Women's Lives: A Study of Different Generations of Australian Jewish Women

Bruna Krimberg von Mühlen

Abstract

The experiences of Jewish women on the margins of the New World Diaspora has been largely neglected. This paper seeks to investigate ways in which Jewish women across the generations are creating new meanings of being a Jewish woman in Sydney Jewry's contemporary society through appropriations, identity and cultural transformations. It employs gender theory, family theory grounded in systemic therapy, as well as a grounding in Jewish studies. Participants were sourced from three generations of Australian Jewish women from the same families. Narrative interviews were undertaken to obtain the participants' life histories, which were examined through the lens of discourse analysis. In this way, this paper aimed to provide greater visibility to the experiences of Jewish women living "at the edge of the Diaspora" (Rutland, 2001), thereby filling a gap in the feminist scholarship on Jewish women.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate through the lens of narrative life histories, whether new meanings of being a Jewish woman, through appropriations, identity and cultural transformations (Tomizaki, 2010), are emerging across three generations in Sydney Jewry's contemporary society. A feminist approach was utilised, with gender theories providing the basis to discuss trans-generationality, family relationships, and Jewish identities.

A major recent survey of Australian Jewry, undertaken in 2017 (8621 respondents) stated that there are estimated to be 113,000 Jews in Australia, and the majority (87%) live in Victoria or New South Wales (NSW). Most of the immigrants indicated that they were more satisfied with life in Australia than in their former homeland. The researchers found that Jewish identity is a "central element of life" for 96% of Strictly Orthodox, 62% of Modern Orthodox, 38% of Conservative, 30% of Traditional, 23% of Progressive, 14% of non-denominational, and 10% of Secular Jewish individuals (Graham and Markus, 2018).

Until the 1970s there were almost no studies about the female role in Jewish history (Feldman, 2006). Also, until the late 1980s, very little was written on Jewish women in Australia, even though beginning in the 1970s there were important developments regarding Jewish women's leadership in the community (Rutland, 1987; Cohen, 1987). In 1976 the constitution of Sydney's Great Synagogue, which originally stated that its Board could comprise of men only, was amended to permit the election of women. The first female president of the Great Synagogue, Rosalyn Fisher, was elected in 2005 (Rutland and Encel, 2006).

In December 1995, Diane Shteinman was elected as the first female president of the community's roof body, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, followed by Nina Bassat, but there are still very few women holding executive positions in the majority of communal organisations in Australia. The emergence of women into the public space of Jewish life is strongly linked to gendered differences in Jewish identity. According to Orthodox tradition, women

cannot be rabbis, men and women sit separately in synagogue, and women are not permitted to lead services or read from the Torah because of the rabbinic ruling that men will be distracted from their prayers by the female voice. Reform Judaism has taken a different, more egalitarian approach; today, the Reform congregation Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney has two female rabbis: Australian born Jackie Ninio, originally from Adelaide (Rutland and Encel, 2006) and Renewal Rabbi Dr Orna Triguboff, ordained in 2010.

Obstacles to Jewish women taking key roles in Australia continue to exist. The organisation Womenpower was created to empower Jewish women. They approached the *Australian Jewish News*, the only national Jewish newspaper, to include a column in which women who had been elected to the boards of communal organisations could be congratulated and profiled. However, they were told that this was sexist and reactionary. As a result, there is no complete information about women on boards (Rutland and Encel, 2006).

Sexism against Australian Jewish women also appears on more serious issues, as shown by the Royal Commission into Family Violence conducted in 2016, which reported that attitudes and practices together with inadequate or ill-informed responses by religious leaders risk exposing women to abuse by family members. Examples included religious leaders not knowing how to respond when confronted with a case of intimate partner violence, sending women back into violent households, blaming the victim or providing poor advice about how to avoid ensuing aggressions (Perales and Bouma, 2018).

These kinds of barriers faced by Jewish women have been examined via feminist theories. This paper draws on these theories, with a particular focus on the theory of mindful space (Burlae 2004), and aims to fill a gap relating to changing identities of Jewish women outside of the United States – since most feminist Jewish Studies emerged there. This study focuses on the Sydney Jewish community, where fieldwork was undertaken during 2016. It presents findings that were part of a broader project for a doctorate that began in 2013 with Brazilian Jewish women, where the author was born (Muhlen 2013). The methodology used in the Brazilian study was replicated in Sydney. The aim of the doctoral research were to give greater visibility to Jewish women in both countries. The author lived from 2006-2007 in Sydney, where she was hosted by a Jewish family and again in 2016 for her PhD, advised by Suzanne Rutland. A comparative study of the interviews conducted in both countries was published in Brazil, entitleed "Gender Barriers in 3 Generations of Brazilian and Australian Jewish Women" (Muhlen & Strey, 2019).

One of the findings in Brazil, which was also investigated in Australia, is that nowadays an inherent reluctance to accord women positions of power still exists on the part of certain male leaders simply because they are women. This is a greater problem in Brazil, where Orthodox Judaism is more pervasive, and Jewish women there have faced a greater struggle to achieve full equality.

Various articles found about Australian Jewish women deal with history and biography, and have not traced the changes over generations (Perales and Bouma, 2018; Creese, 2014; Rutland and Encel, 2006; Rutland 1987; Beecher, 1999; Cohen, 1987). Thus, the aim of this study is to gain a clearer understanding of how Australian Jewish women across three generations are creating new meanings of being a Jewish woman in Sydney Jewry's contemporary society. In

this way, this study also aims to provide greater visibility for the experiences of Jewish women living at the "at the edge of the Diaspora" (Rutland 2001), thereby filling a gap in the feminist scholarship on Jewish women.

Conceptual framework: the theory of mindful space

The Theory of the Mindful Space, proposed by Krista Burlae (2004), suggests that all violence is a kind of captivity or invasion that, in the same way as rape, penetrates into the body, as well as personal and cognitive spaces, affecting the integrity of the individual. However, women are influenced by the patriarchal culture in which we live to accept this violence as normal, so not all actions of invasion or captivity are seen as violent when they occur, causing many women to only realise that they experienced violence when the damaging effects appear. This is why many women remain captive to the gender limitations and barriers created by the society. For action to interrupt the violent trajectory, it is necessary for women to become aware of this problem. This violence can include the exclusion or minimisation of the female role, rather than just physical violence.

The theory of mindful space states that women are socialised to not raise their voices, a mechanism associated with psychological and relational distress. These dysfunctional schemas are inculcated in women to maintain intimate relationships (Szymanski, Ikizler, and Dunn 2016), where they are subjugated by men.

Non-physical barriers are symbolic and reinforced throughout history, making them even harder to remove. In many religions, there is a sexist norm in force through traditions, creating values which are often treated as laws. This religious normativity can hold women captive through their beliefs and behaviours, shaping lifestyles and restricting possibilities according to society's expectations. Breaking that cycle can be overwhelming for women, because it means questioning some belief systems – family's myths – that usually are passed over generations. When a member of the family, in this case, a woman, tries to re-edit some of these myths, they can be perceived as not being loyal to the family and its religion; however, this can often be the only way to overcome captivity (Anderson & Bagarozzi, 1983). Feminists are concerned with the oppression of women and how to understand and ultimately change it (Beecher, 1999).

Historical narrative, communal memory, identity and *halakah* (the written and oral Jewish law) are interconnected in this dance where gender is normatively veiled and disturbingly unveiled (Butler, 2011; Rudavsky, 1995). Beecher (1999) wrote that Jewish law teaches that all views should be treated with respect and pluralism is grounded in Jewish. If Jews believe that humans are images of God, and to recognise the distinctiveness of each person is to know them as an image of God, then stereotyping denies uniqueness.

Feminism and Jewish women

According to scholars, there have been three main waves of feminist history in Australia: the suffragette period; the middle period of seeking economic equality; and the radical feminist period (McPhillips, 2016). Rutland (2002) argues that the Jewish community has been less influenced by radical feminism because of the Jewish belief in the importance of home and family. In addition, while they were very involved with the middle feminist period, searching for full economic

equality, particularly with the efforts of a number of leading Jewish women, they were less involved in the battle for voting rights, which was spearheaded by the Women's Christian Temperance movement (Rutland 2002).

Feminists fighting for full equality understand that they cannot theorise gender without taking ethnicity and class into account. The conception of women should not be monolithic: not all are white, heterosexual, middle-class and catholic. Jewish women have played a significant role in the feminist movement but their importance has not been sufficiently recognised, including the fact that Jewish women still experience marginalisation (Pinsky, 2010).

Peskowitz and Levitt ask "how do we keep critiques of patriarchy in a male dominated society, when these ideas have become passé or unpopular to discuss?" (1997:7). They say that the term patriarchy has been criticised, as has the term sexism, rejecting all words describing gender-based inequity. However, rejecting feminist language prevents scholars from speaking about a key aspect of human history – the patriarchal society – so even if many scholars have already written about patriarchy and other gendered terms, they are necessary tools for feminist critique. This is particularly relevant to Judaism, since it emerged within a very patriarchal society, with its founding figures, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being consistently referred to "*aveinu*", our fathers, in Jewish prayer. It is only recently that the more liberal strands of Judaism include their wives' names: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah (Peskowitz and Levitt, 1997).

Many opponents that follow the Jewish law (oral – Talmud, and written) – men and women - accuse feminists of destroying Jewish principles and practices, threatening the stability of Jewish families, and bringing a deterioration of Judaism. Feminism was perceived as a threat to Jewish survival, rather than a cause to be supported. It is in the public arena, thereby commanding constant public attention, that the Talmud saw the greatest possible violation of feminine modesty. Accordingly, to orthodox Jews, a woman appearing as a central figure in a religious service is likely to distract some of the male worshippers from a reverent attitude and encourage erotic fantasies. Jewish men must recognise that the *halakhah* often has been unfair and discriminatory towards Jewish women. Some scholars see men's assumption of supremacy and control over women as the basic defining characteristic of Judaism (Yanay-Ventura, Galit, & Niza Yanay, 2016).

Writing from a feminist perspective, Australian Jewish journalist and editor Deborah Stone (1997) noted in an article about the Jewish wedding ceremony, that the Jewish bride was not expected to say a word at her own wedding. She said that the Jewish marriage is a male construct, and the legal framework for a Jewish wedding was written by and for men, reinforcing male dominance, dictating a vow of sexual morality and an organisational framework that ensured Jewish society could function by freeing men. In return, the husband promised protection and security to woman, so that they were well cared. She argued that this fact created a barrier to consciousness-raising among Jewish women, who have lived in relative comfort with their bondage situation. She also stressed that the issue of the interpretation of the *halakhah* remained dependent on the consciousness of the rabbi involved, constituting a male fortress. The *chuppah* – the wedding canopy, which is a key symbol in Jewish weddings – defines the limit and responsibilities for her home, but these responsibilities should be shared: candles are symbol for

women, *tallit* for men. The issue is not which symbols are chosen but how they are used and what they symbolise consciously for those using them.

According to *halakhah*, there are other problematic issues that objectify women. For example, the husband has to initiate the divorce and can withhold his agreement, creating significant problems (Graetz, 1995). In Australia, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) organised petitions at both the national and international level regarding divorce (Rutland and Encel 2006). Today, there are rabbis who recognise that in terms of divorce laws, *halakhah* treats women unjustly, and argue that the rabbinate must be pressured to introduce change. In addition, an orthodox feminist movement has emerged, which is also pressing for change. As Joffe states, "Jewish law, weighted against women since ancient times, has not undergone a similar transformation. Jewish divorce, though strictly regulated by Jewish law, is not granted by a rabbinical court, but only by the husband, and it can be finalized only with the wife's acceptance" (2017:7).

From the beginning of the feminist movement, Jewishness seemed to present a contradiction. Pinsky described how, from her childhood, she used to hear that "Girls do not need to learn the same things as boys because they will be doing different things when they grow up" (2010:2). She explained: "what they meant was: men are responsible for praying and studying Torah, and women are responsible for the family, cooking, and cleaning". Also she wrote that if women would like to study the Talmud, they could, but only some areas such as *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) and *niddah* (purity laws governing sex in marriage and menstrual customs), all linked to gender roles.

Beecher (1999) stood up for diversity among Jewish women, and forecast that an increasing number of voices could emerge to reflect about Jewish women's experiences in Judaism and their roles. She also argued that Jewish feminists connect the transformation of the Jewish community with a multifaceted global struggle for social, political, and religious change.

Patriarchal gender beliefs in Judaism

Pinsky (2010) asked if Jews are an ethnic group, a religion, both, or some other category? She concludes that Jewishness includes, but is not limited to, the Jewish religion, encompassing ethnic identity and a history of cultural traits and practices as well as religious beliefs and customs.

Judaism has not been a static religion. It has been influenced Jews interacting with the outside world through acculturation, including gender issues. Jewish women in Australia are living on the margins of the Diaspora. The long-term psychological consequences of this process of acculturation depends on social and personal variables that reside in the society of origin, the society of settlement and the phenomena that both exist prior to, and arise during, the course of acculturation (Gale, 2012).

Rudavsky (1995) argues that Jewish women oscillate between maintaining components of tradition and transforming the more oppressive components of *halakhah*, which are embedded in a heterosexual domesticity paradigm, which has been central to Judaism. Reform Judaism may adopt values, which are seen by orthodox Jews as destroying Jewish faith and identity. Orthodox Jews believe that *halakhah* was God-given and must be strictly observed. Jews have not attributed to women the power and prestige often given to men. Jewish women's religious

activities are based on traditional Jewish texts – the Tanakh (Bible, the written law), Talmud and Midrash (the oral law) – which were written by men. According to Plaskow (1990) they cannot represent the totality of women's experiences.

Thus, the concept of being Jewish is not a monolithic category. Jewish culture combines both religion and ethnicity. This is also true in Australia, reinforced by post-war Australian government policy, which defined Jewishness on the basis of ethnicity, so that even converts to Christianity were classified as being Jewish in terms of the government's restrictive quotas for Jewish displaced persons (DPs) migrating from Europe (Rutland 1991).

Culture plays a key role in the practical perspectives of the dissemination of concepts from generation to generation, affecting standards and practices that are still in force today (Pereira & Pontarolo 2010). Traditionally, women have been valued in society if they attended to their domestic responsibilities as wives and mothers; men have been valued if they are wealthy and can provide for their families; so previously society has placed women in spaces without power, and men in powerful spaces. This was largely the same in Jewish culture, since most Jewish women were expected to take their domestic responsibilities seriously and full equality was elusive. In the traditional morning prayers (*Shacharit*), Jewish men thank God for not being born a woman (Rutland and Encel 2006).

Until the 1970s, patriarchal beliefs were the norm in Australia. Consistent with international research findings, Australian scholarship has provided evidence of trends towards less patriarchal attitudes over the past three decades. Jewish people with no religion hold the least patriarchal atitudes. While Hasidic Jews tend to hold to a patriarchal theology, they are a small proportion of Jews in Australia. Many Australian Jews are quite secular. Higher levels of the importance of religion, family life and frequency of attendance at religious services are associated with stronger traditional beliefs. Thus, patriarchal gender beliefs are at the core of gender inequality at home, family and work. Understanding the relationships between religious identity and gender, is critical to comprehending certain contemporary social problems, such as the links between religion and violence (Perales & Bouma, 2019).

Patriarchal beliefs are associated with a range of indicators of female oppression and gender inequality. For example, empirical research has reported links between patriarchal beliefs by women and/or their partners and female disadvantage in paid employment, work hours, housework and childcare contributions, as well as evidence that they trap women into unhappy marriages (Davis and Greenstein, 2009). In Judaism this is seen at *ketubbah* (lit. "written document", in Aramaic), which is a contract that makes a Jewish marriage official within rabbinic law. Traditionally, it spells out the duties of the future wife, and the husband's financial responsibility – where the wife is completely dependent upon her husband for all of her basic needs, even though the bride brought property into the marriage. Also it presumes that the bride is a virgin. However, no woman was consulted about these issues: male rabbis mediated women voices, creating an asymmetrical relationship, and silencing women's selves (Levitt, 1997). Plaskow (1990) also presents Judaism as controlling, being a problem for Jewish women because of the absence of women's voices in rabbinic Judaism.

This social contract gave men access to women's bodies through the contract of marriage. The religious requirement of hair-covering for Jewish married

women represents the woman as the potential object of the male desire and as a distraction to religious service. In an era where modern western values prize individual rights and autonomy, prescriptive religious dress codes restrict and reinforce notions of women as sexual objects. The representation of women as the agent of male sexual distraction makes women responsible for male behaviour, instead of making men responsible for their own behaviour. Women are not addressed as religious subjects but as potential religious threats or objects. This objecthood becomes the basis of their subjectivity – contemporary modest dress has often become the paramount religious commandment for women. There is a debate around the question of whether hair-covering is a biblical or (male) rabbinic obligation. Unfortunately, most women who cover their hair today do not in fact study the sources – they choose to do so based on societal norms, expectations and pressure (Landau, 2008).

Traditions were built by men, so that the traditional educational system still reflects sexist norms deeply rooted in Judaism. Education plays a key role in affecting the intergenerational transfer of gender relations, which are characterised by a hierarchy of power, where women are subjugated to men. Therefore, attempts by women to question those patriarchal roles may put them in conflict with the inherited Jewish families' traditional values (Gale, 2012).

Traditional views that the woman's role was in the home as wife and mother were beliefs that reinforced the view that intellectually women were not considered equal to men and that justified their being excluded from contributing in a meaningful way, even when women were innovative in establishing institutions, such as the Wolper Jewish Hospital in Sydney, founded by NCJW. Women often do not have the same fundraising capacity as men, since most women still have a lower income (Rutland and Encel, 2006).

According to Carbajal (2018) women were not necessarily judged for their career potential and capabilities but instead viewed as mothers or wives; also the more women considered themselves as fitting in with the traditional feminine gender stereotype, the less likely they were to report leadership aspirations, so patriarchal religious beliefs influence negatively women's aspirations to leadership positions.

In Reform and Conservative Judaism men and women sit together for prayer and women can aspire for leadership positions, and are also ordained as rabbis. However it has taken time even for Reform and Conservative Judaism to train female rabbis. In the United States, the first female rabbi in Reform Judaism was only ordained in 1972. In Australia the first female Liberal rabbi, American-born, Karen Soria (b. 1952), was appointed assistant minister at Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne in 1981. Later, two Australian-born women were appointed as rabbis: Aviva Kipen (b. 1952) of Melbourne and Jackie Ninio (b. 1967) already cited. Rabbi Kipen served as secretary of the Leaders of Faith Communities Forum in Victoria as well as being program director of its religious celebration of Australia's Centenary of Federation (Rutland 2005). When women become rabbis, there is less social distance. Reduction of the attribution of power leads to hierarchy breakdown within religious institutions. When a woman becomes a rabbi, the goal is to connect with others rather than be alone at the top (Geller, 1995).

In the twenty-first century sexist attitudes are changing, even in modern orthodoxy, where female rabbis are beginning to be trained and employed. This

study seeks to explore how these changes have affected Jewish women in Australia, understand their experiences, their contributions, and the barriers they still face for being women and Jews; using the case studies of three families across three generations in Sydney.

Methodology

This study was qualitative multiple case study, which is based on a constructionist paradigm, which is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Stake, 1995). According to Yin (2003), a case study enables the researcher to answer "how" and "why" questions, taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context. Data collection and analysis occur concurrently.

The participants were Australian Jewish women, comprising three generations in three different Jewish families. The main Jewish women's organisation in Sydney, the NCJW, NSW Branch, was approached, as was the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and asked to assist in the recruitment process by circulating a flyer requesting volunteers through the technique of passive "snowballing". Women from all three generations in each of the three families had to agree to participate, with the youngest of the third generation being over the age of 16.

Three families (9 interviewees in total) were interviewed. They represented three main waves of migration: the turn of the twentieth century East European migration; post-Holocaust migration, a formative period of Australian Jewish history (Rutland, 2002) and the more recent South African wave of Jewish immigrants.

First, approval was granted by the University of Sydney's Human Ethics Committee. After volunteering, each woman was contacted, and the research process explained. They received a copy of the Participant Information Statement. After three generations of women from the same family agreed to tell and record their stories, each participant was interviewed separately.

Data were collected through narrative interviews, where the informant spoke freely without interruptions, in colloquial language, regarding what she thought about the research topic (Scarparo 2008). After informing the interviewees, in broad terms, about the research context, the interviewee was asked: "to speak about what it has meant to be a Jewish woman through your life history" with the aim of building the corpus of data through narrative interviews of life histories. Demographic data were collected which included information about gender, age, school identification and origin of families.

To analyse the data, discourse analysis proposed by Rosalind Gill (2002) was used, since it works with the sense of speech rather than merely the text content. The discourse analysis method used was based on feminist theories and gender studies. However, gender cannot be seen and analysed in isolation. Gender is dynamic and interacts with other axes of differentiation such as ethnicity, generational status and religion, taking into account all the social differences including power structures (Colling 2004; Scott 2001; Strey 2004; Kosminsky 2007).

One issue was the similarities and differences between the researcher and the participants. This factor needs to be considered in determining the research

outcomes (Pinsky 2010). Like the participants, the author of the study is Jewish and female. At the start, the participants were not sure of the researcher's religion and ethnicity, but once she confirmed that she was Jewish, they seemed to relax. They started using Yiddish, Hebrew and religious terminology. The researcher is a feminist and this could have set her apart for some of the interviewees, as could the fact that she is part of the younger generation, which could have influenced her interviews with the older participants or those who were younger than she is.

Findings

All the women interviewed were Australian and Jewish. The first family interviewed (grandmother 1, mother 1, daughter 1) had a South African (first and second generations) background and English (third generation). The second family interviewed had an Australian background (grandmother 2, mother 2, daughter 2) and all the three were Australian born. The third family (grandmother 3, mother 3 and daughter 3) had a European Holocaust background, with the first and second generations born in Europe and the third in Australia. Three categories were identified and analysed: Jewish culture/identity; gender and cultural issues, and generational issues. Thus, the diversity of women with their own feelings, needs, worries, desires were listened to, intersecting the axes of ethnicity, nationality, religion and generations.

In terms of what it means to be a Jewish woman, different definitions of Jewishness emerged. Some interviewees were more secular, others conservative in terms of their religious beliefs and others more progressive, leaning towards Reform Judaism. Most of the interviewees were well acculturated into Australian society, with some identifying themselves as practising Jewish rituals, whilst others did not. These differing responses illustrated how Jewish identity can be comprehended as one aspect of a complex, multifaceted and changing self (Pinsky 2010). The changes within Australian Judaism and the immigration process, including time of migration and whether they came from Europe or South Africa, also affected their sense of Jewishness.

Grandmother 1 thinks her Jewish identity has informed her life to a very large extent, in that she was brought up with an awareness of being Jewish and its importance and she also married a man who was Jewish. While her family in South Africa did not observe much of the strictly religious aspects of Judaism according to *halakhah*, they did celebrate the festivals and light candles on Friday night. She left South Africa during its period of transition, having voted in the first democratic election there. Previously she lived in an apartheid society, which was emotionally uncomfortable, because she was aware that it was an unjust society. That is why her children left and she later followed them after the death of her husband. In both South Africa and Australia she worked as a social worker, having received a scholarship and graduated from university as a young woman. When she migrated to Sydney, in 1994, she found herself in a very vibrant Jewish community. She identifies with Reform, because that has managed to answer her questions.

Grandmother 1's daughter, mother 1, grew up with a strong Jewish culture and identity even though her family was not Orthodox. *Shabbat* was important from a cultural perspective; knowing that she was Jewish, the history and the survival of Jewish people was significant rather than being kosher or going to synagogue. Her father had fled Germany in 1935 and eventually entered South

Africa, so she grew up with histories of the Holocaust and an awareness of Jewish suffering.

Daughter 1 thinks being Jewish is really important – indeed one of the most important parts in her life. While her family was not strictly observant, her identity has never been about religion. When she was younger, they did celebrate *Shabbat* and have a *Pesach Seder*, but as cultural, family events rather than as strictly religious occasions. She went to a non-Jewish public school for primary, but transferred to a Jewish high school, where she started to explore what meant to be Jewish. This experience opened up a new world to her in terms of Judaism, learning Jewish texts, Hebrew, Israel and Jewish studies. For her, being Jewish is more about the values, the history, the education and the community than the religion by itself.

Grandmother 2 said her Jewish identity did not become identified until she left school. During World War II, she was integrated into the mainstream non-Jewish community, attending Sydney Girls High School, a government school located in the Eastern Suburbs, near Sydney Jewry's demographic centre, where a lot of Jewish refugees from Nazism settled in 1938 and 1939. Thus, many of their children attended the school. She used to go to school with *matzot* (unleavened bread) during Pesach, but none of the other students commented negatively and there was no antisemitism. After school she was employed as a secretary, but after her marriage had to retire, since married women were not permitted by society to be in paid employment, and she assisted her husband as a receptionist. Growing up in an Australian home, her Jewish context was attending synagogue services and she thought of herself as an Australian of the Jewish religion. She does not keep a kosher home and is not strictly observant but loves to read works by Jewish writers and suddenly realised the importance of cross-identification, such as lighting candles for *Shabbat*. Nowadays, she likes attending synagogue but she is not aware if it is conservative or orthodox. She knows that not a lot of English is used, unlike a more liberal service.

Her daughter, mother 2, explained that when she was young she was just an Australian girl growing up in Sydney. She was more aware of class issues at her local government high school than religious differences. When she started high school she began to think about what it meant to be Jewish, which was a separation from most of her friends, who were officially Anglican but not religiously observant. However, when she went to her new girlfriend's house in December and saw her Christmas tree she asked her parents: "can we please have a *Hannukiah* surrounded by presents?". Through this experience she developed an interest in Judaism, read a lot of Holocaust stories, and began to develop a stronger Jewish identity. Besides understanding Jewishness intellectually, by sixteen years old she understood Judaism from an emotional point of view. After some years, she became aware of the concept of Holocaust guilt – Jews who felt guilty because they were the only ones who survived the Holocaust – and she did a course on the Holocaust completing a doctorate, and teaching Jewish history when she was older. This gave her the opportunity to think about who she was and to understand where she came from. She knew that she wanted to continue to be Jewish even though she believes that it is difficult in the modern world.

Daughter 2 was brought up by her parents as culturally Jewish. Her involvement with the Reform movement made her connect with her Jewish

identity, but she sees herself as a cultural Jew rather than a religious Jew. She also believes that she has multiple identities and does not see herself as being only Jewish. She studied in a non-Jewish school, which she thinks gave her a good balance, rather than just staying within the Sydney Jewish bubble, such as many Jews who immigrated to Australia before and after World War II have. On the other hand, she went to a Jewish high school in America, which shaped her identity, studied Hebrew, and Jewish history and has found it easier when she was with Jewish people because she did not has to explain why she will not go out on Friday nights. She feels that she can connect with her Jewish friends on a different level compared to her non-Jewish friends.

Grandmother 3 said her father was strictly orthodox, but she connected to her Jewish identity through Israel. She participated in the Dutch resistance during the Holocaust, obtaining false baptism papers, and assisted Jews to go into hiding. When this became dangerous, she and her husband were also hidden for two years, but they were discovered and sent to Westerbork camp, a transit camp in Northeastern Netherlands where conditions were terrible. They also gave their children to non-Jewish families. In 1951 they migrated to Sydney, where her love of Israel continues to play an important role in her life. When she turned 100, she asked not to receive birthday presents, but rather that the money be donated to Israel. The war did not change her feelings about being Jewish. She has kept the Jewish traditions and has always loved celebrating the Sabbath and *chagim* (Jewish festivals). She feels that she is traditional Jew but used to attend synagogue only on *Rosh Hashana* (Jewish New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (the Jewish Day of Atonement). In comparison, most of her survivor friends in Australia and Europe, including her own brother, did not want anything to do with their Jewishness.

Mother 3 was born in Europe after the Holocaust and was three-years old when her family moved to Australia. In her childhood she remembers observing the Jewish ritual traditions. They had no other relatives in Sydney, so she called her Jewish parents' friends "Aunt" and "Uncle" but her parents were the only ones proud of their Jewish identity. She remembers the special feeling of *Shabbat* dinners, the feeling of family, and the celebration of Pesach, and Rosh Hashana. From aged 13 to 15 she attended a church school, which opened her eyes. She learned about other religions and this changed the direction of her life. She is not sure about her belief in God, but her identity is about the love of *chagim*, *Shabbat*, her family and her strong identification with Israel as the homeland for Jews, because so many Jews had nowhere to go both before or immediately after the war, whereas now there is somewhere persecuted Jews can find refuge. For many years she felt sad about not moving to Israel but believes that living in the diaspora, one lives Judaism in a different way than in Israel and as a child of survivors, she feels an obligation to represent it.

Daughter 3 said that being Jewish had a big impact on her everyday life. She attended a government school, but from an early age attended synagogue on the Jewish holidays. She had a *bat mitzvah* and enjoyed being part of youth Jewish groups. She feels very strongly about being Jewish, socialising mainly with Jewish friends because she finds that it is easier to relate to other Jews. She went to a multi-cultural high school but socialised more with Jewish students. She believes that being Jewish is giving to the community and being a good person, rather than being strictly religiously observant. After high school she participated in a program

in Israel called Academy. She believes her mom is a better Jew because she donates to Jewish causes and goes to Israel rather than going to *shul* (synagogue) or keeping a kosher home. She never thought about marrying out and she hopes that their children will find Jewish partners, However, if not, they will still be her children.

Discussion

The narratives discussed above are based on language as an expression of identity, offering a version of human subjectivity. The life history interview method sometimes uncovers the changeable nature of identities. They illustrate how one's Jewish identity can fluctuate throughout one's life-time, depending on the circumstances. Sacks (1995) writes that to understand what being Jewish means cannot be limited to religious practice alone, but one must analyze the broader contexts of Jewish cultures, of wider sociocultural systems in which Jews live. In addition, one can observe that individuals can give voice to multiple discourses and identities, which is part of the post-modern world. These findings cannot be separated from the historical moment and the events that have influenced each of those women's lives. The way women were treated and represented also influenced their understanding of the meaning of being a Jew, drawing them closer to or pushing them away from traditional Judaism, allowing them to build their own ways to be Jewish women, sometimes more aware of some captivities, other less.

Naturalised captivities for women

As women, the subjects of this study have been placed outside the mainstream, male society, while being Jewish adds to their minority status. Women who share their histories are also creating culture day-by-day as they build their identities. Finally, Jewishness means different things to the different women interviewed and it is integrated with other categories of identity, such as gender. Their interviews revealed that they did face barriers due to the fact of being female as wall as some for being Jewish. As outlined by Burlae (2004), those women were captured in some spaces, as illustrated by the following parts of the interviewees' life stories.

In terms of the general barriers facing women in the twentieth century, the life stories illustrated generational changes, with the "grandmother" generation facing major obstacles in terms of employment. In particular, grandmother 2 faced the institutional barriers because following her marriage she could not remain in paid employment in Australia, a bar which was only lifted for employment in the Commonwealth public service in 1966, with women in Australia only being granted equal pay in 1969. In contrast, grandmother 1 was a pathbreaker, completing her universities studies and working as a social worker in South Africa, whilst grandmother 3 volunteered for the Dutch resistance. The "mother" generation sought to break down the glass barriers: mother 1 studied medicine, regarded as a more prestigious profession than social work; mother 2 gained a Phd and is a university lecturer; and mother 3 broke away from her home responsibilities and became a highly regarded directress of a pre-school, serving in that position for 17 years. However, when she did return to work, she was constantly exhausted being involved professionally and looking after the family, since her husband made it clear that he would not assist her. With the "daughter

generation" the trajectory is not clear in terms of child and family care, as only one of the interviewees was married with children, but daughter 3, who is married with three children, has decided to put her career on hold and be a full-time mother. Her husband is involved with the children and house yet she still feels the pressure that she has to do the household, and emotionally that she needs to be there for her children. Nowadays she thinks women are busier, and it is hard to find time for herself, her husband and children and work. There is a tension between maintaining a high-powered career and bringing up a young family, and some members of the "daughter" generation are choosing this more traditional family lifestyle, especially within the Jewish culture where family is so important. Also, women are used to be questioned how they balance family and work, but not men; showing gender inequality. Women from more religious and socially conservative families are less likely to have paid work (Nnoromele, 2017).

Perhaps some of the explanation for grandmother 1 being a path breaker can be found in her life history, because her mother was, for the most part, a single, working parent. Her parents divorced when she was a teenager, which was very uncommon in that period and was considered a terrible disgrace for women. Although she attended some Hebrew lessons, she did not receive any encouragement so that she feels she is illiterate in Hebrew. As a single mother, her mother was not there to supervise her. Daughter 1 believes there has been a huge change from when her grandmother was born to when she is growing up and that the world is heading in a positive direction. Before, the women's responsibilities in Judaism were looking after their family, having babies and preparing Shabbat dinners, behaviors expected of women in the patriarchal culture. Today she thinks that there is much more that Jewish woman can do, even though, women can chose consciously to have a family. She is upset when she enters a synagogue and sees a bigger space for men with women relegated to a smaller area, usually upstairs. Showing that orthodox foundations derive from custom and tradition and are rarely questioned (Muhlen & Strey, 2016). On the other hand, she does not believe Judaism is sexist or structured in a way to exclude women in its essence, but thinks it is orthodox interpretations that have restricted women. As well, she sees this as an inherent expectation for women and not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon. She does not remember learning at school about the different gender roles. She imagines that a woman is not thinking "why isn't my husband doing this?" Rather, orthodox women are socialised from a young age into playing that role.

These comments demonstrate that women follow the expected role of wife, mother and worker, but without ceasing to be the "queens of the home," or simply "feminine" - delicate, fragile, disoriented and emotional. There are expected female behaviours and traditions that have defined ways of being and acting, without their realising this. Female behaviour has become naturalised to the point that many think that nature fashioned them that way (Colling, 2004, Scott, 2001), as in orthodox Judaism. However there are also women who consciously decide to have a family without abandoning their career, such as mother 1, possibly because she had a husband to share the childcare with her.

There are other violences women can face. For example, grandmother 2 remembers after the war working for a doctor, who would touch her knees, but that at the time she did not know that this was sexual harassment. Also, in 1953 she was working with a woman who asked her not to wear a particular sweater because it

was too revealing. Another topic that she could not talk about was her father's death. When he died, she and her mother could not go to his funeral. She could not even cry because in those days this was not socially acceptable. When women are unable to emerge into new spaces, there is violence in their lives. Also when a woman cannot escape certain situations that put them as captives, this can be considered as violence (Burlae 2004).

Gender role differences, in the way boys and girls are brought up, can be seen in grandmother 2's daughter, mother 2, when she said it seemed to her that the burden to retain her family's Jewish identity rested on her shoulders and that, unlike her brothers, she was going to be the person to maintain Judaism within the family and raise her children as Jews. When Shabbat on Friday night began to coincide with parties, she started thinking about the issue of being a Jewish girl, because her parents insisted she should stay home even though the brothers were permitted to go out. Yet, nowadays, when she celebrates *chagim* at her home, her brothers are not present at her table. This woman felt frustrated by being prohibited from doing something that her brothers were allowed to. When that happened, she felt the effects of captivity and the need for change. She feels that the rules that governed her teenage years placed her in a space of captivity for women in that family and the culture of that time.

In grandmother 3's history, this appeared first when her husband was the one who decided to go to Australia, while she wanted to go to Israel after the second world war. Mother 3 has a similar history; she married young, and realised her dream of moving to Israel (*aliyah*) would not eventuate because her husband refused to leave Sydney. When she was 28, after having their third daughter, she realised the mistake she made choosing her life partner, but stayed in a very unhappy marriage because she did not have the courage to leave with three young children. Nowadays, looking after her elderly mother takes up her time, but in the future she hopes to fulfill her desire and have time to be a guide at the Holocaust museum. She said she would be most complete living in Israel, but now she has daughters and grandchildren in Sydney and, reflecting the traditional Jewish culture, her family is the most important thing for her. So she would feel selfish moving there and leaving them in Sydney, proving the theory of the mindful space (Burlae 2004), that women are thought to be motivated to help others, being imprisoned in an unhappy marriage until one realises the harmful effects.

An understanding of captivity is to think about imprisonment, which does not necessarily need to occur in physical spaces, but can also be psychological and cultural, as is seen in these women's life histories. Those barriers are the most difficult to remove because they are symbolic and are embedded throughout the ages and, in this case, the Jewish history through generations. They hold women in beliefs and behaviours, shaping lifestyles and restricting possibilities, such as having time for their careers when faced with the duties of motherhood. Donath (2015) says that mother and motherhood are cultural and historical constructs by which women are treated as a natural caregivers and through which womanhood and motherhood are considered to be synonymous.

There were more differences in the first generation of the grandmothers, where grandmother 2 married and had to stop working, whereas grandmother 1 graduated from university and did not stop working, and grandmother 3 worked in the Resistance during the war and when she immigrated, she started working as

well as volunteering for a Jewish women's organisation. Finally there were commonalities between the second generation, where all of the interviewees work, even though they did struggle with running the household, particularly in the case of the mother 3 in her first marriage because her husband did not support her working and refused to assist her in any way; and finally daughters 1 and 2 are still students, but they aware of having more choices, although daughter 3 decided to put her career on hold in order to focus on looking after her children.

From Captivity to Awareness

Peskowitz and Levitt (1997) say that oppressive discourses are naturalised, supporting the maintenance of sexism. Peskowitz (1997) argues that neither sex nor gender is a naturally occurring difference, but is a cultural product, being constantly reproduced, as seen in the remarks discussed above, with some values, particularly relating to the importance of family, being sub-consciously passed on from generation to generation. Also the fact that the religious tradition uses gender relations to organise itself remains largely invisible, as seen in daughter 1's comments that she does not remember learning about this at school. Both gender roles and Judaism are constructed, authorised, legitimised, and made natural, mediated through vast mechanisms of representation. However, some of the interviewees questioned this and were aware of those barriers as seen in the following.

Grandmother 1 said that she decided to join a synagogue in Sydney because she felt she could identify with the inclusivity and equality of the Reform Temple. Before that, she only attended services on Yom Kippur because she opposes the orthodox separation of the sexes. Nowadays she goes to study groups, for women and men. She participates in the National Council of Jewish Women because they are more outward-looking in their activities and she likes the multi-cultural context, mixing with all kinds of women.

Mother 1's childhood in South Africa, with apartheid, in addition to her father's Holocaust experience, led her to question racism. As with her parents, there were many Jews who were activists - involved in resistance against apartheid. Because she and her husband opposed apartheid, they migrated to England, where they lived for 15 years and where their children were born. They joined a liberal synagogue both there and in Sydney, where there is a focus on social justice activities. She feels lucky to live in a free society where one can live one's life as one wants to: to be gay or not, to marry for love, or to remain single. She is very frustrated by the restrictions that Orthodox Judaism has placed on women and this also applies to right-wing Israeli politics. She had three children, but never stopped practicing her profession. She thinks one needs to sort out with one's partner in order to combine motherhood with a profession.

Already daughter 1 believes people should be aware of the restrictions women face but also believes that the demands on men, due to gender expectations, can be unfair. She said: "we shouldn't wait until university to realise that women aren't valued". She thinks Jewish schools should take a pluralistic approach to allow students to decide what type of Jew they wish to be. She is active in a youth Jewish movement. In 2013, she had the opportunity to visit Israel, and had a distressing experience relating to the inferior status to women in Orthodox Judaism. She was part of "Women of the Wall" and went to pray at the Western

Wall in Jerusalem, where men and women pray separately. Radical right wing religious groups (*haredim*) protested with thousands of *haredi* (ultra-orthodox) girls and boys obstructing and abusing them, throwing chairs and stones. She had to be escorted by the police onto a bus. She thanked her guide for taking them out, and asked 'what do you think about all of this, as an Arab?' and he said to her he did not understand Jews fighting each other. She believes that such actions are unacceptable and is disturbed that the majority of Israel's secular population do not actively support the position of the Women of the Wall.

Daughter 1 referred to the women in Israel who fight tirelessly to achieve women's right to read from the Torah scrolls and have complete freedom of religious expression for women at the Western Wall. The Western Wall has become the greatest symbol for the exclusion of women in the public sphere in Israel. In January 2016, after two and a half years of negotiations, the Israeli government approved a plan for a pluralistic prayer section of the Western Wall. Unfortunately, immediately after the plan was voted upon and passed by the Knesset, the ultra-Orthodox parties demonstrated against it and demanded that the agreement be rescinded (Muhlen & Strey, 2016).

Consciousness can cause women to at least realise that they are not the reason for those invasive arrangements. Under a patriarchal culture, all women are likely to face such traditions throughout their lives (Butler 2004). However, this study demonstrated that there was generational change, as demonstrated in the second family that was interviewed. Mother 2 said she is more aware and feels liberated from some pressures as a Jewish woman. She completed her Master's degree and PhD while her children were growing up and she is finally able to work in the profession she chose. She does not have enough time to attend Sabbath services even though sometimes on a Saturday she thinks it would be nice to go but she is happy to relax and sit in the sun. She feels that she managed to overcome the social pressures within Judaism and the influence of patriarchal culture, demonstrating that women can rise to new possibilities and new spaces (Burlae 2004).

Mother 3 showed her empowerment when she finally divorced her husband after 28 years. When she realised how unhappy she was, and when her youngest daughter was three years old, she returned to full-time work as a pre-school teacher, with her later promotion as directress. For 18 years, WIZO, the women's Zionist movement, was her only social activity. After her divorce, she did not think about meeting someone else but was introduced to a man and remarried. They have been together for eleven years. They both love Jewish traditions. Her story as the second generation of this study demonstrates that it is possible to say no to violences.

These stories highlight how Jewish women fought and some are still fighting against their symbolic captivity and there is much greater awareness of the need for gender equality. With changing attitudes to the role of women and to divorce, the women of the second generation in this study have enjoyed greater liberation and been able to achieve personal and professional satisfaction.

Mother 1 was the only one of her generation who was able to choose an occupation before having children and never stopped working, because she had a partner who had always shared children, house and public spaces responsibilities with her and in South Africa there was more help at home; this was the opposite for

mother 2, mother 3, and daughter 3. Mother 2 could only work in the profession she chose after having raised her children. Mother 3 also started working only after having 3 children, and when she did return to work, her husband at the time did not share with her running the household and child care. Finally, daughter 3 has a partner who helps her, but does not fully share in running the home, and this is possibly the reason why she does not find time for career and family, even though she would like to go back to study and work.

Women as role models through the generations

As Levitt (1995) comments, cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories, and are a matter of becoming and also being. She argues that it is important for women to reevaluate the institution of marriage - and one can add the family as a whole - for they do not need to remain in an asymmetrical power relationship. Also, in terms of past generations being models for the next generation, it is very important to think about the role of women in Judaism, not just as it was in the past but also for the current era. This can be contextualised in the following discourses from the interviewees.

Daughter 1 said that she thinks now there are more Jewish female role models for her generation than there were for her mother's or her grandmother's generation. Her mother, grandmother 1, broke away from the traditional role for women in her generation. She gained a university degree, worked as a social worker and provided a strong example for mother 1, who has also been able to combine her professional life with motherhood. The family unit exists in the linear dimension of time, meaning that the influence of past generations on the next generation can be significant (Carter and Mcgoldrick 1995). However, in grandmother 1's story, she became more radical as a young woman, perhaps because of her parent's divorce and her experiences as an only child.

The choices in life are taken due to values and expectations that come from parents' influence (Palma & Levandowski 2008; Piason 2008; Wagner 2002), and past generations. As in grandmother 1's history above, the family is a system that influences the creation of meaning, perception and behavior of its members. The patterns and traditions are transmitted from generation to generation (Sampaio and Gameiro 2005). This is seen in the cases of mother 3 and grandmother 3, with the impact WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organisation), Israel and the Holocaust has had in their lives. Mother 3's mother was already a WIZO member in Europe, before World War II, and when she migrated to Sydney, she became active and was elected vice-president. She remembered as a child helping her mother with WIZO functions at their home. Her mother encouraged her to work for WIZO but initially she did not want to. She finally relented, became involved and it has become an important part of her life. Besides WIZO, she thinks the Holocaust makes being Jewish different for different generations. Only in recent years have her own children become aware of their grandmother's struggles. Yet, mother 3 believes that the major issues that impacted the three generations were the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel.

In a trans-generational perspective, the differentiation process of each member, in relation to one's family of origin, is very important (Alarcão 2002). It becomes a process of struggles and renegotiations, reinventing ways of being in the world (Lauretis 1990). However, when this process is not achieved, it is probable

that there will be a repetition of parents' models, trying to fulfill and solve emotional issues (Sampaio 2012), as in daughter 2's and mother 2's experience. Daughter 2 did not want to visit Israel but her mother pressured her and she ended up going and enjoyed the experience. As with her mother, mother 2 believes it is her responsibility to carry on the Jewish traditions because her brother is agnostic and her cousins were not brought up as Jews. Thus, she feels the same burden as her mother felt. She married a Jewish man and nowadays she is Reform. She decided not to send her children to a Jewish school because she attended a government school, as did her mother, a decision she has not regretted, even though she feels that daughter 2 regrets not attending a Jewish school. She felt her parents' differentiating between herself and her brothers was problematic. With her own children, she believes her son is also not interested in Judaism, yet her daughter feels more Jewish and she thinks daughter 2 understands the burden.

These stories illustrate the fact that each person has a familiar memory linked to what is experienced and transmitted from their family of origin (Silva and Correa 2014). This may be transmitted from parents to their children, who will have the mission of keeping those traditions alive for other generations, which sometimes can be felt as a burden, such as gender roles and even Holocaust memory. Thus, it is very important for one's mental health to be able to question the naturalisation of one's traditions, although usually people repeat what they were taught without questioning.

These findings lead to the search of meaning about how women establish their identities and life narratives through gender, culture, religion and family. Even though patriarchal issues still permeate social relations, many women already follow their desires and feelings, without considering families' beliefs and legacies (Scott 2001; Colling 2004), such as mother 2, who attends a Reform Synagogue, unlike her mother, who was a member of an orthodox congregation. Daughter 2 followed her mother and also goes to Reform Synagogue and did not study in a Jewish school. There were similarities between grandmother 3 and mother 3, since both experienced the Holocaust, and both had the dream of immigrating to Israel, which they did not fulfil because of their husbands, so both worked for WIZO. Yet, mother 3 did finally assert herself and her own needs by divorcing her husband.

Cultural Issues and Multiple Identities

When someone does not fit into the mainstream culture, where the dominating social norms are masculine, white, and non-Jewish, they can feel excluded and suffer prejudice. Mother 2 believes Australia officially is a multicultural society but that in practice Australians do not understand what it means to be part of a multicultural society. She thinks Australians are ignorant of other cultures, are not interested in religion or politics, and usually know nothing about Judaism. She remembers when they moved to their present home, her neighbors asked "what are you getting for Christmas this year?" and she would reply "we are Jewish so we don't have Christmas". They would respond "Oh you poor thing, how sad, but do you give to your children Christmas presents anyway?" and she'd say, "we have Chanukah…". In contrast, daughter 2 thinks that Australia is a multicultural society and that there is no need to separate oneself from the broader society. Having gone to a public and then a non-Jewish private school, where there were very few Jewish students, she feels that it was good to be outside

the 'bubble'. She was in the minority at school, which made her stand out and help others to understand cultural differences, as well as enabling her to value her own Jewish culture.

All the interviewees stressed that their cultural and ethnic identity was stronger for them than their religious connection. Mother 1 said Jewishness for her, in London was more a support than a religion. These narratives show that Jewish identity is mainly a cultural legacy, and that, although it has a connection to religion, is not defined by it. This is demonstrated by studies in other Jewish communities as well (Neto, Cardoso, Riccio and Sakata 2008). Thus, Judaism has been understood as both a religion and a culture (Noble, Rom, Newsome-Wicks, Engelhardt and Woloski-Wruble 2009).

The findings of the study support those of the GEN08 and GEN17 surveys. In GEN08, over 70% of respondents indicated that they spent Friday evening Sabbath with their family every week or most weeks. In GEN17, this had declined, with 43% of respondents indicating they always participated in a Shabbat meal. In GEN08, 60% indicated that they regarded intermarriage with regret or considerable regret, and 44.9% in Sydney reported one or more incidents of antisemitism over the last twelve months; in GEN17, 63% of respondents say they are concerned about intermarriage in Australia and 55% say they would feel at least some regret if their child married a non-Jew, and almost one in ten respondents indicated that they had witnessed or experienced verbal insults and harassment over the last 12 months. The GEN17 found that the more religious respondents are, the more likely they are to prefer a Jewish Day School. Gen17 asked respondents if there were any aspects of Jewish communal life that needed to be improved or changed; 43% suggested 'increase Jewish day school fee assistance' and 42% suggested 'reduce religious division between Jews'. Education is seen as a key issue for the future of Jewish life in Australia, the main advantage of Jewish schools being the strengthening of Jewish identity. The role of the day schools seems to be the most significant in the maintenance and reinforcement of attitudes developed in the home, which was seen in both surveys (Markus, Jacobs, and Aronov, 2009; Graham and Markus, 2018).

Finally, GEN 08 findings showed that support for Israel unifies the Jewish community, with close to 80% of respondents indicating that they regarded themselves as Zionist, while only 13% did not; in GEN17, 69% identify as Zionist. The interview findings supported the GEN08 and GEN17 results, with all interviewees expressing a general support for Israel, but some expressing concerns about the present situation. For example, when the family moved to Sydney, Mother 1 found the community off-putting, because she felt that the Jewish leadership was too conservative, especially in regard to Israel (Gross and Rutland 2015).

It is seen with the changing definition of Jewishness, that most of the women interviewed had in their discourse a greater emphasis on cultural Judaism, intermixed with national and religious factors. The changing responses to traditions shows the greater multiplicity of approaches. There is the issue choice for women in terms of the importance of family and career, as represented in the trajectories discussed here, and particularly with the choice of daughter 3 to focus on her family; while men rarely have to choose between career and family.

Conclusion

In conclusion, religious practice can produce both women's oppression and liberation simultaneously. Women's engagement through learning becomes a crucial part of this process of shifting from women as religious objects to religious subjects. When women engage in the interpretation of sources from within their tradition in its own terms and categories and bring their experience and interpretations to bear, then they can self-consciously bring a range of interpretations and choices to their practice.

In terms of gender and captivity, after centuries of being unaware of other possibilities existing for Jewish women, of invasions and captivity, the women who were interviewed highlighted the trajectory of moving from more traditional beliefs and lifestyle to follow their real desires. They also moved to Reform Judaism, which has more open views of the female roles. This shift in consciousness illustrated that these women rejected the patriarchal culture of traditional Judaism, and believed that these attitudes should be reconsidered. All third generation women interviewed represented this point of view.

However, talking about Jewishness, we need to still consider the place of the family in women's life (Rutland 2002). On the one hand, this is a standard created by societies and culture, but on the other hand, we saw the interviewees enjoyed freedom of choice. That is to say, family seems to be a genuine part of some Jewish women lives. Daughter 3 has chosen to look after her children, marriage and household, even though she thought about going back to study and work. For all others interviewees family is seen as important as investing in their careers and creating a balance between the two is equally important to them in terms of fulfilment. It seems all of the women interviewed valued family life but also wanted a profession, a degree or something to achieve success professionally; however, women still struggle balancing home and career, because they are still blamed if something in the family private space goes wrong, because of the patriarchal beliefs embedded in Judaism and in major society.

Finally, it is only with the changing generational attitudes that it has become possible for women to think of a fuller life. Choices and decisions can be made, taking into account what each person believes is the best for them, knowing that there are other possibilities rather the ones they were brought up with through generational transmission. Being a woman and being Jewish is being part of two different minorities. Being mindful and aware of the issues, like most of the women in this study, takes Jewish women away from the captivity of a patriarchal society that entraps and immobilises their lives. According to Myers and Litman (1995), quoting Mannhein (1952), this social transformation happens when a significative number of people of younger generations reject or change the cultural heritage created by past generations, and this was demonstrated in this study.

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