

SPATIAL PATTERNS OF JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE USSR, 1976-1988

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The problem of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union during recent decades has attracted considerable attention. It is extremely important to understand the determinants and structure of this phenomena for both scientific and practical purposes.

A large proportion of the studies of Jewish emigration from the USSR are frequently based on territorial divisions and presentation of data by republics. This may be the consequence either of a lack of relevant data or of deliberate choice of a researcher. Such type of analysis may be convenient but it is of limited value for the understanding of the emigration processes among Soviet Jewry. Another widely practiced approach toward the study of the Jewish emigration, one that is erroneous in our opinion, concentrates on areas with relatively large numbers of emigrants. Such studies ignore areas with large Jewish population and low or even zero rate of emigration, consequently non-migrants are left out of the analysis. This is methodologically unacceptable. The purpose of this article is to define geographical regions with different migration patterns as a step toward future research on Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union.

The unpublished data collected by Dr. Yoel Florsheim from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Jerusalem make it possible to analyze the process of emigration by regions more suitable for analysis than republics or places with a large number of emigrants. At this stage we chose the level of *oblast* due to the limited availability of socio-economic and demographic data for smaller regions. Since data embrace the period 1976-1988, analysis is restricted to this period. An advantage of this period is that it includes the second wave of emigration, which took place after the Six Day War. It may be recalled that the first wave occurred in the period 1970-1975 when most of the emigrants migrated to Israel. The second wave, during the years 1976-1981, included a large proportion who chose destinations other than Israel. During the years 1982-1986 the number of emigrants was almost negligible, and in 1987 a new wave of emigration from the USSR began. The whole period 1967-1988 was one of administratively restricted emigration. Another feature of this wave of emigration was the possibility of free choice of destination. Migration decisions during the period of the second wave were based on considerable information about possible destinations and about migration itself, accumulated over the years of the first wave. Thus migration decisions could to some extent be rational.

Four republics were chosen for analysis in this paper: the RSFSR, the

Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan. This choice was based on the need to study as homogeneous a population as possible. Hence we excluded from our analysis republics with considerable non-Ashkenazi population and also the Western republics, that is Jewish populations which had very different cultural and historical backgrounds. Our analysis is concentrated on Russian speaking Jewry—an entity which emerged in the course of the approximately last one hundred and fifty years.

Jewish Population Redistribution, Emigration, and Immigration to Israel

One of the basic propositions of our analysis is that recent Jewish emigration has been a continuation of the process of internal relocation of the Jewish population within the USSR since 1917.

The mass outflow of Jews from the traditional Pale of Settlement after the October Revolution (which itself was the continuation of previous migrations), emigration to America, several waves of *aliya*, and the steady penetration of Jews into the internal regions of Russia, and later the evacuation of the Jews eastward during World War II created a new map of Jewish dispersion in the USSR. Significant changes in this geographical dispersion were possible until the late 1950s. Jews who wanted to change their place of residence subsequently were unable to do so as a result of administrative constraints imposed on migration in the Soviet Union. Towards the late 1960s the Jews, together with a few rural peoples from the Asiatic regions, became one of the less mobile ethnic groups (*Vestnik statistiki*, 1973). However, the reasons for Jewish lack of mobility were quite different from those of the other ethnic groups.

Yet, even in the 1970s and 1980s Jews from provincial areas could attempt to migrate to the central cities instead of emigrating. This to some extent explains the relatively low intensity of emigration from regions other than central cities. At the same time the relatively high percent of *olim* (see Appendix 1) among the emigrants from such regions contradicts the view that a low rate of emigration was the result of a higher degree of assimilation among the Jews (Y. Florsheim, 1980). We may illustrate this proposition by computation of several correlation coefficients (wherein CC stands for Spearman rank correlation, *p*—significance, *N*—number of valid cases). Thus the CC between the size of the Jewish population at the *oblast* level in 1959 and its size in 1970 was 0.99, that is, the changes in geographical distribution of the Jewish population were minimal. The CC for percent of Jews in the total population of the *oblast* for the same time points was 0.95. The CC between the size of the Jewish population in 1959 and the change in size during 1959–1970 was 0.18 (*p*=.02, *N*=51). This confirms our proposition since it indicates the growth of places with larger Jewish population, as does the CC between the percent of Jews in the total population and the change in size of the Jewish population

which was equal to 0.38 (*p*=.009, *N*=49). A weakly negative CC -0.11 (*p*=.426, *N*=51) was found between percent of Jews with Jewish mother tongue and the change in the size of the Jewish population. This finding is in accordance with the idea that a determining factor in the formation of an *oblast's* Jewish population size was internal migration, which resulted from local socio-economic conditions rather than from any form of Jewish identity. Another possible factor—different age structures of the Jewish population in the different regions, should also be taken into account in explaining the negative correlation. It is clear that older Jews have a better command of Yiddish than younger ones, and that an elderly population tends to diminish faster than a younger one.

Change in the percent distribution of the Jewish population by *oblasts* in the Russian republic indicates growth on the part of Moscow, Leningrad, Voronezh, Novosibirsk and Kaliningrad *oblasts* at the expense of all other *oblasts* of the republic. Only in Moscow and Leningrad *oblasts* was the increase of their relative weight more than 0.5 percent. In the Ukrainian republic a Jewish population increase occurred in the Dnepropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporozh'e, Kiev, Odessa, Kherson, Rovno and Krymskaia *oblasts* as compared to other *oblasts* of Ukraine. In the Ukraine, only in the Kiev and Odessa *oblasts* was the increase higher than 0.5 percent. In Belorussia, Minsk *oblast* gained about five percent at the expense of all other *oblasts*. Since the natural increase in the "gaining" regions was not higher than in the rest of the *oblast* and, most likely, the opposite was true, this spatial change in Jewish dispersal could be explained only by internal migration (cf. Altshuler, 1979).

All *oblasts* where the Jews significantly increased their percentage of the total population became in 1970–1988 places of highest emigration intensity¹ and, at the same time, of a very low percent of *olim* among all emigrants. We may speculate that the usual selectivity of the process of internal migration to the large cities very likely created an accumulation in the large cities of potential emigrants with high aspirations, who wished to continue their way of life in a similar environment abroad, which they believed was possible in locations other than Israel. Next to the big cities in emigration intensity were *oblasts* located within the borders of former Pale of Settlement. This can also be considered as a continuation of the former process of mass migration from those regions.

The Jews brought with them to their new Soviet locations the attitudes towards possible emigration destinations current in their former places of residence. Those attitudes, along with family ties with previous emigrants, influenced their own migration decisions in the 1970s and generated new migra-

1. Emigration intensity is obtained by dividing the total number of migrants by the number of Jews according to the census of 1970. In the years between this census and the beginning of the period under consideration the size of the population changed significantly. Since we have no information for the later period we cannot compute the rates of outmigration. Hence we use the term intensity to indicate a rough estimation of this parameter.

tion movements in directions well established in the past, as is usual with migration streams. Therefore, the analysis of emigration streams will benefit from being placed in the framework of a broad theory of Jewish migrations over the course of the past two centuries. An example of such a general theory of Jewish migrations in the modern period is presented in the paper of 1986 by Della Pergola.

Of course, internal relocation has not been the only decisive factor in shaping the pattern of Jewish emigration from the USSR and, as we shall see below, the hypothesis of the role of Jewish identity finds some supporting evidence.

In conclusion, analyzing spatial diversity of Jewish emigration helps us obtain a better understanding of the origin and formation of the Jewish emigration streams from the USSR.

Spatial Pattern of Jewish Emigration

The variation of intensity of *aliya* (emigration with Israel as the destination) by *oblast* was lower than that of emigration to other destinations. The former varied from zero to thirteen percent of the Jewish population in 1970, while the *neshira* ("drop out," or emigration with Israel *not* the destination) intensity, also starting from zero, reached more than 18 percent. Twenty-three *oblasts* had zero intensity of emigration; for example, from Omskaia *oblast*, with about 8,000 Jews, only two emigrants were recorded during the period.

The analysis of emigration data by *oblasts* reveals some unexpected facts that contradict usual stereotypes about emigration from the USSR. Thus, the *neshira* intensity from Chernovitskaia *oblast* was higher than that from Moscow *oblast*, while L'vovskaia *oblast* differed markedly from adjacent Western *oblasts* of Ukraine.

Examination of several correlation coefficients (CC) reveals connections between characteristics of emigrants and of the Jewish population in different regions of the USSR. Here computations included only regions where the percentage of persons claiming their mother tongue as Jewish was less than 40 in order to eliminate the disturbing influence of very different regions on computations.

The correlation between the change in the size of Jewish population and the intensity of *aliya* was 0.47 ($p=.001$, $N=50$), and that between Jewish population change and the intensity of *neshira* was somewhat lower, -0.37 ($p=.008$, $N=50$). The CC of the percent of Jewish mother-tongue with intensity of *aliya* was also .37 ($p=.002$, $N=69$), i.e., much higher than with *neshira* $-.06$ ($p=.621$, $N=69$). These results may be interpreted as evidence in favor of the hypothesis of a relation between lower assimilation and greater intensity of *aliya* from specific regions, assuming that *aliya* resulted from a higher degree of Jewish identity. An alternative interpretation of this finding might be suggested: that the different degree of emigrational intensity could be the

result, not of individual feelings of national identity, but of remnants of the Jewish communal life that differed greatly from one place to another and which could support migration streams accordingly to the strength of such community. Also, it should be recalled that there are different kinds of Jewish identity, with Zionism being only one form. As with *olim* and *noshrim* (those who implement *aliya* or *neshira*), non-emigrants can have a specific and strong feeling of Jewish identity.

Although correlation coefficients indicate some link between local characteristics of a Jewish population and its migration behavior, this type of analysis is not sufficient for disclosure of territorial differences in intensity and direction of the migration process. In order to study the spatial patterns of Jewish emigration, clusterization of *oblasts* by emigration intensity and percent of *olim* among emigrants was performed, based on sorting method (Hartigan). More than twenty types of clusters were identified. The resulting clusters are presented in Appendix 1.2 The clusters are listed by intensity of emigration in ascending order, and every group of *oblasts* with similar intensity was divided into several subgroups by percent of *olim* out of total emigrants.

As might have been expected, similar clusters tend to be situated in geographically contiguous areas. Clusters of types 3 and 4, both with about 50 percent of *olim*, are found mostly in the central part of European Russia. To the east of this region lie *oblasts* of type 2 clusters. To the north and west are type 7 and 10 clusters, with a low percent of *olim*. To this area we can add Moscow and Leningrad *oblasts*, also with a low percent of *olim*. The clusters of types 10 and 11 are similar in intensity of emigration but differ in percent of *olim*. The clusters of type 11 in the south unite four neighboring *oblasts* in Russia and in Ukraine. The *oblasts* within the former Pale of Settlement generally are characterized by high emigration intensity. In this area the north had a tendency to lower percent of *olim* than the south, excluding the two large Ukrainian cities, Kiev and Odessa. These results give the impression that the south tends to yield more *olim* than the north: perhaps a climatic factor affects migration decisions. The *oblasts* along the border of the former Pale of Settlement formed a strip of very low intensity of emigration, clusters of type 2, or very low percent of *aliya* while the general intensity was slightly higher—clusters of type 7. Khar'kovskaia *oblast* in this region also had a relatively low emigration intensity for a large Ukrainian city. Cherkasskaia *oblast* with type 11 cluster was very close in its characteristics to *oblasts* that fall into type 7. To the east of this strip emigration intensity increases or, at least, the percent of *olim* among the emigrants grows significantly. This fact seems somewhat strange in view of the general tendency of decreasing emigrational intensity from west to east. Hence, a simple proposition about the diffusion of emigration behavior from the west to east cannot be readily accepted. Instead we may suppose the existence of a number of centers, from which different

2. To the cluster of type 1 belong *oblasts* with unknown Jewish population in 1970, and to the cluster of type 0 belong *oblasts* with zero outmigrants.

emigrational intentions were diffused among Soviet Jews.

To summarize the previous analytic classification, we can now roughly distinguish six main regions of different types of emigration movement, excluding larger cities and some *oblasts*, whose behavior differed markedly. These six regions are :

1. The north of the European part of the RSFSR (with a population of about 13,000 Jews and unweighted mean of percent of *olim* in total of emigrants 14.8%);
2. The central part of the RSFSR (80,000 and 54.5%, respectively);

The former Pale of Settlement, divided between

3. Belorussia with Volynskaia *oblast* of the Ukraine (95,000 and 35.8%, respectively) and
4. The Ukrainian *oblasts* within the former borders of the Pale (108,000 and 48.2%, respectively);
5. A long strip along the borders of the former Pale of Settlement (172,000 and 25.7%, respectively); and
6. The southern part of the European part of Russia plus some eastern *oblasts* of the Ukraine (79,000 and 31.0%, respectively).

The list of *oblasts* in each region is presented in Appendix 2.

The regions of Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan were covered by clusters of type 2, that is, of a very low emigration intensity, except for two cities—Novosibirsk and Alma-Ata, which had similar emigration patterns, possibly due to similar causes. Both are big cities with high numbers of scientific institutions and industrial complexes. This huge territory with a very small Jewish population may be seen as a seventh region in addition to the previous six.

Concluding Remarks

This analysis to some extent reveals the complex internal structure of the Jewish emigration stream from the Soviet Union in the period under consideration, i.e. before the more recent increase in Jewish emigration.

The next step that we should like undertake is to employ a variety of socio-economic indicators in order to seek underlying factors for the emergence of these regional differences in emigration patterns of Soviet Jews. One prerequisite would be to define the place of Jewish migrations within the system of population redistribution in the USSR as a whole.

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Appendix 1: Patterns Of Emigration, 1976–1988, by Area

Cluster and Republic	Name of Oblast	Intensity of Emigration	Percent of <i>Olim</i> Among Emigrants	Intensity of <i>Aliya</i>	Intensity of <i>Neshira</i>
0 Russia	Buriatskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Kalmytskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Mordovskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Tuvinskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Udmurtskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Chuvashskaia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Iakutskaiia ASSR	.	.	.	.
	Altaiskii Krai	.	.	.	.
	Amurskaia	.	.	.	.
	Kamchatskaia	.	.	.	.
Chitinskaia	.	.	.	.
0 Kazakhstan	Vostochno-Kazakhstanskaia	.	.	.	.
	Dzhambul'skaia	.	.	.	.
	Dzhezkanganskaia	.	.	.	.
	Kokchetav'skaia	.	.	.	.
	Kustanaiskaia	.	.	.	.
	Mangyshlakskaia	.	.	.	.
	Pavlodarskaia	.	.	.	.
	Severo-Kazakhstanskaia	.	.	.	.
	Semipalatinskaia	.	.	.	.
	Taldy-Kurganskaia	.	.	.	.
	Turgaiskaia	.	.	.	.
	Uralskaia	.	.	.	.

Cluster and Republic	Name of Oblast	Intensity of Emigration	Percent of Olim Among Emigrants	Intensity of Aliya	Intensity of Neshira
1					
Russia	Mariiskaia ASSR	.	100.00	.	0.00
	Arkhangelskaia	.	14.29	.	.
	Belgorodskaia	.	50.00	.	.
	Vladimirskaia	.	32.56	.	.
	Vologodskaia	.	100.00	.	0.00
	Kirovskaia	.	100.00	.	0.00
	Kostromskaia	.	33.33	.	.
	Kurganskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
	Lipetskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
	Novgorodskaia	.	72.73	.	.
	Orlovskaaia	.	90.00	.	.
	Penzenskaia	.	70.00	.	.
	Riazanskaia	.	68.75	.	.
	Sakhalinskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
	Tambovskaia	.	12.50	.	.
	Tiumenskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
	Ulianovskaia	.	90.00	.	.
1					
Kazakhstan	Aktiubinskaia	.	100.00	.	0.00
	Gur'evskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
	Tselinogradskaia	.	0.00	0.00	.
2					
Russia	Bashkirskaia ASSR	.21	78.57	.16	.04
	Tatarskaia ASSR	.45	65.12	.29	.16
	Krasnoiarskii Krai	.47	16.00	.07	.39
	Primorskii Krai	.13	0.00	0.00	.13
	Khabarovskii Krai	.01	100.00	.01	0.00
	Astrakhanskaia	.14	80.00	.12	.03
	Brianskaia	.26	40.00	.10	.16
	Irkutskaaia	.14	36.36	.05	.09
	Kalininskaia	.17	33.33	.06	.12
	Kemerovskaia	.14	100.00	.14	0.00
	Magadanskaia	.12	100.00	.12	0.00
	Omskaia	.02	50.00	.01	.01
	Orenburgskaia	.20	100.00	.20	0.00
	Permskaia	.40	46.88	.19	.21
	Sverdlovskaaia	.37	56.96	.21	.16
	Tomskaaia	.13	33.33	.04	.08
	Cheliabinskaia	.26	37.50	.10	.16

Cluster and Republic	Name of Oblast	Intensity of Emigration	Percent of Olim Among Emigrants	Intensity of Aliya	Intensity of Neshira
2					
Ukraine	Voroshilovgradskaia	.15	26.32	.04	.11
	Kirovogradskaia	.49	31.58	.16	.34
	Nikolaevskaia	.06	40.00	.02	.03
	Poltavskaaia	.48	19.23	.09	.39
	Sumskaia	.15	0.00	0.00	.15
	Chernigovskaia	.29	56.67	.16	.13
2					
Kazakhstan	Karagandinskaia	.06	100.00	.06	0.00
	Kzyl-Ordinskaia	.09	100.00	.09	0.00
3					
Russia	Gorkovskaia	.62	50.48	.31	.31
	Ivanovskaia	.68	50.00	.34	.34
	Kuibyshevskaaia	.55	45.63	.25	.30
	Rostovskaia	.69	46.40	.32	.37
	Saratovskaia	.51	68.85	.35	.16
	Tul'skaia	.72	37.14	.27	.45
4					
Russia	Volgogradskaia	1.21	50.82	.61	.60
	Kaliningradskaia	1.17	49.06	.57	.60
	Kaluzhskaia	1.36	64.52	.88	.48
5					
Russia	Severo-Osetinskaia ASSR	2.35	95.83	2.25	.10
	Checheno-Ingushskaia ASSR	3.47	91.43	3.17	.30
6					
Russia	Dagestanskaia ASSR	12.22	98.45	12.03	.19
7					
Russia	Komi ASSR	.98	16.67	.16	.82
	Pskovskaia	.77	27.78	.21	.56
	Smolenskaia	.64	14.71	.09	.55
	Iaroslavskaaia	1.31	17.95	.24	1.08
7					
Ukraine	Dnepropetrovskaia	.90	13.44	.12	.78
	Zaporozhskaia	.84	26.32	.22	.62
	Khersonskaia	.57	12.28	.07	.50

Cluster and Republic	Name of Oblast	Intensity of Emigration	Percent of <i>Olim</i> Among Emigrants	Intensity of <i>Aliya</i>	Intensity of <i>Neshira</i>	
7	Kazakhstan	Chimkentskaia	.60	30.00	.18	.42
8	Russia	Voronezhskaia	2.64	64.71	1.71	.93
		Novosibirskaia	2.60	49.19	1.28	1.32
8	Belorussia	Brestskaia	3.11	51.92	1.62	1.50
		Grodzenskaia	2.53	40.74	1.03	1.50
8	Kazakhstan	Alma-Ata	2.85	67.94	1.94	.92
9	Russia	Kabardino-Balkarskaia ASSR	3.82	63.85	2.44	1.38
9	Ukraine	Vinnitskaia	3.80	49.60	1.88	1.91
		Khmel'nitskaia	4.14	55.64	2.30	1.83
10	Russia	Karel'skaia ASSR	2.09	3.03	.06	2.03
		Murmanskaia	1.15	3.23	.04	1.12
11	Russia	Krasnodarskii Krai	2.14	36.36	.78	1.36
		Stavropol'skii Krai	2.85	28.57	.81	2.04
		Kurskaia	2.69	26.40	.71	1.98
11	Ukraine	Volynskaia	1.73	38.46	.67	1.07
		Donetskaia	1.91	25.39	.49	1.43
		Zhitomirskaia	2.29	19.58	.45	1.84
		Krymskaia	1.52	33.16	.50	1.02
		Cherkasskaia	1.68	12.85	.22	1.47
11	Belorussia	Vitebskaia	1.78	25.00	.44	1.33

Cluster and Republic	Name of Oblast	Intensity of Emigration	Percent of <i>Olim</i> Among Emigrants	Intensity of <i>Aliya</i>	Intensity of <i>Neshira</i>	
12	Russia	Leningradskaia	9.29	17.19	1.60	7.70
13	Russia	Moskovskaia	6.11	18.11	1.11	5.01
19	Ukraine	Zakarpatskaia	15.17	85.80	13.02	2.15
		Ivano-Frankovskaia	10.39	74.60	7.75	2.64
		Chernovitskaia	19.57	70.81	13.86	5.71
20	Ukraine	Kievskaia	14.52	6.33	.92	13.60
21	Ukraine	L'vovskaia	20.57	17.03	3.50	17.07
22	Ukraine	Odesskaia	18.95	4.34	.82	18.13
23	Ukraine	Rovenskaia	5.21	37.31	1.94	3.27
		Ternopol'skaia	7.00	58.57	4.10	2.90
24	Ukraine	Khar'kovskaia	6.46	9.23	.60	5.87
26	Belorussia	Gomel'skaia	4.14	26.06	1.08	3.06
27	Belorussia	Minskaia	13.20	14.94	1.97	11.22
28	Belorussia	Mogilevskaia	9.04	33.20	3.00	6.04

Appendix 2:
List of Oblasts by Regions of Different Emigration Patterns

First region

Komi ASSR, Iaroslavskaiia, Kalininskaiia, Murmanskaiia, Karel'skaiia

Second region

Kaluzhskaiia, Ivanovskaiia, Kuibyshevskaiia, Saratovskaiia, Voronezhskaya, Rostovskaiia, Volgogradskaiia, Kurskaiia, Tul'skaiia, Gorkovskaiia

Third region

Volynskaiia, Vitebskaiia, Gomel'skaiia, Mogilevskaiia, Brestskaiia, Grodnenskaiia

Fourth region

Rovenskaiia, Zhitomirskaiia, L'vovskaiia, Ivano-Frankovskaiia, Zakarpatskaiia, Chernovitskaiia, Khmel'nitskaiia, Ternopol'skaiia, Vinnitskaiia, Cherkasskaiia

Fifth region

Pskovskaiia, Smolenskaiia, Brianskaiia, Chernigovskaiia, Kirovogradskaiia, Nikolaevskaiia, Khersonskaiia, Zaporozhskaiia, Dnepropetrovskaiia, Poltavskaiia, Sumskaiia, Voroshilovgradskaiia

Sixth region

Krasnodarskii krai, Stavropol'skii krai, Krymskaiia, Donetskaiia

This list includes only those *oblasts* which are representative for the region; anomalies were omitted. Thus the larger cities are not included in the list because they differed markedly from other *oblasts* in their regions.