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## The Jewish bourgeoisie in Sweden 1838-1938

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The project deals with the Jewish bourgeoisie in Sweden 1838 to 1938, the Swedish case being an almost totally neglected field of modern research. The aim of the project is to study the genesis, formation and renewal of the Jewish bourgeoisie in economic, social and cultural terms. The project also aims to problematize the almost normative assumption that the early Western Jewish group was a homogenous group belonging to the high bourgeoisie and an economic, social and cultural elite as a whole. This is due to scanty research which is almost half a century old. Criteria for being bourgeois is studied both as economy and culture and from the starting point of the concepts of Wirtschaftsbürgertum (entrepreneurs in industry, commerce, finance and other kinds of entrepreneurial activities) and Bildungsbürgertum (lawyers, judges, physicians, engineers, university graduates and higher public officials) common in German research. Similarities and differences between two Jewish immigrant groups "Verbürgerlichung" will be studied: the early "Western Jewish" group which migrated to Sweden from the 1770s to approximately the 1870s, and the later "Eastern Jewish" group which migrated from approximately the 1850s to 1914. Did Eastern European Jews experience the same kind of upward economic and social mobility as the earlier Western Jews and thus represent a reproduction and renewal of the Jewish bourgeoisie? Another important question is if the strategies of Jews included an additional dimension that the Swedish bourgeoisie did not have, namely, the need of acceptance through economic, social and cultural success.

The primary sources used are both printed and unprinted material from the National Archives and the National Statistics Office of Sweden and also from the Mosaic Congregations archives, mostly placed in the National Archives. Several larger databases have been created which form the basis for investigations that then have been complemented with qualitative sources like memoirs, biographies and research literature on the Jewish bourgeoisie in Europe. The oldest primary sources come from the Swedish National Board of Trade on the period from 1784 to 1859 called "Jews in cities", which relate to the four cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg, Norrköping and Karlskrona where Jews were allowed to reside up to 1854. This has allowed the changing of the starting point to an earlier date.

### Most important research results

*The early Western Jews – a homogeneous bourgeoisie?*

The first Jews allowed to live in Sweden without conversion immigrated in the middle of the 1770s from the northern part of Germany and Denmark. This Western Jewish group was in an international comparison very small. In the four above mentioned cities where Jews were allowed to reside, there were in 1787 no more than 150 persons, in 1840 they were 911 individuals. In the year 1860 the Jews in Stockholm

were 613 persons, in Gothenburg 402 and in Norrköping and Karlskrona together 113 Jews. Legislation in 1782 changed the condition of the Jews from Schützjuden to a legislative definition of the Jew as a specific kind of economic man. Jews could only occupy themselves with business on a commission basis, with granting of credits, to run manufactures and factories, to work in trading companies and handicrafts outside guilds. These were occupations useful for the country and therefore seen as suitable for Jews.

Was the Western Jewish group as homogeneous as earlier research claims? The answer is both yes and no. If one studies the strong upward social mobility of the group as a whole, the answer is yes. But if one studies affiliation to the bourgeoisie, the answer is no. Results show that already during the period from 1820 to 1860 it became obvious that an elite had emerged within this group, which increased from approximately 28 % to 49 % of all employed Western Jews, a sign of upward social mobility. Above all it was the wholesale businesses in Stockholm and the manufacturers and factory owners in both Stockholm and Gothenburg that increased most. The Jewish population in Stockholm was lower than 1000 persons in 1870 of a total population of 136 000 inhabitants. In Gothenburg the Jews were no more than one per cent of the city dwellers in 1863. Still, Jews were occupied in almost all economic fields of importance.

My conclusion is that it was within this top layer within the Western Jewry that the Jewish bourgeoisie emerged. This formation took place due to economic activities of such an extensive nature and incomes way above the assets of other segments of the population, with the exception of parts of the nobility. This bourgeois group fits quite well into the two categories of Wirtschaftsbürgertum on the one hand, and the Bildungsbürgertum on the other, the former comprising of the Western Jews and the latter including part of the Eastern Jewish group and the Western Jews as well.

Bourgeois identity does not only signify economic activities, it should also be seen as a culture which manifests itself in a special life style, family construction, certain types of consumption patterns, education and a specific relationship to music, literature and art. Individual achievements, autonomy and a skeptical view on collective arrangements were part of bourgeois ideals. Jewish entrepreneurs founded apartment stores, textile mills, and sugar and oil refineries, even iron works. Economic activities were often connected to innovations in banking, where Jewish families with capital cooperated within several cities in economic networks. Sons were sent to European metropolises, often to other Jewish entrepreneurs to learn a new trade and new languages.

The bourgeois private sphere was seen as a goal in itself, where emotional ties and loyalties were seen as a protection against competition and materialism in the world around them. The family was dominated by the gainfully occupied husband/ father and the wife/mother, could, because of a staff of servants, take part in the reproduction of gender structures and the transference of cultural capital, in this case Jewish culture, religion and identity to the younger generations. Members of the most notable families married mostly within their Jewish kin, but mixed marriages increased in time as well. Later generations of daughters and sons were baptized and married

within the Swedish bourgeoisie and the nobility. Marriage patterns, conversions, but also networks within trade, production and banking contributed taken together to the creation of the early Jewish bourgeoisie. These patterns of behavior can also be seen among Jews in the rest of Europe, maybe especially among the German Jewry.

The Western Jewish group was not totally homogeneous, though, which can be seen in the fact that the other half (51 %) did not reach the same economic levels and social status which could be regarded as bourgeois according to the above mentioned criteria. Within this group retail trade and handicrafts dominated. But even within this group there can be seen a distinct upward economic and social mobility. In addition many had several occupations at the same time.

It must also be pointed out, that the economic development of the Jewish group during the 19th century was in many ways a function of the restrictions and anti-Semitism of the Swedish state and population. This in turn created Jewish strategies of economic, social and cultural success as a strategy to overcome discrimination.

#### *Eastern European Jewish immigrants – a second wave of the Jewish bourgeoisie?*

Jewish emigration in the millions from the Russian Pale of Settlement is a well known research field. A very small part of these immigrants to the West came to stay in Sweden. Between 1850 and 1880 the Jewish population in Sweden increased from 960 to almost 3000 persons and in 1910 they were 6000 Jewish residents in the country. The first wave of Eastern Jews came mainly from an agrarian milieu and established themselves in Sweden as small scale tradesmen and was in practice peddlers, until this was forbidden for foreigners. The next generation established themselves in trade or as wholesalers on a smaller scale. The second wave on immigrants after the 1880s was either occupied in handicrafts or became industrial workers. Interestingly, the Swedish Jewish working class did not develop into a more permanent social group as in England or France. The Western and Eastern Jews had the same conflicts as their counterparts in other parts of Europe. They belonged to different classes and would probably not have been in contact with each other at all if they hadn't belonged to the same ethnic group and congregation.

Upward social mobility was a central motive to both Western and Eastern Jews. Even if trade was a dominant occupation (on different levels) up to the 1930s, a process of differentiation in the occupational structure of both groups took place away from trade. The generations after the peddlers and smaller tradesmen continued within trade on a larger scale or went in for higher education with the help of family, congregation, relatives or other well-to-do Jewish families.

My interpretation is that the upper stratum of the Western Jewish group became the core of the Swedish Jewish bourgeoisie at the same time as the Eastern Jewish group developed into a petty bourgeoisie and the industrial working class but advanced in the second and third generations to lower and upper middle class. A hypothesis could be that small segment of the latter came to be included in the so called *Bildungsbürgertum*.

Furthermore my research shows that even among this group that the share of gainfully occupied women fell from 25 % in 1913 to 10 % in 1934, which could be

interpreted as a sign of upward social mobility and new gender patterns. A similar development can be seen within the Jewish minorities in USA, England, Germany and France.

The differences between the Western and Eastern Jewish group's social mobility cannot solely be seen as Jewish strategies. These differences must be related to larger changes in Western society as a whole. The early Jewish bourgeoisie could be regarded as belonging to older social hierarchies from the 1800th and 19th centuries, even if many traits still could linger on up to the 1930s. Explanations of the differences between these two groups should also be seen as related to industrialization, modernization, the democratic breakthrough and not least to the formation of the 20th century welfare states. Enlarged possibilities for education, to travels abroad, higher living standards together with social welfare policies opened up the possibilities for new segments of the population to become middle class.