

# Brands of Gender in the Jewish Immigration in Southern Brazil

Bruna Muhlen

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## Abstract

The research from this study aimed to open the way to be possible to tell the history of migration and the consequences of oppression and discrimination of the Jews who immigrated to southern Brazil, which in its migration process have a particular ritual acculturation, leading into account its importance in the formation of Brazilian society.

## *Index terms—*

## 1 Introduction

his study aims to investigate the identity, culture, and gender in the process of Jewish immigration in southern Brazil, from interviews already conducted with immigrants and descendants of Jewish immigrants, in the light of the geography of gender and feminist geography.

The research from this study aimed to open the way to be possible to tell the history of migration and the consequences of oppression and discrimination of the Jews who immigrated to southern Brazil, which in its migration process have a particular ritual acculturation, leading into account its importance in the formation of Brazilian society.

The social process of Jewish immigration in southern Brazil is a mosaic whose faces are written in each personal account. Such process is collective, though it is a sum of the parts of each immigrant experiences, of the emotions experienced in the departure and in the arrival and life in Brazil.

## 2 II.

## 3 The Jewish Immigration in Southern Brazil

Jewish immigration started from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to South America, specifically for the countries of Argentina and Brazil, showing similarities with regard to the occupation of space, since both had roots in colonization agriculture.

Jews have always suffered persecution. In Europe, more specifically in Russia, called pogromslooting and destruction of houses -are part of the memory of this ethnic group and emerges in situations of instability and violence ??Gutfreind, 2010). The consequence of the persecutions was the immigration process ??ICJMC, 1991). Thus, in 1891, in order to help Jews facing persecution, was founded the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA -called ICA) by Baron de Hirsch, to establish a methodical and orderly expatriation of Russian Jews.

Brazil was one of the countries chosen by the JCA. The beginning was made in the province of South Brazil, seen as suitable for the establishment of rural settlements, with fertile land for agriculture, which were purchased land for the creation of the Colony of Philippson, close to the city of Santa Maria, and the Author : E-mail : brunakm.psic@gmail.com colony of Quatro Irmãos, near of the city of Erechin (Cruz, 2009). The beginning of this settlement was in 1904, when the Colony of Philippson received the first immigrants (Gutfreind, 2009). Thus fleeing anti-Semitic persecution in Europe, besides that during the Second World War, Jews were under intense persecution and annihilation (Póvoa, 2005).

The JCA acquired firstly about 5,767 hectares of land, 25 km distant from Santa Maria city. Between the years 1904-1924, the JCA formed a second agricultural colony beyond Phillipson, the Colony of Quatro Irmãos. This colony was more successful, in that area, the settlers have shown a tendency for a better adaptation of Jewish social life. However, due to the philanthropic system of the JCA direction, unsuitable for the development of such company, and lack of stimulation, Quatro Irmãos settlers began to immigrate to the city, before they can form a layer of real farmers (Póvoa, 2005).

Immigrants have become disillusioned by the lack of attention of governments of Brazil, in particular in the South of Brazil, who does not follow the deal done with JCA. The ambition for a more comfortable life and the desire to achieve a better economic situation led the colonists to develop a small agricultural trade in the adjacent villages and abandon the farming, settling in cities like Porto Alegre, Santa Maria, Uruguaiana, Erechim, Pelotas and Passo Fundo (Póvoa, 2005).

In 1937, the Constitution said, about immigration, that the Union had the right to "limit or suspend, for economic or social reasons, the entry of individuals of certain races or origins, hearing the Board of Immigration and Colonization." After the end of the Second World War, the Law 7.967, in September 1945, said in Article 1 that "Every foreigner may enter Brazil provided it meets the conditions of this law" that were under Article 2 "the need to preserve and develop the ethnic composition of the population, the most convenient features of their European ancestry" (Zamberlam, 2004). In times of war, there was an anti-Jewish immigration policy in Brazil, inspired by Fascist Letters from Italy and Poland (Berdichewski, 2001).

In 1938, the decree-law 383 forbade the foreigners any political activity, under penalty of deportation, and in 1939 was required that newspapers and publications in foreign language publish its translation in the vernacular. This requirement was not fulfilled by Jewish newspapers. Already in 1941, was completely banned from publication in a foreign language and the two daily Yiddish were closed, never to reopen (Póvoa, 2005).

Discrimination affected all ethnic minorities, but especially hurt the Jewish social life, which was reduced to only activities permitted by law: the religious and charitable. In this period were also prohibited the activities of the Zionist Organization, the most dynamic, ideologically, the most representative of the Jewish community. The Jewish social life was reduced to its simplest expression (Lesser, 1995).

The progress of Jewish life was interrupted and immigrant Jews were spiritually inert until 1945. In 1946 new democratic tendencies manifested themselves in the country and strict laws were relaxed and Jewish life began to beat again in Brazil (Póvoa, 2005).

## 4 III. Geography of Gender and Feminist Geography

The Geography of Gender treats gender as a dimension of social life that should be incorporated into existing structures, in addition to examining the ways in which political processes, environmental and sociopolitical create, reproduce and transform places we live in and the social relations in which men and women live beyond expressions in space. In Jewish immigration from Europe to Brazil is in the geographic space that happens the social and gender construction, gender roles and gender relations are distinct in different territorial spaces, and differential experiences of space between men and women can be observed from a local scale -everyday space -until a global -international migratory movements (Martinez; Moya et al., 1995).

Already Feminist Geography are feminist research in geography that aim to mitigate inequalities based on gender in the short term and long term eradicate them through social change, seeking a transformation not only in the geography, but also in the way we live and work. Since geography is everywhere, the discussions between gender and spatiality are an interesting way to open our minds to this broad, rich and complex world (Martinez; Moya et al., 1995; Ornat, 2008).

The feminist point of view of the observer transpires in his growing sensitivity to centralize "gender" as a hierarchy category that stratifies all moments of the migration process for all those involved, men and women (Kosminsky, 2007).

When dealing with gender, we must avoid the fallacy that gender relates only to women, since gender is a relational category. So, always take as allusion to the relationship between women and men. Include gender as a mediator category in migration studies allows the researcher information of the causes, processes and consequences of international migration, allowing also an extension of the relationship between the local and the global. When gender is brought to the front of migration studies, several issues may arise, including, how women and men experience immigration differently and how this fact interferes in their integration and adaptation (Kosminsky, 2004).

Where as the world is structured around two poles, male and female, these gender roles would be reworked daily, demonstrating its instability characteristic, temporality and spatiality (Butler, 2003). These roles are supported by the enforcement to the bodies of the linearity of sex-gender-desire, because it is expected that bodies appointed as male or female play corresponding roles of masculinity and femininity, but sex goes far beyond a fact, is constructed culturally by the societies, and therefore changeable, variable, and open to change. And through cultural relationships and everyday interactions that sex becomes gender, from spatiotemporal specific constructions. Such relationship are explicable when associated to the set of ideas that a specific culture builds about what it is to be man or woman, a set of behaviors that are expected of people, differentiated in space and time (Ornat, 2008).

Conceptualizing "gender" as a process open to change denotes produce a more praxis-oriented perspective, in which gender identities, relations and ideologies are fluid and not fixed. Gender is a key factor that organizes social life, and has worked since the beginning of human existence: a fact that can not be said for most other laminating social forces, such as "class" and "race". However, "gender" can not be seen and analyzed in isolation. More than that, "gender" is dynamic and interacts with other lines of differentiation ("class", "race", "ethnicity", "generation", "sexual orientation"), taking into consideration that all these social differentiation understand power structures. These forces are social constructs and are therefore are not natural or innate characteristics

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categories. The gender geographical research permits look at gender operating in different aspects of migration ??Kosminsky, 2007).

Certain bodies have their identities indicated as different or marginal, and being related to particular spaces, while others are considered normal and often posing as neutral in the dominant discourse (Ornat, 2008). These perspectives extend the possibility of understanding of human migratory movements.

## 5 IV.

## 6 Acculturation

Each migration process implies in an action of acculturation, which can be defined as the process of exchange when groups and individuals from different ethnicities -in this case European Jews of different nationalities and Brazilians -undergo constant contact with each other, and consequently there are cultural changes in individuals (Mühlen; Dewes et al., 2010).

The concepts of gender relations are complementary to acculturation and needed to understand migrations, since being in a new geographical and cultural space causes having to acculturate and thus get rid of gender patterns of the culture of the country of origin. Thus, migration can act as a machine that encourages changes in cultural representations and attitudes relating to gender (Alencar-Rodrigues, Strey et al., 2009).

V.

## 7 Mobile Identity

The identity is a multidimensional process, which depends on the time that is conjugated, linking together the past, present and future, while they dissociate spaces, institutions and social category (Bastos, 2007).

Ethnic identity is the source of meaning and experience of a group. Which 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 it is a social construction that depends on the culture in which each person is inserted. Thus, identity is a continuous building process, remaining continuously unfinished ??Pedro, 2009).

## 8 VI.

## 9 Methodology

Because it is a documentary research, the starting point was the contact with the Jewish Cultural Institute Marc Chagall (ICJMC), in the city of Porto Alegre, which has a Department of memory which advocates the preservation of Jewish memory from interviews with immigrants who came from various European countries. Such interviews about immigration are archived in an Oral History Collection, for researchers interested in developing studies on this ethnic group have access to the Collection of ICJMC. Some of the interviews were selected and cataloged in the book of ICMJ "Life Stories -Jewish Immigration in Southern Brazil" Volume I (CHAGALL, 1991). Through the testimonies recorded in that catalogs, this work is based on.

All interviews have a Statement of Consent of Marc Chagall which is signed by each respondent who collaborated or collaborates with his testimony. All measures will be taken, as to care about information that might lead to the identification of respondents, to ensure confidentiality.

## 10 VII.

## 11 Testimonials

Taking into account the ways in which political processes, environmental and sociopolitical create, reproduce and transform places we live in and the social relations in which men and women live, according to the Geography of Gender, here are some testimonials from immigrants and descendants of immigrants on the difficulties in the immigration process:

-"(...) A few years passed and I along with a group of mates (...) we managed to restore the cemetery Philippon (...). Including my father's grave is there. (...). It was a tribute thus a way for us to thank our parents, our grandparents, what they did for us, the problems they have passed, when they came from Europe to the lands completely unknown. "-Son of Russian immigrants.

Being Jewish ethnicities the set of branches of the Jewish community, considering the culture and the countries where they were settled, due to temporal and spatial factors, in addition to mixing and interpreting religious and philosophical, usually every community has different traditions of a group to other. The boundaries of ethnic identities can become more flexible or more rigid in the process of immigration (Poutignat; Streiff-Fenart, 1998), as in the following statement:

-"(...) That situation of being half Jew and half German began to hinder my life here in Brazil ... Led me, arrested me, put me in a field, not concentration, but illegal ... "-German, immigrated to Brazil in 1941.

The Jewish ethnicity discrimination, anti-Semitism, has its origin in the early days of human history, Jews were never considered socially desirable in Brazil during the WWII (Camati, 2009), as noted in the cut below:

163 -"I talked to a Jew who lives in Brazil. He was in the war in Russia and he managed to get out of Russia  
164 ... That was in 1941 ... And just in time to come, he was vetoed, not let him go because he was Jewish.  
165 Discrimination was very strong at the time of WWII in Brazil. He has the document that was written that he  
166 could not enter because he was Jew. "-Son of immigrants.

167 In Germany discriminatory social representations were produced by Nazi society around the Jewish ethnicity  
168 (Tedesco, 2011). And it is in reference to psychological and biological factors that it is the most primitive impulse  
169 to reject the other. The politics of intolerance is responsible for anti-Semitism, fascism, communism, Nazism and  
170 all other totalitarisms of the twentieth century (Camati, 2009), as noted in the speech of Argentine immigrant:

171 -"The German colony accepted Nazism and the ideas of Nazism. And in Porto Alegre happened a parade of  
172 boys with swastika. There were interventions of the German consul and often the Globe Magazine was seized by  
173 fascist matters, at the request of the German embassy or Italian. "-Argentinean, immigrated in 1921 to Santa  
174 Maria.

175 Jews lived centuries in Europe and did everything to integrate into the local culture, learning the language of  
176 the country in which they were installed, leading to rapid social mobility, resulting in significant contributions to  
177 the cultural and scientific life to the societies in which they were inserted (Laqueur, 2007). In Brazil had to go  
178 through a new process of acculturation in a different cultural context, as we see in the stories below:

179 -"In Europe he (father) had nothing, had a dirt floor house and when he came here from Europe, he went to  
180 work looking for sowing, because the ICA provided seeds. But he alone could do nothing, he depended on the  
181 natives and it was very hard for him, because he did not know the language ... "-A daughter of immigrants.

182 -"On the ship (...) I learned every day a hundred words, from the Hungarian to Portuguese (...)" -Romanian  
183 immigrant arrived in 1942 in Brazil.

184 -"My father-in-law was in a concentration camp, and my husband went to Rio de Janeiro and asked crying  
185 for a visa (...). Then one of those great men said: 'Then give to this Jew, too, the visa' (...) He (the father of  
186 the respondent) was a super-German, said had no need to emigrate, that Hitler will take a few months and then  
187 disappears and democracy comes back as he was used to (...) "-German Immigrant.

188 In Europe, even before the Nazis, the Jews have suffered persecution:

189 -"The Jew, by the history that everyone knows, suffered persecution since the days of Egypt, then the Jews  
190 knew that the wealth they could carry was the culture, was a profession ...". -Son of immigrants.

191 The rise of Nazism provided a model for anti-Semitism -negative stereotypical conceptions about Jews (Lesser,  
192 1995). In 1933, the Nazis, newly elected, organized a one-day boycott to all shops and businesses belonging to  
193 Jews in Germany:

194 -"On the 1st of April was a special day, all Jewish homes, Jewish shops, Jewish offices, etc ... had a man  
195 charged with a sign: 'Here do not buy, because the owner is Jew. (?) On July 30, I had lost my job (...).  
196 Naturally, it was relatively easy to resolve to leave that country, restricted from activities, always with a certain  
197 life-threatening because they were always a bit more aggressive than in the beginning ... "-German, immigrated  
198 to Brazil in 1933.

199 When they arrived at the camps, Jewish prisoners were divided into groups. The considered too weak to work  
200 were immediately killed in the gas chambers (disguised as showers) and their bodies burned, while others were  
201 assigned to labor camps where they were used as slaves, then killed by Nazis or by hunger ( Finkelstein, 2001),  
202 as almost died the Polish immigrant:

203 -"(...) What fed me is that I was in a wagon with hundreds of prisoners and this wagon was walking as if we  
204 were cattle, and people were dying. They were piling one dead on top of another, and in a corner of the wagon,  
205 had a small window and as it was raining, I put my hand and licked my hand, and this was my food. "-Polish  
206 who underwent concentration camps.

207 Being Jewish is not bounded by national origin. Jewish identity is primarily a cultural legacy that, despite  
208 saving a certain relationship with the Jewish religion is not bounded by it (Neto, 2008), as is perceived in the  
209 the testimony of a Romanian immigrant:

210 -"The colony was large, the Jews lived very well, on Saturday all closed their houses, went to Shil (Synagogue),  
211 like in Europe. (...) "-Romanian, immigrated to Quatro Irmãos with his family.

212 -"? then we got there (agricultural colonies of ICA), stopped there in that place, had great home, immigrants  
213 descended and women in a house, men in another house..." -Russian Immigrant arrived in Brazil in 1913.

214 The concepts of femininity and masculinity can take on different meanings in different cultures and may be  
215 different within the same ethnic group. Immigrant women find themselves further discriminated by a threefold  
216 condition of women, immigrants and workers (Martinez;Moya et al., 1995) as in the report below:

217 -"I was once asked: Your husband is sick? And I said: -No, why? -Because you're working. And I debated:  
218 -Need my husband dying for me to work? "-

219 Below can be observed that gender can not be thought of in isolation, because gender interacts with other  
220 axes that are also determinants, as the issue of social class:

221 -"Sometimes we had too much food, sometimes less, but all worked and we were looking to live. Until 1939  
222 that came the Second World War. (...) If I had not survived, the name (family) would have disappeared, because  
223 not one of my brothers -(...)nobody, nobody survived! "-Polish, immigrated to Porto Alegre in 1948.

224 Migration boost transformations of cultural representations and attitudes relating to gender, as happened

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with the granddaughter of immigrants, already acculturated (as before were just mothers, today fathers are increasingly present):

- "I worked in Jewish college, was circle of parents and teachers, but at that time was only mothers ..." -Brazilian and granddaughter of settlers Philippon. Usually a migrant leaves his country looking for a better life, as reports a Polish immigrant:

- "(...) The ICA gave everything. What would we lose? Work there and work here, then, as the Bible says,

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Brands of Gender in the Jewish Immigration in Southern Brazil when you change your place will get lucky, who knows? "-Polish Immigrant.

The Nazis bet in the people disbelief when people get to know the facts (mass crimes). Were sure that no one would believe that humans would be capable of committing such atrocities, was the "unimaginability" of the Holocaust, its improbability (SANTANA, 2008), as well reports the following interviewee:

Immigration can take the challenge of patriarchal culture when we see the issues of gender relations ??Kosminsky, 2007). As we note in the reports of the following immigrants: VIII.

## 14 Discussion

Interesting to note the differences and similarities in the process of immigration since despite being immigrants of the same ethnic group, came from different European countries and at different times. This makes the process of acculturation of each immigrant unique with particular characteristics.

Normally, a migrant leaves his country voluntarily seeking a better life, which has not happened in the case of the immigrants from this study. It was the case of the first Jewish immigrants in southern Brazil, which came with the ICA, at the beginning of the last century. However, those who immigrated because of World War II, because it is people persecuted for reasons of religion that could not go back home, can be configured as refugees.

Interesting to note that regardless of where they came from and when they immigrated, all immigrants went through difficulties. Including children and grandchildren recognize that somehow they are crossed by the experiences of their ancestors.

Also interesting to note that these immigrants and descendants were modified by external causes. In Europe, when they were victims of persecution and had to immigrate; and in Brazil, where they had difficulties to get visa and even run the risk of being placed in camps because they were Germans Jews and there were policies against the entry of certain races , as provided in the constitution of 1937.

On gender issues, in Brazil in 1913, women went to a house and men to another, to reach the agricultural colony where they would live. Already in Poland before the war in 1939, men and women worked to have food at home. And even recently, Brazilian and granddaughter of settlers experienced situations where Jewish meetings at school, they were for mothers and fathers, but only women participated. In contrast, an immigrant woman to be seen working in Brazil was asked if her husband was ill, implying that for a woman to work (outside the home) only if the man is very ill.

Fortunately, in Brazil, there is growing awareness of gender equality, as realized in the case of meetings of mothers and fathers are actually for men and women, and that work can also be for men and women. That means, independent of issues of space and origin of immigrants, over time, men are gradually assuming roles that were once considered feminine, such as exercise care of a son or a daughter, and women are playing roles that were considered masculine, working outside the home.

## 15 IX.

## 16 Final Thoughts

Knowing the history of European Jewish immigrants who arrived in South Brazil is necessary, considering that it is one of the ethnic groups that enrich the cultural heritage of Brazilian society.

The value of the Jews to the society who welcomed them is extremely important, because there are few descendants of those immigrants who work in areas of high technology and knowledge in Brazil. As well reported Póvoa (2005) Jews play the role of a Brazilian citizen, but preserve their identity.

As already noted Kominsky (2004), the comparison of immigrants from Europe who settled in particular ways in the same society demonstrated the plasticity of the acculturation process of immigrants in all its richness and variety, and unique aspects of receiving society, in the case of Brazil.

Understanding the path traveled by the civilizations that built our history, that contributed to the ethnic rebuilding of Brazil, from the perspective of gender was and is in this work of fundamental importance, because showed that gender is not only an identity or roles we learned in childhood, but something in continuous movement, influenced by the cultural context.

281 Finally, professionals -from psychologists to geographers -who are aware of notions of gender and acculturation  
282 may be more able to make interventions in the immigrant population.

283 Researches in gender Geography have sought to understand the methodological issues related to identity,  
284 culture, spatiality. And that research on Jewish immigration is a contribution to this still new and new area  
285 of geography, but historically old, since gender issues have always existed. Finally, extend the possibilities of  
286 realizing the rich diversity of the various ethnic groups that exist in Brazil, and the world, in the light of gender  
theories.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: F

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