

Finding an Adequate Job: Employment and Income of Recent Immigrants to Israel¹

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the early market experience of recent immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and their mobility patterns a few years after migration. The Labour Utilization Framework, proposed by Clogg and Sullivan (1983), was analysed to identify the employment difficulties immigrants experienced upon arrival, their short-term mobility in the labour market, and the income consequences of their disadvantaged position in the market. Using a panel study of immigrants who arrived in Israel during 1990, we found that although most of them found employment, only a minority did not experience employment hardships. Four years after their arrival, most immigrants were still employed in occupations for which they were over-qualified, and only a small portion of the group managed to find adequate employment. Women had more severe employment hardships and a lower rate of mobility into the better positions. For men and women alike, almost any deviation from a stable adequate employment entailed wage penalties.

INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of immigrants into the host country's labour market has been the focus of substantial theoretical and empirical work. Employment is seen as a way by which immigrants get access to economic and social resources. Hence, it is seen as the most important mechanism to increase their economic well-being. Yet immigrants often encounter difficulties in securing employment, mainly because the skills they acquired in their home countries are not always transferable,

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they lack necessary knowledge of the labour market, their language proficiency is inadequate, and their personal ties (which may help in finding a job) are limited. Often they also face discrimination (Raijman and Tienda, 1999). Consequently, immigrants often find employment in low-paying, insecure jobs, or they experience prolonged periods of unemployment. However, with the passage of time immigrants, in general, improve their market position and even gain parity with the local population in terms of income and market position (Raijman and Tienda, 1999; Chiswick, 1978a, 1978b, 1979; Borjas, 1990).

Most studies on the economic incorporation of immigrants concentrated on their economic activity, specifically on their ability to find employment (e.g. Borjas, 1982; Borjas and Tienda, 1993; Stier, 1991; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997) or their economic attainment in terms of income or occupational status in the host country (Semyonov, 1997; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997, 1998; Chiswick, 1978a, 1978b, 1979; Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000). Recently, however, interest has grown in the process by which immigrants are being integrated economically, so more studies focus on immigrants' occupational mobility (e.g. Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000; Weinberg, 2001; Chiswick, Lee, and Miller, 2002). The current study follows the latter line of research by examining the early market experience of recent immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and their mobility patterns a few years after migration. Within two years (1990-1991) some 300,000 immigrants entered a country which, at that time, had only 4.5 million inhabitants. This group of immigrants was characterized by a high level of human capital and high labour force participation in their country of origin. Thus, the size and characteristics of this group provided an interesting case study to understand the experience of immigrants' incorporation into paid employment. A panel study of these immigrants allowed us to examine their mobility patterns and the short-term consequences of their early market experience in Israel.

Our study focused on the quality of employment that these immigrants were able to secure, given their skills and experience in their country of origin, upon arrival in Israel and few years later. In particular, we sought the extent to which this large, highly educated group of immigrants found employment adequately matching their skills. We also studied the effect of employment upon arrival on the immigrants' labour market position later on, and on their economic gains. To capture the difficulties immigrants encountered in the labour market we used the Labour Utilization Framework (LUF) proposed by Clogg and Sullivan (1983). As we explain below, this framework provides a fine distinction between adequate jobs and several other employment (and unemployment) states which indicate different levels of hardship experienced in the labour market. We could thereby ascertain both the mobility paths and the consequences of the initial position on the immigrants' level of earnings.

THE QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

The LUF model offers a way to capture the heterogeneity of employment positions according to their quality. Clogg and Sullivan (1983) differentiate several states of market involvement that indicate hierarchical levels of employment hardships. At the top is adequate employment, which includes jobs whose necessary skills match the skills of those employed in it and whose working hours are in line with what workers would prefer. Those who do not find adequate employment are distributed among several categories of underemployment, which are ordered according to the hardships they represent: “mismatched jobs” are those jobs for which the employees are overqualified in terms of their skills; “involuntary part-time jobs” are those that offer short hours to employees who would prefer to work full-time; “low-paid employment” includes jobs that provide non-adequate salaries; “unemployment” is the condition of those actively looking for employment; and “employment discouragement” applies to those who initially wanted to work but have given up any hope of finding employment, and as a result have left the labour force. The last category in the model (and not part of the hierarchy) covers those who are out of the labour force because they lack any motivation or interest in participating in the labour market. Note that adequate employment, as well as “mismatched employment” and “involuntary part-time employment”, can be located at any level of the occupational ladder, so it applies to highly skilled and low-skilled workers alike.

The LUF model represents a refinement over the conventional distinction of employment, unemployment, and non-employment used in most statistical analyses of labour force activity. According to the latter, all employed individuals are treated as a homogenous group, and major attention is paid to whether individuals are employed, regardless of the fact that some workers cannot secure adequate employment, and find themselves in unstable jobs that offer low levels of rewards and economic security, or jobs for which they are overqualified. Use of conventional statistics does not allow differentiation between those who find satisfactory jobs and those who are underemployed even though they participate in paid employment. Thus, the actual economic hardships, usually measured by unemployment rates, are underestimated.

The LUF model was previously used to identify the multiple symptoms of underemployment (Clogg, 1979). In particular, it was found that vulnerable groups in the labour market, such as the unemployed and those who enter the market for the first time, tended to find employment in unstable jobs offering low payment (Heckman and Borjas, 1980; Sullivan, 1978; Lichter, Landry, and Clogg, 1991; Clogg et al., 1990). In the current study we focused on immigrants, another vulnerable group in terms of market opportunities. We extended the use of the LUF model to examine the quality of employment that the immigrants found in their

host country and the subsequent effect of their initial position on mobility opportunities. This topic has not been analysed in detail except by Morrison and Lichter (1988), who used the LUF model to identify the multiple symptoms of under-employment for intercounty migrants in the United States. The case of the recent immigrants from the FSU to Israel is of special interest because of the unusual size of this stream of migration and immigrants' skill composition. While we expected that most immigrants would have found employment upon arrival to Israel, as indicated by others (e.g. Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000; Sicron, 1998b), this employment would not necessarily have been considered adequate given the immigrants' skills and preferences for time allocation. We also expected that the immigrants would improve their market position over time, although it is still unresolved whether entry into a marginal (i.e. non-adequate) position yielded further disadvantages which prevented the immigrants from finding adequate employment in the long run.

IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Understanding the process by which immigrants gain economic assimilation in the host country has been the focus in major theories and studies of immigration (for a comprehensive review, see Raijman and Tienda, 1999). Studies on immigrants' work behaviour indicate their relatively high labour force participation (Borjas, 1990; Stier, 1991). A high participation rate, however, does not necessarily imply good occupational standing or high earnings. The position immigrants secure in the market is affected mainly by their level of human capital, but their attainment process is context-dependent. Forces of supply and demand in the host market affect immigrants' ability to find employment in their original occupation (Eckstein and Gottlibovsky, 1996; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997). Economic conditions in the host country mediate the effect of skills (and specific occupations) on the incorporation of immigrants into the market.

The transferability of skills from one labour market (in the country of origin) to another (in the country of destination) also affects the ability of immigrants to secure adequate employment. Accordingly, the degree of similarity in the organization of work and in other institutional and cultural facets in the two countries affects the extent to which immigrants will be successfully incorporated into the paid economy (Chiswick and Miller, 1988; Raijman and Semyonov, 1995). Similarly, some occupations (e.g. blue-collar) can be easily transferred, while others (mainly in the free professions) may be context-dependent (e.g. lawyers), require special (local) licenses (e.g. physicians), or depend more on language proficiency (e.g. teachers).

In addition to human capital and market experience accumulated prior to immigration, socio-demographic characteristics influence immigrants' market position.

Studies have found that women encounter more difficulties in securing employment than men (Raijman and Semyonov, 1997; Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000). This is mainly because women, in general, occupy a marginal position in the labour market. Thus, women immigrants face a double disadvantage (being both women and immigrants) in the labour market. In Israel, as in most Western countries, women are concentrated in a relatively small number of occupations, mainly in clerical and service jobs, and in educational and nursing professions (Kraus, 2002; Jacobs and Lim, 1992; Charles, 1992). These occupations, more than men's, depend on a good knowledge of the language. This, in addition to women's inferior prospects in the labour market, makes it much more difficult for women immigrants to secure adequate employment and pushes them still deeper into marginal positions (Boyd, 1984; Sullivan, 1984; Stier, 1991; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997).

Age at migration is another factor in the immigrants' likelihood of finding employment: older immigrants have a harder time finding employment. While their work experience may render them attractive to potential employers, they may have difficulty learning new skills and changing their occupation to adapt to the new labour market (Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000; Raijman and Semyonov, 1995).

The obstacles to finding employment encountered by immigrants who lack the needed knowledge, skills, or language capacity cause them to enter into the least attractive jobs, for which they are often overqualified. Still, over time immigrants may be expected to improve their market position as they accumulate specific skills and become acquainted with the local labour market (Chiswick, 1978a, 1979, 1982; Borjas, 1982, 1988; Semyonov, 1997). In our study we concentrated on the market experience of recent immigrants in order to document their employment mobility and its income consequences. We expected that human capital, age, and gender would have affected the probability of the immigrants' entering adequate employment. We hypothesized that men, young workers, and those with higher levels of skills in terms of education and language proficiency would have obtained the better positions (in terms of skill adequacy) in the labour market. Furthermore, we contended that independent of their skills (i.e. their occupation in the country of origin and their education), workers who had managed to secure adequate employment upon arrival would be better off economically than those employed in jobs for which they were overqualified, or in jobs that offered only limited number of working hours. Moreover, because experience in the labour market is an important asset of human capital accumulation, we expected that early incidents of underemployment (unemployment and other employment hardships as indicated by the LUF model) would have had long-lasting effects on workers' earnings, even those who eventually managed to improve their position by moving into adequate employment.

IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL IN THE 1990s

Since 1989 Israel has taken in about 1 million immigrants, most from the FSU. In 1990-1991 alone, more than 300,000 Soviet immigrants arrived in a country of only 4.5 million inhabitants at that time. About two-thirds of this large group was of working age, but a relative high proportion (14%) was aged 65 and older. Women comprised the majority of immigrants, including a relatively high proportion of single mothers (Sicron, 1998a). Many of the immigrants had higher education: more than half had post high-school education (one-fifth had 16 years of schooling or more), compared with only one-third in the local Israeli population (Sicron, 1998b: 133). Most of the immigrants aged 16 and older (about 70%) had been active in the labour force prior to their immigration and some 34 per cent had held professional, technical, or managerial positions. These characteristics carried important implications for the immigrants' ability to find employment and for the type of occupation they could get. In addition to the general difficulties faced by immigrants in finding employment and in utilizing their human capital, the size of the group and its level of skills entailed even greater employment hardships. From the point of view of the Israeli labour market, the supply of workers, especially in the high-skilled occupations, surpassed the demand for their skills (Weinberg, 2001). For example, 54,000 trained engineers immigrated to Israel between 1990 and 1993, to a market which at that time had 30,000 engineering positions (Dahan and Ben Porath, 1996: 19). Similarly, between 1989 and 1995, 14,800 physicians entered Israel, while in 1989 13,000 physicians were already working in Israel (Nurel, 2000). Consequently, following their immigration, the rate of immigrants' participation in the labour force dropped (Semyonov, 1997; Sicron, 1998b) and their unemployment rate was extremely high. Nonetheless, within three years, between 1990 and 1993, the unemployment rates fell steeply, especially for men (Sicron, 1998b; Weinberg, 2001).

This study focused on documenting the immigrants' patterns of employment upon arrival, and their employment situation a few years later. In particular, we explored employment inadequacies and examined the patterns of transition into adequate employment. We also wished to identify the factors associated with success in securing adequate employment; finally, as mentioned, we studied the effects of immigrants' early experiences in the Israeli labour market on their level of earnings.

Although highly skilled immigrants are usually more successful in finding employment and in gaining access to good jobs (Haberfeld, Semyonov, and Cohen, 2000), we anticipated that in our sample the highly educated would have endured difficulties finding employment matching their qualifications. This is mainly because the supply of highly skilled professionals surpassed the demand in the Israeli labour market (Sicron, 1998b). Yet, whether these immigrants were able to

move upward faster than others, especially as they gained more experience in the Israeli labour market, remains an open question. Because of their high level of human capital they were better equipped to adjust to the new labour market, but on the other hand they faced intense competition for scarce vacancies in lucrative jobs.² Weinberg (2001: 183) found that highly skilled immigrants had higher rates of occupational persistence, but that many of them preferred unemployment as a short-term option until they found employment in their original occupation.

We expected immigrants who entered adequate employment to have a higher income than their counterparts in inadequate jobs, all other things being equal. Furthermore, we envisaged a long-term wage penalty associated with employment hardships. That is, those who started their work activity in Israel in a marginal position (e.g. in a job for which they were overqualified or in unemployment), and later moved into adequate employment, would have earned lower wages than those who found adequate employment upon arrival and maintained that position for few years following their immigration.

Lastly, we expected significant gender differences in the immigrants' labour market experience. Because of the double disadvantage faced by women (Boyd, 1984; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997), they would be expected to encounter more difficulties in securing adequate employment. Plus, in this specific wave of immigration, a relatively large number of women held traditional male occupations, mainly in engineering. The fact that relatively few women were employed in these occupations in Israel (Kraus 2002) would most probably have affected their ability to find employment in the highly segregated Israeli labour market. On average, women's earnings are lower than those of men (Haberfeld and Cohen, 1998; Kraus, 2002). Nonetheless, we expected the effects of the women's early employment hardships to have been less harmful to their earnings because the earning variation in women's occupations is much lower than in men's (Polachek, 1975).

DATA AND METHODS

Longitudinal information is needed for analysis of the absorption of immigrants into a labour market. In 1992, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey among immigrants who had arrived in Israel during the last quarter of 1990. Data were collected on their labour force activity, occupation, education, and other demographic characteristics prior to immigration (i.e. in the FSU). The survey also collected detailed information on their experience in Israel. In addition to the conventional labour force survey questions (e.g. employment status, occupation, industry, earnings) respondents reported on their Hebrew proficiency, and whether they had taken part in special job training courses while in Israel.³ The sample was interviewed again in 1993 and in 1994. This panel allowed us to

trace the dynamics of employment integration, changes in employment status, and adequacy of employment following immigration. The analysis was based on the 1992 and 1994 panels, and included 771 men and 916 women of working age (25 to 64 for men and 25 to 60 for women)⁴ with information available at two points.⁵

The main variable of interest was the immigrants' employment status, defined along the lines proposed by Clogg and Sullivan (1983). We defined six categories that described the employment states: "out of the labour force" pertained to those who had not participated in paid employment; "discouraged workers" referred to those who had given up any hope of finding employment; "unemployed" included people out of the labour force at the time of the survey but actively looking for employment during the survey year; "involuntary part-time" covered those who worked part-time because they could not find full-time or additional employment; "skill mismatch" covered those who worked full-time or (voluntarily) part-time but had to change their occupation following immigration. This category was based on a comparison of the two-digit occupation held by an immigrant in the FSU with the two-digit occupation held in Israel, at two points in time: in 1992, two years after arrival (first wave) and in 1994, four years after arrival (second wave).⁶ The last category, "adequate employment", pertained to those who worked in their original occupation and were not found in any of the other underemployment categories.⁷ The model assumes a hierarchy of employment states. At the top of the ladder is "adequate employment" and at the bottom is the "discouraged worker" (Lichter et al., 1991).⁸ The employment status variable is used as a dependent variable in the description of the absorption of immigrants into the labour market, and as an independent variable in the analysis of its effect on earnings. We used the information on employment status in 1992 and in 1994 to compute transitions from one employment state to another.

FINDINGS

We started the analysis by examining the employment states of immigrants two and four years after their arrival. Figure 1 presents the distribution of employment states in 1992 for males and females; Figure 2 shows the same for 1994. Figure 1 shows clearly the employment hardships experienced by all immigrants. Most of them were concentrated in jobs that did not fit their skills and only a minority found adequate employment. Accordingly, 54.3 per cent of the men and 25.8 per cent of the women were in the "mismatch" category, compared with only 13.7 per cent of men and 5.7 per cent of women in adequate employment. Women were over-represented in the three other "employment hardship" categories: 10.3 per cent worked part-time involuntarily and another 32.2 per cent were unemployed. The figures for men were 2.7 per cent and 17.5 per cent respectively. While only few were defined as "discouraged workers", women were still twice

more likely than men to be in this category. These figures reaffirm the double disadvantage women face in the labour market, being both women and immigrants (Raijman and Semyonov, 1997). Finally, one-fifth of all women, and less than 10 per cent of men, stayed out of the labour force.

FIGURE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT STATES BY GENDER, 1992

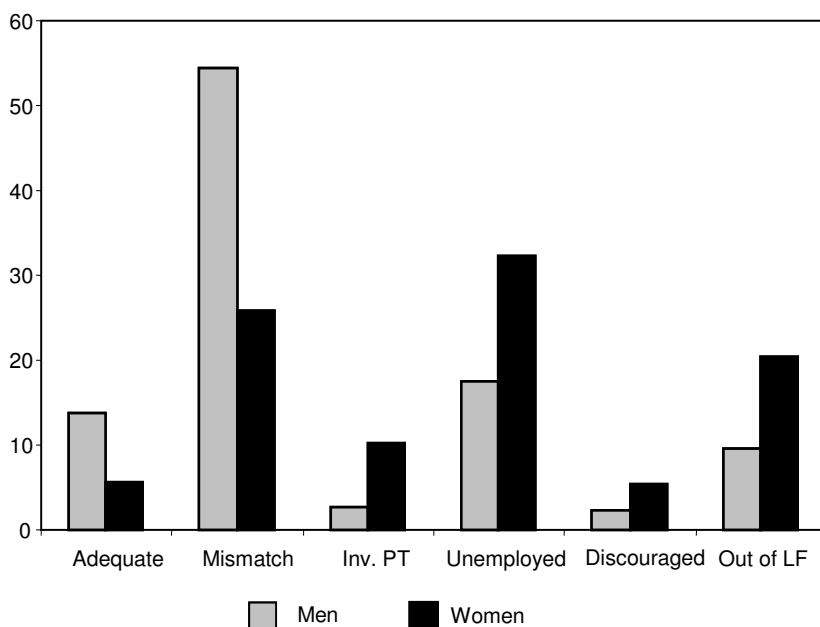
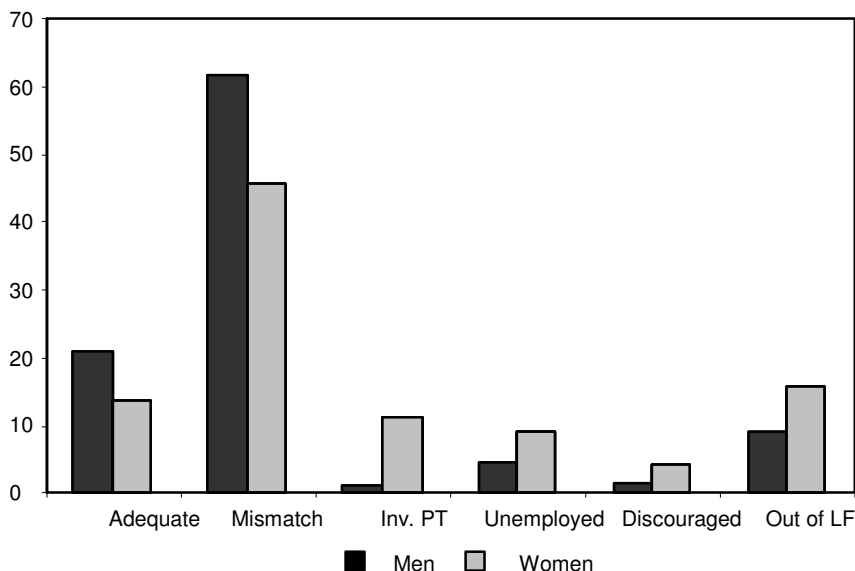


Figure 2 depicts the employment states four years after arrival in Israel. The rate of adequate employment grew substantially for men (from 13.7% to 21.2%), and similarly for women (from 5.7% to 13.5%). Correspondingly, the rate of unemployment declined sharply (to less than 5% and 9% for men and women respectively). Although both men and women improved their market position with time, the majority of employed immigrants were still located in mismatched occupations, highlighting yet again the difficulties these immigrants had in regaining the market position they had held in their country of origin. These figures also emphasize the vulnerability of women, who were still more likely than men to experience employment hardships even four years after they had arrived in Israel.

Although the overall level of employment hardships declined for both men and women, it was important to determine the mobility rate experienced at the indi-

vidual level. To examine the transitions in the labour force states we computed the employment statuses of men and of women in 1994 by their initial status in 1992. The results are presented Table 1.

FIGURE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT STATES BY GENDER, 1994



Four main findings are depicted in Table 1: first, while relatively few immigrants managed to move into adequate employment, this flow was not dependent on their employment state in 1992. About 20 to 25 per cent of men who had been out of the labour force, unemployed, or in involuntary part-time work, and about 10 per cent of those in mismatched jobs and in the discouraged position, had moved to adequate employment. For women, the numbers were significantly lower, though the pattern was similar: about 10 per cent of the discouraged, the unemployed, and those who had held involuntary jobs, and 19 per cent of those who had been out of the labour force, had entered employment of the highest quality.

Second, the majority of those who had been out of the labour force, discouraged, unemployed, and in involuntary part-time employment had found jobs for which they were overqualified (mismatched jobs).

Third, the Table demonstrates a relatively high stability in the higher levels of employment quality: most men and women who had been employed in adequate

jobs (about 69%) in 1992 were still in this position two years later, and so were most of those who had been in the mismatched category in 1992 (80% of men and 69% of women). Nonetheless, almost one-quarter of the men and one-fifth of all women who had successfully entered the labour force in adequate employment had not managed to retain these jobs and had moved into jobs for which they were overqualified.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT STATES IN 1994 BY EMPLOYMENT
POSITION IN 1992, FOR MEN AND WOMEN

	Employment state in 1994					
	Out of labour force	Dis- courage d	Un- employ ed	Inv. part-time	Mis- match	Adequate
Employment state in 1992 for men						
Out of labour force	25.0	4.2	6.9	0.0	38.9	25.0
Discouraged	23.5	5.9	0.0	0.0	58.8	11.8
Unemployed	15.3	2.3	8.4	4.6	50.4	19.1
Involuntary part-time	5.0	0.0	10.0	5.0	55.0	25.0
Mismatch	6.1	1.2	3.4	0.5	79.6	9.1
Adequate	1.9	1.0	2.9	1.0	23.3	69.9
Employment state in 1992 for women						
Out of labour force	24.7	4.4	7.0	7.6	37.3	19.0
Discouraged	28.6	7.1	7.1	7.1	40.5	9.5
Unemployed	20.2	5.6	14.5	10.5	40.7	8.5
Involuntary part-time	6.3	6.3	8.9	30.4	39.2	8.9
Mismatch	6.0	2.5	6.0	10.6	68.8	6.0
Adequate	9.1	0.0	0.0	4.5	18.2	68.2

Lastly, men improved their market position more than women did in all categories. For example, of the unemployed, almost 20 per cent of men had found adequate employment and another 55 per cent were in mismatched jobs, com-

pared with only 8.5 per cent and 41 per cent respectively of unemployed women. Correspondingly, more women than men had left the labour force altogether. The comparison between men and women points once again to the advantaged position of men in the labour market. Four years after immigration women were less able than men to improve their initial position. In other words, the lower rates of men in underemployment states were a result of their ability to move out of these positions; it also indicates a better process of labour market integration.

To understand the transition pattern and its determinants, we employed an ordered logit model in which the employment state was the dependent variable and the human capital and demographic characteristics of the immigrant were the explanatory variables. The ordered logit model assumes an ordinal outcome variable with categories that can be ranked, but the distance between them cannot be determined (Long, 1997). The LUF categories are ranked from higher employment hardships to adequate employment; thus, it is designed as an ordinal variable.⁹ The ordered logit model calculates the probability that an estimated linear function, plus an error, is within a range of cut points estimated for that outcome, and can be expressed as follows:

$$\Pr(\text{outcome}_j = i) = \Pr(k_{i-1} < b_1 x_{1j} + b_2 x_{2j} + \dots + b_k x_{kj} + u_j < k_i)$$

The model estimated, then, the β coefficients as well as the k_{i-1} cut-points, where i was the number of outcomes. We included several demographic indicators among the independent variables: immigrants' age (in years), marital status (married=1, 0 otherwise), and for women, whether they had young children at home (having a child under age 4=1, otherwise 0). Human capital *before* arriving to Israel was indicated by education (measured in years of schooling), and by occupation, which we divided into five categories: (1) professional; (2) semi-professional; (3) managerial; (4) clerical, and sales and services; and (5) skilled and semi-skilled blue-collar occupations as the reference category. We also measured the immigrants' language proficiency¹⁰ and whether they had participated in job-training courses (1=yes, 0 otherwise).

In addition, we included the employment state in 1992 as a predictor of the employment status two years later, in order to track the process of mobility, taking into account the initial position in the market. Appendix Table A1 shows the means and per cent distribution of these variables. Table 2 presents the results for the entire population, and separately for men and women. For each of the groups two models were analysed. The first included the demographic and human capital variables, and the second added to the former the employment state in 1992, in order to test the effect of the initial position in the Israeli labour market on the quality of employment two years later.

TABLE 2
ORDERED LOGIT COEFFICIENTS ESTIMATING THE LIKELIHOOD
OF ENTERING A BETTER JOB BETWEEN 1992 AND 1994

	Total population		Males		Females	
Age	-0.030* (0.007)	-0.020* (0.007)	-0.020* (0.010)	-0.020* (0.011)	-0.040* (0.011)	-0.040* (0.011)
Marital status	0.534* (0.160)	0.541* (0.165)	0.525 (0.309)	0.381 (0.326)	0.511* (0.189)	0.634* (0.197)
Education	0.030 (0.027)	-0.020 (0.028)	0.003 (0.037)	0.002 (0.040)	-0.080* (0.040)	-0.050 (0.041)
Courses (92)	0.513* (0.136)	0.464* (0.152)	0.318 (0.213)	0.392 (0.245)	0.612* (0.177)	0.494* (0.196)
Hebrew	0.235* (0.077)	0.248* (0.080)	0.231* (0.112)	0.317* (0.121)	0.245* (0.109)	0.199 (0.112)
Occupation in FSU						
Professional	-0.415* (0.188)	-0.247 (0.197)	-0.070 (0.242)	0.084 (0.263)	-0.693* (0.348)	-0.562* (0.356)
Semi-professional	-0.240 (0.194)	-0.08 (0.203)	-0.997* (0.292)	-0.767* (0.304)	-0.040 (0.340)	-0.010 (0.349)
Managerial	-0.763* (0.236)	-0.377 (0.247)	-1.136* (0.306)	-0.696* (0.325)	-0.497 (0.463)	-0.223 (0.474)
Clerical, sales and service	-0.644* (0.212)	-0.369 (0.220)	-1.225* (0.353)	-0.920* (0.364)	-0.565 (0.348)	-0.345 (0.356)
Children 0-4					-0.207 (0.289)	-0.367 (0.299)
Sex	0.920* (0.126)	0.773* (0.136)	-	-	-	-
Employment in 1992 ¹						
Mismatch		-2.600* (0.219)		-2.564* (0.266)		-2.862* (0.414)
Inv. part-time		-3.121* (0.299)		-2.209* (0.577)		-3.542* (0.453)
Unemployed		-2.844* (0.238)		-2.576* (0.326)		-3.237* (0.413)
Discouraged		-2.757* (0.376)		-2.648* (0.688)		-3.116* (0.527)
Out of the LF		-2.328* (0.267)		-2.331* (0.407)		-2.712* (0.429)
T ₁	-4.124* (0.486)	-6.375* (0.539)	-4.596* (0.716)	-6.772* (0.787)	-5.357* (0.751)	-7.782* (0.853)
T ₂	-2.828* (0.471)	-5.068* (0.524)	-3.230* (0.675)	-5.406* (0.750)	-4.071* (0.734)	-6.481* (0.838)
T ₃	-2.200* (0.467)	-4.426* (0.521)	-3.024* (0.672)	-5.200* (0.747)	-3.223* (0.728)	-5.604* (0.832)
T ₄	0.954* (0.463)	-0.968 (0.509)	0.810 (0.656)	-1.022 (0.720)	-0.494 (0.715)	-2.621* (0.809)
Model X ²	151.5* (10 df)	338.5* (15 df)	56.0* (9 df)	165.2* (14 df)	70.6* (10 df)	149.1* (15 df)
N	1328	1381	680	680	647	647

Note: 1. Adequate employment is the omitted category; *p<0.05.

Regarding the entire population of the sample, the figures show that men (sex is coded male=1, female= 0) were more likely than women to enter a higher position ($b=0.920$) controlling for their human capital, demographic traits, and family situation. A comparison with the second column reveals that even after taking into account their initial employment state two years earlier, men still had an advantage over women ($b=0.773$) in their market position.

Since men and women had different market trajectories and experiences, we refer to the results of the two gender groups separately. Column 3 of the table suggests that for men, the major determinants of market position were their age, their language proficiency, and their occupation in FSU. The effect of occupation on the quality of employment is interesting: men who had held blue-collar occupations were more likely to be in a good position (i.e. they were less likely to have employment hardships) than men who had held managerial, semi-professional, clerical, or sales occupations. This mainly reflects the intense competition in the Israeli labour market and the incompatibility between the supply and demand of specific occupations. As we stated earlier, the wave of immigration created a shortage of jobs in many white-collar occupations, partly because the immigrants had to compete for relatively few vacancies with other Israelis, and partly because some of their previous occupations were in low demand in the Israeli labour market. Blue-collar workers could enter industries that were less attractive to the veteran population with relative ease. Yet the table indicates no significant differences between blue-collar workers and professionals in their quality of employment. This finding suggests that the Israeli labour market absorbed professional men notwithstanding the high supply in their occupations. In part, it reflects the Government's involvement in job creation, especially in high-tech industries, and in subsidizing employers who were willing to hire immigrant professionals (Sicron, 1998b).

In addition to their occupation, younger immigrants enjoyed an advantage in securing jobs with higher quality, as did those who had better mastery of Hebrew. Education and training courses did not exert a significant effect on men's likelihood to be employed in a better position, controlling for their initial occupation.

Including the employment status in 1992 did not change the results significantly. The negative coefficients of several occupational categories declined, but were still significant and the pattern of differences remained the same. As for the effect of employment state in 1992, the figures suggest that those who had adequate employment upon arrival in Israel were also more likely to have a better position in 1994. Moreover, no significant differences existed in the likelihood to improve job quality by all other employment states. However, those who initially involuntarily had part-time jobs, and those who were out of the labour force in 1992, had slightly better chances of improving their position ($b=-2.209$ and -2.331 respectively) than the others.

The models for women reveal some important differences from those for men. First, most variables in the model significantly affected the likelihood to improve job quality. Second, unlike professional men, women with a professional occupation before migrating to Israel were less likely than women in blue-collar occupations to enter a job of higher quality in the Israeli labour market ($b=-0.693$). However, there were no significant differences between the other occupational categories and the reference group. Similarly, highly educated women had more difficulty securing a better job. These findings emphasize the obstacles professional women encountered in the Israeli labour market, partly because many held "male-type" occupations (mainly in engineering) and partly because of market discrimination against women (Raijman and Semyonov, 1997). Participating in job-training courses increased the likelihood of women to improve their job quality ($b=0.612$). Younger and married women, as well as those with high language skills, had better prospects in the labour market. Yet, contrary to our expectations, having young children at home did not affect their likelihood to obtain adequate employment.

Introducing the employment position in the Israeli labour market only partly changed the effect of other variables: mainly the effect of education and language proficiency became insignificant while all other variables remained unchanged. The effect of employment states of women in 1992 was similar to the finding for men: women who had any kind of employment hardship in 1992, including those who did not participate in paid employment, were less likely to improve their position than those who already had adequate employment. The likelihood of improving their job quality was especially low for women who held involuntary part-time jobs ($b=-3.542$), for the unemployed ($b=-3.237$), and for the discouraged workers ($b=-3.116$).

To summarize, the findings thus far indicate that for the immigrants who arrived in Israel during 1990, having high levels of human capital guaranteed access to good jobs for professional men but not for professional women. However, men with higher Hebrew proficiency and women who invested in market-specific skills, that is, participated in special training, managed to secure better positions. Having documented their employment trajectories, the next question was the extent to which the early experience in the labour market, and the pathway leading to the employment state at the time of the survey, affected the immigrants' level of earnings. In general, employment hardships were expected to be associated with lower levels of earnings. We expected those who started with a disadvantage (that is, were in the various states of underemployment upon arrival) to have a lower level of earnings even after improving their position over time.

We tested our hypothesis using a set of OLS regression models in which the 1994 (ln) earnings served as the dependent variable, and current market position and

early experience served as the main independent variables. These models controlled for standard human capital and demographic variables: weekly working hours, age, education, occupation, participation in training, Hebrew proficiency, and marital status. Those who were not employed in 1994 (including those who stayed out of the labour force, the unemployed, and the discouraged workers) were excluded from the analyses since they had no earned income.¹¹ For each gender group we tested two models: one without the early market experience and one that included their position two years earlier. This was done in order to trace the effect of early market difficulties on subsequent earnings. Our expectation was that those who had job difficulties and interrupted employment earned less than those who managed to secure adequate employment. In the first model we differentiated those who held a mismatched job in 1994, those who held an involuntary part-time job, and those who were in adequate employment (as the reference category). In the second model we took into account the early experience together with the current position. We differentiated the sample as follows: those who were in adequate employment both in 1992 and in 1994 (reference category);¹² those who moved into adequate jobs from a mismatched position and those who moved there from non-employment (unemployed and those who were out of the labour force in 1992); a stable mismatched position (including the few who moved from adequate to mismatched jobs); a move from unemployment to mismatched job; a move from out of the labour force into a mismatched position; and a move from all employment states into involuntary part-time employment. The results of the earnings models are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
UNSTANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS
PREDICTING 1994 (ln) EARNINGS (STANDARD ERRORS)

	Males		Females	
	1	2	1	2
N. hours worked	0.008* (0.001)	0.009 (0.001)	0.022* (0.002)	0.021* (0.002)
Age	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
Marital status	0.187* (0.061)	0.171* (0.059)	-0.020 (0.051)	-0.020 (0.051)
Education (94)	0.014* (0.007)	0.017* (0.006)	0.010 (0.010)	0.011 (0.010)
Courses (92)	-0.070 (0.042)	-0.010 (0.043)	0.114* (0.046)	0.144* (0.047)
Hebrew	0.056* (0.021)	0.064* (0.021)	0.019 (0.029)	0.020 (0.028)

TABLE 3 (continued)

	Males		Females	
	1	2	1	2
Occupation in 1994				
Professional	0.247* (0.054)	0.271* (0.052)	0.318* (0.085)	0.340* (0.084)
Semi-professional and managers	0.015 (0.057)	0.016 (0.055)	0.339* (0.076)	0.358* (0.076)
Clerical, sales and service	-0.080* (0.040)	-0.070 (0.039)	-0.050 (0.059)	-0.030 (0.058)
Employment states in 1994 ¹				
Mismatch	-0.040 (0.043)		-0.126* (0.062)	
Involuntary part-time	-0.727* (0.140)		-0.188* (0.084)	
Employment experience ²				
Mismatch-adequate		-0.271* (.078)		-0.147 (0.161)
Mismatch-mismatch ³		-0.171* (.052)		-0.236* (0.097)
Unemployed-adequate ⁴		-0.401* (.073)		-0.313* (0.100)
Unemployed-mismatch		-0.322* (.067)		-0.375* (0.097)
Out of LF-mismatch		-0.333* (.083)		-0.396* (0.102)
Transition to inv. part-time ⁵		-0.921* (0.139)		-0.407* (0.108)
Constant	7.183	7.281	6.473	6.659
R ²	0.28	0.33	0.52	0.54
N	593	593	505	505

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; 1. Adequate employment is the omitted category; 2. Adequate-adequate is the omitted category; 3. Category includes those who moved from adequate to mismatch employment; 4. Category includes those who were out of the labour force in 1992 and moved to adequate employment; 5. Category includes transitions from all employment states into involuntary part-time.

The first model suggests that after controlling for hours of work, occupation, and human capital endowments, men and women who held involuntary part-time jobs in 1994 earned significantly less than those who were in adequate employment ($b = -0.727$ and -0.188 for men and women, respectively). For men, being over-

qualified for a job (i.e. being in a mismatched job) did not entail earning penalties, but women in this type of employment earned about 13 per cent less than those in adequate jobs ($b=-.126$). These findings may suggest that because of their specific economic conditions and market power, male immigrants could choose to work in occupations that did not match their skills but offered higher levels of earnings. Professional men earned significantly more than those in blue-collar jobs, while men who held clerical, sales, or service jobs earned significantly less. Among women, professionals and semi-professionals earned more than workers in other occupational groups. Men's earnings were also affected by their education and language proficiency, while contrary to our expectations these variables were insignificant for women. The findings for women demonstrated yet again the importance of training courses on their salaries. This was not the case for men.

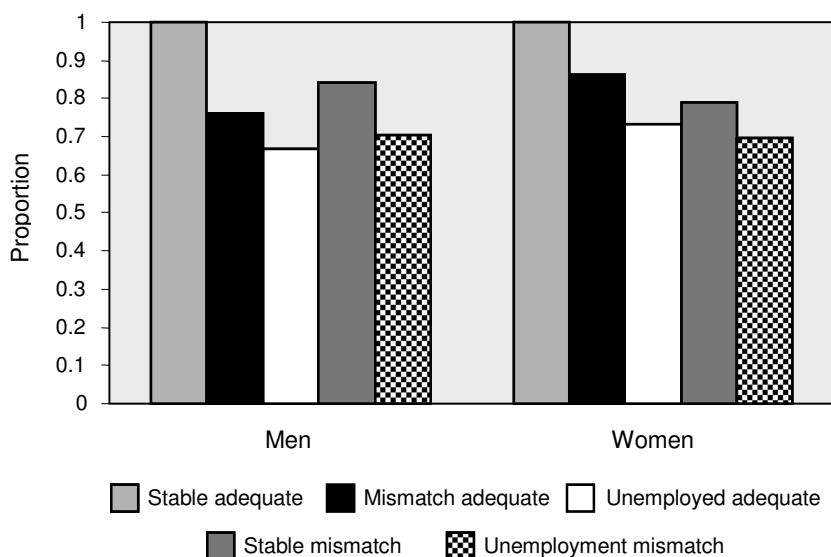
Columns 2 and 4 of the Table present the effect of changes in employment positions on earnings. For men, any deviation from a stable adequate employment entailed wage penalties: those who started off in an adequate job, and remained in this type of employment, had a significantly higher income than those who moved among different employment states, including those who had started in an underemployment state but had moved into adequate employment by 1994, or had remained in an underemployment position for the entire period. These findings emphasize our earlier claim that immigrants might prefer a mismatched position to a job that matched their skills but paid less.

The difference in earnings between men in stable, adequate jobs and those who moved from a mismatched to an adequate position was 27 per cent (the difference in women was 15% but not significant). Interestingly, men who started off in a mismatched job and remained there experienced the smallest wage penalty ($b=-0.171$). Moving from a state of non-employment (unemployment, discouragement, or out of the labour force) in 1992 to mismatched employment entailed similar income penalties for all workers; lastly, employment in involuntary part-time jobs resulted in the lowest level of earnings. A comparison of women and men revealed only slight differences, with stronger regression coefficients for men who moved into adequate employment and those who stayed or moved into involuntary part-time jobs. In other words, part-time employment was more detrimental for men's earnings than for women's. By the same token, the short-term experience of women in the labour force was less consequential for their earnings once they managed to get into adequate employment.

To summarize the costs of employment hardships experienced by immigrants, we calculated the expected earnings of four groups of immigrants: those who entered adequate employment upon arrival and stayed there in 1994; those who moved from a mismatched position to adequate employment; those who moved from an involuntary position (or unemployment) to adequate employment; and those who

had a stable sequence of mismatched employment.¹³ All other characteristics of the immigrants were held constant. Figure 3 presents the results and shows that the earnings of immigrants who had adequate employment in 1994 differed by their earlier experience. That is, experiencing economic hardships upon arrival yielded a lower level of earnings even for those who improved their position within a short period of time. Men who started at a disadvantaged position and moved into adequate employment within two years earned on average about 66 to 85 per cent of those who started in an adequate position. The penalty for women was similar (69-86%). The figure also suggests that for men, staying during the entire period in a mismatched job was preferable, in terms of earnings, to a move to an adequate job, whereas for women, stable mismatch was preferable to the experience of a period of non-employment.

FIGURE 3
PREDICTED INCOME AS A PROPORTION OF EARNINGS IN STABLE ADEQUATE POSITION, BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION AND GENDER



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study we analysed the market experience of immigrants who had recently arrived in Israel from the FSU. Our purpose was to give a broad account of the employment hardships these immigrants encountered upon arrival in the new country, the employment mobility they experienced over time, and the effects of their

particular experiences on their level of earnings. The findings indicated that although most of the immigrants who arrived in Israel during 1990 found employment, only a minority did not experience employment hardships. Four years after their arrival, most immigrants were still employed in occupations for which they were overqualified, and only a small portion of the group managed to find adequate employment. Although immigrants generally experience difficulties in the labour market immediately upon arrival in a new country, the experiences of this group of immigrants was unique in many respects. The exceptionally large size of the wave of immigration, their occupational distribution, and the fact that the majority were highly educated and had had a professional occupation all contributed to their harsh market experiences. Nonetheless, by their fourth year in Israel many had managed to improve their market position and only a minority remained unemployed.

These findings underscore the importance of local labour market experience, and support the claim that over time, some immigrants will improve their situation in the host country (Raijman and Tienda, 1999; Chiswick, 1978b). One important way of improving a position in the labour market is by acquiring language skills and professional training to adjust to the local labour market. In the Israeli case it was the Government that offered a variety of job training and Hebrew courses, and by so doing contributed to the incorporation of these immigrants into the labour market. Accordingly, those who participated in such training and those with good language skills were more successful than others in finding adequate jobs and improving their market rewards.

Yet, not all immigrants experienced upward mobility. The findings emphasize once again the disadvantage immigrant women face in the labour market (Raijman and Semyonov, 1997; Boyd, 1984). Women had more severe employment hardships and a lower rate of mobility into the better positions. In the Israeli case, female immigrants paid a higher price than men for moving to the highly gender-segregated Israeli labour market in which they could not find employment in their original occupation.

As opposed to the general expectation that highly skilled immigrants would have better prospects in the new labour market, our findings reveal that this was not necessarily the case for all immigrants. In a situation with an excess supply of highly skilled workers, some were forced to take service or other low-skilled jobs that were in high demand with the sudden and unexpected rise in the size of the population, rather than staying unemployed. However, professional men, but not professional women, were able to find employment in their original occupation, and thus increase their market returns. The gender differences in the ability of professionals to find adequate employment could be attributed to the types of occupations men and women had and the tight competition in the highly gender-

segregated labour market. Men who held typically “male-type” occupations (such as engineers) were preferred by employers and could benefit from state support of employment positions. Women with such occupations, however, enjoyed little or no demand for their professional skills, and at the same time faced an increasing demand for low-skilled “female” service jobs (e.g. housecleaners, cashiers).

Our findings support the general claim that employment hardships are associated with lower levels of earnings, but we found that this was not necessarily the case for the overqualified employees. The findings suggest that there is a trade-off between income and skill compatibility in the Israeli labour market. Immigrants engaged in mismatched occupations may have experienced loss of prestige and social status, but at the same time they increased their income returns. While this may be seen as an efficient way to improve one’s economic well-being in the short term, its long-term social, economic, and psychological implications are less clear.

NOTES

1. We would like to thank Yitchak Haberfeld for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper.
2. While the supply of labour increased substantially with the arrival of this large group of immigrants, so did the demand, especially in service occupations. Thus, opportunities for employment may have increased for the new immigrants, partly in their original occupations, but mostly in occupations (e.g. in sales or construction) that did not necessarily match the immigrants’ skills. Other jobs (especially in administration) were opened mainly for the veteran population.
3. Training courses were provided by the Government in order to facilitate the absorption of immigrants. These courses helped professionals to obtain licenses, disseminated information about the local labour market, and taught skills needed for specific occupations.
4. We set the age limit to 25 because in Israel this is the typical age of graduating from an academic institution. This is because young Israeli men and women serve in the army until age 21. Immigrants younger than 25 were drafted to the army upon arrival or after completing their academic education.
5. We tested for sample attrition, but found no significant differences on major demographic and work characteristics between the original 1992 sample and the panel used in the current study.
6. We decided to use occupational mismatch although the LUF model is based on educational incompatibility. This was because we believed that occupation incompatibility more accurately captures the employment difficulties experienced by immigrants. Occupation, in this sense, is a more direct indicator of market incorporation. For the comparison we used a two-digit occupational category. This procedure excluded from the analysis those who did not work in FSU or did not report their occupation.

7. The LUF model includes another category, low-income job, which we decided to exclude because we used income as a dependent variable in our analysis.
8. Being out of the labour force is not considered a hierarchical state because many of the individuals in this category chose voluntarily not to participate in the labour force.
9. The hierarchical nature of employment hardships experienced by workers in all the different employment hardship positions has been established in several studies. See, e.g. Lichter, Landry, and Clogg (1991).
10. Language proficiency was measured by two separate questions: one asked whether the immigrant speaks Hebrew (1=yes) and the second, whether he or she reads Hebrew (1=yes). Since the two are highly correlated ($R=0.66$) we added them into an index range from 0 (does not read or speak the language) to 2 (reads and speaks Hebrew).
11. This group included 118 men and 225 women, of whom more than half had not participated in paid employment in 1992. About 29 per cent of the men and 40 per cent of the women were unemployed in 1992, and presumably could not find employment later. Demographically, the group was older than the working population (the average age was 47 and 45 for men and women respectively). While their occupation in the USSR was similar to those who did find jobs, they lacked knowledge of Hebrew and were less likely to participate in training courses.
12. Several categories were too small for separate inclusion in the multivariate model (e.g. a move from adequate to mismatched included 24 men and eight women, and a move from mismatched job to involuntary part-time employment included two men and 21 women; other categories were even smaller, as can be seen in Table 1). We collapsed these few cells into other categories. Tests of the model with and without these categories yielded similar results.
13. We chose these groups because they represented the major employment experience of the immigrants included in our study. These groups represented both stability and upward mobility, and as such, depicted the costs of earlier disadvantage.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A1

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS
(MEANS (SD) AND PER CENT DISTRIBUTION) BY GENDER

	Males	Females
Age	43.0 (9.8)	42.8 (9.0)
% married	91.6	78.7
% children under 4 ¹	-	9.6
Years of schooling	14.5 (2.9)	14.6 (2.5)
% with professional training courses	20.4	29.1
Knowledge of Hebrew (on a scale from 0 to 2; 2=good reading and writing)	0.96 (0.87)	1.16 (0.86)
Weekly hours of work	52.1 (12.6)	39.3 (14.8)
Occupation in former USSR		
Professional	34.4	43.2
Semi-professional	13.1	26.5
Managerial	12.8	5.1
Clerical, sales and service	7.9	17.7
Blue collar	31.8	7.5
Employment states, 1992		
Adequate	13.7	5.7
Mismatch	54.3	25.8
Involuntary part-time	2.7	10.3
Unemployment	17.5	32.2
Discouragement	2.3	5.5
Out of the labour force	9.6	20.5
Total	750	770

Note: 1. Available for females only.

LA RECHERCHE D'UN EMPLOI APPROPRIÉ : EMPLOI ET REVENUS DES IMMIGRES RECENTS EN ISRAËL

Cette étude examine les premières expériences professionnelles des immigrés récemment arrivés en Israël en provenance de l'ex-Union soviétique et leur degré de mobilité quelques années après leur arrivée. Le Cadre d'utilisation de la main-d'œuvre, proposé par Clogg et Sullivan (1983), a été appliqué ici pour identifier les difficultés d'emploi rencontrées par les immigrés à leur arrivée, leur mobilité à court terme sur le marché de l'emploi et les conséquences, en terme de revenus, de leur position désavantagée sur le marché. À l'aide d'une étude par panel portant sur les immigrés arrivés en Israël en 1990, nous avons découvert que, si la plupart d'entre eux ont trouvé un emploi, seule une minorité n'a pas rencontré de difficultés dans la quête d'un emploi. Quatre ans après leur arrivée, la plupart occupent toujours des emplois pour lesquels ils sont surqualifiés et seule une petite partie du groupe considéré est parvenue à trouver un emploi approprié. Les femmes se sont heurtées à des difficultés plus grandes encore et leur taux de mobilité vers des postes de meilleur niveau est plus faible. Tant pour les hommes que pour les femmes, tout ce qui s'écarte d'un emploi stable et adéquat entraîne des pénalités en termes de revenus.

ENCONTRAR UN EMPLEO ADECUADO: EL EMPLEO Y LOS INGRESOS DE INMIGRANTES RECIENTES A ISRAEL

Este estudio examina la experiencia temprana en el mercado laboral de recientes inmigrantes a Israel procedentes de la ex Unión Soviética y sus patrones de movilidad unos años después de su emigración. Se analizó el marco de utilización laboral, propuesto por Clogg y Sullivan (1983), para identificar las dificultades de empleo que experimentan los inmigrantes tras su llegada, su movilidad a corto plazo en el mercado laboral y las consecuencias a nivel de sus ingresos de su posición desaventajada en el mercado. Utilizando un grupo de estudio de inmigrantes que llegaron a Israel durante los años noventa, se observó que si bien la mayoría encontró empleo, fueron pocos los que no tuvieron problemas en su experiencia laboral. Cuatro años después de su llegada, la mayoría de los inmigrantes seguían trabajando en puestos para los que estaban sobre calificados y sólo una pequeña proporción del grupo logró encontrar un empleo adecuado. Las mujeres fueron las más afectadas a nivel laboral con una tasa de movilidad baja de cara a mejores puestos. Para los hombres y mujeres por igual, prácticamente cualquier desviación de un empleo adecuado estable traía consigo sanciones a nivel salarial.