively fewer taxed persons than Amsterdam overall, and also is not significantly overrepresented in elite earners, it is considered ‘Mid-Low.’

TABLE 7.2 Socioeconomic classifications of Amsterdam neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood type	Share residents taxed	Share ‘elite’ taxed
	<i>As ratio, relative to Amsterdam average</i>	
Low	< 0.8	
Mid-Low	≥ 0.8	< 1.2
Mid-Mid	≥ 1.8	≥ 1.8
Mid-High	≥ 1.2	< 1.2
	> 0.8	≥ 1.2
High	≥ 1.2	≥ 1.2

This calculation, based on the relative share of taxpayers in the district, rather than the absolute number or average incomes, enables districts' social class status to vary over time. This way I am not limited to using a static measure for a period much in the future. Thus, while the poor and rich neighbourhoods overlap frequently with neighbourhood status measures in previous research, suggesting that the classification is reliable, the present method also allows for variation over time.⁴⁷ For clarity, I will provide some examples. The island Vlooienburg (district S) in the Jewish Quarter is one example of a 'Poor neighbourhood.' This district counted 3262 inhabitants in 1915, 3049 of whom were untaxed, 209 (6.4%) were taxed at the lowest level, and four (0.001%) above the higher rate. In Amsterdam as a whole, 124 thousand out of 640 thousand residents were taxed (19.3%), with approximately 11 thousand at the elite levels (1.7%). Thus, persons in district S were much poorer than the average Amsterdammer. In contrast, district AK in the Concertgebouwbuurt was a rich neighbourhood. In 1915, roughly 32 percent of its 9092 residents were taxed, with 1272 of them (14.0%) above the elite threshold. This neighbourhood was clearly intended for upper-middle class and elite households.

Tax data have several advantages over measures like rental values. Particularly, rental values are subject to change and do not always reflect the true status of the residence. In expansionary periods, houses in newer districts had subsidised rents. In those cases, rents no longer reflect the social status of the residents. Information based on income taxes are therefore a better predictor of the types of people that resided in the neighbourhood.

7.3.4 *ANDB administration addresses*

For diamond workers, we can also access the addresses listed in the union's membership administration. Addresses were updated continuously for all apprentices and members. While apprenticeship cards generally listed few addresses, we can take the first address to reflect the neighbourhood of their upbringing during adolescence. For membership cards, which generally recorded more addresses, unfortunately not all were dated. Here, the first address relates to a worker's residence at the time of entering the union. After 1916, addresses were dated more precisely. Consequently, we can examine diamond workers' changing residential patterns. Moreover, the apprenticeship data can be effectively used to compare living areas of Jewish and Gentile newcomers in the industry. By combining this data with information about factories' ethno-religious distributions and locations, we can more closely observe the difference in settlement patterns of Jewish and Gentile diamond workers relative to their workplaces.

7.3.5 *Life course residential data*

For 800 randomly-selected diamond workers born between 1873 and 1922, we have complete residential histories throughout Amsterdam collected from Amsterdam's population registers (discussed in Chapter 1.4). To more easily assess the addresses and the types of neighbourhoods they worked in, I summarise the residential information

⁴⁷ Van Leeuwen, *The Logic of Charity*; Riswick, Muurling, and Buzasi, "Exploring the Mortality Advantage of Jewish Neighbourhoods in Mid-19th Century Amsterdam," 725–26; Owen Lammertink, "De opkomst van het moderne ziektepatroon? Doodsoorzaken, degeneratieve aandoeningen en sociale ongelijkheid in Amsterdam, 1854–1926" (PhD diss., Radboud University, 2023); Ekamper and Van Poppel, "Infant Mortality in Mid-19th Century Amsterdam."

into the last residence of the decade. I therefore have neighbourhood information for 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940. In order to concentrate on the experiences of Jewish diamond workers, I limit the life course analyses to the 486 Jewish and Amsterdam-born diamond workers.

7.4 Amsterdam Neighbourhoods

Below follows an overview of the neighbourhoods, and their origins and changes, that comprised 'Jewish Amsterdam.' These are divided into three parts: the original *Jewish Quarter*, which formed the core residential area of Jews between their arrival and roughly 1900; Jewish neighbourhoods in East established since 1880; and Jewish neighbourhoods in South since roughly 1900, including De Pijp since the 1870s.

7.4.1 The Old Core: The Jewish Quarter and Plantage-Weesper

The first Jews to permanently settle in Amsterdam arrived soon after the first expansion of Amsterdam in 1578. In the second expansion, which commenced in 1591, several 'islands' were created to the east of the historical city centre. These islands—Uilenburg, Valkenburg (also known as Marken), Rapenburg, and slightly later Vlooienburg—became the main settlement area for Jews upon their arrival.⁴⁸ Sephardic Jews initially settled on Vlooienburg, whereas Ashkenazi Jews, arriving later, primarily took residence on the other three islands. The islands, together with the districts surrounding the St. Anthoniebreestraat (in district C) and the Waterlooplein (district P), were the centre of Jewish life up to the mid-nineteenth century. This was especially true for the main streets and the squares, with the Jonas Daniël Meijerplein (district R), named after the lawyer who helped orchestrate Jews' emancipation in 1796, being the main one.⁴⁹ The area was described as the Jewish Quarter for the first time in the eighteenth century and was home to the first synagogues in Holland. Notably, the Portuguese Israelite Synagogue, colloquially 'Snoge' or 'Esnoga,' was the largest synagogue in the world when construction finished in 1675.⁵⁰ Additionally, virtually all offices related to Jewish social care were set up here. Despite possessing the wealth to move to other districts, Jewish elites primarily remained in this area until at least the mid-eighteenth century.⁵¹ Jewish economic life was abundantly present here, represented by market areas and, since then, nineteenth-century diamond factories.⁵²

In the centre of the city, the border of the Jewish Quarter is generally considered the Nieuwmarkt square.⁵³ Until the twentieth century, few Jews settled to the West of this square. Starting at the Nieuwmarkt in southeast direction was the St. Anthoniebreestraat. Continuing in southeast direction, the St. Anthoniebreestraat turned into the Jodenbreestraat in district Q. It was these two streets where most of the Jewish shops were located and, for a long time, this is where the middle-class and wealthier Jews

⁴⁸ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 11–13.

⁴⁹ Meijer, *Het Jonas Daniël Meijerplein*, 31.

⁵⁰ Mirjam Knotter, "De feestelijke inwijding van de Esnoga in 1675," in *De Portugese Synagoge in Amsterdam*, ed. Pieter Vlaardingerbroek (Amsterdam, 2013), 124.

⁵¹ Based on residences of wealthy Jews in the *Kohier van de personeele quotisatie 1742*.

⁵² Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 27–30.

⁵³ In 1859, the Nieuwmarkt area counted less than 5 percent Jewish residents. In 1906, 19 percent of residents were Jewish.

lived.⁵⁴ The home of Isaac da Pinto (1717–1787),⁵⁵ an affluent eighteenth-century Sephardic-Jewish merchant and economist, can still be visited there today. Nonetheless, social classes mingled here as Jewish peddlers sold their wares along this street until 1882. The Jodenbreestraat also housed important Jewish institutions, such as the *Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad*, the Jewish newspaper since 1865, and numerous Jewish-owned businesses. The Jodenbreestraat led into the Waterlooplein, a commercial centre, and the Jonas Daniël Meijerplein, a cultural centre.⁵⁶ Vlooienburg's Waterlooplein, built on the dampened Leprozengracht and Houtgracht canals in 1882 adopted peddlers who had formerly sold their wares along the Jodenbreestraat and St. Anthoniebreestraat.⁵⁷ Its opening marked a move for Jewish economic life away from the main streets and towards a central market square, one that became a popular destination and attraction for Gentiles. The Jonas Daniël Meijerplein was home to several Synagogues, including the Ashkenazi Synagogue complex—encompassing, among others, the Great Synagogue and *Neie Sjoel*—and the Portuguese Synagogue.⁵⁸ Social life was mixed here, too, for instance through the presence of *sjnorrers* (Jewish beggars) waiting in front of the *Neie Sjoel* in hopes of receiving donations from weddinggoers.⁵⁹

Further southeast from the J.D. Meijerplein, crossing the bridge, the street continued onwards as the Weesperstraat, initially an important gateway to the neighbouring town of Weesp. The surrounding district, known as the Weesperbuurt, contained the most eastern parts of the *Grachtengordel* ('Canal Belt'). Initially, this is where many affluent Jews had taken up residence along the Nieuwe Prinsengracht, Nieuwe Herengracht, and Nieuwe Keizersgracht. At the end of the nineteenth century it also included the epicentre of the diamond industry, which was predominantly concentrated around the Nieuwe Achtergracht.⁶⁰ Subsequently, many Jewish diamond workers moved here.⁶¹ The affluent residents that lived here before, found new residences elsewhere, commonly in the wealthy Sarphatistraat or in the Plantage. Also located here was the *Diamantbeurs* ('Diamond Exchange'), the main diamond trading location since 1911,⁶² and Concordia, a smaller competitor.⁶³ On the district's large square, the Weesperplein, the *Joodsche Invalide* ('Jewish Invalid') was located here since 1912, a care institution for Jewish elderly and handicapped.⁶⁴

Adjacent to the Weesperbuurt in northeastern direction was the Plantage. This was part of the last expansion of Amsterdam (ca. 1665) but originally attracted few buyers. Instead, the land was used for parks and gardens. In 1682, the Hortus Botanicus was opened here, and in 1838, the Artis zoo opened to the public. The latter became an important location for middle-class Jews to spend their weekends.⁶⁵ Memberships to

⁵⁴ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 29–30.

⁵⁵ Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto*, 12, 15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 27–28, 41–42.

⁵⁷ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 11; Kirsten van Kempen and Hetty Berg, *Waterlooplein. De buurt binnenstebuiten* (Zutphen, 2020).

⁵⁸ Meijer, *Het Jonas Daniël Meijerplein*, 31–32.

⁵⁹ Gans, *Memorboek*, 658.

⁶⁰ Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 27–28.

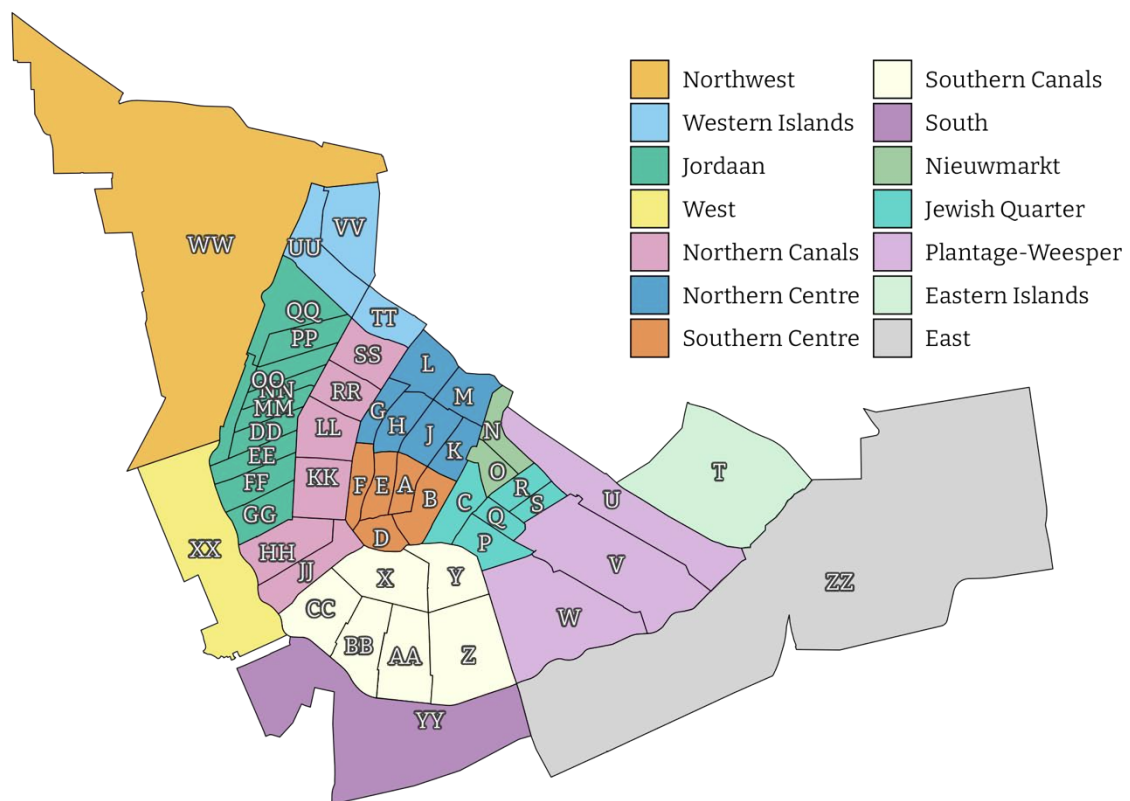
⁶¹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 122.

⁶² Simone Lipschitz, *De Amsterdamse diamantbeurs* (Amsterdam, 1990).

⁶³ Metz, *Diamantgracht*, 93–95.

⁶⁴ Hannah van den Ende, *De Joodsche Invalide. Bloei en ondergang van een Amsterdams verpleeghuis* (Meppel, 2020).

⁶⁵ Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto*, 132, 138.



MAP 7.2 District clusters of Amsterdam ca. 1850.

Source: author's calculations based on the map created by Henk Laloli. For Laloli's map, see <https://amsterdamhistorie.nl/buurten/buurten1850.html>.

Note: the presented district letters were used starting in 1850, the names of district clusters were introduced in government statistics in the early twentieth century.

Artis were seen as a status symbol in the Jewish community.⁶⁶ Greenery surrounding Artis was replaced with housing in the nineteenth century to fight overpopulation. Houses were built with middle-class residents in mind.⁶⁷ It was generally more expensive due to the lower population density and wide streets.⁶⁸ Despite its attractive features, few Gentiles moved to this area, since living there meant going through the old Jewish Quarter to get to the centre.⁶⁹ Plantage also became home to numerous cultural institutions, including Plancius, where many weddings were celebrated and diamond workers' meetings were held, and the *Hollandsche Schouwburg*. Plantage was also where the ANDB headquarters, the *Burcht*, was constructed and opened in 1900. Although disagreements exist regarding the boundaries of the Jewish Quarter, Plantage-Weesper is generally considered part of it.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Polak, *De strijd der diamantbewerkeren*, 14.

⁶⁷ Interview of Mozes de Leeuw in Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 134.

⁶⁸ Michiel Wagenaar, "Van 'gemengde' naar 'gelede' wijken. Amsterdamse stadsuitbreidingen in het laatste kwart van de negentiende eeuw," in *Van stadskern tot stadsgewest: stedenbouwkundige geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, ed. Michiel Jonker, Leo Noordegraaf, and Michiel Wagenaar (Hilversum, 1984), 160–61.

⁶⁹ Wagenaar, "Van 'gemengde' naar 'gelede' wijken," 174.

⁷⁰ Meijer, *Het verdwenen Ghetto*, 131.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ‘old core’ of the Jewish Quarter and Plantage/Weesper became, in relative terms, more Jewish. While Leydesdorff alleged that Gentiles living in the old Jewish Quarter were hardly different from Jews,⁷¹ this group showed a tendency for leaving the area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, Weesper/Plantage especially saw large inflows of Jews. Similar tendencies occurred in the areas neighbouring these Jewish districts. Nieuwmarkt and Lastage, to the north of the old Jewish Quarter, also became increasingly Jewish, going from less than 5 percent to over 20 percent Jewish residents between 1859 and 1906. The area to the northwest of the Nieuwmarkt (K; see Map 7.2) and the St. Anthoniebreestraat area (C), and the southern canal areas (Y and Z), to the southwest of district P and the Weesperbuurt, also saw large influxes of Jews during this period. These three districts had Jewish population shares of below 5 percent in 1859 but ranged between 17 and 25 percent Jewish residents in 1906. The collection of ‘border regions’ around the Jewish Quarter grew as much in their absolute number of Jewish residents as the Jewish Quarter plus Plantage/Weesper itself in this span of five decades.

Since nearly all Jews lived in the Jewish Quarter until the end of the nineteenth century, all Jewish social classes were represented in this geographic area. Consequently, economic conditions varied greatly by streets and neighbourhoods. Valkenburg was one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the city.⁷² While roughly 7 percent of mid-nineteenth-century Amsterdammers were eligible to vote, only one percent was able to vote on Valkenburg. The Valkenburgerstraat is repeatedly remembered for its extreme poverty and poor living conditions.⁷³ Contemporaneously, in district C, containing the Jodenbreestraat and St. Anthoniebreestraat, middle- and upper-class Jews were well-represented, counting over 11 percent voters. Thus, when Leydesdorff writes “who lived in the old Jewish Quarter, lived in poverty,”⁷⁴ this is only true for the poorer segments of the area. While poverty was apparent where it existed, it was heavily concentrated in the two northern islands Valkenburg and Uilenburg. The residents around the Waterlooplein and Jonas Daniël Meijerplein area, and early residents of Plantage-Weesper, were much closer to the Amsterdam average.

Housing conditions in the old core of the Jewish Quarter deteriorated more quickly than elsewhere in the city. This was only partly caused by Jews’ economic misfortunes. Additionally, it was pushed strongly by lack of housing availability. Population density in this area was twice as high as the rest of the city since there was no space to build additional houses for the growing Jewish population.⁷⁵ Only the Jordaan, the Gentile’s working-class district, had greater concentrations of inhabitants per square meter. In contrast, in the Plantage-Weesper area, where many Jews lived, population density was far below the city average.

⁷¹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 150.

⁷² This was fourth-lowest in the city, lower only than districts PP (0.3%), NN (0.41%), and QQ (0.52%) in the Jordaan, a Gentile labourers’ neighbourhood. This is excluding neighbourhood ZZ, which was then still under construction.

⁷³ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 126–28.

⁷⁴ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 112.

⁷⁵ In 1859, the Jewish Quarter counted 644 persons per square kilometre, compared with 324 in Amsterdam (excluding the spacious eastern islands in district T) and 632 in the Jordaan. In 1889, population density had risen to 754 people/km² in the Jewish Quarter, 407 in Amsterdam’s districts built before 1860 and excluding T, and 965 in the Jordaan. In districts Plantage and Weesperbuurt, where a majority of residents were Jewish, population density was far below the Amsterdam average: 149 in 1859 and 231 in 1889.

After thorough investigation, a report from 1901 concluded that parts of the Jewish Quarter had to be destroyed and rebuilt.⁷⁶ Soon after, the Housing Act of 1901 was enacted. This law intended to prevent housing with unhealthy conditions to be built or continue to exist, while ensuring future housing quality and quantity. Consequently, in 1916, the most unsanitary segments of Uilenburg were destroyed. In 1926 and 1936, once enough housing was acquired to resettle residents, additional Jewish islands were razed. Residents of these areas were, voluntarily or involuntarily, moved to newer neighbourhoods.⁷⁷ During these decades, the Jewish Quarter, once the marker of all things Jewish in Amsterdam, increasingly became a more mixed neighbourhood. In 1906, Jews comprised 87.9 percent of its residents, in 1941 only 57.6 percent.⁷⁸ As middle-class Jews moved to newer neighbourhoods, only the poorest Jews remained in the 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter. However, by then it no longer formed the social, cultural, and economic centre of Amsterdam Jewry. Meijer formulated this more strongly, proclaiming that "the Ghetto as central Jewish neighbourhood of Amsterdam no longer existed [already] before 1940."⁷⁹

7.4.2 Amsterdam East: Weesperzijde, Oosterparkbuurt and Transvaalbuurt

Plans for new neighbourhoods were designed as demand for housing continued to grow in Amsterdam since the mid-nineteenth century. In 1876, the director of *Dienst der Publieke Werken* ('Department of Public Works'⁸⁰) Jan Kalff designed a plan for the *Oosterparkbuurt* ('East Park District'), a residential neighbourhood surrounding a large park to the east of the old city borders. This plan also included a small expansion adjacent to the Amstel, which became the start of Weesperzijde. The *Oosterparkbuurt* was located alongside, and further southeast from, Plantage-Weesper, separated by the Singelgracht. Construction of houses commenced in 1881, and the park was built between 1886 and 1891. Initially, the houses were intended to be for the middle-class. However, many of the streets were ultimately built more rushed and in slightly lower quality.⁸¹ Jews, who lived in closest proximity to this neighbourhood, moved there in large numbers. Especially the streets nearest to the Weesperstraat, such as the Tilanusstraat, Ruyschstraat, and Blasiusstraat, counted many Jewish residents. Many diamond workers moved to these streets, which were among the most commonly listed streets on the ANDB membership cards.

In post-war interviews of survivors, the *Oosterparkbuurt* (part of district ZZ, later WE) often gets only limited attention. Most of the interviewees had not been born when this neighbourhood was constructed. Instead, greater attention was placed on the *Transvaalbuurt*, which became a more important centre of Jewish life in the twentieth century. Due to the timing of *Oosterparkbuurt*'s construction, coinciding with relatively prosperous times in the diamond industry, many diamond workers moved to these

⁷⁶ Louis Hermans, *Krotten en sloppen. Een onderzoek naar den woningtoestand in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1901).

⁷⁷ Hakker, "De sanering van de Amsterdamse Jodenbuurt 1900-1940," 39.

⁷⁸ Using area 4 in 1930 (district codes C, P, Q, S, and R) and area 10 in 1941 (C, P, Q, S, R, U, and V1).

⁷⁹ Meijer, *Het Jonas Daniël Meijerplein*, 23.

⁸⁰ The *Dienst der Publieke Werken* was a municipal department aimed at improving and expanding public space and housing. For more information, see Ida Jager, "Hoofdstad in gebreke. Manoeuvreren met publieke werken in Amsterdam 1851-1901" (PhD diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2003).

⁸¹ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 145.

streets.⁸² Further southeast in the neighbourhood we find the Vrolikstraat, another common destination for Jewish residents.⁸³ Hartog Goubitz (1889-1980), who previously lived in an overpopulated house in Valkenburg, moved there in 1904.⁸⁴ He described the Vrolikstraat as a massive improvement over the old Jewish Quarter. One of Leydesdorff's interviewees repeats the sentiment after moving to the Blasiusstraat, "...everything was better than to live [in the Uilenburgerstraat]... in that time change often meant improvement."⁸⁵ Leydesdorff's own opinion on the matter is mixed. On the one hand, her interviewees denote new neighbourhoods in close proximity to the old Jewish Quarter as "overcrowded and dirty."⁸⁶ On the other hand, she characterises such districts as follows:

"[S]anitation there was better, and the streets were wider. There was room to breathe, space to clean, without losing the coziness of the old Jewish Quarter. Living in the Oosterparkbuurt was the first step out of the ghetto, a first step towards life adjusted to Gentiles, and therefore a first step towards assimilation."⁸⁷

According to eyewitnesses, the Oosterparkbuurt differed minimally from the Transvaalbuurt. Moving to either was a conscious decision to live a different type of life, with smaller families to create better future perspectives. Within these neighbourhoods, there were good and bad parts, as there were Jewish, Gentile, and mixed parts. For instance, Iepenplein was denominationally mixed and relatively well off.⁸⁸ However, the dominant culture, if there was any, was Jewish. Gentiles are said to have adapted to their Jewish neighbours, rather than the other way around.⁸⁹ Yet, according to some interviewees, Gentiles knew little about Jewish traditions in the Transvaalbuurt.⁹⁰

The Transvaalbuurt was constructed to the southeast of the Oosterparkbuurt starting in 1910. The area was designed by the famous architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage, who had also been responsible for the ANDB headquarters. The neighbourhood and its streets themselves were predominantly constructed by individual building cooperations. The 1901 Housing Act had set the stage for the government to place more building responsibility in private hands. Now, a wide range of pillarised building cooperations set out to construct new houses and streets. Since there was no Jewish pillar, Jews predominantly made use of the services of Social Democratic building cooperations. These includes the *Algemene Woningbouwvereniging* ('General Building Cooperation'), *Bouwfonds Handwerkers Vriendenkring* ['Building Fund Hand Workers' Friend Circle']—officially non-denominational but unofficially specifically for Jews⁹¹—and *De Dageraad*. Two attempts at building cooperations specifically for diamond workers failed in 1905 and 1920.⁹²

⁸² Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 176.

⁸³ Idem.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 126, 176.

⁸⁵ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 135.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 159.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 161.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 181.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 182.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 184.

⁹¹ Ab Caransa, *Handwerkers Vriendenkring 1869-1942. Belangenbehartiging, ziekenzorg, volkswoningbouw*. (Alkmaar, 1998), 57-63; Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 227.

⁹² Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 234.

The Transvaalbuurt eventually became a 'Jewish' neighbourhood by our definition. While the true number of Jews in this area is hard to estimate in 1906—when it was part of agglomeration ZZ where 6 percent of residents were Jewish—the share of Jews grew rapidly to 26 percent in 1920, 45 percent in 1930, and 58 percent in 1941. Since the varying building cooperations each designed (parts) of their own streets, Jews and Gentiles ended up somewhat segregated within the neighbourhood. Jews primarily lived in streets built by Social-Democratic building cooperations *Algemeene Woningbouwvereniging* and *Bouwvereniging Handwerkers Vriendenkring*—such as the Retiefstraat, Cillierstraat, and Tugelaweg⁹³—Gentiles in those by their respective cooperations *Patrimonium* (Protestant) and *Het Oosten* (Catholic). Furthermore, landlords played a role in further spatial clustering. Liesbeth van Weezel, whose family moved to the Pretoriusplein in the Transvaalbuurt in 1911, mentioned that there had been few Jews living there when they arrived.⁹⁴ According to her, their landlord “tactically” placed all newcoming Jews in the same building, leading to clusters of Jews within the street.⁹⁵ Besides segregation by ethno-religious background, Liesbeth also remarked on class differences. While the Transvaalbuurt was home to numerous intellectuals and middle-class families, including many diamond workers,⁹⁶ it also became socially mixed. When parts of Uilenburg were destroyed in 1916, one half of the Retiefstraat was designed to take up the transplanted, but “[t]his occurred outside of the ‘golden edge’ of the Pretoriusplein,”⁹⁷ where richer inhabitants lived.

In their discussion of the Transvaalbuurt, contemporaries more frequently mention social class differences within the Jewish community than ethno-religious differences between them and Gentiles. A common theme is the arrival of poor Jews, previous residents of Uilenburg, who had to ‘learn how to live’ outside of poverty. Jacques Presser recalled the chicken bones thrown on the streets, remnants of Friday night’s chicken soup, and the public nuisance from radios blasting through open windows.⁹⁸ Emmanuel Aalsvel remembers how, during his comfortable youth in the Transvaalbuurt, his father addressed these new arrivals and told them how to behave in the new neighbourhood. Meanwhile, Emmanuel mentioned the following about ethno-religious differences:

“There was no difference between Jews and Christians, there we simply lived next to one another. There was a difference with the Smitstraat, because the Catholics lived there. We played football against them, but not as Jews, but as Socialists.”⁹⁹

The Transvaalbuurt, with its many Social Democratic inhabitants, was known as the “red village.”¹⁰⁰ Differences between Jews and Gentiles were often minimal, coming from similar socioeconomic backgrounds and with comparable political beliefs. They also arrived in the Transvaalbuurt at the same time. Nonetheless, Gentiles gradually moved away from the neighbourhood. In 1930, the neighbourhood was fully occupied with

⁹³ Caransa, *Handwerkers Vriendenkring*, 60–62.

⁹⁴ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 176.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 179–80.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹⁸ Jacques Presser, *Louter verwachting. Autobiografische schets 1899–1919* (Amsterdam, 1985), 43.

⁹⁹ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 182.

¹⁰⁰ Bregstein, *Gesprekken met Jacques Presser*, 15.

roughly 19,000 inhabitants, among whom were 11,000 Gentiles. By 1941, over 2000 Gentiles had left, making place for new, often poorer Jews, to take up residence in their former homes. The Transvaalbuurt could therefore only become 'Jewish' in our definition through the departure of Gentiles, not simply the arrival of Jews.

7.4.3 Plan South: De Pijp, de Rivierenbuurt, and wealthy neighbourhoods to the west

Expansions towards the South of Amsterdam relevant for Jews occurred in two stages. In the 1870s, De Pijp was constructed. Its houses surrounded the *Paleis voor Volksvlijt* ('Palace for Industry'), paid for by Samuel Sarphati and, in later years, a symbol for Jews' pride of emancipation.¹⁰¹ While this neighbourhood would never become a 'Jewish neighbourhood' per se, it became an important destination for upwardly mobile Jews. Nonetheless, the reputation of De Pijp varies. It was one of the first cases of *revolutiebouw* ('jerry-building')—the construction of large new neighbourhoods using cheap materials without systematic or long-term plans—in Amsterdam.¹⁰² This was evidenced by two collapsing buildings, due to poor quality construction, amidst constructions in 1876. Later on, Heertje described the buildings in De Pijp as ugly.¹⁰³ Yet, as a destination for skilled labourers, it was known as middle class and richer than other workers' neighbourhoods, like the Staatsliedenbuurt.¹⁰⁴ In 1878, after the first waves of residents had moved in, the average inhabitant of De Pijp was more likely to be taxed, but rarely at the highest levels, indicating middle-class but not elite inhabitants. Among them were many Jewish diamond workers who brought the industry with them. Many new diamond factories arose in this area,¹⁰⁵ including Asscher's 1907 factory with nearby housing for their workers.¹⁰⁶ In 1915, the neighbourhood De Pijp was administratively split in three parts: two average, lower middle-class districts, and one upper-middle class area. During this time, it had become an important place for nightlife.¹⁰⁷ Especially for Jews, as it was a common venue and topic for Jewish comedians and singers like Eduard Jacobs.¹⁰⁸ In the mixed denominational districts such as those in East and De Pijp, Jews were confronted with their 'Otherness' as Jews.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, Jews were also able to be themselves. In the Gerard Doustraat in De Pijp, where many Jews concentrated, a Synagogue was opened in 1892.

In the 1910s, Amsterdam South expanded. Constructions on 'New-South,' once again designed by Berlage, started between 1917 and 1925. New South was divided in two parts. On the eastern side, the Rivierenbuurt was intended to house families of the working and middle classes.¹¹⁰ This later also included an extension of De Pijp, known as the Nieuwe

¹⁰¹ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 143.

¹⁰² Vijgen, "Joden in Amsterdam," 78; For more on jerry-building in Amsterdam, see Jos Smit, "'Uit de groote schande van den revolutiebouw'. Over de moeizame waardering van laatnegentiende-eeuwse woningarchitectuur," *Bulletin KNOB*, 2012, 83–98.

¹⁰³ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 233.

¹⁰⁴ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 190.

¹⁰⁵ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 79.

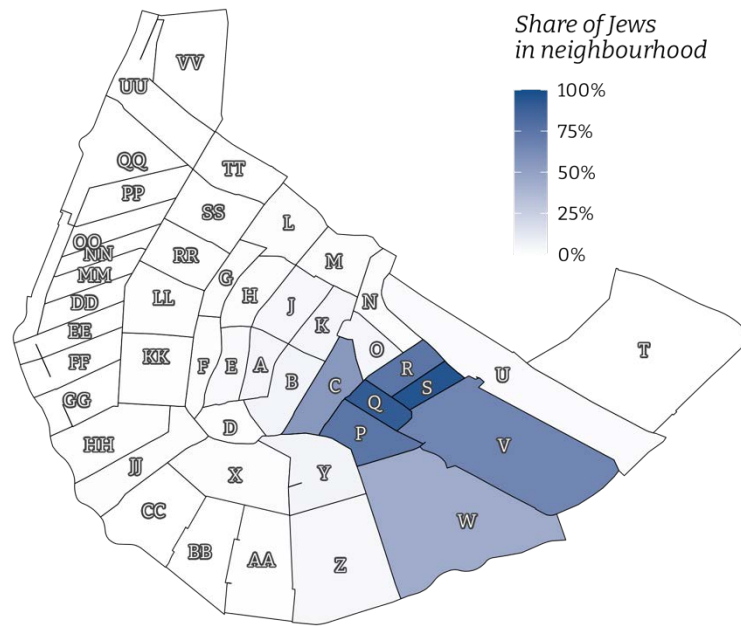
¹⁰⁶ Interview of Lodewijk Asscher in Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 182–83; Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 148.

¹⁰⁷ Vincent Baptist, Julia Noordegraaf, and Thunnis van Oort, "A Digital Toolkit to Detect Cinema Audiences of the Silent Era: Scalable Perspectives on Film Exhibition and Consumption in Amsterdam Neighbourhoods (1907–1928)," *Studies in European Cinema* 18.3 (2021): 252–73.

¹⁰⁸ De Haas, *De minstreel van de mesthoop*.

¹⁰⁹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 162.

¹¹⁰ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 151.



MAP 7.3 Residential spread of Jews in 1859.

Source: Amsterdam City Archive, 5007#314, "Maandstaat van de aantallen inwoners van Amsterdam per buurt, uitgesplitst naar godsdienstige gezindte, burgerlijke staat en soort inwonerschap (vast of tijdelijk)."

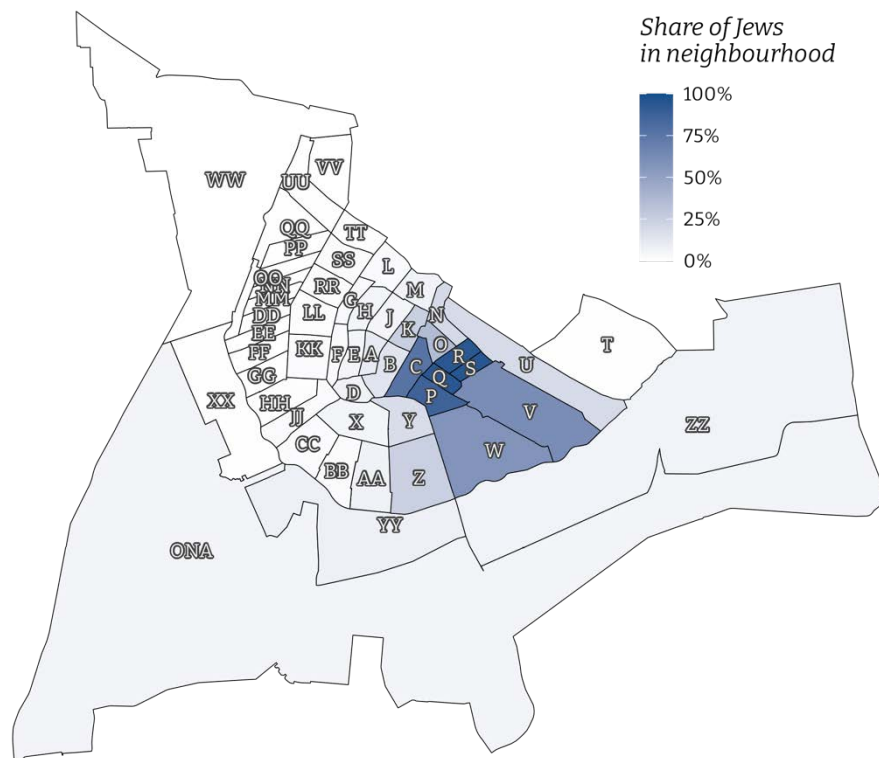
Pijp, intended for similar residents. The western side of New South was designed for upper-middle class families. It included the Apollobuurt, for the elite, and the areas around the Museum square and Concert Hall, intended for middle classes. However, it took until the late 1920s that people could afford to live here because of the towering rents.

In the 1920s, especially after a lowering of the rents, many Jews moved to these neighbourhoods. Yet, New South is rarely discussed in post-war interviews with Jewish survivors. For Leydesdorff, who focused on the Jewish proletariat, this means missing Jewish workers who were upwardly mobile into the middle classes. That 40 percent of Jews lived in South in 1941 attests their high rates of upward mobility in prior decades. Nonetheless, some have doubted the influence of Jews on the district's culture.¹¹¹ Jews, however, definitely left an impact. For instance, the square at the centre of the Rivierenbuurt—the Daniël Willinkplein—was commonly referred to as the Jonas Daniël Willinkplein as a joke, referring to the Jonas Daniël Meijerplein in the old Jewish Quarter.¹¹² Jewish peddlers came here to sell authentic Jewish food, and Jaap Meijer repeatedly called New South “Ghetto South.”¹¹³ In the Concertgebouwbuurt, a Synagogue was completed in 1928, and another Synagogue was completed in 1937 in the Rivierenbuurt. These signify Jews' thriving presence already prior to the arrival of many non-Dutch Jews who settled here after 1933.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 139.

¹¹² Ibid., 154.

¹¹³ Meijer, *Het Jonas Daniël Meijerplein*, 24.



MAP 7.4 Residential spread of Jews in 1906.

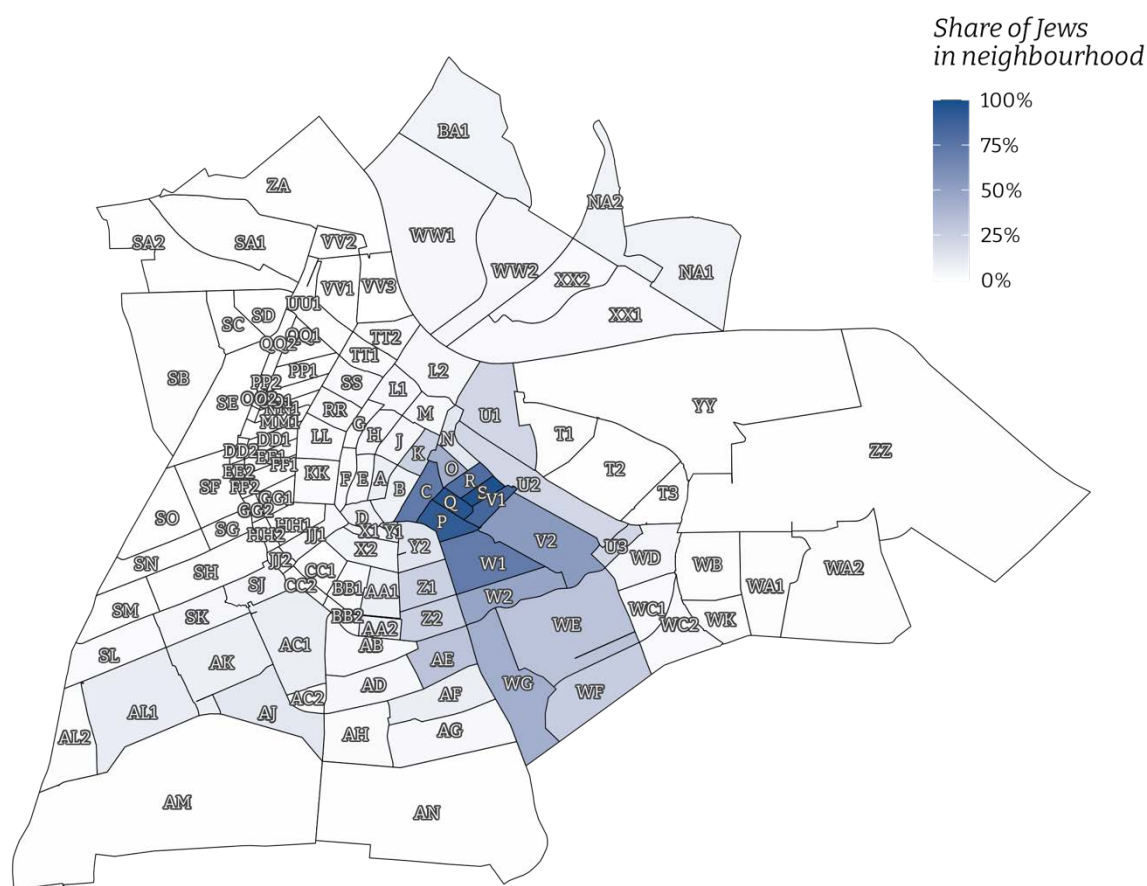
Source: Vijgen, "Joden in Amsterdam. Assimilatie en segregatie van een etnische minderheid 1600-1933" (1983).

7.4.4 Summary: movements between 1850 and 1940

The movements from 1859 until 1941 can be shown in maps using data from municipal records. In 1859, before the expansions beyond the original city borders, Jews lived almost exclusively in the 'old core' (C, P, Q, S, and R in Map 7.2) or in Plantage/Weesper (V and W). Jews were also found in streets in neighbouring districts, where small percentages of Jews lived. At this time, the 'old core' was not exclusively Jewish. A non-negligible number of Gentiles co-resided with Jews in this area.

By 1906, many of these Gentiles had left the Jewish Quarter. The concentration of Jews in the Jewish Quarter therefore strengthened—following outflows of Gentiles—while Jews simultaneously spread across new areas. The urgent need for housing among Jews caused moves to adjacent neighbourhoods. Nieuwmarkt and Lastage, counting less than 5 percent Jews in 1859, now counted over 20 percent Jews. District Z, across the river Amstel from Weesperbuurt, similarly became noticeably more Jewish. Jews also settled in the Weesperbuurt and towards De Pijp and the Oosterparkbuurt. Regrettably, the latter two are included in larger district agglomerations YY and ZZ, and therefore we cannot observe the true percentage of Jews in De Pijp and Oosterparkbuurt at this time. In districts adjacent to these 'neighbouring' districts—that is, those with an additional neighbourhood between it and the Jewish Quarter—percentages of Jewish residents also increased. For instance, in district D on the southern of the city centre covering the end of the Kalverstraat and alongside Rokin, the share of Jews increased from 0.5 percent in 1859 to 6.5 percent in 1906. The annexed area *Oud-Nieuwer Amstel* (ONA) also attracted large numbers of Jews.

In 1920, the spread of Jews away from the Jewish Quarter had progressed substantially. The share of Jews increased in neighbourhoods in all directions from the old core of the Jewish Quarter. Within ONA, now split into various districts, we see increases in Weesperzijde and the Transvaalbuurt. To the west of De Pijp, Jews had already started settling in the richer areas around the Concertgebouwbuurt. We even see increasing Jewish shares north of the river IJ.

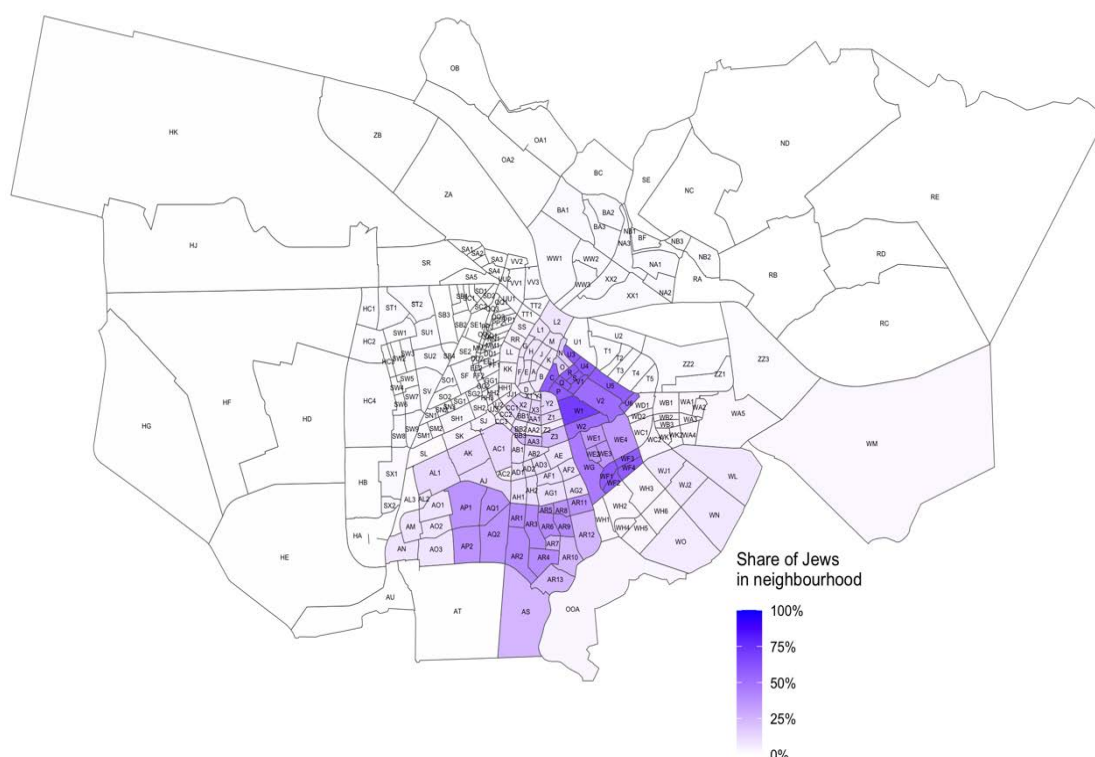


MAP 7.5 Residential spread of Jews in 1920.

Source: Statistische mededeelingen van het Bureau der Statistiek der Gemeente Amsterdam" (1924), 72; Vijgen, "Joden in Amsterdam. Assimilatie en segregatie van een etnische minderheid 1600-1933" (1983).

Although Jews now settled in the eastern part of De Pijp and to the west near the Concert Hall, few Jews settled in the middle, in the western parts of De Pijp. The lack of Jews in this area reveals, to some degree, the settlements patterns of Jews. They moved to newer districts, with better housing, and preferably near other Jews. In the western parts of De Pijp, many Gentiles had already settled and the culture was dominantly Gentile. The quality of the housing, however, did not compensate enough for confrontation with non-Jews. In new areas, Jews could choose their own lifestyle without exceedingly adjusting to Gentiles.

Comparing the map of 1941 (Map 7.6) with 1859 (Map 7.3), we see that Jews now lived considerably more spread out across the city. Jews are seen more to the north, east, south, and southwest of the former Jewish centre. Jews are now particularly well-



MAP 7.6 Residential spread of Jews in 1941.

Source: Statistisch Jaarboek der Gemeente Amsterdam (1949): 71-2, “De Joodsche bevolking in de verschillende wijken der Gemeente (Mei 1941).”

represented in the Transvaalbuurt in East, Rivierenbuurt in South, and the Concertgebouwbuurt in Southeast. A non-insignificant number of Jews have now settled above the Vondelpark, getting close to exclusively Gentile areas like the Jordaan. Many Jews have willingly or forcedly left the Jewish Quarter. In the administrative delineations of 1941, the strongest concentration of Jews is seen in the northern part of the Weesperbuurt, where 70 percent of the residents are Jewish. This is a stark decline compared with 1906, when the largest concentration of Jews was seen in the Jewish Quarter where over 90 percent of residents were Jewish.

Foreign Jews should also be included in the discussion. Between 1933 and 1940, thousands of Jews fled from Germany and many settled in Amsterdam. Comparatively affluent, many of these foreign Jews moved to well-regarded neighbourhoods in Amsterdam South.¹¹⁴ This boosted the share of Jews in this part of the city. However, data from 1930 indicates that Jews had already begun migrating to these districts—particularly the Rivierenbuurt, Concertgebouwbuurt, and Apollobuurt—prior to the arrival of post-1933 Jewish refugees.¹¹⁵ Settlements patterns of foreign and Dutch Jews in Amsterdam did not differ all that distinctively, as can be noted from insignificant

¹¹⁴ Ultee and Luijkx, “Jewish-Gentile Inter-marriage in Six European Cities,” 177.

¹¹⁵ Bureau der Statistiek der Gemeente Amsterdam, Statistische mededeeling no. 100 (Amsterdam, 1934), Table 21, “De bevolking van elke buurtcombinatie bij de Volkstelling van 1930 naar kerkelijke gezindte en het geslacht 1930.”

differences in dissimilarity indices calculated with and without the presence of foreign Jews.¹¹⁶ Thus, changing residential areas of Jews were driven first and foremost by relocations of Dutch, and not foreign, Jews.

Unequivocally, Jews have spread across the city, in neighbourhoods of varying social classes and with diverging shares of non-Jewish neighbours.

7.5 Residential locations of diamond workers

So far, we have looked at the residential spread of all Jews. In our discussion, we have come across the tendencies of diamond workers to move towards certain areas. And the residential spread of Jewish diamond workers has been addressed in previous research.¹¹⁷ However, the union administration enables us to take a much closer look at the residential spread of diamond workers, both Jewish and Gentile. The comparison between Jewish and Gentile diamond workers is key here, since it is beyond the scope of this chapter to follow residential trajectories of all Gentiles. Thus, in this section, I will describe the residential patterns of diamond workers by ethno-religious backgrounds using the membership and apprenticeship cards of the ANDB administration. Additionally, I will showcase how these residences correlated with workplaces, using the largest diamond factories in Amsterdam and information on the ethno-religious backgrounds of the apprentices that were trained there.

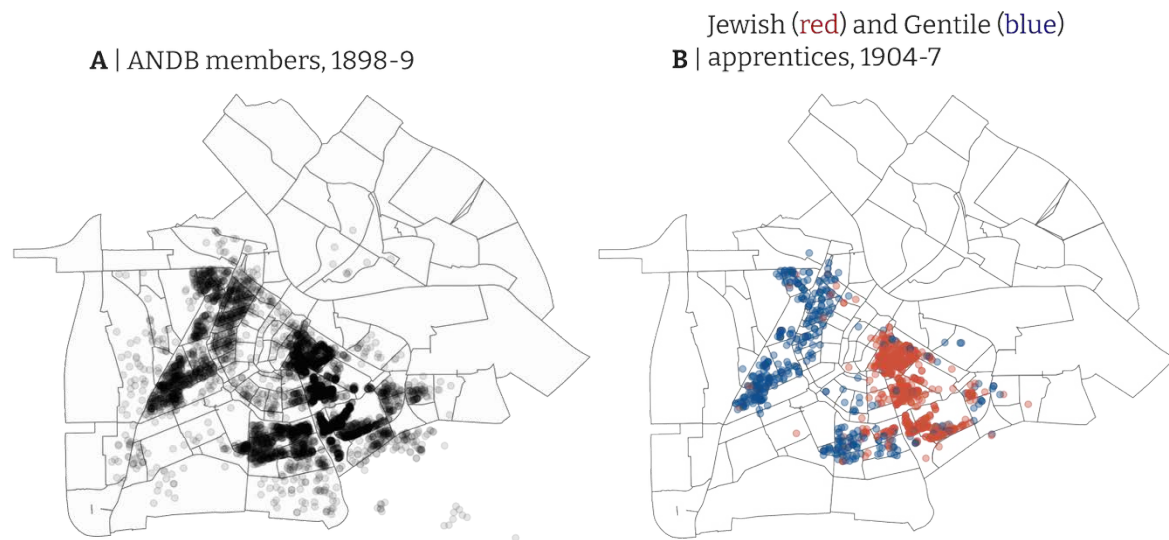
7.5.1 Residences of ANDB member and apprentices, 1898-1940

Panel A of Map 7.7 shows the residences of all diamond workers who were registered on a membership card in 1898 and 1899, the first two years possible. Large concentrations are seen in old Jewish Quarter, Weesperbuurt, Weesperzijde, Oosterparkbuurt, and in De Pijp. Additionally, we also see a large group in the Western side of the city, particularly in de Jordaan, de Staatsliedenbuurt, and the Borgerbuurt. Moreover, a split is seen in the middle of the two regions. Few Jews lived in the richer parts of the *Canal belt* or to the west of Nieuwmarkt in the centre. It is safe to say that virtually all of the diamond workers in the Western side were Gentiles. Nearly all Jews are expected to have lived in the east and south of Amsterdam, but here we could also expect to find Gentiles who worked in the mixed diamond polishing factories.

We can verify this by looking at the addresses of apprentices who started their apprenticeships between 1904 and 1907, right after the apprenticeship halt ended. These are shown in panel B of Map 7.7. We indeed see that nearly all apprentices in the West were Gentiles, and virtually all of the apprentices in the east were Jews. An interesting mix is observed in the south, however. Jews lived in Weesperzijde and across the Amstel in the northeastern parts of De Pijp, but rarely lived in the western and southern parts of De Pijp. Here we find a neighbourhood which is clearly mixed along street lines. The locations of apprentices in Map 7.7 remain more or less constant over time, although Jewish apprentices increasingly move into the Transvaalbuurt since the 1910s. Moreover, between 1909 and 1913 we see the largest number of Gentile apprentices in Amsterdam East. Later we find them more spread across the city. This may reflect the fact that Amsterdam East became ‘more Jewish’ as Gentiles left for other

¹¹⁶ Tamme, “Residential Segregation of Jews in Amsterdam,” 250.

¹¹⁷ Heertje, *De diamantbewerders*, 229–35; Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 24–26.



MAP 7.7 Residences of all ANDB members, 1898-1899, and all apprentices, 1904-1907. Source: “ANDB Apprentice Cards,” release 2019; and “ANDB Membership Cards,” release 2021.

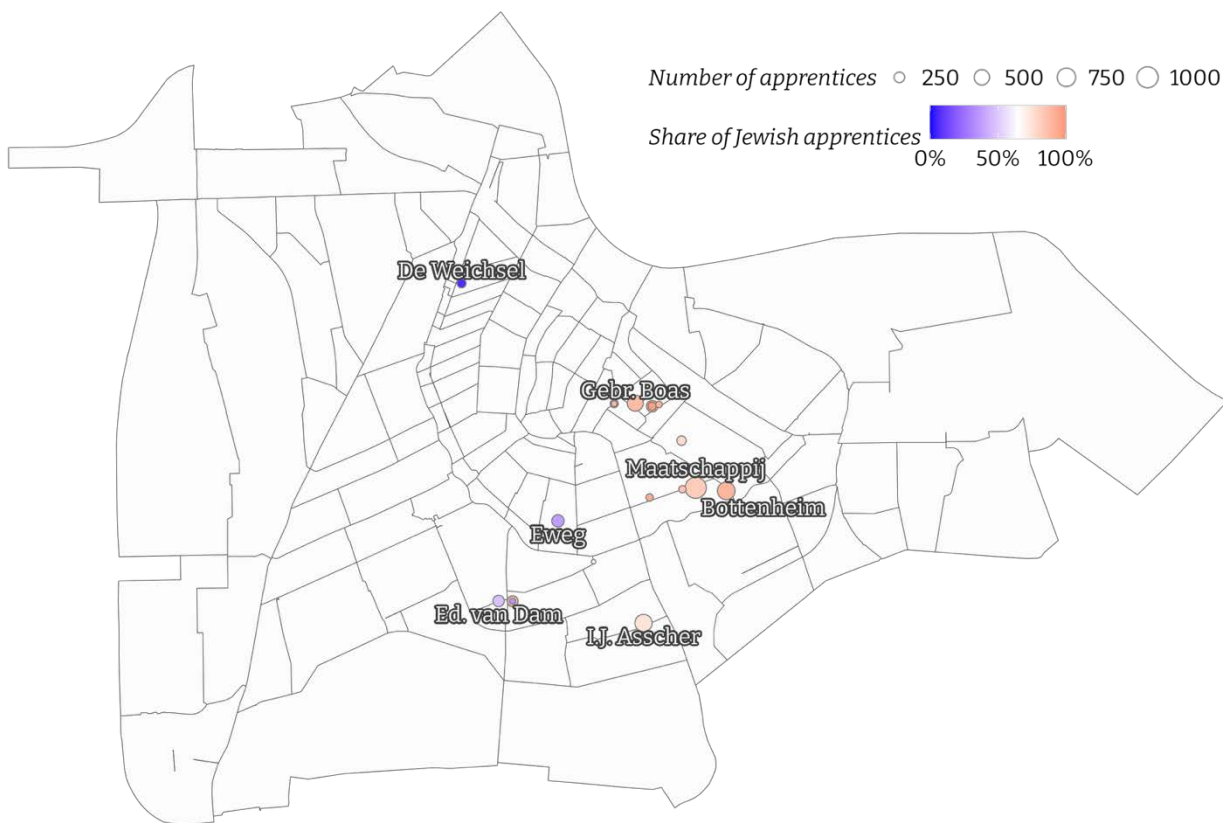
neighbourhoods, as had happened before to the old Jewish Quarter up to the mid-nineteenth century.

Gentile apprentices primarily lived in three areas. Most of them lived in the Jordaan area. Like the old Jewish Quarter for Jews, the Jordaan was where many Gentile labourers lived until the end of the nineteenth century. A second agglomeration was found in the Jacob van Lennepbuurt. This was a newer neighbourhood, built as part of the 1876 building plan of Jan Kalff. The third area is the Western part of De Pijp. Here we see many Gentiles living in the Eerste Jan Steenstraat and other streets to the West of the Sarphatipark (built in 1885). However, the Gentile diamond workers resided everywhere where diamond factories were located. We therefore also find them in the more Jewish areas, including Weesperzijde and Plantage.

7.5.2 Locations of workplaces

We can compare the locations of workers in Map 7.7 with the location of the factories where most of the diamond workers worked. To accomplish this, I identified the 25 diamond factories that trained the most apprentices between 1904 and 1939. After geolocating the factories, I estimate the share of apprentices that were Jewish. The locations of the factories are plotted in Map 7.8. The colours indicate the share of Jewish apprentices, the size of the circle the number of apprentices. Dark blue circles relate to factories with many Gentile apprentices, while more red colours refer to Jewish factories.

In the Jordaan, in the northwest of Amsterdam where virtually all apprentices were Gentile, the largest factory—*De Overtoom* owned by the Gentile Johan Gerrit Nicolaas Eweg (1881-unk.)—trained primarily Gentile workers, who made up 62 percent of all their apprentices. Near the Jewish Quarter and in Amsterdam East, we find factories with high shares of Jews. In the *Koningin Sophia* factory, located in the Uilenburgerstraat, 96 percent of apprentices were Jewish. In the same street, the factory owned by the Boas brothers from 1879 had 88 percent Jewish apprentices. In Plantage, the *Concentratie I* had 77 percent Jewish apprentices, much closer to the true representation of Jews among all



MAP 7.8 The locations of the 25 largest diamond polishing factories and the share of Jewish apprentices, 1904-1940

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Apprentice Cards," release 2019; and "Diamond factories in Amsterdam," release 2021.

apprentices. Similarly, the I.J. Asscher factory in the Tolstraat of the Nieuwe Pijp had 74 percent Jewish apprentices. More to the West, three factories in De Pijp show mixed results. Each located in the Albert Cuypstraat, the apprenticeship body of these factories—*Gruppig & Schaap*, *Kampfraath*, and *Van Moppes*¹¹⁸—were primarily Gentile, mixed, and Jewish, respectively. Thus, while nearly all apprentices and workers lived relatively close to the locations of diamond factories, the composition of the factories varied heavily by the ownership of the factory and the location of the workers. In areas with more mixed populations, factories could be more mixed or vary significantly in the ethno-religious background of its workers while being located in the same street.

¹¹⁸ It must be noted that the Van Moppes firm did not operate this factory until 1947. Prior to World War II, the Van Moppes firm was located in the Plantage Middenlaan. Marinus Gerardus Emeis, *A. van Moppes & Zoon: 1809-1959* (Amsterdam, 1959), 19–25, 35.

7.6 Diamond workers' life course data

The twentieth century in Amsterdam was a period of city expansion and renewal. We have now observed Jews living in districts outside of the Jewish Quarter as time progressed. We also saw diamond workers spread across different regions of the city. But how did Jewish diamond workers move from one neighbourhood to another? And how did origin and destination districts differ in characteristics? Did Jews simply move to new neighbourhoods with similar social class and ethno-religious compositions? Or did their areas of residence change drastically each time they relocated? In this section we will assess these questions by examining residential trajectories of the diamond workers by decade. We will look at three dimensions: (a) the area of residence; (b) the share of Jews in the district; and (c) the social class of the neighbourhood.

7.6.1 *Area of residence*

Early on, Jewish diamond workers, similar to all other Jews, primarily lived in the 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter, in the neighbouring districts Plantage/Weesper, and in the border areas around this Jewish Quarter. By 1880, few had moved to Amsterdam East or South yet as these districts were still under construction. And, although a small but significant percentage lived outside of these areas—contiguous to districts directly adjacent to the Jewish Quarter—this was only a select minority. Progressively, Jewish diamond workers moved out of the 'old core' and later also turned away from Plantage/Weesper. We can see this in Figure 7.1. For each start of a decade (i.e. 1880, 1890, etc.), the share of the diamond workers in that cohort living in a specific area is calculated. These percentages are shown in the columns. For instance, in 1880, 45.8 percent of our first cohort lived in the old Jewish core, seen at the bottom left of Panel A. Flows are drawn between two successive columns. These flows indicate how many people moved between, or stayed within, neighbourhood types over time, with each line corresponding to one person. Thus, between 1880 and 1890, the flow between the old Jewish core and Plantage/Weesper consists of eight lines pertaining to eight persons in cohort 1. The flows help us understand whether Jews moved incrementally to newer neighbourhoods, for instance from Plantage/Weesper to Amsterdam East and then to South, or made big jumps, such as from the old core to South immediately.

The flows indicate that nearly all diamond workers made small steps from older to newer neighbourhoods. Between 1880 and 1910, Jews successively moved from the old core to Plantage/Weesper, and from Plantage/Weesper to Amsterdam East. In these migrations, diamond workers were among the first to make the moves. This is evident when we compare the diamond workers' situations in 1900 with the overall Jewish population in 1906. In 1906, 19.1 percent of all Jews lived in the new areas XX ('Amsterdam West'), YY ('South'), ZZ ('West'), or ONA. In 1900, already 23.3 percent of our first cohort of Jewish diamond workers did, and by 1910, 46.7 in our first cohort had made this trek. In contrast, in 1906 still 33.5 percent of all Jews lived in the old Jewish core, compared with 30.8 percent of our first cohort in 1900 and 16.8 percent in 1910. In other words, the diamond workers and the families that they came from—often also diamond workers—were remarkably mobile in their residences, moving to newer areas earlier than other Jews.

Much of this pioneering was done already before our diamond workers reached adulthood. Since intergenerational following was common, many of them had parents who had worked in the same occupation. Among the diamond workers we sampled,

those whose fathers worked as diamond workers were more likely to be born outside of the Jewish Quarter than those whose fathers had worked in other occupations. In this sense, intergenerational mobility and residential mobility were linked; those who were upwardly mobile intergenerationally were also residentially more mobile.

In our second cohort, we observe many families moving from the old core to the Plantage/Weesper between 1890 and 1900. They originated from both diamond worker and other types of families, so that this does not seem to be directly related to their parents' occupational status. However, their residences in adolescence in 1900 contrast with those of the younger third cohort. In cohort 2, nearly 50 percent lived in Plantage/Weesper in 1900, compared with about 33 percent in cohort 3. Meanwhile, 8 percent of cohort 2 lived in East, compared with 21 percent of cohort 3. Where someone was born or grew up therefore heavily depended on time and the family someone was born into.

Most of those who moved to East before 1910, remained there. Similarly, few that had not yet moved to East by 1910, moved there afterwards. Most of those from cohort 1 who moved to East early on, remained living in Oosterparkbuurt or moved to Transvaalbuurt and stayed there. Although some have stated that Jews moved back and forth between the old Jewish core and Amsterdam East,¹¹⁹ our flows show that this was rare. At most, Jews moved from Weesperbuurt to Amsterdam East. Many of the first cohort also remained in Plantage/Weesper for long periods of time.

Relocations to South occurred later in time. By 1900, only one member of our first cohort had moved to De Pijp. David Mot (1875–1950) had lived in the Kerkstraat, across the Amstel from the Weesperstraat in district Z, before moving to the Govert Flinckstraat in De Pijp in 1899. Soon after, David moved to the Tweede Jan Steenstraat and remained there at least until 1940. By 1910, 10 of his 107 peers from the same birth cohort had made the trek to South. In 1940, 20 more resided in South.

Members of our second cohort made the move to De Pijp earlier. Already four of them lived in De Pijp by 1890. Judith Pais–Van Es (1885) was the first in our sample to be born there. Together with her family, she frequently moved between the older and newer parts of De Pijp and Amsterdam East. After her marriage, Judith and her husband settled in the Nieuwe Pijp, moving to the Rivierenbuurt in 1934.

Besides differences between cohorts, we can also note distinct differences between diamond worker specializations. Due to the limited sample sizes, this variation can most astutely be seen by comparing cleavers, the elite of the industry, and brilliant polishers, in the middle of the workers' distribution. Since relatively few men were trained as cleavers after the first cohort, we limit the comparison to the first cohort. This cohort counted 24 polishers and 11 cleavers. Among the brilliant polishers, 13 were born in old core of the Jewish Quarter. Nine of them were born in R and S, the poorest areas of the neighbourhood, and only two came from C, the richest part. Among the 11 cleavers, only three were born in the Jewish Quarter, of whom two were born in the richest part, C. None of the polishers yet lived in the Weesperbuurt (W), while two of the cleavers did. Two had also moved to Amsterdam East (ZZ) already, compared with only one of the 24 polishers. Since the specialization of workers was strongly correlated with the social position of their parents (see Chapter 4.4), the neighbourhoods that one grew up also correlated strongly with the social status of the father. These differences accumulated over the

¹¹⁹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 196.

span of the life course. In 1930, 10 of the 24 polishers (42%) still lived in the 'old core' of the Jewish Quarter or in Plantage/Weesper. Among the cleavers, only three of 11 (27%) still did, and none of those lived in the 'old core.' Cleavers were also more likely to live in 'Gentile' districts.

Moving to South was correlated with having grown up in diamond workers' families and specializing in higher positions in the industry. For instance, in 1930, 47 percent of the first cohort of female rose cutters lived in East, compared with 32 of the female brilliant cutters. Only 15 percent of rose cutters lived in South, compared with 36 percent of brilliant cutters. 20 percent of brilliant cutters lived outside of the Jewish Quarter, East, or South, compared with 9 percent of the rose cutters. Moving to new neighbourhoods was therefore a function of higher social status for both men and women.

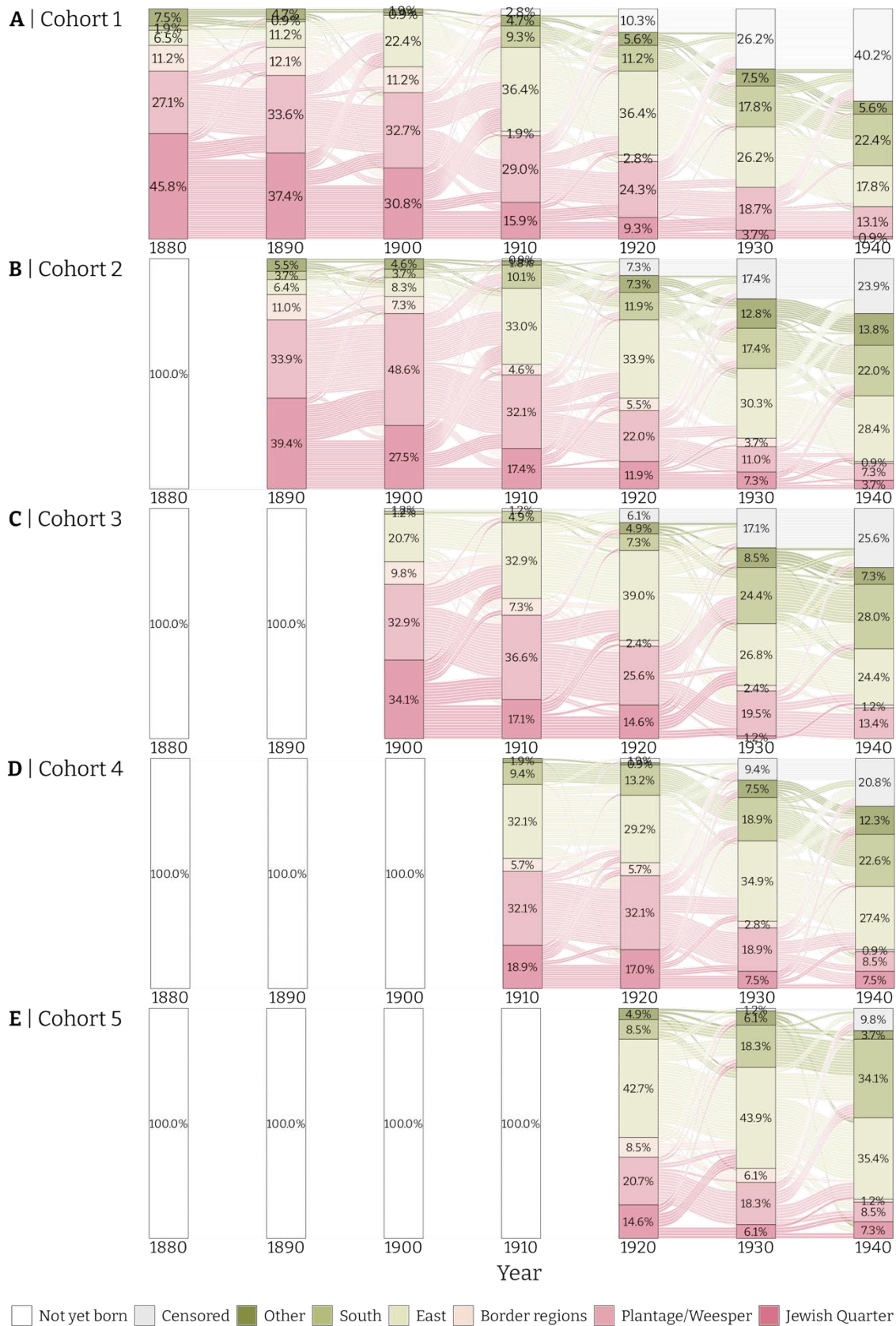


FIGURE 7.1 Residential trajectories of Jewish diamond workers across Amsterdam areas by birth cohort, 1880-1940.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," release 2024.

Note: percentages in grey are 'censored' due to death or out-migration.

7.6.2 Jewish areas

Moving outside of the Jewish Quarter, where some districts counted over 90 percent Jewish residents, often meant moving to neighbourhoods with fewer Jewish neighbours. How Jewish were the neighbourhoods that Jews moved to? And how did those neighbourhoods change in composition over time? Initially, Jewish diamond workers lived in predominantly Jewish districts. Over time, they left areas where most residents were Jewish. Jewish diamond workers, often pioneering in their moves to new neighbourhoods, commonly moved to districts that were new but ‘Gentile’ or ‘Mixed’ in nature. When they arrived, few other Jews had made the move there. The diamond workers arrived at the same time as Gentiles similarly aiming for better housing circumstances and with the money to do so. Thus, until 1890, a large number of Jewish diamond workers lived in ‘Gentile’ areas, and until 1920, ‘Mixed’ areas.

The most important ‘Mixed’ district was ZZ, until 1909 the district code for ‘Amsterdam East.’ Later, this neighbourhood split into districts Oosterparkbuurt (WE), Weesperzijde (WG), Transvaalbuurt (WF), and Dapperbuurt (WD). Jews settled in the first three but relatively rarely in the latter.¹²⁰ Thus, in 1920, after Amsterdam East split into the above areas, the first cohort saw a major transition from ‘Mixed’ (5–15%) to districts where Jews have a ‘Heavy Influence’ (30–50%) due to increasing geographic specificity in the data. Compared with Figure 7.1, where we saw that Jews made only small transitions from older to newer neighbourhoods, we see in Figure 7.2 that these flows were often more dramatic in terms of the Jewish population in the destination district. Between 1890 and 1910 we see large flows from Jewish to Mixed areas. These moves primarily saw diamond workers move from Plantage/Weesper to Amsterdam East.

The last two cohorts, despite being somewhat negatively selected in terms of talent—since only Jews with less access to education entered the diamond industry after 1920—were more likely to end up in the Rivierenbuurt and Weesperzijde, neighbourhoods with heavy Jewish influence, and the Transvaalbuurt, considered a Jewish district in 1940. It was also particularly these cohorts that moved to the Nieuwe Pijp.

After 1920, few people continued to leave the Jewish Quarter, except for cohort 4 seen in Panel D. Between 1920 and 1930, these Jews moved mostly from Weesperbuurt and the old Jewish core to a variety of Mixed and Heavy-Jewish-influence areas. They moved to East but also South, and a small number left for district L, in the city centre, or Watergraafsmeer. Many of them had parents that worked as diamond workers, but in relative terms, this group consisted more of lower-status occupations.

¹²⁰ In 1941, the share of Jews in these districts was 35 percent in the Oosterparkbuurt, 46 percent in Weesperzijde, 58 percent in the Transvaalbuurt, and 4 percent in Dapperbuurt.

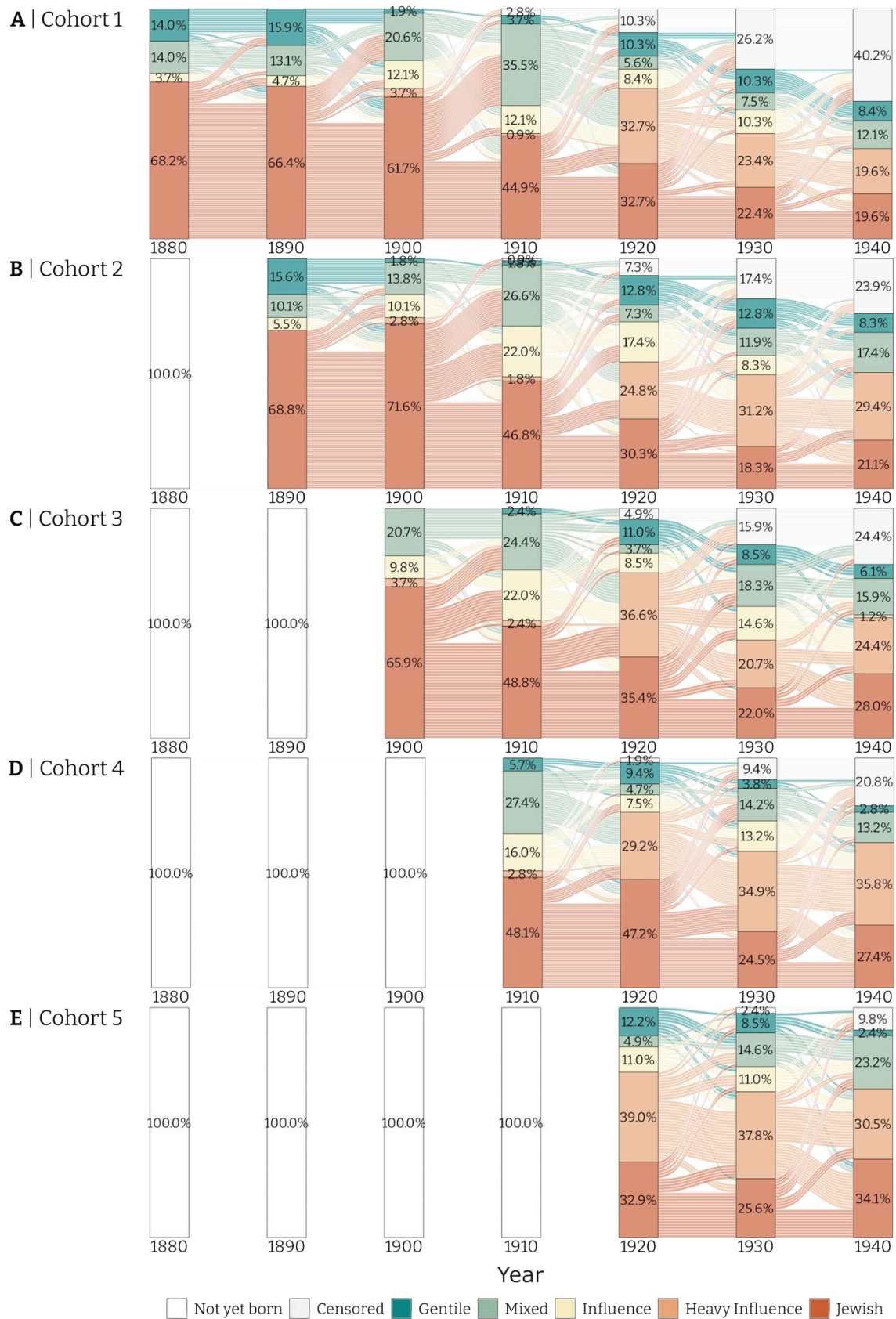


FIGURE 7.2 Residential trajectories of Jewish diamond workers across ethno-religious classifications by birth cohort, 1880-1940.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," release 2024.

Note: percentages in grey are 'censored' due to death or out-migration.

7.6.3 Residential class mobility

Thus far, we have seen that Jews moved to newer neighbourhoods, often with fewer Jewish coresidents. But how did these neighbourhood changes associate with the social class of the neighbourhood? While newer neighbourhoods were often more expensive than the older, poorer neighbourhoods that many mid-nineteenth-century Jews lived in, neighbourhoods were also built for poorer working classes in mind. Moves to newer neighbourhoods and with fewer Jews were therefore not always upward in social class. Here, we look at five different categories of neighbourhood social classes, shown in Figure 7.3.

The residential class mobility of Jewish diamond workers can, in short, be summarised as one towards more middle-class housing. While early-life residences were spread across social classes, few continued to live in poor housing later in life. However, the diamond workers did not exclusively move to prestigious neighbourhoods. In fact, although many of them had lived in the expensive neighbourhoods C and Plantage, by 1940 only a small minority lived in the most prestigious neighbourhoods of Amsterdam.

Until the first decades of the twentieth century, Jewish diamond workers either lived in lower status neighbourhoods, such as Valkenburg and Marken in the Jewish Quarter, or in higher-middle or higher status neighbourhoods, such as C, including the Jodenbreestraat and St. Anthoniebreestraat, and Plantage. From circa 1910 onwards, the diamond workers were most frequently in neighbourhoods classified as 'Mid-Mid,' where residents were similar to those across Amsterdam.

Between 1880 and 1890, and 1890 and 1900, some Jewish diamond workers still moved from 'Low' to 'High' status neighbourhoods. These Jews moved from the poorer areas of the Jewish Quarter to districts C and V (Plantage). These movements are symbolic of Jews' upward social mobility at the end of the nineteenth century. After 1900, however, such drastic moves were less common. By 1900, much fewer Jews lived in the poorest parts of the Jewish Quarter, and many increased their residential status more incrementally, progressively moving into more (upper-)middle class neighbourhoods. This was only possible through the expansion of liveable districts in Amsterdam. Between 1900 and 1910, we see a massive expansion of the 'Mid-Mid' category. This is the result of the Oosterparkbuurt, which initially was home to mostly poorer workers, but later housed many of thriving skilled workers, including the diamond workers. By 1930, nearly half of all our diamond workers lived in a Middle-Middle class neighbourhood. These included the Weesperbuurt, Oosterparkbuurt, Weesperzijde, and the Nieuwe Pijp area, all areas built after the expansion of the diamond industry in the 1870s.

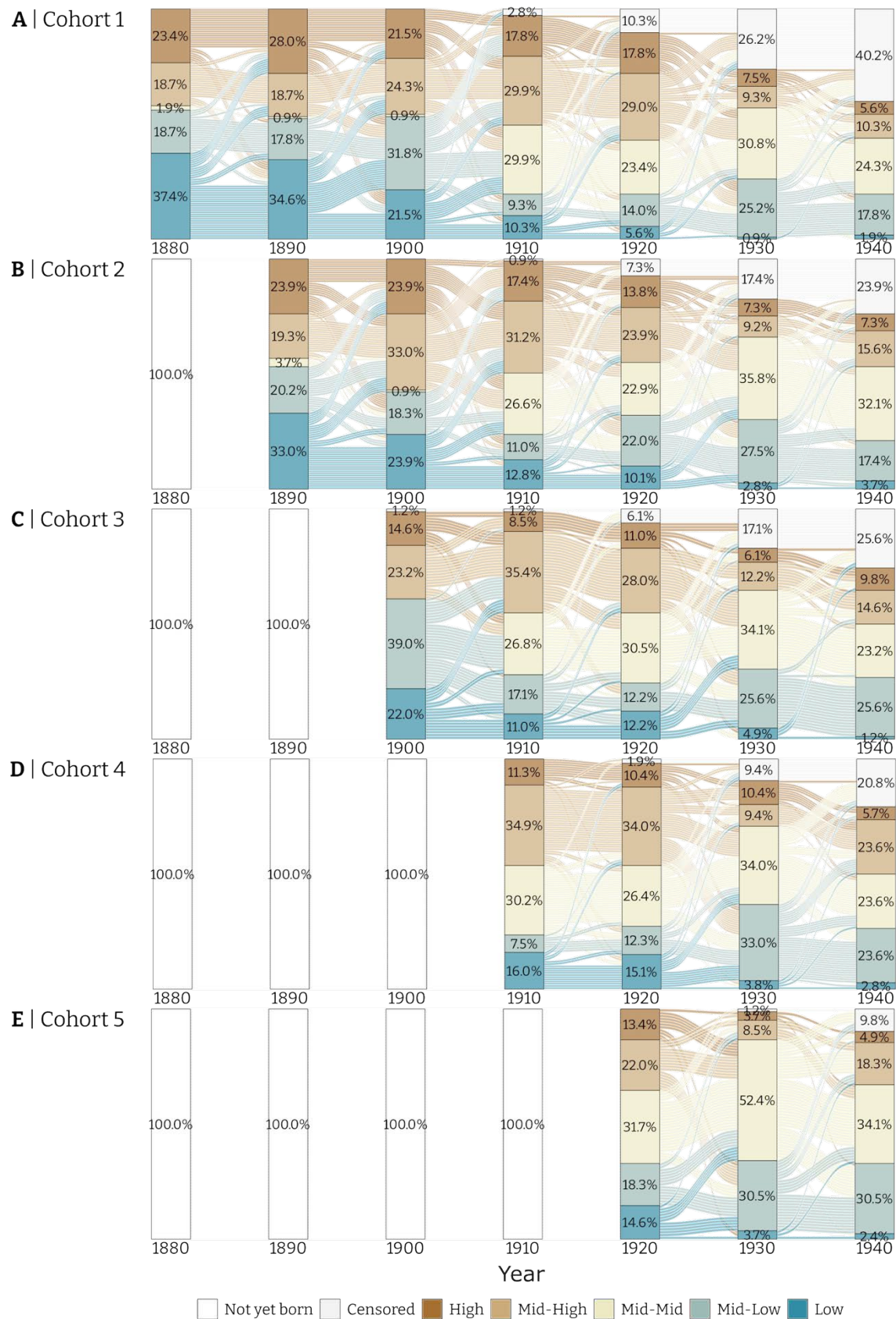


FIGURE 7.3 Residential trajectories of Jewish diamond workers across social class classifications by birth cohort, 1880-1940.

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," release 2024.

Note: percentages in grey are 'censored' due to death or out-migration.

7.6.4 *Types of movers*

Putting the three district categories together—area, percentage of co-ethnics, and the socioeconomic composition of the neighbourhood—allows us to categorise the diamond workers as different types of movers. Although the average diamond worker was a pioneer among the Jewish (skilled) labourers, moving to newer and better neighbourhoods with fewer Jews, not all followed the same path. Part of this could be explained by the social upbringing and careers of the workers. Those with fathers in higher status positions, including those in the diamond industry, often had already left the Jewish Quarter before or during adolescence. Better positions in the diamond industry allowed them to afford moving to more expensive neighbourhoods. Others were less fortunate and, perhaps through a stronger association to the Jewish Quarter, remained there their entire lives.

‘Remainers’

One group of diamond workers never left the Jewish Quarter or returned soon after they had left. This was a relatively small group, but a culturally important one, nonetheless. For some, this was the result of renting good housing or homeownership in the Jewish Quarter. Most people left the Jewish Quarter due to a lack of good housing; thus, if one owned a proper house, they were less incentivised to leave. Mina Dreese-Aap (1880–1943), a merchant’s daughter, co-resided with her parents in a good house in the Waterlooplein district from 1914 until World War II. During this time, Mina contributed to the household income through her thriving career in the diamond industry which lasted until 1931. In her case, high incomes did not spur residential mobility, but rather kept her immobile in the old core of the Jewish Quarter, surrounded by other Jews. Others remained in the Jewish Quarter due to less fortunate economic conditions, such as recurring unemployment or the destruction of their homes after 1916.

‘Quick pioneers’

Another group was quick to leave the Jewish Quarter, moving to less Jewish and more expensive neighbourhoods. In earlier cohorts, these persons moved to De Pijp or Oosterparkbuurt, and in later cohorts this type of mover relocated to the Transvaalbuurt or Amsterdam South at young ages. In many cases, these early pioneers continued to make use of new housing opportunities in the city, moving from the old Jewish Quarter to East and later to South. Thus, they initiated patterns of mobility later seen across the average Jewish population. Alexander Booleman (1873–1942) was one of our diamond workers that lived in each of the districts that became popular among Jews. Alexander was born in a diamond worker’s family in neighbourhood P, one of the lower-middle class neighbourhoods in the Jewish Quarter. Soon after his birth, his family moved to Weesperbuurt, swiftly followed by a move to Plantage in 1876. Before Alexander’s tenth birthday, they had relocated to the Swammerdamstraat in the new Weesperzijde. After moving to Hilversum—where a small diamond centre was located—and back, he settled in the expensive Valeriusstraat near the Vondelpark in 1916, and after a prolonged stay in Antwerp, he moved to the Jekerstraat in the Rivierenbuurt. In doing so, Alexander continued a pattern, started by his parents, of moving to new neighbourhoods when they became available. Rachel Judels (1880–1942) also moved often in her youth. She was born in the Weesperbuurt, the daughter of a cobbler, but her family soon moved back to Marken. In the 1880s, the family moved to De Pijp, to the Oosterparkbuurt, temporarily

to Z—the southern end of the ‘Canal Belt’—and back to the Nieuwe Heerengracht in the Jewish Quarter. After continuing to move between these districts for most of her life, she settled in the Rijnstraat in the Rivierenbuurt in 1925. For her, the frequent moves may be explained more by the impact of economic instability than chasing new opportunities.

‘Real pioneers’

While those moving to newly-built and mixed neighbourhoods should rightfully be considered pioneers among Jewish labourers, some ventured beyond the limits of neighbourhoods close to the Jewish Quarter. They moved to the neighbourhoods in Amsterdam West, where few Jews would settle, or to the newer districts across the IJ in Amsterdam North. Boaz Menist (1874–1933) was one such pioneer. Boaz was born in the poor Houtkopersburgwal in the Jewish Quarter, the son of a diamond setter. In his early life, his family moved to the Rechtboomsloot street, stretching the central districts Nieuwmarkt and Lastage. These districts became a buffer for the Jewish Quarter when it became especially overcrowded. In 1903, Boaz moved from the Weesperbuurt to Antwerp, where he worked for eight years and met and got married to his Belgian–Jewish partner. In 1911 he returned to Amsterdam, moving to the Eerste van Swindenstraat in the Dapperbuurt, a district northeast from the Oosterparkbuurt where nearly all residents were Gentile. In 1917 he moved to “Irisstraat across the IJ,” as it reads on his membership card; even fewer Jews settled there. His residential trajectory in Amsterdam came to end with emigration to New York in 1919. Boaz’ life story is a prime example of the correlations that could exist between ‘pioneering’ demographic events such as residential mobility, intermarriages, and emigration.

Marianna Vleeschhouwer Duyts (1891–1943) was born to a ‘meat seller’ in the Utrechtsedwarsstraat in district Z, the southeastern end of the Grachtengordel and across the Amstel from the nineteenth century diamond epicentre, Roeterseiland. In 1902, her family moved back to the Uilenburgerstraat in the Jewish Quarter. Economic need may have been a factor, because the Uilenburgerstraat was one of poorer quality and later partially destroyed. In 1914, she moved to Zaandam for a brief period, marrying her partner, a diamond worker. The same year, the couple relocates to Buiksloot, an area that would be annexed by Amsterdam in 1921. By 1941, Buiksloot only counted nine Jews in a population exceeding 3000. Later on, Marianna and her husband moved around in the Stadionbuurt, an area for mixed social classes, including those from the poor working classes, built in the 1920s to address the city’s housing deficit. Marianna’s family was not rich, did not intermarry, and did not religiously disaffiliate. They did, however, move to areas where virtually no Jews had lived. Moving to the Stadionbuurt, where housing was cheap, may have been an economic rather than an assimilatory decision.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at the residential mobility of Jews and Jewish diamond workers. We have examined how these changes in living spaces were associated with living among co-ethnic or Gentile peers, and how the neighbourhood changes of Jews varied in social standing. This showed that, since the late nineteenth century, Jews experienced remarkable neighbourhood upgrading. Nearly all Jews left the old Jewish Quarter for larger, cleaner, and more equipped houses and streets. These changes were not always easy. Modern amenities required new residents to ‘learn how to live [op

stand],’ and exposure to Gentiles could cause friction. Nonetheless, as Amsterdam expanded, Jews spread out over the new districts in the nearest vicinity to the old Jewish Quarter. In doing so, they left streets where nearly all their neighbours had been Jews and moved to lanes where neighbours could be of any denomination. Partly through choice, partly through institutional forces, Jews often ended up in the same districts and the same parts of the streets. Jews from the same districts faced the same needs for newer houses and were sometimes placed in the same or neighbouring houses by building cooperations or landlords.¹²¹ Moreover, after enough Jews arrived in these initially mixed denominational neighbourhoods, Gentiles increasingly left for other neighbourhoods, leaving some of these districts to quickly ‘turn Jewish.’ The Weesperzijde, Oosterparkbuurt, Transvaalbuurt, and later the Rivierenbuurt, were all areas where Jews and Gentiles arrived at the same time, but where the Jewish presence progressively grew, creating new, highly Jewish spaces. Physical representations of the growing Jewish presence in these areas include (Jewish-owned) diamond factories and newly-constructed Synagogues.

Moving to newer neighbourhoods together with other Jews was not always the intention. The timing of Jews’ residential moves suggests that often it was the result of a dire need for improved housing rather than a deliberately timed decision. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Jewish Quarter was overcrowded. Consequently, Jews with the resources to do so, moved to new neighbourhoods as soon as the streets were completed. These Jews searched “for light and air,” as Jacques Presser put it.¹²² New Jewish spatial concentrations followed as Jews, facing the same housing pressures, moved at the same time, were limited in their residence by the *pillarised* building corporations, were placed in the same houses or streets by those same building corporations and landlords, and following lacking Gentile inflows or growing outflows from increasingly Jewish streets and neighbourhoods. Few upper-middle-class Gentiles moved to Plantage, considering the proximity to the Jewish Quarter as a social hurdle,¹²³ whereas middle-class Gentiles slowly moved out of Amsterdam East to make space for stronger Jewish concentrations. Thus, even though Amsterdam East was never designed to be a Jewish neighbourhood, but rather one for all types of families in all variations of social class and ethno-religious backgrounds, it progressively became more Jewish over time.

Another factor, clearly observed among the diamond workers, is the dimension of work. Both Jewish and Gentile diamond workers settled in close vicinity to the factories where they worked. Contemporaneously, new factories were constructed near workers’ living spaces, which further fostered socioeconomic ties and belonging to the neighbourhood. Moving far away from the diamond industry was infeasible for a Jewish diamond worker hoping to work for a Jewish employer. Livelihoods were also one of the main reasons listed by Jews who desired to continue living in the soon-to-be destroyed areas of the Jewish Quarter.¹²⁴ Besides the diamond factories, physical representations of work in the neighbourhoods are also seen in the Waterlooplein market and cart stalls for peddlers and sellers in the Transvaalbuurt. Yet, regardless of this strong link between work and residence, Jewish diamond workers were pioneers in the exodus from the

¹²¹ Interview of Liesbeth van Weezel in Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 176.

¹²² Presser, *Louter verwachting*, 43.

¹²³ Wagenaar, “Van ‘gemengde’ naar ‘gelede’ wijken,” 174–75.

¹²⁴ Hakker, “De sanering van de Amsterdamse Jodenbuurt 1900–1940,” 40.

Jewish Quarter and moved to more sanitary neighbourhoods with fewer Jewish neighbours.

The destinations of Jews' residential mobility suggest that the primary reason for relocation was not to incorporate oneself more deeply in non-Jewish society. If this had been the case, we would have observed more Jews moving to the western ends of De Pijp, rather than limit themselves to the eastern parts of the streets, closest to the Jewish Quarter and Amsterdam East. Instead, most Jews aimed to live in nicer houses, ideally while paying less in rent. Moves to Plantage and Weesperbuurt between 1860 and 1900 coincided with massive increases in living conditions as circumstances had been abysmal in their former homes. "We had to leave the [Jewish Quarter] because our home was declared uninhabitable. The bedbugs practically fell in your soup, so to speak" remarked Nathan Stodel.¹²⁵ Subsidised rents attracted Jews to Amsterdam East in the following decades, and even Amsterdam South only became a desirable destination after rents were drastically lowered.¹²⁶

However, although it may not have been their intention, these moves *did* lead Jews to live closer to Gentiles. In 1859, the average Jew lived in a neighbourhood where 65 percent of other persons were Jewish. By 1906, this had dropped to 50 percent, and in 1941 to 36 percent.¹²⁷ For the first time since their arrival in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Jews now comprised a minority of the residents in their neighbourhoods. Jews moved away from neighbourhoods where they were the majority of the inhabitants, and instead started living in areas where they were merely overrepresented. The Transvaalbuurt was the only area built after 1900 where, by 1941, a majority of residents were Jewish. However, this was caused by outmigration of Gentiles from the area in the 1930s. Ever since Jews started leaving the Jewish Quarter, they moved *towards* Gentiles. Gentiles did the same until the 1930s, when they increasingly started moving away from the Jews. The increase in segregation measured by earlier researchers between 1930 and 1941 is therefore largely the result of a 'Gentile flight,' more so than Jews deliberately moving to create Jewish areas. This is backed by earlier discussions on Jewish migration. In Amsterdam South, where 40 percent of Jews lived in 1941, Jews were said to have only a limited influence on the neighbourhood's culture.¹²⁸ Thus, Jews did not seek this neighbourhood to create a new Jewish space, but rather to live in improved residential conditions. Furthermore, although I have followed the literature here and defined neighbourhoods as 'Jewish,' 'Mixed,' or 'Gentile,' based on the percentage of Jewish residents, neighbourhoods were rarely *fully* Jewish or Gentile. Culture was shared within living spaces. Eyewitness accounts attest to the mutual adaption of Jews and Gentiles to one another.¹²⁹ Especially in the socialist areas, individuals self-identified by their shared political beliefs, rather than their diverging religious heritage.¹³⁰

Other than moving closer to non-Jews, Jews' movements across the city also strengthened and redefined spatial class differences. In the mid-nineteenth century, Jews of all social classes lived in close proximity. In the decades to follow, Jews

¹²⁵ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 180–81.

¹²⁶ Hendriks and Van Velzen, *Van de Montelbaanstoren naar het Minervaplein*, 154.

¹²⁷ Calculated based on Jewish and Gentile counts by neighbourhood.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹²⁹ Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 182.

¹³⁰ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 182.

increasingly segregated by class. Elite Jews moved to Plantage, and later to the Apollobuurt. Middle class Jews moved to Amsterdam South, and Jewish skilled labourers moved to Amsterdam East. This trend of relocating by class was comparable to the 'Gentile flight.' Once enough Jews from lower social classes arrived, middle- and upper-class Jews looked for better housing with more of their socioeconomic peers. This is what happened in the Plantage, once one of the richer Jewish neighbourhoods, but which increasingly became a poorer district as elite Jews left. For middle-class Jews we observe a similar trend in the Transvaalbuurt, where the former residents of the destroyed parts of the Jewish Quarter were housed. Not all left the neighbourhood and, as a result, micro-segregation by social class between and even within streets is identifiable.

Another side-effect of better housing was the availability of new amenities. Importantly, in their new living spaces, Jews' offspring had access to schools of higher quality than had existed in the Jewish Quarter. Not only in their streets, but also in the non-denominational schools, Jews were directly face-to-face with their Gentile peers. By changing the opportunity structure for work and schooling, residential mobility could impact future upward social mobility, both within and across generations. Chapter 8 will look at how the Jews, and especially the Jewish diamond workers, fared in terms of education by looking at the children of the persons whose life courses we have studied thus far.

8

Sparkling Students or Disadvantaged Dropouts? Educational Outcomes of the Next Generation

“The ANDB library catalogue functioned as a literary guide. By reading these instructive books, the working people sometimes discovered that they themselves had hidden talents, so some of them became actors, musicians, poets, scientists. Others plugged passionately into new arts and crafts and became innovative interior decorators or ceramists.”

— Meyer Sluyser¹

8.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the intergenerational analyses presented in Chapter 4 by focusing on the next generation. As we saw, Amsterdam-Jewish sons in general were progressively entering higher-status occupations relative to their fathers at the time of their respective marriages. The children of Jewish diamond workers also appeared to have higher likelihoods of occupying ‘elite occupations’ starting in the 1920s, especially when compared with the sons of Gentile diamond workers. A widespread explanation for these elevated rates of attending secondary and tertiary education among Jewish diamond workers’ sons are Jews’ greater appreciation for learning.² In Amsterdam, this was supplemented by the encouragement for self-improvement offered by the ANDB and its leaders.³ If the union indeed increased members’ willingness to invest in their children’s education, then the sons and daughters of diamond workers would be seen to achieve higher levels of educational attainment than Jews and Gentiles from other social backgrounds. This can be tested by using conscription records, which consistently reported the educational attainment and occupations of all 18-to-20-year-old men since 1919.⁴ On top of comparing Jews’ and Gentiles’ educational attainment directly, this source combined with our life courses enable me to answer three additional questions: (1) did sons of Jewish diamond workers obtain higher education levels than Gentile diamond workers sons; and (2) did Jewish diamond workers obtain more education than

¹ Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 59.

² For a discussion of generally higher levels of educational attainment among Jews, see Reuven Brenner and Nicholas Kiefer, “The Economics of the Diaspora: Discrimination and Occupational Structure,” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 29.3 (1981): 517–34; see Section 4.3.2 of this dissertation for a discussion of the mixed empirical results historically.

³ In Chapter 3 we discussed how the union pushed to educate the members through their library, newsletter, and educative trips and courses.

⁴ Education was already reported earlier, but inconsistently and not for everyone. Since 1919 the education was recorded for everyone regardless of educational attainment. Between 1919 and 1923 education was reported if the conscript had surpassed basic primary education. It is therefore assumed that anyone who was listed with no education during those years only had primary education.

Jews whose fathers had different careers; and (3) how did educational attainment vary with Jews' integration?⁵ This chapter will additionally examine the varying occupational structures of young Jewish and Gentile conscripts by socioeconomic and ethno-religious background, as well as assess how occupational choices and educational attainment were related in Amsterdam in the 1920s and '30s.

Earlier research has indicated that there was already a relationship between social class backgrounds and educational attainment in the past. This body of research has also used conscript records but primarily for the post-World War II era.⁶ For instance, Huang and co-authors studied all conscripted men born between 1944 and 1947 and found that education levels varied considerably by the occupational status of their parents.⁷ Sons of higher status fathers were found to have significantly higher levels of educational attainment. Such studies show that conscription records can be used to study educational attainment. The educational attainment of pre-World War II conscripts has, however, not been studied directly yet. This chapter will therefore be the first examination of conscripted Dutch men's educational attainment prior to 1940 while also contrasting educational attainments between Jewish and Gentile men within the same urban landscape of Amsterdam. Additionally, I will pay considerable attention to conscripts' social backgrounds, measured as their fathers' social class around the sons' births. The data presented in this chapter comprises 743 sons, split equally among Jewish and Gentile families, born between 1900 and 1920 and pooled from the various life course samples used in this dissertation. Since women were not recorded on conscript records, and unfortunately no other sources are available for structural comparisons of women's educational attainment, this chapter will focus solely on sons.

8.2 Background

As discussed in the preliminary overview of the educational opportunities of Jews presented in Chapter 2.6, early-nineteenth-century Jewish poor schools were of particularly low quality relative to Gentile schools. State enforcement of Dutch, rather than Yiddish, instruction in these schools improved the connection between the Jewish poor schools and the general labour market. Significant improvements in the quality of education followed from the Education Law of 1857, which paved the way for equal opportunities in primary schooling and greater attendance of Jewish pupils in non-denominational public schools. Henceforth the differences in the quality of schooling between Jews and Gentiles were minimised, although some differences could persist by neighbourhood and for those with private education. The transition from Jewish poor schools to non-denominational public schools, particularly in the last four decades of the nineteenth century, has been claimed to have raised attendance levels of Jewish pupils, increased their human capital attainment, and accelerated their integration into

⁵ Integration is included by comparing sons of intermarried or disaffiliated parents with a representative sample of Jewish sons. Due to small sample sizes intermarriage and disaffiliated are grouped.

⁶ Ying Huang, Frans van Poppel, and Bertie Lumey, "Differences in Height by Education among 371,105 Dutch Military Conscripts," *Economics & Human Biology* 17 (2015): 202–7; Kristina Thompson, "Does Size Matter? Body Height and Later-Life Outcomes in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Netherlands" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2022).

⁷ Huang, Van Poppel, and Lumey, "Differences in Height by Education among 371,105 Dutch Military Conscripts," 205.

mainstream society.⁸ Samples of Dutch populations and national statistics, like the educational census of 1930, indeed suggest that Jews attained higher levels of education than other religious groups.⁹ On average, Jews were more than twice as likely to attend secondary education in 1880 and 1920, as well as having graduated from universities by 1930. However, these statistics may be tainted by selection biases or contrast incomparable groups. For instance if university graduates more likely originated from urban areas, as was true for Jews, Jews' success in attaining university education could be overstated by comparing them with a predominantly rural Gentile population.¹⁰ Differences could, hypothetically, be considerably smaller if their comparison group was urban-born Gentiles. Moreover, recent research has shown a correlation between being part of the broader Jewish 'elite' and higher educational attainment,¹¹ illustrating how class is an important covariate to include. Aggregated national statistics hide such group differences in regional origins and class backgrounds. Statistics regarding university education further limit results to the highest level of education possible. Since only a small minority of Dutch residents belonged to this educational group, using more common educational levels would be more fitting for comparisons. Microdata, such as collected from our life course database and conscription records, allow for more informed comparisons.

We have further reason to dive into more specific microdata beyond the limits of aggregated national statistics. While a growing research body has ascribed a greater historical willingness to invest in education of Jews generally,¹² there are additional indications that diamond workers were particularly incentivised to accrue human capital.¹³ For instance, female diamond workers were motivated to join the ANDB through educational courses; and the union strongly urged workers to spend their time on self-improvement, especially after successively lowering working hours from over 12 hours daily in the nineteenth century to eight hours in 1911.¹⁴ The union motivated workers to spend their 24 hours in a day equally between work, rest, and self-improvement. To achieve the latter the union provided various courses, supplied members with ample news and discussions in its weekly, and established an impressive library in their headquarters prior to the opening of the first public library in Amsterdam. The union succeeded in attracting female union members through educational courses they offered,¹⁵ and anecdotal evidence suggests that the children of

⁸ Dodde, *Joods onderwijs*.

⁹ Mandemakers, "Gymnasiaal en middelbaar onderwijs," 615. See also the Educational Census of 1930. This census distinguishes university graduates by religious affiliation. Consequently, non-affiliated Jews and Gentiles are not counted among their religious groups. These estimates are therefore less reliable if the degree of selection into disaffiliation varied by religious group.

¹⁰ This is what we find in the Netherlands according to educational census of 1930; it is also what Abramitzky and Halaburda found for interwar Poland. Abramitzky and Halaburda, "Were Jews in Interwar Poland More Educated?"

¹¹ Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 111–20.

¹² Botticini and Eckstein, "From Farmers to Merchants"; Becker, Rubin, and Woessmann, "Religion in Economic History."

¹³ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 172; Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 114–16, 149–51, 317–19, 325–26, 500–502, 507–8, 644–48; Hofmeester, "The Amsterdam Diamond 'Marketplace' and the Jewish Experience."

¹⁴ For a complete overview of the ascribed impact of the union on educational attainment, see Chapter 3.3 or Schrevel, "Een stem in het kapittel," 53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

diamond workers also benefitted from these opportunities.¹⁶ The presence of such a strong union, and particularly one which heavily encouraged its workers to educate themselves and their children, are most likely related to higher levels of educational attainment among this group. Limited evidence of this was already provided in Chapter 4. Grooms whose fathers had worked in the diamond industry generally worked in higher-status occupations than other grooms with fathers employed as skilled labourers. This was especially true for Jewish diamond workers' sons (cf. Figures 4.1 and 4.3). Chapter 7 also indicated that Jewish diamond workers experienced rapid residential upgrading. Many Jewish diamond workers, especially those born between 1873 and 1892, had grown up in the old Jewish Quarter and, later in life, had moved to newer neighbourhoods in Amsterdam South and East. Their children therefore grew up in much nicer neighbourhoods than they themselves had, which was associated with various benefits including access to decent schools. Comparing the educational attainment of Jewish and Gentile sons of diamond workers and general, representative samples of fathers can illustrate whether Jews, and particularly Jewish diamond workers, indeed attained higher levels of education when compared with peers from similar social backgrounds.

8.3 Data

8.3.1 Conscription records

Mandatory conscription in the Netherlands was introduced under French rule in 1811. Three years later, it was decided that one conscript would be selected per 100 inhabitants. Potential conscripts could avoid selection in a number of ways. They could be too short, have a brother already in service, or pay for someone to take their place. However, in each case the potential conscript would still go through the required medical check-up. Persons who needed to undergo a health check-up were named in large registers commonly referred to as “alphabetical lists.”¹⁷ The results of the check-ups were recorded in the militia registers (*militieregisters*), also known as conscription records. It is these records that contain the information we need for our analyses.

Illustration 8.1 offers an example of a militia registry entry. It concerns Lion Abas, born on 16 September 1908 in Amsterdam. His father, Pinas, is listed as deceased, but his mother, Clara van Beek, was still alive. Abas lived with his mother and stepfather, J. (Joseph) Goudket at the latter's address, Jodenbreestraat 42. On the check-up date, 16 March 1927 (not shown on the illustration), Lion worked as an office clerk in the administrative department of a ‘radio and electro’ company. Below his occupation we read that Lion graduated from a three-year course of the *Hogere Burgerschool* (HBS; ‘Higher Civic School’), then the main type of secondary education,¹⁸ with a diploma in 1926. Compiling such information for a large number of conscripts with distinct ethno-religious backgrounds can tell us more about group differences in educational attainment.

¹⁶ Benima, *Kippesoep was ondenkbaar zonder saffraan*, 50–51; Van Praag, *Een lange jeugd*, 108–10; Sluyser, *Mr. Monday and Other Tales of Jewish Amsterdam*, 58–59.

¹⁷ Björn Quanjer and Jan Kok, “Drafting the Dutch: Selection Biases in Dutch Conscript Records in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Social Science History* 44.3 (2020): 503.

¹⁸ Petrus Boekholt and Engelina de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland vanaf de middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd* (Assen, 1987), 273.

ILLUSTRATION 8.1 An example of an entry in the militia registers, 1927.

Source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam 5182#4466.

15	260	3/69	1. Aas 2. Lion	1. Amst. 16 2. Sept. 1908	1. Pinaas (overl.) 2. a. van Beek b. Clara	1. a. Amst. 2. a. id. b. J. Breckhaert jr. pa. Haarckhag. J. Goudket.	1. a. Antoon. Oedeinde. Radio- en Tele. 1 2. a. J. van der. Sedruff. 2. J. van der. B. 3. J. C. 1924	1. a. Meter 2. a. 710 millim.

8.3.2 Our sample

For each son in the various life course samples used throughout this dissertation—random samples of diamond workers (ANDB), the general Jewish population as well as intermarried and disaffiliated Jews (JDJ), and the overall Amsterdam population (HSN)—I collected and transcribed the date of the check-up, the occupation, and the educational attainment. Since the militia registers in Amsterdam consistently recorded the educational attainment since 1919, I only include sons who were conscripted in that year or later. We can find individuals up to 1940, after which the militia registers are only available anonymously, meaning we no longer track individuals based on their names and date of births.

For a small subset of sons it was not possible to retrieve their entry in the militia registers. This could happen if they had died prior to their check-up, their family had left Amsterdam prior to their conscription age, or the conscript had not been born in the Netherlands.¹⁹ In our diamond worker sample, emigrants predominantly consisted of families that moved to Antwerp, while for the other samples migration to other Dutch cities was more common. Nonetheless, attrition rates were low. In total, 743 sons were located that were (i) born between 1900 and 1919; (ii) lived until at least 19; (iii) whose families lived in Amsterdam at the time of their conscription; and (iv) had a health check-up where their education and occupation was recorded.

These 743 conscripts are divided into several categories. First, we have 333 sons of representative Gentiles from our HSN life courses. Their educational attainment reflects that of the general non-Jewish population of Amsterdam. Next, 148 sons of representative Jews from the JDJ database represent the average outcomes in education for the Jewish population of Amsterdam. Additionally, our data contains 128 Jewish sons of diamond workers and 43 sons of Gentile diamond workers observed in our diamond workers' life courses. Comparing them with the general populations will indicate whether diamond workers attained higher levels of education than their average peers. Lastly, 91 sons of 'non-identifying Jews'—a combination of sons where at least one parent had a Jewish background but either disaffiliated from their Synagogues, converted to Christianity, or entered a mixed-faith marriage—showcase the educational attainment of Jews stemming from more integrated families. Altogether, comparing the groups enable preliminary conclusions to be made regarding the impact of being part of the Jewish community, the son of a diamond worker and ANDB member, and the impact of integration on educational attainment and occupational choices while including comparisons within their respective social class origins.

¹⁹ For a discussion on potential biases in the conscript records, see Quanjer and Kok, "Drafting the Dutch."

8.4 Education Levels

In the nineteenth century, primary education was not yet mandatory for all children. Diamond workers commonly introduced their sons, and later their daughters also, to the industry at the early age of 13. In some problematic cases, the union expelled children as young as nine years old from the workplaces. A law introduced in 1900 formally made primary schooling compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 13. After graduating from primary school a number of non-mandatory options were available to extend one's education. The most common of these schools was the MULO ('More Advanced Primary Education,' Dutch: *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*) later known as the ULO. The MULO was introduced in the 1870s but, due to the entrance fees, was not immediately well-attended. In 1875 the Amsterdam MULO's cost varied between 20 and 80 guilders per year.²⁰ For most labourers this was several weeks' worth of wages, although the highly-paid diamond workers required much less labour time to pay for this school. These schools were not yet seen as secondary education, but rather as an extension of primary school education.²¹ Although in theory not intended to be the endpoint of the educational trajectory, instead seen as the precursor to secondary schools, in practice it was rarely followed by other forms of schooling. In the nineteenth century the MULO replaced older forms of post-primary education, including the 'French schools.'²²

Another common form of post-primary schooling was applied vocational schooling. This education was offered in various forms. It was commonly provided in trade schools (*ambachtsscholen*) which offered training for a range of general, skilled occupations. Here we should also note several specific schools, such as schools that trained teachers—although their student body had attended secondary schooling as well—non-tertiary schools for the fine arts (*kunstnijverheidsscholen*), or training institutes for seafarers and marines (*Kweekschool voor de Zeevaart*). More technical education, for instance to train future engineers, was offered in *Middelbare* and *Hogere Technische Scholen* ('Middle and Higher Technical Schools'; MTS and HTS), which became available in Amsterdam after 1910,²³ or in the 'Electrotechnical School' (*Electrotechnische school*, ETS).

Practical education was also offered to be used in commerce and business. These *Handelsscholen* ('business schools') were administratively considered separately from the more general trade schools as they were formally included in the Education Law of 1857. Initially, these schools were seen as a precursor to the HBS, but later business schools were also attended by HBS graduates oriented towards commerce, blurring the order between the two forms of education. The business schools offered practical training in foreign languages, bookkeeping, business correspondence, and other qualities needed for successful employment in the commercial sector. Outside of the formal business schools, these skills could also be acquired in private courses or from other institutions. One example is Mercurius, the union for office clerks and other

²⁰ Wouter Marchand, "Onderwijs mogelijk maken: twee eeuwen invloed van studiefinanciering op de toegankelijkheid van het onderwijs in Nederland (1815–2015)" (PhD diss., University of Groningen, 2014), 85.

²¹ Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland*, 177.

²² Marchand, "Onderwijs mogelijk maken," 85.

²³ Hans Schippers, *Van tusschenlieden tot ingenieurs. De geschiedenis van het Hoger Technisch Onderwijs in Nederland* (Hilversum, 1989), 27–29.

white-collar personnel, which offered certified business courses.²⁴ More commonly, however, prospective office workers attended the public business schools either during the day or at night after their workday ended. After 1920, the popularity of business schools decreased due to increased competition from HBS schools, although in Amsterdam business schools remained a popular option.²⁵

Up to the latter half of the nineteenth century, secondary education was primarily offered in private ‘French schools’ and Gymnasiums. An education law in 1863 added the *Hogere Burgerscholen* (‘Higher Burger Schools,’ HBS) which soon became the most common form of secondary education. The HBS was often costly and attendance was highly esteemed.²⁶ The HBS offered a 3-year and a 5-year curriculum, where the shorter course often led pupils to follow business courses afterwards or to start their careers early, while the 5-year course was intended primarily for prospective university students. The popularity of HBS schools rose in the twentieth century and, as secondary education expanded, so did the options for attending various other schools in Amsterdam. The city’s only gymnasium, the Barleaus Gymnasium (founded as a Latin School in 1342; as Gymnasium in 1847), was joined by a second school, the Vossius Gymnasium, in 1926. These schools were among the most elite institutions for secondary education in the Netherlands.

TABLE 8.1 Potential educational levels in conscript records ca. 1920-1940.

Schooling level	Includes	Approximate age at completion
Primary only	Primary	13
Primary and additional schooling	Additional non-secondary years of schooling (ULO; MULO; continuation schools; private tutoring)	14-16
Vocational schooling	Vocational schooling; music classes if occupation is musician	14-16
Secondary education	Gymnasium; HBS; MTS/HTS/ETS	15-18
Business education	Public or private business schools	15-18
University	University or Conservatorium	18-21

Source: author’s classification based on Boekholt and De Booy (1987) *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland*. Dotted lines refer to distinctions made later in the chapter.

Table 8.1 presents the hierarchy that will be used throughout this chapter. Key indicators will be the share of sons who (a) achieved any additional years of schooling beyond the basic seven years of primary schooling; and (b) achieved at least one year of secondary, business, or university education.

²⁴ Reinalda, “Bedienden georganiseerd,” 133, 351.

²⁵ Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland*, 207–8, 269–70.

²⁶ Jules Schelvis, who attended the HBS in the 1930s, remarked on the high number of classmates from notable parents. As the son of a diamond worker, Jules was one of the less affluent children in the class. Schelvis, *Een jeugd in Amsterdam*, 83–84.

8.5 Educational attainment

Taking as a starting point the two ‘general samples—i.e. the samples based on random selection in the JDJ and HSN databases—we can get a clear idea of how educational attainment was distributed among the ethno-religious groups. These are presented in Figure 8.1. The left panel presents the educational distribution of Gentile sons; Jewish sons’ educational levels are shown in the right panel. As the Figure shows, nearly half of all conscripted in each group had no more than primary education; this was true for 45.6 percent of Gentile and 43.2 of Jewish conscripts. In other words, over half of conscripts experienced at least one year of education beyond basic primary education. It is this subsequent education where Jews and Gentiles diverged. In terms of frequency, only having primary education was followed by vocational schooling for Gentiles. One in four (25.5%) Gentiles gained (semi-)skilled occupational training, compared with one in twelve (8.1%) Jews. Instead, Jews were more frequently found in the MULO schools (20.3%), in public or private commercial training (13.5%), or in HBS schools (10.8%). Seemingly, Jews more often chose theoretical types of schooling, whereas Gentiles were more commonly found in practical schooling types.

If we add together the bottom three and the top three education forms, we can approximate those who were trained for manual occupations and those trained for non-manual occupations. 71.6 percent of Jewish men were trained for the manual group, compared with 82.2 percent of Gentiles. In contrast, 28.4 percent of Jews were found in educational programmes which predominantly led to white-collar work, compared with 17.7 percent of Gentiles. In early-twentieth-century Amsterdam, Jews clearly attained higher levels of non-manual education.

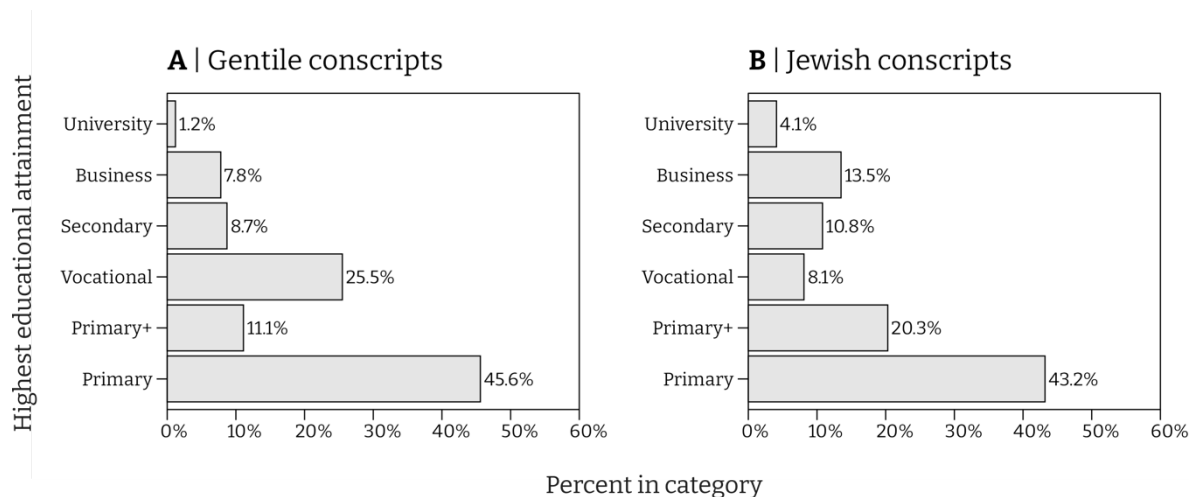


FIGURE 8.1 Educational attainment of representative Jews and Gentiles’ sons, Amsterdam 1919-1940.

Source: author’s calculations using an extension of “ANDB Members’ Life Courses,” 2024 release.

Note: based on 333 Gentile and 148 Jewish conscripts’ educational attainment.

8.5.1 Educational attainment by social class

By limiting our sample to conscripts in Amsterdam, we have already limited the bias towards urban areas that is present in national educational data.²⁷ Another problem mentioned is the difference in social class backgrounds between the different ethno-religious groups. To address this, we can compare the shares of sons in non-manual education within each group by the social class their father held around their birth. If higher levels of educational attainment are more accessible to men originating from higher social class backgrounds, or if coming from such backgrounds makes one value education more, than these rates should be increasing with social class.

As Figure 8.2 shows, this is more or less true for the Gentile community. All sons of higher professionals and managers attained this level of education (panel A), and many of the lower managers and professionals' sons did also (panels B and C). The sons of Gentile unskilled workers rarely attended this type of schooling (panel F), but those born to skilled and semi-skilled workers did (panels D and E). The trends for Jews are similar, although Jewish sons of skilled and semi-skilled workers were more likely to attain this level of education than the Jewish sons of lower managers and professionals. Meanwhile, sons of Jewish unskilled workers had even lower educational attainment than comparable Gentile sons. Jewish sons of lower professionals and managers (panels B and C) show a peculiar difference with similar Gentile sons. While Gentiles with fathers in this category that worked in non-trade occupations had significantly higher levels of educational attainment than sons of fathers working in trade, the difference between these groups is negligible for Jews. Moreover, although sons of Jewish merchants had significantly more education than sons of Gentile merchants, Jewish sons of non-trade lower white collar workers attained non-manual schooling much less frequently than Gentile sons. However, because of small samples of Jewish sons of non-trade lower professionals ($N = 7$) we should be careful not to overinterpret this finding.²⁸

The same trend is seen when we examine any additional years of schooling beyond basic primary education. The differences between Jews and Gentiles are especially pronounced among the skilled and semi-skilled workers' sons. One element at play here is the greater propensity to attend vocational schooling among Gentile conscripts.

The comparison of Jews and Gentiles per social class backgrounds illustrates that Gentiles had higher levels of educational attainment at the tail ends of the class distribution—among lower white-collar workers (panel B), since the sample of higher professionals was too small,²⁹ and unskilled workers (panel F)—whereas Jews had attained higher forms of education in the middle and most densely populated part of the class distribution, i.e. the (semi-)skilled workers (panels D and E). The strong adherence to Social-Democratic ideology among these Jewish sons of (semi-)skilled workers could be seen as an explanation for their higher rates of secondary education. Jewish fathers in these social classes were most affected by the growing Social-Democratic movement

²⁷ Which is generally observed, also in the Dutch educational census of 1930. See also Abramitzky and Halaburda, "Were Jews in Interwar Poland More Educated?"

²⁸ Moreover, only one of these seven sons had no more than basic primary education. One attended vocational schooling, one had multiple years of MULO, and two had private classes in languages.

²⁹ The two Gentile sons and four Jewish sons in this category all achieved at least secondary or higher education.



FIGURE 8.2 Share of conscripts attaining non-manual (secondary, business, or university) education by ethno-religious background and social class of the father, 1919-1940.

Source: author's calculations using an extension of "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release.

Note: based on 333 Gentile and 148 Jewish conscripts' educational attainment.

in Amsterdam.³⁰ The large differences in educational outcomes by social class background also highlights the impact of social class, and perhaps associated income or wealth, on the accessibility to or demand for education. Thus, the average Gentile was more likely to attend vocational schooling because he was more likely to have a father who worked as a skilled worker. But other types of non-economic reasons could also be at play and have impacted the demand for education. The impact of the Socialist movement, and the union for the diamond workers in particular, could potentially explain why sons of Jewish skilled workers attained higher levels of education than the sons of lower-white-collar fathers.

³⁰ For a discussion, see Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 89–90; Frank van As, "Judeo-socialisme? Een verkenning van de relatie tussen het Amsterdamse Joodse proletariaat en de sociaal-democratische beweging, ca. 1870–1940," *Onvoltooid Verleden* 30 (2014): 1–9; Veldhuizen, "De partij," 63–65.

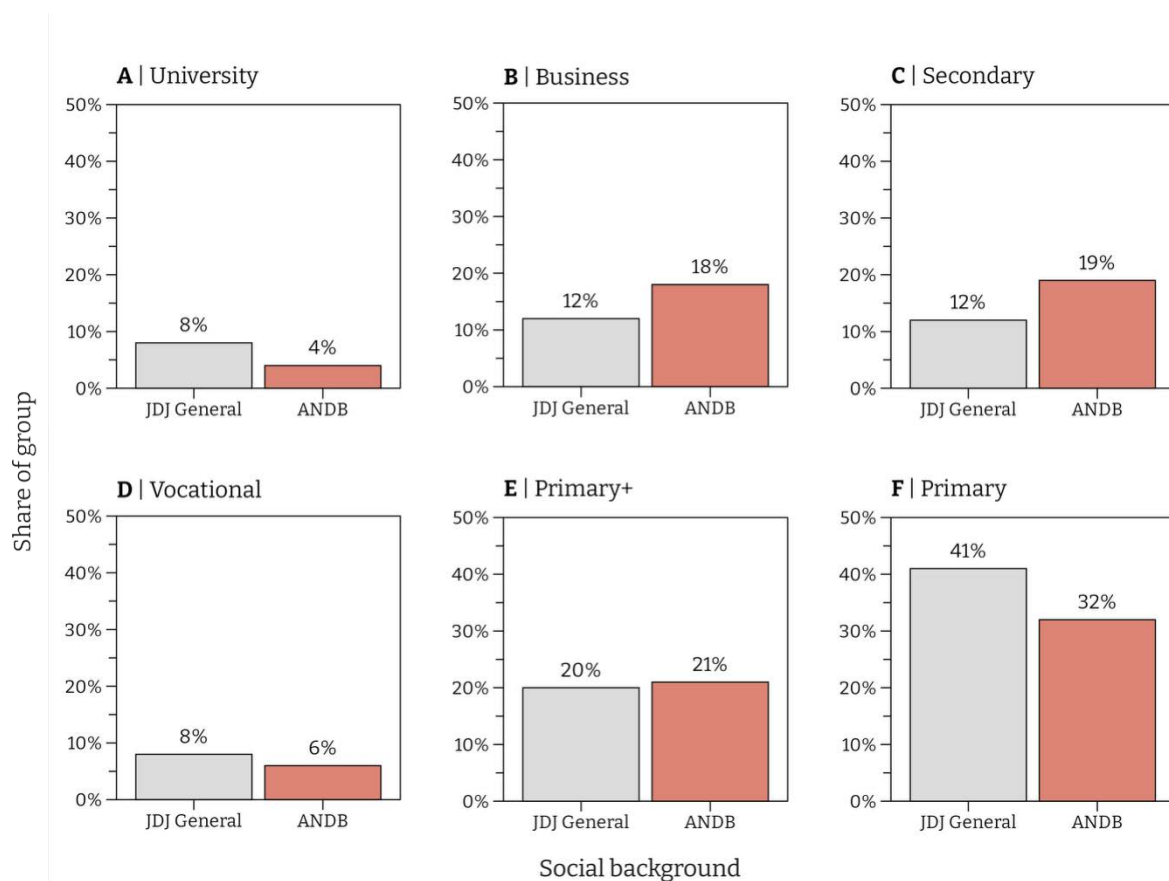


FIGURE 8.3 Educational distribution of Jewish diamond workers' sons and sons of Jews whose fathers had at least social class of skilled worker (excluding diamond workers), 1919-1940.

Source: author's calculations using an extension of "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release.

Note: based on 128 ANDB members' sons and 51 general Jewish sons' educational attainment.

8.5.2 Educational attainment of diamond workers' sons compared

If the ANDB had a positive impact on members' affinity for education, then we would expect sons of diamond workers to have higher rates of educational attendance than sons with similar class backgrounds. To test this, Figure 8.3 makes a comparison between Jewish diamond workers' sons, denoted with "ANDB," and the sons of general Jews who had a social class of skilled worker or higher ("General"). In the latter group we exclude those fathers who worked in the diamond industry, in order to highlight the differences between diamond workers and all those with an equivalent or higher status. The Figure shows that 68 percent of Jewish diamond workers' sons attained a level higher than only basic primary education, compared with 59 percent of Jewish sons with similar or higher social backgrounds.³¹ Furthermore, 41 percent of Jewish diamond workers' sons attended at least secondary or business education, compared with 32 percent of the comparison group. Only among university attendees Jewish diamond workers are less common. This is explained by the presence of PhD graduates and

³¹ $100\% - 32\% = 68\%$; $100\% - 41\% = 59\%$.

doctors among fathers in the overall Jewish sample: two sons of Marcus Boas (1879–1941), a professor in ancient languages,³² and the son of Jacob Simon Rudelsheim (1887–1969), a medical doctor, also attended university. Additionally, Benjamin Kan (1909–1942), a cellist and the son of a butcher, attended the Conservatory and was therefore listed in the category of tertiary education. Only in his case can we speak of upward mobility through education, whereas the other three university attendees followed in their fathers' footsteps. In contrast, all five Jewish diamond workers' sons moved socially upwards through attending university. Here we find Isidore Herman Voet (1913–1938), the son of diamond worker turned ANDB executive Ies Voet (1878–1943); Aron (1914–1997) and Elias Broches (1918–1942), sons of the Russian-born diamond sawyer Abraham Broches (1880–1943); Joseph Krant (1916–unk.), son of butcher Pieter Krant (1886–1943); and Arnold Bronkhorst (1913–1943), son of diamond worker Isaäc Bronkhorst (1891–1943), who attended the Conservatory. Overall we can confidently state that Jewish diamond workers outperformed their peers who originated from similar social backgrounds.

Figure 8.4 presents the same numbers for Gentile sons. Comparing Gentile sons of diamond workers with the sons of Gentiles from similar or higher class backgrounds, we find much smaller differences. 70 percent of Gentile diamond workers' sons and 67 percent of their comparison group attained any education beyond basic primary schooling. However, 24 percent of the latter attended at least secondary education, compared with 26 percent of the Gentile diamond workers' sons. Thus, while Jewish diamond workers' sons had rates of non-manual education far exceeding those of their Jewish peers, Gentile diamond workers' sons had virtually the same rates as the average middle-class Gentile son.

The direct comparison between Jewish and Gentile diamond workers' sons' attendance of these non-manual types of education—41 percent for Jewish sons and 26 percent for Gentile sons³³—suggest a difference that cannot fully be explained by differences in the socioeconomic position of their respective fathers. While Jews in the diamond industry often held higher-paying positions, they also experienced more frequent periods of unemployment, negating most excess incomes earned. Instead, the messaging of the union to invest in their own self-improvement and the education of their children was likely better received among the Jewish members, who (1) lacked a Jewish 'pillar' in a pillarised society leading them to affiliate more closely with Social Democratic ideology and adopting its 'uplifting' motto; (2) were the majority of their industry's workers; and (3) belonged to the same ethno-religious group as the president who delivered these pro-education ideas.³⁴

Since nearly all diamond workers present in our life courses and born between 1873 and 1892 had remarkably long careers in the diamond industry, it is hard to study differences by the length of the ANDB's influence. These results would also be conflated by the career mobility of diamond working fathers, which directly affected membership lengths. Disregarding this, since nearly all diamond workers had career lengths of at least 10 years in the diamond industry and as members of the ANDB, it is fair to say that ANDB had enough time to influence the thoughts of the members included in our data.

³² Marcus Boas was, himself, the son of a diamond worker. His daughter Henriëtte Boas (1911–2001) also completed a doctorate.

³³ For Jews, see Figure 8.3: 4% + 18% + 19% = 41%; for Gentiles, see Figure 8.4: 12% + 14% = 26%.

³⁴ Discussed in Section 4.5, the Conclusion to Chapter 4.

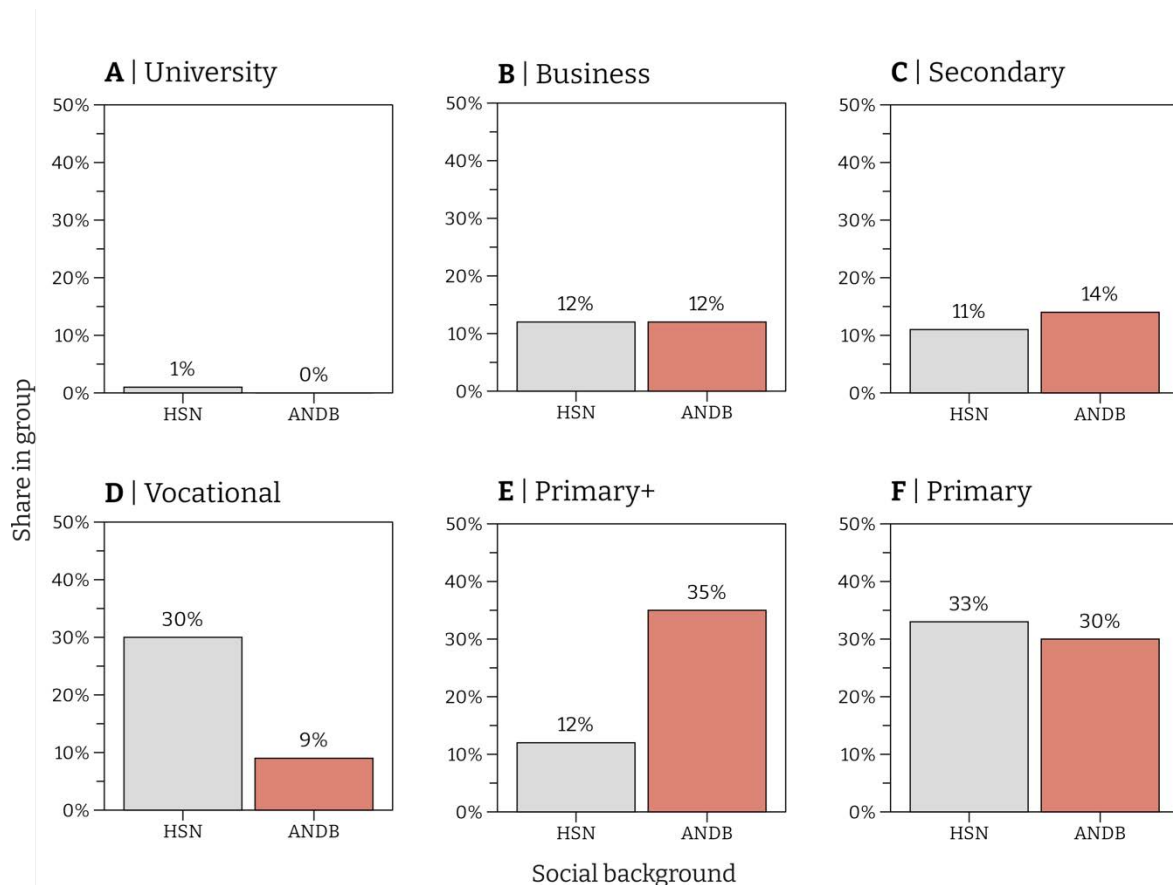


FIGURE 8.4 Educational distribution of Gentile diamond workers' sons and sons of Gentiles whose fathers had at least social class of skilled worker (excluding diamond workers), 1919-1940.

Source: author's calculations using an extension of "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release.

Note: based on 43 ANDB members' sons and 156 general Gentile sons' educational attainment.

Future research could include more diamond workers with shorter careers as a comparison group.

8.5.3 Educational attainment of 'non-identifying' Jews

When controlling for social class backgrounds, Jewish diamond workers' sons outpaced the average Jewish conscript in educational attainment. Another group that could plausibly have exceeded the average young Jewish man in education were those who came from more integrated backgrounds. Recent research on the broad Dutch-Jewish 'elite' suggests a strong correlation between high socioeconomic backgrounds, elevated levels of educational attainment, and above-average rates of integration into mainstream society.³⁵ The conflation of the three factors makes it hard to interpret whether high social class backgrounds, integration, or the combination of the two led to higher rates of education; or whether integration followed from higher levels of educational attainment. Incorporating integration only through parents' characteristics eliminates the latter pathway. Then, comparing the educational attainment of 91 sons of

³⁵ Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 61, 112, 133, 144.

at least one ‘non-identifying’ Jewish parent, we can disentangle the impact of high social backgrounds and integration on educational attainment of the next generation.

On average, sons of ‘non-identifying’ Jews were more likely to attend at least one additional year of schooling beyond basic primary education. Only 32 percent were limited to primary education, meaning over two-thirds attended at least one extra year of schooling. Compared with the Jewish diamond workers’ sons, of whom 41 percent attended secondary or business education, the offspring of these ‘non-identifying’ Jews attended these types of education more frequently at 46 percent. They, however, more often obtained secondary education, whereas the Jewish diamond workers’ sons more frequently attended business schooling.

As we saw earlier, these percentages hide large differences by social class background. Figure 8.5 presents these differences by social class for this group. While 86 percent of sons of non-identifying Jews whose fathers worked as lower or higher professionals or managers, i.e. white-collar workers, attended at least one additional year of schooling beyond primary, this was true for only 52 percent of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers’ sons.³⁶ Furthermore, 65 percent of sons from white-collar fathers attended at least secondary or business education, compared to 29 percent of the blue-collar sons.³⁷

By comparing blue and white-collar Jewish sons with general Jews from the same social backgrounds, we can tell whether having integrated parents led to higher educational attainment for all Jewish sons, or whether this differed by social background. For this purpose, I split the data used in Figure 8.3 for the general JDJ sample into blue and white-collar backgrounds. 27 percent of these general blue-collar Jews’ sons attended at least secondary or business education. This is remarkably similar to the 29 percent of integrated blue-collar Jews’ sons. In contrast, while only 34 percent of the general white-collar Jews’ sons attended this type of education, it was as high as 65 percent for the integrated white-collar Jews’ sons. While this astonishing difference is partially explained by the relatively higher occupational status of integrated white-collar fathers compared with the general group—more of the integrated parents held elite positions—a similarly large difference was found when limiting the comparison only to lower professionals and managers. For instance, while the sons of non-integrated merchant fathers rarely had above primary education, nearly half of the ‘integrated’ merchants’ sons did.

Thus, high levels of educational attainment were not necessarily a characteristic of ‘integrated’ Jews. For the offspring of integrated Jewish manual workers, their parents’ integration did not immediately translate to higher rates of educational attainment. Instead, high levels of educational attainment appear to be the result of an interaction between integration and high social class backgrounds. Two key pathways in which integration could impact educational attainment is (i) by changing worldviews, i.e. having a more open-minded perspective which aligns with acquiring human capital, and (ii) a different social network. Ideological changes are expected to be present for both groups of sons of integrated blue-collar and white-collar parents. This would explain why, for both groups of sons, sons of non-identifying fathers were more likely to obtain at least secondary education than their general Jewish counterparts. However, social

³⁶ Based on Panel F of Figure 8.5: $100\% - 14\% = 86\%$; $100\% - 48\% = 52\%$.

³⁷ Based on Panels A through C of Figure 8.5: $30\% + 16\% + 19\% = 65\%$; $21\% + 8\% + 0\% = 29\%$.

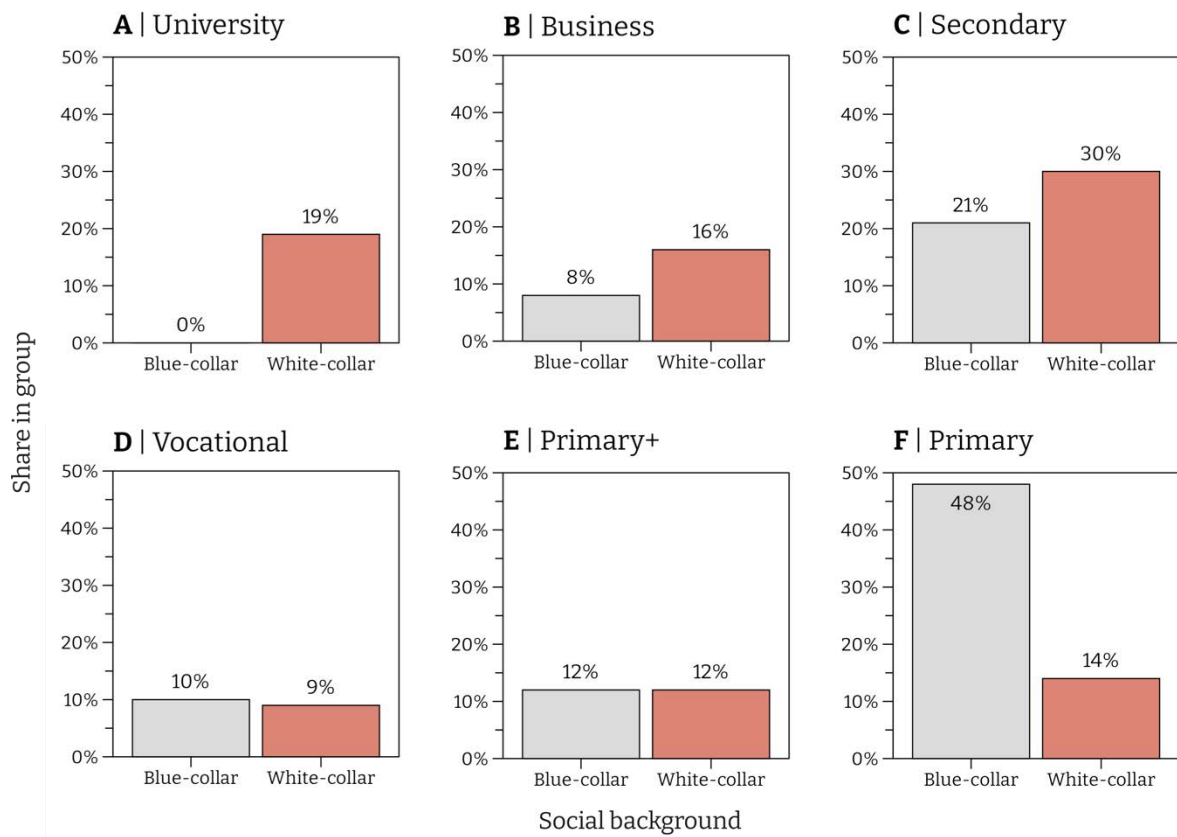


FIGURE 8.5 Educational attainment of sons of 'non-identifying Jews' by fathers' social background, 1919-1940.

Source: author's calculations using an extension of "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release.

Note: fathers' social class were grouped into blue- and white-collar as otherwise the samples would be too small. Based on 43 white-collar and 48 blue-collar sons of non-identifying Jews' educational attainment.

networks of white-collar and blue-collar sons of integrated Jews are expected to differ if we assume that integrated Jews were exposed primarily to Gentiles belonging to the same social class. Since Gentiles with blue-collar backgrounds generally had lower levels of educational attainment than Jews, increasing the number of blue-collar Gentiles in one's network would reduce, rather than increase, the average educational attainment of Jews' networks. In contrast, Gentiles with white-collar backgrounds had higher levels of educational attainment than Jews whose fathers had worked in white-collar careers. In this case, increasing the share of white-collar Gentiles raises the average educational attainment of one's network. In short, more contact with Gentiles was not enough to increase integrated Jews' educational attainment; what mattered was the type of Gentiles in one's network and whether they valued or could afford education themselves.

8.6 Occupational distribution

Besides educational levels, the conscript records also registered the occupations of all working conscripts. We can therefore observe how family background, educational attainment, and career choices were interrelated for both ethno-religious groups. I show this for all sons, conscripted between 1919 and 1940, with a listed occupation. First, I discuss the five most common occupations among Jewish diamond workers' sons, comprising nearly two-thirds of this groups' conscripts, before highlighting ethno-religious differences by social class.

8.6.1 Occupational titles

Office clerks

The most common occupation among all conscripts in our samples, both within the Jewish and Gentile samples and among the diamond workers' sons, was employment as office clerks in the growing office sector.³⁸ These sons worked in a variety of offices, including several companies related to the tobacco trade, in investments and banking, but also in the offices of small-scale factories, including one diamond polishing factory. Even though Jewish diamond workers' sons attended at least secondary education at much higher rates than Gentile diamond workers' sons, Jews were not more likely to become office clerks: 14 Gentile (35.0%) and 34 Jewish (29.4%) sons became office clerks.³⁹ The same is true when we compare the two general samples; 47 Gentile (15.5%) and 21 Jewish sons (16.2%) became office clerks.⁴⁰

However, when Jews became office clerks, they had almost always attended secondary schooling—HBS or Gymnasium—and/or business schools, whereas the Gentile sons rarely had such high levels of education, and were instead more generally becoming office clerks after attending the MULO.⁴¹ Thus, whereas their higher rates of office clerks suggests that Gentiles were more welcome or more willing to enter these occupations, there is a real possibility that Jewish sons performed more challenging tasks and had better career prospects after entering these occupations. Alternatively, it may be that they had to compensate for their Jewishness by obtaining additional years of schooling for the exact same job, similar to the status exchange premiums discussed in Chapter 6 on mixed marriages. The finding that Jewish sons were just as likely to become office clerks refutes Leydesdorff's claim that companies informally closed their doors for Jewish office workers.⁴² However, Jews were less likely to be listed as office workers at the time of marriage, a later point in time than the conscription check-up.⁴³ This suggests that Jews may have struggled more to embark on office careers than Gentile peers with similar levels of educational attainment *and* that they might have

³⁸ In 1930, office clerks had the most unionised employees out of all occupational sectors in Amsterdam. *Statistisch jaarverslag der gemeente Amsterdam 1930*, Table 318, pp. 272–273.

³⁹ The difference is not statistically significant: $t(147) = 0.66$, $p = 0.52$.

⁴⁰ $t(432) = -0.18$, $p = 0.86$.

⁴¹ The 55 Jewish sons that worked as office clerks ($m = 0.636$, $sd = 0.486$) were significantly more likely to have at least secondary or business education than the 61 Gentile office clerks ($m = 0.475$, $sd = 0.504$), $t(124) = -1.95$, $p = 0.06$.

⁴² Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*, 265, 315. One of the interviewees stated: "At one office I was told, 'I don't hire Jews.' This happened several times."

⁴³ Based on findings in Chapter 4.

switched after shorter times. Jewish experiences in the office sphere, symbolic for the modernisation of work, would benefit from additional research.

Anecdotal accounts, like the ones presented by Leydesdorff, suggest that Jews' absence from offices earlier, and successes in office work later, depended on their conviction and the networks they built in these offices. Sal Santen's (1915–1998) father, a clever man who had been offered employment as an office clerk at a law office, had to forgo the opportunity due to his fathers' rejection of working on the Sabbath.⁴⁴ Sal's grandfather later became a socialist, as did his father—who picked up work as a leather merchant and cobbler—and Sal later became an office clerk himself.

Siegfried van Praag and Jacques Presser, sons of Jewish diamond workers and later small-scale diamond traders, became office clerks. Both left personal memoirs that show that neither of them had aspired to work as clerks but both had been required to take up this line of work for economic reasons. In Van Praag's memories, harsh antisemitism was uncommon in these offices, but *risjes*—antisemitic micro-aggressions—occurred more frequently. In this new economic sphere, the Jewish presence was limited, and Jewish office workers were generally a small minority in the office. Jewish networks became all the more important in these spaces. During his brief employment at the bank, Van Praag was supported by two Jewish colleagues: “two gentlemen co-ethnics, the vice-president Mr. Godschalk and the attorney Mr. Voorzanger, liked me and wished the best for me. For me, the worst: to become a serious banker.”⁴⁵ When Van Praag eventually left, partially due to the frequent *risjes*, Voorzanger stated solemnly that “we wanted the best for you, we wanted to see you climb here.”⁴⁶ In Jo van Praag's case, Siegfried's brother, we find a reference to a Jewish superior that could aide in the fight against antisemitism. When a Gentile attorney at his office told Jo that “for every hundred Jews, there are only three good ones,” Jo remarked “that would be me, our boss Van Nierop, and the third I do not know. Shall we ask Van Nierop?”⁴⁷

Leman Lakmaker (1885–1942), a cigar maker, office clerk, and later editor of the *Wereldbibliotheek*, a publishing house for affordable world literature, had more luck with his colleagues. His Jewish boss was a large inspiration for his upward growth in his office.⁴⁸ In nearly all cases, however, Jews had to acquire the cultural capital of office work themselves, coming from social backgrounds and networks with little to no office work. In the four cases mentioned here, all were sons of (semi-)skilled Jewish workers, some upwardly mobile. Even in the case of the successful merchants, as was the case for Presser, economic differences were persistent for the social climbers. Van Praag remarked that Presser, who was the top student in their year, had been among the least affluent students in his class.⁴⁹ For Jews, entry into higher spheres of education and working as an office clerk often meant entering non-Jewish spheres and a lack of personal ties; the opposite of working in the diamond industry.

⁴⁴ Sal Santen, *Jullie is Jodenvolk. Herinneringen aan een jeugd* (Amsterdam, 1969), 57.

⁴⁵ Van Praag, *Een lange jeugd*, 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁸ Josje Lakmaker, *Voorbij de Blauwbrug. Het verhaal van mijn joodse grootvader* (Amsterdam, 2009), 60–61.

⁴⁹ Van Praag, *Een lange jeugd*, 45.

Department store, store, and warehouse clerks and porters

Another important and growing occupational group for Jews was the group of (department) store and warehouse employees (*winkel- en magazijnbedienden*). As large department stores were being opened in Amsterdam, it were predominantly young Jewish men and women who entered these positions. In total 37 Jewish conscripts (12.3%) worked in this field, compared with 14 Gentile (4.1%) conscripts.⁵⁰ Jews also entered this occupational group with higher levels of educational attainment. Only two of these Gentile clerks had any years of schooling beyond the basic primary education, compared with 18 of the Jewish clerks.⁵¹

The growing presence of Jewish department stores and textile factories, as well as the over-representation of Jews among storekeepers, explains why Jews more frequently started their careers working these jobs.⁵² Their relatively higher educational levels, however, requires another explanation. This can be explained by the diverging social backgrounds of Jewish and Gentile store and warehouse clerks and porters. While 64 percent of Gentiles grew up with fathers who worked as semi-skilled or unskilled labourers, this was true for only 13.5 percent of Jews. Instead, Jews employed in these (department) stores were more frequently skilled workers, engaged as merchants, or lower white-collar workers.

Why the relatively better-positioned Jewish fathers had more sons entering these occupations is less clear. One possibility is that Jews used the occupational title for different tasks. For instance, it has been suggested that Jewish department store employees also functioned as salespersons,⁵³ an occupational title associated with a higher social status. Alternatively, Jews had fewer opportunities available to them and were therefore, despite higher levels of educational attainment, necessitated to take up such entry-level positions. In certain cases, the family situation and subsequent mobility suggest that the latter is true. One example is Jacob Asscher (1904-1943), the son of a Jewish diamond worker with a 3-year HBS diploma, was a warehouse porter in 1923, a time during which his father had become unemployed. He was likely only temporarily a warehouse porter to contribute to the household income in the short-run. When he married six years later, he worked as an office clerk in a leather business and by 1939 he had become an attorney.⁵⁴ Likewise, Jacob Kurk (1916-1945) had completed four years of vocational schooling when he became a warehouse porter at age 16 in the middle of the Great Depression,⁵⁵ but by 1939 he was listed as a typesetter,⁵⁶ presumably what he had been trained to do.

⁵⁰ Statistically higher among Jews ($m = 0.123$, $sd = 0.329$) than Gentiles ($m = 0.041$, $sd = 0.199$); $t(644) = -3.89$, $p = 0.000$.

⁵¹ Statistically higher among Jews ($m = 0.487$, $sd = 0.501$) than Gentiles ($m = 0.143$, $sd = 0.363$); $t(49) = -2.50$, $p = 0.011$.

⁵² Examples include De Bijenkorf, Maison de Bonneterie, Gerzon, and Hirsch & Cie. For a discussion, see Roger Miellet, "Joodse ondernemers in het Nederlandse grootwinkelbedrijf in de negentiende en de eerste decennia van de twintigste eeuw," in Venter, *fabriqueur, fabrikant. Joodse ondernemers en ondernemingen in Nederland 1796-1940*, ed. Hetty Berg, Thera Wijsenbeek, and Eric Fischer (Amsterdam, 1994), 78-91.

⁵³ For a discussion, see the life story of Jacob Waas (1911-1941) in the Amsterdam City Archive, "De razzia's van 22/23-02-1941," <https://amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief/themasites/razzia/jacob-waas>.

⁵⁴ Militieregister, huwelijksakte, Gezinskaart, Persoonskaart van Jacob Asscher 1904-1943.

⁵⁵ Gezinskaart David Kurk (26-07-1878).

⁵⁶ Persoonskaart Jacob Kurk (10-01-1916).

Diamond workers

In the late nineteenth century, the most common occupation for diamond workers' son was to also enter the diamond industry. However, after 1920 this was hardly the case. Nonetheless, several sons still followed their parents into the lapidary profession. This was the situation for 16 Jewish (14.7%) and 3 Gentile (5.0%) diamond workers' sons. Additionally, 12 Jewish sons from the representative sample (9.2%) and seven from the non-identifying group (11.1%) also entered the diamond industry, while none of general Gentile sample did so. Thus, the share of conscripts who became diamond workers was only slightly higher among the diamond workers' sons compared with the comparison groups, highlighting the increasing lack of intergenerational following among these workers.

Notably, many of the Jewish diamond workers had only completed basic primary education. This was the case for 62.5 percent for Jewish diamond workers' sons also working in the diamond industry, compared with only one in three among the Gentile diamond workers' sons. Regardless of ethno-religious group or background, none were ever listed with vocational schooling. Clearly, the mandatory multi-year apprenticeships required for entry into the diamond industry were not recorded as vocational schooling by the conscript registrars. Instead, two Gentile diamond workers were listed with several years of MULO. Among Jewish diamond workers, one was listed with secondary education, while another was listed with business education. In contrast, many Jewish diamond workers' sons had benefited from extended education, but few of them went on to work in the diamond industry afterwards. Louis Goudvis (1909-unk.), who completed five years of HBS, was an exception in this regard; Albert Salomon de Jong (1909-unk.) attended his four years of evening business schooling while working as a diamond worker. Louis later worked as a merchant before moving to South Africa in 1935.⁵⁷ Albert also worked as a merchant,⁵⁸ starting his own car business by 1939.⁵⁹

Tailors

One occupational group that Jews increasingly moved into in the twentieth century was that of tailors. Among the diamond workers' sons, eight Jewish conscripts (7.3%) and none of the Gentile conscripts worked in this skilled trade. In the representative samples, two Gentiles (0.7%) and eight Jews (6.2%) became tailors, on top of three non-identifying Jews' sons (4.8%). Compared with the diamond workers, who were never listed with vocational education, several tailors were listed with skilled manual training. Still, roughly half were listed with only primary education, an indication of possible undercounting of Jews' vocational schooling. Tailors' fathers were generally skilled workers, but these garment makers also often originated from unskilled workers' families.

Compared with the diamond industry, which offered poor prospects since 1920; and warehouse or department store employment, which was often only a temporary or static position;⁶⁰ tailoring offered the possibility for a stable career with potential for upward mobility through starting one's own business. Among the diamond workers' sons'

⁵⁷ Gezinskaart Simon Goudvis (09-04-1874).

⁵⁸ Gezinskaart Abraham Salomon de Jong (14-02-1909).

⁵⁹ Persoonskaart Abraham Salomon de Jong (14-02-1909).

⁶⁰ This was true in Germany, but also held in Amsterdam. Lerner, *The Consuming Temple*, 54.

examples include Nathan Breemer (1899–1943), who became a wholesaler in tailors’ supplies;⁶¹ Abraham Zeelander (1908–1944) and Charles Fernand Witteboon (1914–1943), who became independent tailors;⁶² and Louis Bonewit (1899–1989), the only 19-year-old tailor that had completed the MULO, who later switched careers and became an office clerk.⁶³ However, stability or upward trajectories among tailors was not guaranteed, and several moved down over time. Marcus Bril (1908–1941) and Maurits Coopman (1916–unk.) put down their tools and turned to peddling flowers and fruit, respectively, later in life to make a living.⁶⁴ Maurits became an independent tailor after the war and emigrated to Canada in 1952.⁶⁵ In their cases, a lack of family connections in profitable trades limited career options. Both their fathers grew up in the families of cigar makers, themselves later becoming diamond workers and experiencing unemployment during the years in which their sons commenced their careers. With the diamond industry offering only scarce employment then, limited networks among tailors, and the cigar industry of their fathers lacking good career prospects, these young men turned to trade as a last resort.

Together, these four occupational groups—office clerks, department store employees, diamond workers, and tailors—represent over half of Jewish diamond workers’ sons, and nearly half of the average Jewish sons, but only twenty percent of Gentile sons. Within each of these common Jewish occupations, the young Jewish men held higher educational attainment than their Gentile peer with the same social background. We now turn to the social class positions of the conscripts, where we will contrast Jews and Gentiles’ occupational choices by educational choice.

8.6.2 *Social classes*

Given the wide distribution of occupations listed in the conscript records, discussing each separately as we have done above is infeasible. Instead, we can aggregate each occupation into the social class they belong to. Then, for each social class and group, we can measure (a) the share that has received at least primary education and (b) the share that received at least some secondary or business education. These statistics are presented in Figure 8.6. Only the group and social combinations with at least 10 occurrences are shown.

Earlier we discussed that Jews had higher educational attainment than the average Gentile with the same social background. The relative distribution over the social classes, indicated by the sample sizes at the bottom of the panels, show the consequence of this: Jews more frequently ended up in white-collar positions.⁶⁶ Moreover, Figure 8.6 suggests that educational levels determined the social class in which one’s early career started. Except for the Jewish diamond workers’ sons, of whom more than 50% obtained at least one additional year of post-basic primary education, less than one-third of

⁶¹ Gezinskaart Nathan Breemer (16-05-1899).

⁶² Persoonskaart Abraham Zeelander (04-04-1908); Persoonskaart Charles Fernand Witteboon (18-12-1914).

⁶³ Persoonskaart Louis Bonewit (21-03-1899). Louis emigrated to the United States in 1953 and where he died in 1989.

⁶⁴ Persoonskaart Marcus Bril (17-10-1908); Persoonskaart Maurits Coopman (01-02-1916).

⁶⁵ Idem.

⁶⁶ For instance, 43 out of the total 130 Jews in the general Jewish sample were found in this social class, compared with 69 out of 302 Gentiles in the general Gentile sample; statistically higher among Jews ($m = 0.331$, $sd = 0.472$) than Gentiles ($m = 0.234$, $sd = 0.424$); $t(432) = -2.11$, $p = 0.02$.

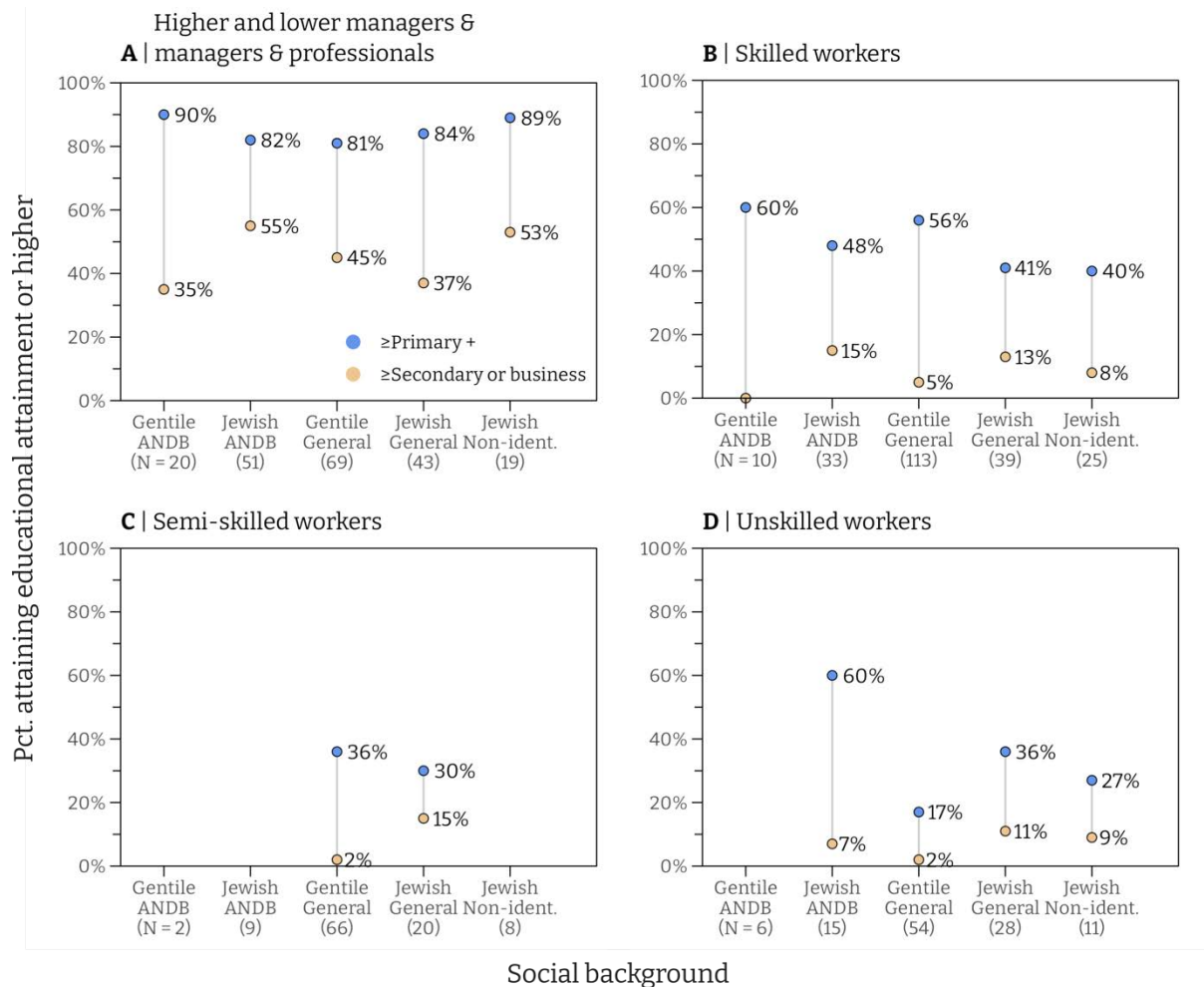


FIGURE 8.6 Share of conscripts with at least one additional year of primary (yellow) and at least secondary or business education (blue) by sample and social class, Amsterdam 1919–1940.

Source: author’s calculations using an extension of “ANDB Members’ Life Courses,” 2024 release.

Note: sample sizes under 10 were censored.

unskilled and semi-skilled workers had any *reported* education beyond the basic primary schooling. These Jewish diamond workers’ sons also obtained at least secondary or business education more than average—displayed in orange—which is most evident when we look at the groups of skilled workers and white-collar workers. Among these white-collar workers, the Jewish diamond workers’ sons had at least secondary or business education 55 percent of the time, compared with 35 percent of Gentile diamond workers’ sons.⁶⁷ Thus, Jewish sons of diamond workers tended to have higher levels of educational attainment when compared to other conscripts with occupations in similar social classes. This tells us that the high educational attainment of Jewish diamond workers’ sons is not explained by their own social class.

⁶⁷ Statistically weakly higher among Jews ($m = 0.558$, $sd = 0.502$) than Gentiles ($m = 0.364$, $sd = 0.492$); $t(72) = -1.53$, $p = 0.07$.

The Gentile conscripts that started their careers as lower or higher professionals and managers, a group dominated by office clerks, tended to have slightly more ‘non-manual’ educational attainment than the average Jewish conscript in this group.⁶⁸ However, this is partially driven by the higher propensity of Jews to enter this social class. As mentioned, this represents the highest 24 percent of Gentiles and the highest 33 percent of Jews by social class. Moreover, Jews more often worked in occupations that did not formally require higher forms of education, like merchants and commercial travellers.

8.6.3 Vocational schooling

One caveat that has been mentioned throughout the chapter has been the lack of Jews’ registered vocational schooling. This is most markedly seen when looking at diamond workers, a group of workers known for long apprenticeships, who were never recorded with recorded skilled training. Instead, those who did not attend any additional formal schooling beyond their lapidary apprenticeships were listed as only having received basic primary education. This under-recording of vocational training was more common among occupations generally performed by Jews than Gentiles. Compared with carpenters, the most common skilled occupation among Gentile conscripts, highlights this. Only three out of 23 Gentile carpenters (13.0%) were listed with only basic primary schooling.

Jewish diamond workers and Gentile carpenters were not the exceptions in this diverging trend. To get a better idea of the size of this discrepancy, we can contrast the share of all Jewish and Gentile conscripts with any note of skilled training on their conscript record. Assuming that all skilled workers required some vocational or on-the-job training to work in their professions, these rates should be relatively high. Moreover, if Jews and Gentiles worked in occupations that were equally likely to be recorded with vocational training, then the percentages should be similar. However, the rates differ significantly. Among all Jewish conscripts employed as skilled workers, 18.8 percent were listed with vocational training. For Gentile skilled workers, this was much higher at 45.1 percent.⁶⁹

Which factors could explain such large differences? The main factor is formal vocational schooling. These schools offered skilled training for many common manual occupations, such as carpenters, electricians, fitters, and mechanics. In the Gentile population, these occupations were practiced often. Jews rarely worked in these professions, a legacy of the discriminatory pre-nineteenth-century guild system. With Jews’ limited population shares in Amsterdam and under-representation among many skilled occupations, the ratio of Jewish to Gentile pupils at the vocational schools must have been minimal. Instead, Jews worked in more niche skilled crafts. Besides the obvious case of the diamond workers, these include bakers, butchers, tailors, leather workers, cigar makers, typographers, and furniture makers. In absence of Jewish vocational schools until the 1930s, many of these skills were obtained through tacit learning and in one-on-one apprenticeships rather than formal institutions.

⁶⁸ However, the difference between Gentiles ($m = 0.451$, $sd = 0.501$) and Jews ($m = 0.372$, $sd = 0.489$) is not statistically significant; $t(112) = 0.819$, $p = 0.41$.

⁶⁹ Significantly higher among Gentiles ($m = 0.451$, $sd = 0.500$) than Jews ($m = 0.188$, $sd = 0.392$); $t(216) = 4.24$, $p = 0.00$.

Consequently, Jewish craftsmen lacked formal accreditation for their obtained skills. While such diplomas had only limited importance for early-twentieth-century skilled workers, it highlights the continued, historically-guided position of Jews' manual work at the fringes of the formal labour market.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter shows that Jews attended more non-primary education than Gentiles. While this was already suggested by national statistics on university graduates, it had not been established for the Dutch capital city specifically, for all educational levels, and for comparisons within fathers' social classes. Jews attended more secondary education but also studied at business schools at higher rates than Gentiles, exemplified by Jews' overrepresentation among merchants and other commercial activities. Consequently, Jews more frequently worked in higher positions in trade or as white-collar service workers.

This excess educational attainment of Jews relative to Gentiles was especially observed among the diamond workers. The sons of Jewish diamond workers attended secondary or business education twice as often than their Gentile counterparts. Since both grew up in the household of a diamond worker, the social class background could not explain this difference. Nor could the general higher levels of educational attainment of Jews since Jewish diamond workers' sons exceeded the educational attainment of other Jews with similar or higher social class backgrounds. Instead, the explanation should be sought in the influence of the ANDB on their members. The ANDB and its leaders propagandised self-improvement and investments in education. This message likely connected more strongly with the Jewish members. Jewish diamond workers revered their president, comprised a majority of the union's members, and did not have their own 'pillar' in a pillarised society. In contrast, Gentile members could rely more heavily on their own pillars. However, this expectation cannot be tested directly.

Jews from backgrounds characterised by some form of 'radical assimilation'—religious disaffiliation, conversion, or mixed marriages—also attended higher forms of education than the average Jewish Amsterdammer. Greater open-mindedness among such *assimilants* could explain their sons' higher educational attainment. However, the largest differences were seen among the group of non-identifying Jewish sons from upper-middle-class backgrounds, whereas the sons from working-class backgrounds did not receive more schooling than the average Jewish conscript. Although it cannot be tested directly with the data at hand, this interaction highlights the potential diverging impact of social networks on integration and social class. For working-class Jews, greater exposure to working-class Gentiles may not have aided possibilities for upward mobility.

Most commonly, working-class Gentiles only attended primary education or some form of vocational schooling. This skilled training frequently took place in formal institutions, while Jewish craftsmen obtained their skills in more informal settings. The absence of Jews' social and cultural networks in formal settings of professional training maintained the barrier for Jews to enter more mainstream skilled manual occupations. Jews specialised in niche crafts where training was passed along from one generation to the next or through one's extended network, as had been common for the Jewish diamond workers. As a result, most of their efforts towards skilled training went under

the radar of official reporting, to a large extent the enduring consequence of centuries of labour market discrimination and segregation.

While the missing Jewish vocational schooling highlights the persistent impact of past labour market segregation, Jews' greater investment in higher forms of formal education underline their massive strides in structural integration. In the early twentieth century, Jews were overrepresented in secondary schools, in business schools, and at Dutch universities. This was both the result of decades of social upward mobility in the Jewish community, but also that of novel opportunities and disappearing barriers to Jews' entry into adequate schooling, particularly since the Education Law of 1857 and the broadening of Jews' residential distribution in Amsterdam. The latter was important since pupils went to school close to their homes. In the decades prior to World War II, this launched Jews into previously Gentile spheres, including office spaces where Jews frequently had spent more time in formal education than their Gentile peers. Their greater rates of educational attainment, visible in nearly all segments of Jews' economic participation, created the pathway to continued intergenerational, marital, and career mobility.

9

Conclusion

9.1 The story

Social mobility among nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Amsterdam Jews was considerable and widespread, spanning the life domains of work, residence, and education. Their social status rose more rapidly than that of Gentiles, ultimately surpassing it by the early twentieth century. Increasing improvements in work opportunities, housing quality, and education benefited Jews throughout their life courses and, notably, across generations. These structural changes increased the exposure to Gentiles, particularly in new non-denominational schools, in their neighbourhoods, in clubs and organisations, and at work. As a community, Amsterdam Jews ascended from a perceived ‘impoverished minority’ to a group that contributed disproportionately to the economic and cultural fabric of the Dutch capital. Many of them joined the middle classes, became politicians, and entered the sphere of elites through the arts and sciences.¹ Given the available evidence, it seems that no other group achieved such rapid socioeconomic gains during the same period.² Jews also increasingly disaffiliated from their Synagogues and married non-Jewish partners, phenomena almost unheard of in the mid-nineteenth century.³ By the 1930s, nearly every Jewish family likely included an intermarried person within their extended family. In the years preceding the Holocaust, Jews firmly embedded themselves in the capital’s institutions through their enduring contributions and participation in Amsterdam’s culture. They did so in a distinctive Amsterdam-Jewish way. They established both Jewish and co-denominational spaces, integrating into broader society while preserving key aspects of their traditions.⁴ They were, in the words of Henri Polak, who worked relentlessly to

¹ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 60–61, 111–12.

² Based on overviews of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century immigrants in the Netherlands and Amsterdam: Jan Lucassen and Rinus Penninx, *Newcomers. Immigrants and Their Descendants in the Netherlands 1550–1995* (Amsterdam, 1997); Leo Lucassen, ed., *Amsterdammer worden. Migranten, hun organisaties en inburgering, 1600–2000* (Amsterdam, 2004); Jan Rath, “A Game of Ethnic Musical Chairs? Immigrant Businesses and Niches in the Amsterdam Economy,” in *Minorities in European Cities*, ed. Sophie Body-Gendrot and Marco Martiniello (London, 2000), 26–43; Lucassen, “To Amsterdam”; Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migratie als DNA van Amsterdam*; and studies on specific immigrants groups, such as those from China: Henk Wubben, *Chineez en ander Aziatisch ongedierte: Lotgevallen van Chinese Immigranten in Nederland, 1911–1940* (Amsterdam, 1986); Italy: Frank Bovenkerk and Loes Ruland, “Artisan Entrepreneurs: Two Centuries of Italian Immigration to the Netherlands,” *International Migration Review* 26.3 (1992): 927–39; Margaret Chotkowski, “Vijftien ladders en een dambord. Contacten van Italiaanse migranten in Nederland 1860–1940” (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2006); and Germany (in Utrecht): Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002).

³ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 135, 148; Peter Tammes, “Abandoning Judaism: A Life History Perspective on Disaffiliation and Conversion to Christianity among Prewar Amsterdam Jews,” *Advances in Life Course Research* 17.2 (2012): 81–92.

⁴ For instance, most Jewish–Jewish marriages continued to take place in the Synagogues and virtually all boys were still circumcised in the early twentieth century. Blom and Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders,” 298–300; Tammes and Scholten, “Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands.”

uplift and incorporate these workers, referring to himself, “Dutch among the Dutch but also Jewish among the Jews.”⁵

This story closely echoes the historiography’s status quo. However, this dissertation has showcased, through new data and methods, that trends were not the same for all Jews and varied significantly among different groups. This variation is exemplified by the followers of Henri Polak, the Jewish diamond workers, who formed *the* core of the Amsterdam–Jewish community and culture from the late nineteenth century onward.⁶ Although sometimes mischaracterised as the Jewish ‘proletariat,’⁷ diamond workers led many of these changes among non–elite Jews. While at times facing periods of incessant unemployment, the workers in this centuries–old, but in the 1870s rapidly expanding, Jewish ethnic niche experienced upward social mobility earlier and more dramatically than other Amsterdam Jews. By collaborating with Gentile colleagues, they leveraged their numbers to successfully strike for better working conditions.⁸ This led to the formation of the Netherlands’ first modern union, the *Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerdersbond* (ANDB; ‘General Dutch Diamond Workers’ Union’), which steadfastly worked to improve workers’ lives and provided unprecedented benefits. The union’s impact was evident in the workers’ social positions—their societal image transformed from “the rotten cabbage at the greengrocer” to respected, emancipated labourers—and especially in their children. This dissertation demonstrates that Jewish diamond workers’ sons commonly achieved higher social positions and educational attainment than both their Gentile and Jewish peers with a similar background. These benefits were also transferred to women and daughters. The industry and union offered skilled work to women at equal pay, which was rare in an era when most Jewish and Gentile women worked as domestic servants or seamstresses, earning far less than men. Others benefited indirectly through family members or the increased spending power of diamond workers. Thus, the successes and challenges of Amsterdam’s Jewish diamond workers impacted the entire community; young and old, men and women, whether themselves employed in the diamond industry or indirectly benefitting from Jews’ growing wealth and status.

It were the Jewish diamond workers’ successes that enabled them to be the first non–elite Jews to leave the overcrowded ‘Jewish Quarter’ behind and move to more liveable neighbourhoods. It were the high wages in times of employment, the ANDB’s weekly newsletter, and an enviable library which enabled and motivated them to invest so heavily in their children’s education. Not surprisingly, the milieu of diamond workers produced some of the Social Democratic movement’s most important figures. The foremost example is Henri Polak, a diamond worker who had followed his father into the industry, and later became president of the ANDB and the NVV, a confederation of unions that would eventually lead to the formation of the FNV, the largest Dutch union today. Women from this community also became influential leaders in the labour movement.⁹ The diamond workers served as role models, inspiring both Jews and Gentiles to adopt

⁵ Bloemgarten, “Henri Polak,” 1991, 37.

⁶ Bregstein and Bloemgarten, *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam*, 48–51; Hofmeester, “The Impact of the Diamond Industry,” 47.

⁷ For instance Kleerekoper, “Het joodse proletariaat”; and Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*.

⁸ Van Tijn, “De Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerdersbond,” 410.

⁹ Hofmeester, “Roosje Vos, Sani Prijes, Alida de Jong, and the Others,”; Van der Veen, ““Je had als vrouw al een achterstand”.”

Social Democratic principles and establish or join unions. The ‘emancipation’ of the Jewish working class therefore began with the diamond workers, making it essential to examine their role and the institutions that shaped them to fully understand the Amsterdam Jewish community.

9.2 What is new?

Much of the above narrative is already well-documented. Over the past eight decades, several historians have addressed the integration of Amsterdam Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, emphasising the importance of Social Democracy, the diamond industry, and its leaders.¹⁰ This dissertation distinguishes itself through four elements that offer fresh insights into this historiography. First, while previous scholars have focused primarily on integration, few have discussed Jewish social mobility or used detailed, individual-level statistics to study it.¹¹ By broadening my focus and applying new data combined with innovative techniques, I have presented long-term patterns of social mobility and integration for the entirety of the Amsterdam-Jewish community.

Second, by introducing individual-level data, I was able to investigate differences within the Jewish community based on social class. Previous literature has largely argued that integration of Jews was a slow yet persistent process.¹² These commentators have correctly noted that the process of Jewish integration was layered and diverged among subgroups such as Orthodox, Liberal, Socialist, and Zionist Jews.¹³ Amsterdam Jewry has therefore been described as a ‘Mosaik’ at times.¹⁴ Yet, indicators of social mobility and integration were often measured only at the communal level.¹⁵ This obscured the significant influence of individual characteristics on lived experiences. There were indeed important differences between Jews from diverse social backgrounds, with Jewish diamond workers standing out as the most exceptional. These workers and their families exhibited a unique combination of high upward mobility and mixed integration trajectories, distinct from those of other Jews.

This connects closely to the third element: the decoupling of social mobility and integration as independent processes in different facets of life. In the context of this dissertation, these facets include occupational following or intergenerational mobility, marriages, careers during the life course, residences, and educational attainment. By doing so, we are able to contrast experiences across life domains. This has emphasised that social mobility and integration were, indeed, distinct processes: they could be interconnected, but not necessarily so, and individuals could experience significant upward mobility independent from integration and vice versa.

¹⁰ Kruijt, “Het Jodendom in de Nederlandse samenleving”; Kleerekoper, “Het joodse proletariaat”; Hofmeester, “‘Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...’”; Blom and Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders”; Leydesdorff, *Het Joodse proletariaat*.

¹¹ Exceptions include Van Poppel, Liefbroer, and Schellekens, “Religion and Social Mobility”; Tammes, “Hack, Pack, Sack.”

¹² Blom and Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders”; Tammes and Scholten, “Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands”; Lucassen and Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie*; Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers.”

¹³ Gans, “De kleine verschillen.”

¹⁴ David Sorkin, “The New ‘Mosaik’. Jews and European Culture, 1750-1940,” in *Dutch Jewry in a Cultural Maelstrom 1880-1940*, ed. Judith Frishman and Hetty Berg (Amsterdam, 2007), 11–30; Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers.”

¹⁵ For instance, access to kosher food was declining, religious attendance was falling, and religious disaffiliation and intermarriages were on the rise. Blom and Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders”; Tammes and Scholten, “Assimilation of Ethnic-Religious Minorities in the Netherlands.”

Lastly, the historiography, focused on explaining the experiences of Jews, has often overlooked contrasts with life trajectories of Gentiles. Such comparisons are essential to offer a comprehensive view of how unique Jewish lives were. For example, existing studies have described the poverty of the Jewish Quarter without noting similarly destitute conditions in the Jordaan, a comparable, poor district primarily inhabited by working-class Gentiles; quoted intermarriage rates without considering non-Jews' role in the lack of interfaith marriages; and attributed patterns of residential segregation to immobile Jews rather than migrating Gentiles. As a result, these studies were unable to highlight the noteworthy mobility of Amsterdam Jews. Comparing within and between groups provides a clearer view of the distinct experiences of Jews, dependent on social class and subject to intersectionality. This approach also highlights Jewish workers—a frequently overlooked category at the expense of Jewish entrepreneurs¹⁶—and their differences from Gentile workers.

By combining these four elements—that is, examining the social mobility and integration trajectories of Amsterdam Jews independently, separating these processes by life domain, using uniquely-detailed individual-level data to establish long-term trends, and comparing within the Jewish community by social class backgrounds and between Jews and Gentiles from similar walks of life—this dissertation confirms much of what was previously assumed about Amsterdam Jews, while at the same time uncovering new insights into their social mobility and integration patterns. This comparative perspective reveals that Jews were exceptional in their upward mobility, especially across generations and compared with Gentile peers in similar social classes, and that while Jews integrated concurrently, these processes were not necessarily linked. This approach also highlights important variations in the pace and extent of social mobility and integration, as well as their evolving relationship across life facets and over time. For instance, Jewish diamond workers exhibited remarkable intergenerational mobility, even compared to other Jews, and showed strong political integration, yet intermarried far less frequently than anticipated by their social positions. These variations in social mobility and integration among Jews and Gentiles of different social backgrounds can be understood through several interconnected frames. These include the diamond industry's role and characteristics as an ethnic niche, the influence of institutions, and resulting changes in social networks and opportunity structures. I will explore each of these frameworks in detail followed by a discussion on the relationship (or lack thereof) between social mobility and integration.

9.3 Frames

9.3.1 *The ethnic niche*

The characteristics of the diamond industry as an ethnic niche explain why Jews were able to reap the benefits of the 1870 *Cape Time* boom as well as later advances in the labour movement. The origin of these characteristics go back to the first arrival of Sephardic diamond traders around the turn of the seventeenth century and have long-run repercussions. For instance, if the mid-eighteenth-century city government of Amsterdam had not denied Gentile's request for a diamond workers' guild—citing Jews' role in bringing the diamond industry to Amsterdam in the first place—nineteenth-

¹⁶ Green, *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora*, 1–2.

century Jews could not have benefited from the industry's expansion. Jews were the main employers in this industry and progressively the workers as well. Since the start of the seventeenth century, Jews used the diamond industry, one of the few industrial trades they were allowed to enter, to circumnavigate exclusion in a segregated labour market. Subsequently, maintaining this niche over centuries enabled them to 'hoard opportunities' from a minority position,¹⁷ placing them in an excellent position to prosper from the arrival of South-African-mined diamonds in the winter of 1870.

As the newfound supply of rough primary material found its way from South Africa to the Amsterdam harbour, the number of workers in this industry expanded from 1500 in 1865 to surpassing 10,000 in 1890. With a stronghold in this niche, Jews constituted the majority among this new workforce. Since learning *the* 'trade,' as it became colloquially known among Jews, was lengthy and costly, and Jews had strong footing specialising in larger diamonds, Gentile entrants focused on smaller diamonds called *chips*. With the diamond industry in the Netherlands being solely located in Amsterdam, having circumvented direct competition from local Gentile outsiders, and not yet facing severe competition internationally, Amsterdam Jews could continue to benefit from the windfall of the *Cape Time* boom for the upcoming decades.

Although not affected by competition from other workers or diamond centres in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the industry was heavily impacted by fluctuating financial markets and international conflicts. Consequently, diamond workers were frequently unemployed, in particular the Jews, who specialised in larger, more speculative diamonds. This instilled a future-oriented perspective to deal with this problem. In 1894, the answer was found in collective action. This helped stabilise living conditions in the short term, for instance by establishing unemployment funds, and granted control over the labour market to limit the number of future entrants. In the long-run, however, solutions were sought in the form of alternative careers and investments in education. These were direly needed after 1920, when the Amsterdam diamond industry collapsed due to the intensifying competition from Antwerp.

The characteristics and development of the diamond industry make it highly unique in comparison to other niches frequently participated in by Jews. Unlike tailoring or trade in second-hand clothing,¹⁸ diamond manufacturing required years of training with costly materials, leading to high wages and initially shielding them from most forms of competition. The strong hierarchy in the industry additionally allowed Jews to keep the best positions, such as the cleaving of diamonds, for themselves. Moreover, frequent unemployment created a problem that could be partially solved by collective action and has been hypothesised to serve as a 'bridge' to better positions since these workers had both the means and the motivation to consider other careers.¹⁹ The characteristics of the industry and its history set the stage for Jews to profit between 1870 and 1894, to profit again from its main institution in 1894, which in turn helped evade worse economic tragedies after the industry's collapse.

¹⁷ Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 153–54.

¹⁸ De Vries, *From Pedlars to Textile Barons*, 28–29; Hofmeester, “‘Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,’” 48–49; Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*, 52.

¹⁹ Heertje, *De diamantbewerkers*, 225.

9.3.2 Institutions

After Jewish diamond workers had benefited from the *Cape Time* boom, a combination of institutions—the *Handwerkers Vriendenkring* (HWV), ANDB, and SDAP—was all fundamental in uplifting working-class Jews and Jewish diamond workers. As exclusion from Gentile organisations persisted even after political emancipation in 1796, Jews were motivated to start their own institutions. The *Handwerkers Vriendenkring* was one of the more notable ones, established in 1869 one year before the *Cape Time* boom and following decades of calls for Jews to pick up skilled manual work.²⁰ The HWV aided Jews who worked in skilled labour, providing small funds for unemployment, training, and encouraging self-development.²¹ After smaller associations in the diamond industry had failed to gain traction among diamond workers during the prosperous 1870s and 1880s, the HWV played a crucial role in pushing Jewish diamond workers to join the diamond workers' union in 1894 and later emerged as one of the most prevalent housing associations for Amsterdam's Jewish working-class residents.²²

The story of Amsterdam's diamond workers cannot be told without an extensive discussion of the ANDB. Primarily, it was non-denominational despite the overrepresentation of Jews in the industry.²³ Jews and Gentiles, specialised in diamonds of different sizes, fought and went on strike side by side for better working conditions. Mandatory membership for all diamond workers was beneficial for Jews, who were the main workers in the industry, as it strengthened their numbers while minimising ethno-religious competition, but also for Gentiles, whose limited numbers in the industry would give them insufficient influence. For the Jews, a significant minority in Amsterdam, the union offered power to an otherwise largely disadvantaged and vulnerable community. High wages and a full unionisation rates enabled workers to pay hefty contributions and afforded the union to save up to sustain workers during unemployment or periods of sickness and to fund strikes. It also allowed the ANDB to heavily invest in the 'uplifting' of their members. The union's activities aimed at 'emancipating' the workers—to which Henri Polak and colleagues worked tirelessly for decades—were embodied physically by the commanding headquarters, shaped like a fortress with tall stairs to symbolise the uplifted status of its members. Messaging from the union, spread through lectures, courses, the ANDB weekly, and an imposing library subject to nationwide envy, motivated workers to invest more time in education and culture. Additionally, major successes in the union's fight for better working conditions, such as the first European eight-hour working day, facilitated self-improvement. "These people awakened... they started to read," said historian Jacques Presser, who grew up among them, including his father.²⁴ The subsequent social and intergenerational mobility of these workers and their families, among whom we can count Presser and many of his peers, resulted from the efforts of strong leadership, inspiring personnel, and the individual contributions of numerous motivated members. It is in this climate that most Jewish and Gentile sons and daughters of diamond workers were raised. The dissertation finds evidence that the union's promotion of continued self-development

²⁰ Caransa, *Handwerkers Vriendenkring*, 21–28; Blom and Cahen, "Joodse Nederlanders," 249–50.

²¹ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...," 62.

²² *Ibid.*, 68–69; Caransa, *Handwerkers Vriendenkring*, 57–63.

²³ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...," 352.

²⁴ Bregstein, *Gesprekken met Jacques Presser*, 12.

positively impacted the educational attainment for the sons of diamond workers, and this impact was significantly larger for Jewish sons as compared to their Gentile counterparts. It was this intersectionality—being Jewish and a diamond worker—that disproportionately improved the chances of their next of kin to experience upward social mobility. This also highlights how the impact of institutions like the ANDB, spreading social and cultural capital, can lead to advances in domains like human capital.

Additionally, the ANDB as an institution empowered women. Unique for its time, the union enforced equal pay for equal work, resulting in significant raises in female diamond workers' earnings. They exclusively held high positions as cutters and sometimes cleavers, which enabled—and boosted—benefits of intergenerational transmission to include daughters. In the weekly newsletters, the editor gave leading female essayists a platform to openly advocate for women's positions in the labour market.²⁵ There also was no marriage bar and women even received a small amount of financial support when they became mothers. Thus, female diamond workers could work in a variety of family situations, including living independently, supporting their parents, adding to the family income, and not uncommonly as female breadwinners.²⁶ Their relatively privileged position became all the more noticeable after 1920, when employment in the industry became harder to come by and women, more often than men, ended up in positions of lower social status.

Alongside the ANDB, Socialism provided Jews their missing pillar in a 'pillarised' society,²⁷ bolstered exposure to Gentiles, and fostered integration. In particular, the SDAP—the largest political party in early-twentieth-century Amsterdam—presented Jews with a political voice, considerable representation, and later worked towards building new homes for their predominantly working-class base. The ANDB played a cataclysmic role in bringing Jews into Social Democratic politics and influenced them to join the SDAP. Together, the ANDB and SDAP emphasised commonalities rather than differences between workers of distinct ethno-religious backgrounds. These commonalities were shared from a young age in new meeting spaces, such as the *Arbeiders Jeugdcentrale* ('Labourers' Youth Centre'), often credited with increasing Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rates.²⁸ The combination of the ANDB and SDAP largely explain why Jewish diamond workers' families so disproportionately reaped the rewards of workers' emancipation.²⁹ Since Gentiles had their own pillars, they received moral messaging from sources other than the ANDB. Jews, in contrast, heard the same encouragement from both the ANDB and the SDAP, each organisations where Jews were well-represented among its members and leadership. This motivated Jewish diamond workers especially to make use of the opportunities the union offered them.

The HWV, SDAP, and corresponding building associations such as the AWW were also instrumental in bringing the residences of Jews and Gentiles in closer proximity to one another. The HWV and the *Algemene Woningbouwvereniging* (AWV) built housing in the Transvaalbuurt, in close vicinity to buildings of other Socialist and non-Jewish building

²⁵ Such as Henriette van der Meij, the first female journalist in the Netherlands, who frequently wrote articles for the ANDB weekly. Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 115, 431.

²⁶ "Rapport over huisindustrie uit 1914. Hoofdstuk 10, De diamanthuisindustrie te Amsterdam," page 9.

²⁷ Daalder, "Dutch Jews in a Segmented Society."

²⁸ Gans, "De kleine verschillen," 51–52.

²⁹ That the union had a larger impact on the outcomes of Jews than Gentiles has been noted by the following historians: De Jong Edz., *Van ruw tot geslepen*, 733; Kleerekoper, "Het joodse proletariaat," 220; Bloemgarten, "Henri Polak," 1993, 645.

cooperations, creating a shared space where political beliefs and values—and not ethno-religious backgrounds—became a distinguishing feature. “The red village,”³⁰ as it was often called, eliminated much of the geographic differences between Jews and Gentiles. Starting in the late nineteenth century, Jewish diamond workers thus led the way out of the Jewish Quarter and into newer, cleaner, and more spacious neighbourhoods in Amsterdam East. Here, Jews identified and were seen as Socialists. In the 1930s, Gentiles increasingly moved away from the Transvaalbuurt as annexations and expansions towards the North, South, and West of the city continued.

While politics and housing brought Jews closer to Gentiles ideologically and spatially, the continued employment of Jews in the diamond industry also isolated them to some extent and limited their integration. Jewish diamond workers less commonly renounced their religious affiliation explicitly or entered into a marriage with a Gentile partner than other Jews, regardless of social class backgrounds. This is especially surprising when we consider the alleged impact participation in the Social Democratic movement had on intermarriage rates.³¹ However, since I find that this pattern is not transmitted to their children, another determinant must be at play. The explanation should instead be sought in the composition of Jewish diamond workers’ social networks. At work and in their union, virtually all their peers were Jewish, and these workers primarily married into families with similar backgrounds. This brings us to the third element, the changing opportunities available to Amsterdam Jews and their evolving social networks.

9.3.3 *The opportunity structure and social networks*

Another facet that is important to discuss is the evolving opportunity structure, and the social networks within them, as a frame that contributed to the variation in social mobility and integration for our different groups. In the case of Jews and Jewish diamond workers, occupational choices were established under limited opportunities by guild exclusion and general non-acceptance by mainstream society in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Wherever possible, Jews therefore found work within an ethnic niche, with co-ethnic employers, or independently. Consequently, a Jewish economy emerged with the diamond industry at the centre. Although the acceptance of Jews grew—and social differences between them and Gentiles declined—employers with similar backgrounds continued to be or became a main source of employment at the end of the nineteenth century, as was the case for the diamond industry. This niche could only persist the way it did over the long-run because Jews had historically started as employers in this field.

As the average social position of Jews began to rise, more and more Amsterdam-born Jews became successful enough to run their own stores, firms or factories with employees. Although the spectacular rise in Jews’ status since 1870 was jumpstarted by the expansion of the diamond industry, this dissertation shows that growth also occurred in other occupations, including commercial travellers, merchants and shopkeepers. The growing number of domestic Jewish employers were joined by Jews from outside Amsterdam, either from the Dutch *mediene* or abroad, frequently Germany. The growing number of Jewish employers opened up opportunities for occupational diversification and upward occupational mobility for Jews in particular. Alongside

³⁰ Bregstein, *Gesprekken met Jacques Presser*, 15.

³¹ Kruijt, *De onkerkelijkheid in Nederland*, 51–52.

small-scale Jewish-owned shops which employed at most a handful of employees, large department stores such as De Bijenkorf, which is still around today, and companies like De Vries Van Buuren, Hirsch and Cie, and Hollandia-Kattenburg, all became major employers of Jewish workers and helped them transition from unskilled and skilled (but niche) work into (lower) white-collar work. This is evidenced by the massive reduction in Jewish unskilled labour and rapid rises in the number of Jewish department store clerks, in warehouses, and among tailors. The diversification of occupations allowed more people to envision themselves rise within a firm or company, which may have promoted educational attainment as the expected returns to education increased.³²

Despite the dissolution of guilds and their incorporation into the overall education system, Jews continued to be discriminated against in the labour market. Jewish religious traditions played a role in the general apprehension among employers to hire Jews. Jews initially preferred to work on Sunday rather than Saturday—to keep *Sjabbes* ('Sabbath') free—which made it difficult for them to gain employment in Gentile-owned businesses even after the guild system was dismantled. When observing religious practices such as the Sabbath became less common in the nineteenth century, barriers to entering the mainstream economy declined, but did not disappear completely. The presence of Jewish employers enabled Jewish workers to combat some of this structural discrimination. However, prejudice in the labour market had taken a new form, no longer institutional but now based on individual preferences and dislikes of employers. The evidence in this dissertation that Jews marrying Gentiles came from significantly higher social backgrounds than their spouses serves as an example of such preference-based discrimination in the marriage market. Additionally, weak evidence for discrimination is found in the fact that Jewish workers had, on average, higher levels of educational attainment than their Gentile peers in the same occupations. Both cases suggest that Jews had to 'compensate' for their ethno-religious background because of discrimination. Even if Gentile employers' preferences for working with co-ethnics over Jews were weak, taste-based discrimination in a labour market could lead to total segregation.³³ Modern audit studies have identified that immigrants face more difficulty getting jobs based only on their names³⁴—many Jews could be identified based on their distinctive names, as my innovative methodology has shown in this dissertation—and historical studies have found that such discrimination also existed in the past.³⁵

Thus, until the end of the nineteenth century, a likely Gentile reluctance to hire Jews, based on a 'taste' to work with co-ethnics, persisted. These tastes changed, as people did, with the emergence of Social Democracy as a force in late-nineteenth-century Amsterdam. Jews and similar-minded Gentiles rebranded themselves as socialists and grew up in the same neighbourhoods, influencing their preferences for partners through more shared beliefs and exposure to one another. In other words, boundaries between groups blurred. Political beliefs, and not religious background, increasingly mattered

³² Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*, 221–22.

³³ Gary Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (Chicago, 1957), 14–16.

³⁴ Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination," *American Economic Review* 94.4 (2004): 991–1013.

³⁵ Petra Moser, "Taste-Based Discrimination Evidence from a Shift in Ethnic Preferences after WWI," *Explorations in Economic History* 49.2 (2012): 167–88; Vasiliki Fouka, "How Do Immigrants Respond to Discrimination? The Case of Germans in the US during World War I," *American Political Science Review* 113.2 (2019): 405–22.

when finding a life partner. Inter-marriage rates rose significantly when the SDAP soared in membership counts from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. Moreover, Socialism changed the social networks people had. Within the working class, Jews no longer mingled exclusively with co-ethnics. In higher strata, political leaders of Jewish descent garnered greater acceptance for the Jewish people in the capital and across the country.

This dissertation highlights the diverging changes in the networks of Jews and Gentiles. While Jews continued to marry partners of similar class backgrounds, they decreasingly married partners whose families worked in the same occupational groups as their own families. This allowed for more intergenerational diversification of occupations and, combined with increasing intermarriages—which also became more equal between partners—started a self-reinforcing process of widening social networks and occupations.

The competing diamond manufacturing centre in Antwerp offered an alternative to dealing with Amsterdam's opportunity structure. Migrating to Antwerp allowed diamond workers to widen or circumnavigate their opportunities. However, the same social networks persisted in the *Scheldestad* and remained an important driver of career success. Jewish diamond workers were more likely to make this trek but often ended up in exclusively Jewish circles and mainly working for Dutch-Jewish employers such as Eduard van Dam. Thus, Amsterdam's Jewish diamond workers were strictly bounded by their local and nearby opportunities and networks, which were definitive for current and intergenerational mobility, but also subject to change during the period studied.

9.4 Relationship between social mobility and integration

My dissertation complicates the common notion that social mobility and integration are synonymous or always moved in tandem. In classical assimilation theory, upward social mobility and assimilation were by-and-large equated and assumed to be processes that progressed linearly.³⁶ The divergent patterns shown in this dissertation indicate that this was not the case. Like broader society, the Jewish community was segmented and diverged in the pace and extent of social mobility and integration. Segmented assimilation theory was developed to incorporate such diversity.³⁷ On top of the general, linear pathway ("linear upward assimilation"), it added two alternative pathways: "linear downward assimilation," which occurred when minorities integrated into lower social classes, and "selective assimilation," whereby individuals deliberately maintained strong ethnic ties and worked in ethnic economies to pursue social mobility absent of integration.

Several subgroups of Amsterdam Jews fit in these categories, albeit as a native minority group and not as immigrants. For instance, many 'elite' Jews followed the first pathway,³⁸ and the Jewish underclass of porters discussed in Chapter 5 embody elements of the second, downward pathway. To some extent, Jewish diamond workers fit in the third category. They exemplified the core of the Jewish ethnic economy through which they achieved upward mobility while keeping strong ties to the Jewish community as indicated by their low intermarriage and disaffiliation rates. However, key aspects of

³⁶ Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 70–71.

³⁷ Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation."

³⁸ Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 105–7.

their experiences do not fit the mould presented by the theory. Although working in the diamond industry shielded Jews from most labour market discrimination, few Jews who were members of the ANDB—and not the much smaller Jewish union Betsalel—“deliberately” maintained their ties through employment in the Jewish economy. Instead, the diamond industry offered the best chances for upward mobility, both within and outside of the Jewish community, evidenced by mobility rates that exceeded those seen by other groups in Amsterdam. Moreover, Jewish diamond workers did integrate strongly in several life domains, including working on the Sabbath, which became normalised in the twentieth century,³⁹ their strong representation among Social Democrats, and pioneering spatial integration. Their temporary isolation in the domain of work through participation in an ethnic niche also directly contributed to their descendants’ educational attainment and enabled them to follow more traditional paths of integration. At the same time, most “downwardly assimilated” porters did not show signs of integration into the Gentile underclass, and recent evidence suggests experiences of Jewish elite also does not show a uniform pattern.⁴⁰ Thus, while segmented assimilation offers key insights for studying integration and problematises its relationship with social mobility, its pathways cannot incorporate the full range of experiences observed among Amsterdam Jews and in different facets of life.

New assimilation theory presented by Alba and Nee offers a non-normative alternative to segmented assimilation theory. It provides a common language to discuss the process of integration. Additionally, it creates more space for non-ethnics, like Amsterdam’s Gentiles, as actors in the process of Jewish integration. Differences between ethnic groups are identified as “(bright) boundaries” which can be altered through “blurring,” “crossing,” and “shifting.”⁴¹ The individual act of crossing to the mainstream group, leaving the boundary unchanged, was rare; religious conversions hardly occurred. Blurring takes place when social distinctions fade, for instance through mixed marriages, widespread religious disaffiliation, and decreasing residential segregation. Since the late nineteenth century, boundaries were blurred extensively through departures from the Jewish Quarter, increasing marriages with Gentiles, and to some extent by secularisation, although this rarely translated in disaffiliation recorded in population registers.⁴² Jews blurred boundaries in different ways depending on their social class. For instance, Jewish diamond workers moved to “red villages” with other socialists and later to middle-class neighbourhoods in Amsterdam South, elite Jews moved further away to upper-class districts in the southwest of the city, and many working-class Jews remained in the Jewish Quarter until their living quarters were destroyed and were relocated to more spacious homes in Amsterdam East. Gentiles, however, partially ‘brightened’ lines in the early twentieth century. After Jews and Gentiles had simultaneously moved into areas in Amsterdam East, Gentiles started departing for newer areas, leaving behind a growing Jewish concentration. Such patterns were less observed for elite Jews. Furthermore, while Jews’ residential patterns blurred nicely along class lines, intermarriages showed less clear patterns. Here, diamond

³⁹ Hofmeester, “Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...,” 96.

⁴⁰ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 265–67.

⁴¹ Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 60; Richard Alba, “Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005): 20–49.

⁴² See Chapter 2 for statistics by occupation. For a broader discussion, see Tammes, “Abandoning Judaism.”

workers stood out with their uniquely low levels of intermarriage in contrast to Jews from all other social classes.

Shifting, the increasing inclusion of previously excluded individuals, also occurred differently by social class. The political sphere is one main aspect of this category. Initially, Jews had adhered to Liberalism, but since the last decade of the nineteenth century working-class Jews more strongly associated with Social Democracy.⁴³ The Jewish diamond workers were, through the messaging from their union and its leader, Henri Polak, the most politically active subgroup of Amsterdam Jews. Consequently, their high civic involvement caused numerous important SDAP figures to come from diamond worker milieus. Jews employed in unskilled labour often had no unions to turn, leading to much lower rates of political participation. Another aspect of shifting boundaries is prejudice from outsiders. This dissertation has provided evidence of discrimination in the marriage market and, likely, the labour market. However, discrimination declined over time, embodied by more intermarriages, narrowing differences in social status backgrounds of intermarried partners, and a widening of Jews' occupational distribution. At the same time, remnants of discrimination remained noticeable. Working-class Jews increasingly worked in Jewish-owned department stores and workplaces for ready-to-wear garments,⁴⁴ many diamond workers switched to employment as commercial travellers, and among Jews in the educational elite historic preferences for topics in law and medicine persisted.⁴⁵

In short, the case of Amsterdam Jews shows that upward social mobility could be a sign of integration, especially with regards to boundary blurring, but their experiences and reception by Gentiles varied distinctly by social class background. As such, class is not an all-encompassing characteristic that can be automatically linked to integration and the same is true for changes in social classes. The existence of ethnic niches within different social strata complicates this further. The diamond workers stand out as a unique case in this regard. While ethnic niches could hamper integration through isolation and persistent strong ties with co-ethnics, it could also advance integration in the domains of political participation and, in turn, residential assimilation. Especially in intergenerational respect, it created a fertile ground for the mainstream integration of their children. How ethnic niches affected the integration and social mobility of Jews depended strongly on their own characteristics, those of the ethnic niche, and the wider opportunity structure in which they were located. For the autochthonous Amsterdam Jews, who comprised a significantly large share of the population and held a stronghold over a well-remunerated niche in a luxury industry, remaining in the Jewish economy could actually accelerate their integration in some domains while limiting it in others. This builds on earlier research showing that this held true in Amsterdam and diverged from experiences in Jewish niches in Paris and London.⁴⁶ This dissertation has attempted to illuminate this case further for one group of Jewish *workers* who, based on the findings presented here, deserve further investigation in other contexts to contrast against the experiences of Jewish entrepreneurs.

⁴³ Hofmeester, "Jewish Parliamentary Representatives," 77.

⁴⁴ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 48–49.

⁴⁵ Van der Veen, "Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers," 116–17.

⁴⁶ Hofmeester, "Als ik niet voor mijzelf ben...", 341–56; see also David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven, 1994); and Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*.

9.5 Setting the agenda

In her recent dissertation, Sietske van der Veen proposed that future research should focus on the various subgroups of Dutch Jewry, rather than go on a “quest” for representative quantitative data.⁴⁷ Although I agree with Van der Veen that egodocuments provide deep insights into Jews’ life strategies and feelings of identity and belonging, I believe that the lack of quantitative data and analyses regarding Dutch Jewry has limited the ongoing discussion, prevented existing knowledge from being challenged and new questions from being asked, and constrained comparisons with non-Jews to advance our holistic understanding of Dutch Jews. Moreover, the reliance on deep contextual knowledge on Jewish history, for instance through specific microhistories, has kept a narrow, qualitative perspective within Dutch-Jewish history. Consequently, few contemporary sociologists or demographic and economic historians have engaged with this historiography, hindering new insights from a more comparative perspective. Nor do I believe a quest for representative quantitative data is needed. This data already exists. As I have shown, a majority of Jews can easily be identified in historical records on the basis of their names. My *Jewish Name Index* makes it possible to study individual Jewish lives with any source containing possible Jewish names. Since 1811, Jews were present and recorded in the same sources used to write the social, economic, and demographic histories of non-Jews throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Moreover, the dissertation by Van der Veen and the current dissertation showcase the complementarity between quantitative and qualitative analyses. Personal narratives and ego documents help us understand individual motivations. How widespread these motivations were can be questioned. This can be clearly seen in the discussion on intermarriages. Diamond workers, predominantly of Social Democratic ideology, were presumed to be more likely to intermarry with Gentile partners. Empirical results from this dissertation show that was not the case. Alternatively, what large-scale data on Jewish diamond workers can tell us about their beliefs, motivations, and aspirations has its limits. Novels, biographies, newspapers and union periodicals shape the meaning behind these numbers. Together, quantitative and qualitative sources will enable us to fully understand the lives, experiences, and mobilities of Jews in historical Amsterdam.

Instead of focusing on the “quest” for representative quantitative data, this dissertation has identified a number of avenues that require further investigation. One key element relevant for both social mobility and integration that has, thus far, received too little attention in the historiography, is the educational attainment of Dutch Jews. At the time of their political emancipation, Jews were more often illiterate than Gentiles. They received segregated primary education, generally of considerably worse quality than available to the rest of the population. Until the Education Law of 1857, this separated education system prevailed. Since 1861, when the law was formally enacted, Jews received the same non-denominational primary education as everyone else. The fruits of this reform are clearly seen in the decades closest to World War II. Young Jewish men attained more years of schooling than their Gentile counterparts, regardless of class, and Jewish men and women were markedly overrepresented among university graduates.⁴⁸ What happened in between those two points in time remains understudied.

⁴⁷ Van der Veen, “Novel Opportunities, Perpetual Barriers,” 271.

⁴⁸ Evidenced by the outcomes of the Education Census of 1930 and discussed in Chapter 8.

However, one may expect that Jews' greater investments in education led to increased integration and continued upward social mobility in Dutch society. Studying the student bodies of individual secondary schools in Amsterdam, particularly the earliest HBS and business schools, would be a good starting point to bring more clarity to the subject. This would also enhance opportunities to incorporate the lives and stories of Jewish girls and women. Educational elites, such as Jewish doctorates, similarly deserve more attention.

Related to the topic of education is the expansion of Jewish employers. As my study of the diamond industry has shown, Jewish employers were key in ensuring employment for their co-ethnic employees. Regardless of educational attainment, nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Jews have regularly mentioned discrimination in employment practices by non-Jewish managers. The growth in Jewish-owned businesses, both small and large, enabled Jews to capitalise on their varying types of education. Garment factories, department stores, law offices and banks all contributed to the employment of lower and higher skilled Jews. This was key for uplifting the poor working classes, Leydesdorff's 'lumpenproletariat,' but also avoiding discrimination felt by higher-educated Jews.⁴⁹ Although Jewish businesses have received considerable attention from historians,⁵⁰ rarely has their role in hiring practices been examined. These businesses, together with the growing number of commercial travellers—employed by larger firms, especially in textiles—increasingly stood at the core of Jews' economic and cultural experiences and offered a stepping stone for next generations to navigate the much wider Gentile society. Jewish businesses also provide the possibility to link Amsterdam-Jewish history with new locations, including the origins of its founders and the social destinations of their employees.

⁴⁹ Such as those described by Van Praag, *Een lange jeugd*, 57–61.

⁵⁰ For instance, De Vries, *From Pedlars to Textile Barons*; Berg, Fischer, and Wijsenbeek, *Venter, fabriqueur, fabrikant*; Fransisca de Haan, *Een eigen patroon: geschiedenis van een joodse familie en haar bedrijven, ca. 1800–1964* (Amsterdam, 2002); Ter Braake and Van Trigt, *Leerhandelaar, looier, lederfabrikant*; De Jong, "Joodse ondernemers in het Nederlandse film- en bioscoopbedrijf"; Knoop, *Hirsch & Cie*; Metz, *Diamantgracht*; Wallet, Post, and Joachimsthal, *Joachimsthal*.

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International Institute of Social History
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Stadsarchief Amsterdam
Archief van het Bevolkingsregister
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FelixArchief
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Periodicals

Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad (1865–1940)
Algemeen Handelsblad (1850–1940)
De Vrijdagavond (1924–1932)
Weekblad van den Algemeenen Nederlandschen Diamantbewerkerbond (1894–1940)

Websites

amsterdamhistorie.nl
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Appendix A. *The Construction of the Jewish Name Index*

Persons' names provide researchers with a great deal of information. Names can act as a signal for social status,¹ cultural identity,² nationalistic values,³ and geographic origins,⁴ among numerous other aspects. While not all child naming was intended to signal belonging, names that intentionally or unintentionally signal greater correlations to certain characteristics can be used to estimate or identify persons' affiliations to certain groups. Researchers have therefore used lists of highly distinctive names to identify individuals' belonging to various groups. Groups that have been distinguished using these methodologies include people with a migration background,⁵ from specific country origins,⁶ by race,⁷ and belonging to various religious groups.⁸

Name-based methods enable identification of group belonging when more direct measurement of their sociocultural backgrounds, such as religious background in the case of Jews, is absent in the source material. To identify Jews in various Dutch sources that do not explicitly report religious affiliation, I construct a Dutch 'Jewish Name Index' to be applied to the names in these sources. For the construction of the index a source is needed that meets two conditions: (1) the source covers all persons within a geographic area and specific timeframe; and (2) the source includes information to identify group belonging, such as religious affiliation or race, directly. For instance, Fryer and Levitt employ a database of all births in California over the period 1961–2000, a source that includes the child's race or ethnicity,⁹ while Abramitzky and collaborators have used historical U.S. censuses where having Yiddish or Hebrew as a mother tongue functioned as a measurement for being Jewish.¹⁰ In the current dissertation I use the index of the Amsterdam population register for the years 1851–1853. This source includes the religious affiliation of all Amsterdam residents and can function as a census after removing duplicate entries. The religious affiliation is deemed reliable as religious

¹ Gregory Clark, *The Son Also Rises: Surnames and the History of Social Mobility* (Princeton, 2015).

² Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustan, and Katherine Eriksson, "Do Immigrants Assimilate More Slowly Today than in the Past?," *American Economic Review: Insights* 2.1 (2020): 125–41.

³ Lydia Assouad, "Charismatic Leaders and Nation Building" (Paris School of Economics Working Paper No. 2020–38, 2020); Felix Kersting and Nikolaus Wolf, "On the Origins of National Identity. German Nation-Building after Napoleon," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 52.2 (2024): 463–77.

⁴ Kees Mandemakers and Gerrit Bloothoof, "Exploring Co-Variation in the (Historical) Dutch Civil Registration," in *Els Noms En La Vida Quotidiana.: Actes Del XXIV Congrés Internacional d'ICOS Sobre Ciències Onomàstiques. Annex. Secció 3*, 2014, 271.

⁵ Abramitzky, Boustan, and Eriksson, "Do Immigrants Assimilate More Slowly Today than in the Past?"

⁶ Dylan Shane Connor, "Class Background, Reception Context, and Intergenerational Mobility: A Record Linkage and Surname Analysis of the Children of Irish Immigrants," *International Migration Review* 54.1 (2020): 4–34.

⁷ Roland Fryer Jr and Steven Levitt, "The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119.3 (2004): 767–805; Lisa Cook, Trevon Logan, and John Parman, "Distinctively Black Names in the American Past," *Explorations in Economic History* 53 (2014): 64–82; Lisa Cook, John Parman, and Trevon Logan, "The Antebellum Roots of Distinctively Black Names," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 55.1 (2022): 1–11; Hui Ren Tan, "Black and White Names: Evolution and Determinants," *The Journal of Economic History* 82.4 (2022): 959–1002.

⁸ Dylan Shane Connor, "In the Name of the Father? Fertility, Religion, and Child Naming in the Demographic Transition," *Demography* 58.5 (2021): 1793–1815; Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustan, and Dylan Connor, "Leaving the Enclave: Historical Evidence on Immigrant Mobility from the Industrial Removal Office," *The Journal of Economic History* 84.2 (2020): 352–94.

⁹ Fryer Jr and Levitt, "The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names."

¹⁰ Abramitzky, Boustan, and Connor, "Leaving the Enclave."

disaffiliation was rare in mid-century Amsterdam; approximately 2 percent of the population reported having no religion. Furthermore, at that time religious conversion was extremely uncommon among Dutch Jews,¹¹ making it unlikely that Jews would be reported as belonging to any non-Jewish religion.

What will follow are three subsections covering each of the three steps towards using the Jewish Name Index. First, the construction of the index. Second, the verification and testing of the index. Third, the application of the index to Amsterdam marriage certificates in the LINKS database of Dutch civil records.

A1. Constructing the Jewish Name Index

The indexed Amsterdam population registers for the periods 1851–53, 1853–1863, and 1863–1893 are available as public open-access databases on the website of the Amsterdam City Archive.¹² Only the index for the 1851–1853 period includes the religious affiliation. During this period 602,709 entries of individual persons were made. Some persons were entered multiple times after moving residences. Using the 1849 census population estimate of 224,025 Amsterdam residents as a baseline, each person was entered 2.69 times on average. Entries with duplicate full names and birth dates are removed, leaving 233,893 individuals. This falls in line with a linear interpolation between the 1849 and 1859 census estimates. 5563 individuals (2.4%) were listed without any religious affiliation. These people were either religiously unaffiliated or had illegible entries and were removed from our database. This leaves 28,562 Jews (12.5%)—individuals who listed either *Dutch* or *Portuguese Israelite* affiliations—and 199,768 non-Jews (87.5%)—individuals with any valid non-Jewish religious affiliation—for a total of 228,330 persons.

In total Amsterdam residents covered 1274 unique first names and 10,881 unique last names occurring at least five times. Following the philosophy of the Historical Sample of the Netherlands, names that occurred fewer than five times are considered misspelled. Since different spellings of names impact the probability that a name is considered Jewish or not—for example, the surname Wolf is considered Jewish but Wolff is not—names are not standardised extensively. Instead, I follow the *burgerLinker* approach and remove diacritics and change common exchangeable letters: *c* to *k*, *ch* to *g*, *ph* to *f*, *ij* to *y*, and *z* to *s*.¹³ For each of the valid names it is possible to calculate how common the name was among Jews and Gentiles. I follow the methodology, separately for first and last names, that was first used by Fryer and Levitt who used the following equation:¹⁴

$$JNl_{name} = \frac{\Pr(name|Jewish)}{\Pr(name|Jewish) + \Pr(name|Gentile)}$$

where JNl is the Jewish Name Index-score ranging from 0 to 1 for a given name and $\Pr(name|Jewish)$ and $\Pr(name|Gentile)$ refer to the share of all Jews and Gentiles with a

¹¹ Hans Blom and Joël Cahen, “Joodse Nederlanders, Nederlandse joden en joden in Nederland (1870–1940),” in *De geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2023).

¹² These can be accessed here: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/stadsarchief/organisatie/open-data/>.

¹³ *burgerLinker* is a modern approach to link civil certificates in the Netherlands. For more information, see Mandemakers et al., “LINKS” and <https://github.com/CLARIAH/burgerLinker>.

¹⁴ Fryer Jr and Levitt, “The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names.”

given name, respectively. An index score of 0 indicates that a certain name was only held by Gentiles, 0.5 corresponds with names that were equally common in both groups' name distributions, and 1 refers to names only given to Jews. The distribution of index scores and the relative distribution of names across religious groups are shown in Figure A1.

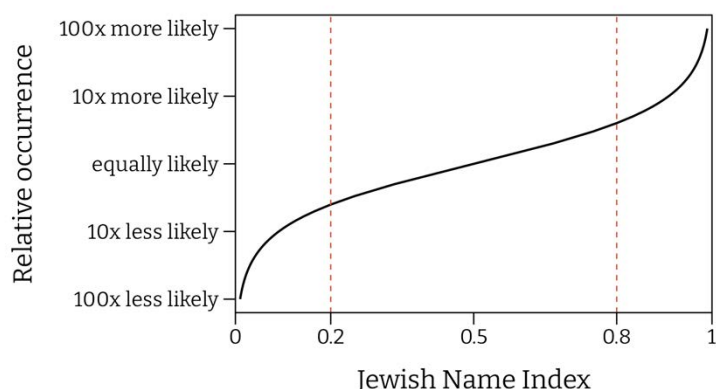


FIGURE A1 The relationship between Jewish Name Index and the relative distribution of names within different groups.

As scores approach 0 and 1, the relative distribution of occurrence of names near infinity. At 0.8, a name is four times more common among Jews than Gentiles, at 0.9 this ratio has increased to 9 and at 0.95 it has risen to nearly 25. A practical example is the name Johannes which occurred a total of 9622 times in Amsterdam. In only two cases these persons were listed with a Jewish religious affiliation. Thus, the index score is:

$$\frac{\Pr(\text{Johannes}|\text{Jewish})}{\Pr(\text{Johannes}|\text{Jewish}) + \Pr(\text{Johannes}|\text{Gentile})} = \frac{\frac{2}{28,562}}{\frac{2}{28,562} + \frac{9620}{199,768}} = 0.001$$

Likewise, the name Salomon occurred 888 times but belonged to a Jewish person 870 times. This gives the following calculation:

$$\frac{\Pr(\text{Salomon}|\text{Jewish})}{\Pr(\text{Salomon}|\text{Jewish}) + \Pr(\text{Salomon}|\text{Gentile})} = \frac{\frac{870}{28,562}}{\frac{870}{28,562} + \frac{18}{199,768}} = 0.997$$

To distinguish names that *distinctively* suggest belonging to a certain group—the name Johannes clearly does not indicate a belonging to the Jewish group, whereas Salomon does—researchers have used thresholds to denote ‘distinctively ethnic names.’¹⁵ Commonly, this threshold is placed at 0.8 when studying distinctive first names; not

¹⁵ Using a subset of ‘Distinctively Jewish Names’ has been a common approach to identifying Jewish individuals. For a recent example, see Chiswick, *Jews at Work*.

belonging to this group would then be the inverse of 0.2.¹⁶ These thresholds are indicated on Figure A1 using red vertical lines. At the index score of 0.8, names are exactly four times more common among Jews than Gentiles. Others have introduced family names to the equation. Abramitzky and co-authors used a combined boundary of 1.4, or an average of 0.7 for first and last names, to distinguish their Jewish sample in early-twentieth-century New York City. While these boundaries are important to draw a threshold between names, Kreisman and Smith have demonstrated that most distinctively ‘black’ or ‘white’ names cluster at 0 and 1.¹⁷

A2. External verification of the approach

Before applying the Jewish Name Index to the LINKS’ marriage certificates, I will first test the viability of the approach. This serves two purposes. First, to verify that those individuals who are identified as Jewish through this naming approach were indeed Jewish and not incorrectly matched Gentiles. Second, to configure the optimal number of first and last names and the index thresholds to be used. So far, studies have used one name—either the first or last name—or two names—a combination of the first and last name—to identify group belonging using ethnic name indices. However, several Dutch sources offer additional information in the names of parents. For instance, Dutch marriage certificates provide five names per family: the child’s first name and their parents’ first and last names. Since fathers’ names are generally passed on to their children, one only needs to account for one to avoid double-counting. Using five names instead of two offers more bandwidth for persons to be identified even when one of their names is misspelled.

I will test thresholds ranging from 0.25 down to 0.10 in intervals of 0.05. For each threshold I examine the accuracy and efficiency of six identification techniques. These techniques identify a person as Jewish if: (1) their first name is Jewish; (2) their last name is Jewish; (3) either the first or last name is Jewish; (4) both the first and last name are Jewish; (5) at least two out of five names, including parents’ names, are Jewish; and (6) at least three out of five names, including parents’ names, are Jewish or at least both surnames are Jewish. In each case, no Gentile names are allowed. Gentiles are identified in the same way but with inverted thresholds.

To avoid testing the material on the source used to create the index, the Amsterdam population registers, the approach will instead be tested on two unrelated databases. To test whether identifying based on five names provides better results than using two names the databases should include a research person’s parents’ names on top of their own *and* indicate group belonging either explicitly or inherently. Baptism records and a database of *chuppahs*, Jewish religious weddings, fit these criteria. Excepting a small group of Sephardic Jews who baptised their children, all baptisms pertained non-Jewish children. Thus, after filtering out this Jewish subgroup, no Jews should be identified in this data. Since baptism records are only available until 1811, I limit the material to 243,812 baptisms occurring in the last 40 years, i.e. 1771–1811.

¹⁶ Fryer Jr and Levitt, “The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names”; Tan, “Black and White Names.”

¹⁷ Daniel Kreisman and Jonathan Smith, “Distinctively Black Names and Educational Outcomes,” *Journal of Political Economy* 131.4 (2023): 877–97.

The other source is a database of 12,139 *chuppah* marriages with full information in Amsterdam Synagogue administrations between 1834 and 1937.¹⁸ In contrast to the baptisms, *chuppahs* should only include Jews. Hypothetically speaking, Gentile persons could occur on this source if they married a Jew. However, non-Jewish spouses were relatively uncommon for Jewish grooms and spouses, ranging from virtually 0 percent around mid-nineteenth-century up to roughly 15 percent in the 1930s.¹⁹ Additionally, mixed-faith marriages were rarely religiously ordained. In the early twentieth century, the share of Jews entering interfaith marriages having a religious wedding in a Synagogue was between 3 and 5 percent, compared with over 95 of Jewish-Jewish couples.²⁰

In data linking, matching techniques are tested on their ability to minimise Type I (false positives) and Type II (false negatives) errors. Moreover, one linking method is considered better than another if it is able to match a greater proportion of the data while keeping the level of errors constant. Two measures that are commonly used to appraise these two qualities of linking models are the Positive Prediction Value (PPV) and the True Prediction Value (TPV).²¹ The PPV, given by the following equation:

$$\text{Positive Prediction Value} = \frac{\# \text{ correct matches}}{\# \text{ matches}} = (1 - \text{False Positive Rate})$$

measures the *accuracy* of a model by estimating the share of correct matches out of all (correct and incorrect) matches. In our case, a match is a person who is unambiguously flagged as either Jewish or Gentile. The PPV, calculated as:

$$\text{True Prediction Value} = \frac{\# \text{ correct matches}}{\# \text{ observations}} = (1 - \text{False Negative Rate})$$

indicates the *efficiency* of a model. It establishes how many persons were correctly identified as either Jewish or Gentile out of all possible matches, i.e. the sum of matched and unmatched persons. A tradeoff generally exists between accuracy and efficiency. More lenient models provide a greater number of matches at the cost of higher false positive rates.

Figure A2 presents the TPR and the False Positive Rate (FPR), which is simply 1 minus PPV, for each combination of the six selection techniques, four thresholds, two databases used for testing, and a split by sex for the *chuppah* marriages. Models are considered more optimal as they approach an FPR of 0 and a TPR of 1, that is the top right corner of the plots. In both the case of the baptisms and the *chuppahs*, techniques based on only the first name (denoted in yellow) or only the last name (blue) perform rather well. In all cases, except for brides in the *chuppahs* at the lowest threshold level, are the share of

¹⁸ The database can be found on the website of *Akevoth*, formerly the genealogical department of the Center for Research of Dutch Jewry affiliated with the Hebrew University. It concerns marriages of Ashkenazi Jews occurring in Amsterdam Synagogues between 1834 and 1937. The information was collected and transcribed by Dave Verdooner;

https://www.dutchjewry.org/noach/synagogual_marriage_ascts_from_amsterdam.shtml.

¹⁹ See Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 for a deeper discussion of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage trends.

²⁰ Boekman, *Demografie van de Joden in Nederland*.

²¹ Ran Abramitzky et al., "Automated Linking of Historical Data," *Journal of Economic Literature* 59.3 (2021): 865–918.

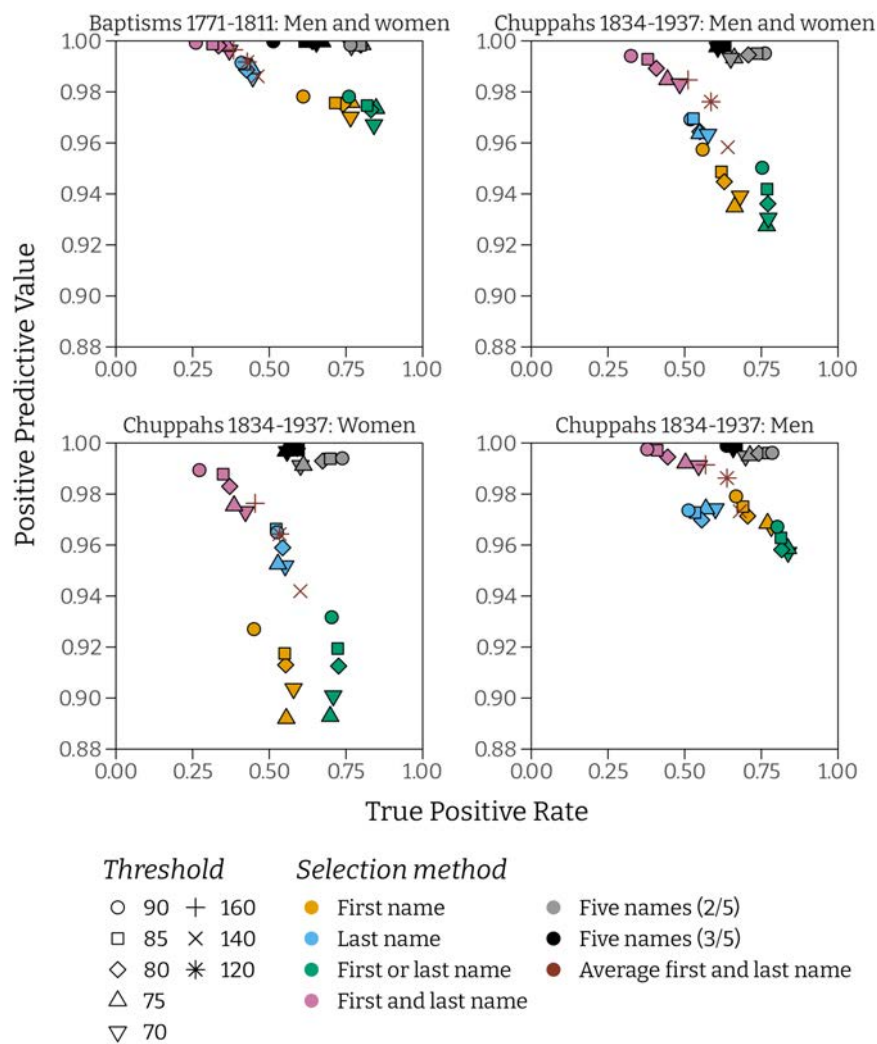


FIGURE A2 TPR and FPR values for different selection techniques and thresholds
Source: author's calculations using *Doopregisters* and *Chuppah* databases and JNI approach.
Note: * except for two last names, in which case two in-group names suffice.

false positives above 10 percent. Using a combination of the first and last name leads to improvements in one direction at the cost of another. The lenient case of requiring only one of a research persons' first and last name (green) to be distinctive leads to the largest samples but with reduced accuracy. In contrast, the strict approach of requiring both the first and last name (pink) to be distinctive leads to the most accurate samples among those created from a research person's own names only, but also the smallest samples. Researchers who only have the names of the research person available and who prioritise accuracy should opt for using only the last name or use the strict approach of both first and last names being distinctive. This is applicable for Dutch Jews, who constitute only a small share of the Dutch population and where low accuracy rates and high false positive rates lead to high levels of contamination. Since Gentiles are nearly ten times more present in the data, even small error margins would lead to high shares of perceived Jews actually being Gentiles. When working with subgroups that comprise larger population shares, for instance when comparing Catholics and Protestants, using

only the first name or at least one of the first and last name could be sufficient and would lead to much larger samples.

Using additional names, thereby adding second opinions enabling less strenuous selection, provides a middle ground in this tradeoff. In fact, using five names consistently outperforms the efficiency-accuracy tradeoff portrayed by the curve along the other measures. Requiring as little as two distinctive in-group names out of five (grey), and none of the remaining names being distinctively out-group, leads to higher accuracy rates while maintaining a large sample. Tightening the restriction slightly by increasing the number of distinctive in-group names needed to three, except for when both surnames are distinctive (black), leads to even more accurate, but slightly smaller, samples. With FPR values as low as 0.002, meaning the approach makes virtually no mistakes on persons it matches, while still identifying over half of the persons in the samples, the two approaches which include parents' names in the identification strategy outperform those which only use a person's own names. If one envisions a straight line or curve going from the pink to the green symbols, to be interpreted as a tradeoff curve between efficiency and accuracy, then the black and grey values are significantly to the right and above this curve. Furthermore, varying the thresholds has only a marginal impact on the approach requiring at least three distinctive names. To ensure the highest level of accuracy this dissertation will use the approach of at least three out of five distinctive names. Since thresholds have little impact on the accuracy here, I stick with the threshold of 0.80 as has commonly been used in the literature. In the baptism dataset, this approach matched 63.6% of the sample including 155,106 correct matches and 47 incorrect matches. In the *chuppah* dataset, the approach matched 61.9% of the sample including 10,563 correct matches and 21 incorrect matches.

A3. LINKS' marriage certificates' samples

Having established the Jewish Name Index, verified that it works properly, and identified a 'best practice' for our sample, we now enact it on the LINKS marriage certificates. Since this dissertation concerns itself with the experience of Jews in Amsterdam, we limit the sample to marriages taking place in Amsterdam. This leads to a sample of 389,664 Amsterdam marriage certificates for the 1811-1932 period. I use the aforementioned approach on grooms' and brides' families separately. The distribution of the estimated group belonging is shown in Table A1. Ambiguous refers to persons who were not able to be 'matched,' i.e. they could not be identified distinctively as either Jewish or Gentile. Unambiguous refers to the 'matched' population, those who were considered as either Jewish or Gentile by the selection approach. For both men and women, matching rates exceeded 70 percent. This matching rate is higher than the matching rate in our testing, a likely result of the higher quality of recordkeeping in the civil registrations.

Furthermore, the share of Jews among the matched individuals, roughly equal to 10 percent for the entire period, corresponds to the Jewish share in the total Amsterdam population, which fluctuated between 8 and 12 percent throughout the period. This suggests that the selection approach is not skewed in either direction. Additionally, Table A1 presents separate matching results for period 1900-1932. These results verify that, although the distinctiveness of names was calculated from names present circa 1850, the matching results did not worsen in later periods. This could have happened as result of changing naming patterns as the Jewish population integrated more actively into Gentile society. Instead, the matching rates of this tail end of the data are actually 1

to 2 percentage points higher than the overall average. The share of Jews in the matched population, dropping to roughly 9 percent in the latter period, corresponds with the shrinking Jewish population share in Amsterdam since the late nineteenth century.

TABLE A1 Distribution of matches in LINKS data by gender and period

	Grooms	Pct.	Brides	Pct.
1811-1932				
<i>A. Matching rate</i>				
Total marriages	389,664	100%	389,664	100%
Ambiguous	95,691	24.56%	112,242	28.80%
Unambiguous	293,973	75.44%	277,422	71.20%
<i>B. Distribution</i>				
Unambiguous	293,973	100%	277,422	100%
Gentile	263,555	89.65%	248,875	89.71%
Jewish	30,418	10.35%	28,547	10.29%
1900-1932				
<i>A. Matching rate</i>				
Total marriages	179,147	100%	179,147	100%
Ambiguous	40,044	22.35%	49,228	27.48%
Unambiguous	139,103	77.65%	129,919	72.52%
<i>B. Distribution</i>				
Unambiguous	139,103	100%	129,919	100%
Gentile	126,032	90.60%	118,172	90.96%
Jewish	13,071	9.40%	11,747	9.04%

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JNI approach.

Overall, all indicators suggest that the approach chosen leads to a sample of nearly 75 percent of all Jewish grooms and brides in Amsterdam at an extremely high level of accuracy. The use of this data throughout the dissertation is therefore warranted.

Appendix B. Additional Figures for Chapter 2

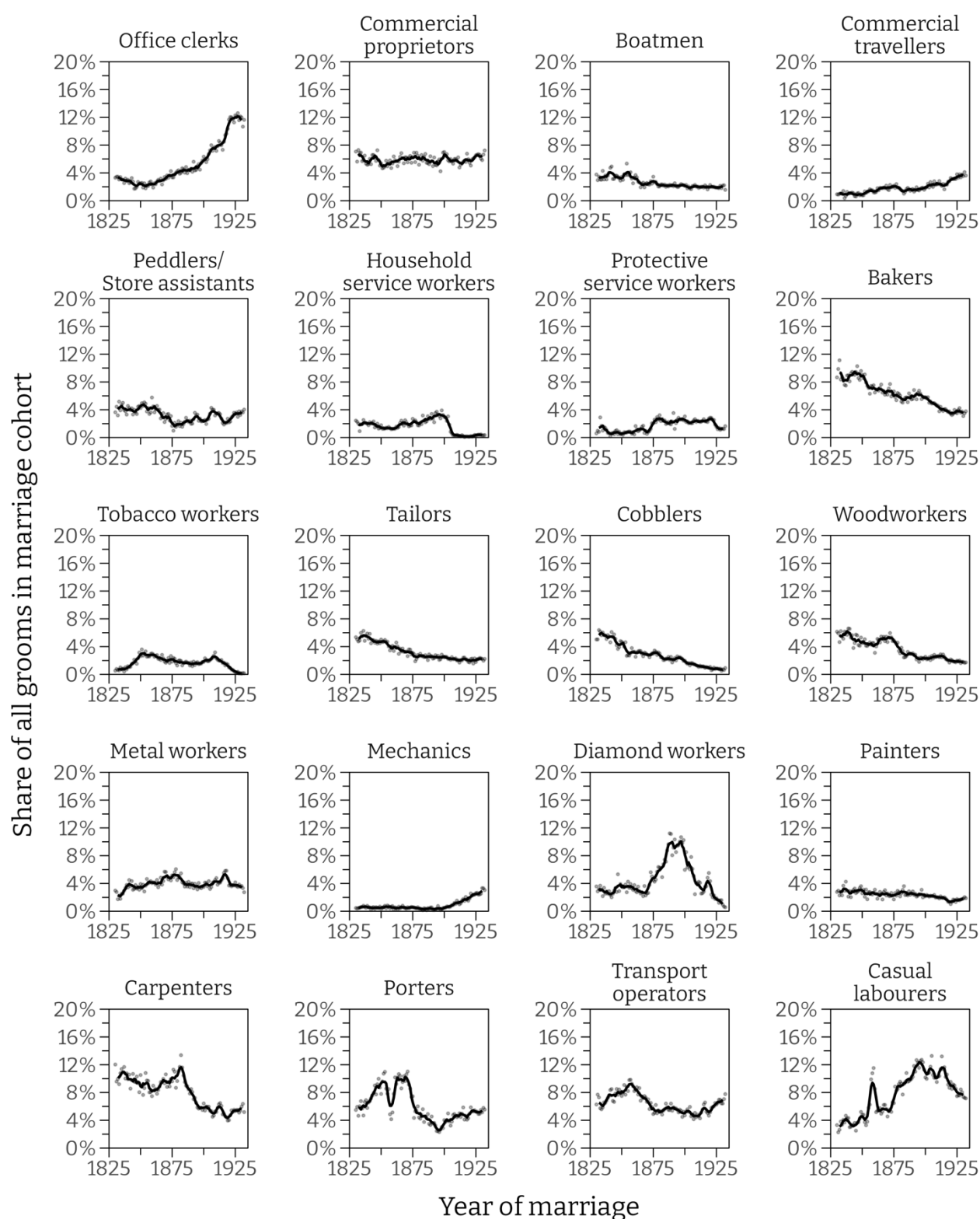


FIGURE B1 The share of grooms employed in the 20 most common occupations in Amsterdam, 1830-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS.

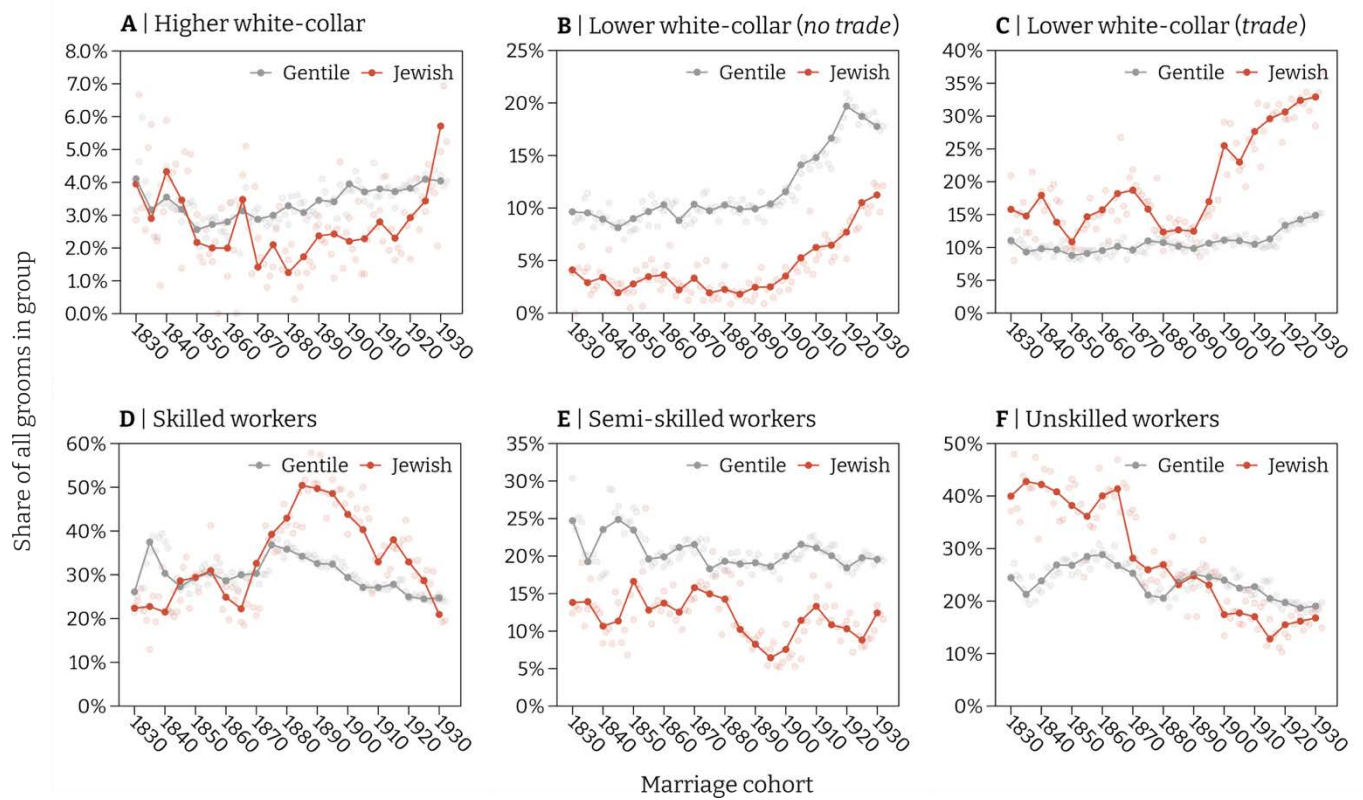


FIGURE B2 The share of grooms by ethno-religious background and social class, 1820-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JNL.

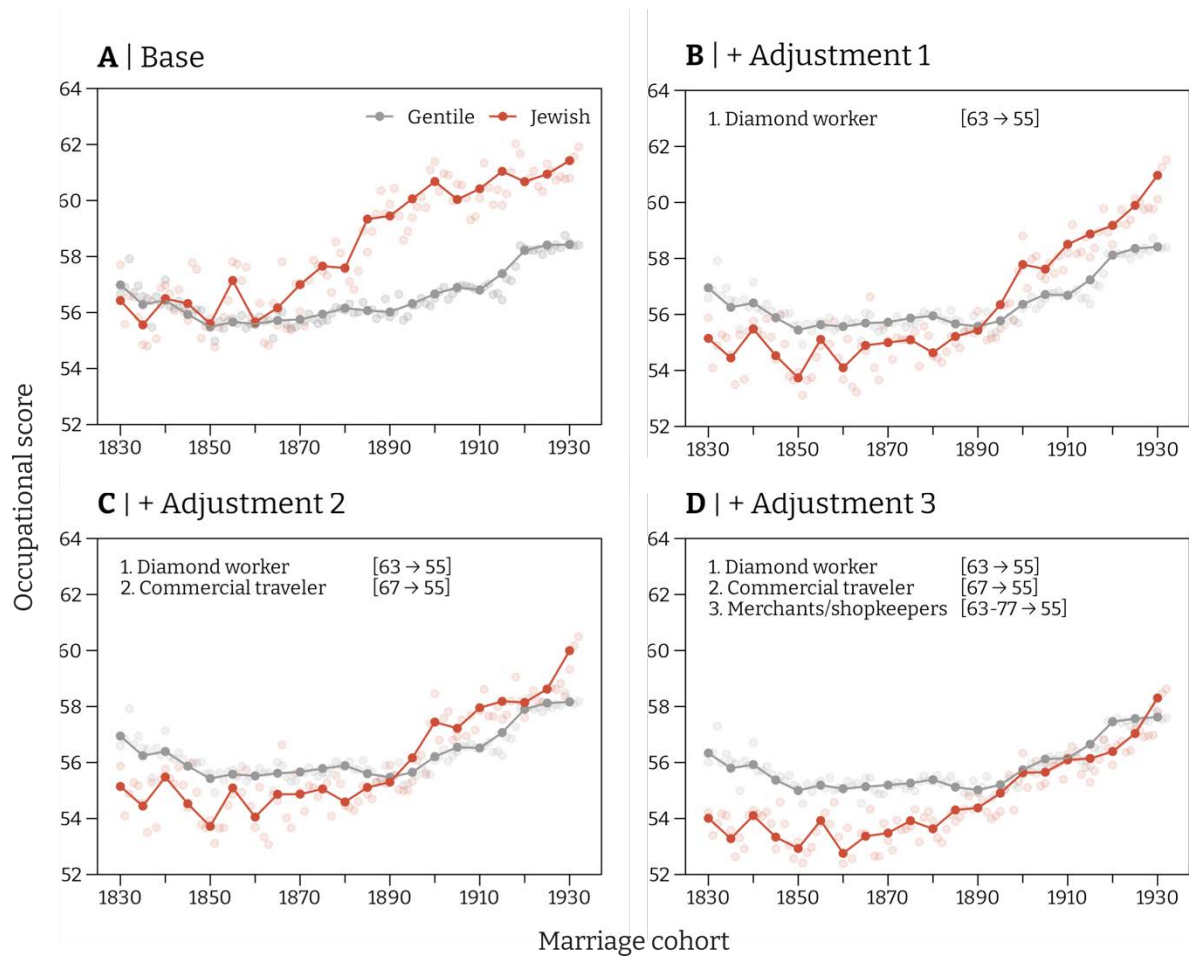


FIGURE B3 The average occupational scores by ethno-religious religion after adjusting common Jewish occupations downward, 1820-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JNL.

Note: in panels B, C, and D, occupational scores in occupations where many Jews worked are reduced to the average occupational score in the 1820-1900 period (i.e. 55) to highlight the growth in Jews' occupational scores outside of these occupational groups. Panel B reduces the diamond workers' scores to 55, panel C additionally reduces those of commercial travellers, and D also those of merchants and shopkeepers.

Appendix C. Additional Tables and Figures for Chapter 5

TABLE C1 Gentile-Jewish intermarriage rates of all Gentile grooms and Gentile diamond workers, Amsterdam 1880-1929.

Period	All Gentile grooms		Gentile diamond workers	
	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.
1880-1889	39 / 15,803	0.25%	2 / 552	0.36%
1890-1899	74 / 19,021	0.39%	5 / 1092	0.46%
1900-1909	113 / 23,363	0.48%	5 / 635	0.78%
1910-1919	213 / 28,934	0.74%	6 / 465	1.29%
1920-1929	393 / 35,507	1.11%	6 / 335	1.79%
1880-1929	832 / 122,628	0.68%	24 / 3079	0.78%

Source: author's calculations using LINKS "Cleaned Civil Registry" 2022 release.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process.

TABLE C2 Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rates of all Gentile sons and Jewish diamond workers, Amsterdam 1850-1929.

Period	All Jewish sons		Sons of Jewish diamond workers	
	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.
1850-1859	8 / 700	1.14%	0 / 40	0.00%
1860-1869	9 / 832	1.08%	0 / 70	0.00%
1870-1879	25 / 1169	2.14%	3 / 198	1.52%
1880-1889	29 / 1288	2.25%	2 / 169	1.18%
1890-1899	46 / 1196	3.85%	1 / 91	1.10%
1900-1909	103 / 1532	6.72%	10 / 191	5.24%
1910-1919	176 / 1929	9.12%	38 / 571	6.65%
1920-1929	250 / 1872	13.35%	78 / 558	14.00%
1850-1929	646 / 10,518	6.14%	132 / 1888	6.99%

Source: author's calculations using LINKS 2022 "Cleaned Civil Registry" release.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. Both sets of sons are limited to those with living fathers with valid occupations at the time of the sons' weddings.

TABLE C3 Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rates of all Jewish daughters and Jewish daughters of diamond workers, Amsterdam 1850-1929.

Period	All Jewish daughters		Daughters of Jewish diamond workers	
	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.	Intermarried / <i>N</i>	Pct.
1850-1859	7 / 730	0.96%	0 / 52	0.00%
1860-1869	17 / 863	1.97%	0 / 73	0.00%
1870-1879	10 / 1170	0.86%	0 / 206	0.00%
1880-1889	16 / 1295	1.24%	1 / 205	0.49%
1890-1899	39 / 1241	3.07%	3 / 99	3.03%
1900-1909	47 / 1608	2.93%	5 / 200	2.50%
1910-1919	112 / 2057	5.46%	22 / 621	3.54%
1920-1929	208 / 1987	10.20%	62 / 560	11.10%
1850-1929	456 / 10,951	4.16%	93 / 2016	4.61%

Source: author's calculations using LINKS 2022 "Cleaned Civil Registry" release.

Note: The sample is based on all Amsterdam marriage certificates where both the groom and bride were distinguished as either Jewish or Gentile. See Appendix A for a description of the selection process. Both sets of daughters are limited to those with living fathers with valid occupations at the time of the daughters' weddings.

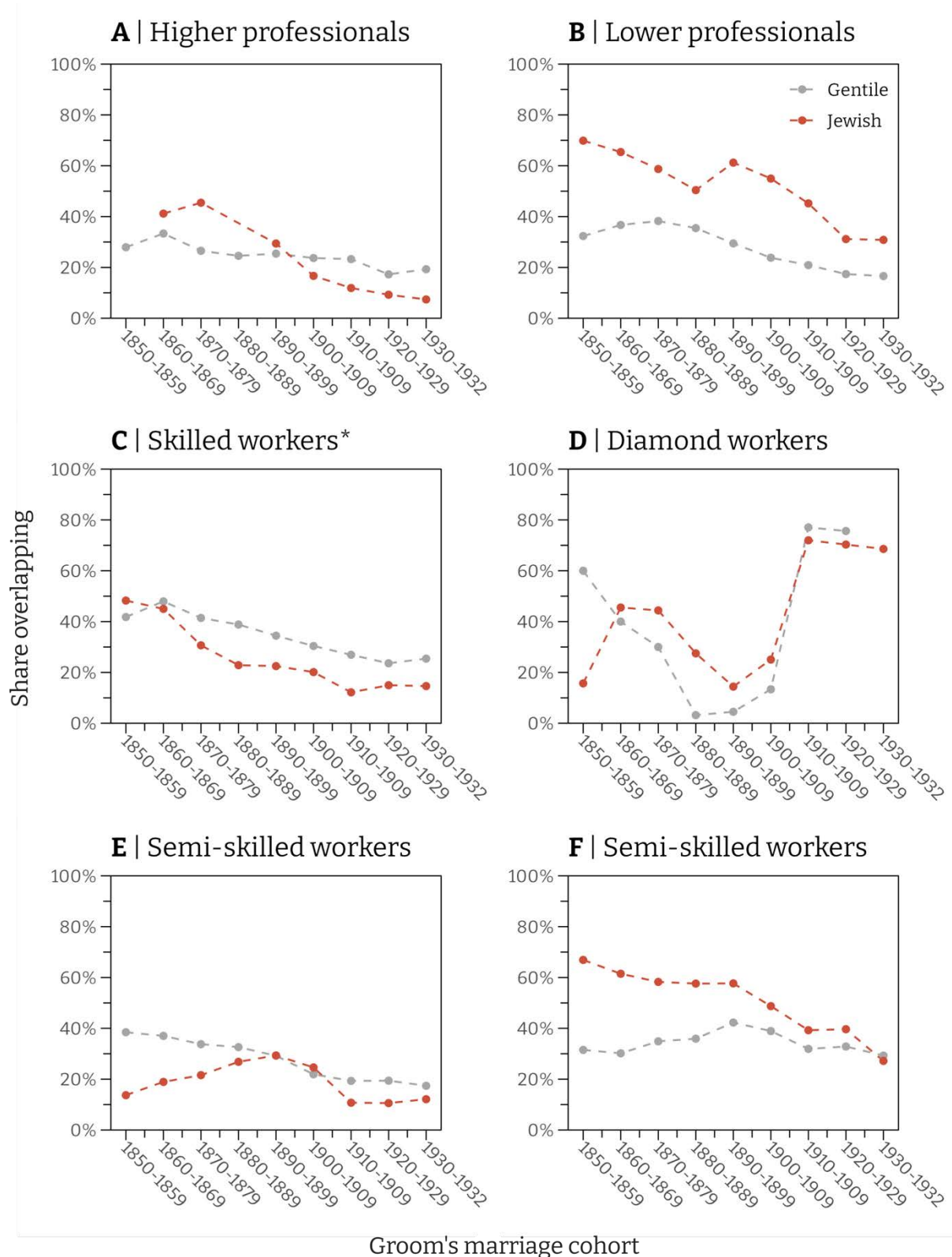


FIGURE C1 Occupational overlap between groom and father at the time of grooms' marriages by social class and ethno-religious background, Amsterdam 1850-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JNL.

Note: combinations with insufficient grooms are excluded from panels A and D; * excluding diamond workers.

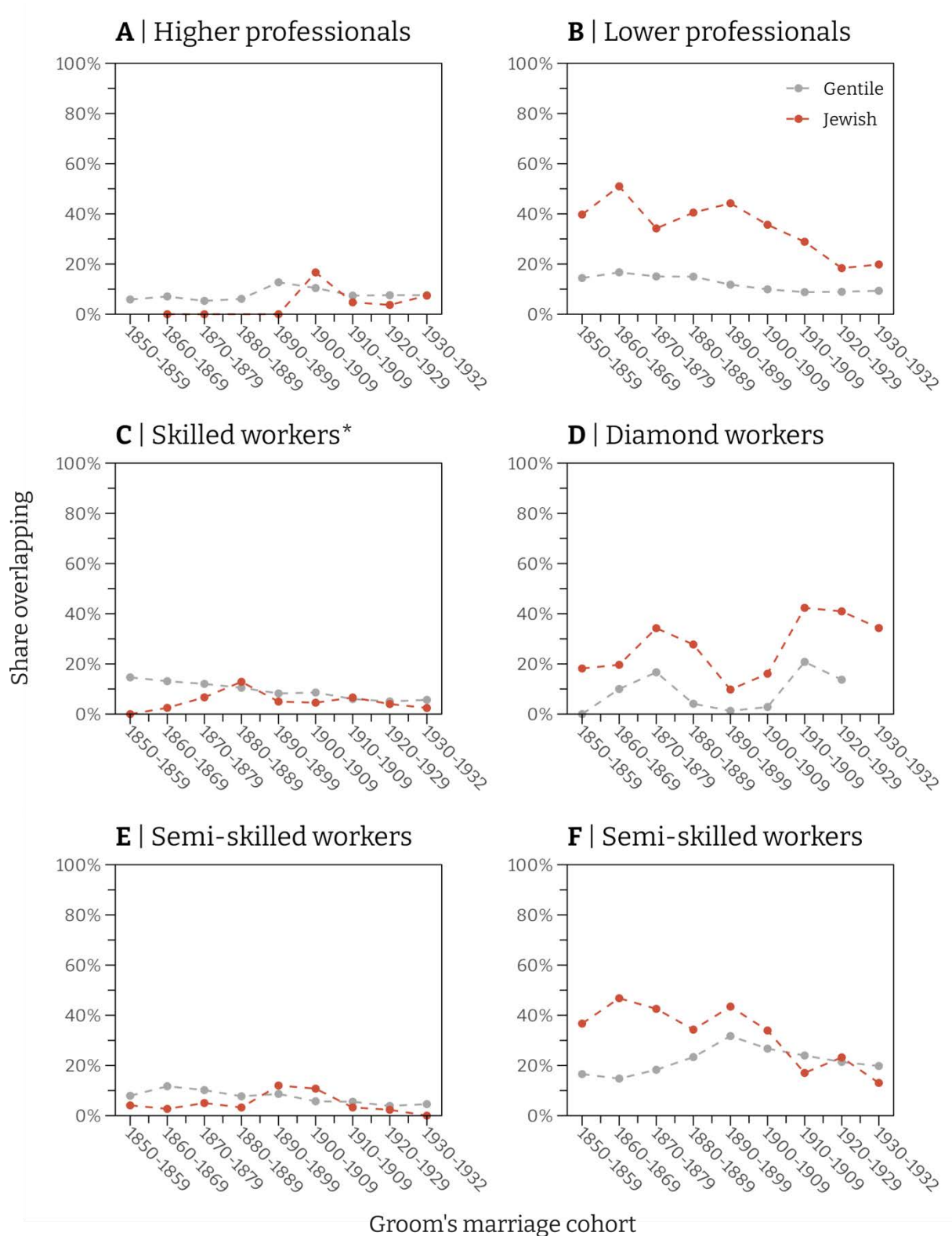


FIGURE C2 Occupational overlap between groom and father-in-law at the time of grooms' marriages by social class and ethno-religious background, Amsterdam 1850-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JNL.

Note: combinations with insufficient grooms are excluded from panels A and D; * excluding diamond workers.

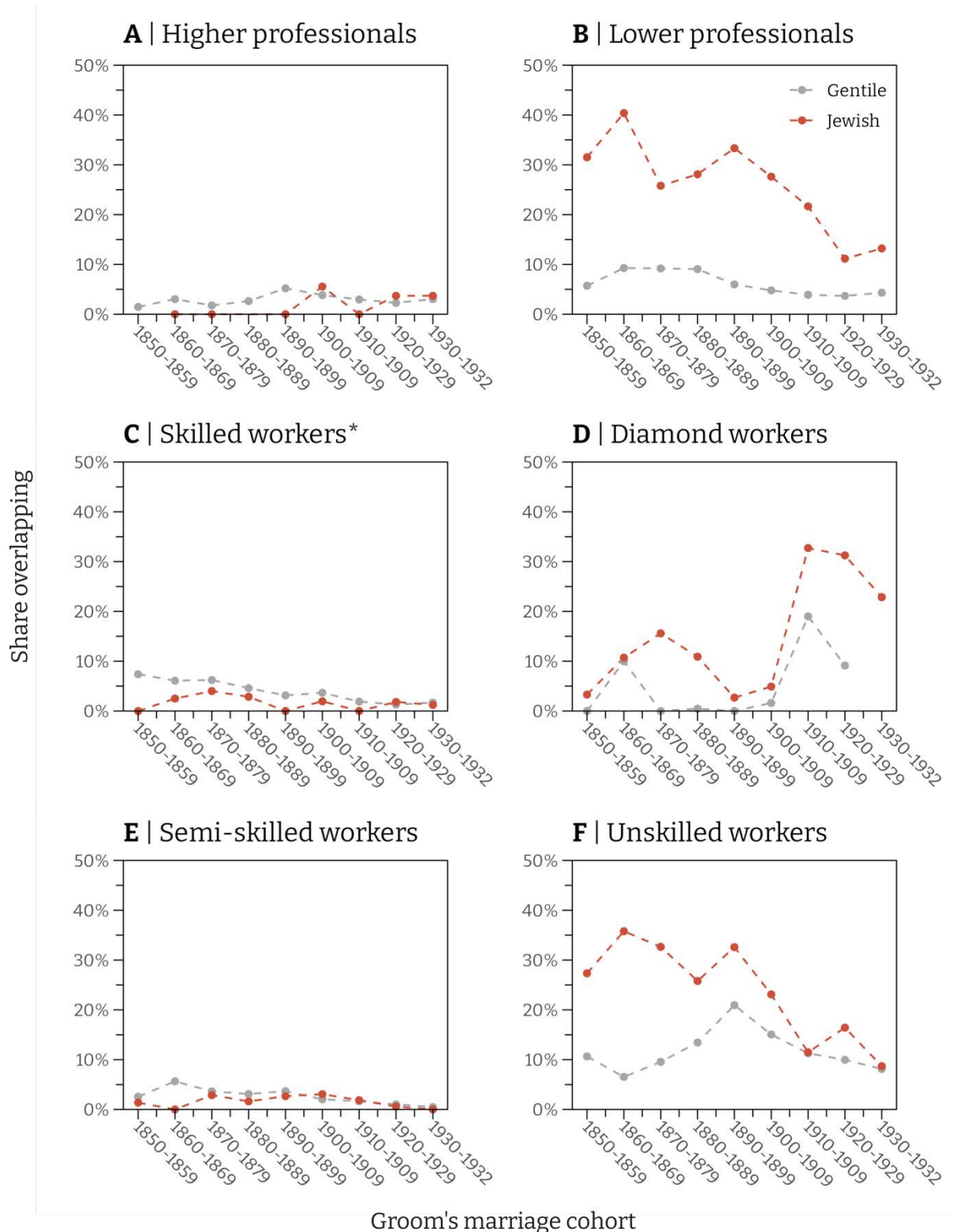


FIGURE C3 Occupational overlap between groom, father, and father-in-law at the time of grooms' marriages by social class and ethno-religious background, Amsterdam 1850-1932.

Source: author's calculations using LINKS and JN1.

Note: combinations with insufficient grooms are excluded from panels A and D; * excluding diamond workers.

Appendix D. Bereavement of Fathers prior to Sons' Marriages

To estimate the numbers in Table 5.4, marriages are needed where both the groom, their father, and their father-in-law were listed with a valid occupation. Parents who had died prior to the marriage were not listed with their occupational status. Consequently, our analyses may be biased if there existed differences in the likelihood of parents' survival that varied by ethno-religious background. For instance, if fathers and fathers-in-law of lower-status Jewish grooms were more likely to survive until their next of kin's wedding relative to Gentiles, then our analyses may pick up more lower-class Jews than Gentiles. While it is likely that there *were* differences in survival—as has been shown by Frans van Poppel and co-authors—it is important for our analyses that these differences in survival had little to no impact on the average status of the groom. To test this, I run an Ordinal Least Squares regression where the outcome is the occupational score, or HISCAM, of the groom, and explanatory variables include the bereavement of at least one father(-in-law) interacted with ethno-religious background, age group, and the year of marriage. The results are shown in Table D1.

TABLE D1 Regression results of presence of living fathers at wedding on HISCAM-score

Variable	Beta	St. Error	p-value	
Bereavement father [^] (Ref. = Both present)	0.303	(0.053)	0.000	***
Jewish groom	3.358	(0.120)	0.000	***
Bereavement × Jewish groom	-0.299	(0.152)	0.049	**
Age group (Ref. = 18-24)				
25-29	2.530	(0.053)	0.000	***
30-34	3.560	(0.070)	0.000	***
35-39	3.501	(0.096)	0.000	***
Year of marriage	0.049	(0.001)	0.000	***
Intercept	-37.824	(2.447)	0.000	***
N		189,217		
R ²		0.036		

Source: author's calculations using LINKS data and JINI approach.

Note: based on sample years 1865-1932; [^] bereavement of at least one father or father-in-law;

** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Given our large sample, these results will always be *statistically* significant. However, the estimated beta coefficients indicate that differences between grooms whose father and father-in-law were both alive—the reference category—and grooms for whom at least one father was not living were minimal. Moreover, Jews and Gentiles hardly differed in this regard. While Jews had, on average, occupational scores of 3.358 higher than Gentiles, the difference between Jews and Gentiles was reduced by only 0.3 occupational points if we compare grooms with at least one bereaved father-(in-law). Thus, I am confident that the results are not meaningfully impacted by differential mortality patterns of Jews and Gentiles.

Appendix E. Additional Figures and Tables for Chapter 6

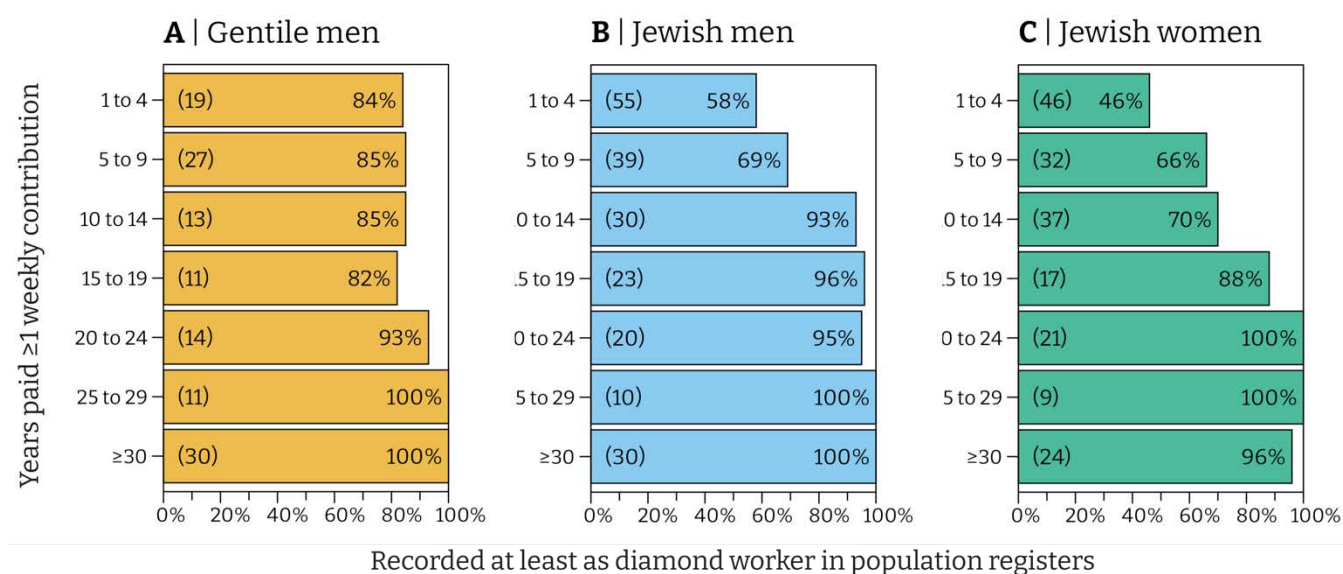


FIGURE E1 The share of members recorded as a diamond worker in the population registers, by years spent as ANDB members, gender, and ethno-religious background
Source: author's calculations using HSN-ANDB and ANDB membership cards.
Note: sample sizes of each category are given to the right of each panel.

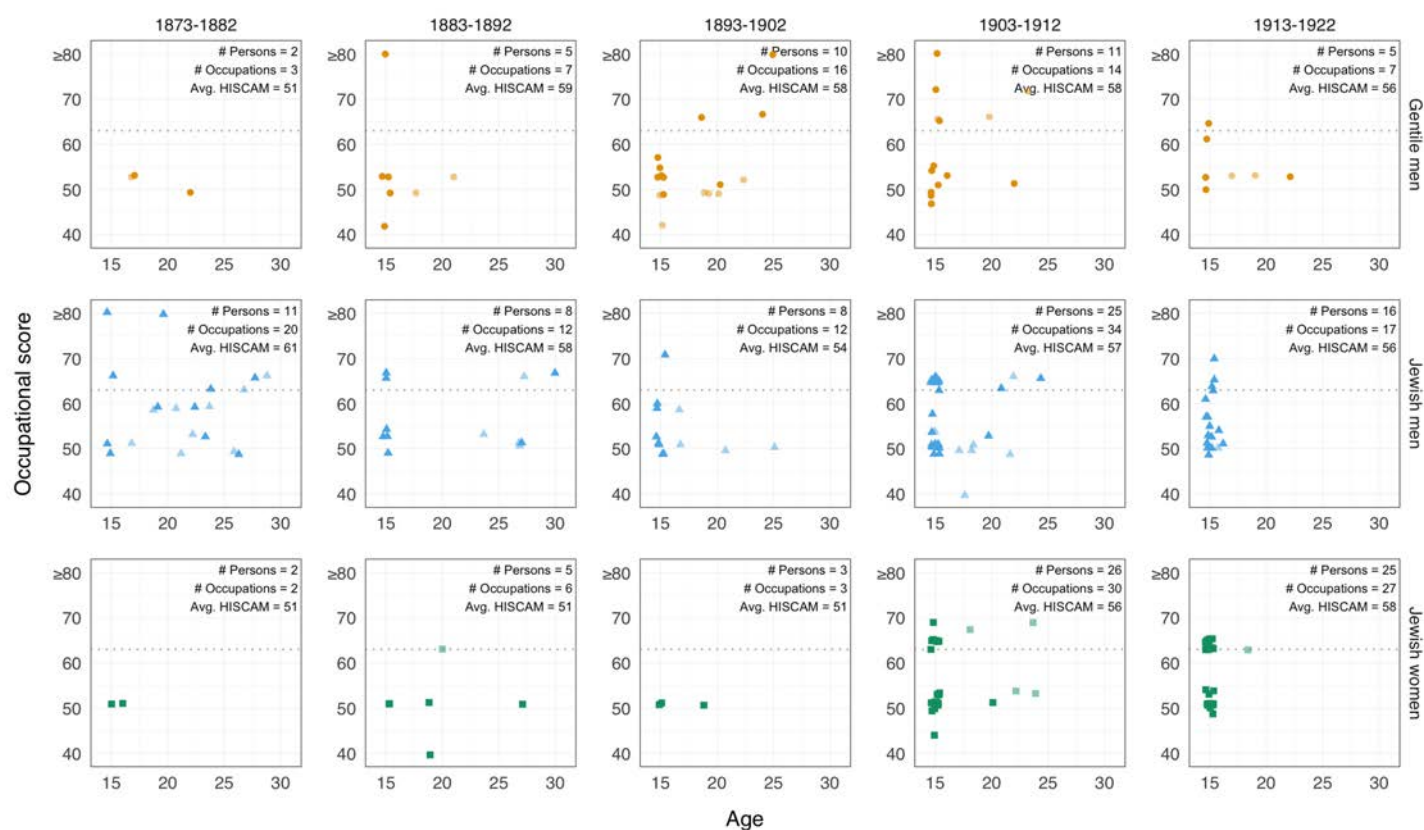


FIGURE E2 Occupations held by diamond workers prior to their entry into the diamond industry, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious group

Source: author's calculations using HSN-ANDB

Note: dark colours indicate first occupation, light colours subsequent occupations. Average HISCAM calculated using first occupation only.

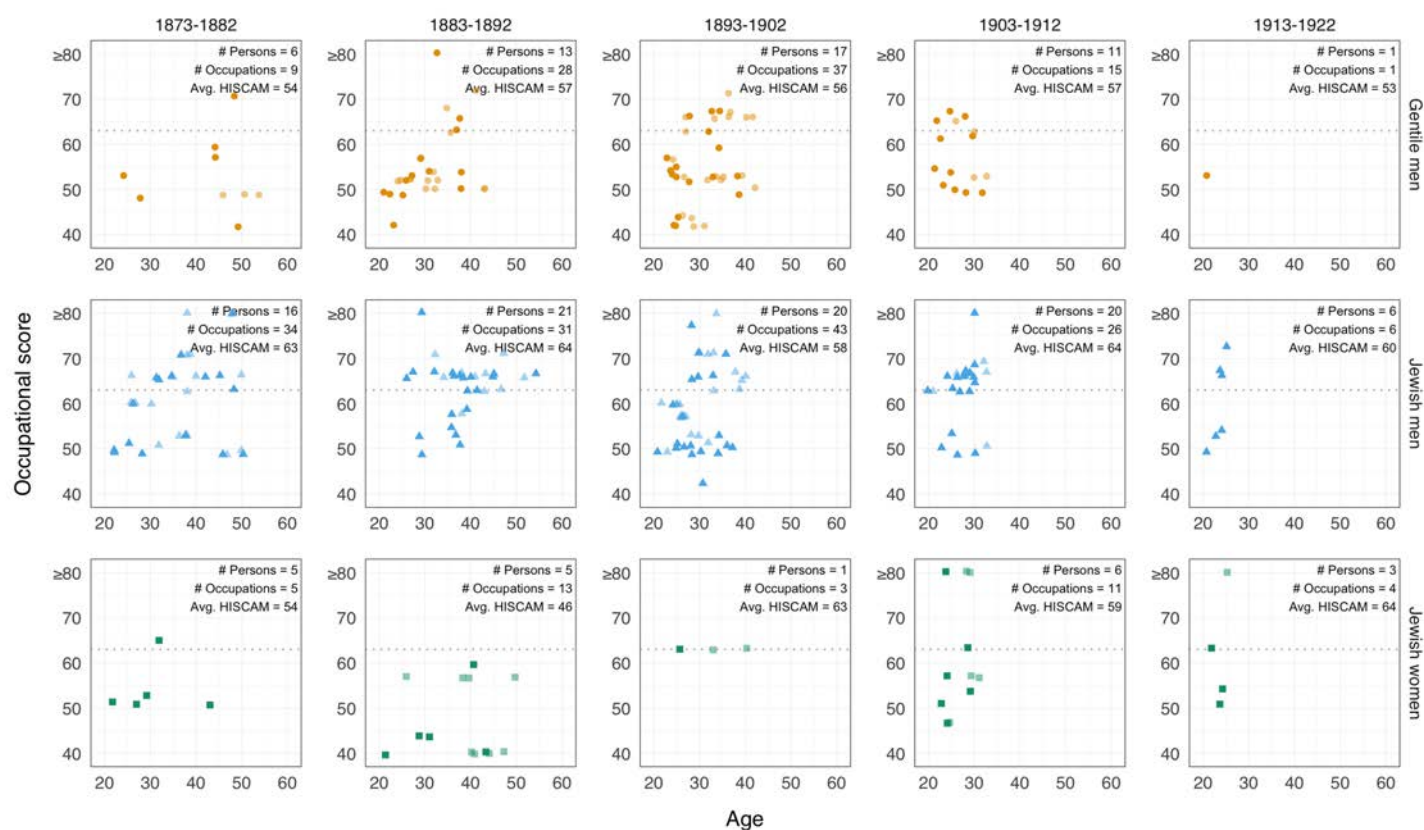


FIGURE E3 Occupations held by diamond workers after their entry into the diamond industry, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious group.

Source: author's calculations using HSN-ANDB

Note: dark colours indicate first occupation, light colours subsequent occupations. Average HISCAM weighted by number of occupations per person.

TABLE E1 Occupational scores by sample, ethno-religious group, cohort, and career stage, 1888-1940.

	ANDB			ANDB			ANDB		
	Jewish men			Jewish women			Gentile men		
	<i>Career stage</i>			<i>Career stage</i>			<i>Career stage</i>		
<i>Cohort</i>	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late
1	62.6	62.7	62.4	60.1	61.9	61.0	62.1	62.7	62.6
2	62.5	63.5	62.4	61.7	61.1	60.3	61.7	61.2	60.7
3	61.2	60.2	59.8	61.1	61.6	60.4	60.0	61.0	59.5
4	60.8	61.6	60.8	60.2	60.2	60.9	61.5	62.3	62.1
All	61.7	62.0	61.5	60.7	61.0	60.7	61.0	61.6	60.9

	General			General			General		
	Jewish men			Jewish women			Gentile men		
	<i>Career stage</i>			<i>Career stage</i>			<i>Career stage</i>		
<i>Cohort</i>	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late
1	58.9	59.7	59.9	48.7	50.9	49.7	56.7	56.7	57.7
2	57.5	59.2	59.3	48.9	51.7	51.9	54.9	56.0	56.1
3	61.5	62.1	62.1	52.6	52.6	52.7	56.7	57.0	56.6
4	60.1	60.3	60.2	56.4	56.7	56.3	58.1	57.7	57.6
All	59.9	60.5	60.4	53.2	53.1	53.2	56.5	56.7	56.7

	Non-identifying			Non-identifying		
	Jewish men			Jewish women		
	<i>Career stage</i>			<i>Career stage</i>		
<i>Cohort</i>	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late
1	62.4	62.4	63.0	56.4	57.8	55.8
2	61.1	63.4	62.2	50.1	51.3	51.2
3	61.0	60.4	60.3	56.6	58.2	58.2
4	61.4	60.9	61.3	58.0	60.4	59.3
All	61.4	61.6	61.6	56.4	57.6	56.9

Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release.

Appendix F. Description of Linkages between Apprenticeship Cards and 1941 Gemeentelijst

The ANDB apprenticeship administration counts 7695 cards between 1904 and 1958. From these, I exclude: (i) all *protégés* of the *Algemene Juweliers Vereniging* ('General Jewellers' Association');²² (ii) those whose cards offer too sparse information on either the apprentice or their parent; and (iii) all apprentices who did not start between 1904 and 1913 and outside of the ages 13 to 18. This last requirements keeps backgrounds of apprentices similar—it is unlikely they had prior career before joining, focuses on the period with the most incoming apprentices (1904–1913), and ensures that individuals had reached full adulthood by 1941. This leaves 4606 apprentices, roughly three quarters of whom were Jewish. These were linked to the municipal list of 1941 using their first name, last name, and date of birth.²³ This direct linking method created 1442 links, over half of all Jewish apprentices.²⁴ Four main reasons explain the absence of links: (1) individuals were no longer alive in 1941; (2) individuals no longer resided in Amsterdam in 1941; (3) the names or date of births deviated considerably between the apprenticeship cards and the municipal list; or (4) individuals had survived the war and lived long post-war lives.²⁵

The linked sample consists of 1131 men and 311 women. They were born in the period 1886–1898, started apprenticeships between 1904 and 1913, and were aged 43 to 55 in 1941. To minimise differences between the three groups, the sample is delimited further. We only look at apprentices who (i) had parents in the diamond industry and (ii) lived in the old or new Jewish Quarter during their apprenticeships. Since married women were rarely listed with an occupation, and a majority of women were married by 1941, the following analyses will be based on the male apprentices. This leaves a total of 654 apprentices: 291 who completed their apprenticeship and were diamond workers in 1941, 288 who completed their apprenticeships and worked in different occupations in 1941, and 75 apprentices who changed careers prior to completing their apprenticeship examination.

²² The AJV was allowed a certain number of their apprentices placed each year. This allowed them to acquire the know-how needed to be a diamond trader. These apprentices generally did not continue working as members of the union.

²³ Allowing for a total Levenshtein distance of 2 for the combined first and last name.

²⁴ 2772 of the 4606 could be identified as Jewish based on their apprenticeship cards. Identification occurred based on linking to the *Joods Monument*, by the distinctiveness of their names, or manual examination in the Amsterdam population registers.

²⁵ The dataset of the Amsterdam municipal list of 1941 available to me does not include approximately 13 percent of the total Jewish population, roughly half of all Holocaust survivors, for privacy reasons.

Acknowledgements

Those who have the misfortune of knowing are well aware that writing a dissertation is rarely an easy task. Fortunately, many people have guided me along the way.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisors, Karin Hofmeester and Leo Lucassen. Karin, thank you for your steadfast support and understanding throughout this journey. I enjoyed our many inspiring discussions about Jewish Amsterdam and the diamond industry, for which I could always pop into your office. This PhD surely would not have been possible without your expertise! Leo, thank you for urging me to keep writing and challenging my thinking on key ideas at critical junctures. Your thoughtful comments and praise each step of the way gave me the confidence to see this work through. As supervisors, you gave me the space and freedom to shape the dissertation in my own way, yet were readily available when I inevitably needed direction. Your combined feedback on consecutive drafts of the manuscript helped turn this dissertation into a far more complete and, hopefully, readable product.

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Seeking international academic connections, I joined the *Association for Young Historical Demographers* in 2022. Since then, my fellow board

members have provided me with a welcome and therapeutic monthly outlet, for which I remain appreciative.

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It was only a short time after I started my studies in Lund that I realised I wanted to study social inequalities in the past professionally. I want to thank my friends who were with me then—Marcos, Silvia, Toni, and Ludwig—for patiently enduring my enthusiasm in those early days. I also want to express my appreciation to the friends I made as I continued my academic journey—especially Mads and Louise, Hampton and Alfie, Danny, and Qi. Thank you for staying in touch, making time for me despite your busy lives, and bearing with my chronically slow replies. Your presence has meant more than you know.

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Summary

This dissertation explores the social mobility and integration patterns of Amsterdam Jews from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the eve of World War II. It puts the lives and careers of diamond workers, those who made a living in Amsterdam Jews' premier occupational niche, at the centre of this discussion. The dissertation analyses the information in the membership administration of the diamond workers' union and supplements this with reconstructed life courses of selected diamond workers, thus combining workers' private lives and career histories. It employs a comparative approach by contrasting the experiences of Jewish diamond workers with the trajectories of Gentile diamond workers and those of Jews and Gentiles in other occupational groups. In this way, the dissertation highlights the remarkable life courses of Amsterdam Jews and, in particular, those of Jewish diamond workers.

The first three chapters set the stage. Chapter 1 outlines the theoretical framework, historiography, and data used. It defines key concepts, operationalises the attribute 'Jewish,' and discusses how social mobility and integration are measured. Chapter 2 expands on the social, economic, and demographic developments in Amsterdam since the beginning of the nineteenth century before discussing Jews' changing position in the Dutch capital. Chapter 3 details the diamond industry, the focal point of the dissertation. It describes the origins of the Jewish ethnic niche, the formation of the diamond workers' union, highlights the union's significance for the uplifting of Jewish workers, and characterises the social dynamics and hierarchy among the industry's workers.

The next four chapters present comparative analyses of social mobility by ethno-religious background, sex, birth cohort, and social class across the life domains of work, marriage, residence, and education. Chapter 4 examines patterns of intergenerational mobility. In the nineteenth century, diamond workers stood out for their prevalent occupational following. By the end of the century, however, the industry had reached full capacity. Consequently, fewer sons of diamond workers followed in their fathers' footsteps. While Jewish diamond workers' sons commonly ended up in a higher social class than their parents, Gentile sons of diamond workers were characterised by greater class stability. In fact, Jewish sons of all class origins saw more upward mobility than their Gentile peers from the same walks of life. The same pattern is observed for parents—both fathers and mothers—and their offspring—sons and daughters—where both generations worked in the diamond industry. Here, the chapter also expands on the strikingly high rates of upward mobility among women in the diamond industry. Specialised in top positions located in small *ateliers* rather

than hazardous factories, Jewish and Gentile women born to diamond workers almost always worked in higher positions in the industry. Thus, the diamond industry was a driver of generational improvements in status for both Jews and women.

Marriages were another avenue for social mobility. Chapter 5 examines two key aspects of partner choice: the social class and ethno-religious background of one's spouse. The chapter shows that Amsterdam's Jews were more likely than Gentiles to marry partners from similar class backgrounds. The Jewish community was thus characterised by less social fluidity than members of the dominant non-Jewish society. Meanwhile, Jews increasingly married Gentile partners—a pattern that accelerated after 1890 due to the rise of the Social Democracy and the active role of Jews in it. Jewish diamond workers lagged in this regard. This finding is linked to differential exposure to non-Jews by occupational groups: Jewish diamond workers primarily interacted with other Jewish diamond workers. However, although intermarriage is a common proxy for integration, it did not always imply equality between partners. On average, intermarrying Jews came from significantly higher social status backgrounds than their Gentile spouses. This pattern is indicative of discrimination on the marriage market, although it declined from the late nineteenth century onward. Finally, the chapter reveals high degrees of occupational clustering in Jews' immediate social circles. Jewish grooms working as commercial proprietors, diamond workers, and in various unskilled occupations were especially likely to have fathers *and* fathers-in-law employed in the same fields. These concentrations could be beneficial for career progression but hampered occupational diversification among Jews, thus complicating familial support in times of need.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that many Jewish diamond workers managed to transition into new careers, nonetheless. This chapter compares life course career trajectories. Although diamond workers commonly worked for various employers over the span of their careers, they rarely changed job titles. Each specialisation demanded considerable skills and, thus, lengthy apprenticeships. They also faced significant hurdles on their paths to becoming entrepreneurs or employers; rough diamonds were expensive and competition among traders and factory owners fierce. Nevertheless, the instability of employment in this luxury industry made career changes commonplace. Roughly half therefore transitioned to new careers permanently, especially following long crises in the beginning of the twentieth century. Jews and Gentiles shifted to common occupations in their respective subgroups; trade and white-collar careers for Jews and other (semi-)skilled manual labour for Gentiles. Diamond workers hoping to remain employed in their field tried their luck in Antwerp, a strategy more common among Jews due to their greater cultural attachment to industry. Moreover, the chapter shows that careers directly affected integration: for Jews, lengthier careers in the diamond

industry lowered the likelihood of intermarriage and religious disaffiliation.

Upward mobility of Jews was not only visible in the occupations they held, but also through their choice of residence. Chapter 7 follows the residential histories of Jewish diamond workers. Until the nineteenth century, Jews clustered in the *Jewish Quarter*, a mostly impoverished area to the southeast of Amsterdam's city centre. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Jews increasingly left this quarter. Jewish diamond workers pioneered these relocations, purchasing homes in the newly constructed *Pijp* area or moving to the *Jewish Quarter*-adjacent *Plantage* and *Weesper* districts. Rising population densities necessitated further expansions of the city and Jews and Gentiles, facing similar housing pressures, concurrently moved to new areas in Amsterdam East. Consequently, growing segments of Jews lived in 'Mixed' neighbourhoods where both Jews and Gentiles were strongly represented. For the first time since their initial arrival in the seventeenth century, Jews, on average, no longer lived in districts where they comprised over half of the residents. As Amsterdam continued to expand, affluent Jews and Gentiles progressively moved to areas more aligned with their social standing. Thus, segregation increasingly occurred along class lines and was decreasingly based on ethno-religious background. Nonetheless, after new middle-class districts were built in other parts of the city, Gentile residents of mixed neighbourhoods started moving out, creating stronger Jewish concentrations in these areas. The chapter thus highlights the impressive spatial integration of Jews while emphasising the role of both Jews and Gentiles in sustaining segregation.

Chapter 8 extends the analyses to the next generation, examining educational attainment of the sons of the Jews and Gentiles studied throughout this dissertation. Unequivocally, Jewish sons were more likely to complete secondary and tertiary education than Gentiles. Gentile sons, in contrast, more often obtained vocational education, although such schooling was notably underreported for Jews. Jewish diamond workers especially invested more into their sons' education. Their union strongly promoted (self-)education, demonstrated by a library subject to nationwide envy. However, although Jewish sons enjoyed more education than their Gentile peers on average, they started their careers at the same levels, a pattern especially notable among office clerks. While this may be indicative of discrimination on the labour market, it could also reflect the nature of the labour market for young men and the limited networks of Jews in the office sphere.

The results from this dissertation apply to a number of disciplines in history and sociology. Importantly, it demonstrates that national and local social mobility rates can hide large subgroup differences which ought to be assessed in greater detail. For Jewish history, it underlines the value of comparative and quantitative approaches, contrasting the experiences of Jews and Gentiles, and men and women, within and across occupational groups and social classes. This approach has led to

a number of important new insights. First, Jews experienced rapid upward mobility since 1870. Initially, this socio-economic ascent was driven by the expanding diamond industry. In subsequent decades, Jews maintained this growth by investing in education, through the widening class of Jewish employers, and resulting from strides in societal integration. This connects to the second point: social mobility and integration were not inherently related. Not only could social mobility occur independently from integration, in the case of the diamond workers upward mobility hampered integration in several life domains—Jewish diamond workers had by far the lowest intermarriage rates of all Jewish occupational groups and rarely disaffiliated despite growing secularisation. In other words, integration was not always a precondition or outcome of socioeconomic improvements of Jews, although it could reduce labour market discrimination and diversify the occupational distribution of their social networks. Third, political emancipation and integration through the diamond workers' union and Social Democratic politics were crucial in forming the mindset of growth among the Jewish working-class. They encouraged Jewish workers to invest in their own human capital and the educational attainment of their next of kin with intergenerational benefits. Natural avenues for further research are to assess Jews' experiences in schooling and the role of Jewish employers and entrepreneurs in establishing labour markets that protected Jews from discrimination.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de sociale mobiliteit en integratiepatronen van Amsterdamse Joden van het midden van de negentiende eeuw tot aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog. De levens en carrières van diamantbewerkers, werkzaam in de belangrijkste beroepsniche van deze gemeenschap, staan centraal in dit onderzoek. Het proefschrift analyseert de informatie in de ledenadministratie van de diamantbewerkersbond en vult deze aan met gereconstrueerde levenslopen van geselecteerde diamantbewerkers, waardoor privéleven en loopbaan van de arbeiders worden gecombineerd. Via een vergelijkende aanpak worden de ervaringen van Joodse diamantbewerkers afgezet tegen die van niet-Joodse diamantbewerkers en van Joden en niet-Joden in andere beroepsgroepen. Zo belicht het proefschrift de opmerkelijke levensloop van Amsterdamse Joden, en in het bijzonder die van Joodse diamantbewerkers.

De eerste drie hoofdstukken vormen de basis voor de analyses in dit proefschrift. Hoofdstuk 1 schetst het theoretisch kader, de historiografie en de gebruikte data. Het definieert sleutelbegrippen, operationaliseert wat 'Joods' betekent binnen dit onderzoek en bespreekt de meetmethoden voor sociale mobiliteit en integratie. Hoofdstuk 2 behandelt de sociale, economische en demografische ontwikkelingen in Amsterdam sinds het begin van de negentiende eeuw en de veranderende positie van Joden in de hoofdstad. Hoofdstuk 3 verdiept zich in de diamantindustrie. Het beschrijft de oorsprong van deze Joodse niche, de vorming van de *Algemene Nederlandse Diamantbewerkersbond* (ANDB) en de betekenis daarvan voor de positieverbetering van Joodse arbeiders, en karakteriseert de sociale dynamiek en hiërarchie binnen de industrie.

De volgende vier hoofdstukken presenteren vergelijkende analyses van sociale mobiliteit naar etnisch-religieuze achtergrond, geslacht, geboortecohort en sociale klasse in de levensdomeinen werk, huwelijk, woonplaats en onderwijs. Hoofdstuk 4 onderzoekt patronen van intergenerationele mobiliteit. In de negentiende eeuw viel op dat zonen van diamantbewerkers vaak hetzelfde beroep uitoefenden als hun vader. Tegen het einde van de eeuw had de diamantindustrie haar volle capaciteit echter bereikt, waardoor minder diamantbewerkerszonen in de voetsporen traden van hun vaders. Terwijl Joodse zonen van diamantbewerkers doorgaans opklommen naar een hogere sociale klasse, bleven niet-Joodse diamantbewerkerszonen vaker in dezelfde klasse. Sterker nog, in het algemeen vertoonden Joodse zonen meer opwaartse mobiliteit dan hun niet-Joodse leeftijdsgenoten van dezelfde rangen en standen. Hetzelfde gold voor combinaties van ouders—zowel vaders en moeders—en kinderen—zonen en dochters—waar beide generaties in de diamantindustrie werkten. Het

hoofdstuk bespreekt ook de opvallende opwaartse mobiliteit onder diamantbewerksters. Zij werkten vooral in topfuncties in kleine ateliers in plaats van in de ongezonde diamantfabrieken; zowel Joodse als niet-Joodse dochters kwamen vrijwel altijd terecht in hogere posities. De diamantindustrie was dus een belangrijke motor achter de statusverbetering van zowel Joden als vrouwen.

Hoofdstuk 5 beschouwt het huwelijk als mobiliteits- en integratiemechanisme. Het hoofdstuk toont aan dat Amsterdamse Joden vaker binnen dezelfde klasse trouwden dan niet-Joden. De Joodse gemeenschap werd dus gekenmerkt door minder sociale fluiditeit dan leden van de dominante niet-Joodse samenleving. In de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw trouwden Joden steeds vaker met niet-Joodse partners—een fenomeen dat na 1890 versnelde door de opkomst van de sociaaldemocratie en de actieve rol van Joden daarin. Joodse diamantbewerders bleven in dit opzicht achter. Dit wordt grotendeels verklaard door de mate van blootstelling aan niet-Joden per beroepsgroep: binnen hun belangrijkste niche gingen Joodse diamantbewerders voornamelijk om met andere Joodse diamantbewerders. Hoewel het gemengde huwelijk een veelgebruikte *proxy* is voor integratie, impliceerde zulke relaties niet altijd gelijkheid tussen partners. Gemiddeld hadden gemengd-gehuwde Joden een aanzienlijk hogere sociale achtergrond dan hun niet-Joodse partners. Dit duidt op discriminatie op de huwelijksmarkt, maar het nam vanaf het einde van de negentiende eeuw sterk af. Tenslotte laat dit hoofdstuk zien dat Joden vaak een beroep kozen waar familieleden werkzaam in waren: beroepsclustering kwam meer dan gemiddeld voor. Vooral Joodse bruidegoms die in de handel, de diamantindustrie en verschillende ongeschoolde beroepen werkten, hadden zowel vaders én schoonvaders die in hetzelfde vak hun brood verdienden. Zulke netwerken konden gunstig zijn voor de loopbaanontwikkeling, maar belemmerden ook de beroepsdiversificatie onder Joden en dus steun in tijden van nood.

Hoofdstuk 6 vergelijkt de loopbaantrajecten van Joden en niet-Joden. Hoewel diamantbewerders tijdens hun loopbaan vaak voor verschillende werkgevers werkten, veranderden ze zelden van beroep. Elke specialisatie vereiste aanzienlijke vaardigheden en, als gevolg, een lange leertijd. Hun weg naar het ondernemerschap werd verder verhinderd door de dure grondstoffen en hevige concurrentie onder diamanthandelaren en fabriekseigenaren. Vanwege de instabiliteit van de werkgelegenheid in deze luxe-industrie waren carrièrewisselingen echter aan de orde van de dag. Ruwweg de helft van de diamantbewerders veranderde permanent van beroep, vooral na langdurige crises aan het begin van de twintigste eeuw. Joden en niet-Joden kozen dan doorgaans voor beroepen die vaak voorkwamen binnen eigen kring; werk in de handel en witte-boordenberoepen voor Joden, en ander geschoold handwerk voor niet-Joden. Diamantbewerders die in hun vakgebied werkzaam wilden blijven beproefden hun geluk in Antwerpen, een strategie die vaker voorkwam bij Joden vanwege hun sterkere culturele verbondenheid met de industrie. Bovendien toont dit

hoofdstuk aan dat langere carrières in de diamantindustrie de kans op gemengde huwelijken en secularisering onder Joden verlaagden.

De opwaartse sociale mobiliteit van Joden was niet alleen zichtbaar in hun beroepen, maar ook in hun woonomgevingen. Hoofdstuk 7 volgt daarom de woongeschiedenis van Joodse diamantbewerkers. Tot de negentiende eeuw woonden Joden geconcentreerd in de grotendeels verpauperde *Jodenbuurt* ten zuidoosten van het centrum van Amsterdam. In de tweede helft van die eeuw verlieten steeds meer Joden deze wijk. Na de uitbreiding van de diamantindustrie vanaf 1870 namen Joodse diamantbewerkers het voortouw door huizen te kopen of huren in de nieuw aangelegde Pijp of te verhuizen naar de aan de Jodenbuurt grenzende Plantage of Weesperbuurt. Vanwege de toenemende bevolkingsdichtheid werden verdere uitbreidingen van de stad noodzakelijk en verhuisden Joden en niet-Joden gelijktijdig naar nieuwe wijken in Amsterdam-Oost. Hierdoor gingen steeds meer Joden in 'gemengde' buurten wonen. Voor het eerst sinds hun aankomst in Amsterdam in de zeventiende eeuw woonden Joden gemiddeld niet meer in buurten waar zij meer dan de helft van de bewoners waren. Naarmate Amsterdam verder uitbreidde, verhuisden welgestelde Joden en niet-Joden steeds meer naar gebieden die meer overeenstemden met hun sociale status. Segregatie vond dus steeds meer plaats naar klasse en minder naar etnisch-religieuze achtergrond. Nadat in andere delen van de stad nieuwe middenklasse-wijken werden gebouwd, begonnen niet-Joodse bewoners van gemengde wijken echter te verhuizen, waardoor daar sterkere Joodse concentraties ontstonden. Het hoofdstuk belicht dus de indrukwekkende ruimtelijke integratie van Joden en benadrukt tegelijkertijd de rol van zowel Joden als niet-Joden in het in stand houden van de segregatie.

Hoofdstuk 8 breidt de analyses uit naar de volgende generatie en onderzoekt het opleidingsniveau van de zonen van de in dit proefschrift bestudeerde Joden en niet-Joden. Joodse zonen voltooiden vaker middelbaar en hoger onderwijs, terwijl niet-Joodse zoons vaker een beroepsopleiding volgden—een type onderwijs dat voor Joden vaak ondergerapporteerd werd. Vooral Joodse diamantbewerkers investeerden sterk in zelfstudie en in de opleidingen van hun zonen. De ANDB stimuleerde scholing intensief, onder meer door hun landelijk geprezen bibliotheek. Ondanks hun hogere opleidingsniveaus begonnen Joodse zonen hun loopbanen vaak in dezelfde beroepen als niet-Joden met minder scholing, een patroon dat vooral opviel bij kantoorbedienden. Hoewel dit mogelijk wijst op arbeidsmarkt-discriminatie, kan het ook een weerspiegeling zijn van de aard van de arbeidsmarkt voor jonge mannen of van de beperkte netwerken van Joden op kantoren.

De bevindingen van dit proefschrift zijn relevant voor verschillende disciplines binnen geschiedenis en sociologie. Zo toont het aan dat nationale en lokale cijfers voor sociale mobiliteit grote verschillen tussen subgroepen kunnen verbergen. Deze in geaggregeerde mobiliteitscijfers verdeckte mobiliteit verdient bestudering. Voor de

Joodse geschiedenis onderstreept het de meerwaarde van vergelijkende en kwantitatieve benaderingen, waarbij de levens en ervaringen van Joden en niet-Joden, en van mannen en vrouwen, binnen en tussen beroepsgroepen en sociale klassen tegen elkaar worden afgezet. Deze benadering heeft tot een aantal belangrijke nieuwe inzichten geleid. Ten eerste is het duidelijk dat Joden een snelle opwaartse mobiliteit hebben gekend sinds 1870. Aanvankelijk werd deze sociaaleconomische stijging gestimuleerd door de uitbreidende diamantindustrie. In de decennia daarna zetten Joden deze groei voort door te investeren in onderwijs, via het groeiende aantal Joodse werkgevers en door grotere maatschappelijke integratie. Dit houdt verband met het tweede inzicht: sociale mobiliteit en integratie waren niet inherent aan elkaar gerelateerd. Niet alleen kon sociale mobiliteit onafhankelijk van integratie plaatsvinden, in het geval van de diamantbewerker belemmerde opwaartse mobiliteit de integratie in verschillende levensdomeinen—Joodse diamantbewerker huwden verreweg het vaakst binnen de Joodse gemeenschap en vertoonden het minst vaak religieuze disaffiliatie ondanks de toenemende secularisatie in de Nederlandse samenleving. Anders verwoord, integratie was niet altijd een voorwaarde óf resultaat van sociaaleconomische verbeteringen voor Joden. Het kon echter wel discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt verminderen en de beroepsstructuur binnen hun sociale netwerken diversifiëren. Ten derde waren de ANDB en sociaaldemocratische politiek cruciaal voor de politieke integratie en verheffing van de Joodse arbeidersklasse. Zij moedigden Joodse arbeiders aan om te investeren in hun eigen onderwijs en in de opleidingen van hun naasten, met alle intergenerationele voordelen van dien. Nieuwe wegen voor verder onderzoek zijn het bestuderen van de ervaringen van Joden in het onderwijs en de rol van Joodse werkgevers en ondernemers in het creëren van arbeidsmarkten die Joden beschermden tegen discriminatie.

Curriculum Vitae

Joris Kok was born on 1 February 1995 in Roosendaal, the Netherlands. He obtained a BSc in Economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2016, followed by MSc degrees in Economics and Economic History from Erasmus University Rotterdam and Lund University in 2019. That same year, he started his PhD at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam and the Institute for History at Leiden University. During his doctoral research, Joris was a researcher and visiting researcher at Lund University in 2021 and 2023. He presented his research at various international conferences, including the annual meetings of the *Economic History Society*, the conferences of the *European Society for Historical Demography* and the *Social Science History Association*, and the *European Social Science History Conference*. He currently serves as President of the *Association for Young Historical Demographers*, an organisation which connects early-career scholars in historical demography and related fields. In 2024, he joined CLARIAH as a Junior Data Engineer and later that year he became a Postdoctoral Researcher at Radboud University in the *Lifting the Burden of Disease* project led by prof. dr. Angélique Janssens. He is currently a Lecturer at Radboud University.