

# Staging the Jewish bourgeois home

Women as consumers and producers of diverse public spaces in Stockholm at the beginning of the twentieth century

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**ABSTRACT** • This article explores the relationship between the domestic position of Jewish bourgeois housewives and the larger Swedish, urban landscape at the beginning of the twentieth century. Examining the interior décor, shopping patterns, urban places, and the social, cultural and religious aspects of the domestic spheres of Irene Strauss and Jeannette Ettlinger, this article argues that they consciously used public spaces to establish their individual practices of Jewishness. By entering the gendered space of the Jewish home, accessible through private letters and receipts, this article portrays the bourgeois women as actors with social and economic power. They produced public spaces that communicated either cultural integration or orthodox distinctiveness, thereby constructing diverse strategies for Swedish belonging. These strategies demonstrate the growing religious, social and cultural diversity within the Jewish community in Stockholm during the last three decades before the Second World War.

## Introduction

The last weeks of January 1917 were busy for Irene Strauss. Over five consecutive weekdays, she visited shops across Stockholm's city centre, searching for kitchen utensils, interior décor and tableware for her new home in Sweden. Åkerholmska bosättningsmagasinet on Sibyllegatan 9 was a favourite, setting her up with white porcelain plates, cups, egg cups, pie dishes, coffee pots of different sizes and three salad bowls. Some of the tableware was from the popular 'Boston' series from the local porcelain factory, Rörstrand, its side dishes and bowls decorated with blue garlands around the edges. The locally famous shop AB Julius Slöör järnaffär, recently refitted to accommodate modern display windows at Järntorget in Old Town (Gamla Stan), was another popular

destination. Two visits to the shop provided Irene's kitchen with, for example, saucepans, frying pans, cutlery and chamber pots for the total sum of 80.77 *kronor*. The coming months continued to see Irene and her husband Julius accumulate many purchases. Settling in Sweden as a newly-wed Jewish bourgeois couple from Germany and Austria-Hungary, they filled their first apartment on Kungsgatan 3 with stylistic items for both practical and social reasons. Furniture and décor from local stores were thus personally chosen and transported to the new home, together constituting a domestic, physical stage, through which the couple could publicly perform their social, economic and cultural belonging to invited guests.

Irene's role in constructing and linking the family's domestic space with the



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outer, public world was indispensable. As this article will argue, the Jewish, bourgeois housewife in Stockholm was an active agent in turning her household into a setting for communal and public events, giving it a function beyond its traditional domestic use. While adding further strength to the budding Nordic scholarship on the important, but often neglected, role of women in modern Scandinavian Jewish communal life from as early as the 1860s up to the 1940s (Boijesen 2004–5: 141–5; Banik and Ekholm 2019; Hultman 2019: 17–20; Thor Tureby 2019), this article will reveal the potency of studying gendered spaces, such as the Jewish home. By exploring the ways Irene Strauss and her fellow community member Jeannette Ettlinger constructed public, bourgeois homes in Stockholm at the beginning of the twentieth century, this article is able to discover and investigate the performance of diverse and individual versions of Jewishness<sup>1</sup> encouraged within and through the gendered, domestic space.

### Finding Jewish women in public spaces

Religion often segregates and shapes women's relationship with public places, but geographical studies on female religiosity have still largely ignored gendered, non-neutral

spaces (Morin and Guelke 2007). In the Judaic example, women are traditionally exempt from the practice of daily prayers in the synagogue and the study of Torah in Beit Midrash, their religious duties being located in the home. The Reform movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries discussed the elevation of women's status in the community, and while their roles were continuously connected to domestic life, mixed choirs were introduced in the synagogue, and women could assume authoritative, public roles through philanthropic activities (Baskin 2010). Clearly, the Jewish woman's experience of the geographical aspects of Judaism did not belong only to the domestic sphere.

Still, the home itself functioned not simply as a domestic space for familial activities. Marion Kaplan's seminal work shows that German Jewish, bourgeois housewives used their homes to pass on Jewish traditions to the next generation. She states that the mothers' religious role offered 'a measure of social power that they could achieve nowhere else' (Kaplan 1991: 78). The present article, however, argues that Jewish, female roles in the gendered, domestic sphere also dictated women's experience of the city. As the importance of the market for consumer goods increased at the beginning of the twentieth century, the department store became a way for women from both the upper class and the increasing upper-middle class to enter the public arena without a chaperone (Husz 2004: 109–22). Filled with commodities from the store, the living rooms, sitting rooms and salons in the homes of the bourgeoisie also became public spaces with social functions (Salmi 2008: 73–5), closely related to the world outside the threshold. The bourgeois home thus also functioned as an arena for the display and performance of one's cultural, religious and social belongings (Frykman and Löfgren 1979: 105).

1 David Biale has conceptualised 'Jewishness' as historical, local and temporal expressions of culture, produced through the absorption of local customs from the non-Jewish environment, and practiced with the consequential bend of some Talmudic laws (Biale 1994: 41–5; Biale 2002: xvii–xxvi). Although Moshe Rosman argues that this 'multiperspectivism' only replaces the former master-narrative, thus defeating the purpose of the postmodern, constructivist approach (Rosman 2007: 16–18), the flexible concept of Jewishness allows for various Jewish practices and perspectives on the world to exist at the same time.

The bourgeois lifestyle was used by Scandinavian Jewish individuals as a strategy for social mobility and national belonging (Kuritzén Löwengart 2017: 189–99; Banik and Ekholm 2019; Hultman 2020). Reflecting the intrinsic values of the bourgeoisie, the non-working housewife was therefore continuously promoted within the Jewish upper-middle and middle classes in the period before the Second World War, although the trend was declining among the general population in Stockholm (Bredfeldt 2008: 110–14; Schön 2012: 201–5). Consisting of approximately 2,600 individuals in 1910, the Jewish community in Stockholm was at this time becoming increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse. Individuals from socially established Jewish families, who had arrived from Denmark and today's Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, were still chosen as communal leaders in the Reform-associated Mosaic Congregation, but religious, social and economic differences existed among both its members and the Eastern European Jewish immigrants that had started to arrive to Sweden in the 1860s. Whether Reform or religiously traditional, bourgeois families were particularly influential in the establishment of permanent educational venues and religious places that promoted different versions of Jewishness, thus aiding the public performance of Jewish diversity in Stockholm's cityscape (Hultman 2019).

The Jewish process of constructing and performing one's belonging has been conceptualised in the 'corporeal turn' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2005) and the 'spatial turn' (Mann 2012) in Jewish studies at the turn of the twenty-first century, focusing on the history of the Jewish body and its relationship with material surroundings. Arguing that the image of Jews as 'People of the Book' was consciously constructed by Jewish communities in the eighteenth century amidst socio-political discussions on religious primitiveness, Howard

Eilberg-Schwartz (1992: 1–15) calls for studies exploring the experiences of Jews not partaking in privileged, textual activities. Performative studies do indeed use the corporeal aspect to mainly investigate the body's contradictory movements against societal norms, executing a practice of power through staged performances in the public landscape (Diamond 1996; Sennet 1996: 24). While studies on Jewish women have explored resistant performances against 'the master narrative's presumption of the uniformity of the experience of Jews in modern Europe' (Hyman 2002: 154), the links between Jewish female movements in the urban landscape, and their vital and socially powerful role in the domestic space of the home, remain rather unexplored. Yi-Fu Tuan argues that it is the human being's innate need to find personal validation in their physical surroundings, and he shows that the material organisation of a home, such as the choice and position of furniture, is a micro-reflection of a person's 'geometric personality' (Tuan 2011: 17), just as bodily movements in the urban landscape reflect a person's intentions (de Certeau 1993: 128; Amato 2004: 16).

Clearly, Jewish bourgeois women's creation of their homes was closely related to the outer world, and together with urban performances, it reflected their personal and familial belongings. This article explores the homes and urban movements of two bourgeois Jewish families between the 1910s and the 1930s: the orthodox home of Jeannette Ettlinger, and the less religious home of Irene Strauss. Jeannette and Irene were responsible for two households with unique social and economic wealth within the Jewish community. This examination should, therefore, not be understood as a general blueprint for Jewish women's experience of the urban space. It is rather an attempt at understanding the relationship between the Jewish bourgeois housewife's role in the domestic sphere and her movements in the cityscape.

Personal letters, business correspondence, and rental agreements in Jeannette's husband Jacob Ettlinger's personal archive at Riksarkivet, and over 500 receipts from Irene and Julius Strauss's record at the archive of Stockholm stadsmuseum<sup>2</sup> reveal how the two women used their apartments in central Stockholm to construct settings that held and initiated different performances of Jewishness. In accordance with the newly established 'economic turn' in Jewish studies, which examines economic activities in relation to religious and cultural aspects (Reuveni and Wobick-Segev 2011: 1–8), this article views Irene Strauss and Jeannette Ettlinger as both producers and consumers of individually constructed Jewish, bourgeois belongings. Their economic and cultural actions were performed in a period of comparative national economic growth. Although Sweden experienced financial crises in 1921 and 1931, the nation developed methods for industrial standardisation, rationalisation and mechanisation, which together with structural efficiency, strong exports, decreasing national debts, and monetary policies aided its quick recovery from the effects of the First World War and the Great Depression (Schön 2012: 168–90, 212–24). This article examines Irene's and Jeannette's different understandings of Jewishness through their material and cultural production and consumption (Reuveni 2017: 189) in the increasingly modern and economically healthy city of Stockholm. It reveals the potential social, religious and economic agency extended to Jewish bourgeois women, and provides two examples of the increasing presence of individual practices of Jewishness, and thus diversity, in the Jewish community in Stockholm at the beginning of the twentieth century.

2 All receipts used for this study are stored in volume 46: Strauss, Varia, Stockholm stadsmuseums arkiv (henceforward referred to as SSMA).

## Producing individual versions of the Jewish bourgeois home

Irene Grossman (1886–1956) was born in Vienna, and married Giessen-born Julius Strauss (1883–1939) in Stockholm in 1916. Their sons Bertil (1917–1963) and Kurt (1920–1999) were born soon afterwards. The family quickly established a bourgeois home in Östermalm, the eastern, modern district of Stockholm. They bought, for example, kitchenware, tableware, furniture, clothes, a bicycle, an electric vacuum cleaner, a radio, a gramophone and a motorboat. Julius Strauss worked in the upper trade sector and was a member of the Mosaic Congregation. The congregation's membership fee was based on income, and the Strauss family paid 804 *kronor* in 1939, making them a part of the richest top 4 per cent of the Jewish community's taxed members.

Irene and Julius Strauss moved to Jungfrugatan 6 in 1919. The building was constructed in 1907, and although Östermalm was inhabited by both affluent people and the working class up until the 1930s, this new apartment building was modern and fashionable. One of the family's earlier homes had boasted six bedrooms, leading to the conclusion that the new apartment must have been either of equal size, or bigger. In the building's entrance floor, the walls were coated in marble and the lift was fashioned with intricate iron patterns. The apartments were decorated with French double doors, wooden floors in exquisite patterns, wainscot panels, cornices and a fireplace.<sup>3</sup>

Irene systematically filled their home with new furniture and décor. Some pieces were brought from previous homes, such as an antique fur, armchairs and sofas, acquired

3 'Sjöhästen 4', *stermalm I: Byggnadsinventering* (1973), Stockholm stadsarkiv (henceforward referred to as SSA).

from A. F. Hellqvist in Nässjö and transported to Stockholm at the beginning of 1917. In the succeeding years, a washbasin was changed, a vacuum cleaner was bought, curtains were assembled, a chest of drawers was repainted, and another was varnished. Some ten years after the couple's wedding, new sets of wine glasses, glassware, plates, tea pots, jars and cutlery replaced their old ones. At the end of the 1920s, the family acquired at least six new electric lamps, several floor clocks, a new gas stove, a radiator, silver cutlery, table silver and furniture for Julius's gentlemen's room. The apartment was redecorated with new wallpaper throughout, picture frames were repaired, and new curtains, new bedroom furniture and a desk in varnished pine were added to the property. The house was decorated with Irene's individually chosen combination of wallpaper, paintings, photographs, plants, cabinets with ornaments and heavy curtains (Crossick and Haupt 1997: 94; Massey 2013: 16), displaying her embrace of the general bourgeois trend. The emphasis on Julius's social quarters, as well as the acquisition of silverware, wallpaper, painting frames and curtains, attests to the public function of the apartment. They would have cluttered the walls and cabinets in the drawing-room and the salon in a warm and welcoming manner, following the 'Oscarian' design of the Swedish bourgeois home (Frykman and Löfgren 1979: 110–11). The furniture and items were carefully chosen and, in time, replaced to keep up with the latest fashion. As a bourgeois housewife in Sweden, Irene, therefore, used the stage that her domestic domain offered to produce the family's intended social belonging for visitors to see.

Although the receipts do not reveal who visited the Strauss apartment, they suggest that guests were well treated. Julius regularly bought strawberry marmalade from the local seller, AB Helgot Berg, and a monthly ration of cigars, and he stocked the wine cellar with port wine,

madeira, punch, cognac, whisky, Cointreau and imported wine from Wachenheim – a German district close to his birth city of Giessen. The visitors were entertained with music on the gramophone, or the new and innovative radio. Carefully chosen books and journals were probably placed in the social areas of the flat for all to see and occasionally flicker through. The records show that the family acquired the journal *Scenen* on theatrical and musical productions, and had yearly subscriptions to the local newspapers *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, journals belonging to temperance and non-profit aid societies, and a book bought from AB Bok- & pappershandel avd. för kyrklig konst.

The receipts clearly show that the family's association with the Swedish bourgeois culture was much stronger than their emphasis on Jewishness. A 'Christmas rug' was, for example, obtained from the interior design company AB Robert Ditzinger. Similarly, 1.25 kg of pork was ordered in February 1918, despite (or because) it was not kosher, and one-year-old Bertil won recognition in *Aftonbladet* for his contribution of a 'painting' to the company's Christmas fundraiser that same year. Since Hanukkah took place at the end of November in 1920, the ham accompanying the order of sweets, chocolate, coffee, cheese and butter from the department store Nordiska kompaniet on 14 December – the mixture of dairy and meat products once again contradicting *kasbrut* laws – was acquired for a seemingly rapturous Christmas celebration.

The Strauss family consciously chose the materials on display and foods consumed in their home, aiming to perform their bourgeois and Swedish belonging, and downplay Jewish traditions, to visitors welcomed to Jungfrugatan 6. While still paying members of the Mosaic Congregation, and thus clearly defining themselves as Jews, they emphasised other belongings in their home. The entertainment and

intellectual sources available in the house, furthermore, displayed the family's knowledge of the social and cultural landscape in Stockholm. The temperance society, a social movement against the consumption of alcohol, developed and run by nonconformist evangelical movements, had a pivotal role in social and civic changes in the country at the turn of the twentieth century. Involving about 20 per cent of the Swedish adult population, they promoted study circles, health activities and sport events, teaming up with the labour movement to foster the developing national identity of 'the conscientious worker' (Blocker, Fahey and Tyrrell 2003: 603–5). Although Julius's orders of wine and spirits suggest that he did not endorse alcoholic abstinence, the journal subscription might have piqued his interest and it definitely communicated the couple's engagement with the Swedish national identity to visitors. The Swedish radio station was, furthermore, established in 1925, and 40,000 people listened to the first broadcasts that same year (Radiofakta 2017). Positioning themselves at the forefront of modern cultural consumption, the couple bought a radio in 1924, and paid for their first radio license in 1925. Since the individually chosen combination of objects for visual display in the bourgeois home was designed to invite like-minded people to discuss their meaning (Grier 2010: 96), the public space in the Strauss home was constructed for a non-Jewish or culturally integrated Jewish audience, its national and cultural elements aimed at finding common ground with their Swedish visitors.

Leora Auslander (2009: 55–7) argues that the Jewish bourgeoisie in Germany before the Second World War, defined by their non-Jewish environment and encouraged by Judaism's sensibility to senses, time, home and the material world, produced a Jewish bourgeois 'subculture' within the nation. The Strauss family's Jewishness had, similarly, no

religious connotations. Traditional customs, like the keeping of *kashrut*, were abandoned. Instead, they engaged in – and performed according to – the social, national and cultural aspects of their urban locality. The Jewish 'subcultural' notion of their bourgeois practices within the home is, however, not accentuated with the sources available, since the identities of the family's visitors remain unknown. Other Jewish couples used dinners to invite friends and acquaintances from the local elite. The parents of Josef Sachs, one of the creators of the department store Nordiska kompaniet, organised, for example, cultural evenings for over sixty Jewish and non-Jewish guests every other week at the end of the nineteenth century (Sachs 1949: 29–32). Although the wealthiest Jewish families in Stockholm at the turn of the twentieth century were relationally and economically intertwined, they were also friends and business colleagues with non-Jewish individuals.<sup>4</sup> The identities of the Strauss family's visitors can, therefore, not be assumed, but if the décor of their home reflected the type of guests they had, Irene and Julius might have welcomed bourgeois, Christian or religiously and culturally integrated Jewish individuals.

In contrast, Jeannette Ettliger's bourgeois home was constructed to fit a bourgeois, Jewish orthodox subculture. She was born as Jeannette Philip (1881–1956) in Copenhagen, and married German-born Jacob Ettliger (1880–1952) in 1917. The couple settled in Stockholm and welcomed their three children Camilla (1918–2002), Ruth (1920–2009) and Joseph (1923–1986). Jeannette kept a traditional home, inviting Jews for kosher-prepared meals. Her husband was chairman of the orthodox synagogue Adat Jisrael. He established the

4 Mia Kuritzen Löwengart's work (2017: 187–98), for example, portrays the social networks surrounding the construction of the Concert Hall.

company AB Metall & bergprodukter and became a successful businessman (Carlsson 2014: 168–71); his taxed membership for the Mosaic Congregation, amounting to 1,068 *kronor* in 1939, shows that he was one of the richest men in the community. The Ettliger family home was located at Östermalmsgatan 7. The district had recently been redeveloped by the city's municipal authorities, following the city planner Albert Lindhagen's ideas of a spacious, clean city with broad, tree-lined avenues surrounded by buildings, which invited the flow of natural light into the apartments (Eriksson 2004: 51–60). The 1840s saw the creation of the park Humlegården, and over the following seventy years Villastaden was constructed with exclusive villas at the northern tip of the park. Living on Östermalmsgatan, the Ettliger family therefore established their home in a very modern district of the city, in a flat that demonstrated their affluence.

The rental agreement from 1 October 1934 shows that the flat was a modern, luxurious apartment with twelve rooms, including kitchen, bathroom, pantry, butlery and an attic office.<sup>5</sup> Built in 1913, this flat was one of the biggest in the building, and the decoration included wainscot panels, cornices, tile stoves, French double doors and a lift with forged iron patterns.<sup>6</sup> The flat was heated from 15 September to 15 May, and had access to hot water between 1 September and 1 June. It was fitted with a stainless-steel kitchen sink, as well as a bathtub and ceramic floor in the bathroom in 1938, all in line with the latest fashion. The apartment was furthermore furnished according to the bourgeois style with a concert piano, heavy furniture, draped curtains

5 Rental agreement from 1 Oct 1934, SE/RA/720483/1/1, Jakob Ettliger's arkiv, Riksarkivet (henceforward referred to as JEA).

6 'Lövsångaren,' *Building Inventory: Östermalm IV* (1984), SSA.

and endless bookshelves (Massey 2013: 16; Grier 2010: 94).<sup>7</sup> Based in this modern flat in northern Stockholm, Jacob is said to have walked the almost four kilometres to Adat Jisrael on Södermalm every morning to perform the daily prayers (Carlsson 2014: 171). Living closer to the orthodox synagogue, and thus being able to follow the *shabbat* rules of public movement more easily, was apparently not an option; residing in a city district that corresponded to their social status was deemed more important.

The Ettliger family, however, invited thousands of Jews from 1917 to 1952 to enjoy their kosher kitchen (Carlsson 2004: 170–1). For example, when replying to a business colleague, the Dutch Jew Ben Heimans, who asked for help to find a hotel serving kosher food in Stockholm, Jacob generously wrote in 1933, that 'I keep a kosher home myself, and if you would give me the honour, I would be happy to greet you as my guest on Friday evening and *shabbat*.'<sup>8</sup> In her letters, written to Jacob when he was abroad on business trips, Jeannette described her social plans for the family's weekly *shabbat* dinners. While the table was almost always visited by Jewish individuals from Jacob's international network,<sup>9</sup> members of their local Jewish circle were also frequent guests. For example, she wrote on 10 September 1930 that on 'Friday afternoon, we will have quite a few people over',<sup>10</sup> listing, among others, the Mazur, Weissenberger and Friedmann families – some of them members of Adat Jisrael. Illustrating the relative cohesiveness of Adat

7 Interview with Per Hollander, 8 Nov 2017 (henceforward referred to as Hollander).

8 Letter from Ben Heimans to Jacob Ettliger, 4 Apr 1933, SE/RA/720483/3/2, JEA. My translation from German.

9 Hollander.

10 Letter from Jeannette Ettliger to Jacob Ettliger, 10 Sept 1930, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from German.

Jisrael's members, she added that 'I probably also have to invite the Borodheims'.

Apart from showing great hospitality to fellow, local and international kosher-keeping Jews, both Jeannette and Jacob were heavily involved in providing the orthodox Jewish community in Stockholm with kosher products and ritual facilities. They tried to procure kosher sugar from the continent in 1933, corresponding with the company Svenska sockerfabriken and the chief rabbi in Copenhagen.<sup>11</sup> While Jeannette wrote the initial letter to the Swedish company, Jacob continued the ensuing discussions, probably because of his in-depth knowledge of trade. The couple asked to buy as little as 20 kilograms, as only a few families were interested in the sugar. That they still found the dedication and energy to fight for such a small amount of sugar shows how important the keeping of *kasbrut* was for them. The records are, unfortunately, silent on the couple's success at procuring kosher sugar.

Jeannette was further concerned about the community's collective keeping of *kasbrut*. Although her kitchen maid cooked all of the family's kosher food, Jeannette was pivotal in the continued existence of residential kosher kitchens across Stockholm. Before Pesach, she invited Jewish wives into her kitchen to *kasber* their cooking utilities, the act of making items ritually clean for the preparation of kosher-meals. Her grandson Per Hollander remembers her enthusiastic and authoritarian presence during these events, as she organised different stations in the kitchen for the ritual cleaning.<sup>12</sup> Together with weekly *shabbat* dinners, the Ettlenger home thus provided a space for the continuation of Jewish traditions, largely

11 Letter from Jacob Ettlenger to Svenska sockerfabriken AB, 18 March 1933, and letter from the latter to Jeannette Ettlenger, 17 March 1933, SE/RA/720483/3/1, JEA.

12 Hollander.

enjoyed within the local and international, orthodox community. Jeannette was not only wife to a commercially successful, bourgeois husband, but also served as a form of *rebbetzin*, extending her social status as the wife of Adat Jisrael's chairman into structuring the social and religious infrastructure of the orthodox community in Stockholm from her home.

The couple was clearly unanimously working towards the continuation of Jewish traditions within the boundaries of Adat Jisrael. Their closeness is visible in Jeannette's letters; for example, she called Jacob her 'loving angel treasure', and described herself as 'only half a person' when he was away.<sup>13</sup> She often noted that she loved to hear his voice when he called on the telephone, and signed some of her letters with the nickname *Nudel* (dumpling). When in their country house on the island of Skarpö in Stockholm's archipelago in the summer of 1938, she wrote an emotional letter on her 'feminine inability' to contain her feelings of loneliness when he was not around.<sup>14</sup> Their close relationship was furthermore linked to Judaism. Her recollections of their first meeting placed them in a synagogue, and they kissed for the first time during a walk after the service.<sup>15</sup> When married, both worked non-profitably towards the maintenance of the rituals and lifestyle they associated with a Jewish existence in Stockholm. Although Jacob as chairman was considered one of the main actors in Adat Jisrael, Jeannette had an equally important role. She not only kept the family's public, bourgeois and Jewish orthodox home, but also organised

13 Letter from Jeannette Ettlenger to Jacob Ettlenger, 5 Sept 1930, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from German.

14 Letter from Jeannette Ettlenger to Jacob Ettlenger, 12 Aug 1938, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from German.

15 Letter from Jeannette Ettlenger to Jacob Ettlenger, 31 Oct 1934, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from German.



social and ritual events within the community in his absence. Her family in Copenhagen even kept their home kosher because of her enthusiasm.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, Jeannette was a religious force in her own right, forming her private home into a meeting place for Adat Jisrael's members and thus shaping orthodox Jewishness in Stockholm from her domestic sphere.

Both Irene and Jeannette put a lot of energy into producing their individually ideal homes in Stockholm. While Irene bought, refashioned and replaced furniture and décor, planned Christmas dinners, served wine from her husband's birthplace and demonstrated interest in contemporary political movements, Jeannette focused on constructing a social hub and providing ritual support for the orthodox community in Stockholm. Jeannette Ettlinger's indispensable role within the orthodox community offers a more complex picture of the often simplistic division between established Jewish, bourgeois families and religious migrants. Although social differences have been discerned within Eastern European groups, suggesting that similar religious views trumped different economic belongings (Banik and Ekholm 2019), this article exemplifies Carl Henrik Carlsson's suggestion (2004: 34) that the religious and social divisions between migrants and established families were not as clear-cut as previously believed. Indeed, an earlier study has shown that the boundaries between religious groups were somewhat flexible within the Jewish community in Stockholm, although the shape and longevity of each group were defined by the activities of the bourgeois or wealthy individuals involved (Hultman 2019: 45–70, 145–98). The different approaches used by Irene and Jeannette, despite their similar migrant backgrounds and socio-economic belongings, are perhaps better understood in light of these

16 Hollander.

studies. In a community where religious and social belongings were interconnected and activated in multifaceted ways towards cultural processes, Jewish life was increasingly characterised by diverse versions of Jewishness.

### Consumption in the urban bourgeois home

Irene and Jeannette lived at the beginning of the twentieth century in a modern, urban world that was in a state of continuous change, growth and development. Stockholm's population grew from 350,000 in 1910 to a little less than half a million in 1939 (Borg 2011: 74). The physical alterations of the cityscape provided space for recreational activities. Cafés moved out into the streets, parks and esplanades became locations for promenades, and the city's cinemas numbered 75 in 1919 (Furhammar 1991: 44). The entertainment establishments were sites for the consumption of modern culture, and they together produced an urban environment that was a 'delight' and an 'intoxication' (Benjamin 1973: 45–55). The department store, for example, became a 'secular temple' (Lerner 2015: 7), displaying commodities that offered a lifestyle of nostalgic continuity and authentic tranquillity in the hectic and chaotic modern period (Outka 2009: 4–8).

As noted earlier, the department store represented a public space that women could visit. Since commodities were produced to provide an authentic aura and historical continuity to homes, the division between the home and the store diminished. With the ability to choose which products to buy, and thus what kind of home to create, women were no longer corporeal embodiments of the domestic space, but performers of it. They gained 'control over *how* to create and present an "authentic" home and self' (Outka 2009: 14–15), and therefore had society's acceptance of their being in public areas related to material consumption. As established above, Irene's and Jeannette's homes

Store	Items	Receipts	Sum, <i>kronor</i>
AB Sidenhuset	Clothes	12	1,360.00
Axel Ekman tapetserare och dekoratör	Home décor	10	198.45
AB M. Bendix barnkläder	Clothes	6	351.69
Åkerholmska bosättningsbolaget AB	Kitchen utensils	6	98.10
Nordiska Kompaniet	Clothes/food	5	622.98
Brising & Fagerström	Kitchen utensils	5	157.93
AB Berglund's Tvätt	Cleaning	5	135.00
AB Julius Slöör Järnaffär	Kitchen utensils	5	151.07
P. U. Bergström	Clothes	2	68.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>3,143.72</b>

Table 1. Irene Strauss's most visited shops, 1905–28, based on receipts from volume 46: Strauss (SSMA).

produced two different forms of Jewish existence in Stockholm, and their visits to shops, department stores and other entertainment sites reflected these domestic spaces.

The introduction presented some of Irene's first shopping experiences in Stockholm's city centre. Out of the household's 406 receipts with addresses from 1905 to 1939, she signed or ordered 21.2 per cent (86 receipts).<sup>17</sup> Most receipts are from 1917, and the majority are linked to the preparation of Irene's first home on Kungsgatan 3. She visited Åkerholmska bosättningsbolaget AB, located in Östermalm and specialising in the wide range of items needed for the furnishing of a new, bourgeois home, and she bought most of her kitchen utensils and glassware from this company. As she settled into the Swedish capital, Irene established a shopping pattern between her home in Östermalm and Julius's offices, with the commercial city centre and the department store as popular destinations. With the apartment organised, most of Irene's purchases

in the 1920s were related to clothes. She paid for repairs of shoes and skirts, and ordered alterations of hats and dresses. Lavish items were also purchased, such as furs, new suits for Julius, sailor caps for their boys and a blue silk dress right before the Christian New Year's Eve in 1918.

As seen in Table 1, the clothing stores AB Sidenhuset, AB M. Bendix barnkläder and Nordiska kompaniet were some of the shops she frequently visited. While the Jewish bourgeois subculture within Irene's home cannot be established with the sources available, the list of shops provides a hint. Two of the five most popular stores were owned by Jews: AB M. Bendix barnkläder and Nordiska kompaniet, both located in the city centre and not in Irene's local vicinity. The majority of Irene's most expensive purchases were bought from these stores. Quick conclusions should obviously not be drawn, but the list suggests that although performing solely national and social belongings in her home, Irene had a network of Jewish acquaintances, which might have encouraged her to visit Jewish-owned stores for some of her errands.

Jeannette and her daughters also appreciated the indulgent pleasure of shopping. In a

17 There are several other receipts that can be linked to Irene Strauss, such as purchases of clothes, but since the name of the buyer is not given on the receipts, they are not included in this calculation or the following analysis.

letter to Jacob on 22 February 1933, Camilla recounted hunting for a present for her mother:

Mother wishes for 1) a lamp 2) a pair of coasters. 1) The lamp is green, made of ceramic, and when we one day saw it in a window, mum said that she wanted it and needed a lamp. The price is approximately 35 kronor, not more than this.<sup>18</sup>

Window-shopping with Jeannette opened up the world for Camilla, allowing her to plan surprises for her mother's birthday. Indeed, walking the streets of Stockholm, admiring goods in the window displays, reading the advertisement signs and experiencing the urban crowd, the girl participated in a very modern experience. She was drawn to the window displays and inspired to dream about buying the items, the marketing strategies increasing her *Kauflust* (Lerner 2015: 5), in this case demonstrated by the ceramic, green vase.

The adventurous experience of walking the streets of Stockholm was indeed especially vivid for Jeannette's children. Camilla described the events of her final days of freedom just before school started in the autumn of 1930:

We went to the amusement park [Gröna Lund] and went on the roller coaster until the world was spinning, and we watched the Cossacks and the dwarfs that played 'Snow White'.<sup>19</sup>

The excitement is noticeable in Camilla's text, and her knowledge of the silent film *Snow White* from 1916 shows that visits to modern

institutions, such as the amusement park or the cinema, were a common, yet exhilarating, experience for her. Indeed, her younger sister Ruth told the parents in an undated letter that she received Camilla's ticket for a school production of Eugène Marin Labiche's theatrical piece *The Italian Straw Hat*, and that both of them visited the cinema to watch the film *The House of Rothschild*. She looked forward to her parents' return to Stockholm, anticipating they would like it as well.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Ruth wrote to her father that 'we went on a car trip with the Liwschütz family last Sunday. I am to send their regards.'<sup>21</sup> The Ettlenger children's modern experience of travelling in cars, enjoying the speed offered by new technology and a change of scenery, took place together with Jewish acquaintances. Indeed, Camilla went shopping with Jeannette, the family visited Gröna Lund together, and the sisters went to cultural productions together: the city's modern distractions were experienced in the presence of the family or the family's Jewish social network.

When Jeannette moved around in the urban landscape, she similarly associated it with Jewish matters. In a letter to her husband, Jeannette mentioned that she met Chief Rabbi Marcus Ehrenpreis's wife at Nordiska kompaniet.<sup>22</sup> For her, the modern temple became an extended site for community relationships. Jeannette was, moreover, involved in community activities outside her home. She mentioned social meetings and discussions with people in her letters, often relating their questions or wishes regarding communal matters to Jacob when he was working abroad. Thus, she wrote that one Joseph Magnus telephoned in 1930,

18 Letter from Camilla Ettlenger, 22 Feb 1933, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from Swedish.

19 Letter from Camilla Ettlenger, 11 Sept 1930, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA. My translation from Swedish.

20 Undated letter from Ruth Ettlenger, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA.

21 Ibid. My translation from Swedish.

22 Letter from Jeannette Ettlenger to Jacob Ettlenger, 10 Sept 1930, SE/RA/720483/1/1, JEA.



Figure 1. Irene Strauss's shopping activities. Based on receipts from volume 46: Strauss (SSMA). Map: H. Hellberg, and A. E. Pählman, '1934 års karta över Stockholm med omgivningar' (1917-34), SE/SSA/Stockholmskartor/1917-34 Karta över Stockholm med omnejd (SSA).

that the *shul* was full at the end of February 1933 and that Isaac Davis wanted to employ a mason from Riga in 1934. The contexts of these statements are unclear, but Jeannette unmistakably acted as a transmitter of communal politics and news. She also provided gossip from the Jewish community as a whole, declaring, for example, the engagement of Ehrenpreis's daughter in 1930, whose fiancé was, '*Gott sei Dank* [thank God], a Jew'.<sup>23</sup> Several letters to Jacob revolved around religious matters, such as the discussion on the necessity of including the reading of *sifre*, rabbinic works on legal issues, in the synagogue, or the request of her husband's advice on how to reply to a question on the religious state of Reform Jews in Denmark.

Irene was seemingly not engaged in Jewish communal activities, but established a close relationship to her local surroundings. The shops she visited in the local vicinity were, as seen in the GIS-analysis in figure 1, mostly related to household chores. Local cleaners, such as AB Berglunds tvätt, were asked to clean rugs and clothes, and nearby carpenters were

23 Ibid. My translation from German.

employed to repair, paint or construct furniture. Axel Ekman tapetserare och dekoratör cleaned and assembled all curtains in the household twice every year. Establishing relations with local companies, Irene kept her apartment clean to counter the noise and dirt of the city (Salmi 2008: 75). The acquisition or repair of clothes was, as shown earlier, entrusted to the larger shops and department stores in the city centre. Stores in the vicinity were convenient to use for weekly chores, but the activity of window-shopping and trying on and choosing clothes required the luxurious experience in bigger and better-known stores. During these trips into the city centre, Irene likewise purchased luxurious food items. For example, she bought eggs from the market at Hötorget, perhaps after visiting the adjacent department store P. U. Bergström.

Irene's relationship with the urban landscape was clearly linked to her position as a bourgeois housewife. Table 2 shows that her shopping habits were largely based around the household, specifically its everyday chores. Figure 1 clarifies how the immediate neighbourhood in her urban district offered facilities

for these activities, while the department store, urban markets and well-established shops in the city centre, with their lure and excitement, functioned as sites for the acquisition of clothes and refined products. Unlike Jeannette and her daughters, her shopping pattern does not reveal much about her Jewish social circles. Shops in the vicinity of religious places were not visited, and although the receipts show frequent visits to stores owned by Jews, her personal acquaintance with the owners can only be hypothesised. The female members of the Ettlinger family, on the other hand, experienced the urban thrill of department stores, window-shopping, the cinema, amusement parks and car drives within Jewish circles, thus linking the Jewish life offered at home with the experiences of modern Stockholm.

Items	Receipts	Sum, <i>kronor</i>
Clothes	31	2,593.44
Food	6	875.03
House	49	1,031.38
<i>Cleaning</i>	10	204.00
<i>Home décor</i>	18	325.98
<i>Kitchen utensils</i>	18	417.90
<i>Furniture</i>	3	83.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>4,499.85</b>

Table 2. Distribution of items bought by Irene Strauss, 1905–28, based on receipts from volume 46: Strauss (SSMA).

Jeannette had a seemingly strong position within her home, marriage and community. The value and range of purchases between the Strauss couple also reveals Irene’s social power. Of all her purchases, 83.7 per cent cost between 1 and 100 *kronor*, and, as can be deduced from table 1, the greater sums involved the procurement of larger quantities of food from Nordiska kompaniet, such as the Christmas dinner mentioned earlier, or big orders of clothes. Of Julius’s purchases 86.3 per cent were located within the same

price range. His largest purchases were more expensive than those of Irene, and the majority of his receipts were linked to clothes or the purchase of a boat. Furthermore, 52 per cent (211 out of 406) of all receipts were signed or ordered by him, while 21.7 per cent (88) had no designated buyer. Some of these receipts deal with boat trips to their summer house and the importation of wine, but most are related to clothes. While 36 per cent of Irene’s receipts concerned clothes, only 18.5 per cent of Julius’s did, suggesting that most of those unnamed receipts belonged to her. If so, the difference in numbers of receipts accumulated by each of them decreased, making their level of purchases more even. Although Julius was responsible for the larger purchases early on in their marriage, the receipts in the archive suggest that Irene took on more economic responsibility later on. Some ten years into their marriage, the couple divided their household purchases between them, Julius focusing on entertainment, while Irene was responsible for everyday chores, as well as the appearance of their apartment and themselves. Thus, as the societal divide between the domestic and public spheres diminished in Sweden, Jewish bourgeois women could enter the urban landscape, and use their money and time to consume commodities, engage in culture and develop friendships, thereby elevating their economic, religious and social status.

## Conclusion

While earlier studies have shown that Jewish women could assume authoritative, public roles in Jewish communities in Scandinavia at the beginning of the twentieth century, this article not only presents a complementary case study, but also examines the opportunities provided for women through the gendered space of their homes. Jewish women not only entered domains previously inhabited only by men, but also used the social aspect of their domestic space to carve out opportunities for themselves

in the public, urban arena. The bourgeois home was an economic, social and cultural endeavour, and demanded its housewives use the public areas of the home – the salon, the gentlemen’s room, the dining room – to fulfil social, cultural and religious ideals. As the modern world diminished the distances between stores and homes, bourgeois women in Stockholm, including Jewish housewives, assumed greater responsibilities in their marriages, and used their economic, religious and social roles in the home as reasons for becoming consumers of commodities, and producers of communal activities, outside their homes.

The examples of Irene and Jeannette illustrate the public opportunities offered to some Jewish women through their roles as domestic housewives. With social and economic status, they could enter the urban landscape, linking their individually chosen consumption to the specific ideals they materially produced in their homes. The public notion of the domestic sphere, therefore, expanded, and thus provided Jewish bourgeois women with the chance to produce homes that communicated individual ideals of Jewishness. As the examples of Irene and Jeannette show, the material and social production of Jewish life could differ considerably. Born abroad, but living in Sweden, they chose two different approaches on how to establish their existence as Jews in Stockholm during the three last decades before the Second World War: both embraced their socio-economic status, but while Irene’s Jewish home was defined by cultural integration, Jeannette chose orthodox distinctiveness. The two women are, therefore, examples of the increasing presence of individualistic ideals and practices of Jewishness within the Jewish community in Stockholm up until the Second World War, suggesting that although consisting of relatively few members, Jewish community life in the Swedish capital was growing more diverse and multifaceted at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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