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

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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 Sluyser[1]

"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 Mendes[3]

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 Mendes[5]—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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 day[19]—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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 diamantbewerkers*, 93.

[39] Ibid., 137-38.

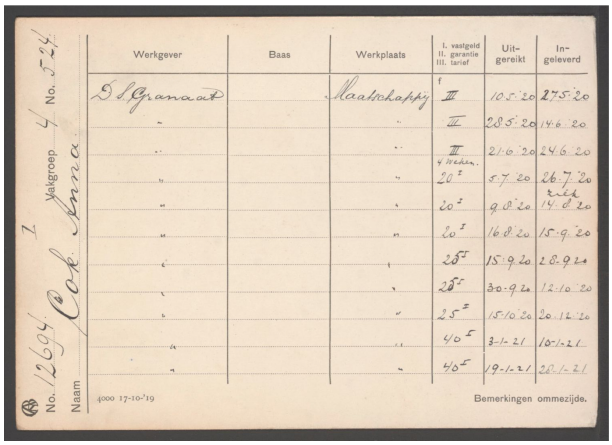
[40] Operating as a separate group between workers and employers, they started their own organization (*Eigenwerkmakers-Vereeniging*). This organization and its members, however, garnered disapproval from the ANDB. By 1912, a few hundred of these own-work-makers were active in Amsterdam. To address this 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.

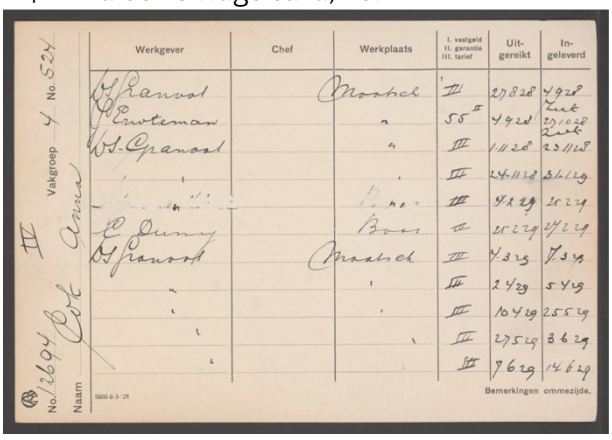
Most workers, however, remained as wage dependents and despite the stability of specialisations, they regularly transitioned from one employer or factory to another. Contracts between employers and workers were short, generally as long as it took to cut or polish a bag of diamonds, and thus renumeration 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



B | Anna Cok's wage card, no. 4



Anna would work at the same factory and for the same employer until 1928, when she made her first switch of employer, working for Erwteman 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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 Diamantbewerkers."

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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 "Uitgetrokkenen.""

> "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 Druijf (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.

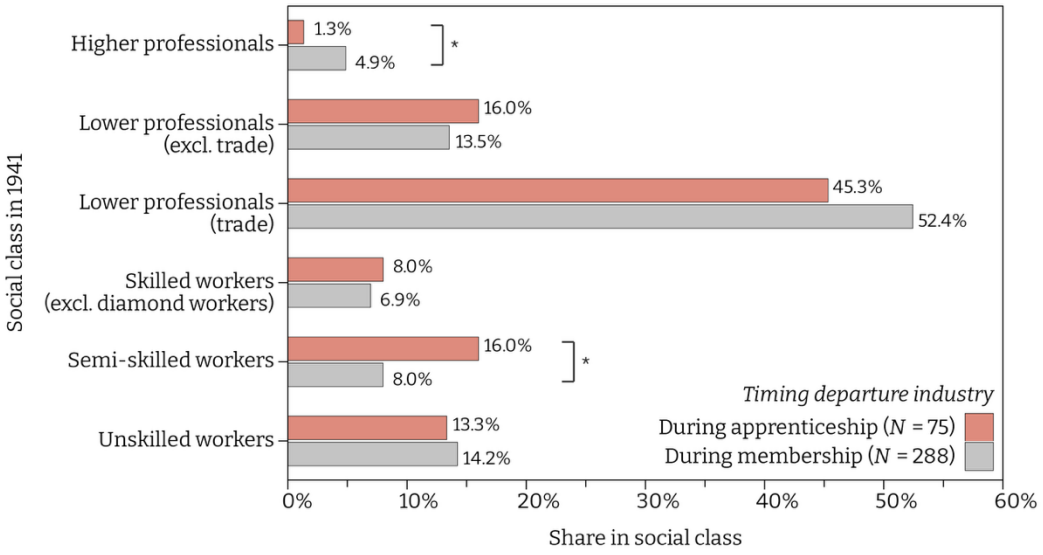


FIGURE 6.1 Social class in 1941 by timing of leaving of diamond industry.
Source: author's calculations using linked apprenticeship cards and *municipal list* of 1941.
Note: diamond workers who left during their memberships ($m = 0.049$, $sd = 0.215$) were more likely to work as *Higher professionals* 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 ($m = 0.799$, $sd = 0.272$); $t(96) = 1.76$, $p = 0.082$; * 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 $a = 0.10$; p-value = 0.081.
[77] Statistically different at $a = 0.10$; 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.

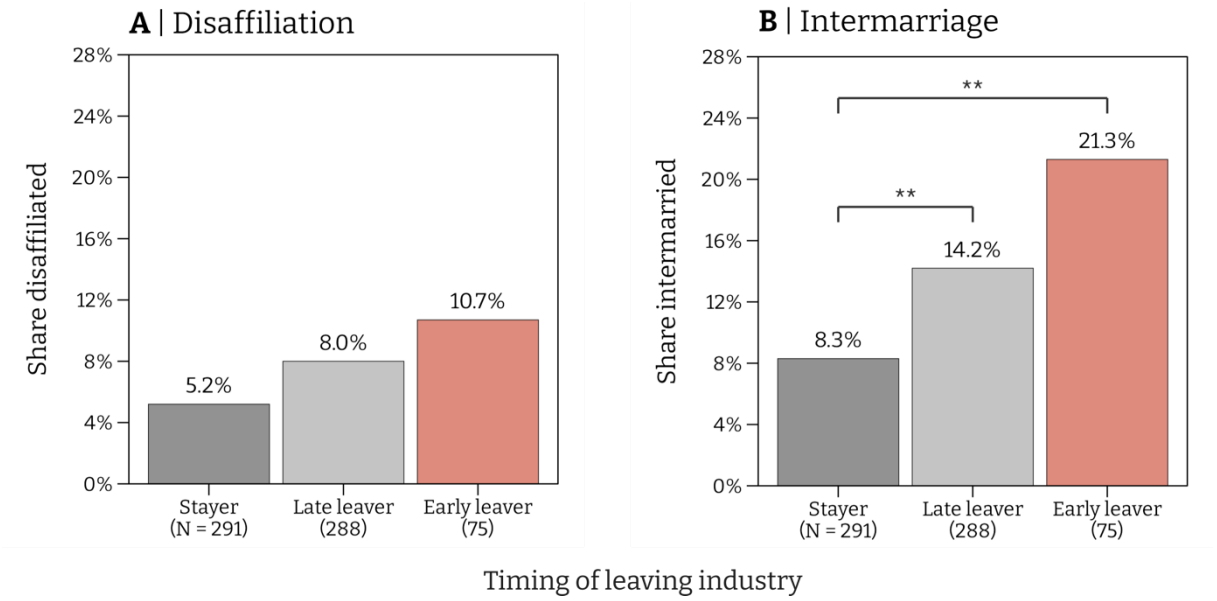


FIGURE 6.2 Share disaffiliated and intermarried male apprentices by the timing of leaving the diamond industry**.**
Source: authors' calculations using linked apprenticeship cards and *municipal list* of 1941.
Note: results are the same whether we exclude the less than 10 percent of individuals who never 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.

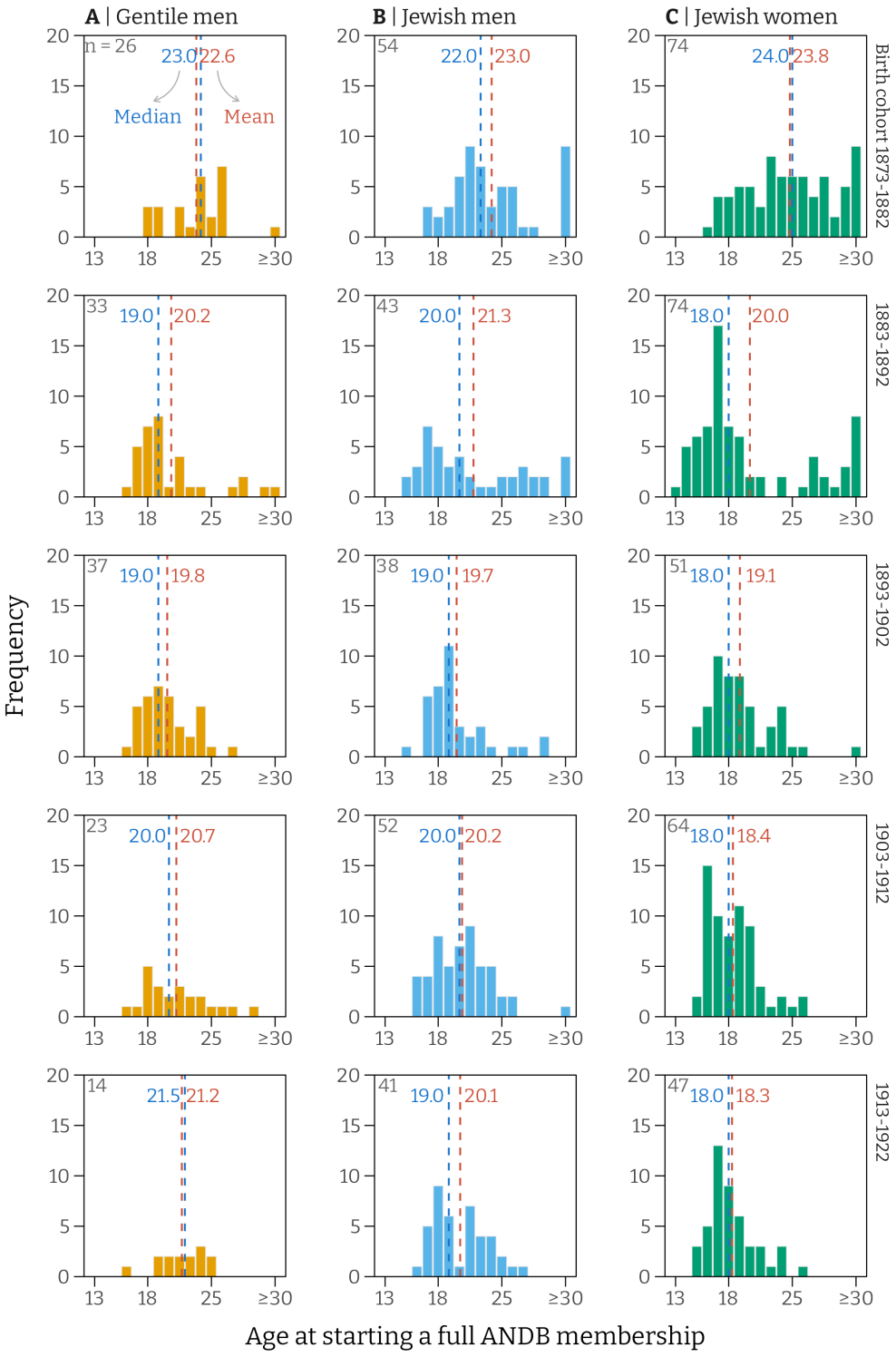


FIGURE 6.3 The age distribution of becoming a full ANDB member by birth cohort, religion, and gender.
Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.
Note: the number of individuals per plot is presented in grey in the top left 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).

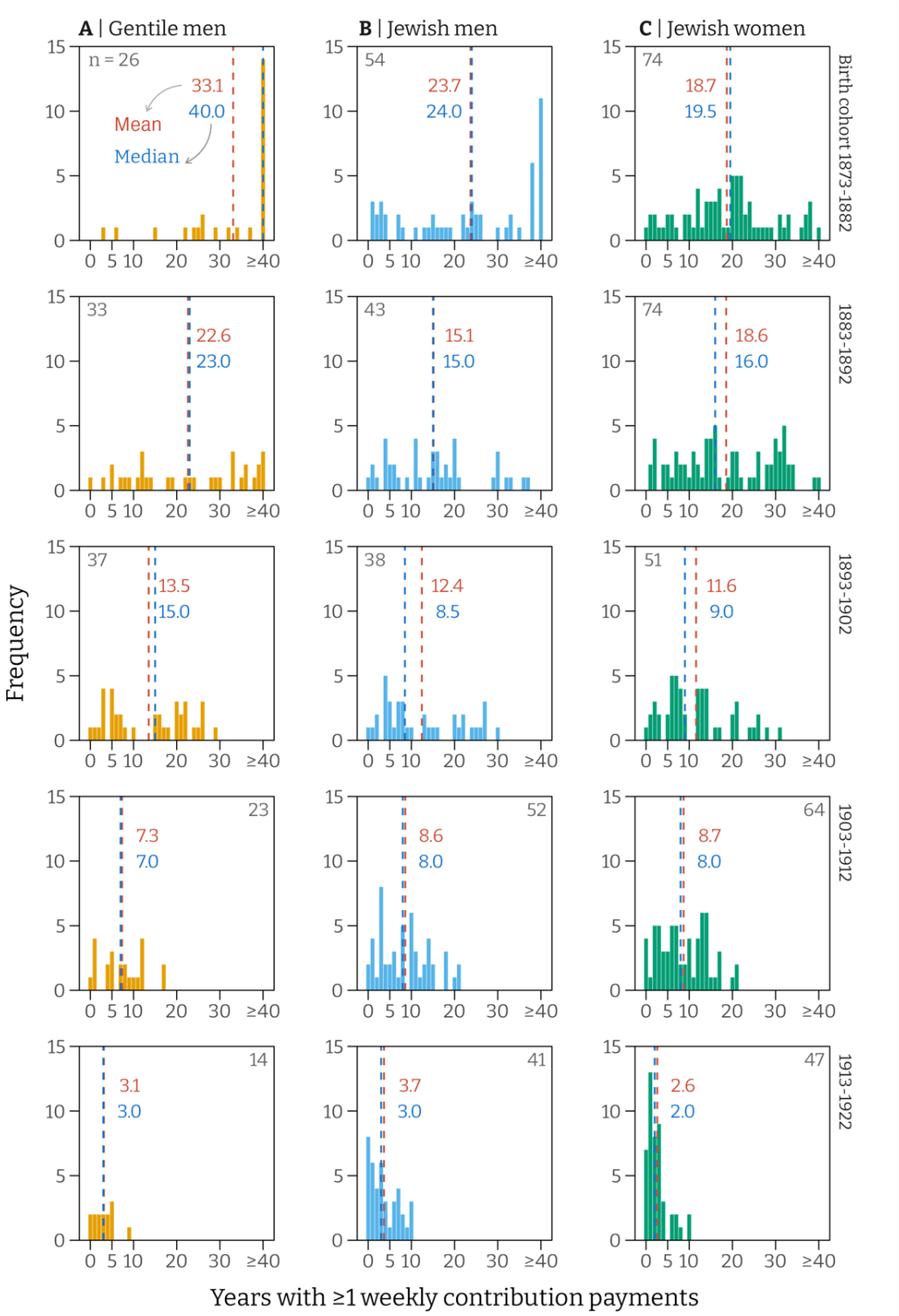


FIGURE 6.4 The distribution of membership duration, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious background

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 part s 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.

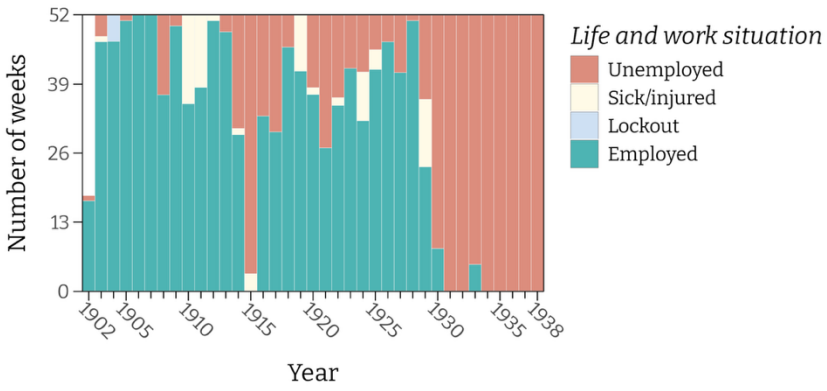


FIGURE 6.5 The lapidary career of Rachel Gobetz (1873-1942), including annual number of weeks employed, unemployed, sick, or in lockout during her ANDB membership. *Source*: ANDB archive, #9430.

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.

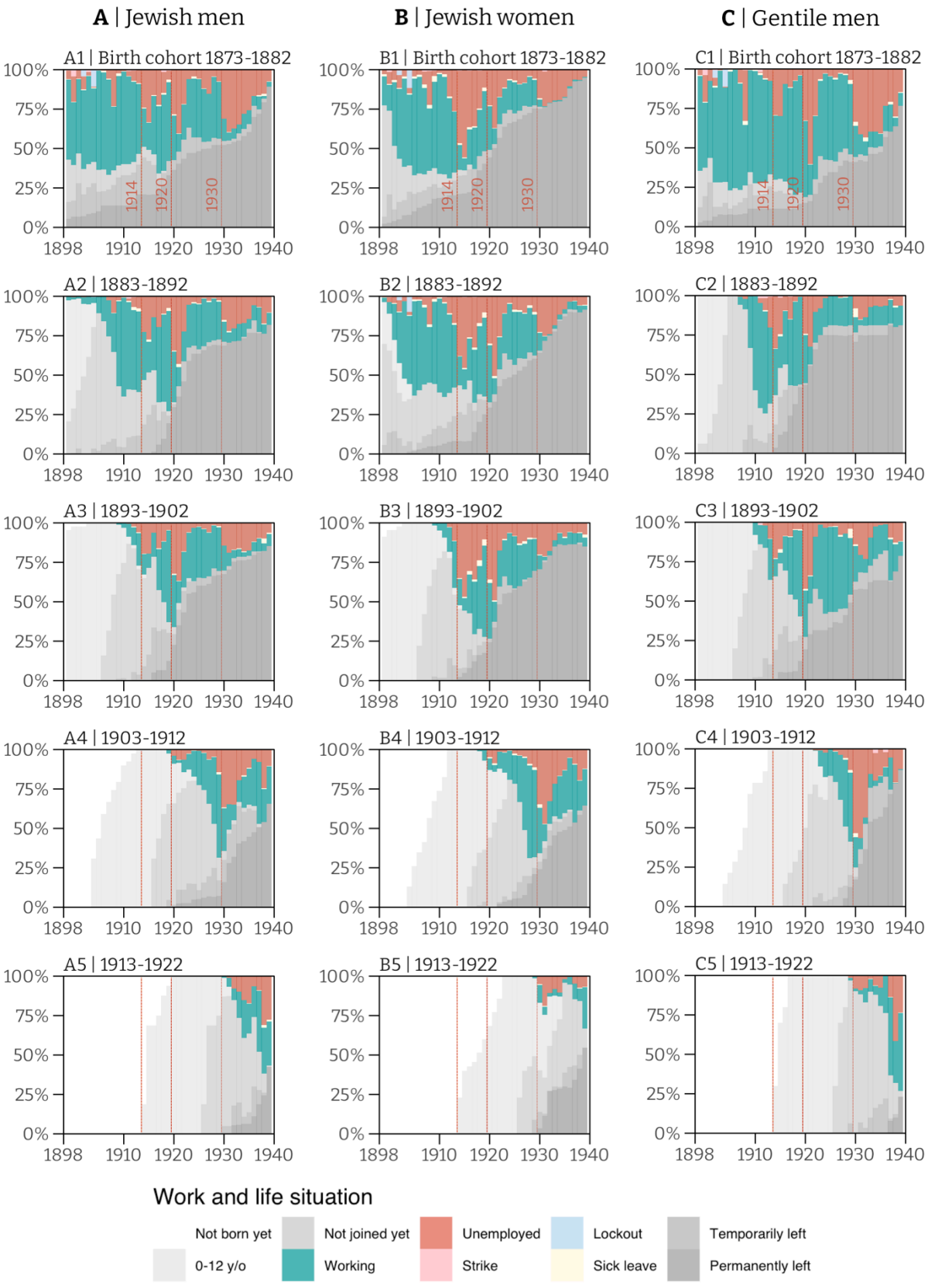


FIGURE 6.6 Annual number of weeks by employment type, gender, cohort, and ethno-religious background

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.

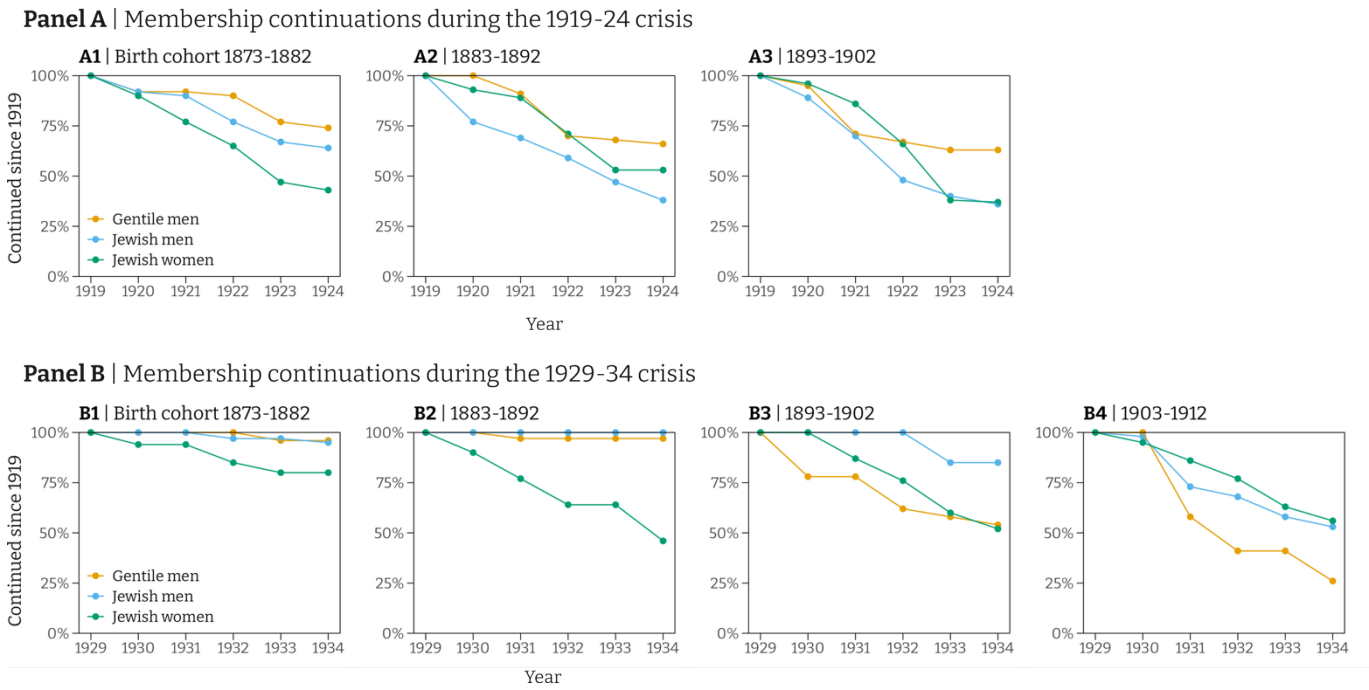


FIGURE 6.7 Share of diamond workers who were members at the start of the two main crises, by continued membership, gender, cohort, and ethno-religious group.
Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.

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.

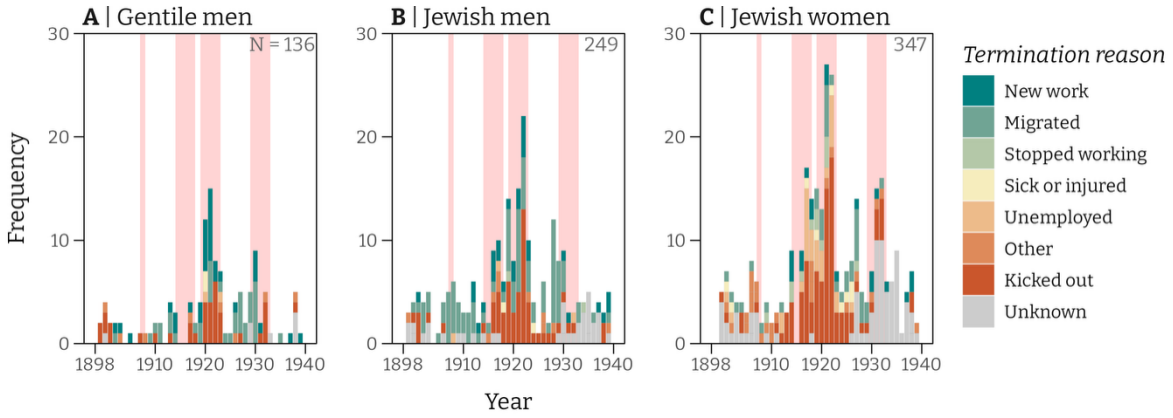


FIGURE 6.8 Reasons given for diamond workers' membership dissolutions, 1898-1939
Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.
Note: 'Unknown' covers all dissolutions without specified reasons; 'Other' included uncommon reasons, 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."

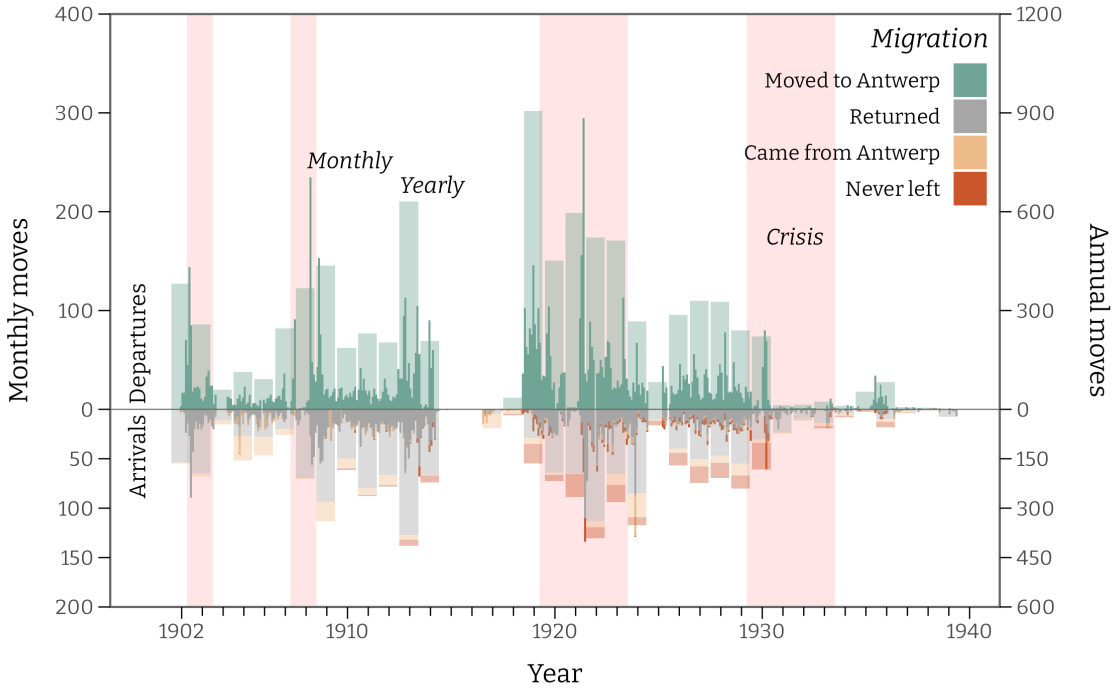


FIGURE 6.9 Official numbers of diamond worker migration to and from Antwerp, 1902-1940.
Source: monthly reports of membership changes published in the *Weekblad* 1902-1940.
Note: monthly numbers are reported as lines, yearly figures as bars. Industry-wide crises are highlighted by the red shaded area. 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 Antwerp[89]—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.

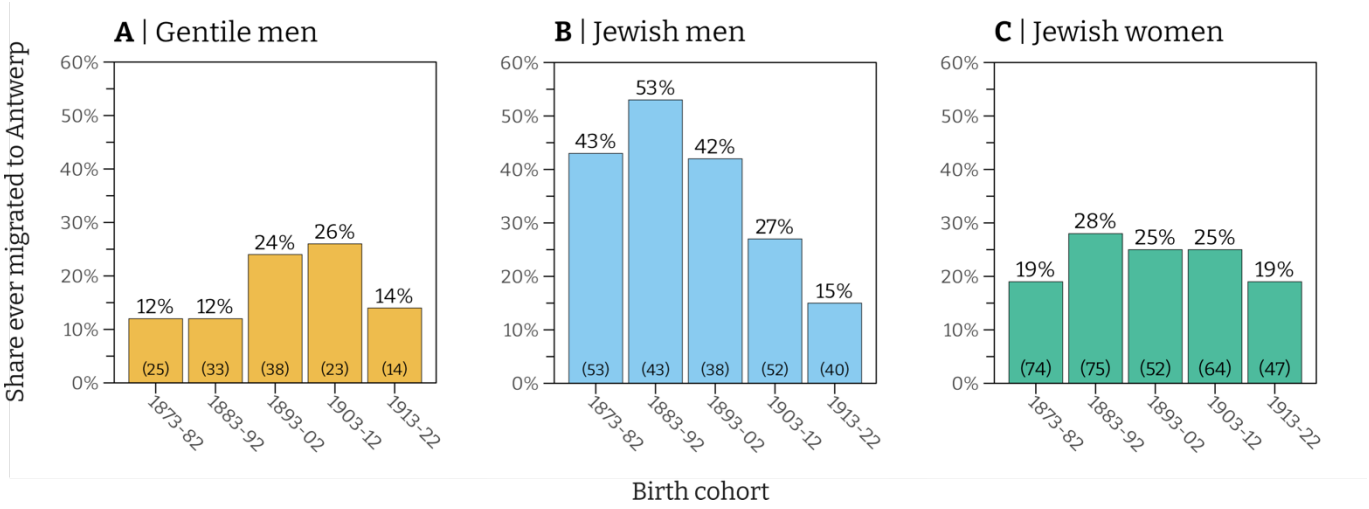


FIGURE 6.10 The share of diamond workers ever moving to Belgium, by cohort, gender, and ethno-religious background.
Source: author's calculations using "ANDB Members' Life Courses," 2024 release; and "ANDB Membership Cards," 2021 release.
Note: total number of life courses per group in parentheses at 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'Oliveyra, 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 Vischshraper (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 Vischschraper."
[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, Pendler, 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 JDJ[130] 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 diamantbewerkers*, 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 upmost 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 neighbourhoods—offered another avenue of upward mobility. The next chapter will examine how Jews' evolving residential choices reflected social mobility and integration.