Russian Jews in Germany

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*Jewish Immigration from the Former Soviet Union to Germany and Israel in the 1990s**

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1990 and 2004, over 1.5 Million Jews, together with non-Jewish family members, left the former Soviet Union (FSU) and settled in Israel, Germany, Canada, the USA, and other countries. At the beginning of this immigration wave (1990–1991) the vast majority of FSU immigrants went to Israel; in the mid 1990s many went to the USA and Canada, but in recent years Germany has become their main destination. In total, about one million immigrants from the FSU had moved to Israel by 2004, about 300,000 to the USA,[1] and about 190,000 to Germany.[2]

The research literature on FSU immigrants in Israel is extensive. Numerous studies have been conducted by researchers from all disciplines in the social sciences covering almost all aspects of this immigration.[3] By contrast, the literature on FSU immigrants to Germany is still relatively small and fragmentary.[4] This paper will contribute to this literature by providing a systematic socio-demographic comparison between FSU Jewish immigrants in Germany and Israel. Relying on micro data drawn from the Israeli and German censuses and other data sources, we will describe and compare Jewish immigrants from the FSU who arrived in the two countries between 1990 and 2000. The comparison will focus on patterns of self-selection

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[1]Mark Tolts, 'Russian Jewish Migration in the Post-Soviet Era', in *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2000), pp. 183–199.

[2]According to *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, 2004.

[3]For an annotated bibliography on this topic see Elazar Leshem 'Immigration from the FSU and its Absorption: Social Research in Israel (1990–1994)', in *Immigration and Absorption of Former-Soviet Union Jewry*, Jerusalem 1997.

[4]Sabine Gruber and Harald Rüßler, *Hochqualifiziert und arbeitslos*, Opladen 2002; Barbara Dietz, 'German and Jewish Migration from the Former Soviet Union to Germany: Background, Trends and Implications', in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4 (2000), pp. 635–652; Barbara Dietz, 'Jewish Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Germany: History, Politics and Social Integration', in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2003), pp. 7–19; Barbara Dietz, Uwe Lebok and Pavel Polian, 'The Jewish Emigration from the Former Soviet Union to Germany', in *International Migration* vol. 40, no. 2 (2002), pp. 29–48; Julius H. Schoeps, Willi Jasper and Bernhard Vogt (eds.), *Russische Juden in Deutschland*, Weinheim 1996; *idem* (eds.), *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland? Fremd- und Eigenbilder der russisch-jüdischen Einwanderer*, Potsdam 1999; Judith Kessler, *Jüdische Migration aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion seit 1990. Beispiel Berlin*, unpublished manuscript, 1996.

(namely, what types of people come to which country) and socio-economic assimilation (that is, how fast, if at all, they progress in their new countries). Specifically we address two related questions: first, what are the demographic characteristics and the educational levels of FSU Jews who self-select themselves to emigrate to Israel or Germany? And second, do immigrants succeed in integrating and assimilating into the local economy and labour market of each country? Before turning to the empirical part of this paper, an overview of the context of this migration to Israel, and especially to Germany, since 1990 is provided.

EMIGRATION FROM THE FSU TO ISRAEL AND GERMANY

Eligibility, trends, and residential distribution

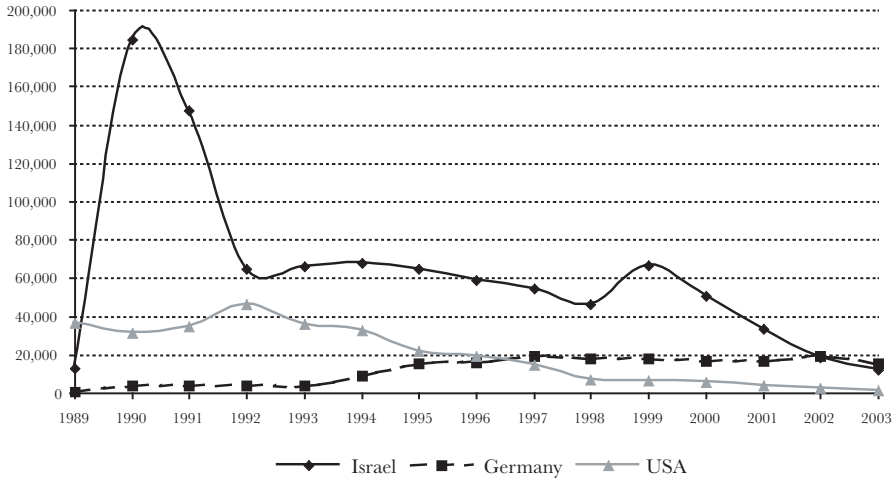
Both the Israeli authorities and Zionist organisations (for example, the Jewish Agency) expect FSU Jewish emigrants to move to the Jewish State. Israel's migration policy is governed by the law of return, granting citizenship to all Jewish immigrants and, since 1970, to their non-Jewish relatives. Moreover, unlike other migration countries that limit the number of immigrants and prefer skilled and young immigrants, Israel's declared policy is to admit as many Jewish immigrants as possible, regardless of age, educational level and ethnic origin. Consequently, the Israeli government actively worked to attract and assist immigrants from the FSU; it helped them to leave the Soviet Union, took care of their moving expenses, subsidised their housing cost, provided them with occupational training, and offered them free language classes. But despite this generous assistance, not all Jewish emigrants from the FSU in fact moved to Israel.

Between 1975 and 1989, most FSU Jews actually immigrated to the USA, which granted them refugee status. In October 1989, however, the USA changed its policy; it no longer considers FSU Jews as refugees. Consequently, as shown in figure 1 below, between 1989 and 1990 the proportion of FSU emigrants reaching the US dropped sharply, and nearly 400,000 FSU Jews arrived in Israel in just two years (1990–1991). Between 1992 and 2000 Israel's annual rate dropped to 50,000–70,000 immigrants; after the start of second Palestinian *intifada* in 2000 and the ensuing economic slowdown in Israel, the country's the annual number of FSU immigrants sank to less than 20,000.

Evidently, in the post-1992 period many FSU Jewish emigrants found other destinations. One attractive alternative has been Germany, which made the decision to accept and assist these emigrants. Between 1990 and 2002 Germany increased its annual intake of FSU immigrants from about 4,000 to nearly 20,000. Figure 1 shows that as early as 1996 Germany was receiving more FSU Jewish immigrants than the USA, and by 2002 it had became the leading receiving country for these immigrants, accepting more of them than either the USA or Israel. The remainder of this section will focus on the institutional context of FSU immigration to Germany, comparing it to the Israeli situation when relevant.

Immigration of Jews to Germany was initiated by the last East German government in July 1990; since 1991 it has been extended to the united Germany. In

Figure 1: Registered emigration of Jews (including their non-Jewish household members) from the FSU to Israel, Germany and the USA, 1989–2002



Sources:
Israel: Jewish Agency Reports and running statistics of the Department of Immigration and Absorption; Germany: *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, 2004; US: Running statistics of HIAS.

1990 Jews from the USSR would gain entry to Germany through a tourist visa, after which they would be granted "quota refugee status" according to a law—the *Kontingentflüchtlingsgesetz*—that had originally been adopted in 1980 in order to admit Southeast Asian refugees;[5] while no formal ceiling was specified, it was estimated that the annual number of immigrants would not exceed 10,000.[6] The intent was to grant asylum to a limited number of Jewish citizens from the FSU who were threatened with persecution and discrimination. This reflected the general historic responsibility of the German state to make amends for its Nazi past, in the process restoring at least a fraction of Germany's pre-1939 Jewish population.

Starting in November 1991, prospective immigrants had to apply for a permit at German embassies in their countries of origin, providing satisfactory proof of their

[5]Lothar Mertnes, *Alija: Die Emigration der Juden aus der UdSSR/GUS*, Bochum 1993; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 13–26; Dietz, 'German and Jewish Migration', p. 639; Dietz, 'Jewish Migration', p. 7; Madeleine Tress, 'Soviet Jews in the Federal Republic of Germany: The Rebuilding of a Community', in *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 37, no. 1 (1995), pp. 39–54; *idem*, 'Foreigners or Jews? The Soviet Jewish Refugee Populations in Germany and the United States', in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 27, no. 2 (1997), pp. 20–39; Paul A. Harris, 'Russische Juden und Aussiedler: Integrationspolitik und lokale Verantwortung', in Klaus J. Bade and Jochen Oltmer (eds.), *Aussiedler: Deutsche Einwanderer aus Osteuropa*, Osnabrück 1999, pp. 247–264; Franziska Becker, *Ankommen in Deutschland: Einwanderungspolitik als biographische Erfahrung im Migrationsprozeß russischer Juden*, Berlin 2001.
[6]Tress, p. 41. This 10,000 person "ceiling", however, has never been enforced.

Jewish ancestry.[7] The German authorities recognise persons with at least one Jewish parent, as well as their immediate family members including non-Jewish spouses, as Jewish Quota Refugees (JQR).[8] This definition is somewhat more restrictive than the Israeli law of return, which defines as Jews, for the purpose of the law, persons with one Jewish grandparent. Thus, both the Israeli and German definitions accept non-Jewish spouses and dependent children of Jewish immigrants. It is clear that all those defined as JQR in Germany could have gone to Israel, being able to emigrate to Israel according to the law of return but not vice versa; namely, the grandchildren of Jews admitted to Israel under the law of return would not be considered as JQR in Germany. Naturalisation is also easier and faster in Israel than in Germany. Israel grants citizenship to FSU Jewish immigrants upon arrival, much like the German practice with ethnic Germans. By contrast, JQR are not entitled to German citizenship upon arrival, but must reside in Germany for 6–8 years before being eligible to apply for citizenship (the exact time varies by German state). However, compared with guest workers and other immigrants, who until 2000 were required to reside in Germany no less than 15 years before applying for citizenship, JQR have been privileged.

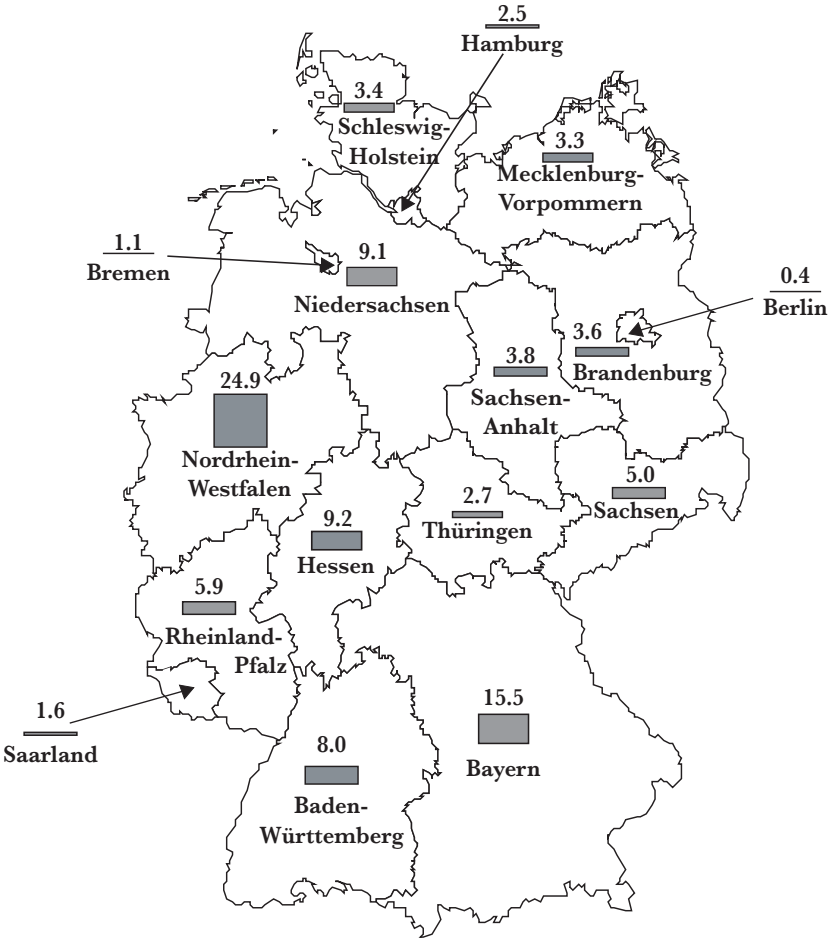
Applications of prospective Jewish quota immigrants filed in their home countries are distributed by the German Federal Administration Office among the federal states which decide about admissions. After a state has accepted a prospective immigrant on the basis of the quota refugee regulation, the application form is returned to the federal admission office, which forwards it to the German embassy in the country of origin. The embassy then informs a prospective immigrant about the decision; the latter then has a year to organise the immigration to avoid expiration of the entrance permit.[9] According to the Federal Administration Office, of a total of about 255,000 applications submitted by Jews and their relatives in the FSU between 1991 and 2004,[10] approximately 217,000 were approved by November 2004. The overall approval rate is thus about eighty-five per cent. In most cases, the reason for refusals is either inadequate proof of Jewish ancestry or established forgery of the documents. Thus, while most Jews applying to settle in Germany have been granted permission, the rate is probably lower than in Israel, which admits virtually all Jewish immigrants. However, in Israel, unlike Germany, no statistics are published on those who applied for immigration but were denied entry by the Israeli government because of inadequate proof of Jewish ancestry.

Germany has adopted the policy of settling Jewish quota immigrants—and also ethnic Germans and recognised asylum seekers—across the entire country.[11] Interestingly, this was the Israeli practice until the 1980s, but when the recent wave of FSU immigrants arrived in 1990, Israel decided that the free market would be more efficient than the state in allocating residential locations. In Germany, the

[7]Jeroen Doomernik, *Going West: Soviet Jewish Immigrants in Berlin since 1990*, Aldershot 1997; Dietz, 'German and Jewish Migration', p. 640.
[8]Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 13–26; Dietz, 'German and Jewish Migration', p. 640; Becker, pp. 53–59.
[9]Dietz, Lebok and Polian, p. 36; Dietz, 'Jewish Migration', p. 11.
[10]The number of applications ranges from 8,009 in 2003 to 29,824 in 1995.
[11]Harris, p. 252.

practice results from a 1991 refugee act containing a numerical formula for sharing the financial burden imposed by immigrant settlement between the federal states with refugee allocations being made in proportion to the total population of a particular state. Even though refugees may take up residence in whatever part of the German Federal Republic they prefer, some of the newcomers' financial benefits are contingent on their remaining where they are sent. As shown in figure 2 below, about 25% of Jewish quota refugees were sent to North Rhine Westphalia, the most populous federal state, settling in Cologne, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Essen; an additional 13.3% were sent to Bavaria, settling in Munich and Nuremberg.

Figure 2: Geographic distribution of Jewish immigrants in German federal states (per cent)



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2004; the total number of immigrants is 190,288.

Material benefits

Jewish immigrants receive more material assistance than any other immigrant groups in Germany with the exception of ethnic Germans. Unlike most other categories of immigrants—guest workers, immigrants from EU countries, unrecognised asylum seekers, and labour migrants—JQR enjoy extensive state support.[12] They receive an unlimited residence permit, permission to work (since 1998 they were not required to obtain a work permit), housing support, and initial absorption assistance for a maximum of six months, along with a state-provided German-language course of the same duration. Moreover, JQR are eligible for welfare payments if they have not been able to find work by the time the absorption assistance has expired. Unlike ethnic Germans, however, JQR are not eligible to receive working pensions based on years of work abroad, nor are their educational credentials automatically recognised by the state.[13] However, in cases where these credentials are not recognised they are offered vocational retraining courses.[14]

In any case, other agencies than those of the federal government and states also assist FSU Jewish immigrants. One important task of both the various official Jewish communities in Germany and the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany (*Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland*, *ZWST*) is the social, economic, religious, and cultural integration of Jewish immigrants. The Central Welfare Board of Jews is a part of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the umbrella organisation of the Jewish communities, which receives three million euros annually from the Federal Government for "preserving and nurturing the German Jewish cultural heritage, establishing a Jewish society, and supporting its integration in Germany".[15] Effectively, the Central Welfare Board deals with a range of matters related to immigrant absorption, providing its own programmes for integration.[16]

Not all JQR in Germany are entitled to this assistance, as the Jewish communities register only those who are Jews according to Jewish religious (*halakhic*) law—persons born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism. Consequently, the assistance provided by Jewish organisations—for instance, additional German-language training, housing support, and counselling—is available to only about half of JQR, that is those registered in the Jewish communities.[17] Ironically, no such disparity in benefits between Jews and non-Jews, however defined, exists in the Jewish state, all immigrants being entitled to all benefits once they have been admitted to Israel under the Law of Return. This is not to say that being a non-Jew in Israel is always easy. For instance, since only religious marriages are recognised, non-Jews cannot marry Jews within the country; likewise non-Jews cannot be buried in Jewish cemeteries. JQR in Germany in fact cite such factors as one of the reasons they have chosen Germany as their destination. Nevertheless it is unclear if the proportion of

[12]Doomernik, pp. 53–71; Harris, p. 249; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 19–21.
[13]Harris, p. 249; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 19–21.
[14]Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt (eds.), *Russische Juden in Deutschland*, p. 39; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 19–21.
[15]See www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/494.0.html.
[16]Harris, p. 256.
[17]Dietz, 'Jewish Migration', p. 12.

non-Jews among JQR in Germany—at most fifty per cent[18]—is higher than the proportion in Israel where it is about thirty per cent according to Central Bureau of Statistics figures.[19]

All told, Jewish quota refugees in Germany receive a generous material package—one probably more attractive than the package offered other immigrants in Germany. Immigrants in Israel also receive generous benefits: a lump sum upon arrival, language classes, limited unemployment benefits, mortgage subsidies, and some retraining courses, but in purchasing power, their value is far below that of the German package, and they last for a shorter period. More specifically, the Jewish Agency has estimated that in the first year after immigration, the value of immigrant-assistance is about equal in Israel and Germany (around 15,000 Euros); however, calculated for the first five-year period after immigration, the value of the German package is about three times higher, this figure increasing to about seven times higher when calculated over a ten-year period.[20] In this light, it is striking that, when asked why they chose Germany rather than Israel as their main destination, JQR have rarely mentioned material conditions, or in fact, the Israeli security situation; rather, factors cited included family ties in Germany, cultural affinity with the country, and more favourable climatic conditions.[21]

Socio-economic standing

Socio-economic studies on post-1989 immigrants from the FSU in Israel have focused mostly on the high levels of human capital these immigrants possessed on arrival as compared to both the Soviet and Israeli populations.[22] Most of these studies have emphasised labour force participation, documenting impressive employment levels for the immigrants in their first two to four years in Israel. But in part, these levels were achieved at the price of a downgrading in relation to

[18]Since 50% of JQR are registered in the Jewish communities, we can infer that at least 50% of all JQR are Jewish according to Jewish law (see Dietz, 'Jewish Migration', p. 11; Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt, *Russische Juden in Deutschland*, pp. 14–15). The proportion may be higher, as some who are eligible to register might have elected not to do so.

[19]Yinon Cohen, 'From Haven to Heaven: Changes in Immigration Patterns to Israel', in Daniel Levy and Yfaat Weiss (eds.), *Challenging Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspectives on Immigration*, New York 2002, pp. 36–56.

[20]Jewish Agency for Israel, 'Comparison of absorption benefits Israel–Germany', internal memo, entitled "Research and Strategic Planning, no. 4 (1 May 2003)" (in Hebrew).

[21]Doomernik, pp. 28–50; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 13–16; Yvonne Schuetze, 'Warum Deutschland und nicht Israel', in *BIOS*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1997), pp. 186–208. Curiously both the media (see www.forward.com/issues/2003/03.07.25/news6.html) and the internal memo of the Jewish Agency (see note 20) have identified material benefits as a major reason for the influx of FSU Jewish immigrants to Germany.

[22]Michael Beenshtock and Yehuda Ben Menahem, 'The Labor Market Absorption of CIS Immigrants to Israel: 1989–1994', in *International Migration*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1997), pp. 187–224; Zvi Eckstein and Yoram Weiss, 'The integration of Immigrants in the Former Soviet Union in the Israeli Labor Market', in Avi Ben-Bassat (ed.), *The Israeli Economy, 1985–1998: From Government Intervention to Market Economics*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 349–378; Noah Lewin-Epstein, Yaacov Ro'I and Paul Ritterband (eds.), *Russian Jews on Three Continents: Migration and Resettlement*, London 1997.

occupations that had been held in the FSU,[23] and available evidence casts doubt on the ability of post-1989 immigrants to reach earning-convergence with native Israeli Jews.[24] Nevertheless, both popular and scholarly[25] publications advance the notion that these immigrants are well on their way to full economic integration into the Israeli labour market.

It is important to note that while the Israeli studies are based on large representative samples of FSU Jewish immigrants, available studies of JQR in Germany are based on data of questionable quality. One study is based on a sample of 4,000 persons but covers only those registered in the Jewish community of Berlin.[26] Two other studies of nearly 1,150 persons each include only those registered in the Jewish communities, thus excluding about fifty per cent of JQR.[27] A fourth study is based on administrative data covering all the JQR in the State of North Rhine Westphalia, thus excluding the seventy-five per cent of JQR who settled in other states.[28]

Although these studies are based on unrepresentative samples, do not follow conventional definitions of labour market variables, such as, for instance, unemployment rates or educational credentials, and rarely distinguish between early and recent immigrants, they nevertheless furnish an idea of the socio-economic standing of FSU immigrants in Germany.[29] Perhaps their most important finding, also corroborated by the popular press, is the existence of very low employment levels and very high unemployment or non-employment levels among FSU Jewish immigrants in Germany. This is a remarkable situation considering the high educational credentials with which these immigrants came to Germany. Schoeps *et al.* and Kessler report that fully seventy per cent of adult Jews who immigrated to Germany have "tertiary" educational level, and Gruber and Rüßler report that over fifty per cent of adults have "academic qualifications". Unfortunately, neither study provides earnings or income data—the best single indicator for socio-economic standing.

This being the case, we have to rely on other data sources to compare the demographic and socio-economic standing of FSU immigrants in Israel and

[23]Rebecca Raijman and Moshe Semyonov, 'Modes of Labor Market Incorporation and Occupational Cost Among New Immigrants to Israel', in *International Migration Review*, vol. 29, no. 2 (1995), pp. 375–394; Rebecca Raijman and Moshe Semyonov, 'Best of Times, Worst of Times of Occupational Mobility: the Case of Russian Immigrants in Israel', in *International Migration*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1998), pp. 291–312; Nancy Weinberg, 'Immigrant Employment and Occupational Mobility in a Context of Mass Migration. Soviet Immigrants in Israel', in *European Sociological Review*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2001), pp. 169–188; Eckstein and Weiss, p. 349.

[24]*ibid.*, p. 349.

[25]Beenshtock and Ben Menahem, p. 222; Leshem, 'Immigration from the FSU'.

[26]Judith Kessler, *Jüdische Migration*; *idem*, 'Jüdische Immigration seit 1990. Beispiel Berlin', in *Zeitschrift für Migration und soziale Arbeit*, 1 (1997), pp. 40–47.

[27]Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt (eds.), *Russische Juden in Deutschland*, pp. 24–33; *idem* (eds.), *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland?*, pp. 31–40.

[28]Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 27–32.

[29]The four studies are rich in information with respect to the social integration of the newcomers from the FSU, their attitudes towards Germany, their cultural and religious identities. Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt (eds.), *Russische Juden in Deutschland*; *idem*, *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland?* and Kessler, *Jüdische Migration*, are also valuable for providing information on the pre-immigration situation of Jewish immigrants, both economic and social. Moreover, the above-mentioned studies contain information, not available in the German census data, on the country of origin within the FSU.

Germany. The comparisons focus on selectivity and socio-economic assimilation. Selectivity comparisons offer information regarding the types of immigrants—especially with respect to their educational level and household structure—who choose to come to each country, while the assimilation analyses offer information regarding the rate of economic progress of immigrants in the two countries.

DATA

Germany

We used the 2000 German micro-census in order to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics and labour force progress of FSU Jewish immigrants in Germany. The German census is conducted annually, and includes basic demographic characteristics, education and labour market information for a representative sample (1%) of German households. Unfortunately, the German census does not include information about respondents' country of birth, ethnic origin or religion, nor, for immigrants, about legal status at migration (for example, quota refugee or asylum seeker). However, the census does indicate nationality, year of arrival, and information on spouses and children living abroad.

Because of the special nature of migration to Germany in the 1990s, it is thus possible to use the German census for identifying JQR. Two large groups of immigrants from the FSU are included in the 2000 German census: one group is composed of ethnic Germans, so-called *Aussiedler*, who are automatically awarded German citizenship and are therefore not traceable in the census as immigrants unless they kept dual FSU-German citizenship. The second group is composed of JQR who, according to the pre-2000 legislation, had to keep their FSU citizenship for at least 8 years before applying for German citizenship. As practically no immigrants from the FSU other than JQR and ethnic Germans have been allowed into Germany since 1990,[30] it is safe to assume that the vast majority of those arriving since then with citizenship of one of the FSU republics are JQR. This being the case, we have classified as JQR all those arriving in Germany between 1990 and 2000 who satisfy all four of the following criteria: 1) they hold nationality of one of the FSU republics; 2) they do not hold dual (German-FSU) citizenship; 3) they do not have a spouse or children residing in the FSU; 4) they are not married to a spouse of German nationality. The second criterion is aimed at distinguishing between JQR and ethnic Germans, while the third criterion attempts to filter out some labour migrants or students from the FSU, normally underrepresented in the census data. The fourth criterion is aimed at excluding FSU persons who immigrate to Germany following marriage to a German spouse. This identification algorithm yielded a total of 526 JQR aged fifteen and over in the 2000 German census.

[30]Under the current asylum law it is practically impossible to receive asylum for persons from the FSU (unless these are Jews), since the FSU republics are considered safe. With the intensification of the war in Chechnya, the number of asylum seekers from that area may have recently increased, but during the 1990s the number was negligible.

To be sure, the algorithm is not perfect. It might, for example, include some non-Jewish students from the FSU. Likewise, the identification algorithm excludes two categories of JQR: 1) very recent arrivals (those arriving in 2000) who still resided in public housing during the census week in May; and 2) very early arrivals who were eligible to apply for German citizenship by 1998 or 1999. Assuming that the naturalisation process takes one year, and that most JQR exercise their right to become German nationals, by 2000 most of the 1990–1991 cohort may not be identifiable in the 2000 census since they are defined there as German nationals. Thus, the 2000 German census enables an accurate identification of 1992–1999 Jewish arrivals from the FSU but less inclusive identification of those arriving in 1990–1991 and 2000. Notwithstanding this difficulty, the census data are well suited for describing and analysing the socio-demographic characteristics with which FSU immigrants arrived in Germany, as well as their economic progress in comparison to their counterparts who emigrated to Israel. In particular, three features of the German census are essential for our purpose: its representativeness of all JQR, at least in regard to 1992–1999 arrivals; its inclusion of year of arrival, enabling us to separate the effects of selectivity from assimilation; and its standard labour market data, enabling comparisons with other countries.

Israel

The 2001 Income Survey is used to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics and labour force progress of FSU immigrants in Israel. Income surveys are conducted annually by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, and contain standard demographic and labour market information for a representative sample of households. The identification of FSU immigrants in these surveys is straightforward as there is a variable asking if the person was born in the FSU. In addition, the surveys include year of arrival.[31] Unlike the Israeli census of 1995, they do not distinguish between FSU Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants, nor do they provide information about place of birth within the FSU. However, the results of these surveys may be compared to those of the 2000 German data, thus enabling us to compare patterns of immigrants' self-selection and assimilation.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

We begin with analyses of demographic characteristics—age structure, marital status, household size, and number of children in household—of immigrants in both countries by period of immigration and gender. Evidently, the characteristics of the recent cohort

[31]We chose the 2001 surveys, rather than those for 2000, because the grouping of year of immigration in the 2001 surveys allows us to identify two cohorts of immigrants comparable to those in Germany (1990–1994 and 1995–2000).

(1995–2000) are more indicative of selectivity patterns than the characteristics of the earlier cohort (1990–1994), whose members were living in their new destination for an average of eight years by 2000–2001, some of their characteristics, with the exception of age, thus possibly reflecting adaptation to the host society.

In general, immigrants to Israel are slightly older than those to Germany, are slightly more likely to be women, are less likely to be married, and tend to reside in larger households than their counterparts in Germany. Immigrants arriving in Germany are more homogeneous with respect to their age than those coming to Israel. A higher proportion of those emigrating to Germany are in their prime working ages (25–54) compared to those emigrating to Israel. In particular, the proportion of older immigrants (over 55 years old) is higher in Israel than in Germany, especially among women, and as a result the proportion of widows choosing Israel is higher than in Germany (data not shown). It appears that many

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Jewish immigrants from the FSU, 15 years old and over, in Israel and Germany by period of immigration.

	All		Men		Women	
Period of immigration:	1990–1994	1995–2000	1990–1994	1995–2000	1990–1994	1995–2000
	1	2	3	4	5	6
% over 55 years old:						
Israel	32.0	28.9	29.3	26.4	34.2	30.7
Germany	27.1	20.6	26.8	16.5	27.4	24.2
% 15–24 years old:						
Israel	17.1	19.6	19.6	21.9	15.2	17.8
Germany	15.7	17.8	19.5	19.4	11.9	16.3
Median age at arrival:						
Israel	36.5	38.5	34.5	36.5	38.0	40.5
Germany	34.0	35.0	32.0	35.0	34.5	35.5
% women:						
Israel	55.5	56.4	—	—	—	—
Germany	50.6	52.8	—	—	—	—
Among those 20+:						
% married:						
Israel	62.9	60.7	70.2	69.5	57.1	54.1
Germany	72.5	69.0	74.0	73.7	71.1	65.0
Mean household size						
Israel	2.88	2.83	3.09	2.95	2.66	2.73
Germany	2.64	2.49	2.63	2.53	2.65	2.46
Mean no. young child[a]:						
Israel	0.51	0.54	0.56	0.52	0.46	0.55
Germany	0.49	0.54	0.42	0.56	0.55	0.53

Sources: Our analyses of the 2000 German micro census, including 526 immigrants, and the 20001 Israeli Income Survey, including 5,288 immigrants.

[a] Mean number of children under 14 years old in the household

older immigrants in Israel reside with their adult children, and as a result the average size of immigrant households in Israel (2.86) is higher than in Germany (2.54), despite higher marriage rates in Germany among immigrants, and a similar number of children in immigrant households in both countries.

Lower marriage rates in Israel are also due, at least in part, to differences in the age structure between the two immigrant populations. However, the differing rates may also reflect "mixed" couples (one Jewish, the other non-Jewish) preferring emigration to Germany, as reported by immigrants in some previous research.[32]

Interestingly, the age selectivity is more pronounced among recent arrivals than among those who arrived earlier. Within the recent cohort, (columns 2, 4 and 6), 28.9% of those coming to Israel are fifty-five and over, compared to 20.6% of those opting for Germany (a difference of 8.3 percentage points). Within the earlier cohort the difference between those opting for Israel and Germany is only 4.9 points. Finally, most of the differences in age and marriage rates between immigrants in the two countries are greater among women than among men. Thus, Israel appears to attract older, unmarried women, while Germany, as indicated, attracts married men and women in their prime working age. Evidently, this selection pattern is weighted in Germany's favour if one is considering the potential economic contribution of immigrants.

Education

Human capital levels that immigrants bring with them to a destination country tell us much about the sort of selectivity at work in the migration process. Educational levels are arguably the best observed indicators for immigrant skills. The only comparable educational factor available in the Israeli and German data is that of whether or not respondents have at least a first university degree. Fortunately, this is the most significant factor in advanced economies, university education having increasingly become the main avenue for attaining prestigious occupations and high income jobs in both the Israeli and German labour markets.

As shown in the top panel of table 2 (column 2) below, educational levels of immigrants from the FSU do not vary much across destination countries; nor do they vary between men and women, as shown in columns 4 and 6. In both Israel and Germany the figure is circa 40–45% university graduates, a much higher educational level than that of the native populations in Israel (25.8%) or Germany (14.5%). Notably, the educational levels of the recent cohort are not as high as those among the earlier cohort. This is due in part to the educational mobility of younger immigrants who may have attended universities after their arrival in either Germany or Israel in the early 1990s. However, it may also be simply due, at least in part, to lower educational levels with which more recent cohort came to both countries.[33] In any event, no educational selectivity is manifest in the choice of FSU Jewish immigrants between Israel and Germany.

[32]Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt (eds.), *Russische Juden in Deutschland*, pp. 57–58; Doomernik, pp. 39.
[33]Cohen, p. 54; Gruber and Rüßler, pp. 37–38.

Table 2: Educational levels and labour force characteristics of Jewish immigrants from the FSU, 25–64 years old, in Israel and Germany, by gender and period of immigration (percentage figures in parentheses refer to the Israeli and German native populations as a whole)

Period of immigration:	All		Men		Women	
	1990–1994	1995–2000	1990–1994	1995–2000	1990–1994	1995–2000
	1	2	3	4	5	6
% with at least B.A.:						
Israel (25.8)	45.5	40.6	45.6	41.8	45.5	39.6
Germany (14.5)	48.1	40.0	50.0	38.5	46.5	41.4
% in the labour force:						
Israel (69.6)	79.4	68.7	85.4	76.8	74.3	62.6
Germany (76.4)	72.5	63.7	77.6	72.0	67.7	55.7
% unemployed:						
Israel (7.5)	7.4	12.3	7.0	12.4	7.7	12.3
Germany (8.6)	28.7	50.3	24.4	33.3	41.1	61.6
% in PTM occupations:[a]						
Israel (41.7)	35.2	15.9	34.7	17.7	35.7	14.2
Germany (42.9)	41.9	32.1	35.3	28.3	50.0	39.3
Median Household income[b]						
Among all immigrants:						
Israel(100)	87	61	94	63	74	59
Germany (100)	62	46	65	47	61	46
Among employed immigrants:						
Israel (100)	84	66	89	72	76	64
Germany (100)	79	65	82	62	76	69
Among non-employed immig.:						
Israel (100)	75	91	70	90	79	91
Germany (100)	55	60	55	61	56	59

Source: Our analyses of the 2000 German micro census including 376 immigrants, and the 2001 Israeli Income Survey, including 3,340 immigrants.
[a] Among employed immigrants.
[b] As a percentage of median monthly income (from all sources, after taxes) among native residents.

Labour force characteristics upon arrival

Educational levels offer basic information on the formal skills with which immigrants arrive in their destination country. Labour market characteristics—labour force participation rates, unemployment rates, occupation, income—serve as better indicators of "unobserved" skills such as motivation, "ability" (however defined) and other factors relevant for workers' productivity but unmeasured in standard studies.[34]

[34]Barry Chiswick, 'The Effect of Americanization on the Earnings of Foreign-born Men', in *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 86, no. 5 (1978), pp. 897–921; George Borjas, 'The Economics of Immigration', in *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1994), pp. 1667–1717.

In particular, income is viewed as a summary indicator of immigrants' skills, both readily observed and normally unobserved, as well as of their overall economic success.

Immigrants' labour market characteristics are presented in table 2. The characteristics of the recent cohort (column 2, 4, and 6) offer information about skills among immigrants who have been in the host country for one to five years, before any meaningful assimilation has occurred. Upon arrival, immigrants in both countries are less likely than native residents to be in the labour force; when they do join they suffer from a higher unemployment rate than native residents, and from occupational downgrading in relation to the occupations they held in the FSU.[35] Consequently, in both countries, the median monthly household income is 46–61% of that enjoyed by native households. At the same time, the situation of recent arrivals in Germany is far worse than that of recent arrivals in Israel. In Israel the unemployment rate of recent immigrants is 12.3%—about 5 points higher than the rate among native residents (7.5%); in Germany, the rate is 50.3%, about 40 points higher than the rate among the native population (8.6%), indicating that one out of two immigrants in Germany aged between 25 and 64 years old is unemployed; for female immigrants as a separate category, the figure is even higher, namely two out of three. Evidently, something is very wrong with the employment situation of recent JQR in Germany.

One factor which may explain this extremely low employment rate is selectivity in employment. In Israel, the relatively poor unemployment benefits probably force new immigrants to take whatever job they can find. Consequently, in their first years in Israel, only 15.9% of immigrants hold Professional, Technical, or Managerial (PTM) occupations, despite their high educational level; by contrast, in Germany a much higher proportion of employed recent immigrants (32.1%) are in prestigious PTM occupations, suggesting that many recent JQR immigrants, especially women, turned down lower-quality jobs that may have been offered them.

Contrary to popular belief, however, not working carries a price tag in Germany, no less and perhaps even more so than in Israel. In households in Germany where respondents are employed, the median income of recent immigrants is 65% of the median monthly income among native Germans; the figure drops to 46% among all households, regardless of respondents' employment status. No such difference is manifest in Israel, in part because most Israeli households have at least one earner, whereas in Germany in 50.3% of JQR households there is not even one employed person.

[35]Raijman and Semyonov, p. 391; Kessler, *Jüdische Migration*, p. 36–41; Kessler, 'Jüdische Immigration', pp. 41–42; Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt (eds.), *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland*, pp. 64–76; Yitchak Haberfeld, Moshe Semyonov and Yinon Cohen, 'Ethnicity and Labor market Performance Among Recent Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union to Israel', in *European Sociological Review*, Vol 16, 3 (2000), pp. 287–299.

Labour force and economic assimilation

In their first years in the host countries, immigrants are expected to suffer frequently from unemployment and consequently from low earnings. With time, however, as they become more acquainted with the new society and economy, adjust their skills to the local labour market, and improve their language skills, they are expected to experience occupational and job mobility and eventually reach parity with native residents of similar educational level in all indicators, but especially in earnings. If immigrants fail to achieve such parity, this could either reflect poor skills, broadly defined—the prevalent explanation for the failure of some recent immigrant groups in the USA to reach income convergence with demographically comparable native residents—or treatment by the host country preventing full economic assimilation.

The question thus arises of whether or not FSU Jewish immigrants in both Germany and Israel achieve substantial economic progress in their first six to ten years, and especially whether they achieve complete assimilation in various measures. When compared to the figures in parentheses, the figures in columns 1, 3, and 5 show whether or not immigrants reach convergence with native labour market characteristics in each country. In order to estimate the progress they made in their first six to ten years, we assume that when these immigrants arrived in Israel or Germany their labour market characteristics were roughly similar to those presented for the 1995–2000 cohort. Thus a comparison of columns 1, 3 and 5 to columns 2, 4 and 6 reveals the progress made by immigrants in their first six to ten years in the host country.

Although in both countries FSU Jewish immigrants progress economically, the rate of progress in most indicators is faster in Israel, and the gap between natives and immigrants after six to ten years, is smaller in Israel than in Germany. Considering, for example, employment and unemployment levels, after six to ten years in Israel immigrants there have higher participation rates and lower unemployment rates than native Israelis, and this is true for both gender groups. In Germany, too, immigrants show some progress in participation rates and becoming employed, but the participation rates are still below those of native Germans and their unemployment levels—about 24% among men and 41% among women—are far above the native German levels. These figures suggest that thus far JQR in Germany have not integrated into the labour market and are unlikely to ever reach employment levels of native Germans.

This pattern is important because employment levels are central for economic integration and assimilation. Indeed, employed immigrants in Germany and Israel are doing rather well: their median household income is 79% and 84%, respectively, of the median income among natives. This implies that after six to ten years in their respective countries, the immigrants' economic standing relative to native residents is slightly better in Israel than in Germany, while the immigrants' absolute economic standing in terms of purchasing power is better in Germany than in Israel. Whether immigrants care more about relative or absolute income is unclear. All one can say is that if they care about what their income can buy, they are most likely better off in Germany; but if they care about their location in the stratification system, they are better off in Israel.

Employed immigrants, however, are the minority among JQR in Germany while they are the vast majority in Israel. Indeed, when we consider the economic progress and economic standing of the entire early 1990s cohort—both the employed and the non-employed—FSU Jewish immigrants in Israel are doing better than their German counterparts, at least in relative terms. In Israel they earn 87% of what native Israelis earn, while in Germany the figure is 62%, a rate suggesting, again, that JQR immigrants cannot expect to reach parity with native Germans. Yet even in Israel FSU immigrants who arrived in 1990–1994 have not yet reached income parity with native Israelis. Compared to immigrant groups in the USA, for example, income assimilation in Israel after 6–10 years is not very high, especially if one considers, first, the high educational levels of FSU immigrants, second, the fact that most of the 1990–1994 cohort has been in Israel for 10 years (most of them having arrived in 1990–91), and third, that the Israeli "native" benchmark group includes nearly 20% low-income Arab households.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Tracking the destination choices of FSU Jewish emigrants in the two migration waves of the past thirty-five years—from 1968 to 1988 and from 1989 to the present—reveals a similar pattern. At the beginning of each migration wave most emigrants went to Israel whereas later cohorts preferred a different destination country. In the first wave the other destination country was the USA, which offered refugee visas to Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. In the current wave the other country is Germany offering Jews from the FSU the status of JQR.

The similarity between the two migration waves, however, does not extend to patterns of immigrants' self-selection and labour market integration. In the first wave those who went to the USA had higher educational levels than those who went to Israel.[36] In the current wave no such educational selectivity has been detected, at least not between Israel and Germany. The formal schooling levels of Jewish immigrants to Germany and Israel are similar, and relatively high, although not as high as the educational levels of FSU Jews who emigrated to Canada in the early 1990s.[37]

Considering the demographic characteristics of immigrants, we found that Germany attracts married immigrants in their prime working age, while Israel attracts slightly older immigrants who are disproportionately women. On the face of it, this selection pattern favours Germany, as the propensity for employment is greatest among married men in their prime working age. But the results suggest otherwise. In Israel most recent immigrants work or look for work, while in Germany the reverse is the case: most recent immigrants do not work, either because they are

[36]Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld, 'Selectivity and Assimilation of 1970s immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel', work in progress.

[37]Noah Lewin-Epstein, Moshe Semyonov, Irena Kogan, and Richard Wanner, 'Institutional Structure and Immigrant Integration: A Comparative Study of Immigrants' Labor Market Attainment in Canada and Israel', in *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2003), pp. 389–420.

still looking for work or because they are out of the labour force. Most of the differences in immigrants' employment and unemployment rates between the two countries can be attributed to the greater rigidity of the German labour market, as well as to the greater public assistance offered to unemployed immigrants in Germany compared to Israel. In Germany the long-term state benefits enable immigrants to search for a long time for jobs matching their high educational levels, while in Israel immigrants are "forced" to take whatever jobs are available even if these do not match their high educational credentials.

Immigrants' characteristics on arrival in a host country are, to be sure, less indicative of integration prospects than the same characteristics a few years later. Impressive economic progress is possible after a slow start, especially among refugees. For example, Soviet Jewish immigrants who came to the USA in the late 1970s earned eighty per cent less than native residents upon arrival, but in less than fifteen years the situation was the reverse.[38] Thus far, this has not been the experience of FSU Jewish immigrants in either Israel or, especially, Germany. In fact, by most indicators, labour market integration and assimilation has been slower in Germany than in Israel; consequently, unemployment and income gaps between early immigrants and native residents are appreciably greater in Germany than in Israel: a difference apparently based on the rigidity of the German labour market combined with material incentives to search for a longer time for adequate jobs.

On a broader level, the difficulties in labour market integration of JQR in Germany may explain why in recent years only about half of FSU Jewish emigrants chose that country, rather than the vast majority; there are analogies here with the 1980s, when over eighty per cent of Soviet Jewish emigrants chose the USA, reflecting a "strong" economic incentive to prefer that country to Israel, since the USA offered both higher relative and absolute income.[39] By contrast, in the 1990s the economic incentive to prefer Israel to Germany or vice versa is weak, as immigrants face a choice between improving their relative income (Israel) or their absolute income (Germany), but usually cannot have both.

[38]Barry Chiswick, 'Soviet Jews in the United States: An Analysis of Their Linguistic and Economic Adjustment', in *International Migration Review*, vol. 27, 2 (1993), pp. 260–285.
[39]See Oded Stark, *The Migration of Labor*, Cambridge, MA. 1991.