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Brands of Gender and Acculturation in Immigration Process of Second World War Survivors in Southern Brazil

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Abstract

This study focused on how a migration context drives changes in attitudes and identity. We investigate the process of acculturation of Jewish survivors of the Second World War who immigrated to South of Brazil decades ago. This is a complex immigration because the immigrants who survived the Second World War were more vulnerable to experience stress of acculturation since most of them lost their families, homes, and everything but their lives. This research consisted in a documentary and discourse analysis of interviews made with Jewish survivors' immigrants performed by the Jewish Cultural Institute Marc Chagall in Porto Alegre, Brazil. As results we found that immigrants have gone through a process of acculturation in which their ethnic identity gradually acquired new brands from a new social construction from this international migration to Brazil.

Introduction

Nowadays several researches are being conducted that aim to register the experiences of people involved in major trauma by collecting oral records. The theme that opened this type of research, which is called “testimonial movement”, was the Holocaust. Such traumatic events offer a unique opportunity to study the past (Ferreira, 2006).

We study the acculturation experiences of a few European Jews who survived the World War II. Holocaust survivors who were in concentration camps and those who managed to escape persecution and immigrated to the south of Brazil were the participants of this research. Of those only four are still alive, living in the city of *Porto Alegre*, where this research was conducted.

The aim of this research was to understand how three immigrant men and one woman went through the process of acculturation, during their immigration from Europe to Brazil, as survivors of the Second World War. This research aimed to answer the following questions: How the differences and similarities that immigrants found in their integration in Brazil, compared to its ethnic context in Europe before and during World War II influenced their identity? How did their integration in the Brazilian cultural context take place, taking into account the processes of immigration and acculturation?

To answer those questions it is important to first understand some concepts, such as identity, and also the context that Jews were inserted during the World War II. Identity is understood here as referring to the source and experience of a group. The groups are differentiated by language and culture that represent them. These distinguishing features represent sources of meanings defined by the people themselves, showing that we are not born with an identity and that identity is a social construct that depends on the culture in which each person belongs. Therefore, identity is a process of continuous construction, always remaining unfinished (Pedro, Ferreira, & Moraes, 2009). The war has effects on this construction.

Cultural identities are not rigid or immutable. They are transient and fleeting results from processes of identification with the culture in which each individual is inserted (Gregolin, 2008). According to Hall (2005), when the world result in an immigrant insertion in fragmented identities, multiple and decentered, implying in elements to think about the flexibility of boundaries in the construction of identity. Femenías (2007, 2011) argues that identity is complex, it is a construct that does not correspond to fixed traits, determinants and

independent of the experiences of individuals, but depends on the own experiences and reference groups, in constant restructuring and motion, in continuous dialogue with the environment and oneself, thus, the identity implies beliefs, customs and lifestyles not static.

Through the social identity theory, from the School of Bristol, Jewish identity can be understood as likely to conflict between belongingness to groups. If the identity results from the awareness of belonging to a group and not to another, such as the case for Jews living in the Diaspora, there is a double belonging: to the Jewish community and the specific nationality to which they are linked by immigration and such duplication is often experienced in a conflictuous way (Barlach & Pezo, 2008). Jews in the Diaspora had two desires: preserve their identity and the connection with their cultural center; and to integrate the broader cultural context in which they live (Barclay 1996; Barclay, 2004).

In Germany, during the war, social representations were accentuated by the discriminatory Nazi society around the Jewish identity (Tedesco, 2011). The Jews of that period were characterized by the imperative of geographical displacement and problems in relation to religious identity. The aim was to survive the persecutions, the possibility of extermination practiced by the Holocaust, the loss of family, friends, properties, dignity, deportations, citizenship, among others, and the solution was to break with their origins (Lesser, 1995).

The exile, migration or Diaspora is directly linked to nationalism (in the sense of belonging to a place, heritage or people) and stands in opposition to this by the feeling of estrangement and by the frequent emptying of the feeling of belonging. So soft and provisional identities emerge, and new perceptions of nation and nationality, re-signifying nationality in a transitional context, by constructing more fluid spaces (Almeida, 2011).

The cultural traits that mark a boundary of an ethnic group may change, and cultural characteristics of the individuals in the group can be transformed. According to Huntington (1997, cited by Junior, 2009) flags and other symbols of cultural identity are important because culture and cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people. People are finding new identities, and yet old, parading under new flags, but often old.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach, in which works with interpretations of social realities, emphasizing the significance of the data collected and the importance of the social context in which they were cast, playing the corpus and generating meaning (Allum, 2002), through a documental analysis.

Documental sources or archives are any personal records or iconic belongings. In this study data were collected in *Marc Chagall Jewish Cultural Institute of Porto Alegre (ICJMC)*, which has filed documents of Jewish immigrants. Documents to perform data collection were produced by ICJMC, which prepared the project called "Preservation of Jewish Memory", by recording interviews of Jewish immigrants in south of Brazil (the state called *Rio Grande do Sul*), transcribing and archiving in the Oral History Collection, together with some videos and pictures (Chagall, 1992).

As the object of this research is a specific part of the survivors' lives that involves acculturation in the immigration process, we used parts of interests of their life histories for analysis. Therefore the analysis of documents is appropriate, providing information about past occurrences that are not directly observed (Calado & Ferreira, 2006).

Each respondent signed a consent form. In our analysis of the documents were taken all measures to ensure that no identification of any person was possible whose documentation was read, studied and analyzed.

After the data were collected we used Discourse Analysis proposed by Rosalind Gill (2002) which works with the meaning of the speech and not the content of the text by searching the effects of meaning related to speech; it involves the understanding of the meanings that the participant manifests. According to Gill (2002) there are many styles of discourse analysis, but all defend the importance of discourse in the construction of social life, characterized by conflicts of various kinds. The term discourse refers to all forms of speech and all kinds of texts. A discourse analyst is interested in the text itself, and sees every speech as a social practice, embedded in a context, and not in a social vacuum (Gill, 2002).

Results

The corpus of this study consists of one autobiography, four transcribed interviews and two recordings, previously collected by the Institute Marc Chagall, focusing on the experience of war and immigration. From these documents we seek to explore issues of identity and culture present in the life stories of these survivors.

Survey participants are: Hana, who was born in Eastern Europe, close the Russian border, in 1923; Moses, who was born in 1928 in a small town to the south, in same European country than Hana; Benjamin, who was born in 1936 in a small town, in a country of northwestern Europe, and Samuel, born in 1929, in a central European country, but after war, from 1946 until 1958; he lived in another country in Western Europe, where he was naturalized. Although the names used here are fictitious, they were chosen from names commonly used by Jews.

The War and the Issue of Identity

Hana was integrated into the Jewish community in Europe and her grandparents had a kosher kitchen. Aldo, his father, was a traditional Jew who maintained traditions, such as Shabbat and going to the synagogue on religious holidays.

Hana started to feel aggression in public school where she studied because teachers gave lower grades to Jews. So her parents put her in a Jewish school that had classes on Sundays. Upon returning home she used to hear "Jew! You are studying today." After Hitler's rise, anti-Semitism became more aggressive and direct. Even the caretaker of the building persecuted her family, and the caretaker's daughter said to Hana that she couldn't talk with her anymore because she was a Jewish girl.

In the same country than Hana, Moses lived in a *shtetl*, where there were many Hasidic (religious), rabbis, and his parents were very religious. They also suffered from anti-Semitism.

Already in northwestern Europe Benjamin lived with his parents and sister. The paternal family was not religious, whereas the maternal family was religious. Every evening they used to pray and traditional Jewish dates were celebrated. The first memory he has of Nazism was the fact of having to change to a Jewish school, away from his home because Jews were no longer allowed to study in public schools. His father was supposed to be promoted to be director of the school, but another man was appointed due to anti-Semitism.

Samuel lived in central Europe. He used to go to the synagogue in the Jewish feasts. Until he was expelled from public school, he had no idea what anti-Semitism was. He was expelled because he had some disagreements. He started a fight when someone called him a Jew. Then he also went to a Jewish school, away from home.

Hana was the only one who was already in Brazil during war, managed to escape with her family from persecution before 1939. Moses, during war, was with his family, lived in a ghetto. They were forced to wear the David Star for identification. They were confined in a space with a capacity of 5,000 people, but there were placed 40,000. They were forced to do hard labor. Their belongings were confiscated and food was rationed. In 1943, his parents and his sister were taken to Auschwitz, and sent to the gas chambers. The two sisters and the brother, who remained, were taken to concentration camps. Moses was taken to the labor *Markstaet* camp. They were housed in wooden sheds. He was no more called by his name, but by the number he received. In early 1944 he was taken to the *Finfteichen* camp. In mid-1944 he was taken to the camp in the town of *Goerliz*; from 500 prisoners, 80 remained, including Moses.

Samuel was deported from his hometown in 1941, to the Lodz ghetto, where his father died due to health problems and lack of food. Samuel and his mother were deported to Auschwitz; his mother was sent to the gas chamber. Samuel was tattooed and became a number too. When the Russians started to get close, they were sent to other camps: First to *Mauthausen* and then to *Sachsenhausen*. Who took care of the camp, besides SS, were criminals, considered superior to Jews

Benjamin, during war, had the most peculiar fate. In 1941 the Nazis called his father for a "job", but he was killed. So he and his sister were taken by the mother to a non-Jewish family, where they spent two nights. Then they were taken to another family, where he saw a former classmate. For safety, he could no longer leave the house, and were taken to a third family. Nearby was a hotel occupied by Nazis, who could not see

Benjamin. So once again there was suspicion of some risk, and moved home again. Another time, they passed through another family. After that, they returned to the third family. Benjamin was instructed on what to say if he ever were stopped and questioned: This family was his uncle and aunt, his father and mother died. Even a non-Jewish surname was invented. With time he forgot prayers in Hebrew. Both the second as the third family were Protestants. He used to read the Bible and celebrate non-Jewish dates. In half of those years in hiding, his mother rode 150 km to see their children after two years without seeing them. She visited them for a few hours, and then went away again.

After war Hana was already in Brazil, as we have seen, worked in a place where the manager was Jewish, showing the search for the reference group with same identity. Benjamin wanted to stay in that third family. His God was divided between Judaism and Christianity, and sometimes wondered if God existed. After war he returned to live with her mother and sister. He felt uneasiness related to everything that was Jewish, in the same time he felt the duty to be happy because he survived. He had to keep busy to not remember the time of war. At the first town where he lived in South America, teamed up with an Israeli Congregation, but felt uncomfortable in joining Jewish institutions. He married a Jewish woman and raised their children according to Judaism. In 1968, on a trip to Europe, visited a Jewish cemetery, and was thrilled with music from their country of origin. The name chosen for his son meant “the small, poor guy that got there.” In the 1990s he saw several survivors who had never before spoken about the war, writing books, telling of the aftermath of World War II, and realized that he was not the only one who just “now” could see and face trauma. So he realized that for decades he had not lived but survived. For him “the survivor does not support the memory of yesterday, cannot think about today and life always runs after tomorrow.” Received a letter from his “Sister of war” saying that for years she had a sister and a brother, and that after war, they suddenly disappeared. He visited the camp where his father had died, to mourn and “bury him”. But he felt an orphan for life. Months later was the Bar Mitzvah of his son, which made him feel that he was following the tradition of passing the message from generation to generation. In 2003 he contacted the administration of the law of the Persecuted Disbursements and received a positive response. That left him relieved, not so much for the money, but because he touched on a subject that cannot move for years; so he achieved his greatest wish: peace of mind. One day he was invited to a Christmas night in a church, and became emotional as he recalled the Protestant culture that he was educated in that third family. Today if he feels like going to synagogue, he goes; if feel like going to church, he goes. If he feels like identifying himself as European, he does; if he feels like identifying with Latino culture, he does. However, he does not want to be presented as a Jewish European, but as a European Jew.

Samuel realized that the war had ended when suddenly there was no more German in Lubeck, and French Jewish officials, along with American Joint, took them to France. He found his brother and sister. But when his brother came to visit him, no one knew what to say, because they were seven years without having seen each other. He lived from 1946 to 1957 in Western Europe. He went to live with an aunt and uncle, but did not accept the authority of anyone. After everything that happened, he lived 12 to 17 years as a hunted animal, he felt revolted. Samuel does not miss his homeland. After the war, he went several times there for work, and he had a family there. In 1955 he worked there almost a year. He had a health problem and went to the doctor, who told him that he had ulcers and should operate, but he sought a second opinion, who told him: “you are not sick, when you leave this country you will no longer have a problem.” He left there and had no further problems. For Brazil he has no patriotic spirit. At this point he never identifies with any country.

Samuel transmitted to their children a Jewish liberal education, he said that the important thing is question, not accepting. His family is not religious, but he wishes that future generations knew Judaism. He never wanted to talk about the Holocaust, but concluded that the worst is forgetting everything, as some say it did not exist. The memory must be kept alive in every possible way.

Moses, when the Russians bombed the city he was in, hid in a bunker and was saved. The *Haganah* (Israeli army in formation) took him to the hospital Rothschild in Vienna and then to *Bad Reichenhall* in Bavaria. From there he went to Munich, with the help of Unra and Joint (American organization supporting the Jewish survivors of war). In 1947 he moved to a town near Hanover, where they remained until 1950. His brother

and sister went to Israel in 1948 with the ship Exodus. His other sister went to the US, and Moses chose Brazil because the US would have to fight in the Korean War. He wanted to work, so a Jew began to help another.

Moses was told that his brothers were alive. He traveled and met them. He found an uncle who helped them, and together they went to their hometown, which was destroyed. In 1946, Moses and his brothers went to the city of *Bendzin*. They stayed in a kibbutz. There taught Hebrew, Judaism, to bring Jews to Israel. From March 1950 until the end of 1951 he lived in Munich, a Jewish neighborhood. In Argentina, Bolivia, Sao Paulo and *Porto Alegre*, when arrived he looked for the Jewish quarter, to see whether he felt there at home. In Brazil he worked in the factory of a Jew. The Jews who immigrated to Brazil after war were called “Grimberg”, like new. In 1960 he was naturalized and became Brazilian. On the Solemnity of the International Day in memory of the Holocaust, in *Porto Alegre*, as representative of the last survivors alive, said that all the suffering that was passed by Jews was only because of being Jew. And being Jew is fighting for life.

The Culture in Europe and in Brazil

Culture is a system of interrelationships between the individual, social and historical processes of collective behavior in a time frame that makes possible cultural products, which include artistic, daily, scientific, technological and folk demonstrations, that vary in each culture. The fact that human beings see the world through their culture has resulted in a tendency to consider their way of life as the most accurate and most natural. This trend, called ethnocentrism, is responsible for, in his extreme case, the occurrence of numerous social conflicts, like Nazism of Second World War, which led to the migration of Jews to other cultures (Noriega, Carvajal & Grubits, 2009).

In the city where Hana lived in Europe, there was a very large Jewish community and many synagogues. In school she had classes of German as a second language, although there has always been hatred between Germans and people of the nationality of Hana. Jews attended theaters and concerts, as this was part of the educational process in her country. The only thing she thanks her native country for is the education. In her hometown teaching was excellent, the knowledge in terms of art (theater, music, art) was of good quality and there was a rich cultural life.

In the same country of Hana, in another city, Moses' family also spoke Yiddish. He studied in a public school that had few Jews. Teachers and peers were anti-Semitic. Envy was strong, because the Jews were wealthier. The church started to spread anti-Semitism, from the viewpoint of Moses. The religion came first of everything. In his hometown all Jews were religious. A goy (non-Jew) could not go to the synagogue, Jews and non-Jews did not marry each other. They felt more Jews than Europeans. The Hasidic (religious Jews) were in command. They displayed charity without wanting anything in return, different than Brazil. After the war, Jews kept being killed.

Samuel was also born in a city with large and active Jewish community. His father was a store manager until 1933, when he was fired during the Hitler government. In 1938 his brother and sister went to a country in Western Europe, where his father's cousins were willing to stay with them, but Samuel was the youngest and too small to be sent. He ended up in a concentration camp.

Where Benjamin was born there were two Jewish communities. In his school he had no friends. There was a saying that reflects the culture of his country, “talking is silver, silence is gold.” If everyone knew how it was during World War II, there was no point in everyone whimpering. That's why he took so long to talk about his war experience. In his country culture was different from Brazil, the laws were followed.

Before Hana was born, her father was in Brazil. When he arrived in Brazil, the Brazilian anthem was played and a “black” took his hat and said to him stand up. His father was touched by his kindness, because if it was in Europe, he would have slapped him. Her father loved Brazil and soon adapted. After years of living there, after the first war, he returned to Europe and met her mother. After she was born her father always dreamed of returning to Brazil. Even in restaurants in Europe, the people said: “Jews undesirable.” The father immigrated in January 1939. The money that Hana's mother had saved was to buy the tickets and arranged to buy clothes to Brazil, because where they were there wasn't the habit of getting well dressed. Even in the theaters at night they dressed uniform. Hana, her sister and her mother arrived in August 1939 in Brazil. The

father was hired by a firm of a Jew, and was part of the Israelite Congregation, where they had Portuguese classes. Later, Hana went to college. She followed some habits of her native country, such as food.

Like Hana, Moses also heard that Brazil was paradise, but Jews had difficulty getting visas. So, he went first to Paris to get a visa for Bolivia, a country that was corrupt and gave easily visa, in his opinion. He arrived in La Paz and thought “where am I going?”, “Jew look for Jew.” His area of living was in the Jewish quarter. But then, Bolivia had a revolution every year, inflation was rampant, there was instability and corruption, and he spoke Yiddish, but not Spanish. Decades later got a visa for Brazil.

Benjamin immigrated twice and had no idea what it meant to go to South America, with another language and culture. One scale, from the ship, was in Rio de Janeiro, and when he saw Corcovado, he had the impression that he was saying “welcome and see all the beautiful things we offer”. On the scale of SP he already perceived the reality from Brazil, when he saw a victim of a fatal car accident. And in the scale in Porto Alegre he played football. So he went to the final destination, where he would live in Brazil. A first experience in South America, that contrasted with Europe, was bureaucracy. He also remembered the pension where he stayed and the owner of the pension spoke Yiddish, and the first meal was Nudelsuppe, but when questioned what was that, the owner of the pension said, “it is called like this all around the world, how come you do not know?” Demonstrating that despite the Jewish communities from the outside appear homogeneous, are heterogeneous with diverse food traditions, political orientations, religious, socioeconomic and educational classes, and various national origins. Even so, among the Jews, an ethnic bond is created (Blay, 2009).

Benjamin spoke no Yiddish, and after a year he already spoke Spanish. Since he got his first job, he tried to integrate socially and culturally in the community, but his mental confusion was increased by the difficulties of adapting to the new culture. So, he made friends with whom he had cultural traits in common. In his country of origin, sex was only for procreation, unlike Brazil. As had no Latin American citizenship, when he needed to leave the country to work, had to ask for a visa to return. He realized in these trips throughout Latin America, that the gap between rich and poor is huge and prejudice too. In 1969, when business went badly, he decided to move to Brazil, Porto Alegre, where he assumed the role of director of the company where he worked. Since he came to Brazil for work, he had to adapt. He had no option to like or dislike the country, as he had to work. He agreed to come to Brazil when he looked at the size of the country on the map. In the 1980s he was already “acclimated.” At that time, he only used his native language to write letters to his mother or to speak with friends of same nationality. He felt that Brazilians also have prejudices, but he learned to live with these. He does not understand the existence of different trends of Judaism in Porto Alegre, believing that unity is a strength. He noticed that inherited cultural facets of the family that hid him for longer in Europe.

Samuel was not happy after the war in Europe, and after years of working in a country in Western Europe he went to South America. He wanted to go to Uruguay, which until 1960 was called the Switzerland of South America for its economic stability and social policy. However the factory in which he worked in Europe, needed someone in Brazil, and he got the letter guaranteeing employment visa. In this firm people were Jewish. The barriers that he encountered were at work. But he adapted and felt repatriated. He used to speak Yiddish, before learned Portuguese. He came to work, but he is still working for living; unlike Europe, where he worked for 12 years and receives retirement. He sees this as one of defects of Brazil, but nowhere it is perfect, and the country was good for him and thinks he’s being right.

From survivor’s life’s histories, is evidenced that the acculturation process occurred gradually in the course of time. An example of this process refers to abandon Yiddish and adopted Portuguese. Although Jews have a defined identity, the survivors lived the process of acculturation abandoning some customs and habits that shaped the Jewish community in their homelands, and acquired other cultural elements in Brazil.

Discussion

After data were collected we could answer the following questions of the study: How were the differences and similarities that immigrants found in their integration in Brazil, compared to their ethnic context in Europe

before and during World War II? How did that influence their identity? How did their integration in the Brazilian cultural context take place, taking into account the processes of immigration and acculturation?

Anti-Semitism has gained force when, in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws changed the daily life of the Jews. They lost their citizenship and it was forbidden for them to relate to non-Jews. Jews who were persecuted by the government of their country, but who managed to immigrate, may be called refugees, as they sought to protect their life in other countries. Those who immigrated after war, no longer suffered persecution in their own country, at least not officially. They could be viewed as economic migrants, seeking better economic conditions because Europe was almost destroyed. In theory, they were considered citizens, and therefore, supposedly, have rights of protection. We noticed that in the history of the four survivors.

In the testimonies we could observe that during the pre-war Jewish identity was related to being religious, attend a synagogue, Jewish feast dates, and pray. This until begin the persecution when they were expelled from schools, being rejected by teachers and lost job opportunities, all because of prejudice against the Jewish identity.

Thus, during the war being Jewish was to have to flee, hide, be deported, confined to ghettos, having to wear David Stars, and having camps as their final destination. Being Jewish was starving, feeling cold, and losing family; being Jewish meant being near death.

Concepts of ethno-cultural or national subordination to hegemonic cultures prevailing in Nazi Europe were emptied. Brazil, for groups persecuted by prejudice, is the place of mixture and ambivalence, because even in an era where “bleaching” was present, many Jewish refugees were able to resume and strengthen individual identities and freely construct their identity in opposition to rigidity imposed by the Nazi regime. Even those who felt that being Jewish was just a part of their multiple identities, often being the smallest part, than, for example, being German (Schpun, 2011), were not spared. That is what happened to Samuel.

Given that the construction of social reality is mainly symbolic, in relation to the consciousness of the survivors as agents, of how they represent themselves and the world, does not mean that they live in full consciousness of its determinations, since everything that constrains themselves, delimits the field of possibilities to act and represent (Chartier, cited by Falcon, 2002).

When an immigrant lacking possessions and government support comes to a new country, the first need is to find a place to sleep, eat, and work. These steps should be addressed immediately, not wait days or weeks (Blay, 2009). The Jews came together, and contacted each other. To survive, immigrants needed community (Blay, 2009). If a Jew cannot adapt, he or she seeks a Jew who lives there. To solve the first problems, it was important to relate with other Jews, integrate themselves in the community, bridge to the establishment in the new country. After months, or years, another emergency presented itself: to build a family. The economic success could wait: finding a mate was priority (Blay, 2009), as noted in the history of the survivors.

After the war ended, all survivors, in different ways, kept their Jewish identity, but all of them, somehow, had their identities strongly influenced by the war experience. Being Jewish after war meant recommence, immigrate, doubt whether God existed, afraid of being Jewish, being guilty of having survived. Living with trauma, but also pursuing peace, fighting against war memories. It meant not having more family and having to get married to have a family again. It was to face trauma. It was trying to live and not just survive. It was waking up from a nightmare, but not having anywhere to go. It was about seeking help from other Jews, seeking work, trying “to be human again.” It was about change and not identifying with any place, not belonging anywhere.

Thus, Jewish identity in the Diaspora was transformed in all survivors. Hana and Moses feel Brazilian Jews. Already Benjamin and Samuel prefer to be viewed as European Jews. Lesser (2001) found that being a Brazilian Jew or a Jewish Brazilian is not the same thing; however, these two notions co-exist simultaneously, often in the same people. It shows that identity is always incomplete, open to change (Femenías, 2011), mainly influenced by culture.

The issue of education was considered a key part of this cultural group. Language is the main cultural code that allows communication between people. And from the ninth and tenth centuries, *Yiddish*, the language of the merged Hebrew, German and medieval Slavic languages, was the main language of communication of

Ashkenazi Jews, as realized in the survivors' stories. Yiddish is a language identified by some studies as part of Jewish identity for Jews coming from Central Europe, and the *ladino*, a language for Jews from Sefarad - region of Spain and Portugal. The language occupies a predominant place for a people scattered in the Diaspora (Barlach & Pezo, 2008).

The elements that represent the Jewish culture are diverse. In the new homeland Jews brought in their luggage cultural elements making explicit the desire they had to express and celebrate their rituals in the new space (Santos & Bezzi, 2009). So while immigrants bring with them habits and values of their home countries, they adopt transnational practices, merging the source with the Brazilian looking to recreate a familiar environment and deal with adjustment difficulties (Rial & Assunção, 2011).

The food tradition is very strong in Judaism, and the surviving immigrants brought their traditions when immigrated. Food is another expression of Jewish culture and identity, with grandmothers teaching grand-daughters, mothers and daughters gathered around a flavor and its own knowledge, distinguished and distinctive in the region to which they belong, but only because it pertains to the same people or know. There is a food for every occasion, linked to what one is celebrating: fried cakes in oil to commemorate the miracle of the oil (Chanuka, when the oil light lasted much longer); milk and honey for a sweet reminder of the grant of the boards of law to Moses; on Passover unleavened bread, as it is written in the bible, "will eat unleavened bread in a holy place" in memory of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt (Barlach & Pezo, 2008).

The difficulty of getting visa was due to concern about the ethnic formation in Brazil, permeated by the search for a national identity. Between the 1920 and 1940 Jews, and Japanese and Germans, were objects of study for the formulation of Brazilian ethnic type. The concern intensified in the 1930s with the advancement of racist and imperialist thought influenced by Nazism. Between 1819 and 1947, the country received about 4.9 million immigrants (Cruz, 2009; Kreutz, 2010).

The visas to immigrate to Brazil were obtained years later by Moses, Samuel and Benjamin. The transformation of Moses occurred in relation to language, because before learning Portuguese, he spoke Yiddish. In his native country, Jews could not have land, so most of Jews worked in commerce. In his country he was first Jew and then European. The *shtetl* was Hasidic. In Brazil he entered the Brazilian culture "normally". He was used to travel around the world and concluded that he had to fit in the place where he was. In *Porto Alegre* he went to the Jewish quarter, where there is a small community, and he has adapted because did not intend to be alone. In Brazil he feels like being Brazilian first and then Jew, and he thinks Brazilians consider all equal. He married and had children, and all lives according to Judaism. He feels anti-Semitism, but less than Europe because there are too many immigrants in Brazil. In Brazil people marry with people of different religions, different from his country of origin.

The four survivors married Jews. Marriage between Jews incorporated diverse experiences and values, such as those brought from countries of origin. This synthesis resulted in the new Brazilian Jewish families. The marriage between immigrants Jews took place, in most cases, with partners of their own ethnic group, with partners of the same national origin, who identified themselves because they followed the rules brought from the country of birth, which varied according to the customs and local ties with the Jewish religion. Behind these choices, they were sure to find a partner whose values and behaviors would be similar, if not identical, to the partner: compliance with religious rules, the organization of the home, children's education, communication in a common language (Blay, 2009). Weddings interethnic evidence that ethnicity also migrates and so ethno-cultural territories are produced, reproduced and mobilize with the migratory dynamics (Tedesco, 2011).

Final Thoughts

There is a growing interest by researchers about memories of Holocaust survivors and World War II, which occurs at a time when these traumatic events are no longer part of living memory. This interest in historical memories probably occurs because there is an acceleration of social and cultural changes that threaten identities, to separate what we are from what we were (Burke, 2005).

Besides of memory work, of rescue, giving voice to trauma, there is an effort of theoretical and critical elaboration about identities. There is an important statement that has much to do with the concept of psycho-

social identity: after the Holocaust, the recognition of Jews of their Jewish identity was great. If, before the Holocaust, to be accepted socially implied a denial Jewish identity, then change can be seen in proliferation of autobiographical publications of survivors after the Holocaust (Barlach & Pezo, 2008).

Surviving Jews migrated to another economic, political and social reality. Cultural identity, being a dynamic process is modified over time and in historical context, seen in assimilations of new customs and traditions in the new territory. The cultural aspect also undergoes transformations from one generation to another within the same culture. At the same time Jewish cultural identity was preserved through celebrations and rituals that were performed in Europe before immigrating and which are still held in Brazil, with some changes due to process of acculturation, which occurred over time.

As events recede in time, lose some of their specificity, memories start to fit in recurring general schemes of culture. Such schemes help perpetuate memories, but at the cost of distortion (Burke, 2005), which could be considered a limitation of studies with survivors of WWII, but not less important or necessary. After all, according to Burke (2005), we still live in an era of ethnic conflict. Therefore we cannot forget such conflicts, and memory plays a key role.

Thus war trauma in memory is based on a notion of confession in search of the truth of self (Telles, 2011), as seen in biographies of survivors. Perhaps by having borne the pain of war and immigration, they could not change, these four survivors did not die, as Almeida (2011) said: "What cannot be changed must be endured." War offers a lesson of darkness as a gift irreversible to death (Minh-ha, 2011). And escaping from death was not possible for 6 million Jews. So the guilt is so common among those who survived.

What interested us in this research is that testimony has an important social function: remember what happened, not forgetting to which group one belongs (Barlach & Pezo, 2008). And even more, giving visibility to what has been overlooked: the phenomenon of immigration.

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