UNIVERSALISM AND PARTICULARISM
IN BRITISH ORTHODOX, REFORM AND LIBERAL JEWISH PRAYERBOOKS
AND RITUAL

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The knowledge of the Torah can be acquired only in association with others

(B.Ber. 63b)

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Abstract

*Shabbat* day with its ritual phases and liturgies, chosen as a focus for this study, presents an ideological paradox, with notions of both particularism and universalism (P/U) in the core of its narrative. Ritual with all its elements, such as participants, objects, space, music, body gestures and style of service, provide additional meaning to what is embedded in the words, and this needs to be taken into consideration while examining the ideology of a prayerbook. The ritual process may affect or alter their P/U meaning.

Thus, to advance the debate in discussing P/U in the contemporary British Jewish Orthodox, Reform and Liberal prayerbooks and ritual, I engage here with Judaism as a vernacular religion. Because it is not enough to examine only verbal expressions of the prayerbooks, I also consider the verbal, behavioural and material expressions of religious belief. I identify and critically assess various strategies, which depend for their effectiveness on the approach to change of specific worshippers and prayer leaders, and that are deployed in order to remove or minimize the impact of undesired particularistic formulations.

Drawing these threads together, I triangulate the reading of *Shabbat* texts with ethnographical methodologies, thereby providing a better understanding of the way in which Jewish liturgy works as lived religion. The thesis contributes to further discussion of P/U notions within Jewish liturgy and serves to advance methodological thinking about *siddurim* and Jewish ritual.
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Abbreviations, Transliterations and Translations


Similarly, I have employed the transliteration system of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, except in the case of the letter ח, which is transliterated as ch.

Where a published transliteration conflicts with the system I use, I have retained the transliterations of the original.

Upon the first use of a Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish word or expression, I have translated it within the text.


Source texts translations are quoted from:


Mishnah: *Mishnayoth* (1977), Blackman, P. (edn), Gateshead: Judaica Press, LTD.


Abbreviations of prayerbooks in the thesis:


JRUL (1903) *A selection of Prayers, Psalms and Other Scriptural Passages, and Hymns for use at the Service of The Jewish Religious Union*, London, Wertheimer, Lea & CO.


SHA (1841) *Seder Haavoda: Gebetbuch für die öffentliche und häusliche Andacht der Israeliten*, Hamburg, DS Berendfohn.


Introduction

Our prayers are in Hebrew – it is a Jewish language and according to rabbis it is the first language, the language of creation. With the very first words of a prayer you are saying: I am doing this as a Jew in Hebrew, so you have the particularistic ideas right from the start. Each day begins with a series of blessings, and one of the first says: ‘Blessed are you Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us through your commandments...’ ‘Sanctified us’ in Hebrew *lekadesh* is to make us different, selected, often translated as holy, which means that Jewish people need to be particular and that they need to have a specific relationship with God – the King of the Universe (a universalistic note). Does it mean that it makes them better? I do not think so. Everybody else is doing their thing, that may be specific for them, but Judaism is specific to us; we have our own specific views of God, the world and our place in it expressed through the prayers and ritual (OL2).

These words, spoken by OL2 during one of the first interviews concerning particularism and universalism (P/U), illustrate the tension that exists throughout the Jewish prayer and ritual. Prayer is a way of communicating with God, but also with others about a specific vision about God, Jews, and the world. Prayerbooks reflect the historical circumstances of those who wrote prayers and who recite them or even reject them (Marx, 2014b). Sacred texts, including prayers, are the most obvious carriers of Jewish theology. One strong root of this theology is in the biblical passages concerning Israel’s election and their special status, such as Genesis 12:2-3 and Exodus 19: 5-6.

However, as OL2 notices, there are other elements of ritual that may strengthen or weaken the P/U balance of Jewish liturgy. These include choice of language (Hebrew, Aramaic or English) in which the words are uttered, their purpose (the facilitation of the ritual, its explanation, teaching, etc), those who participate, the inclusion of actions and gestures, the setting and time of ritual (e.g. synagogue or a classroom), the source of music, and other additional elements (e.g. commentaries, objects, decoration) which are incorporated in it. That is why to advance the debate in discussing P/U of contemporary British Jewish prayerbooks and ritual I engage here with Judaism as a vernacular religion, ‘that is as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret and practice it’ (Primiano, 1995, p. 44), taking into consideration the verbal, behavioural and material expressions of religious belief. Building on Leonard
Primiano’s theory, Marion Bowman argues that engaging with ‘official religion’ demands that we also study how belief and practice are transmitted and received in their historical and cultural context, so that a researcher receives a ‘realistic’ view of religion as it is lived (Bowman and Valk, 2014). Thus to achieve such a view concerning P/U, I examine texts and rituals and carry out interviews, asking about and participating in what people do ‘elsewhere’ (Harvey, 2013, p. 7).

This thesis examines some of the P/U elements of Jewish Shabbat liturgy through the analysis of three contemporary Orthodox (United Synagogue), Reform and Liberal prayerbooks (siddurim) and accompanying elements of Jewish ritual. The three modern prayerbooks used in British Orthodox and Progressive synagogues that have been chosen for this research are representative of their respective movements: Jonathan Sacks’ edition of the Orthodox siddur, The Authorised Daily Prayerbook (2006), the Reform Forms of Prayer (2008) and the Liberal Lev Chadash (1995). Content analysis as a method for textual examination is used to study P/U elements of these prayerbooks and to assess critically whether the modifications introduced in contemporary Progressive prayerbooks, be they in Hebrew texts, English translations, or commentaries, significantly change the P/U vision of the texts. Furthermore, this thesis tests the theory that prayerbooks represent Jewish identity, and analyses to what extent siddurim mirror this identity and reflect their users’ sense of belonging to wider society. Sacred texts, including prayers, create boundaries that allow their user to distinguish one group from others. Traditional Jewish prayers tend to present a rigid, sometimes even negative, view of others, reflecting the historical circumstances in which they were written (Green, 2002). Progressive siddurim have been adapted to express Jewish specificity while strongly voicing attachment to universal values.

A study solely of the text of prayers is important and has a value in itself, but there is a danger that prayers will be treated merely as literature (Hoffman, 1987). They become prayers only when used in a specific context, that is, during the ritual for which they were composed. Therefore, they deserve to be studied in a context in which they are read, recited, repeated, and sung, and in which the ritual process may affect or alter their P/U symbolic meaning.

For these reasons, it was decided to triangulate the content analysis method with participant observation and interviews, to examine elements of Jewish ritual such as actors, places, objects, garments, action and gestures which may influence the P/U balance. Such an innovative methodology helps to assess critically the role of siddurim in Jewish liturgy and the way in which they reflect each group’s identity. Analysis of
interviews and participant observation shows that ritual is not merely an act of devotion but a tool for sustaining and constructing Jewish identity. Cohen argues that Jewishness, the conscious affirmation of the qualities that make Jews Jews, presumes a contrast between Us and Them. The Jews constitute an Us; all the rest of humanity, or, in Jewish language, the nations of the world, the gentiles, constitute a Them. Between Us and Them is a line, a boundary, drawn not in sand or stone but in the mind. The line is no less real for being imaginary, since both Us and Them agree that it exists. Although there is a boundary that separates the two it is crossable and not always distinct (1999, p. 341).

Text and ritual are used to influence one’s mind and create a world that on Shabbat may feel different from ordinary weekdays, when Jewish notions are more strongly voiced and distinctiveness may be seen as desired and welcomed. Shabbat day with its ritual, chosen as a focus for this study, in itself presents an ideological paradox, with both notions of P/U in the core of its narrative. Based on Gen. 2:1-3, Shabbat is seen as universalistic in scope as it forms the culmination of creation and is described as a day of rest for God and humanity. But another narrative from Ex. 31:12-17 presents Shabbat as a symbol of the exclusive relationship between God and the Israelites, thus as a day that was given only to Israel. Both narratives are part of every Shabbat service, but on Friday evening the Genesis story is more strongly voiced, whereas on Saturday the Exodus one is central. Hence, Shabbat liturgical texts as well as other ritual elements may influence one’s perception of and relationship with fellow Jews and non-Jewish neighbours, and create boundaries between them beyond the Shabbat experience.

This thesis fills a lacuna in ritual studies concerning modern Jewish ritual, especially in Europe. To my knowledge, there are no extensive academic analyses of the P/U underlying the convictions and performance of contemporary Jewish liturgy that include an analysis of how the prayerbook mirrors worshippers’ ideology and their feeling of Jewish identity as part of non-Jewish society. By using a combination of textual analysis and fieldwork, I aim to bring about a new understanding in the discussion around the P/U of certain texts, and by examining both ritual practice and people’s convictions, to build up a new body of knowledge in Jewish liturgical analysis of the P/U aspects of Jewish prayer. Thus, I bring fresh understanding not only to the work of the editors of prayerbooks, but also to the way people lead services and conduct rituals, both in Jewish and in interfaith contexts.
The ritual of contemporary British Jews is a field which still awaits more academic research. I have selected Jewish communities in London to study P/U ideology within prayerbooks and ritual, as this is where the majority of British Jews belonging to all Movements live. The religious landscape of British Jews has been shaped by distinctive historical, demographical, political and cultural factors, as well as the understanding of religious and ethnic minority (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010). Even though they are small in number,¹ Jewish British communities are as varied as American or Israeli communities (Pinto, 2013).

The research questions

My purpose in this thesis is to analyse the way in which the concepts of P/U are present in three contemporary Orthodox, Reform and Liberal prayerbooks, as well as in Shabbat ritual performance in eighteen synagogues across London. Through my research, I set out to answer the following questions:

- How are P/U expressed in prayerbooks and ritual?
- How do the liturgy and the ritual reflect the P/U convictions of participants? Do the chosen prayerbooks, as the editors of Forms of Prayer claim, ‘encapsulate the self-understanding of a given community at a given moment in time’ (Forms of Prayer, Preface)?
- Have the editors of Progressive prayerbooks succeeded in universalising the traditional texts, which early Jewish Reformers accused of ‘overstating the distinctiveness of the Jews from other peoples’ (cf. Lev Chadash, p. xv)? Do the changes introduced in the three modern prayerbooks significantly change the P/U as well as of those who pray?
- What is the relationship between the liturgical text in the prayerbook, the ritual itself and the understanding of the ritual in the minds of worshippers?

¹ According to JPR, the number of ‘Enlarged Jewish population’ in 2016 was 370,000, see https://www.jpr.org.uk/country?id=354 (Accessed 20 April 2020).
Defining particularism and universalism

In explaining my understanding and usage of the terms particularism and universalism, it is helpful to consider a more general definition. The Oxford English Dictionary explains the term ‘particular’ as ‘[b]elonging to or affecting only a part of something; partial; not universal’, while ‘universal’ is explained as ‘[e]xtending over or including the whole of something specified or implied, esp. the whole of a particular group or the whole world; comprehensive, complete; widely occurring or existing, prevalent over all’. These two terms have been applied in Judaism and Christianity to describe an ideology concerning the doctrine of election and redemption.

Therefore, **particularism** is used to describe attitudes or texts which assume that one group, in this case Jews, are chosen by God for salvation. This contrasts with **universalism**, which designates the belief that all people benefit from God’s election. Orthodox liturgies and ritual tend to be more particularistic than Reform or Liberal ones, which aspire to be more universalistic, but which often retain considerable particularistic emphases. Judaism is based on the idea of an elected family whose mission is to bring the received revelation from God to the rest of the world. It is therefore particularistic but not **exclusivist** (excluding all non-Jews) or necessarily **triumphalist**, working to defeat all other faiths. Indeed, some Jews regard Christianity and Islam as partners in the Jewish messianic programme.

Some Jewish rituals and texts may address Jews alone, and are therefore ‘**specific**’ to them, without actively excluding others. Ritual objects such as prayer shawls may be restricted to Jews, but are not designed to make others feel like outsiders even if this is their effect – i.e. they are ‘exclusive’ but not ‘exclusivist’.

In my analysis, I also discuss the process of **universalising** traditional prayers or ritual by changing the wording, changing the translation, by providing a commentary, or by including non-Jews in the performance of elements of liturgy which were traditionally limited to Jews. In the case of Progressive liturgies, a reverse process may be observed which I call **neo-particularisation**, i.e. when previously universalistic prayers or elements of ritual are replaced or placed side by side with (re-introduced) traditional forms in which particularistic elements are more strongly voiced.
Application of this terminology in text analysis was simpler than in discussion of the religious practices where the thin line between, e.g. Jewish specific and particularistic was not always easy to draw. Sometimes long unresolved debates took place with my supervisors, whether a practice as ‘washing of the hands’ should be seen as particularistic or specifically Jewish. Thus, it became clear that to map people’s convictions and ritual actions was more difficult, since it included ambiguity, fluidity and tension, because their symbolism could receive various meanings and interpretations, whereas ritual boundaries that were clearly drawn by official religion in a specific context were negotiated and porous.

U/P – a historical survey

The tensions between P/U is a perennial issue in Israelite and Jewish history from biblical times until today. This is the religious context in which my thesis operates, which thus makes it necessary to explore the history of key concepts that form the background to this study. Although historical development of liturgy is not my primary focus, I do draw on it where it is relevant to my analysis, and I believe that this introduction is necessary to understand further discussion concerning the extent to which P/U ideology is embraced and expressed in contemporary British siddurim, Jewish ritual and by its participants. I present here a sketch of how attitudes toward P/U tension have left their imprint on Jewish liturgy as it developed over the centuries, often with care to preserve unchangeable elements of Jewish tradition and identity.

One of the main purposes of being part of society is to know and to organize one’s own world. Through making distinctions, one is able to know what belongs to oneself (or a specific group) and what is shared by everybody else, in other words: what is particular and what is universal. Separation and differentiation of ideas and thoughts provide a clear framework for existence and one of the principal concepts in Jewish thought. In the Torah, the act of differentiation is the first activity performed by God (Gen. 1). With the creation of Adam and Eve, the story of humanity begins, and through the covenant with Noah the relationship between God and humanity is established (Gen. 8-9). In that way the first eleven chapters provide a universal background to a particular story of the Jewish people.
It is through further distinction that the history of the Jewish people begins, with the election of Abraham in Gen. 12. From then on, to make distinctions between what is pure and impure and what is holy and profane becomes one of the most important activities for Israelites, especially for the Israelite priestly tribe (see e.g. Lev. 10:10; Lev. 20:24; Ezek. 22:26). As the biblical narrative develops, it is due to historical circumstances whether or not particularistic or universalistic tendencies are voiced more strongly. A more balanced view seems to be present in prophets such as Isaiah, in which is said e.g. ‘Blessed be my people Egypt, my handiwork Assyria, and my very own Israel’ (Isa. 19:24). This text may imply that God has a relationship with Israel, but also with other peoples. Although Israel’s status is always shown to be special, the chosen people also have a role to play in the universe as a ‘light for the nations’ (Isa. 49:6), so that salvation may reach all. Furthermore, Micah’s vision of eternity as filled with peace and recognition and praise of God (e.g. Mi 4:2) concerns not only Israel but all the nations (Weissman, 2006).

This dialectic between the P/U of Jews and humankind is sharply developed in the Talmud. Talmudic sages develop biblical narratives to create instructions on how to act (Borowitz, 1971). Thus, until today the covenant of Noah is treated as the legal foundation for how Jews should relate to non-Jews (Novak, 2011). The experience of minority diasporic life made the Jewish people focus more on sustenance and protection of their own community and finds its echo in the presentation of theology concerning non-Jews. To illustrate rabbinic teachings concerning non-Jews, let me give examples related to P/U ideology.

According to some Talmudic sages, what mainly distinguished a Jew from a non-Jew was the relation to the Torah (Urbach, 1975, pp. 525-56). Some sages had a liberal-universalistic outlook and spoke in favour of discussing Torah with gentiles, others took a particularistic-exclusive view and opposed this. Thus, some taught that ‘whoever says a wise thing among the nations of the world is called a sage’ (B.Meg. 16a) and a ‘gentile who studies the Torah is like the High Priest’, while others taught that a gentile who studies the Torah deserves death (B.Sanh. 59a). In B.Sanh. 58b the same punishment was destined for gentiles keeping Shabbat. Such a radical view was related to the conviction that Torah and Shabbat were exclusive gifts for the Jews.

Over the centuries before the Enlightenment, Jewish commentators presented a variety of attitudes, but often the particularistic voices were stronger (Lundgren, 2001). Individuals such as Shlomo ben Yitzhak or Moses ben Maimon who were well-
educated, presented a more balanced view. But they still considered Jews to be superior, not in character or nature but because of the Torah. However, there were also trends that stressed a chauvinistic approach, such as those indicated by Alan Brill (2010, pp. 157-8) in the teaching of the Maharal of Prague or in the works of Schneur Zalman of Liadi, who denied that gentiles were created in the image of God and that they have souls.

The Enlightenment and emancipation brought new philosophical ideas and changes into society and culture. What Jews and non-Jews had in common became more important than what made them different, that is religion and culture. This was also the moment when Reform Judaism was created as a Jewish response to the philosophical, political and sociological changes. The early Reform prayerbooks in Germany (as well as Britain) were less radical in introducing change than the ones that followed, and it was only toward the end of the nineteenth century that they underwent several wider modification with regard to P/U ideology (Friedland, 1967). Growing acculturation resulted, in attention to the distinctive and the particularistic elements of Judaism. An appeal was made on the basis of German idealism to focus on the eternal truths of Judaism, stripped of its time-bound institutions. The resultant quintessential Judaism was felt to be universal and timeless. Jewish exclusivism was challenged by Reform Judaism and Jewish particularity was seen as an instrument for a universal aim (Lundgren, 2001, pp. 93-113). The Pittsburgh Platform (1885) and Columbus Platform (1937) outlined and directed the vision for Reform Judaism not only in America but beyond. The focus in these documents is on the Bible, prophetic ethics, a rejection of halakhic restrictions on diet, priestly purity and dress, and the notion of Jewish peoplehood, and it emphasises Judaism as a religious community. Concerning liturgy, one of the fundamental principles of the early reformers was rejection of many elements of Jewish ritual. Thus, in the Pittsburgh Platform we read:

> Today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives... We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their

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2 On Rashi and other faiths, see e.g. Grossman (2006, pp.194-9); on Maimonides and the concept of being chosen, see e.g. Kellner (1993).

observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.⁴

Another teaching related to the messianic vision of time, that everyone will recognise God and a world of justice and peace will be established at any moment, was shared by many. Ethical Judaism was seen as an important tool to achieve this vision. These new philosophical ideas led into the modification of prayerbooks, as Reform thinkers believed it was necessary for the sake of intellectual honesty - one of the Reform principles - and to appeal to contemporary users.

In England at that time, several thinkers played an influential role in shaping contemporary Judaism with its P/U dimensions. Among them were Simeon Singer, Hermann Adler, Morris Joseph, Claude Montefiore who to various degrees saw the need for changes. Detailed discussion of their contribution is not possible here, but it is worth bringing a few examples concerning changes not only to Progressive but to Orthodox ritual.

Thus Singer, the editor of Orthodox Authorised Daily Prayerbook (1890), included several additional prayers for special occasions, such as for the consecration of a house, a prayer for women after giving birth on their return to a synagogue. The chief rabbi at his time, Adler also introduced changes in the Shabbat ritual, reflecting a concern for decorum, such as the use of vernacular for sermons and special clerical garb (Reif, 1993, p. 284, Sharot, 1973).

In his influential book Judaism as a Creed and Life (1910), Joseph presented a conservative view of Jewish belief and practice. At the same time he was convinced that a Jew should be a full member of a society with all its rights and duties, but simultaneously a religious man. Although he claimed that in other religions one may find some values, it is Judaism that is superior ‘and the most sublime embodiment of the God-idea of which men have any knowledge’ (Joseph, 1910, p. 7). God has chosen the Jewish people, who thus have particular duties and a role (mission) in the universe. It is the deeds of Jews, not their election, that will be the reason why somebody receives eternal life. In relation to Shabbat, Joseph thought that it has two dimensions: one related to Jewish history and its place in Jewish tradition and the other a universal message.

The peak of universalistically aimed ideology can be found in the approach of the founding members of the Liberal movement: Israel Abrahams, Lily Montagu, Israel

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Mattuck and Claude Montefiore. Mattuck believed that Jews were a religious community, not a nationality, and therefore disregarded Zionism and its political goals (Rich, 2014). Montefiore taught a universalistic vision of Judaism as a tradition that carries a message for the world, and believed that it would become a universal faith (Kessler, 2004, p. 138). His words describe well the implications of such ideology and its implementations, which are also found in the approach to the *siddur*.

Liberal Judaism sets out to emphasise the ‘prophetic’ elements in Judaism, and to minimise or negate the ‘priestly’ elements. Thus it abandons priestly conceptions of clean and unclean; it rejects the idea of ‘holiness’ as attaching to things as well as to persons ... and it gives up praying for the restoration of the Temple and of animal sacrifices (Kessler, 2004, p. 103).

Thus, religious practices should be done on the basis of their meaning for the spiritual and moral life of a contemporary Jew, whereas what does not fulfil these criteria should be abandoned. Universalising tendencies, as I discuss in this thesis, still today characterise the Liberal movement. However, as throughout history, 20th-century events also made their impact on the shape of the ritual.

The experience of pogroms, the rise of Anti-Semitism, the First World War and most of all the Shoah, tempered Jewish optimism and universalistic ideology. These events and the establishment of the State of Israel resulted in a return in Jewish thought and ritual to tradition and particularism.

Two influential thinkers, who also happen to be the editors of two of the *siddurim* to be discussed, are worth mentioning here. Both Jonathan Sacks and John Rayner recognised the tension between particularism and universalism as a key issue within the Orthodox and Progressive Movements.

Sacks claims that Judaism is in a constant state of tension between P/U, which he calls a ‘unique paradox’, as the ‘juxtaposition of universality and particularity was to cause a tension between Israel and others, and within Israel itself, that has lasted to this day’ (Sacks, 1992, p. 250). Sacks’ *Dignity of Difference* (2002) is a Jewish theological response to the impact of globalisation on religious life. This book generated so much discontent among Orthodox adherents that it led Sacks to modify its content in the second edition. Not being able to present here the whole discussion, and as other publications analyse it (Jotkowitz, 2011, Tirosh-Samuelson and Hughes, 2013), I shall just quote one controversial passage:

In the course of history, God has spoken to mankind in many languages: through Judaism to Jews, Christianity to Christians, Islam to Muslims. Only such a God is
truly transcendental – greater than not only the natural universe but also than the spiritual universe articulated in any single faith, any specific language of human sensibility. How could a sacred text convey such an idea? It would declare that God is God of all humanity, but no single faith is or should be the faith of all humanity (Sacks, 2002, p. 55).

Sacks teaches that there is a progression in the Bible from the universal to the particular. The Torah begins with creation and covenant through Noah with all the peoples, but then God chooses Israel as different, ‘to teach humanity the dignity of difference’. Sacks sees election as an example for other faiths to find their unique path to God. He does not say here that one religious truth is absolute, even though this was the view of his influential teachers, Joseph Soloveitchik and several of his critics. Such traditional views present the Jewish faith as supreme and unique. (Jotkowitz, 2011). Thus, the question remains open how to teach religious and cultural tolerance and at the same time the traditional view of the particular, unique way for Jews.

John Rayner as a rabbi, liturgist and theologian, played an influential role in the whole of Progressive Judaism (Friedland, 2007). Belonging to the Liberal Movement, in his sermons and a few publications he reaffirmed the convictions of its founders that Judaism is primarily a religion and contains universalising dimensions. However, with the establishment of the State of Israel, Rayner spoke about the obligation to support it, and that secular-national elements are part of contemporary Judaism (Rayner and Hooker, 1978). For Rayner, both P/U were fundamentally important for Judaism. However, the particularistic elements have true value if they inspire a Jew to work toward advancement of the whole world. He embraced the concept of election, but the special relationship between God and Israel is strictly related to the Jewish mission: to witness to God and to be a light to the nations (Rayner, 1960, p. 10). In other words, for Rayner, the Jewish mission is carried through particularistic practices, but it has a universal aim (Mühlstein, 2012). Concerning other religions, Rayner believed they also have a special relationship with God and they have their own merits. As a strong believer in the Progressive approach of ‘intellectual honesty’, he co-edited several Progressive prayerbooks and created liturgical texts whose influence and pioneering changes reached beyond the borders of the United Kingdom (Friedland, 2007). Thus, Rayner was committed to Jewish particularistic traditions, including ritual, while at the same time focused on the universal ideas expressed by the biblical prophets. A text by Rayner summarising his position on P/U is found in siddur LCh (p. 172):
We, more than previous generations, are aware that other traditions have their own merits, and their own valid perceptions of religious truth. The God of all humanity calls every one of the families of the earth to make its contribution. Therefore we do not claim to be chosen in any exclusive sense. But none of that absolves us from our own, special responsibility.

Rayner showed respect for traditional forms of ritual and texts. He tried to bridge them with Progressive approaches to Jewish liturgy by balancing Jewish particularism with universal ideology. To what extent he was able to achieve that is also reflected in Lev Chadash and is a subject of this study.

Presenting here a historical review concerning P/U within Jewish thought shows the validity of engaging with this theme. As it was shown from biblical times until today, the tension between P/U is intrinsic to Judaism. Those who engage with the preparation of new editions of siddurim or who conduct services also engage with P/U ideology. In the era of close relationships with other religions, mixed marriages, and European pluralistic societies, the examination concerning the presentation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in religious texts and ritual becomes once again or even more urgent.

**Literature review**

I present here a literature review focused on those scholars who influenced my thinking on P/U elements in Jewish prayerbooks and ritual. It shows some of their contributions in relation to my subject and indicates how my analysis in the following chapters builds upon theirs to develop an understanding of P/U ideology in Jewish liturgy. I also return to these and other theories in the main part of this thesis, where I apply their analysis to a specific text or element of ritual at a specific moment in the Shabbat liturgy.

I begin the literature review with those who have previously engaged with P/U. I then discuss those who taught me how to read and analyse Jewish prayers (texts), and finally those from whom I have learned ethnography in general and techniques for researching Jewish ritual in particular.
Looking for a better understanding of how the terms ‘particularism’ and ‘universalism’ are used in academic literature, I have investigated their deployment in various fields such as sociology, politics, law, and ethics. However, the most common usage of the terms P/U relates to the discussion concerning how one religion perceives other faiths. Alan Race (1983) coined four categories: exclusivism, inclusivism, universalism and particularism, to describe how one religious system relates to the concept of religious truth and salvation within its own and other religions. Race’s theory concerning Christian theology, popularised by John Hick (1985), has been widely discussed, and critically evaluated through its application to other religions (e.g. Hosseini, 2010, Jung, 1998, Maharaj, 2018, Nah, 2013). Scholars showed that the application of Race’s theory needs adaptation because lived experiences of faith communities do not always operate within one of the four categories and in the complexity of some religions’ sacred texts. Concerning the Jewish theology of other religions, it was Alan Brill (2010, 2012) who first attempted to apply Race’s four terms to a variety of Jewish sources from biblical to modern times in relation to the question of the vision of God and of salvation, in relation to Jews and other nations.

These terms are also applied in the field of philosophy, including Jewish thought. In her analysis of the P/U ideology of John Rayner, Lea Mühlstlein (2012) referred to Svante Lundgren (2001), who provides categories which allow us to place a Jewish philosopher on the spectrum of particularism and universalism. Lundgren traces P/U ideology by looking at how the concept of chosenness is understood in relation to the nature of a Jew – if there is difference between a Jew and a non-Jew, the attitude toward proselytes, the place of non-Jews in messianic times and the Jewish contribution to the world.

Similar ideas are used in the discussion not only of philosophical texts but in the discussion of the P/U horizons in the Bible (Chinitz, 2001, Levenson, 2002, Martens, 1988, Reinhardt, 2005). As the main point of reference is the biblical concept of chosenness, I refer to several publications here while discussing the ideology of individual prayers.

However, while studying the texts mentioned above, I realised that the field within which my research lies (i.e. Jewish prayerbooks and ritual) is more complex and involves not only textual sources but also ethnography. That is why I do not use the
theory of one author but, building upon the existing literature, I apply my own understanding of P/U terms as presented in the preceding section.

**Literature concerning Jewish prayerbooks**

Jewish liturgy can be approached from several perspectives. The earliest scholars began to study liturgical texts in the mid-nineteenth century by applying the historical method employed in Christian liturgy. From the beginning, they encountered the problem of where to place Jewish prayers on the historical timeline. Nevertheless a number of scholars such as Ismar Elbogen (1993, [1913]), Joseph Heinemann (1977, 1996) or Abraham Idelsohn (1972, [1932]) undertook the task of discussing the origin, rabbinical sources and development of Jewish prayer. Their studies remain of great value as an entry point into studies of Jewish prayers. However, some of their assumptions have been challenged by academics on the basis of newer discoveries e.g. in the Cairo Genizah or at Qumran (Hoffman, 1979, 2009, Kimelman, 2006, Leiter and Spicehandler, 2007, Reif, 1983, 1993, 2017). Even though my research does not focus on the historical development of prayers, I refer to these contributions, as they are necessary for understanding the formation and historical context of the prayers.

Scholars studied the prayerbook to indicate how the ritual came into being in its contemporary form and which elements formed its core and which were fluid. Progressive *siddurim* are formed in relation to the traditional prayers, adopting some of the variations in rites, which were often abbreviated and modified according to Reform and Liberal ideology. The development of prayerbooks, seen through a historical lens, is examined by two modern scholars: Jakob Petuchowski (1968) and Eric Friedland (1967, 1997, 2003). There have been also a number of publications on some more recent developments in the progressive liturgy (Hoffman, 1987, Cohn and Fisch, 1996, Blank, 2002, Langer, 2005b, Sperber, 2010, Caplan, 2012, Smith, 2012, Marx, 2010, Boeckler, 2016) but none offers a thorough examination of contemporary British *siddurim*.

Jeremy Schonfield’s book, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayers* (2006), is a groundbreaking study of Jewish liturgy, presenting textual layers and meanings of the opening sections of the daily morning liturgy. He notices that most traditional commentators on the prayerbook provide scriptural, rabbinical and other sources for each passage, as though prayers were an anthology rather than a text with meaning in itself (2006, p.
Schonfield argues that the individual lines were not chosen randomly, and that the context often contributes to the meaning. Such an approach widens the understanding of the general composition of prayers and shows that prayers need to be interpreted in a wider context, not just as individual citations drawn from other texts. The scope of Schonfield’s book is limited to a section of the daily morning prayer and does not discuss most of the prayers with which the present analysis deals. However, his book and several articles concerning other prayers (Schonfield, 1999, 2001, 2006, 2013, 2019) as well as studying for several years under his supervision, has deeply influenced my reading of Jewish liturgical compositions.

A number of articles examine texts to which I relate while discussing the P/U ideology of chosen prayers as well as the textual changes that occurred over time in Progressive liturgy. The purpose of the nine-volume commentary on the prayerbook edited by Lawrence A. Hoffman under the title *My People’s Prayerbook: Traditional Prayer, Modern Commentaries* (1997-2005), is to make the traditional text of the siddur better understood and known to a broader audience. For each volume, a team of commentators prepared various views on the text such as historical, Talmudic, theological, halakhic, biblical, feminist, Hasidic and Progressive (mainly American). Because the commentary is meant for the general public, compromises had to be made and many problematic texts are given little attention. However, introductory essays written by leading liturgists offer a good academic analysis of particular texts, which are discussed in further paragraphs in the scholarly discussion.

Among others, Eric L. Friedland (1997, 2002, 2003, 2011), Dalia Marx (2010, 2013b, 2014a, 2013a, 2014b, 2015) and Ruth Langer (2005a, 2005b, 2011, 2012, 2017) are most frequently referenced throughout this thesis. Their publications engage with P/U ideology and present theologies of self and others while discussing texts some of which are analysed here e.g. *Aleinu* (see ch. 7), *Amidah* (ch. 5 and 7), *Birkat Hamazon* (ch. 3), *Kaddish* (ch. 5), the Prayer for the State (ch. 7) and *Havdalah* (ch. 8). Some assess the challenges such traditional texts pose to Progressive movements, but mainly concentrate on the American or Israeli context and rarely see particularism in its positive identity-building dimension but often only as exclusive.

Jewish liturgy can be viewed through the lens of specific philosophical notions that relate to P/U elements. One of the central themes is the notion of election (more deeply discussed in ch. 7), discussed by many academics over the centuries, and most recently by David Novak (1995, 2011). His discussion concerning the rabbinical understanding of the Noahide laws (Novak, 2011) as laws which can be seen as a
boundary between Jews and non-Jews is considered. The Noahide laws are referenced in the *siddurim* as a way of dealing with the tension around P/U. His theory is contrasted with those of other writers, opinions of interviewees and the analysis of the commentaries in the researched *siddurim*, to examine whether the distinction between Jews and non-Jews based on the Noahide laws and election does not conceal a notion of superiority and exclusivism (ch. 7).

Lastly, the notion of memory and sacred narrative recur throughout this thesis. Hoffman argues that in the liturgical message of the prayerbook ‘lies the key to Jewish identity’ (1977, p. 131) and, once accepted by the community, the prayerbook is seen by some liturgists as a tool for forming the group’s identity. The past and tradition are the source of the symbolic expression of community (Cohen, 1985). There seem to be two narratives concerning historical events: one that struggles and tries to get as close as possible to the ‘historical truth’ – mainly done by the historians and academics; and the second, which seems to be more influential, is the sacred story (in religious studies also called ‘myth’) that speaks about the past in a subjective, selective and often emotionally loaded way. Myth is a-historical and efficient (Cohen, 1985). The *siddur* is a tool in constructing Jewish identity and as such is the sacred narrative in which lies the P/U ideology. Sacred stories form one’s sense of self and world. They give orientation to people’s life and time, their individual and community experience.

Discussing the role of sacred myth, Hoffman argues that recitation of the mythic history during ritual is performed for ‘its power to galvanize group identity’ (1987, p. 76). For these reasons, throughout this thesis (but more specifically in ch. 5) elements of the sacred narrative of *Shabbat* are analysed to reveal what is remembered and what is forgotten, which shapes the specific Jewish identity (Spiegel, 2002, Yerushalmi, 1982, Webber, 2007). Furthermore, this will show the way in which the nations and their role in Jewish history may influence attitudes toward contemporary non-Jewish neighbours and the world. Victor Jeleniewski Seidler’s (2000, 2017) works discuss the memory in relation to the Shoah and British identity. The writings of Joseph Yerushalmi (1982), Jonathan Webber (2007), and Jacob Katz (1961) were helpful in understanding the concept of Jewish memory and of sacred narrative presented in the *siddurim*, although their works are mainly philosophical in scope and rarely include liturgical compositions.
Triangulating textual analysis with ritual analysis to achieve more extensive results in studies of P/U in Jewish ritual meant learning new skills from ethnographers, anthropologists and religious studies scholars. Entering a new field, it was suggested that firstly I turn toward academics whose works have a major influence. Studying scholars like Victor Turner (1974, 1967) and Mary Douglas (1966) helped me understand and analyse my own data, which was collected from participant observation and interviewees.

Turner's concepts of liminality, *communitas* and rituals provide a general theoretical scheme for interpreting *Shabbat* rituals. In a way, *Shabbat* is liminal, cyclically recurring and creating a state of inversion in which the entire group enters a liminal mode in which status, roles and power relationships are reversed (Turner, 1974, p. 167-203). For example, the *Havdalah* ritual (ch.8) can be seen as a *rite de passage* from sacred to ordinary, where ritual is accompanied by notions of danger (Hoffman, 1987, p. 42). Turner claims (1967) that symbols are fundamentally related to ritual and religious beliefs, and that their aim is to influence and transform human behaviour. Thus Turner is primarily concerned with what the ritual does to people. My research also discusses the reasons for participating in certain Jewish rituals, what ritual does for the participants and how people relate to and deal with symbols during ritual.

Turner (1974) also argues that rituals are ‘multi–referential’ and ‘multi–vocal’. Rituals are the means to say something about a particular group vis-à-vis another, but they also speak about the relationship of a person to his/her membership. This theory presupposes that people understand to some extent the symbolic language that the ritual uses. Social anthropologist Anthony Cohen (1985), who has done research around the formation of personal and group identity (corporate identity) through symbolic practices and rituals, argues that the boundaries are formed mentally through a specific understanding of the distinctiveness and meaning that people attach to it. Symbols are used because they are not precise and reflect various possible meanings. Thus, symbols and rituals ensure the continuity of the community in a changing society, and, as Jan Platvoet writes, the rituals, as symbolic actions, are ‘pregnant’ with meaning (Platvoet, 2008, p. 205). My research examines to what extent the symbols of the *Shabbat* ritual are understood and meaningful for participants, especially when the liturgy is conducted mainly in Hebrew. This also raises the question whether the rituals
are conducted because the particularistic elements are perceived as necessary for a person's identity, or whether their performance in itself is more important.

The role of language was also studied by Mary Douglas, who observes that its role in general is more than just the words, since a common language also conveys hidden assumptions (1975, p. 177). In the case of Jewish ritual, the choice of language and the proportion of Hebrew and English used in a service play an important role in the underlying P/U attitudes of a synagogue. David Aberbach (2006) mentions the discussion of early Reformers around the insistence on using the vernacular in the ritual. The question of the use of non-vernacular language in a ritual is examined by Madeleine McBrearty (1995) through personal interviews and participation in services. During ritual, language can serve various purposes, such as announcing practicalities; but it is also a tool to express the community's convictions and beliefs. In a ritual, a language is shared by a community, but the meaning may not be shared. McBrearty claims that Hebrew is the language of prayer and it is used to transmit sacred myths. As it is usually understood by only a small number of people, it also defines the boundary between holy and profane and between members of the Jewish people and non-Jews. This leads to another theme in this research: ways of drawing the boundaries with other groups in society. Douglas argues that rituals enact forms of social relations and in giving these relations visible expressions, they enable people to know their group (Douglas, 1966). The question concerning the choice of elements used to create a particularistic boundary of the Jewish ritual and 'ambiguity' (Seligman and Weller, 2012) are discussed throughout this thesis (e.g. see ch. 3, the discussion around kashrut and the influence of the participation of non-Jewish synagogue members in some Progressive communities).

Siobhan Garrigan’s *The Real Peace Process* (2010), made me aware of how a message, which in her research is that of sectarian elements, can also be communicated non-verbally through symbols, gestures and rituals. Even though her study is conducted within an Irish Christian context, her findings can be applied to Jewish ritual as well. This reading led me toward the positions which brought me to engage with material culture in religious studies (Lohmann and Sered, 2007, Morgan, 2014, Miller, 2010), including Jewish architecture (Coenen Snyder, 2012, Kadish, 2002, Mann, 2005, Jarrassé, 2001) and ritual objects (Emmett, 2007, Lohmann and Sered, 2007, Stolow, 2007, Ochs, 2007, Furman, 1981).

These approaches to ritual studies resonate with the emphasis on 'lived reality', following Marion Bowman (2014) and Graham Harvey (2013, 2009), with whom I have
also the privilege to study in person and to hear at several academic conferences. They encouraged me to ‘get out and see, smell, hear, taste or touch religion happening’ and to look for religion ‘elsewhere’ (Harvey, 2013, p. 1-21), as every element of the ritual is a potential data which influences the perception and participation in the ritual and is a potential carrier of P/U notions.

Jewish ritual

The ritual of contemporary British Jews has not been sufficiently researched, even though, as Adam Seligman (2008, p. 4) observes, there has been a re-emergence of ritual, including in religious communities that had previously abandoned many of its forms. Judaism is one such religion where the process of what Seligman calls return of ‘orthopraxy’ takes place. Even though I agree with his observation concerning ritual, calling it ‘orthopraxy’ is not fully adequate, as this may suggest that communities simply bring back traditional practices. As is shown here, in the case of Progressive ritual, the traditional elements that are restored may receive new interpretations or they may be chosen selectively. Ruth Illman (2018b, 2016), whose research concerns changes in the field of Jewish music, speaks rather about a ‘turn toward tradition’ or ‘creative re-traditionalisation’, which I find more appropriate in the context of contemporary Progressive British Judaism. Recent researchers who engage with ethnography concerning British Progressive communities as regards music (Illman, 2018a, Borts, 2014), contemporary Orthodox women (Taylor-Guthartz, 2020) and from sociological perspective (Frosh and Sheldon, 2019), were helpful in understanding the phenomenon of change in Jewish ritual with which I also engage indirectly.

In North American ethnographical studies, more research has been conducted concerning Jewish ritual. I mention here a few publications that engage with some of the aspects which are important for the discussion of P/U elements of the Shabbat ritual and to which I allude in further discussion.

Using the participant–observer approach, Samuel Heilman (1976) describes three dimensions of synagogue life: community prayer, study and assembly. Two of his researches concerning Jewish mourning rites (2001) and Haredi community (1992) also consider theological undercurrents from the perspective of Orthodox researcher. These studies brought my attention to the other-than-spiritual roles of ritual, including
identity-building and identity-binding to a social place. His works present a limited study – conducted in American Orthodox synagogues – but they help to understand the interactions that occur especially in Orthodox settings, which can easily pass unnoticed by an outsider. Some of his observations, such as the division between the participation of women and men even in some Orthodox communities, have been challenged over recent years under the influence of gender ideology, to which I relate for example in the case of the Kaddish prayer (ch. 7).


In majority of Progressive synagogues two or more parallel services take place which vary in styles. Frida Furman (1981) examines the aims of two kinds of ritual in a Reform synagogue: the ‘normative ritual’ and a more informal ritual called a ‘chaverim service’. She notices a different distribution of elements expressing Jewish specific and particularistic ideology, such as ritual garments and gestures, and two types of ritual. Furman sees particularism as ‘an essential ingredient of the community, which cannot be sustained through a universal ethical ideology alone’ (1981, p. 238).
my opinion this reflects Emil Durkheim’s idea that ritual action strengthens both belief and the community (1965). Although the modern world might seem to be post-Durkheim in its ideology, there is currently a clear tendency towards bringing back traditional forms in gestures, symbols, language and even some forms of ritual with more clear particularistic elements. Based on my participant observation and interviews, various kinds of ritual present in British synagogues are researched, and I also examine whether any traditional forms are re-introduced there, and the reasons for such changes.

This section has not exhausted all the publications to which I allude, or which I discuss and challenge while presenting my own research. It names only those that play an important role in it and which shaped my understanding of P/U ideology, prayers and Jewish ritual. None of the above publications engage at the same time and with the same depth both in prayerbook analysis and in contemporary ethnographical data across movements. Thus, my own original approach, which is presented next, aims to fill a lacuna which exists in Jewish ritual studies.

Methods

Having been engaged in Jewish–Christian dialogue for more than a decade, I wanted to conduct research within Jewish studies in order to better understand my Jewish partners. Being interested in liturgy and the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, I sought a research topic within Jewish prayers. The theme of P/U in Jewish prayerbooks was proposed by one of the editors of the Liberal siddur, Charles Middleburgh and my future supervisor Jeremy Schonfield, both of whom teach Jewish liturgy at the Leo Baeck College.

Around this time, I got to know a document published by the International Council of Jews and Christians, ‘A Time for Recommitment: Building the New Relationship between Jews and Christians’ (2009). It is accompanied by an educational guide, edited by Deborah Weissman and Philip Cunningham. In point six of this document, there is a call to Jews and Jewish Communities to ‘re-examine Jewish texts and liturgy in the light of Christian reforms’. Although the greater burden of challenging and changing anti-Jewish liturgical composition is on Christians due to

their history of engagement with tragic events, more and more Jewish scholars recognize the need for a similar revision of their own liturgy concerning the presentation of non-Jews. Thus, I found the opportunity to analyse the siddurim that are in most common use and what they say about non-Jews and the outside world, because these are valuable for all who engage in interfaith dialogue. Deciding to study contemporary Reform and Liberal siddurim in Great Britain, it became clear that I needed first to reach for the Orthodox prayerbook, as it was these texts, which in the nineteenth century were changed and ‘universalised’ by the founders of Progressive Judaism. Engaging with the ritual of the three main movements in Great Britain allows me to show the different paths taken toward difficult Hebrew texts, prayerbooks and ritual. Most Orthodox leaders and editors of siddurim do not accept any change to the traditional text, but some express their discomfort through alternative ways, such as commentaries, lessons, explanations and, in rare cases, omissions. On the other hand, Progressive Jews, who have thoroughly edited their own texts in the past, exhibit a tendency to reintroduce more traditional texts which sometimes may even contradict their Progressive theology.

Textual analysis was combined with two other methods: interviews and participant observation. My turn towards ethnography and ‘lived religion’ was not part of my initial plan. However, it deeply enriched my research and rendered this analysis much more valuable for scholarship. It was proposed by my supervisors Graham Harvey and John Wolffe, Open University researchers who work in the field of ritual studies and history. They indicated that I triangulate the textual studies with participant observation and interviews to establish the P/U elements of certain Jewish rituals in practice. Such an innovative approach allowed me to engage with vernacular religion (Primiano, 1995, 2014), and to obtain a broader and more complex understanding of the balance between P/U elements within Jewish ritual. To prepare for ethnographical research, I studied The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion, edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (2011), in which three methods seemed to be appropriate for my textual and ritual analysis. After a pilot study and discussion of my analysis with my supervisors, I decided to follow this process and methodological approach. At this stage it also became clear that the best way of studying P/U in Jewish prayer was to narrow down the study to Shabbat texts and ritual. Even though P/U could be studied through the ritual of festivals such as Purim, which is strong in particularistic notions, or Succot, which is more universalistic in scope, the data from participant observation would be narrower, as festivals happen
once a year, which would limit the choice of communities and the quantity of visits. Studying weekday ritual would also be more difficult, as the majority of my interviewees do not participate in the services outside Shabbat and festivals. Taking into consideration the whole of Shabbat also mitigates against making assumptions that the P/U balance is the same, as shown in chapters 5 and 6 while discussing how the Friday night liturgy focuses on the Creation story and that of Saturday morning has its peak in the celebration of the gift of the Torah. Those who participate only on Friday may experience particularistic expressions less strongly than they would during the Saturday ritual.

In analysing a selection of Shabbat prayers from three Orthodox and Progressive prayerbooks, I employed content analysis (Nelson and Woods, 2011) as my primary method. This method is used in religious studies by those researchers who are interested in content, structure and the performance of prayers in relation to identity (e.g. Campbell et al., 2009). Content analysis has been used by other researchers to study various religious texts such as hymnals (Evans, 1967) sermons, and liturgy (Ross, 1995, Sethi and Seligman, 1993).

In my own case, the historical and sociological context of reading the text was identified. Specific interpolations to the text within a specific context were examined: what might it mean to its user and how might this text affect the user (Nelson and Woods, 2011, p. 112)? Through such analysis, commonalities and differences between the three versions of the Hebrew texts, as well as their translations, were identified. The degree of P/U ideology of the chosen texts was assessed.

This textual analysis of selected texts was informed by Orthodox interpretations of those prayers. Further, a contrast was made with the attempts of Progressive editors to change the text in such a way that the prayers mirror modern Progressive Jewish ideology concerning the relationship between Jews and the world. Through comparative analysis, similarities and differences between the variants of texts in the siddur of each movement were identified, as the prayerbooks contain texts that are not identical to those in other editions. The absence of certain texts was noted and possible interpretations offered. By contrasting the traditional modes with the Liberal and Reform editions of the siddurim, it was considered whether the changes were successful and meaningful for those using the siddurim. I attempt to bring to light the universalizing attempts of the Progressive editors and the differences in ideology not only between these and the Orthodox text, but also between those of the Reform and Liberal movements.
Participant observation, following Harvey's portrayal of 'methodological guesthood' (2003, 2011), was carried out in various synagogues of the three movements of British Jewry: Orthodox (Ashkenazi United Synagogue), Reform and Liberal. Through an analysis of the Maori guesthood protocols, Harvey provides a model of researching a ritual in which the researcher does not have to choose between being an observer or participant but may seek to receive the position of a guest. In such a case, certain rules of behaviour apply, such as respect and taking a position of learner and not of an expert, thus listening and asking questions rather than providing answers. Moreover, the hosts have a choice to welcome such a person or not, and give him/her the status of a guest, as the presence of a guest is important and may create changes. Guests are expected to be clear about who they are and what they seek. Although in bigger synagogues not everybody was informed by the leaders beforehand about my presence, the concept of guesthood helped me to engage with those around me. Often on the second visit most of the participants knew the purpose of my visit, but I did not experience any difficulties in approaching the communities, who always gave me a warm welcome and were curious.

The participant observation was conducted in 18 synagogues chosen from each of the movements (5 Orthodox, 6 Reform and 7 Liberal). Each synagogue was visited 3 or more times. The numbers of attendees at the services varied between 10 and 400 participants. In some synagogues, the ritual took place only on Friday evening or Saturday morning. The length of services varied from 45 minutes to over three hours. The forms of services varied from larger services, where often professional leaders and musicians sought to facilitate the service, to smaller gatherings with one prayer leader involved (in the majority of cases, the rabbi of the congregation). In a few cases, Progressive services offered an experimental, informal style of service in which prayers were discussed, while in others music played a dominant role. The geographical location was limited to London. Several synagogues provided various styles of service, all of which were taken into consideration, although children’s services were not part of this research, due to ethics restrictions.

Synagogues were identified through a snowball sample, beginning with one Orthodox and two Progressive long-established synagogues. The potential communities and their prayer leaders were contacted on the recommendation of Interviewees or by choosing randomly. In order to address questions concerning my participation in a Jewish service, which could be viewed as threatening, I provided each community with an information sheet describing the project. In two Orthodox
communities the permission to take part in the Friday evening service was not possible more than once, as the services took place in a private setting and all the participants were male. Concerning *Shabbat* afternoon and evening prayers, the possibility of participating in an Orthodox setting was limited, either because such services took place in private settings or were not conducted at all. Progressive synagogues do not have regular services on Saturday afternoons and *Motsei Shabbat*. Through interviews, the data concerning the services was supplemented in order to gain a fuller understanding. However, all the other synagogues I contacted were willing to participate, resulting in a total of 103 services over the five years of research (O20; R40 and L43). Participant observation was conducted until data saturation was achieved.

In addition to these visits, I participated for over five years (on average twice a week) in the daily morning services at the prayer room of the Leo Baeck College. Although my research does not directly deal with everyday prayers and ritual, many elements are common to the *Shabbat* services, and the leaders of these prayers also conduct rituals in some of the communities selected for the *Shabbat* research. The prayers at the Leo Baeck College presented a wide range of forms, from classical to creative and innovative styles, during which both Progressive prayerbooks were used. On several occasions these services were more experimental and also included discussion concerning texts of prayers, ritual practices and modifications that the leaders introduced to the official service of the *Shabbat* ritual.

Another source of data was participant observation in interfaith services conducted by Jewish leaders, which I attended in order to determine whether any changes to the ritual were introduced. These took place every year in one Reform and one Liberal synagogue (5 times), and others were organised by British Progressive rabbis during the Jewish-Christian Bible Week and the conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims (3 times).

Throughout my research I was invited to many *erev Shabbat* meals, in the majority of cases by those who also agreed to be interviewed, and 4 families (from every Movement) extended an invitation to stay with them over the entire *Shabbat*.

There are certain challenges in researching synagogue services on *Shabbat*. One of them is that recording and taking photos in Orthodox communities are not permissible on *Shabbat*. Electricity is used in Progressive settings, but it would still not be appropriate for me to record or take photographs during the ritual, and this would also go against the methodological concept of ‘guesthood’ that I chose to follow. During the participant observations, I tried to blend into the service as much as possible in
order not to influence the normal pattern of the ritual. This explains the lack of photos in several places, which would be helpful to illustrate the analysis of the Shabbat ritual. Moreover, for the same reasons, no notes were taken during services. Thus, I had to rely on my memory and extensive ethnographical notes taken immediately after the end of participation. Despite these obstacles, the result was thousands of pages of data, which were re-read, analysed and coded using NVivo software.

The aim of data-gathering and analysis was to identify themes and references to P/U in the ritual. In addition, attention was given to additional elements (e.g. comments, prayers, gestures, material objects, events, themes, guests etc) during the ritual which might change the P/U balance.

Furthermore, 50 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of Progressive and Orthodox synagogues in London (29 experts and 14 regular participants in the prayers) in order to explore what and how P/U elements of Jewish ritual play a role in informants' Jewish identity and what meanings they attribute to them. The interviews were conducted over five years, until no new relevant knowledge was being obtained from any of them. Questions were posed concerning prayers and rituals which include P/U elements, and further analysis was conducted through coding, categorization and thematic analysis (Davidsson Bremborg, 2011). The data gathered from the interviews was used to understand the ideology of the prayerbooks under discussion.

The participants were identified through a snowball sample, beginning with rabbis and student rabbis at LBC. The majority of interviewees were experts or regular participants who reflect on ritual and prayers. Finding other participants was an arduous task, as several potential study participants refused to participate, explaining that they do not have much to say about the prayers, as they do not pray individually and they come to synagogue more for social reasons than for prayer. However, within each movement, one or more non-experts were interviewed. The participants were approached face-to-face or via emails, followed by a sheet of information concerning the aim of this research and a consent form. Some participants in the synagogue services came to speak to me during the community Kiddush or at other moments outside the ritual in order to ask or express opinions about certain prayers. These informal conversations are included in the analysis.

I interviewed three editors of the Progressive prayerbooks in order to examine their processes, which often involves both theological and ideological discussion concerning changes, and the challenges of reflecting the position of various
communities. Several clarifying questions were also asked through emails to elaborate on the choices Progressive editors introduced in their *siddurim*. However, they also spoke as leaders of ritual, and therefore their anonymity is preserved.

The interviews were mainly conducted in synagogues or interviewees’ workplaces. After gaining permission, a date was set and the entire interview was recorded (between 30 minutes to an hour), transcribed, analysed and coded in *NVivo* with a set of codes developed for this study. The aim of the data-gathering, transcription and analysis was to clarify how the ideology concerning *P/U* in the *siddurim* and in the ritual is shared by those who engage in Jewish prayer.

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were prepared in advance and went through an HREC process. None of the interviewees asked to be provided with the questions in advance. None of the interviewees asked for a transcript, even though there was such an option, but the majority expressed an interest in reading the final thesis.

Potential limitations and risks connected with this kind of analysis were regularly reflected upon during the research, such as the impact of my own background as a non-Jewish person on the respondents in the interview process. To avoid any ethical issues, the participants were informed of the aim of the study, about who was responsible, how the interview would be used, their right to withdraw, as well as confidentiality. A consent form with all the necessary information was presented to and signed by the interviewees.

Each participant was coded to preserve anonymity. The coding reflects affiliation to a movement: O for Orthodox, R for Reform and L for Liberal, and the interviewee’s position in the synagogue: a prayer leader (L), a rabbi (R), while in other cases gender is used (W for a woman and M for a man). The list of the interviews is included in the appendix.

The content of the thesis

P/U ideology of Jewish prayers and ritual in this volume is studied according to the *Shabbat* ritual, from preparation and entering the *Shabbat* (chapter one) to the final ritual of *Havdalah*, which marks the passage from sacred to ordinary time (chapter eight). The first chapter is focused on the activities which Jews undertake to prepare and create the reality that will help them enter the sacred time of *Shabbat*. Creating the
specific Jewish time and space is constantly negotiated with those belonging to a wider society. The first ritual that marks sacred time is *Hadlakat nerot* – Lighting of Candles. This short ritual with all its elements – time, actor, objects, texts – is analysed in chapter two. P/U ideology finds its expression not only in the ritual, but also through material culture and in personal memories attached to it. The next chapters present P/U of the *erev Shabbat* ritual at home and in the synagogue. Chapter three concentrates mainly on the ritual and prayers which traditionally are performed in the home setting. However as the *erev Shabbat* ritual is also performed in the synagogue context, chapter four analyses the various ways of performing it in the Orthodox and Progressive communities to show how ritual mode influences P/U.

In contrast to the above, where discussion around ritual is central, some chapters are dedicated mainly to the analysis of texts. In chapter five chosen texts from *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Erev Shabbat* are discussed, whereas in chapter seven prayers of *Shabbat* morning are the focus. These prayers are compared and contrasted with the commentaries included in the prayerbooks and are mirrored in interviewees’ comments. To assess the choice of Progressive editors of the *siddurim* concerning universalising the traditional prayers or turning towards more traditional specifically Jewish and particularistic expressions, the *Shabbat* morning ritual is studied in chapter six; this ritual is rich in specifically Jewish and particularistic ideology due to its central element - the celebration of the Torah.

Together with the first ritual of *Shabbat*, *Hadlakat nerot*, the closing service, *Havdalah*, forms a frame for the sacred time of *Shabbat*. In the final chapter the ideology of differentiation and distinction and its relation to P/U notions is discussed in connection with Jewish individual and group identity. With the establishment of Progressive Judaism its role has undergone amendments and transformations due to *Havdalah’s* particularistic vision of relations between Jews and the rest of the world. It makes *Havdalah* a fine example for the discussion of P/U in texts, ritual and ethnographical research.
1. Entering Shabbat

Preparation for Shabbat for an observant Jew is a mitsvah ('commandment' and by extension a 'good deed'). In various places the Talmud provides a list of activities which should be a part of preparation for the coming of Shabbat (e.g. B.Beits. 16a) so to fulfil the commandment to 'keep' (Ex. 20:8) to 'remember' (Deut. 5:12), to delight in and to honour Shabbat (Isa. 58:13-14). The laws of Shabbat do not only obligate one on the day itself, but according to Talmudic sages it should be remembered throughout the week, through concrete actions undertaken so that all work will cease the moment the sacred day begins. The Talmud teaches that each person, even when busy with the most sacred activities, should deliberately do something practical in order to prepare themselves for Shabbat. Later commentators likewise emphasized the importance of remembering Shabbat every day. A more recent scholar, Joseph B. Soloveitchik, taught that what distinguishes a religious Jew is not that she or he is a shomer Shabbat ('an observer of Shabbat'), but is shomer erev Shabbat ('one who prepares and is ready on the eve of the Shabbat'). He also claimed that there are many shomrei Shabbat but few Yehudim shel erev Shabbat ('Jews who prepare and are ready on the eve of the Shabbat') (cited in Peli (1975, p. 57)). Thus, preparation for Shabbat during the week plays an important part in shaping Jewish identity. It is also a time in which the tension between P/U elements is felt, as one must make choices which would not be a part of weekday activities.

Preparation for Shabbat, intensifying on Fridays, was mentioned by even the least practicing interviewees, as one of the key elements that forms their Shabbat experience, and allows them to approach this day as special. RStR3 said: 'Friday is important; you prepare your food, home, clothes, how you prepare for the service. It is a way of marking the sacredness of the day'. In the following section, I present ways in which my respondents prepare and enter their Shabbat experience, and I analyze to what extent P/U notions influence their choices and help them to make that sacred day specifically Jewish.

In this chapter, I also begin to trace particularizing nuances of Jewish ritual, which have allowed the Jews to survive and sustained their identity in galut, exile from their geographical sacred centre – from the Land and the Temple. Jewish memory is expressed throughout the prayerbook, but the sacred centre of Judaism also finds its place within ritual through the symbolism of time, objects, action, gestures, and food. Today, however, I perceive a certain ambivalence toward the sacred centre, which is
present in prayers, commentaries and the convictions of interviewees. Some related to Abraham Heschel's idea of the day of *Shabbat* as a 'sanctuary in time' (1955) – *Shabbat* comes to replace the physical centre with a spiritual one. Although contemporary Judaism is orientated around time rather than space, the memory of the Temple and hope for its reconstruction has not completely vanished, even from Progressive liturgies. The Temple and its memory have strong particularistic connotations, as they relate to a unique way in which Jews worshipped God at various points in history.

In the following section, I explore how Jews prepare for *Shabbat*, thereby allowing a 'sanctuary' to come into existence, not only in time but also in space, which is equally important to the experience of *Shabbat*.

1.1 Shopping and *kashrut*

Spending an entire *Shabbat* with four Jewish families (one Orthodox, two Reform and one Liberal) helped me to realize how much effort is put into the preparation for this day that lasts only 24-25 hours. Throughout the entire week, various activities were undertaken to get ready for *Shabbat*, but the turning point was the shopping list (written or mental). From that moment, the process of bringing together all the elements of the *Shabbat* experience intensified.

As a part of the preparation for *Shabbat* and of the willingness to honour that day, the majority of my interviewees explained that they think carefully and prepare a list of items necessary for a distinctive *Shabbat* meal and table. OL2 provides a typical view:

*Shabbat* begins on Thursday when I am told what to buy for *Shabbat*. So, I would go out at some point on Friday morning to buy candles, wine, *challot* and fish, eggs and groceries, the things that we need for the family. We buy it on Finchley Road, and there is a fish shop there, but we might also buy the fish in our local Sainsbury, but good fish (OL2).

The items for *Shabbat* should not only be fit for his Jewish home; being of good quality and taste is part of making the *Shabbat* experience a 'delight'. For OL2 (or, indeed, for the majority of my interviewees) this expectation does not necessarily mean food bought from a *kosher* store. Many Jews, including OL2, must decide to what extent they want to keep the laws of *kashrut* ('to be proper', 'suitable') and must consider not only what to buy but where to shop. To observe dietary laws means creating a traditional
Jewish home and living within particularistic boundaries of Jewish identity, which make a person distinct from non-Jews.

In the case of my Orthodox respondents, the majority declared that they follow halakhah concerning requirements for kashrut, and therefore they would strictly separate meat from milk and have two sets of dishes, and they have adapted their kitchen spaces accordingly. For OW5 and others, who keep an Orthodox kosher house, whatever they buy for their home ‘is part of what makes a meal – a Shabbat meal’ (OW5). For Jews like OW5, Jewish elements of ritual are less likely to be negotiated than for the majority of my interviewees, though even for them the presence of more strict or non-Jewish guests influences their ritual and adds to the P/U elements introduced during Shabbat. Boundaries as regards with whom one eats were often seen as a way of preserving Jewish identity and communal consistency. Mary Douglas’s theory concerning dietary laws confirms that with whom one eats and what one consumes relates to social relationships and concepts about ‘different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries’ (1975, p. 249).

For these reasons related to Jewish identity, although kashrut laws are complex, two of the Reform interviewees who were not brought up in Orthodox homes, introduced these in their home. RW3 said that while preparing to become Jewish she found it meaningful for her Jewish identity to keep kosher. Similarly RR3 chose to follow kashrut whilst at university because it provided ‘a sense of identity and connecting to peoplehood’. Entering their home, various colour labels (similar to those illustrated in photo 1) were noticeable in their kitchens; they are used as reminders to mark cupboards for utensils, pots, pans, etc. to indicate that they were reserved for meat or milk products.

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6 A full discussion of the detailed rules concerning kashrut is beyond the scope of this paper. For the Orthodox United Synagogues (UK), see e.g. http://www.kosher.org.uk/category/buying-kosher (Accessed 20 March 2020), though some of my respondents would also consult their own rabbis in cases of uncertainty. For Progressive views on kashrut, see Rothschild (2016, pp. 297-320), Tobias (2007, pp. 223-6).

7 On how kashrut was used to distinguish one’s Jewish identity from others in early Judaism, see Marks and Taussing (2014, pp. 129-38).
Such arrangements serve as an additional marker of the space as a Jewish one and ‘connect to Jewish community, history and life according to a set of values’ (RR3).

The majority of Progressive interviewees keep a form kashrut, called ‘biblical kashrut’ at home, which according to RW2 is eating meat only from kosher animals or for others becoming vegetarian or vegan. But this element of Jewish tradition related to kashrut can become one of the problems within family life and celebrations. Any guest who is stricter in their practice may require additional preparation and negotiation. Personally, I found it challenging at first to know what I could bring as a guest, especially to more traditional families whom I knew less well. The laws of kashrut are at the centre of Jewish ritual, as eating occupies an important aspect of Shabbat routine as well as an important particularistic aspect of Jewish identity. Frequently during my Shabbat visits, the theme of food and genre of food came up in discussions at the Shabbat table as well as during the interviews while discussing Shabbat preparations.

All of the interviewees agreed that what they eat is indicative of their P/U ideology, as it shows to what extent they want to express Jewish distinctiveness from other nations. A few, such as OL2, RStR1, LStR1, talked about the tension related to keeping kashrut. One of the Progressive rabbis referred directly to kashrut and identity, illustrating a traditional Liberal stand toward kashrut. Such voices were few, but there were also Liberal voices such as LR6, for whom not keeping kosher was an important part of her identity as a Progressive Jew and expressed belonging to wider society. She was brought up in a house in which
grandparents were totally committed Liberal Jews anti-\textit{kashrut}, which as they said separates us from our non-Jewish neighbours. But at the same time, they never compromised on their Jewish identity or religiosity.

She explained that \textit{kashrut} prevents Jews from visits in non-kosher houses, and thus LR6 does not accept the idea of \textit{kashrut} for Progressive Judaism, as it was often voiced in the beginning of the Reform. As I show above, however, contemporary Progressive opinions on this vary, and I observed a return to some sort of \textit{kashrut} as an expression of Jewish identity and belonging to a specific group. Others, such as LR3, add that \textit{kashrut} in the form of vegetarianism or veganism is also related to a concern for the environment and is additional to their Jewish identity.

It remains to briefly discuss the place of \textit{kashrut} in the synagogues, as food preparation and sharing a meal may be a part of the \textit{Shabbat} ritual in the community context. In all the Orthodox synagogues I visited, the food prepared for \textit{Shabbat} was \textit{kosher} and the kitchens were kept strictly according to US \textit{kashrut} rules. In the majority of Progressive synagogues, the cooking spaces were designated as vegetarian, and often an explanation was found in the kitchen as in photo 2 (where no meat products are allowed), but the products brought there were not expected to have a \textit{kashrut} certificate, or to have been cooked in a \textit{kosher} kitchen.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{photo2.png}
\caption{A synagogue \textit{kashrut} policy on the door to a kitchen in one of the Progressive synagogues.}
\end{figure}

When I asked members about choices concerning \textit{kashrut}, they explained that it was to do with forming a space where everybody felt ‘invited and included’ (RW2). Limiting dietary regulations to vegetarianism or fish blurs the traditional
particularistic notion of distinction through food, and facilitates non-Jewish participants who bring and prepare meals for the whole community.8

Two specific items need a separate mention as they cannot be missing from a Shabbat table: wine and Shabbat bread. They were seen as markers of Jewish ritual and markers of the day of Shabbat. For this reason, some of my interviewees had only kosher wine for Shabbat, including special sweet wine called yayin mevushal (‘cooked wine’, that can stay open for a longer period of time). For more traditional Jews, the issues with kosher wine also relate to the concept of what is prohibited for Jews, yayin nesech (‘poured out wine’ — in antiquity wine offered in non-Jewish sacrifices, see B.AZ 29b), and because of the fear of idolatrous ritual, wine should not be bought or received from non-Jews. Another factor in choosing wine (and other Shabbat food products) was linked with a conscious choice to support Israel’s economy. For a few, such as LR9, this was a reason not to choose such wine, as he strongly objected to what he called ‘any form of tribalism’, and to Israeli politics concerning settlements in which some Israeli wine is made. They would therefore always use non-kosher wine. The majority of my Progressive interviewees would buy more expensive but non-kosher wine, unless they expected more observant Jews as guests.

By contrast, challah bread was, on the whole, preferably bought in Jewish bakeries (as in photo 3).

Photo 3. Challah bread. For some Festivals and celebrations (as here the colourful one for Purim) challah bread may have a different shape or ingredients which symbolically relate to these occasions.

8 For Talmudic discussion of the permissibility of Jews and non-Jews sharing a kitchen, see e.g. TAZ 5:6, see also Rosenblum (2014).
Although halakhically (see OCh 167) almost any kind of bread could be used for Shabbat, all the interviewees saw this particular kind of bread (along with wine) as a central and integral part of the Shabbat meal: ‘Doing the Kiddush, having challah and the wine is still something that I look forward to every Friday’ (RW3). A few women who liked to cook told me that they prefer to bake bread themselves, as it forms a part of their spiritual preparation for Shabbat. RW3 said that the smell of baked bread announces to other members of her household that Shabbat is approaching and is ‘a call to change their routine from weekly activities to those permitted on Shabbat’. The custom of preparing Shabbat bread is also mentioned within the Orthodox service for the eve of Shabbat (ADPB, p. 301), during which a portion from M.Shabbat ch. 2 is read. Although challah in form of sweet braided bread is a part of the ordinary diet in Eastern Europe (in some Sephardi traditions other kinds of bread are used (e.g. laffa)), this kind of bread and the wine were seen by most of the interviewees as markers of sacred time and a meal specifically eaten on Shabbat.

1.2 Cooking

Shabbat meals are prepared from early afternoon – or sometimes even earlier. One of the forbidden works on Shabbat is creating a fire, so cooking for the whole Shabbat time needs to be prepared in advance. Both what is prepared and how it is prepared indicates Jewish identity and adherence to the Jewish traditional way of spending erev Shabbat. During my fieldwork, I observed that in the majority of kitchens that I visited a variety of Jewish cookbooks were to be found. The kind of food served at a Shabbat meal was rarely random in Orthodox homes, and often the recipes, such as for cholent (a traditional Shabbat stew served on Saturday), were passed through generations. Recipes were the carriers of a family history and an integral part of Jewish history. The laws concerning kashrut, the various customs of preparing food, cooking and keeping it warm (as the food on Shabbat should be warm, see Sh.Ar., OCh 318), the kind of specific dishes for festivals, integrating regional food and customs specific to places of origin, all these elements make the Shabbat meal a specifically Jewish experience. As David Freidenreich (2011, p. 4) argues

Food is not merely a source of vital nutrients. Because of its central role in human life and its practically infinite diversity, food serves as a powerful
medium for the expression and transmission of culture and, more specifically, of communal identity.

This is particularly true in Jewish ritual, not only because of the *kashrut* restrictions or the way food is prepared, but also because of the diverse kinds of food related to specific festivals (so rarely eaten outside designated times), to which symbolism is often attached and which serve as reminders of biblical narratives or historical events.

In more Progressive homes, traditional aspects of Jewish meal ritual might be less evident through the kind of food and the way in which it is prepared. RStR5 explained: ‘We often eat traditional *Shabbat* foods: *challah*, chicken soup, *kugel*, *cholent*’. All dishes named here are typical of the traditional *Shabbat* menu. Likewise RStR3, even though she buys the ingredients in the local (not Jewish) market and store, uses only Jewish cookbooks to find new recipes for the *Shabbat* meal. Another, OW7, had the custom of preparing from various cuisines around the world, but she would keep the *kashrut* regulations concerning the preparation of the food.

Thus while some eating practices distinguish one Jew from another Jew, they also express commonality between Jewish people around the world as they cook and gather to eat on *Shabbat* to mark the sacredness of this day. As Frederick Bird (1995a, p. 39) argues: ‘by eating together, people reconstitute themselves as identifiable groups, represent themselves to each other as such, and express their sense of connectedness’. At the same time this practice distinguishes Jews from non-Jews. Jewish meals are a point at which particularistic notions related to Jewish identity meet universalistic ones such as hospitality and welcome to those outside a specific group to create bonds within wider society.

### 1.3 Arranging the space for *Shabbat*

The most visible expression of the notion of a different day, of *Shabbat* sanctity and delight, is in the appearance and decoration of the *Shabbat* table and the arrangement of the space. The *Shabbat* table is not only used for *erev Shabbat*, as traditionally three meals are consumed over the course of *Shabbat* (B.Shab. 117b-118a).

Most interviewees said that Friday morning is the time when weekly cleaning is done. OW5 emphasized that the emotional and spiritual experience of *Shabbat* is channelled through a physical world, and therefore, for her, how the house looked was
important. She always had fresh cut flowers for Shabbat to enhance the Shabbat atmosphere in her home. A few of the interviewees had special cutlery and dinnerware, inherited or selected especially for Shabbat, which were stored in the cupboards on weekdays. Most interviewees had a selection of carefully chosen, beautiful objects in order to express hiddur mitsvah (‘beautification of a mitsvah’, a Talmudic principle of enhancing ritual objects through aesthetics; see B.Shab. 133b; S.S.R. 1.15; O.Ch. 65b), because ‘Jewish tradition values and endorses an aesthetic dimension’ (OW5). Some of these serve on weekdays as decoration, whereas others are carefully stored in safe places. According to OW5 and many others, ritual objects should be appealing to the senses through attractive and agreeable fragrances, tastes, textures, colours, and artistry. In that way the Shabbat table with its ritual objects and actions becomes a symbol of ‘belonging not only to a specific family, but also to beit klal Isra’el’ (‘house of all Israel’) (OM1). This sense of connectedness is strengthened by ritual objects that regularly find a place on the Shabbat table, even in most Liberal homes, where no traditional prayer is recited.

The table at which Shabbat meals are eaten is usually covered with a festive tablecloth on which Shabbat candles⁹ are placed. In all the homes I visited, both Orthodox and Progressive, I observed that people had a selection of Judaica for Shabbat, even though sometimes they preferred to use ordinary objects. Often such items have a personal story attached to them and are passed from one generation to another. Moreover, theological symbolism is attached to certain objects put on the table, recalling the Jewish narratives of the Exodus and the Israelites’ desert experience, which will be alluded to several times in Shabbat prayers. Thus the two loaves of bread traditionally signify the double portion of manna that fell on Shabbat (Ex. 16:22, cf. B.Shab. 117b), and the cover represents the dew that was on the earth in the desert and is often embroidered with Jewish symbols. For some of my interviewees challah covers also recalled personal history, as for LR5, who received hers from her mother before her conversion to Judaism. One of the most popular explanations for covering the challah, cited by OW5, is that the bread is covered so it is not offended, as the Kiddush (the benediction over wine) is recited first. In one of the more traditional homes that I visited, challah was also placed on a special board next to a decorated challah knife, both of which were also covered. OL2 related this custom to the symbolism of a knife as a war weapon (based on Isa. 2:4) and Shabbat should be the moment of experiencing peace. Hence, through these objects and their rituals, two

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⁹ See chapter 2.
founding narratives are re-enacted: origins of Jewish peoplehood in the Exodus and the desert experience, and the special relationship between God and the Jewish people.

Several interviewees also spoke of the symbolism of the Shabbat table in its relation to the Temple and its sacrifices, which also relate to this particular relationship. OR1 explained that, after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the rabbis established a system to replace the Temple sacrifices through prayer and study, and through a complex set of laws regarding food and its rituals (ways of preparation and consumption). In B. Ber. 55a, R. Johanan and R. Eleazar taught that ‘as long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now a man's table atones for him’. Thus, the table in a Jewish home is equated to the altar in the Temple. This symbolism is present throughout the erev Shabbat meal, e.g. when challah bread is prepared, one takes a small piece of the dough and burns it in memory of the Temple sacrifices. Challah is eaten with salt, which was also used to salt the sacrifices (Lev. 2:13; B.Ber. 40a).

Next to the challah bread is placed a Kiddush cup filled with wine, which adds another meaning to the Shabbat meal. As a symbol of completeness and perfected human life, the wine also alludes to Jewish eschatology (Berenbaum and Skolnik, 2007d). Thus, not only the past events of Jewish history become present at the Shabbat, but also the future, as Shabbat in rabbinic thought is seen as ‘one-sixtieth of the world-to-come’ (B.Ber. 57b). Although the symbolism discussed here is not often mentioned at table, most of the interviewees knew about it. RR5 saw it as a part of the Jewish sacred narrative and heritage and thus as important to her Jewish identity. For her, these and other less obvious symbolic meanings related to the table made a meal a Jewish one. Thus, whenever guests were present, she liked to mention it as a way of sharing about Jewish shared heritage and identity.

Those who have Shabbat prayers before the meal, also prepare siddurim for each person at the table. In the Orthodox homes, Hebrew-English or only Hebrew prayerbooks were distributed to each person. In Progressive homes, the siddur Forms of Prayers (2008) was also used, while several of the interviewees (e.g. RStR1, RStR3) had their own printed family prayerbooks as in photo 4.

The way in which the prayerbook is present and used at the Shabbat table ritual identifies and marks a meal as Jewish, and reinforces the communal perception of both otherness and self-identification. Moreover, the choice of a specific siddur indicates one’s ideology and where one sees oneself on the spectrum of Jewish philosophy.

In my discussion here, I have concentrated on home ritual around the Shabbat table, but in some Progressive synagogues, similar preparations would happen for the community (as in photo 5).

Photo 5. A Kiddush table at a Reform synagogue.
Instead of having the *Shabbat* meal at home, in five of the Progressive synagogues I visited the *erev Shabbat* meal was offered in the synagogue building on a regular basis. Thus, those who for various reasons do not have a *Shabbat* meal at home could take part in the *Shabbat* there. In two cases, the rabbis (as the synagogue leaders) decided that, because of their obligations to the community, their whole family should participate on a regular basis in the community *erev Shabbat*, and would only exceptionally have the *Shabbat* meal at home on a Friday night. Nonetheless, the table would still be prepared, as customarily they would have one meal together on Saturday. But the table and the space are not the only things in need of preparation, and in the next section I will discuss the internal and external preparations that individuals take upon themselves.

1.4 *Shabbat* clothes

In this section I am concentrating on the choices people make concerning their wardrobe as *Shabbat* approaches and what message concerning P/U ideology they (consciously or not) convey. During my fieldwork I observed that (even in the most Liberal setting) people like to mark *Shabbat* through the choice of the clothes they wear. The choice one makes may not only be motivated by the desire to mark the distinctiveness of *Shabbat* from rest of the week. It may also be a way of distinguishing one’s identity – belonging to a specific movement within Judaism, as if being different from the rest of society. With the approach of *Shabbat*, clothes need to be prepared due to the prohibition of work such as washing or ironing.

‘On *Shabbat* evening I wear a white shirt’ OL2 said, ‘It makes a difference, it is embodied, it is a marker – it is *Shabbat*’ (OL2). This custom is well rooted in the Jewish tradition and reaches back to rabbinic times, when the importance of how one is dressed on *Shabbat* is discussed (e.g. B.Shab. 113a, Ber.R. 11:2). In traditional settings, a formal dress code expresses belonging to a specific group – being part of the Jewish people, and living according to this group’s set of values, and being different or even separated (in more radical communities) from wider society. What one wears also indicates P/U elements of one’s ideology. Clothing marks relationships among wearers, relations with those who do not belong to a specific group, and the wearers’ own image of themselves (Joseph, 1986). Moreover, change in one’s ideology might be reflected in
changes in dress code, for example, abandoning specific garments when switching to a group that is more or less radical.

Each movement has its own dress code, and the stricter the observance in one’s community, the more distinctive the dress code. Hence, Iddo Tavory argues that:

Being an Orthodox Jew is to be born into, or later to enter, a world of visible signs. Even those considered less observant post signs of belonging on their bodies, on their doorstep, in their houses. Some of these signs seem welded to the Orthodox body: the black overcoat and hat, beard side locks, yarmulke. Like other uniforms, Orthodox attire provides a clear sign of belonging (2016, p. 135).

Likewise, Anthony Cohen (1985) says that the boundaries of a community are formed through a specific understanding of distinctiveness and the meaning that people attach to it.

Most Orthodox interviewees would agree with OW3 that the Orthodox wardrobe is divided into two categories of clothes: ordinary and for Shabbat. Additionally, in less strict Orthodox homes various head coverings (wigs or hats) for married women (see M.Ket. 7:6) are worn on Shabbat. Some such as OW3, cover their heads only in synagogue. Some more strictly Orthodox women and men wear a house-key as part of their belt, due to the prohibition of carrying. Such ordinary objects as keys therefore become ritualised items of attire (Heilman, 1976, p. 60) and express the wearer’s attitude to halakhah and to Jewish identity. Women in each of the Orthodox synagogues I visited had their own distinctive dress code (ways of head covering such as wigs, hats, fascinators; colour code; length and style etc.), which was adhered to in the women’s section. Men were expected to wear a white shirt and dark trousers, and in two visited communities most men wore black hats. In many places a few regulars challenged these expressions of community ideology (e.g. PObs.15OrtSyn.2; PObs.19OrtSyn.5). Purposefully not obeying these rules expresses convictions concerning integration and assimilation with wider society.

In Orthodox communities children have their own dress code. Small girls wore a kind of bridesmaid’s dress, that would have looked out of place in a non-Orthodox synagogue. In some synagogues, such a style was popular, in stark contrast to their mothers’ and sisters’ modest dark clothes. Boys often wore white shirts and black trousers, like their fathers, sometimes with white tsitsit ('ritual tassels’) hanging out of their trousers.
In Progressive settings, separating and choosing specific clothes for *Shabbat* is rather limited to what is more elegant, but which is not distinctive from what others wear in society. This way expresses a negotiation of Jewish tradition of special *Shabbat* clothes with universalistic values: keeping one’s identity but at the same time not separating oneself from wider society. Only on two occasions in a liberal home setting, where none of the prayers are traditionally recited, did the hosts admit that they do not make any effort to pick special clothes for *Shabbat* eve.

So, for more traditional Jews their identity is marked through the choice of garment for *Shabbat* to emphasize the otherness (holiness) of that day as well as belonging to a particular group. More Progressive Jews may make the choice not to mark the day of *Shabbat* externally through any specific style of clothing, but to focus instead on other aspects of that day, such as organizing a special meal with a festively decorated table. But clothes that need to be prepared before *Shabbat* eve, which are common to various extents to all three movements and which directly relate to the Jewish identity – are *tallit* and *kippah*. Traditionally these are also worn on weekdays, but some interviewees had special sets for *Shabbat*, while others, as the majority of the Progressive respondents said, used them only for *Shabbat*, festivals or religious rituals. Thus they had to be found and prepared before the ritual begun. They need to be discussed separately as they carry various meanings and further express P/U notions through shapes, colours, as well as their symbolism.

1.5 *Kippah* and *tallit*

The elegant outfit, which serves to distinguish *Shabbat* from ordinary time and its specific symbolism is strengthened by two ritual garments: a *kippah* (pl. *kippot*, ‘skull-cap’, a head covering called *yarmulke* in Yiddish) and a *tallit* (‘cover’, ‘cloak’, a prayer shawl) with *tsitsit* (‘fringes’). Both can be worn also on a daily basis by more observant Jews, while in the Progressive context they may be reserved for specific times and activities, as *Shabbat*, prayer or study.\(^\text{10}\)

The *Kippah* is a head covering, which according to *halakhah*, should be worn by Jewish men all the time (Sh.A., OCh 2). Unlike the *tallit*, there is no specific prayer associated with putting it on. The custom of covering one’s head, developed over the

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\(^{10}\) The *tefillin* (phylacteries) are used for ritual only on weekdays, thus are not discussed here.
centuries due to a combination of factors, also relates to P/U ideology: interpretations of certain biblical passages, anti-Semitic decrees, imitation of non-Jewish neighbours or the wish to differentiate from them, or simply fashion or a reaction to local climates (Rothschild, 2016, pp. 321-5). In contrast to the women’s tradition of covering their heads (to express their marital status), the kippah's symbolism is religious, relating to respect for God and to separating the heavenly and earthly spheres, as well as marking a distinct Jewish identity (as Christians pray bareheaded, cf. Chatam Sofer, Ned. 30b). For some, such as OM1, it expresses being observant and even ‘pride in being Jewish’, which would not be accepted by those who like OL2 want to be seen as integrated within British society. In the opinion of OL1 it is a generational and not only ideological difference in attitude toward externally expressing one’s belonging.

I observed a variety of practices and approaches within the Progressive movements, which also reflect upon people’s stances toward marking Jewish identity. The traditional way of reserving the kippah for men and seeing women’s covering of the head as a symbol of marital status is disregarded. It is understood rather as a sign of respect, of Jewish identity, or of following the custom of a community. In most cases it is expected that men wear a head covering.

Women are also encouraged for Torah services on the bimah ('elevated stand'), to wear a kippah or its equivalent (as in photo 6). A growing number of women choose to wear a kippah while participating in Jewish ritual, religious study, meals etc.

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11 Its shape is a modern invention, for historical development, see: Ydit (2007), Darwin (2017).
13 On the kippah controversy in American Reform context, see Furman (2001).
14 On changes concerning Jewish ritual garment and women, see Emmett (2007).
Two kippot, one for RR5 bead-work and another prepared for a son on the occasion of Upsherin – hair cutting ritual.

In Progressive settings black kippot are rarely seen. However, some wear the traditional tallit. Kippot are often prepared for special occasions such as a Bar/Bat Mitsvah ceremony or Mitsvah Day, and these may include a logo of an institution (e.g. LBC), or a favourite cartoon character or a logo of a soccer club for a child.

A collection of kippot of RR3, which include her grandfather’s traditional black kippah, a white Bukharan kippah (a style popular with women in some Progressive communities (PObs.6LibSyn.3)), two with more universalistic elements: a ‘fair trade’ mark, and a slogan ‘make poverty history’.
This symbol of Jewish identity may also carry additional symbolism that is particularistic (support for Zionism for example, expressed through white and blue colours and the shape of the kippah) or universalistic, such as a kippah with rainbow colours expressing support for LGBTQI rights (see photo 7).\(^{15}\)

In the early days of the Reform and Liberal movements there was a trend not to wear head coverings that were in any way distinctive from non-Jews (Rothschild, 2016, p. 328), and even today in a few Liberal synagogues (PObs.3LibSyn.1; PObs.11LibSyn.6) some of those who were brought up in that tradition will not cover their head, even if it causes problems for calling them to the bimah. Being asked about it, LM2 explained that ‘kippah was never my custom and to wear something distinctively Jewish is against my ideology of being part of wider British society’. In one of the Liberal synagogues (PObs.13LibSyn.7), a pamphlet was distributed to visitors which included the less traditional and universalising explanation that wearing a kippah is optional for men and women, and that a tallit is a reminder of the ‘responsibility to honour both God and our fellow human beings’. Such regulations concerning head-covering are generally established by a ritual committee in each synagogue, and whoever attends a service (whether they are Jewish or not) is encouraged to follow them. LR1, explaining the expectations of usage and rules concerning head covering, hints again at the changes taking place in many Progressive communities concerning ritual: the process of neo-traditionalisation, sometimes with a slight reinterpretation of the custom, as mentioned above. Worth noticing is that in the synagogue context, the kippah loses its distinctiveness as a garb related to Jewish identity and is understood more as a ritual garb.

This would not be the case with a tallit to which tsitsit are attached (a commandment derived from Num. 15:37-40, discussed in the Talmud e.g. M.Men. 3:7; B.Men. 44a; Masechet Tsitsit). The tallit is worn exclusively by Jewish men in Orthodox settings (regularly from the age of 13 or by married men (cf. B.Kid. 29b), depending on minhag hamakom) and never by a non-Jew (this also applies to all visited Progressive communities).\(^{16}\) A tallit should be used when one is called for a Torah reading, or when acting as the ba’al tefillah (‘master of prayer’, a prayer leader).

In a few services led by Orthodox women (PObs.1OrtSyn.4; POb.19.OrthSyn.5) these never wore a tallit, even though authoritative texts can be quoted in favour of women wearing them (e.g. B.Men.43a). Jewish feminists see challenging this situation

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\(^{15}\) On kippot and LGBTQI, see Milligan (2013, 2014).

\(^{16}\) For historical development, see Berenbaum (2007); Rothschild (2016, pp. 329-35)
as a key in the battle of women’s place in the Jewish community (Lohmann and Sered, 2007). On this matter, Ayala Emmett writes: ‘women who have taken to wrapping themselves in ritual garments such as the tallit signify a monumental change in a long tradition of the gendered synagogue’ (2007, p. 79). As Emmett argues, such women change the tradition, but they also ‘conserve tradition by tying themselves to the very same ancient commandment (Numbers 15) that men do, to put fringes on the corners of their garments’ (2007, p. 84). Despite the presence of this discussion in some London Orthodox communities, some of my interviewees prefer to keep to the traditional gender division (e.g. OW4).17

Tallit and tsitsit may be seen as exclusive, particularistic signs of Jewish identity, since through their symbolism they recall the commandments and the Jewish people’s covenantal relationship with God. The tallit is put on with a blessing (berakhah) stating the holiness (separateness) of the Jewish People: ‘Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in the tasselled garment’ (ASPB, p. 6). Not only may any blessing, as a ritual act be said only by a Jewish person, but because of the idea of sanctification, this formula expresses the particularistic exclusive relationship between the Jewish people and God. This special relationship between God and Jews is often presented in the metaphorical image of a marriage, which here seems even more relevant, as a tallit is worn by bridegrooms and may be used as a wedding canopy (Schonfield, 2006, p. 86).18

Wearing a tallit expresses a man’s relationship to the Jewish people and to their shared memory. At certain moments of the ritual (e.g. during the individual Amidah), an observer may see in more traditional settings (PObs.200OrtSyn.6) a ‘sea’ of white tallitot – as there is a tradition of covering one’s head and to be enfolded in it, symbolically subjecting oneself to God’s will (B.Shab. 118a). The prayer for putting on the tallit, even though it is performed individually, is composed in the plural, (‘who commanded us’), as individuals are inseparably connected with klal Israel. The tallit accompanies a Jewish person throughout life and can be seen in the larger frame of life cycle rituals (e.g. marriage, burial) and rites of passage.

17 Further discussion concerning feminist influence on Jewish ritual lies beyond the scope of this thesis. The website https://www.jofa.org (Accessed 16 September 2019) contains several articles concerning Orthodox women views toward ritual objects such as tallit, tsitsit, tefillin which traditionally are used by men; also Marcus (2005).
Orthodox men usually wear a big white *tallit* with black or blue stripes, (represented by photo 8), which is traditional.

*Photo 8. Traditional tallitot: one white and black tallit and a second more colourful one. On the top 'atara ('a crown, decoration'; neckband worn on top of tallit) with a traditional blessing recited before putting on the tallit.*

In only one synagogue (PObs.1OrtSyn.3) did a few men wear *tallitot* with differently coloured stripes. In Orthodox synagogues (as well as in Progressive ones, which will be discussed next), the colours and style of the prayer shawl express attitudes toward tradition similar to *kippot*, as well as an ideology as regards issues such as strictness in *halakhah*, equality between genders, Zionism, settlements in the West Bank, homosexuality, feminism.

The dominant style of *tallit* in Progressive synagogues is also the traditional one, though some (particularly women who choose to wear the *tallit*) choose more colourful ones, often expressing additional ideological principles, as illustrated by two *tallitot* in photo 9.
Progressive interviewees felt that they have a choice in wearing a tallit for public ritual. LR1, as a synagogue leader, often encourages women to try to wear a tallit, as for her, and for RR4, putting on a tallit is an important part of Jewish ritual, engaging the body and not only the intellect in the prayers. RR2 sees a tallit as a tool to form a boundary between the universalistic world and the particularistic, not only externally (as only a Jew should wear it), but most of all internally, that is leaving for a moment everything unrelated to the Jewish ritual in which one engages. As much as this may be true, LR2 mentioned that the tallit may also form an unwanted barrier, if a service aims at expressing inclusivity and informality. Thus even though he values this practice, there were situations in which he felt it was unnecessary and advisable not to wear a tallit.

LR3 referred to the importance of using a tallit as related to its symbolism – the mitsvot and the obligation to follow them: ‘tsitsit and tallit are reminders about being the best person you can be, achieving your potential’. Thus, the tallit often accompanies a Bar Mitzvah ceremony as a sign of this responsibility to lead a Jewish life, which a young person is officially beginning. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies in some Progressive communities included at the beginning of the Shabbat service an additional ritual of putting on a tallit (sometimes personalised through colours, symbols, size, fabric), and of reciting the traditional blessing.
This particular ritual object can cause tension concerning the participation of a non-Jewish parent in that ceremony on the bimah. All my Progressive respondents admitted that although such a person would be welcomed on the bimah next to a Jewish child, he or she would be requested not to wear a tallit, as it is a ritual garb reserved for a Jew. As LR4 explains:

I would let the non-Jewish partner of bnei mitzvah be next to the Jewish partner and to say a prayer in English at that stage. But that is it. Nor should they wear the tallit as this is part of belonging to the “Jewish club” (LR5). Thus, the tallit is seen as a ritual object to be used exclusively by Jews in a public service; it is connected with communal shared Jewish identity and with the particularistic privileges and duties that flow from this.

1.6 Guests

Traditionally, preparation for Shabbat includes planning and inviting guests for one (or more) of the Shabbat meals. Hachnassat Orechim (‘welcoming guests’) in rabbinic literature is as important as mitzvot such as visiting the sick or studying Torah (B.Shab. 127a), and this commandment is quoted in the ADPB (p. 17) as one of the texts to be read every day (including on Shabbat mornings).

Frequently, when asked for an interview concerning Shabbat, I was invited to come and experience Shabbat. On most occasions I was not the only guest for the meal and often not the only non-Jew. My interviewees confirmed that they liked to have guests or to be guests themselves, as this was part of Shabbat tradition, and it added to their sense of community. RW2 said: ‘I like to have non-Jewish friends. It is in a way a path toward better understanding each other, getting to know our customs and traditions’. Inviting non-Jews can also be seen as an opportunity to learn something about the non-Jewish world, as when during the Shabbat meal with OR1, most of the time was spent talking about my work in interfaith dialogue and changes in Christian theology.

Having a non-Jewish presence in a Jewish home therefore allows universalistic notions to enter into a particularistic setting, since not only some of the rituals were negotiated, but conversations also tended to change from Jewish-related topics to more general ones concerning, for example, politics or current affairs. Concerning ritual,

19 Such a case is also discussed in the form of Progressive responsa, see Washofsky (2010, p. 5).
when I was a guest for the first time, on most occasions I was asked if I felt comfortable or knew the ritual, such as *Netilat Yadayim*.\(^{20}\) My travelling on *Shabbat* (one of the prohibited activities on *Shabbat*) seemed to trouble only one of my hosts. For one *Shabbat*, in a more traditional home where *Shabbat halakhah* is strictly observed, I received an invitation to stay overnight so I would not have to travel. This illustrates that inviting less strict (or non-) Jewish guests is not a simple undertaking for more traditional Jews, and may require accepting more universalistic elements than if I had shared the same particularistic identity and understanding of ritual.

### 1.7 Studying and praying

As *Shabbat* time is a source of holiness and remembering God as the Creator and Sovereign, Jews are instructed to prepare themselves not only physically, but spiritually through the study of Torah, Talmud or meditation. Even though the weekly Torah portion is heard by those who come to synagogues, traditionally on Saturday morning,\(^{21}\) it is customary for the portion to be read before *Shabbat* not only in Hebrew but in the everyday language (cf. Sh.Ar., OCh 285:2). Photo 10 presents two kinds of *chumashim* (sing. *chumash*, lit. ‘five’; the five books of the Torah printed separately in book form, often with translation and commentaries), one with a more traditional commentary and the other aimed at Progressive readers, which is used by several of my interviewees for Torah study.

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\(^{20}\) Discussed in ch. 3.5.

\(^{21}\) In Progressive synagogues it might also occur on Friday night, see chapter 4.
Reading Torah portion and commentaries is part of preparation for Shabbat for all the service leaders and rabbis. RR5 said:

Thinking about Shabbat does start from at least Tuesday or Wednesday, but in fact I produce a sermon and a service sheet on the previous Sunday, so that’s already done on Sunday. So there’s lots of preparation in the house as well as in the rabbinic sense.

The study of the weekly Torah portion with commentaries related to it is central to being Jewish. In general, this thread of thought and particularistic ideological ideas of election and mission will be pursued more in the next chapters, which explore how it is expressed within the prayers and ritual itself.

1.8 Giving tsedakah

As money cannot traditionally be spent or carried on Shabbat, there is a custom of putting coins into a special box before lighting the Shabbat candles. This custom is related to the concept of tsedakah (‘righteousness’, charitable giving). As part of the anticipation of Shabbat, a couple of Orthodox women mentioned the Shabbat tsedakah box (see photo 11), and putting money in it. Loose coins may be placed there at other times, but the eve of Shabbat is a preferred occasion.
One is instructed to do this only in the Orthodox siddur (ADPB, p. 255), and in the Orthodox homes I visited, the box was usually placed in a room where the candle lighting ritual took place. After collecting a certain sum, the family decides where it should be donated.

Only a couple of Progressive respondents said that they kept this custom. Others explained that, although social-justice involvement plays an important role in their family life, they do not have a tseddakah box, and that other ways of giving donations work better for them. The commitment to social justice in Progressive Judaism is one of the most important values, and in the early history of the Reform and Liberal movements, their founders rejected many traditional rituals in order to put more emphasis on ‘ethical values’ (Tobias, 2007, pp. 215-9).

In my interviews I rarely asked about what kinds of charities people support, but what became evident in conversations and data from fieldwork was that in all three movements social justice commitment is intrinsic to Jewish identity. People were asked to support charitable causes in most Shabbat services through announcements. Once on Shabbat it was announced that a special collection was organized for Syrian refugees in an Orthodox synagogue (PObs.18OrtSyn.4), and members could bring the donation to the office during the week. These are examples where traditional ritual, which can be

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22 I suspect that the balance of supporting Jewish and non-Jewish causes might differ between strict Orthodox and Progressive communities, but such research is beyond the scope of the thesis.
particularistic in its wording, could be contraposed by one’s ideology, action, and outreach toward the wider world.

As was mentioned regarding those who keep this custom, this act directly precedes the beginning of Shabbat, which traditionally begins with the lighting of the candles that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the P/U elements included in preparing for and entering Shabbat. I began by briefly presenting traditional sources that emphasise the role of preparing for the experience of Shabbat, although the siddurim that I examined only imply the need for preparation. The striking contrast between the prominence of preparation in Jewish life and its absence within the siddur is worth noting.

I examined activities related to the theological ideas of ‘honouring’, ‘delighting’, ‘observing’ and ‘remembering’ Shabbat, which are chosen as ways of creating the Shabbat experience. Each activity discussed here, both external ones such as shopping, cooking, arranging the space, preparing garments, inviting guests and giving tseddakah, and internal ones such as studying and praying, forms part of a process of entering Shabbat and includes elements that reflect P/U ideology. I also opened a discussion which will be continued through the thesis about the choices made by interviewees concerning material objects used for Shabbat rituals, in relation to expressing Jewish specific and particularistic notions. Challah, wine and candles were identified as indispensable for Shabbat evening, though by introducing non-kosher products their particularistic impact was sometimes weakened.

Through the analysis of ethnographic data, I considered differences in attitude towards preparation that are held by Jews from the three movements. Throughout my analysis, I have discussed to what extent P/U ideology influences one’s choice to mark that day as separate and special. I also noted negotiations regarding ritual, inviting non-Jews, and the effect of the informants’ personal convictions concerning the notion of election and of being part of the People of Israel. Although, as I have shown, preparation for Shabbat plays various roles in Jewish life, depending on factors such as one’s adherence to Jewish traditions, all my interviewees agreed that it is present in their weekly routine. For some it may start the day after Shabbat, while for others for whom
the religious aspect of Jewish identity has little importance, preparation may be present only through cleaning or shopping for the Friday meal and finding prayerbooks and a kippah. Nonetheless, all my interviewees agreed that Shabbat needs marking not only through elements of ritual, but also through some preparation to ensure that one is ready for Shabbat when the time of the lighting of the Shabbat candles arrives. This is the ritual I shall analyze next.
2.
Lighting the Candles

*Hadlakat Hanerot* is a short ritual consisting traditionally of a couple of gestures and one blessing, but as perhaps the best-known Jewish ritual, it has found expression in many paintings around the world. A woman with covered hair, her hands covering her eyes, standing by a small table with a white tablecloth and bearing two white candles is an image familiar to most Jewish people and also many non-Jews. It is therefore worth opening the discussion by analysing some statements by my interviewees concerning the place of *Hadlakat Hanerot* in their private lives and its relationship to Jewish identity. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the ritual itself both at home and in a community setting, throwing light on P/U notions it transmits.

Academic publications which partly discuss the ritual of the Lighting of Candles include those by Israel Ta-Shma (1975), Kathryn Hellerstein (1995) and Meir Ydit (2007). But none engages in depth with ethnographical data, especially in a British context, as does this chapter. For its analysis of the role of language in relation to identity and P/U notions, an article Magdaleine McBrearty (1995) was particularly helpful, as the blessing for *Hadlakat Nerot* is the first recited prayer on *Shabbat*. This presents an analysis of the role of non-vernacular language, based on ethnographic research in one of the Canadian Reconstructionist synagogues. The more theoretical approach to language and identity in a work by Mary Douglas (1975) influenced me to look beyond the words in search of hidden meanings, as P/U is often also expressed in such a way.

2.1 Candles as markers of time and identity

*Shabbat* time is framed by two ceremonies that are prescribed in the Talmud (B.Naz. 3b, cf. *Hilkhot Shabbat* 29:1;) that is *Hadlakat Hanerot* and *Havdalah* (‘separation’, ‘distinction’).23 These two rituals are the traditional borders that separate holy from secular time, setting distinctions between what is *kodesh* (‘sacred’) and what is *chol* (‘secular’). A few interviewees were conscious of this framing, but somehow the second ritual tends to be lost for the majority of Progressive respondents. For the majority of

23 See ch. 8.
my interviewees, it did not have the same prominence in their Jewish religiosity. RStR3 said:

Friday is important, how you prepare yourself: you prepare your food, clothes, you prepare the service, your home, your candles. I mark the beginning but not the end. It is also important for me to be together for the meal, I make sure that the children are at home, and yeah ... I know when it is finished but I do not mark it.

For others, the ritual of candle lighting at the beginning and end of Shabbat is an important reminder of a particularistic moment in Jewish time and life, a moment of identification with Judaism and with a specific group – Israel. In the same way, some understood all ritual objects as important tools in building and sustaining one’s Jewish identity. RL1 explained: ‘We need the reminders of the Shabbat candles and the familiarity attached to them. They are the map of our identity and they give us a sense of rootedness’. In a similar vein, OL1 recalls another aspect of this special ritual memory:

The Shabbat candles are enormously powerful because anyone who grew up in a Jewish household will never forget standing with mother when she lit them. And yet, they are simple objects: a couple of candles and box of matches and somebody lights it. But the depths it gives you ... the prayers that are written around it, what it means to the person who does it is profound. This is the language of tradition.

For OL1, and many Orthodox and Progressive Jews this ritual is a carrier for memories of marking a specific moment in time, when certain aspects of family life are especially emphasised: having time for the family, love, warmth, care, etc. Furthermore, the interviewee like several others mentioned that as a child he remembered his mother lighting the candles, which suggests how this ritual helps to pass on Jewish tradition to the next generation. During my visits, when children were present at the moment of Hadlakat Hanerot, if they were tall enough, they were also invited to light the candles. Nearly all interviewees kept and used candlesticks received as an heirloom. It can be argued that a ritual which is enforced by positive, personal connotations is less easily abandoned than one which might seem theologically important but emotionally neutral.24

24 Which resonates with Harvey Whitehead’s argument in Whitehouse and Lanman (2014, pp. 680-1) concerning the role of emotions in ritual.
RR5, and several others across all movements, reiterated the status of this ritual by describing what happens when they are outside the home setting:

I would not even think of not lighting candles. I mean even when we are on holidays we take candles with us. We have lit candles on the windowsill of hotel rooms. You are in the week; you light the candles, you're in Shabbat. A different time, in a different zone. Once you've lit the candles you are there.

Even the least religious respondents kept saying that Hadlakat Hanerot is significant, even if they do not do it themselves. If the Shabbat candleholders which I brought with me for the interviews were not chosen as the most important ritual object, they were never indicated as not significant. During these hours of conversation, I began to understand that even if theology does not take a dominant place in their narratives, this specific ritual is inextricably linked with Jewish identity. ‘I had a friend’, RR3 told me during our interview, ‘who was telling her mother: “I remember Shabbat and lighting the candles, but I do not keep Shabbat”’. Even though this person did not express any specific Jewish elements of ritual beyond naming the day, she kept doing it. These two simple candles kindled at a specific time act as carriers of Jewish identity, sometimes for many generations. A rabbi who regularly participates in the processes of conversion to Judaism, discussing the Hadlakat Hanerot in relation to Jewish identity referred to descendants of maranos or anusim, Jews who were forced to abandon Judaism and to convert to Christianity, but who passed this ritual to the next generations:

You know the number of people who come to the beit din ['a rabbinical court'], who want to convert, and when you probe their history, their grandmother used to go down to the basement on Friday night and light candles and you never knew why and she could never explain – hidden Jews. These things [rituals] have a life of their own (RR2).

Such examples show how Hadlakat Hanerot on Shabbat evening is integral to Judaism, and how closely it is related to Jewish identity. This ritual is also perceived today as a vital part of Jewish tradition and identity, even though in many conversations, especially with members of the Progressive Movement, the particularistic notions, further discussed in the next paragraphs, were rarely overtly mentioned.
2.2 The candles and candleholders

Kindling lights on Shabbat is an ancient ritual, already well established in the time of the Mishnah (cf. M.Shab. 2:6). In antiquity, one oil lamp was used to provide light in a house. The custom of an additional light was instituted for various reasons, including to honour the day (kibbud Shabbat), to bring peace to one's home (sh’lom bayit), and to beautify the experience of Shabbat (oneg Shabbat) (see Rashi to B.Shab. 25b; OCh 263:1; see Ta-Shma, 1975). Arguably, the use of the single light was prohibited, so another was added that could be used, for instance for reading.

In my conversations, I asked about the origin of the ritual objects to explore their significance for interviewees and whether P/U meanings are attached to them. In this section, I present the origin and appearance of my interviewees' candles and candlesticks and the choices they presented.

For some of my respondents, buying candles was on their Shabbat shopping lists, as the candles should be new. For others, these have to be a certain shape and colour. Many more traditional interviewees said that they like long, white candles that last between three and six hours, well into the Shabbat time. They stay lit and eventually burn out. OW3 explained that according to halakhah they may not be blown out or moved from their location after they are lit. Photo 12 shows a box of candles which is available in some Jewish stores.

Photo 12. Traditional Shabbat candles.

None of the three siddurim examined suggest the colour or shape of the candles, just the fact there should be two of them. This is explained in one of Sacks’s commentaries
as an ‘ancient custom’ (ADPB, p. 254-5). Nonetheless, additional candles may be added for each child or, as in photo 13, for each woman participating in the meal.

![Shabbat table with candlesticks](image)

*Photo 13. A Shabbat table with candlesticks of various European origins.*

Candles or tealights can be used without holders or candlesticks, though the majority of my interviewees chose holders carefully. For example, knowing my Polish background, some Orthodox interviewees showed me Judaica of Polish origin that had been passed to them by a grandmother, or bought in Poland to create a link with past generations. In contrast, Progressive Jews, even though they might own more traditional candlesticks, liked to choose or prepare their own. Thus, Jewish specific notions are added to relatively ordinary (universal) objects, through the process of selection, quantity, decoration and special usage. According to LR5 ritual objects should appeal to the senses through attractive and agreeable fragrances, tastes, textures, colours or artistry.

But *hiddur mitsvah* – aesthetic beauty – might not be the first reason that candles or candlesticks are chosen, as their value might lie elsewhere.
Photo 14 presents candleholders made by the daughter of a rabbi, who explained: ‘These are much less gorgeous – my daughter’s first home-made candlesticks – we keep them in the cupboard, now that she agreed to use grandma’s (as in photo 15) (RR3).

In the majority of cases, the origin of candlesticks passed within a family is known (the RR3’s smaller candlesticks, with more traditional shape, came from Poland, where the grandmother was born), or they are attached to a personal memory, such as a gift for a
bat mitsvah (RStR5), or because they were bought on a trip to Israel (LStR1). Such candleholders, even if they are no longer used (as with the ones prepared by the daughter), are stored and kept for their sentimental value, and also because, once used in the ritual of Hadlakat Hanerot, they receive a degree of ‘sacramentality’ (to use Christian terminology). Such ritual objects cannot be deposed of, so are stored in a designated place.

The place where the candles to be lit are located may also have some significance. Although there are halakhic rulings for this matter (cf. Sh.A. 277:1), they were never mentioned to me in the interviews.

In a few cases, the candles were placed to one side, where the wind would not blow them out. But as they add a special atmosphere to the Shabbat celebration, they usually stand on the Shabbat table (cf. Rashi to B. Shab. 25b) as in photo 16.

![Photo 16. A Shabbat table in a Liberal home.](image)

Just one person, OW1, acknowledged that she knew that it is not necessary to use candles or olive lamps, and that switching on the electrical light or a torch would be enough to fulfil the mitsvah. OW6 saw this custom in a hospital in Jerusalem, but even though she understood the reasons for it – in hospital it is not permitted to kindle a flame – she preferred to use candles, as they add a festive atmosphere. Not only is the
appearance of candles and their holders important, but also when, where and how they are used, as will be discussed next.

2.3 When

The Hadlakat Hanerot commandment is time bound, i.e. confined to a particular day and to a specific stage of sunset. Performing it has consequences and demands negotiation in personal lives, as well as in the life of a Jewish community. The traditional time for candle lighting differs in certain Orthodox communities, but a minimum of 18 minutes before sunset was indicated to me as the ‘correct’ time for the ritual (OL1). Orthodox respondents were conscious of the halakhic time and said they try to keep it as strictly as possible. This means that in winter, when sunset falls around 3.30pm, work must be stopped earlier, so that one can return home before Shabbat.25 Such short days can cause problems to those who work in non-Jewish contexts. But in summer, when sunset is late, the ritual can be done as late as around 9pm, which also means that the service in more traditional synagogues and family dinner take place late. Such practices may influence one’s life enormously if one does not live in Israel, where a majority follow the same lifestyle and rhythm. Some interviewees who keep Shabbat admitted that they began to celebrate it around 6pm or 7pm, when everything would be prepared, and would then stop work and enjoy time with their family (OW2, OW5).

Knowing that the service on Erev Shabbat is at a fixed time in Progressive synagogues,26 nearly always between 6pm and 7.30pm, I was expecting a flexible attitude concerning the halakhic time for candle lighting in private settings. This assumption was not totally wrong, but some interviewees were conscious of the precise, traditional Shabbat time. RStR5 affirmed:

my Shabbat starts at the traditional, halakhic start of Shabbat - I have a calendar which tells me when that falls week-by-week. My wife is a bit more flexible in her approach, so she might still be cooking after Shabbat comes in, but we light

25 For a discussion around contemporary issues related with work and halakhah within Orthodox and Reform approaches, see e.g. Shabbat-if-i-am-struggling-to-find-a-job-1.148045 (Accessed 20 August 2020).

26 In London, only a minority of Progressive Synagogues do not have regular Erev Shabbat services or none at all.
candles at the traditional halakhic time which is, broadly, when I begin my 
*Shabbat* observance.

For a few, keeping to specific times was an essential part of the *Shabbat* 
experience. For others, *Shabbat* was ‘their’ time, which began with the service, or when 
they were ready, which involved mediating between this particularistic element of 
their Jewish tradition and the modern society in which they live.

## 2.4 Who

Lighting *Shabbat* candles is a positive rabbinic commandment and traditionally 
belongs to the women’s domain. As a positive (what one *should* do) and time-bound 
commandment, it is one of the few (according to Orthodox views) that women are 
obligated to fulfil, because women are exempt from nearly all such *mitzvot*. Progressive communities depart from this in ways that lie outside the scope of this 
thesis. In Orthodox as well as Progressive contexts, in both private and public settings 
negotiations might take place with regard to the identity of the agent.

In a private setting at home, various scenarios are possible depending on 
knowledge, attentiveness toward ritual, inclusiveness or strictness towards *halakhah*. 
Customarily, in Orthodox households it is a woman (the mother) who lights the 
candles, as is confirmed by Sacks in his commentary to *Hadrakat Hanerot*: 'The ancient 
custom is for women to perform this commandment since they are the primary 
guardians of the home' (ADPB, p. 254). He sustains the traditional notion of the Jewish 
woman’s role in this ritual, and that it is mainly a woman’s role to create a ‘Jewish’ 
home. Sacks limits the agency to women, even though *halakhah* obligates a man to light 
the candles in cases where a woman is not present.

Frequently, for Orthodox as well as Progressive women this moment is the only 
time for prayer on Friday night. It is centred around their Jewish family and those 
whom they know and who specifically need prayer because of a specific life situation. 
Sacks alludes to this custom in his *siddur* commentary: 'It is also customary at this point 
to say a prayer for the welfare of one’s family that their lives may be illuminated by the

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27 Except for e.g. *Hakhel* (Deut. 31:12, *simha* offering (Deut. 15:14, T.Hag. 1:4), *Hadrakat hanerot* (…), 
eating *matsah* on *Pesah* (T.Pisha 1:34), drinking the four cups of wine on *Pesah* (B.Pes. 108a-b) *Kiddush hayom* (B.Ber. 20b), reading the *megillat Esther* on Purim (B.Meg. 4a); lighting the *Chanukkah* candles 
(B.Shab. 23a).

28 For a discussion of Progressive positions, see e.g. Alexander (2013).
Torah and its teaching’ (ADPB, p. 255). His suggestion as to what the woman should ask for is specific and primarily concerns the religious aspect of Jewish identity. However, women were creative in this sphere. Over the centuries and still today, many personal prayers have been created, and are included in prayerbooks for women. In the past they were mainly created in Yiddish, and are known as techines (or in Hebrew techinot). One such prayer which contains several particularistic petitions, such as one for the rebuilding of the Temple, was mentioned by OW5, who for Friday night uses ‘A Jewish Woman’s Prayerbook’ (Lavie, 2008, p. 156-8). RW3 indicated that more contemporary techines are found on the website ‘Ritualwell.org’, which has prayers in English or Hebrew, some adapted from traditional ones.29

In the context of a Progressive Jewish home, who lights the candles might be a more inclusive decision. Since men and women feel equal partners, lighting the candles might be performed by either, though sometimes it is still left for women. Even then, it is mostly motivated by choice and not by the traditional halakhic reasoning.

I was interested in what happens in a home setting if there are non-Jewish guests, thus in ritual boundaries. One simple solution that I observed was to prepare only two candles, which were lit by the Jewish host, a mother or a child. In one visited Orthodox home, two candles for each woman present were prepared, whether they were Jewish or not Jewish, but the blessing was recited by the host. Thus, the boundaries between P/U were kept to a certain extent, participants are not only observers, but could actively take part in Jewish ritual.

As I have pointed out with regard to the traditional context, the particularistic element is important and sustained by the ADPB commentary. But this does not fully mirror what happens in private homes, especially the more Progressive ones. The presence of non-Jews during Jewish rituals may have influence in both directions – by strengthening the particularistic boundaries, e.g. verbal comments concerning the traditional way of performing Hadlakat nerot (RStR1); or causing them to be renegotiated, e.g. by asking the non-Jewish person to light the candles (as did RStR6).

2.5 How

The act of lighting the candles is traditionally accompanied by a gesture of inward-waving motion of the arms, followed by drawing the hands over the flames and

bringing them towards the eyes, as if bringing the light toward the person. The hands then cover the eyes, while uttering the benediction. In the *siddur*, Sacks explains only the gesture of covering one’s eyes from a halakhic perspective: usually the *berakhah* is said before the act, but here, it is the act that precedes the prayer. Moreover, he argues: ‘the blessing is made afterward, so that the lighting precedes mental acceptance of the day and its prohibitions’ (ADPB, p. 255).

During my fieldwork, I repeatedly observed the gesture that Sacks does not mention, the movements of the hands. None of my interviewees, the non-rabbis or the leaders, were able to explain why they were performing it, but even in the Liberal context, which emphasizes rationality and the dropping of ‘superstitions’, some were keeping it. One leader provided an idea also found in *The Jewish Catalog*, that it serves to welcome the *Shabbat*, and it is a way of drawing the *Shabbat* atmosphere inside a person (Siegel et al., 1973, p. 43). Some gestures clearly have senses unknown even to the performers themselves, but which might feel simply ‘more Jewish’ or ‘more traditional’ or ‘more authentic’. Thus, these gestures may provide a feeling of belonging to a particular group, or as some called it, to a ‘tribe’ (LR4E). This gesture is less performed in the Liberal setting than in more traditional ones.

It seems that not only objects and actors, but actual practice or performance can become a carrier of particularistic notions. Gestures that are not part of a natural way of lighting candles strongly relate to Jewish tradition. These made little sense for the interviewees, except that this was done by those who taught them, in the majority of cases a mother.

2.6 *Hadlakat Hanerot* in a communal context

*Hadlakat Hanerot* usually does not happen in Orthodox synagogues because it is primarily a home ritual. One of the reasons for it would be a communal meal followed by the service. However, the candles would not be put in a central position, but rather on a side table (OL2).

In the Progressive synagogues that I visited, every *Kabbalat Shabbat* service started with the lighting of *Shabbat* candles. Moreover, as LR2 explained: ‘even though a synagogue is not a traditional place of lighting candles, nevertheless in Liberal tradition it became a part of the Friday night services process’.
It is an example of how the home ritual has migrated to the synagogue setting in a specific context, and I shall refer to similar examples later (e.g. the case of Havdalah in some Progressive communities - see ch. 8). In one Liberal synagogue, members gather once a month on Friday evening in a synagogue for a ritual that starts with Hadlakat Hanerot, but only a few chosen prayers are recited. I was interested in why they do not simply gather for a meal, as the ritual was short. The explanation was that ‘some members would not do anything Jewish at home’ (LW1), and it is a good opportunity to familiarise them with this ‘beautiful custom’. Such Shabbat rituals followed by meals in Progressive synagogues happen regularly, mainly for the purpose of community-building, but also as a way of providing a space where Jews might ‘feel at home’ (LW1) among other Jews (though non-Jewish spouses might be present), within a Jewish space.

It is also significant to mention a shift that has happened in most Progressive synagogues as regards the placement of the objects and of the ritual. In the Progressive synagogues visited, the ritual objects were usually placed on a bimah (a ‘platform’) in front of the ark or on a smaller table, specially prepared in front or in the centre of a synagogue. The candlesticks were nearly in all cases classical ones, made of bronze or silver, with a long stand, in which two white candles were placed (see photo 17).

I observed various scenarios for the way erev Shabbat begins. In some Progressive synagogues (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn.1) the clergy entered the space and the
congregation stood up in silence. The rabbi called a person or persons by name to light the candles; the *erev Shabbat* service followed. In other synagogues (e.g. Pobs.19LibSyn.6), the ritual might be more accentuated by the way it was introduced, to which I shall return in a moment.

The choice of person who performs or fulfils the *mitsvah* varies, and it is perceived as an honour to be invited to light the candles in the synagogue. I asked leaders how it is decided who lights the candles. All agree that when it is done in public it must be a Jew, because as LR2 explained, one must say a blessing, and blessings as such are ‘reserved only for Jews’. Lighting the candles is universal as an action, but through specific symbolism and the words (*berakhah*) that accompany it, it becomes particularistic, related to Jewish identity. Thus, in a Progressive community any Jewish woman or a Jewish man can be chosen to light the candles. And as it is perceived as an honour to perform this ritual on behalf of a community, the choice of such a person may be related to a rite of passage such as *Bar/Bat Mitsvah*, a personal celebration such as a birthday, a person’s special role in the community, or because of an unusual contribution.

Being aware of the reality in Progressive synagogues, where many of the families are of mixed-faith, I was interested in the boundaries where rites are performed that would normally be reserved to those who are Jewish by birth or choice. Customs and tradition are strong factors, but the family ties and emotion are just as strong. Therefore, I asked some leaders about whether – and, if so, how – particularistic convictions about boundaries in this ritual are negotiated. In a case of candle lighting by a *bar/bat mitsvah*, the parents, no matter what their religion, are usually invited to stand next to the child as a moment of recognition for their effort to bring up a child in the Jewish faith. But the non-Jewish parent does not perform any ritual gestures or utter the *berakhah*.

By contrast, on several occasions I participated in services where the boundaries for this ritual were blurred, although this was not discussed in public. Twice a month, in a Reform synagogue (PObs.2RefSyn.1), there is a more *chavurah*-style service (endorsing fellowship and community among members, open to discussion-based learning, group singing, and participatory prayer), which takes place after a more classical Reform *Kabbalat Shabbat*. There are no two distinctive

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30 Based on article http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jewish-interrmarriage-in-uk-rises-to-26-percent/ in 2016 there was 26% of intermarriage (Accessed 16.03.2020).
31 For the early development of *chavurah* movement, see Neusner (1972).
candles but the first two candles (tealights) are kindled by a specific person, who recites the blessing and then anyone who wants can light other candles. As mentioned above, candles are prepared for all the participants. The leaders of the ritual emphasised a number of times that in Reform synagogues inclusivity is a top value, so men as well as women are invited to light the candles. It was never mentioned that a person has to be Jewish. It might be argued that when a person’s status is not exposed in public and when it is not necessary to draw the P/U line, some Progressive leaders prefer not to challenge the existing situation because of the complicated social situation in their communities. Officially and publicly limiting all the ritual gestures only to Jews could harm the cohesion of the community and create further divisions, leading to the loss of members because of their non-Jewish partners and families.

2.7 Prayers for ritual of Candles’ Lighting

The discussion around the ritual of candle lighting on *erev Shabbat* would be incomplete without presenting the text of the prayers which accompany it. In this section I analyse how much the text itself focuses on P/U and to what extent it mirrors what is happening in settings where the ritual actually happens. While lighting the *Shabbat* candles, an ancient text accompanies the universal action of lighting candles, which marks the entry into a specific time with its own sacred narrative.

I begin by discussing where the text for Hadlakat Hanerot is found in the *siddur*, because as mentioned above, there are variations in where ritual action takes place in contemporary congregations in London. In the Orthodox *siddur*, the section with the text for candle lighting is included in the chapter called ‘Welcoming Shabbat’ (*Kabbalat Shabbat*) (ADPB, pp 254-69). This part of the *siddur* is used mainly by men during the service in the synagogue. In contrast, in the Reform *siddur* this ritual appears in the chapter called ‘Home Services’, in the section ‘Shabbat Eve Home Services’ (FoP, pp. 446-50). Finally, in the Liberal *siddur* there are texts prepared for Hadlakat Hanerot, in all five of the optional ‘Shabbat evening Services’ (LCh, pp. 69-102), as well as in the separate chapter ‘Prayer for Various Occasions’ in the section ‘Welcoming the Sabbath in the Home’ (LCh, 1995, p. 562). The *siddur* is not always the easiest book to use, and one might ask why the editors of the Reform prayerbook did not include this text in the

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32 On the history of the changes, see Petuchowsky (1968), for less thorough but more recent essays concerning history of Hadlakat Nerot prayers in Progressive (mainly American) prayerbooks see ed. Hoffman (2004, pp. 42-6).
section for *Erev Shabbat*. As mentioned above, until recently Reform communities included lighting of the *Shabbat* candles at the beginning of the service. RR6 explained there was a custom to start a service with this ritual, but recently (2018) she decided not to include it in her Reform synagogue, as the candles would burn longer than the service and they would have to be blown out. In the Reform movement (as indicated by RR2) there has been a gradual shift since 1967 toward more traditional ways of leading services, and excluding *Hadlakat Hanerot* from the communal service may be a symptom of this trend. One might also wonder if it is not a reminder to congregants that this ritual was traditionally an important part of the home ritual and of Jewish identity, which is mainly formed and sustained at home. But in Progressive synagogues which follow the Liberal *siddur*, the Candle Lighting is still done in the communal setting.

Lighting the candles can be incorporated into the service, preceded by a few words of welcome or a short song. In other communities the ritual is more elaborate. In several synagogues, e.g. PObs.7LibSyn.4, there is a custom of singing (for example, *niggunim* – (sg. *niggun*) mostly wordless melodies related to *Hassidic* or neo-*Hassidic* practice) before the lighting of candles, both to silence and gather the community, to give time for personal reflection, and as a way of separating and closing the week.\(^{33}\) Instead of a song, several Progressive *shlichei tsibur* (sing. *sheliac*; ‘an emissary’, one who represents the community at prayer, by leading the service) chose a text (from the *siddur* or especially composed) that was related to the notion of *Shabbat* or specifically to this ritual.

Texts for lighting the candles are included in all three *siddurim*. The majority of the prayers – meditations in the Progressive *siddurim* which are, in a way, commentaries on the *Hadlakat Hanerot* ritual – clearly have particularistic overtones (in FoP prayers ‘Riboyne...’ and ‘*Shabbat* alone’; in LCh: ‘In the spirit...’, p. 69; ‘You shall call...', p. 75; ‘I will make...', p. 79 and the first three texts on p. 562). These prayers present the concept of *Shabbat* as Israel’s heritage and a source of unity with other Jews. To quote just two examples:

Two candles, one person. I welcome this *Shabbat* alone and join myself to the community of Israel. One candle for me. One candle for my people. Together and alone we share our heritage, our future, our yearning for the peace of *Shabbat* (FoP, p. 447)

\(^{33}\) On role of *niggunim* in Progressive practice, see Illman (2016).
Here the common (Talmudic) understanding for the two candles (also adduced by Sacks (ADPB, p. 255)) as representing two dimensions of Shabbat: ‘observing’ (shamor; Deut. 5:12) and ‘remembering’ (zakhor; Ex. 20:8), is re-interpreted as representing a Jew who lights it, and the Jewish people.

Another meditation in the Liberal siddur reads: ‘In the spirit of our ancient tradition, which unites and sanctifies the house of Israel in all lands and ages, we welcome the Sabbath, by kindling these lights’ (LCh, p. 69). Here, through the notion of the ‘house of Israel’, the unity is not limited to contemporary Jews, but through this ritual one should realise that these share in a long-lasting Jewish heritage. Other prayers allude, e.g. to keeping Shabbat as a part of the covenant and as Israel’s task.

However, a couple of prayers also indicate universalistic aspirations, often with messianic undertones:

“I will make you a light to the nations, that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”. As these candles remind us of past generations of our people who have sought to live up to the ideal, so may we, in our day, strive to be a source of light to those about us (LCh, p.79).

Similar ideas are found in the Orthodox siddur, but in the commentary to the candle-lighting ritual found at the foot of the page 254:

Lighting candles is a positive rabbinic commandment, symbolising shalom bayit, domestic peace. By creating peace in the home, we are helping to make peace in the world.

Before moving to that siddur, it is worth mentioning that in both Progressive siddurim, there are five meditations that lack clearly particularistic elements, but express a more universal wish that Erev Shabbat will be filled with joy, peace, happiness, delight, etc., for those who are going to keep it and for the whole world (LCh, p. 256).

The prayer, in the form of a benediction, is included in all three siddurim, and the Hebrew has the same wording: ‘Blessed are You, LORD our GOD, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us to light the Sabbath light’ (ADPB, p. 255; FoP p. 447; LCh, pp. 69, 75. 84, 88, 562).

At this point, when the first prayers are recited in Hebrew (in some Progressive contexts these might be repeated in the vernacular), it is necessary to examine the role that language itself plays in P/U ideology. Madaleine McBreaty argues that ‘no element of ritual action is more pervasive than language. It is through the agency of language that most component parts of ritual find its expression’ (1995, p. 82). Jewish rituals are filled with words which communicate not only practical information about what to do,
but most of all are used to convey religious messages to the participants. Ritual language is intrinsic to a specific group, using particularistic symbols, codes and sacred narrative (myth) which may or may not be understood by an outsider. Douglas writes that speech shared by a group transmits not only words but ‘a hidden baggage of shared assumptions’ (Douglas, 1975, p. 177). In the case of traditional Jewish ritual, the common language is not the vernacular, but Hebrew or Aramaic (though the latter only for a few prayers) and sometimes Ladino or Yiddish, which adds to the specificity of the ritual. English has a secondary role in the Orthodox siddur and is used for translations, commentaries and rubrics.

Knowledge of Hebrew varies in all communities, but even those who do not know it well are able to recite the better-known prayers (such as certain blessings and the Shema), either because they have learned enough to read the letters, or because they simply recite from memory. The transliteration of Hebrew – a helpful tool often accessible in Progressive communities – is not available in Orthodox synagogues (unless other versions of the siddur are available). Lack of knowledge of Hebrew, although perceived as not ideal (and competence in Hebrew has a high status), was never mentioned by my Orthodox interviewees as a reason to switch into the vernacular, and Hebrew was seen as an indispensable part of Jewish ritual.

In Orthodox settings, Hebrew appears as a ‘sacred’ language, used for the purposes of ritual, while the vernacular is used for profane purposes such as announcements, for bringing order, and for conversations between participants. Since Hebrew is also a vernacular language for some, the boundary of usage may become blurred, for example when it is used for such ordinary purposes as calling for silence or for conversations to end. But for the majority of congregants, Hebrew has a strong religious significance. Hebrew also permits participants to disguise ideology or concepts which would require elucidation, rational discourse and perhaps result in calls for omission or change if they were recited in English. Furthermore, Hebrew has the power to delineate between Jewish and non-Jewish participants. From the moment one begins to pray in Hebrew, one engages in a particularistic activity and according to OR4, anyone who does not understand Hebrew ‘cannot really grasp what it is about’.

On the other hand, even though the Hebrew language is seen as an important part of Jewish identity and a shared connection with klal Isra’el, in various Progressive communities its usage for ritual varies between 30 percent of the service (e.g. in PObs9LibSyn.5) and almost 100 percent (e.g. PObs.21RefSyn.6). The amount of Hebrew depends on the rabbi’s ideology and the community’s knowledge of it, as well
as the tradition of a place. Even where it is preferred, it may remain problematic. The prayer leaders whom I interviewed, such as RR1, admitted that only the elite of the congregation know Hebrew and are able to join in easily and to understand the prayers. Importantly, the English translation does not always fully render the meaning.

The choice of language may also depend on who is in the community. As RR9 said, she uses more English when there are more mixed families, so that non-Jews can feel more included and read the Jewish texts. Thus, language has the power to create more inclusive experiences or more particularistic ones which may exclude some people. Language is a tool for creating a spiritual, particularistic experience which distinguishes Judaism from other religions and which carries theological concepts and ideological notions that can be hard to translate into another language. FoP includes a transliteration of all the prayers, so that anyone can join in, while the Liberal prayerbook in some synagogues has been transliterated in order to facilitate participation (PObs6LibSyn.3, PObs.13LibSyn.7 PObs.16LibSyn.8). At the same time, Hebrew may be a good tool to disguise ideas viewed by some Progressive Jews as uncomfortable, misunderstood, or even unwanted, such as the concept of chosenness (see ch. 7).

Returning to the blessing for candle lighting discussed here, this is a carrier of particularism because of the language used, i.e. Hebrew, but also (as any other blessing) through the traditional wording (formulated probably in the post-Talmudic period (Ta-Shma, 1975)), since it alludes to commandments which traditionally were given to Jewish people at a particular moment of their history.34 Nonetheless, God is addressed as melekh haolam (lit. ‘king of the universe’), combining universalism with particularism. This short benediction is a good example of the tension between these two aspects, present in Jewish liturgy throughout texts and ritual.

Even though in Hebrew the blessing is the same (although Progressive editors change some texts), in the vernacular the translations differ. This is not only because each translator has a number of synonyms to choose from, but also because words may express certain ideological positions. One striking difference is the use of the gender-inclusive language in naming God – instead of the traditional translation ‘king of the universe’, it is translated in both Progressive siddurim as ‘sovereign of the universe’. The inclusive language was chosen by the editors of the LCh for the first time among Progressive movements, but this has since been followed to various extents in other

34 ‘To light a Shabbat candle’ does not appear in the Torah, so is post biblical commandment, see Ta-Shma (1975).
prayerbooks. A second difference that I want to mention (though there are others) touches the ritual directly. Although traditionally two or more candles are used, the Hebrew text reads ner shel Shabbat ‘a Shabbat light’, in the singular. Only the Orthodox siddur keeps the grammar ‘the Sabbath light’, which may reflect the ancient custom of using oil for a single lamp (Ydit and Geffen, 2007). Progressive siddurim translate the word ner in the plural, thereby mirroring the practice and not the literal meaning. Finally, the word tsivanu, which in Orthodox and Reform siddurim is rendered by the verb ‘to command’, is translated in the Liberal Prayerbook as ‘to enjoin’. The meaning of these two English verbs is similar, but the Liberal choice suggests that there is room for disagreeing or adjusting and not simply ‘obeying’ the tradition.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that a simple ritual such as candle lighting might express a particular identity. I have discussed the P/U elements embodied in the performance, performers and texts. In the Progressive movements, the negotiation between P/U of Hadlakat Hanerot is more strongly marked than in the Orthodox ritual, where tradition and halakhah are more strictly followed. Nonetheless, as I have shown, in non-public contexts adjustments may happen. The particularistic boundaries in the ritual are less fixed in private settings and less so in formal services in the Progressive context, although the move towards more traditional and particularistic elements of the ritual has been observed and is also discussed in this section.

It was confirmed through the interviewees that the ritual of lighting Shabbat candles is strongly associated with Jewish identity and with belonging to a particular group – klal Isra’el. For some of my respondents, it was the only Jewish act which marks their Shabbat observance and their identity. As has been shown, the effectiveness of Hadlakat Hanerot lies in a brief ritual action (one of a few often perceived as reserved for women), accompanied by a blessing over simple but carefully chosen ritual objects, that is candles and candleholders. As was also shown, each element of the ritual may carry additional specifically Jewish or more universalistic notions.

As the blessing for Hadlakat Nerot marks the beginning of Shabbat, it was important to introduce here a discussion of the use of Hebrew vs. the vernacular language in relation to P/U. The ethnographic data confirms the growing preference for Hebrew in the ritual. It is seen as intrinsic to a Jewish community, as a carrier in
prayers of particularistic symbols and sacred narrative, which are necessary to sustain Jewish identity. Hebrew and vernacular are also used to deal with exclusive, triumphalist or unwanted ideological notions, to which I will return when discussing such prayers in the following chapters.

The following chapter of this thesis will concentrate on the next stage of Shabbat – the Shabbat eve. The synagogue ritual and prayer will be discussed first, followed by P/U elements present in the home ritual.
Every Shabbat I participated in with a Jewish family was an experience unique in itself. No two were the same in their organisation, though they were always beautiful and special, and lots of effort was put into their preparation. The inherited image of Shabbat as a time ruled by what a Jew cannot do, was broken the very first time I went to my Orthodox friends’ home for erev Shabbat. The house looked festive but there was also something special in how people talked, related to each other and of course in what people did. Using the Jewish traditional understanding of Shabbat, it was definitely a moment when one could touch eternity.

The Shabbat is the foretaste of the messianic redemption. But even as this enclave of perfection is carved out in the realm of time, the world goes on as usual in the realm of surrounding space. That is why Shabbat needs a community in order to be credible. By an act of will, the community creates this sacred time and space, and agrees to live by its rules (Greenberg, 1988, p. 129).

Having discussed ways of entering Shabbat and the first ritual that actually marks the beginning of Shabbat – the lighting of candles – in the Jewish home, I discuss here other elements of erev Shabbat at home, which make this time so specific. Every Shabbat evening has a different combination of P/U elements, and the presence of guests, especially non-Jews, influenced this balance, which will be demonstrated here through chosen examples from participant observation and interviews.

This chapter is ritual-driven, but it also discusses chosen texts which are traditionally used on Shabbat evening (Birkat Habanim, Shalom Aleikhem, and Eshet Chayil), Kiddush blessings, a selection of table songs and Birkat Hamazon. Only two interviewees (OL2, RR4) usually begin the Shabbat evening at home with Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv prayers, while others go to a synagogue, pray individually or begin the meal with Kiddush. This is why the discussion of these services is left for the synagogue context (ch. 4). Even though the home is a primary setting for erev Shabbat, some rituals take place in both locations, whereas others are shifted to the communal setting, e.g. Kiddush or a meal.

Before I begin the analysis, a few academic positions need to be mentioned here. There are few publications which discuss the ritual of erev Shabbat in detail. Ruth Langer (2017) has written an article about the development of texts for ‘Blessing of the Children’ in which she presents not only the history of this ritual, but also Reform
attitudes toward the text. But her article does not discuss the ritual actions in depth
nor the British context. More has been written about Jewish food and meals, e.g. by John
Cooper (1993), May Douglas (1966) or David Freidenreich (2011), who explore
regulations concerning Jewish food preparation and sharing meals with others, and
how they are used to demark identities. But as Susan Marks and Hal Taussig rightly
claim, studying regulations or even prayers used before or after a meal, such as Birkat
HaMazon, will not give the same result as studying also the context where such rituals
take place. One ‘must attend to the ritual enactment’ (2014, p. 9). Even though their
work concerning meals is limited to the period of early Judaism, their methodology of
studying ritual texts in the context of performance is valid even more so for
contemporary ritual studies, and is one I apply throughout the thesis.

While discussing Kiddush texts that directly engage with Jewish sacred
narrative and the P/U ideology of the stories of Creation and Exodus, it was necessary
to find academic works which deal with the Jewish past, history and memory and how
they work in ritual terms. As Victor Jeleniewski Seidler writes ‘within Jewish tradition
there is an awareness of the importance of memory and the need to remember (2017,
p. 42). In the case of Jewish liturgy, the classic work of Yosef Yerushalmi, Zakhor (1982),
is one starting point. His discussion concerning the split between memory and
historiography has been debated by contributors such as Amos Funkenstein (1993),
Yael Zerubavel (1995), and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin (2007). For Jews, prayer is not only
praise, petition and study, but ‘recitation of the history of partnership’ (Heilman, 1976,
p. 67), and a way of remembering God’s intervention in history and people’s responses
to it. But these events are remembered selectively and presented through the lens of
the Jewish experience. It is through recital and ritual that the sacred narrative is
channelled on Shabbat (Yerushalmi, 1982). Sacks argues that ‘history is information.
Memory, by contrast, is part of identity’ (Sacks, 2003, p. 29), and it is through ritual the
Jewish collective memory is transmitted and formed. Jewish rituals are ways of re-
enacting the past events recorded in the siddur, as if they were happening today.
However, as I show, it is through individual and collective interpretation, and in a
Progressive context also through adaptation, that the siddur sacred narratives become
meaningful for a contemporary Jew. Thus in analysing the texts most commonly used
on erev Shabbat at home, I open the discussion around the choice of narratives and the
ways they are presented them in siddurim in relation to P/U ideology, and I examine
how ritual and the personal memories of the participants influence the P/U dynamics
of the texts.
3.1 *Birkat Habanim*

One Friday afternoon, I was invited to an Orthodox family home to spend *erev Shabbat* with them and also to visit a more traditional synagogue for the service in the north of London. Upon arrival, I was invited into a sitting room, where two large and a number of smaller candlesticks where placed on a small table. OW6 lit the candles one by one, and said the blessing. Then, she invited her husband to join in another prayer, and turned to me and said:

> We have three adult, married children, and five grandchildren. We know that they are gathering at this moment to do what we do here. Since they were born, we have been saying the blessing of the children. Even now when they are not here in flesh, they are with us in our hearts, so we still say the blessing and send them our love.

And then both parents recited the traditional Blessing of the Children (*Birkat Habanim*).* Like OW6, OM2 continues the practice of blessing his children even when they have left home to go to university. He calls them every Friday before *Shabbat* begins to recite the blessing and wish them a good *Shabbat*. Several interviewees, such as RStR3, said it was an important custom, as it cultivates familial relationships (which is a strong aspect of keeping *Shabbat*), but it is also a reminder of Jewish identity for their children who left home and are living in a non-Jewish setting. Traditionally parents bless their children after returning home from the synagogue. This ritual may take place after recitation of *Eshet Chayil* (as in FoP, p. 450), unless their mother blesses them immediately after lighting the candles, and their father after he returns from the service.

In the prayerbooks, the blessing of the children is included in the section for home ritual (ADPB, p. 310, FoP, p. 450, LCh, p. 663), and the majority of the interviewees said that it was as important as the ritual of candle lighting, even though sometimes the ritual was simplified to a few words expressing love. The central text of *Birkat Habanim* is the biblical priestly blessing from Num. 6:24-26 (used at other moments of the *Shabbat* and weekday liturgy), which also relates to the Temple liturgy. Two Progressive interviewees expressed discomfort about using the blessing.

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35 History and development of *Birkat Habanim* lies beyond the scope of this thesis, see e.g. Langer (2017).

36 For discussion of the priestly blessing in morning weekly liturgy, see e.g. Schonfield (2006, pp. 144-6), Hoffman (2001, pp. 129-30).
LW3 explained that in the Bible this blessing is associated with priests, so she tried to use other contemporary, more feminist versions of the blessing found on the website ‘Ritualwell.org’, such as e.g. ‘Be who you are and may you be blessed in all that you are’. She also does not see the matriarchs and patriarchs in the traditional version as role models for their children. But she admitted that she mostly uses the traditional version from Numbers, which she knows by heart and believes to be an important link with Jewish tradition and previous generations.

_Birkat Habanim_ was abandoned in early editions of Progressive prayerbooks as too particularistic, but was re-introduced in the Reform _siddur_ in 1977 and the Liberal in 1995. Traditionally, it is to be recited by a Jew due to particularistic links with the Temple and the priestly lineage (Langer, 2017), as well as with a long-standing Jewish tradition. It is a part of Jewish ritual that is rarely modified and is retained even in most Progressive circles. In a couple of Reform families, both parents say the traditional prayers, first reciting the verse for the girls followed by that for the boys, and then the priestly blessing (as in FoP, p. 450). RStR4 expressed concern about the gendered formulations in these prayers. That is why she preferred to use the Liberal _siddur_, where there is no distinctive blessing for boys and girls; there is one blessing formulated in the plural for both sexes. As I have mentioned, in LCh the patriarchs and matriarchs, symbolising Jewish identity and tradition, are not mentioned, but the role of tradition is emphasised in the first paragraph: ‘A noble heritage has been entrusted to us. Let us guard it well’ (LCh, p. 663). A few interviewees mentioned the particularistic notions associated with this blessing as out of line with the Progressive mindset, but such objections were often overruled, and precedence given to the notion of familiarity and something being passed down from one generation to the next. This is also expressed in the decision of the Progressive prayerbooks’ editors that this blessing does not need transliteration, as it is expected that people would either know it by heart or know Hebrew or read it in English.

After _Birkat Habanim_, families may gather around the table to recite the benedictions over the food, or as was the custom in the homes visited, to sing the song _Shalom Aleikhem_.

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3.2 Shalom Aleikhem

*Shalom Aleikhem* (‘peace to you’; ADBP, p. 311; FoP, p. 448, LCh, p. 76), which has been included in the *Erev Shabbat* ritual at home as well as in the synagogue since the seventeenth century (Idelsohn, 1972, p. 151), was named by some of my interviewees as problematic. In the Orthodox home it opens the *erev Shabbat* ritual at the table. On a number of occasions *Shalom Aleikhem* was also sung as a part of Progressive synagogue services, as is reflected in LCh where it is included in one version of the *Shabbat* evening services for the synagogue.

Although the text of *Shalom Aleikhem* does not seem to have clear P/U concepts, four of my interviewees mentioned it as ‘not Jewish enough’, so perhaps not particularistic enough. For one it is ‘too strongly related to the Catholic theology of angels [and] thus had some notion of idolatry’ (RW1). A critical approach to this text was voiced already in the seventeenth century by e.g. rabbis Yaakov Emden (in *Siddur Beth Ya’akov*) and Chayim of Volozhin^39^ who expressed concern that this song might be seen as incipient idol worship. The treatment of angels in British Progressive prayerbooks has developed over time, but we can perceive a general tendency to deemphasize this aspect of Jewish liturgy (Petuchowski, 1968).

Despite its theology, this song is generally present at the *Shabbat* table, and all my interviewees expressed an emotional attachment to it. RR4, when asked about *erev Shabbat*, said: ‘When I come back from the synagogue, we sing *Shalom Aleikhem*, say Kiddush, wash hands, and say the berakhah for bread, eat the meal, and then sometimes do Birkat Hamazon’. On three occasions, when I was invited to spend *erev Shabbat* with two Reform families and one Liberal, it was the only song at the *Shabbat* table, directly followed by a simplified Kiddush. Others, such as LW2, try to re-interpret the theology to make it less problematic, and she explained that for her angels are symbols of God working in people’s lives. She talked about her attachment to this song because of the traditional tune which brings with it memories of *Shabbat* meals with her parents and grandparents. For her and many others, *Shalom Aleikhem* is an important part of Jewish tradition and an integral part of the *Shabbat* experience, which carries important particularistic notions of rootedness in the tradition and an emotional attachment to the song.

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It is easier for Jews to overlook the problematic ideology of a text if they can reassure themselves of its long tradition. As RR6 explained, ‘almost anything can be sung as long as it is sung in Hebrew, as it helps to deal with difficult concepts and it prevents too intellectual an approach toward the liturgical texts’. I have not heard either of these texts sung in English, even in the most Liberal synagogues where English is used in equal proportion to Hebrew. Its language is an important particularistic aspect, which strengthens the relation with Jewish tradition and culture, much like *Eshet Chayil* which is discussed next.

3.3 *Eshet Chayil*

Another biblical text used on *Erev Shabbat* that is both well known and provokes discussion is *Eshet Chayil* (‘a woman of worth’), a biblical poem from Prov. 31:10-31. It is part of the traditional *erev Shabbat* liturgy at home, and is included only in the Orthodox (ADPB, p. 312) and the Reform (FoP, p.449) siddurim. This usefully illustrates the multiple symbolism of a text taken out of its biblical context, since it could be seen as universalistic, without any particularistic notions (as the previous poem), as an expression of a husband’s praise and honour for his industrious wife. But through the *Kabbalah*, the poem received an esoteric dimension and a particularistic interpretation, being understood as praise of Israel (the male voice), who welcomes the *Shekhinah* (‘Presence’ – God, which relates also to the Kabbalistic concept of *Shabbat* as Israel’s bride), or the soul, or Torah (female dimension) (Idelsohn, 1972, p. 54, Eisenberg, 2000, p. 129).

For some, as for OM2, the plain sense of this poem is enough, and he likes to sing it as a public praise of everything his wife did at home and for who she is, and as a way of expressing his love and appreciation. Others familiar with various interpretations alluded to the theological issues of this poem. LO2 said:

I think it is probably Israel vis-à-vis God or humanity vis-à-vis *Shabbat*. It is a complicated symbol. And sometimes we read it, sometimes we don’t. And it is something people enjoy discussing and arguing about. Jewish ritual is something that you talk about.

The majority of my Progressive interviewees did not know the more particularistic interpretation, but after being informed of it, they admitted that they prefer the symbolic to the literal understanding because of the non-inclusive and
gender stereotyping message it carries (RR2). *Eshet Chayil* is an example of the prayers included in the *siddur* but rarely used by the majority of my interviewees.

At this point of the home ritual, *siddurim* are often collected and the focus moves away from text and toward the food, over which blessings are sung.

3.4 *Kiddush*

In a traditional home it is the head of the family, the father, who recites *Kiddush* (‘sanctification’) on behalf of all present. In absence of a male adult, a Jewish woman is obliged to perform it (e.g. B.Ber. 20b). *Kiddush* transforms ordinary eating into a ritual performance and a sacred act (Rothschild, 2016, p. 112). This prayer technically begins the *Shabbat* evening meal at home.

Halakhically there is an obligation to perform *Kiddush* both on *erev Shabbat* at home and before the second meal on *Shabbat*, but not before the third meal (Tur, OCh 291). Some will include it, especially when there is a more festive meal in a community setting for special occasions. *Kiddush* is recited over the cup filled to the brim with wine or grape juice, before blessing two *challot*. Talmud B.Pes. 106a instructs that wine is the preferred beverage for *Shabbat*, because joy is associated with it, and the full cup indicates that the *Shabbat* that is about to begin should be overflowing with joy, as it will be in messianic times. If there is no wine, the *Kiddush* might be recited over the *challah* (Sh.Ar. 272:9), and the blessing over wine omitted.

I have observed various customs concerning the positioning of the participants and the manner in which the *Kiddush* cup is held while reciting the benediction, the symbolic meaning of which adds particularistic notions to this ritual. Even though there are various ways of holding the cup while standing, only RR4 described the different traditional ways in which to hold the cup, sometimes in the palm of the right hand (Sh.Ar.183:1-4) or each person holding their own (T.Pes.106a). Her husband places the cup in the palm of the right hand with the fingers upward, said in the *Zohar* (*Hakdema* 2a) to symbolise a rose, which represents the *Shekhinah* – the feminine aspect of God. *The Jewish Catalog* (Siegel et al., 1973, p. 109) explains that it expresses the longing of the Jewish People for God, while an open hand with a cup of wine symbolizes Messianic times. Even though the meaning was not understood, for her and her husband the gesture itself was an important part of their Jewish identity and a way of transmitting it through the generations. Irrespective of how they are held, the cups
with wine or other specially chosen drink, as well as the prayers and gestures marked the ritual as not just drinking, and indicated that Kiddush marks a Shabbat meal and builds the atmosphere of festivity. What adds to the particularistic notion of this ritual is that Kiddush is always recited in Hebrew, even in the Progressive setting, where the vernacular can be used. It is so much part of the tradition for Shabbat, that most interviewees know it by heart (sometimes in a shortened version) and rarely use a siddur.

The text of Kiddush differs between the evening and morning of Shabbat. The Friday night recitation of Kiddush is a way of ‘remembering’ and making actual and meaningful the sacred narrative concerning Creation and Exodus (physical and spiritual liberation), whereas the text for Saturday morning speaks of Creation, rest and the special character of Shabbat (the Exodus narrative is omitted). In the next part, I shall concentrate mainly on the differences between the translations of the second benediction (mentioning the day) for the home ritual, which is included in all three siddurim (ADPB, p. 314; FoP, pp. 452-5; LCh, pp. 563-6). It is worth noting that Kiddush texts do not differ much in Hebrew, although the English translations of Erev Shabbat Kiddush show various attitudes toward P/U within the ideology of Orthodox and Progressive Movements.

In the Liberal prayerbook, Kiddush is preceded by a prayer composed of a verse from Ex. 20: 8-9, and two optional meditations with a universalistic tone expressing gratitude for the past week, friends, family and the day of Shabbat as a time of peace and rest (LCh, p. 563-4). In two other siddurim, the traditional biblical passage from Gen. 1:31-2:3 (in the Reform siddur Gen. 2:1-3) establishes a universal setting by including the Creation narrative and the separation of the seventh day, followed by a short benediction over the cup of wine: ‘Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine’ (ADPB, p. 315; cf. M.Ber 6:1, B.Meg. 27). Recitation of the introductory verses is traditionally seen as expressing the idea that humans are partners with God (B.Shab. 119b), thus expressing a universalistic ideology which is different from the next section – the benediction of the day (birkat hayom). This text, a collection of biblical verses central to the Jewish sacred narrative, does not only invoke God’s past and present activity, but also refers to specific things, places and times. It includes some of the main particularistic themes about the exclusive relations

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See ch. 5.
The theological and historical discussion in depth of all the Kiddush texts lies beyond the scope of my thesis, see e.g. Elbogen (1993, pp. 94-5), Steinsaltz (2000, pp. 126-30), Hoffmann (2007).
between God and Israel, which includes the concept of election, the special attitude of God’s love for Israel, redemption from slavery, the gift of freedom, and Shabbat as an inheritance (nachalah) of Israel. Here, theology is concentrated exclusively on Israel and God, even though God is recalled in the beginning as a Sovereign (King) of the universe. It contrasts with the first part of the text of Kiddush with its universalistic theme of the finishing of creation.

The English translations illustrate the ideology of each movement concerning P/U. The translation of the Orthodox siddur keeps close to the Hebrew and expresses particularistic notions. In the Reform siddur the word nachalah (‘possession, inheritance’) follows the literal meaning, whereas LCh does not translate the word; the first time it is in Hebrew and the second time it is translated as ‘a token’, which in Hebrew is another word: ’ot (that can also be translated as a ‘sign’; a biblical use of this word appears in Kiddush for Shabbat morning). Hoffman remarks that nachalah in the Bible is often used in relation to the Land and its legacy for tribes of Israel (2007a, p. 92), which implicitly adds an additional particularistic note.

The Traditional phrase ki banu bacharta ... mi kol ha’amim, translated in the Orthodox and Reform siddur as ‘chose us … from (‘among’ FoP) all the peoples’ relates directly to the concept of chosenness.\(^42\) In the Liberal siddur, the verb bahar is rendered ‘call someone to’, while ‘from all the peoples’ is simply omitted.\(^43\) Such translation instead relates to the aim of election, and prefers to shift the emphasis. This reflects a centuries-old debate on the concept of election by avoiding triumphalism or favouritism, voiced by non-Jews throughout history (Novak, 1995, 2010). Interestingly, the word ‘favour’ itself is used to translate the word ratsah in both Liberal and Orthodox siddurim. God ‘favours’ Israel with the gift of Shabbat, but in the Reform siddur it is conveyed ‘willingly’, which might be seen as a reference to God’s love. Liberal editors felt free to replace the Hebrew phrase bahar banu in other places in the siddur (such as in Aleinu [ch. 7]), but here, perhaps due to its familiarity and the wish to continue with tradition, they permitted a discrepancy between the literal meaning and its translation. Ordinarily it is the Hebrew version that is sung, while English is read, especially when Kiddush is performed in community. Furthermore, the concept of being chosen is in direct relation with holiness (as in Deut. 7:6: ‘For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God. Of all the peoples on earth the Lord your God chose

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\(^42\) Put to light in the whole thesis, however discussed in depths in chapter 7 as it is central notion to the Torah service.

\(^43\) Omitted already by Abraham Geiger and in some later siddurim (see Petuchowski, 1968).
you to be God’s treasured people’) and keeping the commandments (specifically here the *Shabbat*). In this way, the *Kiddush* narrative creates a particularistic aspect of *Shabbat*, not only as a day of rest for all the world, but as a sign and obligation for Israel, the chosen people.

*Shabbat* symbolism and its sacred narrative is revisited and marked throughout the year – in other words is remembered (*zakhar*). In the *Kiddush* text the word used is *zikaron*, which is related to memory and can be translated ‘remembrance of’ or ‘memorial of’. It is a way of speaking about past events that are important for Jewish identity, but in a way that re-enacts them and makes them present (Yerushalmi, 1982, Spiegel, 2002, Kessler, 2015). These elements of Jewish memorial are not only part of Jewish history, but active elements of the sacred narrative that forms Jewish individual and collective consciousness. Jonathan Webber argues that ‘the act of memory is, at least notionally, to keep the past alive, to shape the personal and social self with a sense of continuity and consistency’ (2007, p. 74). Webber further argues that the past events which the sacred narrative evokes are deprived of their ‘pastness’ as the ritual is oriented towards the present and the future. ‘A biblical memory is goal-oriented, at the service of present needs’ (Webber, 2007, p. 79). Memorial in the case of *Shabbat* includes both a universal aspect, presenting God as Creator of the Universe, and a more particular one: God has a special relationship with Israel and redeems Israel: *zikaron lema’aseh vereshit* (‘a memorial of the work in the beginning’) and *zekher litzi’at Mitzrayim* (‘remembering the exodus from Egypt’).

The word ‘Egypt’, as it was explained to me by Jeremy Schonfield, can be de-particularised by preserving the Hebrew form (as in *HaSiddur HaMetsuyan*, p. 101) *Mitsrayim*. Its root, *tsar*, alludes literally to ‘narrow places’, meaning the experience of being slaves and then the Exodus. I mention this in order to indicate that the liturgy of *Shabbat* has not only elements of creation and joy, but also memories of persecution and redemption (as in many of the *Shabbat* songs which I discuss later). Whitehouse and Lanman (2014, p. 677) argue that shared memories of painful experiences have the effect of binding individuals within a specific group:

Highly dysphoric experiences, such as front-line combat (Whitehouse and McQuinn 2013) and “rites of terror” (Whitehouse 1996), work to rewrite individual self-concepts and produce psychological kinship among those undergoing such experiences together.

Even though the Exodus story is drawn from ancient memory, it is recounted within Jewish liturgical texts throughout the *Shabbat* and weekly liturgy. Moreover, other
‘narrow places’ of Jewish memory are interwoven in the Jewish liturgy and serve as reminders that the final redemption is still to be realised and the Shabbat is only a pre-taste of it. The editors of these siddurim did not add universalising commentaries to this text.

The prayer ends with a closure (chatimah, ‘a seal’, a concluding formula that expresses the essence of a berakhah) which says: ‘Blessed are You, Lord, who sanctifies the Sabbath’ (FoP: ‘makes the Shabbat holy’; LCh: ‘We praise You, O God for the holiness of the Sabbath’) implying that there is a relation between the holiness of God, Israel, and the Shabbat. It also reflects the idea that as God sanctifies the Shabbat, it is now Israel’s role to sanctify the Shabbat by remembering it, resting and stating that it is God who sanctifies the Shabbat; these words are accompanied by objects, gestures and re-enactment (ritual). According to Maimonides (Hilkhot Shabbat 29:1), such verbal sanctification is necessary not only at the beginning of Shabbat but also at the end – through the Havdalah ritual (ch. 8) – to demarcate the holiness (separateness, otherness, Heb. kodesh) of this day.

3.5 Netilat Yadayim and Hamotsi

The washing of hands was part of some home rituals, mainly in Orthodox families, however also in one Liberal and one Reform setting. It is included in the Orthodox and Reform prayerbooks (ADBP, p. 314, FoP, p. 453), the Hebrew text being the same in both siddurim, and the English does not have major differences. Thus I quote the ADBP version: ‘Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us about washing hands’. Like any benediction, their meaning relates to Jewish identity; however, its particularism is subtle.

This benediction is recited upon rising from sleep, when each hand is washed three times (Sh.Ar., OCh 4:2), and before eating bread, when the hands are washed just once (Sh.Ar., OCh 162:2).\(^{44}\) Netilat yadayim is often rendered (as in ADBP version) as ‘washing hands’, but netilah literally means ‘taking [up]’ and, as Schonfield explains in relation to washing the hands after waking up, “lifting up” in the sense both of raising the hands for water to flow over them and of elevating them to higher functions’ (2006, p. 44). It is done also on other occasions, see Berenbaum (2007).
In one Orthodox home I visited, netilat yadayim was always part of the ritual, and was explained as an obligation (cf. M.Ber. 4:10). In all homes to which I was invited, when the ritual took place before the Shabbat meal, the non-Jews were invited to wash their hands (though a couple of times it was explained that it is not necessary to join in if someone does not want). Thus, the specific meaning of this ritual became to a certain extent universalised through the participation of non-Jews in a specifically Jewish ritual.

In the literature, opinions vary as to whether the symbolism of this ritual relates to sacrifices in the Temple or to the priesthood, since some see it, specially the morning ablutions, as a preparatory to prayer (Kimelman, 2006). Commenting on the morning washing of the hands, which is not related to eating but uses the same phrase and similar ritual gestures, Schonfield writes: Enacting part of the Temple ritual (...) demonstrates the speaker’s nostalgia for the Temple and acknowledges that the synagogue and the home (...) are its substitutes, serving as vehicles for mourning its destruction’ (2006, p. 133). However, he prefers to see the ritual as a part of hygiene rather than enacting the Temple’s ritual. Kimelman writes that washing hands before meals can be understood as derived from the priestly demands of holiness, which after the destruction of the Temple concerns the whole people of Israel, and not only those from the priestly line (Kimelman, 2006, p. 576). Even though one sees these arguments as a more valid interpretation for contemporary ritual, the relation to the Temple was brought forward by the majority of my interviewees.

For OR3 who, like a few of my Progressive interviewees (e.g. RR4, LR5, RW3), performs this ritual regularly or on special occasions (e.g. the Pesah seder), its meaning is associated with Jewish identity and tradition. Similarly, RR4 explained how the washing of the hands continues to be relevant for him: 'It is just a good ritual, it is a berakhah and I love berakhot. It brings us back into connection with God and other Jews'.

I would argue that it is not only the form of a blessing that makes it a Jewish ritual. Using Vanessa Ochs's (2007) categorization of ritual objects, the natlah (as in photo 18) is ‘explicitly’ a Jewish object, used only for the ritual ablation.
Moreover, I have never observed anyone using an alternative object or performing Netilat Yadayim without a natlah (though any bigger cup can be used Sh.Ar., OCh 159:1). Consequently, the performer, time, object, gesture and words and their symbolism related to Temple rituals indicate a specific Jewish ideology.

While everyone is washing their hands, traditionally those who have already done so remain silent until the blessing over bread is recited. On Shabbat, two loaves of bread are traditionally covered with a cloth (illustrated in photo 19) and the blessing is recited: ‘Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth the bread from the earth’.
There are various traditional ways to hold and to serve the two loaves. I would like to mention one that is less traditional. Even though the blessing itself does not have particularistic notions and recalls God as the Sovereign of the Universe, traditionally it is said, like any blessing, only by a Jew. But in the Progressive movements, as well as in a few Progressive families that I witnessed, there was a tradition for everybody to touch the *challah* (see photo 20), or to touch the person next to them, so that there is a connection to the bread, which further universalised this ritual.

![Photo 20. Ritual of Hamotsi benediction over covered challah bread.](image)

The blessing was recited together (Jews as well as non-Jews) and bread was sprinkled with salt and shared, sometimes by tearing a piece from the loaf. Such modified ritual gives an impression of equality and inclusiveness, transcending any divisions. If such a ritual happens in Progressive synagogues, it might be the last ritual action on *erev Shabbat*, or it is directly followed by a meal in a home setting.

### 3.6 Meal

From the traditional three *Shabbat* meals on *Shabbat*, many interviewees said that the Friday one is the most important for them and that they pay special attention to how and what is prepared (a number of *halakhic* texts imply that the meals should be prepared from the best ingredients that one can afford (e.g. *Tur, OCh 244:2*)), who is

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45 On social history of Jewish meals, see Cooper (1993), Marks and Tausing (2014).
invited, and how to create an atmosphere of festivity. The morning Shabbat meal might be eaten in the synagogue by those who attend the service, and the last meal might either be light or more sophisticated.

Preparing the meal and its distinctive features were already analysed in the previous chapter, but I would like to mention that this is, in fact, also a universalistic moment of the Shabbat ritual, even though defined in specific Jewish terms. The meal is a moment of celebrating of Shabbat, but also one of building ties of family and friendship, of inviting strangers into the home and forming new acquaintances. Eating together serves ‘as a powerful medium for the expression and transmission of culture and, more specifically communal identity’ (Freidenreich, 2011, p. 4). Thus Shabbat meals, as many other ritual meals, are a way also to experience what Victor Turner calls communitas (1974), where values and a sense of being a community are evoked and constructed through sacred narratives and talks. Most often the conversations that take place at Shabbat meals concern a wide range of subjects; most of those in my presence were unrelated directly to Jewish identity. However, the more universalistic perspective might shift towards some things more specifically Jewish by discussing the weekly Torah portion, which traditionally is perceived as an obligation at the Shabbat table (cf. Avot, 3:3). Matthias Klinghardt (2014) argues that the tradition of discussing the Torah portion developed in the rabbinic period, when Torah table talk made the meal itself a metaphor for carrying out sacred activities once performed by Temple priests. This traditional practice of studying the Torah on erev Shabbat was regularly present in three Orthodox families and two Progressive ones, but topics from the biblical portion were present in broader discussion as well. Such conversations could last even two or three hours and involve the singing of Jewish songs, which will be discussed next.

3.7 Zemirot

The custom of singing around a table on festive days was not new to me, but the ways of performing songs, their choice as well as the time led me to ask led me to ask on almost every erev Shabbat to which I was invited what made this singing Jewish and different from my childhood experience in Poland, when on some evenings women gathered to sing folk songs. Traditionally on Friday night (as well as during Shabbat meals on Saturday), a collection of songs (zemer, pl. zemirot) are sung, which express
and build up the mood and the atmosphere of Shabbat. The halakhic origin of including songs at the Shabbat table is found in B.Meg. 12b, where it is recommended that on Shabbat: ‘Israel should eat, drink, and speak Torah and words of praise (zemirot).’ OL2, being asked about which zemirot he and his family sing, said:

We sing zemirot for which we know tunes, so never Mah yafit, sadly. We like Tsur mishelo, Yom zeh l’elsrael, Yah ribbon, Dror Yikra, Yom zeh mekhubad, Mah yedidut, Barukh El Elion, Yom shabaton, Menuhah vesimhah.

All three siddurim include most of these zemirot, though even in the Orthodox prayerbooks this was not always the case (Reif, 1993). Having zemirot in contemporary siddurim, especially in both Progressive prayerbooks, indicates their usage not only within family ritual, but during communal services in synagogues on Shabbat. Solomon Goldman explains the popularity of zemirot at the Shabbat ritual:

The zemirot have a charm which words alone cannot describe. Some are exquisite lyrics, but many have the homespun quality of folk-songs that have to be sung to be appreciated. Their charm lies in their expression of all the simple, unsophisticated joy and delight, relief, exaltation and relaxation which Jews in all ages have won from the Sabbath (Goldman, 1961, p. 45). The custom of singing at the Shabbat table developed out of a universal practice of mealtime singing, but there are a number of reasons that distinguish Shabbat zemirot from any other singing, and emphasise the particularistic aspects of Shabbat.

First of all, there is a kind of ‘canon’ (not halakhic, as there is no such legal obligation to sing zemirot), a certain number of songs that are included in the prayerbook of each movement (even though their theology might not reflect a movement ideology). There are also other ‘sets’ which may be more representative of Progressive customs or reflect a person’s place of origin or personal preferences (Hoffman, 2007b). These sets are often a unique blend of the holy and the secular, the serious and the joyful, composed in Hebrew as well as Aramaic, Yiddish, Ladino and other vernacular languages. Each Shabbat meal traditionally has its own set of zemirot, relating to the time of Shabbat and to Shabbat theological concepts, which is reflected by their arrangement in Orthodox siddur (ADPB, p. 317n, p. 469n, p. 574n). Some zemirot of kabbalistic origin (Hoffman, 2007b), such as Yom zeh l’Israel (This day is for Israel) (ADPB, p. 320; FoP, p. 102; LCh, p. 644), end with an eschatological vision of the

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46 For historical development and inclusion of the zemirot in siddurim, see Hoffman (1979, 2007).
47 To discuss which songs are sung on which part of the Shabbat day lies beyond the scope of this thesis.
messianic age being compared to one great *Shabbat*. Another one, *Yah Ribbon Olam siddurim* (God, Master of the Universe) was often sung at home. Only three of its five verses are included in Progressive *siddur* (ADPB, p. 316; FoP, p. 103) due to the particularistic request to end the exile, ingather the Jewish people, and for God’s presence to return to the Temple in Jerusalem. It finishes with a plea: ‘renew our Sanctuary, remember the ruined city’; many Progressive Jews would have objections to the literal meaning of this.

Similar themes of suffering and redemption are found in a number of *zemirot*, such as *Deror yikra* which is found in the Progressive collections (FoP, p. 186, LCh, p. 86) but not in ADPB. The traditional text is included in the Reform *siddur*, but verses 3 and 5, which call for vengeance against Israel’s enemies, have been amended both in Hebrew and English. In the Torah and in the *siddur*, an enemy (*oiev*) often refers to hostile foreign nations whom God is threatening either to use as a powerful instrument to chastise disobedient Israel, or to defeat as part of an ongoing campaign for the welfare of Israel. Kessler explains that over time, ‘being surrounded by oppressive nations became a feature of Jewish memory and identity’ (2015, p. 94) and the *siddur* mirrors the experience of Jewish people. The editors of FoP included a note explaining that: ‘We have amended the Hebrew text from “smash my foes with angry rage” to “release my foes from angry rage” ... from “Passionate God tread down my foes” to “transform my foes”’(FoP, p. 187), while the explanatory notes at the foot of that page describe the tension between the experience of Israel as an oppressed nation and the hope for a time when ‘wilderness will flourish, people will sing God’s praises and be able truly to keep *Shabbat*. The plea for the destruction of Israel’s enemies is replaced by a call for ‘their repentance’. Neither the song nor the editors explain the eschatological relations between Israel and the Nations beyond saying that the ‘people’ (perhaps only Israel) will praise God and keep *Shabbat*, a universalistic but possibly triumphalist note. This *zemar* was sung on one occasion in a Reform synagogue (PObs.8RefSyn.3) as a part of the morning service without any explanation. In LCh these verses are omitted and the song itself is shortened and merged with one of the optional services for *Shabbat* evening services. This version is also particularistic, since it expresses the special relation between God and Israel, but the vengeance and triumphalism are gone. These examples illustrate how editors of Progressive *siddurim* deal with texts which seem not to be in harmony with their ideology. There are also commentators, even among Progressives, who do not challenge the literal meaning, and justify the use of such texts, as there are still places where Jewish life is threatened.
The question arises whether they literally believe that ‘God will eventually crush Israel’s enemies’ (e.g. Dorff in: Hoffman, 2007b, p. 141) in messianic times.

People are more ready to forgive or ignore the problematic concepts in a song when it has a melody that is comfortable and familiar. Their tunes are often directly borrowed from the surrounding culture or from the Jewish musical tradition. Zemirot are not the only examples of liturgical texts to which folk melodies are used. Several respondents indicated that they borrow non-Jewish tunes for Shabbat Psalms (even tunes of Christmas carols) for Havdalah or Aleinu. Ideologically, because these songs are usually sung in Hebrew (or Yiddish, Aramaic, or Ladino), their meaning is seen as not worth worrying about. It is their relation to Jewish tradition that makes them acceptable, and even popular.

3.8 Birkat Hamazon and the end of the day

Traditionally, this is the final prayer, the ‘Grace after the Meal’ (Birkat Hamazon), which completes the meal and indicates that it is time for the guests to leave – that the celebration is over. It is recited regularly, but on Shabbat (as well as Festivals) the text used for the ritual has special additions. The practice of this ritual in more Progressive families varies. Sometimes it was sung immediately after we finished the meal, and then the conversation continued in a more relaxed setting.

Debates concerning the formation and application of one of the oldest Jewish liturgical texts are found in the Talmud (e.g. M.Ber. 6:5; 7:3; B.Ber. 48b; 50a), and versions of differing lengths exist (Hoffman, 1979, pp. 145-6). Orthodox and both Progressive siddurim have shorter and longer versions for this ritual (ADBP, pp. 756-75; FoP, pp. 462-87; LCh, pp. 551-9). Additionally, the Liberal siddur has a third version called the ‘Full Version’, which contains ideological changes to the traditional wording. The shorter Liberal version omits all repetitions, abbreviated quotations and texts that seem no longer meaningful.

These various versions are another good example of editors’ attitudes toward P/U elements of Jewish prayers. The text is made up of four blessings: birkat hazan ('a

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48 On music and its origin in the Reform setting, see Borts (2014).
49 Birkat Hamazon was included in the prayerbooks, except Liberal siddur for synagogue services until 1967.
50 Further discussion of history of Birkat Hamazon lies beyond the scope of this thesis, see e.g. Marks (2014).
blessing over the food’), *birkat ha’arets* (‘a blessing over the land’), *birkat yerushalayim* (‘a blessing over Jerusalem’), *hatov vehametiv* (a praise of God ‘who is good and who does good’). The whole is preceded by introductory verses: *zimu* – a ritual of invitation to join in the Grace. Before analysing the text itself, I shall cite commentaries by the editors of two *siddurim* (Orthodox and Reform) preceding *Birkat Hamazon*. Explaining their structure, the editors allude to themes of my thesis.

Sacks in his commentary to *Birkat HaMazon* explains:

The original form of Grace consisted of three blessings, which move sequentially from the universal to the particular. In the first, we thank God for sustaining the world and all that lives. The second is national: we thank God for the land of Israel as well as for the other blessings of Jewish life: the covenant and its sign, circumcision, and the Torah. The third turns to Jerusalem. The fourth paragraph is a later addition: according the Talmud (*Berachot* 48b), it was added after the Bar Kochba rebellion, c. 135 CE’ (ADPB, p. 757).

This emphasises the particularistic aspects which are part of the sacred narrative concerning Jewish identity, and concerning the fourth part mentions a tradition about an historical event around which the text was written, describing what it means. It praises God’s goodness and contains no particularistic elements, except that it uses among more universalistic names for God (‘King of the Universe’, ‘the good King who does good to all’), others which relate to specific moments in Jewish history: ‘the Holy One of Jacob’, ‘our Shepherd’ or ‘Israel’s Shepherd’. Providing a historical context that alludes to the narrative of being a persecuted People enables Sacks to add a specifically Jewish tone to this prayer.

In the Reform prayerbook, a historical context is given, based on the same Talmudic text. But it adds a strongly universalistic interpretation of this text,

The four paragraphs indicate four primary Jewish teachings: ‘who gives food to all’ is a reminder that as God’s agents we are duty-bound to ensure that all are fed. ‘For the land and for the food’ speaks of the need to care for the earth that yields so much and is abused so easily. ‘Who build Jerusalem’ reminds us that concern with what we eat and how we eat is part of our responsibility in the building of God’s kingdom. ‘Who gives food to all’ speaks of the need to be sensitive to the quality of the lives of the creatures we eat and the manner of their deaths (FoP, p. 463).

The particularistic notions are universalised, so even though the prayer is literally about Jewish identity and Jewish community, it is re-interpreted as a set of teachings
concerning the wider world. But this commentary appears at the beginning of the prayer, and may not filter through one’s thinking.

As regards the texts of *Birkat Hamazon*, I have chosen to examine the Liberal siddur, as its changes are more radical than those in the Reform siddur. As mentioned above, this siddur has three versions of *Birkat Hamazon*. The short version is a simple blessing that praises God for providing food, which is followed by Ladino and longer versions expressing similar notions about God’s providence and care for the whole world. In the ‘Full Version’ (LCh, pp. 553-8), some particularistic notions are kept, while others are changed or omitted. Thus in the second paragraph, which for Sacks has a national aspect, LCh also contains particularistic ideas and includes the concept of a gift of the Land. A literal translation of ‘heritage’ includes a notion of having rights to this Land, as well as a special relationship with God through the covenant, and to the teaching of Torah. But it does not mention the Exodus, circumcision (the covenant’s sign), or ‘laws’ (*chukim*), which appear in the Orthodox siddur. This paragraph is universalised in the *chatimah* and a short paragraph which responds to the needs of food in the whole world. Such a pattern is followed in later paragraphs: whenever the traditional text has a particularistic note, it is universalised or followed by an addition (in Hebrew and English) concerning the wider world e.g. ‘May the Most High, Source of perfect peace, grant peace to us, to all Israel, and to all humanity’ (LCh, p. 558). This universalised ending of *Birkat Hamazon* gives a messianic vision of universal peace (FoP has a similar addition), whereas the traditional *Birkat Hamazon* (in ADPB and FoP) includes an additional paragraph composed of biblical verses that also call on Israel to be attentive to those in the world who suffer; but it closes with the request for strength and peace over Israel (only), so is particularistic in scope.

As mentioned above, *Birkat Hamazon* marks the end of the *Shabbat* eve celebration at home and in the synagogue, which may last late into the night. The venue and the food need to be tidied for the two other *Shabbat* meals and the rest of the *Shabbat* time. In more traditional homes, the food is left on electrical plates to keep it warm, and *halakhic* regulations concerning cleaning the space are kept. As a non-Jew in the home of a family who observe *Shabbat* strictly, I felt the boundaries between us at this time. Due to my *halakhic* ignorance, it was immediately suggested that help is not needed with clearing up. So the simple, universal activity of cleaning became a moment of separation and distinction, due to complex rules of *kashrut*. Nonetheless, in most of the families that I visited, these boundaries were kept less consistently, so help with arranging was either welcomed, or the cleaning was left until the next day.
Summary

The discussion of P/U ideology in this chapter focused on the ritual elements that are most popular in the home on *erev Shabbat*. I began with the traditional Blessing of Children that follows the Candle Lighting, which however popular, has particularising nuances related to the Temple that were questioned by several interviewees. In contrast, two other popular traditional texts, *Shalom Aleikhem* and *Eshet Chayil*, are not changed in Progressive prayerbooks, although their meaning was discussed and challenged by interviewees. Some preferred not to include these, while others, precisely because of the possibility of multivocal interpretation, sing them but also discuss their P/U possibilities of meaning.

Every *Shabbat* on which oneprepares and consumes a meal, one is making a statement concerning P/U ideology, depending on the extent to which one's food is *kosher* and on how the table and diners signal their self-identification with particularism. What also makes it a Jewish meal is the prayers one recites before and after it. Through the ritual and text of *Kiddush*, *Shabbat songs* and *Birkat Hamazon* the notion of sacred narrative was introduced which includes texts central to the P/U discussion by relating to the Jewish memory of Creation and Exodus. As the Hebrew text is similar in the three chosen *siddurim*, it was important to discuss the translations and commentaries included, since they reflect the editors' and the movements' ideology concerning P/U.

While discussing the turn toward tradition in Progressive ritual, I have also shown that ritual meaning is not necessarily constant or stable. *Shabbat* table rituals can be traced back to particularistic Temple practices, but it does not follow that this is meaningful or definitive for today’s Progressive Jews, who may reinterpret the practices in their own often personal contexts. The genesis of a practice might be quite irrelevant for them. But as I have shown, in the case of *Netilat Yadayim*, it is precisely the origin of certain rituals which to some Progressive interviewees makes them seem unwanted and opposed to their personal and communal practice.

An analysis of one important element of the *erev Shabbat* celebration is purposely omitted in this chapter – that is the *Kabbalat Shabbat*. Since *Erev Shabbat* for the majority of my interviewees involves changing the space – from a home setting to a synagogue context, the next three chapters are dedicated to the *Shabbat* evening in the synagogue, beginning with discussion of P/U elements reflected in the space where the services take place.
One of the first *Erev Shabbat* services I attended in London made a huge impression on me for several reasons. The synagogue is situated in the centre of London, tucked between other buildings; its side entrance is not clearly distinguishable as a Jewish place of worship. The area is filled with many Muslim stores and restaurants, with tables placed on the pavement where many smoke *shisha* pipes. Walking there for the first time, I was not sure if I was in the right district, and something resembled the atmosphere of the Old City in Jerusalem. I was reassured that this was the right place when I saw a group of distinguished elegantly-dressed people being welcomed (and checked) by two security guards. As my name was on the list of guests held by security, I entered the hall where around 50 people had gathered. This first experience of finding the synagogue and taking part in *Erev Shabbat* resembled many others I had in various parts of London, however the P/U notions were not equally present, as demonstrated here.

Two ethnographical works have been helpful in analysing data coming from participant observation of the *Erev Shabbat* ritual in the synagogues that I visited and on which this chapter is focused. From a sociological and anthropological perspective, Samuel Heilman’s *Synagogue Life* (1976) presents a detailed analysis of activities and interactions in an Orthodox synagogue as a place of study, prayer and assembly. Many of his observations were confirmed by my own in the Orthodox synagogues that I visited. However, my sample is more diverse (not limited to one particular case), and the context is British rather than American. Furthermore, I reflect on chosen concepts rather than offering a detailed description of the life of one synagogue, and thus it adds a new angle to the small number of pre-existing ethnographical works concerning synagogues.

Similar, but different in scope, is a collection of articles, edited by Jack N. Lightstone: *Ritual and Ethnic Identity* (1995a). The individual authors approach Jewish ritual through the lens of various themes or around a presentation of part of the *Shabbat* service in the Canadian Jewish context. The majority of research was performed in Progressive contexts, and therefore their observations are elucidating for some aspects of Reform and Liberal *Shabbat* ritual. Like Heilman’s book, these articles concentrate on the sociological aspects of religion, whereas my analysis, even if it learns from such work, also departs from it, concentrating mainly on ideological and
theological concepts present in Jewish ritual and the texts of prayerbooks. Moreover, both books were written more than two decades ago. Jewish ritual is dynamic and has undergone various changes over the years since these books were published, and therefore I hope my ethnographical data will bring a fresher view of some aspects of Jewish ritual in a British context.

4.1. *Erev Shabbat* in Orthodox synagogues

4.1.1 Where and who

Entering *Shabbat* begins at home, where, as I have discussed in previous chapters, Jews gradually prepares themselves physically and spiritually to enter what Joshua Heschel called a ‘sanctuary in time’ (1955, p. 29). For those whose habit it is to join their community, the preparation also happens through a ‘journey in space’ – leaving home and walking to a synagogue where their community gathers for *Erev Shabbat*. In London, in contrast to Israel, such a journey leads through a non-Jewish space, a public space filled with shopping and the regular business of Friday afternoon. My stricter Orthodox interviewees (OW5, OM1) often saw this transition as a potential danger. It not only disturbed their spiritual journey toward *Shabbat*, but the fact that Orthodox Jews are more easily distinguished by their clothes also makes them more generally vulnerable to anti-Semitic reactions when they are outside. Such a feeling of potential danger is reinforced by the presence of security at the gates of many synagogues in London (both Orthodox and Progressive).

Jewish buildings are marked with a *mezuzah* (*mezuzot*, ‘doorposts’ (cf. Ex. 12:7); discussed e.g. in B.Men. 31b-34a), which contains a parchment scroll with texts from Deut. 6:4–9 and 11:13–21 (as in photo 21).
This custom, which halakhically only applied to living spaces, is also practiced as regards the doorpost of many Jewish institutions (Rabinowitz, 2007), even though a synagogue may be exempted, due to the Torah Scrolls inside it. Especially in the majority of Orthodox cases, crossing over a threshold with a mezuzah means entering another kind of zone where Jewish identity is strongly marked and where universalistic symbols are supposed to be left outside.

While the wider vicinity – the neighbourhood of some of the Orthodox communities that I visited – is surrounded by another marker, an eruv. The presence of an eruv indicates that the population of the area surrounded by the eruv contains a high proportion of Orthodox Jews, which may lessen the feeling of danger and liminality of space. Eruv (literally ‘mixing’) is a concept applied to various symbolic acts (Kaplan, 2007b), and allows certain otherwise forbidden acts such as walking further than 2000 cubits, or facilitates carrying certain objects between two domains on Shabbat and other festivals (B.Er. 26b–82a; Tur, Sh.Ar., OCh 366–416). Whereas mezuzot were used by all interviewees, the eruv concept was mentioned to me only

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51 Thus excludes spaces such as storerooms, stables, lavatories, and bathrooms.
once, while walking with OW5, who said that she was able to change her synagogue for a more traditional one further away from her house, as it was still within the eruv. For the majority of my interviewees, the eruv was seen as too strict and old-fashioned a concept (connected with a ‘shtibl’ mentality (OM2)), and in a way too particularistic. Fonrobert (2005) and more recently Ewance (2012) analyse various attitudes to the presence of an eruv within Jewish and non-Jewish neighbourhoods, which led in some areas in London to conflict not only between Jews and non-Jews but even more so among Jews themselves.\(^5\) Its symbolism and function were questioned due to (among other things) its visibility: poles and lines mark the boundary of the eruv, even though an eruv does not exclude anyone from using the space. For some, the eruv is seen as a ‘public expression of difference [which] contravenes the right of dominant/universal community not to confront cultural otherness’ (Cooper, 1996, p. 537).

The closer one comes to the entrance of the synagogue, the more one becomes part of a specific group in which certain behaviour marks and divides those who meet on the street as Jew and non-Jew, member of a specific community and outsiders. Leaving their home, a person often meets another member of a specific shul (‘synagogue’) and various sociable conversations ensue, which are part of what Heilman (1976) calls ‘warming-up’ for the service. In this way, the boundaries of a synagogue extend beyond the building, entering the non-Jewish, universal space (and a similar process takes place after the service as congregants move away from the synagogue back towards their homes).

When entering a building, walking past a doorpost with a mezuzah after being approved by security staff, one leaves what is chol (‘secular’) to immerse oneself gradually more deeply in the sacredness of space and time. Again, external signs of another realm are used to mark entering a Jewish space, a shul. In all synagogues, the decorations and their symbolism related exclusively to biblical narrative, Jewish symbols and the history of the community and hardly ever departed from these themes, even in Progressive settings. In that way, someone entering a particularistic space, could freely express his/her Jewish identity shared by others.

In all synagogues that I visited it was expected for both men and women, Jewish and non-Jewish, to cover their heads and, next to the entrance, boxes with kippot and headscarves were placed in case one forgot to bring one. In two synagogues (OrtSyn.2KS and OrtSyn.3KS), Erev Shabbat services take place in the beit midrash (an

\(^{5}\) Cousineau (2010) shows how Jews were the strongest opponents, partly out of cultural embarrassment.
example is shown in photo 22), as there are usually only around ten men present and rarely women (however their space was preserved and marked with a mechitsah).

![Photo 22. An Orthodox beit midrash, a space where the erev Shabbat ritual regularly takes place happens. The mechitsah is on the right, and two rows of chairs are prepared for the women. On erev Shabbat there were around 10-15 men and a few women.](image)

In two other synagogues (PObs.120rtSyn.1 and PObs.180rtSyn.4), between 3 and 5 women regularly come for the service. In all cases, it was difficult to find these rooms and a code was necessary to enter them or to ask a member to open the door. Such arrangements even further emphasise the closeness of the group and the particularistic notions of the whole ritual, even though I suspect that economy (saving some money on heating and security) also plays a role.

Some conversations took place before the service began. This liminal phase was shortened to the necessary period for finding one's siddur and for gathering ten men (minyan). In most places that I visited, an outsider would receive attention and a few words would be exchanged to get to know the person. I also was always welcomed, asked how I had heard about the service, and whether I knew someone there. Often, to make me feel more comfortable, an explanation followed that there might be a few women for Erev Shabbat, but that they were more likely to attend on Saturday. On one occasion, OM2 (a member of a small Orthodox shul), who was waiting for the minyan, shared that sometimes the community has difficulty gathering a minyan, and it was not an issue this time as the number was higher (around 20 men). The community included
some male family members of a *bat mitzvah*, whose ceremony was taking place the following morning.

To recite *tefilah betsibbur* ('public prayer'), a *minyan* is necessary. In OrtSyn.2 I was told that they expected a *minyan* because they have a 'WhatsApp' group and it had been confirmed that ten men would be there. As the service was about to begin the tenth man arrived. Some of those present attempted to mitigate the particularistic exclusion of my person by asking me if I knew how to find the right pages during the service and by inviting me to *Shabbat* dinner (repeated again after the service had ended), so I felt welcomed and remained a part of the ritual, even though I was not halakhically included. The uncertainty around *minyanim* was always mentioned in conversations at the beginning of *Erev Shabbat*, often with a note of embarrassment and sadness. However, the presence of a *minyan* was never an issue on *Shabbat* morning. It is also worth noting that the fact that Friday is a regular working day in London means that the desire to leave home and go to synagogue on a Friday evening must inevitably compete with tiredness arising from one’s secular obligations. Thus, the tension between being Jewish and being part of wider society is felt more acutely on *Erev Shabbat* than on Saturday, when people do not have to work.

As mentioned above, conversations are an important part of the *Shabbat* experience. They build community unity, so it is important that the space facilitates them. Some conversations could take place more easily due to the arrangement of the seating (e.g. PObs.18OrtSyn.4). This is important mainly in spaces where men and women are expected to sit separately. In PObs.18OrtSyn.4 the *mechitsah* ('divider', aimed to prevent the ritual’s participants from any distractions, particularly coming from a sexual attraction toward the opposite sex; Sh.A., OCh 98:1) was constructed using two low benches between rows of chairs, dividing a larger part in front for men and a smaller section for women behind.

*Mechitsot* come in different sizes and forms, and are as varied as the spaces in which they are found. Shira Wolosky (2009) shows how in Orthodox synagogues *mechitsah* is perceived as a sign of ‘authenticity and religiosity status’, even though it is rather modern halakhic ruling. Heilman (1976, p. 69) argues that gender segregation is one of Orthodox Judaism’s symbolic absolutes and it affirms ‘in some way the collective membership in the Jewish world’. Such separation occurs on other occasions (*Kiddush* meals, parties, government meetings), though in the United Synagogues I

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53 For contemporary discussion concerning *halakhah* and *tefilah betsibbur*, see Freundel (2011).
54 Further discussion is beyond the aim of this thesis, see Wolosky (2009), Baumel (2011).
visited on Shabbat, men and women were separated only during times of prayer. The *mechitsah* was kept there for the aforementioned symbolic reasons, but the tradition was challenged by some of the ritual participants and interviewees. Whenever a sermon was given, if it was possible, the *mechitsah* would be split apart or the rabbi would stand between both sections so he could be seen by men and women alike.

Wolosky and others also see the *mechitsah* as ‘part of a systemic exercise of power and control’ (2009, p. 13), which is symbolically expressed through its size, height and transparency. Only young children have the freedom to move between the two spaces from the moment the service begins, though it is rare that children are present on *Erev Shabbat*. *Mechitsah* not only separates men from women but also limits access to ritual objects (as in photo 23), as all except *siddurim* (in PObs120rtSyn1KS) are contained in the men’s section.

*Photo 23. Sections in an Orthodox synagogue for Erev Shabbat. Top: for women without ritual objects (books only for children, for study and some folders concerning Jewish ritual); Bottom: for men with bookshelves for *siddurim*, *chumashim* and ritual garb.*

The presence of ritual objects in the men’s section compounded the feeling of being in a particularistic space to which only a certain group of people have access. In
other synagogues (e.g. PObs.15OrtSyn.2KSh, PObs. OrtSyn.6KSh) that I visited, the *mechitsah* was a real separation, as it was made of a thick, high, white, suspended curtain, and throughout most of the service the women could only hear the service. Because of such an arrangement in PObs.15OrtSyn.2KS, women followed their own rhythm of prayer or private conversations.

The arrangement of the space emphasizes its Orthodox Jewish identity with its distinctive understanding of Jewish tradition and ritual observance. It creates the sense for worshippers that they are part of a wider Jewish Orthodox community which prays in a similar manner around the world. Thus, it also makes explicit its distinction from Progressive Jews and even more so from the non-Jewish world, whose members, if invited to an Orthodox setting, must accept these spacial arrangements.

### 4.1.2 Ritual

After a period of ‘warming up’ (through conversations, reading the notices or something from a *siddur*, or simply sitting and waiting) which lasts as long as the men take to gather, in all cases without any announcement the first words of the first prayer were heard: *Ashrei yoshvei veitekha ...* (ADPB, p. 170). The ritual is conducted the same way every week, so those who are regulars, have a feeling of familiarity and Jewish particularity. The *shaliach tsibur* ('emissary of the congregation', a person designated to lead the service) stands on the *bimah*, in front of the ark. He plays a rather central role, as the *shaliach tsibur* enables worshippers to fulfil their obligation of prayer through recitation on their behalf (Sh.A., OCh 124:1).\(^{55}\) His role is usually marked by a *tallit*, in general put over his head.\(^{56}\) The *tallit* is also used as a tool for concentration and separation from what was going on behind him – worshippers welcoming each other, looking for a newsletter, having short conversations. There are moments in the service in which silence is expected, as e.g. from *Barkhu* until the end of the *Amidah*, during the Mourners *Kaddish* and the sermon. But as I have already mentioned, the synagogue plays an important role for the community and therefore often even within the space where ritual takes place are formed what Heilman (1976) calls ‘sociability spots’, where conversations take place during less engaging parts of the service.

In the majority of Orthodox synagogues, the service is only in Hebrew (except three synagogues where pages for main parts were given in English), and it comes in

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55 For historical development of the traditional role of *shaliach tsibbur*, see Blidstein (1971).
56 The symbolism of *tallit* was discussed in ch.1. For discussion around *tallit* for evening service, see Freundel (2011).
one flow of recitation, with breaks only to change the person leading. Usage of Hebrew, as explained in the previous chapter, has particularistic notions and functions in forming a cohesive Jewish community. However, some men were talking more than participating in the prayer, which could be that they were unable to join in. In rare cases where the women were present, some prayed individually as they could not join in singing. Others followed what the men were saying in silent recitation, traditionally moving their lips (a tradition based on Hannah’s prayer in 1Sm 1:13).

In all the synagogues that I visited on Friday night, the ritual begun with the Minhah (‘afternoon’) service which does not belong to Shabbat. It is rarely recited on weekdays in shul, and therefore most people have contact with this prayer only on Fridays. Minhah is followed immediately by the Kabbalat Shabbat\(^57\) (‘Reception of Shabbat’) Service and then Ma’ariv (‘evening’). The whole worship on Friday night lasts between 45 minutes and an hour. Most prayers (except Psalm 29, Lekhah Dodi, Psalm 92 and Yigdal) were recited quickly and only certain parts, marked in the siddur and to which the Congregation should respond, were accentuated by a louder voice and slower pace so that others could join in. Where the leaders like to sing, some additional parts were sung, though as a consequence more parts were also recited quickly or skipped so that the whole ritual did not last longer. Singing marks Shabbat as distinct, as on weekdays prayers are rather quickly recited because there is little time before work. On Erev Shabbat there is more singing than on weekdays, but the most happens on Shabbat morning. Singing marks the time and classifies it, as different tunes are used for Erev Shabbat and for Shacharit, and each festival has its own melodies (Friedmann, 2008, Idelsohn, 1929, Sharlin, 2008). Besides singing, some persons also help themselves to enter the rhythm of prayer through what in Yiddish is called shokeling (swaying). However, in the synagogues I visited, shokeling was restrained and done only by younger men and boys, or by more traditional visitors (PartObs.18OrtSyn.4). The origins of this practice are not clear. OM1 suggested that it related to a verse from Psalm 103: ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul; and my whole being bless God’s Holy Name’, but he saw it as an expression of a ‘yeshivah way’ of praying and piety. Such body movements may be seen as more traditional and part of a Jewish way of engaging with prayer, but for the majority of participants, the only gestures they performed were those traditionally prescribed for the liturgy. The mode of how prayers are performed gives a particularistic feeling, a different one to Progressive communities.

\(^{57}\) On the question of Kabbalat Shabbat as a mandatory prayer, see Freundel (2011).
When I compare the experience of attending *Erev Shabbat* in Orthodox Synagogues with Progressive experiences, the former felt at certain moments more like a ritual performed by individuals who gathered to pray together, rather than like a community ritual. As I have already mentioned, a synagogue has a triple function: to be a place of prayer, of assembly and of study. But all three may happen within one space. A few members of the OrtSyn.2 easily shifted from prayer to conversation, back to prayer, and then to study of a *parashah* commentary printed in a US newsletter and presenting it to a neighbour, while others were immersed in prayers for most of the ritual. Such an approach to *Erev Shabbat* ritual is specific to the majority of Orthodox communities, but it was never observed in the Progressive context, where everybody normally follows the service leader’s instructions, even though a study session may be integrated into the ritual.

In all synagogues, toward the end of the ritual a rabbi gave a short sermon, always on the weekly Torah portion, often explaining some specific verses of the biblical text, relating it to Talmud or *halakhah*. During my visits, there were no universalistic digressions in the sermon on *Erev Shabbat*. Up to this point, the ritual and the sermon were strong in particularistic notions.

On *Erev Shabbat* there were few announcements at the end of the service, usually only reminders of what would happen the next day. But it is also a time when a person who came as a guest might be officially introduced to the community. Women are traditionally excluded from such an honour and are instead welcomed during the *Kiddush*. In my case, I was twice officially presented and welcomed publicly during the *Erev Shabbat* announcements (in two other cases it happened during the *Kiddush*). Such a welcome facilitated my inclusion in *Kiddush* conversations and in women’s conversations during prayers on *Shabbat* morning. Being introduced by a rabbi certainly neutralised any idea of threat coming from being a stranger and non-Jew, and it is one way of changing the stranger’s status to that of guest, which might mean that, on the next occasion, such a person can receive a call up to the Torah or other responsibilities within the ritual. Heilman (1976, p. 108-11) in the analysis of stranger/guest metamorphosis in a *shul* located among Afro-American gentiles, argues that having strangers inside the community would ‘perhaps raise the group’s anxieties about its integrity and continued existence to intolerable levels’. Harvey (2003), describing Maori protocols of welcoming strangers, explains that certain native communities see a stranger as a potential enemy or guest, and it is through ritual that the visitor’s status is fixed. I experienced certain patterns of welcome and behaviour.
upon entering a synagogue for the first time, and observed the change that gradually
happened from welcoming me as a stranger and becoming their guest. It is expected
that visitors notify the office before the service and introduce themselves. As I have
mentioned, upon arrival further conversation and questioning take place, so some of
the boundaries can be overcome, while others concerning ritual can be kept in the case
of a non-Jew. This change of status was rarely felt in Progressive synagogues, as the
structure of services is different. I shall discuss this in the next section.

The evening prayers end with a final hymn, *Yigdal* – a poetic version of
Maimonides’ thirteen principles of Jewish faith. Often it is sung responsively by the
leader and congregation. If a young boy below the age of thirteen is present, he may be
given the *kibbud* (‘honour’) to be the leader of this prayer (PObs.10rtSyn.3KS). It is a
way of enabling the male child to take religious responsibilities within Jewish ritual in
the future and to learn through imitation how to do it properly. Such *kibbudim* may
involve acting as a *chazzan* (‘cantor’) at the end of prayers, opening the ark, on occasion
chanting the *haftarah* portion. Besides education, it also plays an important role in
strengthening the Jewish identity of a boy and his sense of belonging to *klal Israel*, so
that at the age of *bar mitzvah*, he would be able in theory to carry out the *mitsvot*.

4.1.3 Community Kiddush

In every synagogue, the Friday night synagogue service ends with *Kiddush*. No candles
are lit, as this is done by women in the home, where in the Orthodox Movement *Kiddush*
is repeated. In the majority of the Orthodox synagogues that I visited, *Kiddush* is done
quickly and without any emphasis in front of the Ark by the *shaliach tsibbur*. As was
explained by OL1, *Kiddush* has a secondary position, as it is one of the rituals that is
kept because of the historical reasons mentioned above, but its primary place and focus
is at home (B. Pes. 101a; Elbogen, 1993, Hoffman, 1979). *Kiddush* is recited over a cup
filled to the brim with kosher wine or grape juice (see B.Pes 106a). Wine is a symbol of
joy, and the full cup indicates that the time of *Shabbat* which is about to begin should
be overflowing with joy and bounty as a symbol of messianic time (Berenbaum and
Skolnik, 2007d). Thus, the beverage’s symbolism has particularistic meanings for
*Shabbat*. In case there is no wine, the *Kiddush* might be recited over the *challah* (Sh.A.
272:9), and the blessing over wine is omitted. On Saturday (or in some Progressive
synagogues on Friday eve as well), in the synagogues I visited *chamar medinah* (‘drink
of the country’) was served next to wine, often including blended or single-malt Scotch whiskey.

*Kiddush*, which may be repeated with the community after the service, presents an opportunity for conversation, strengthening relationships between community members and often forming a source of information about members’ needs and a source of gossip. Usually, after no longer than 15 minutes, the community members began to walk out, often with others, toward their homes where their family and the evening meal of *Erev Shabbat* was waiting for them.

Summing up, in Orthodox synagogues the Friday night services are mainly limited to exclusively Jewish participation, but also in the majority of cases to men. Few women decide to come as they are mainly responsible for the preparation of *Erev Shabbat* at home. On *Erev Shabbat* women have no real voice, which is expressed through the arrangement of the space and access to ritual objects, although in reality as regards the power and authority of women in the Orthodox *shul* setting, they have an important voice. The Friday night ritual in an Orthodox setting feels the most particularistic, and rarely are any non-Jewish elements allowed to enter the particularistic ‘bubble’ during the ritual. At the same time, as I shall discuss in the following paragraphs, some parts of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* prayers in the *siddur* are strong in universalistic notions, but in a certain way, as will be discussed in the third part. However, I shall now turn to Progressive ritual on *Erev Shabbat*, where particularistic notions underwent changes.

4.2 *Erev Shabbat* in Progressive synagogues

4.2.1 Various styles

*Kabbalat* and *Erev Shabbat* ritual plays various roles in Progressive synagogues. In some communities, it is the pivotal ritual moment of *Shabbat*; in a few, it is barely registered as an event or does not even take place. However, the majority of my interviewees expressed that this was their favourite part of the *Shabbat* ritual, regardless of whether it is spent at home or in a synagogue. Furthermore, the community aspect is extremely important for my interviewees, whether expressed through family presence in a home setting and/or with a synagogue community. RR4,
asked if he goes to a synagogue or prefers to pray at home on Erev Shabbat, emphasised the community aspect:

Sometimes I do it at home or in the garden. I like being a part of the community. Singing, being part of the community and davening. Generally, it is more powerful; it has more impact and more effect.

The Erev Shabbat service is not only important for an individual, but may also play a significant role for community identity by strengthening the bonds between its members as well as a sense of shared Jewish identity. LR2 said:

For the congregation, it is the main weekly time coming together. But of course, there is a deeper theological meaning: the idea of Shabbat as a remembrance of Creation, the exodus of Egypt, the Sinai covenant with God etc. - they are there to be talked and discussed.

LR2 relates to the role that ritual plays in the formation of the group as a congregation, but also notices that the particularistic ideology embedded within texts and gestures serves to build the group’s Jewish identity.

In Progressive synagogues (PObs.3LibSyn.1, PObs.17LibSyn.8, PObs.2RefSyn.1) where services have a formal style, a small number of regulars were in attendance (between 10 and 40), and services took place in the main sanctuary. All participants have equal access to the tallitot, kippot and siddurim, etc. which are provided for every service. Unlike the Orthodox communities, there was no separation between men and women and the shelichei tsibbur made sure to be as inclusive as possible in distributing kibbudim among the Jewish participants. Non-Jews were rarely asked to do anything during this ritual. LR1 and LR9 explained that sometimes they ask a non-Jewish parent of bar/bat mitsvah to read something from a siddur or to stand next to the child when he/she lights the Shabbat candles. Boundaries in Jewish ritual are usually maintained, and protecting them is the job of a leader or warden who knows the Jewish community members and chooses the right people for various functions. The ritual usually follows the structure of the siddur, though leaders also feel free to bring additional texts, not necessarily from Jewish sources, for inclusion in the service. The message of these texts influences the P/U balance of the ritual.

A greater number of the synagogues in London that I researched have Friday night services that are more participatory in style, however with varying frequency. They gather a more diverse age group with mostly younger participants, as it is conducted with lots of singing and considerably more Hebrew than the regular services. Less formal ways of conducting the ritual were employed and various actions
were undertaken to build up the communal identity through singing, giving time to get to know the person sitting next to you, space decoration, use of instruments, etc. The space is arranged differently than for Shabbat morning. In the majority of the communities that I visited, whenever it is possible a semi-circular/circular arrangement of chairs is preferred over rows, expressing the inclusiveness and equality of all the participants (one example of such arrangement is presented in photo 24).

Photo 24. A Liberal synagogue prepared for Erev Shabbat. The space was adapted to feel more inclusive.

According to LW2 and RM2, such a setting better facilitates entering the mood and the whole experience of Shabbat. The shaliach tsibbur, who in the majority of services was a rabbi of the community, sits among the participants so that the hierarchical connotations are avoided, although in the majority of cases the leader’s role was marked through wearing a tallit (except in one case PObs.21Ref6). In one Reform synagogue (PObs.2RefSyn.1) where the style of a service is more classical, the leader’s position was additionally distinguished during regular Erev Shabbat by wearing a black gown in addition to the tallit. The clerical garb has been in use since Enlightenment times (imported from the Protestant churches) in other synagogues as well, but mainly for Shabbat Shacharit.58 The traditional custom of having more elegant dress

58 In two synagogues (PObs.12OrtSyn.1; PObs.2RefSyn1), a specific gown (silk top hats, pin-stripe trousers and tails, or a gown) designate synagogue leaders, this was originally borrowed from Germany and incorporated in in nineteenth-century Anglo Jewry (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010, p. 6).
for *Erev Shabbat* varied in various synagogues, but in smaller communities usually people choose to wear their regular outfits, not to mark the special status of the day externally but rather through participation in the ritual. As LStR2 argues, these types of services are in line with other synagogue activities to provide more spirituality (however one understands this concept), but also to prompt those who are not regular members to come for services. The majority of the synagogues are actively searching for how to make services more attractive, e.g. through providing a space and time for the community for a discussion of the ritual (PObsSyn.4RefSyn.2).

The majority of the texts are sung in Hebrew, though in three Liberal synagogues some texts are purposefully read in English so more people can join in. Some sung prayers are shortened, so they become a kind of mantra; thus the text itself and its meaning play a secondary role to the ritual itself. Furthermore, a number of instruments are used to accompany the music, thus the *halakhic* prohibition of using them on *Shabbat* is not respected. The leaders of these services often break the flow of service with short commentaries introducing the following prayers or inviting people to take more time for silence and meditation. For this purpose, *niggunim* are also used so to help the participant to enter the meditative atmosphere of these services.

Some of the tunes of these prayers were purposely composed to match the British context better. LStR2 being asked about one such type of services explained:

Until ten years ago, the tunes used in the Progressive synagogues (...) were guitar-based, largely driven by American singers/songwriters who brought a particularly American sound to the liturgy (Debbie Friedman, Craig Taubman, Jeff Klepper). So Dean Staker started composing melodies for the *Kabbalat Shabbat* liturgy which was influenced by British songwriters (Cat Stevens, Pink Floyd, The Beatles, to name a few). He has also become part of a group of musicians with Judith Silver and David Hoffmann called 'Shir Britannia'. The idea is that there are songs in our secular folk traditions that have as much spiritual power as do our traditional Jewish liturgy, and that they could be used in conjunction with the traditional liturgy to provide a new spiritual experience.

Music was often mentioned as a common language, which enables participants to join in ritual even without knowing Hebrew. Several scholars have written about the role of singing on *Shabbat*, (Friedmann, 2012, Rubin and Baron, 2006, Summit, 2000) and in recent years two ethnographical PhD theses completed by Barbara Borts (2014) and Ruth Illman (2018a) have discussed the role of music and changes in British

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59 For the use of *niggunim* in the Progressive services, see Illman (2016, 2018a, 2018b).
Progressive synagogues. The shift in the way music came to be used in Progressive synagogues and the creation of new tunes that have been described as ‘pro-ethnic and pro-Israel’, began in the 1960s (Lipstadt, 2014) and gradually arrived in the UK, where other new compositions were adapted to the context and grew in popularity.

Alan Merriam argues that music serves not only as entertainment but also as communication and symbolic representation designed to validate religious rituals and contribute to the continuity, stability and integration of a group (1964, pp. 219-27). That is why music in Jewish ritual is also a carrier of Jewish tradition, and as Jeffrey Summit (2016, pp. 16-7) explains, may help to deepen this relationship with Jewish heritage in a way that will be seen as relevant for a modern Jew.

Furthermore, music has the potential to comment on the words spoken during the service and is thus a tool for expressing and strengthening or weakening particularistic ideology. It can also cover over texts which may be ideologically difficult or even unacceptable for some. Melody may help participants engage with the prayer on another level, going beyond the words. An example is *Aleinu* (discussed in chapter 7), which the majority of the Liberal interviewees indicated as an example of the most particularistic and even chauvinistic prayer, which at the same time is sung by everybody because it has a ‘catchy’ tune. This melody makes it stand out in Progressive synagogues, while in the majority of Orthodox communities it is read quickly, with usually only the first and the last few lines recited aloud. Thus music can be a powerful tool to sustain, emphasise or disguise the P/U meaning of the accompanied text or even moment of the ritual.

Music is always present in synagogue ritual, and the most important moment of any service - that is, the Torah reading - is actually chanted. However, the amount of space that is given to music always depends on the perceived role of the ritual itself, and the abilities of the prayer leaders and their community. Friday night services in Progressive synagogues tend to have more music than Orthodox ones, whereas on Saturday in all movements music is seen as important aspect of ritual delivery.

Another kind of *Erev Shabbat* is a fellowship service (sometimes called ‘chavurah’ service). In one of the Liberal synagogues (PObs.16LibSyn.8), the ritual is shortened to only a few prayers in the beginning and the *Kiddush* followed by a meal. The ritual resembles a Friday night family meal. On a couple of occasions, a kind of study session on recited prayers was integrated in this time, thus an additional particularistic element was added. The meal ends with *Birkat haMazon*, followed sometimes by ‘Hatikvah’. I had difficulty in interpreting the introduction of this hymn.
into that context other than as a need to finish this ritual in a more particularistic way. It could be understood as expressing being part of the People of Israel as well as expressing a supportive attitude toward Israel. In other synagogues, fellowship services were made up of two parts: a regular service, followed by a Kiddush with the Erev Shabbat meal, to which all members and guests were invited. Such services also take place from time to time in all the Orthodox synagogues that I visited. Their purpose is to strengthen the social cohesion of the community and the relationships between its members.

Elements of the space usually stay the same for Erev Shabbat, though they may be re-arranged in a Progressive setting. Any new elements may strengthen or weaken the particularistic experience. For example, during the week when Yom HaShoah was commemorated in the foyer of a Liberal synagogue (PObs.8LibSyn.3), an exhibition was prepared on the Holocaust. Whoever entered the space was exposed to the photos and texts, which illustrated this tragedy of the Jewish people. Through additional texts and commentaries, the rabbi further strengthened the particularism of the Erev Shabbat ritual that took place. The focus was on the Jewish people and their suffering, ways of survival and the importance of building a strong relationship with members of the Jewish community.

By contrast, for three years in a row while the research was conducted, in the week of Sukkot several additional universalistic allusions were brought into the ritual through the decoration of the space and the leaders’ commentaries during the Erev Shabbat ritual. The entrance hall of a Reform synagogue was transformed for a week into a sukkah (see photo 25); the Sukkot ritual is rich in universalistic theological notions.60

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60 As this thesis concentrates on Shabbat, further discussion would go beyond its aims.
This *sukkah* received an additional universal theme through photos and phrases concerning asylum seekers and refugees, as there was at that time a crisis in many European countries. The next year, the theme was around water shortage, thus photos suspended around the *sukkah* showed water reservoirs and dry areas where there is a lack of water. In both services of *Erev Shabbat* during *Sukkot* week, additional commentaries and prayers with the theme of peace were used throughout the liturgy. Even though most regular Jewish notions were still present in the prayers, these services were the ideologically universalised.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that another time when more universalistic elements entered the *erev Shabbat* services, Jewish and non-Jewish speakers were invited who addressed themes that were significant for wider society such as mental health care (*PObs.9LibSyn.6*), women’s rights (*PObs.4RefSyn.2*), LGBTQI (*PObs.4RefSyn.2*); or this greater universalism was brought in through additional texts for a study portion used during the ritual (*e.g.* *PObs.16LibSyn.8*; *PObs.4RefSyn.2*; *PObs.7LibSyn.3*). The majority of interviewed rabbis confirmed that they feel free to bring additional texts into the services, which would help to shed more light on the issues present not only in Jewish communities but also in society as a whole. Although these presentations are not often in the centre of ritual, they were presented in English, a language that was understood by all (unlike Hebrew), and dealing with issues present in everyday conversations. Correspondingly, if the issue was an attack on or threat to
Jewish life or Israel, then accordingly more particularistic themes were brought to the ritual, making the universalistic elements of Jewish prayer and ritual unnoticeable.

### 4.2.2 Ritual

The liminal phase between the end of the ordinary day and the beginning of *Shabbat* is felt less strongly by the majority of the Progressive interviewees. It is related to their way of keeping (or not keeping) the traditional *halakhot for Shabbat* and their way of marking this day as distinctive from weekdays. For some, the *Erev Shabbat* ritual in the synagogue is the only ‘Jewish’ thing they do on *Shabbat* (or even within the whole week), while others consider themselves *shomrei Shabbat* (who keep the traditional *Shabbat* laws). Some, before and after leaving the synagogue premises, go for a meal in a restaurant, use public transport, drive, or use money. For a great part of the *Erev Shabbat* participants, the rhythm of life will be different from other days of the week only to a certain extent. What they meet inside the building depends on the style of the service to which they choose to come and the leader’s attitude to the traditional and particularistic aspects of the *Shabbat* service.

In Progressive settings, *Erev Shabbat* services begin with a song, or in the case of formal services, a melody might be played on an organ (PObs.2RefSyn.1, PObs.4RefSyn.2). This is a way to quiet down and to form a group gathered for the ritual. Usually, copies of one of the two Progressive *siddurim* (or a special one, e.g. a booklet containing a modified liturgy for the *Erev Shabbat* service, the ‘Netser Liberal’ *siddur*, the ‘Beit Klal Yisrael Siddur’) were already put on chairs or distributed upon entry. Some formal words of welcome followed and an invitation to light the *Shabbat* candles prepared for this occasion. As mentioned in chapter two, during the interviews, the majority of Progressive prayer leaders saw *Hadolat Nerot* as an essential part of *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

Occasionally, as an introduction to the Friday night (also to the *Shabbat* morning) service, introductory readings were chosen from within or outside the Jewish tradition. LStR4 chose Rumi’s poem ‘The soul of prayer’ as an opening text, and saw no ideological problem with bringing a text from non-Jewish sources into the ritual. Others, such as the editors of the Reform *siddur*, would use only Jewish authors, defining this widely (RR2). The editors of LCh, however, included non-Jewish authors, because, as explained in the Introduction, ‘they symbolise our belief that we are heirs, not only of Judaism, but also larger cultural and spiritual heritage of humanity’ (LCh, p.
The commentaries in LCh are not as easily accessible as in FoP, as they appear at the end of the *siddur* as notes. Commentaries and words of explanation can be introduced at any moment in Progressive prayers (which is not a custom in Orthodox synagogues). The leader’s choice of commentary may change the literal meaning of the text from particularistic to universalistic (or vice versa). Not including the commentary leaves words and ritual open to individual interpretation, allowing people to engage with them or not.

After the candle lighting, in the majority of the services the *Mah Tovu* prayer is sung (FoP, p. 100) or another traditional *Shabbat piyyut* (‘poem’), such as the kabbalistic *Yedid Nefesh* (ADPB, p. 256; FoP, p. 109; LCh, p. 648) or *Shalom Aleikhem* (FoP, p. 104; LCh, p. 76).\footnote{Discussed in ch. 3.2} Such songs enable participants to enter the *Shabbat* mode and create an atmosphere of joy and festivity central to the *Shabbat* experience.

In the Reform liturgy, as in the Orthodox one, the next part includes the eight Psalms for *Erev Shabbat* (FoP, pp. 110-26). These Psalms present God as Creator and Sovereign of the world, with a more particularistic note about the special relation to Israel in Psalm 98. These texts set one of the main theological themes for *Shabbat* as the celebration of Creation but also a moment to begin reflecting on the kingship of God and how it is realised in this world. The particularism is not absent from the *erev Shabbat* liturgy as in other parts of the ritual, because there are texts which touch on the special relationship with Israel as the People who recognised God as their King, bound with God through a covenant.

These Psalms as an entire section of Friday night prayers preceding *Kabbalat Shabbat* do not find their place in *LCh*, and Psalm 99 which traditionally belongs to the *Erev Shabbat* liturgy as well, is missing. A few Liberal interviewees expressed dissatisfaction about this (LR6). These Psalms are dispersed in five ‘Sabbath Evening Services’. In practice, probably for practical reasons, it has never been observed, in the Reform ritual as well, that the whole set was used during one service. On some occasions instead of these Psalms, a song, poem or text relating to the themes of *Shabbat* or to more universalistic ideas of creation, rest, family relations et al. was used. However, including this set of Psalms in the Liberal *siddur*, even though not as *Kabbalat Shabbat*, is one of the signs of re-introducing a more traditional form of worship compared to the previous editions of Liberal *siddurim*.

At this moment of the ritual (or at the end of the service), the editors of *LCh* provided a section called *Prayers and Readings on Various Themes*, where a collection...
of texts from various Jewish and non-Jewish authors were arranged around 53 themes. Only LR5 used it for every *Erev Shabbat* service, while others admitted that when the *siddur* was introduced, they used it regularly, now less often or they feel free to choose among them only certain parts, as most of these texts are carefully chosen and they introduce the theme of *parashat hashavua* (weekly Torah portion)\(^{62}\) and its meaning for contemporary life.

What comes next in the ritual - a *piyyut* - is an indispensable part of the service; however in Progressive liturgies, its text is altered. The poem *Lekhah Dodi* (ADPB, p. 266; FoP, p. 121; LCh, p. 91), which is discussed in the next chapter, has a few well-known tunes (it was never simply recited), which is one reason why this poem is so popular.

The Reform ritual often at this point includes two additional Psalms, Ps 92 and 93 (FoP, pp. 124-6), which are usually sung. These Psalms again describe God’s power over nature. They are proceeded by a short phrase ‘May the Everpresent comfort you together with all those who mourn’, which is a more universalised version of the text found in the Orthodox prayerbook: ‘May the Almighty comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem’ (ADPB, p. 271). This is the moment in Orthodox synagogues, when the mourners in the week of *shivah* return to the *shul* (PObs.19OrtSyn5). I mention this ritual, as it was not included in the 7th edition of the Reform *siddur* (1977), which is another example of bringing back more traditional forms into the ritual, but rarely practiced (RR9). However, it is worth noting the change in the vocabulary of the Reform version, in which references to Zion and Jerusalem are omitted. The traditional version was probably seen as inappropriate since the State of Israel has been established.

The next two parts of *Erev Shabbat* in the ritual of Reform and Liberal synagogues, i.e. the *Shema* and *Amidah* (FoP, pp. 127-52; LCh, pp. 92-102), are essentially the same. They are introduced by the *Barekhu* call, which is one of the verses, that to be recited, traditionally needs a *minyan*. In Progressive synagogues, there are various attitudes toward counting the *minyan*,\(^{63}\) and during my participant observation for *Erev Shabbat*, there was no occasion to be in a situation where there were less than ten people. Some as LStR1, confirmed that it is important to have a *minyan* but for him, anyone that prays counts, no matter what their origin, gender or religious affiliation, so particularistic boundaries may be weakened. Thus, the

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\(^{62}\) See ch. 7.

\(^{63}\) For Progressive views on counting the *minyan*, see Rothschild (2016, p. 28).
traditional notion of *minyan* is preserved and at the same time interpreted differently and in a way widened to be more inclusive.

During their recitation or singing, specific traditional gestures might be performed, such as bowing, stepping three steps forward and backwards, etc. In a few Progressive synagogues (e.g. POb.16LibSyn.8; POb.11LibSyn.6), there is a custom to stand up for the *Shema*, even though traditionally one recites the *Shema* sitting, which helps concentration and is related to the idea that the *Shema* is a study portion. Standing also emphasises the theological centrality of the prayer, while the doors of the Ark are opened, symbolically alluding to the Biblical narrative of the Sinai Revelation and to the Torah as the heritage of the Jewish people. As in the Orthodox setting, the majority of participants perform the traditional gesture of covering their eyes with the right hand (B.Ber13b; OCh 61:5) in order to be able to say this verse with a deep concentration (*kavanah*), and in relation to the word *shema* which refers to hearing rather than seeing. However, in some synagogues, those who wear a *tallit* may use it to cover their eyes. LStR1 alluded to these gestures:

All of it makes me think of a physical embodiment of our tradition. The combination of a text and an act. For example, standing up for the *Shema*, we distinguish *Shema* from other parts of the service; and also, we follow the instructions of the text which says to recite it ‘when you lie down and when you rise up’.

These gestures, as any other within the *Shabbat* ritual, add to the notion of Jewishness. Thus, external expressions of Jewish identity on *Shabbat* are found not only in the space or in how people look, in spoken words and singing, but throughout the ritual through gestures: standing, sitting, bowing, touching and kissing the *tsitsit*, standing on one’s toes, moving forward and backwards, turning towards the Ark, tasting wine, etc. The liturgy of *Shabbat* is filled with verbal, auditory, visual, gustatory and olfactory gestures which are used to denote, express or exemplify (Stern 1988, pp. 275-6) elements of Jewish ideology and particularistic notions and symbols. In order to make an impact on a performer, these gestures need to be known and understood – thus they require a specialist knowledge related to Jewish identity and tradition. They create a particularistic atmosphere that may automatically alienate non-Jewish participants as well as those who are Jewish but who do not know that language. Thus, in many communities (even some Orthodox ones) the percentage of those who perform such gestures varies, though the proportion is always higher in Orthodox synagogues than in any Progressive synagogues. The reappearance of once-abandoned gestures is
a sign of how Progressive ritual has changed since the Six-Day War in 1967, when pride in Jewish identity has become stronger. It also indicates a shift from the intellectual approach of early Reformers toward a more embodied experience and search for what some called ‘more spiritual’ engagement with the ritual (LStR2). These forms are also perceived today as ‘authentically’ Jewish (RStR 5; LW2, RW1), which adds to the particularistic experience of the Shabbat ritual. In the majority of Progressive communities (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn.1), body language was left to individual choice, as tradition was often presented as a source of inspiration but not as something binding (Illman, 2016, pp. 302-3). Individual interviewees repeatedly asserted that gestures were important for their personal engagement with prayer, helping them to concentrate and engage with the ritual. RR5 explained that gestures are shared community language, which was performed in the same or a similar way for generations, and around the world, which carry associations and resonances, and something new or invented would be lacking of those memories.

The language and meaning of ritual gestures is strongly particularistic and expresses being ‘in’ or ‘out’, and from my own experience it is one of the most complicated components of Jewish ritual.

The entire Amidah was often recited (or sung) by the whole community, and not individually in silence, as in the Orthodox ritual where the leader and congregation say together only a summary of the seven blessings of the Amidah. In some communities, as in PObs.2RefSyn.1, in the middle of the Amidah an additional blessing from the weekly prayers is added, which is the prayer for the sick. It is usually sung twice and in the middle, participants are invited to say the names of those who need prayer. The names are always given in English and not as in the Orthodox setting with the traditional Hebrew ‘bat/ben (daughter/son of …) [mother’s name]’. As in the case of Kaddish, non-Jews can be mentioned here as well. It is also a moment that primarily serves as a reminder of those in the community who need support, so of strengthening relationships among the members.

The end of services varied. In the majority of Progressive synagogues, rabbis gave a short sermon (always in English, from the beginning of the Reform Movement (Petuchowski, 1968, p. 66)), which often alluded to the parashah (weekly Torah portion) or discussed a chosen text from traditional Jewish sources. However, another scenario can also occur, such as reading the weekly Torah portion from a chumash or even a scroll, especially in those synagogues where there is no Shabbat Shacharit.
service. As was also observed (e.g. Pobs.19LibSyn.6), a bar/bat mitsvah may choose to read from the Torah portion rather on Erev Shabbat and not during the Shacharit service, as is preferred by the majority of communities.

When there was a bar/bat mitsvah, the rabbi would also direct a word to them at this point of the ritual. Some of the sermons were given by bnei mitsvah, and they were more universalistic in their themes, even though they were often based on the weekly portion of the Torah, which served as a starting point to talk more generally about universal ethical values. In the majority of cases, the children started with a story important to them, as on one occasion from a book by J. K. Rowling, while others spoke about the importance of the Jewish tradition and what it meant for their Jewish identity, thus stressing more particularistic notions and Jewish identity. Two prayers, Aleinu and Kaddish, conclude each service, and are followed by a final benediction. The service may conclude, as in Orthodox synagogues, with Yigdal or another Shabbat song such as Shalom Aleikhem, which in some synagogues is followed by a community Kiddush.

4.2.3 Community Kiddush

In Progressive synagogues, Kiddush is the final ritual that ends the Erev Shabbat service, and which includes the blessing over wine as well as bread (in Orthodox services, the blessings are over the wine only). Progressive synagogues placed more of an emphasis on the Kiddush as a ritual by the way in which it was organised (for example, in another room), and performed (e.g. sung with a guitar) for the purpose of strengthening the communal Jewish identity of the specific group. For some Progressive participants it may also be the only occasion to participate in Kiddush and the prescribed Shabbat evening meal before crossing the boundary to the more universal world.

The fact that Kiddush was always in Hebrew and almost always sung, added to the particularistic aspects of the ritual. In contrast to the Kabbalat Shabbat service, I have rarely witnessed the use of siddurim for Kiddush except by the leader in the synagogue. Thus, those who did not know Hebrew or who were non-Jews became observers of the ritual. On two occasions (PObs.2Ref.Syn.1, Pobs.3LibSyn.1), rabbis knew that there were non-Jews and gave a short explanation before the ritual began, contrasting benedictions for wine and bread with the Christian Mass, remarking that ‘it is not what Christians do at their own liturgy’. This particularistic moment in a way
excluded the non-Jewish invitees, contradicting the inclusive invitation to consume wine and bread later. *Kiddush* could be followed by a study session, but more often it quickly turned into a social gathering or a meal when particularistic notions faded away.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed chosen elements of the *Erev Shabbat* ritual in the synagogue. In the Orthodox setting, *erev Shabbat* services are similar to one another and there are no major differences between synagogues. Those who come to services are helped to express and strengthen their belonging to a particular group of people – Israel and Jewish identity – through various ritual elements such as prayers, language, gestures, music, modes of conduct, ritual objects or even space. This is a moment (especially for men, as most women do not come to this service) to become fully immersed in the sacred time of *Shabbat*. As I have shown while discussing, e.g. the concept of *minyan* or community, *Kiddush* is also a moment when social relationships with other Jews are put into focus through commitment to participation in the ritual. Thus, in this particular space and time, universalistic notions are only rarely introduced, e.g. in sermons or private conversations, depending on an individual’s own ideology or how much they want to bring the ‘outside world’ into the *shul* or to be *shomer Shabbat* in the traditional sense.

In Progressive settings, there are various styles of services, and their P/U notions are variable. However, similarly to the Orthodox *Erev Shabbat* ritual, the focus is on community and strengthening its members’ Jewish identity, the bonds between each member and *klal Israel*. For this reason, the community *Kiddush* has a significant place, to the extent that the whole *Shabbat* prayers may be replaced by it (as discussed here in the case of PObs16LibSyn.8). The structure of the service itself is similar to the Orthodox one, but prayer leaders may adapt certain parts, omitting or adding texts from within or even outside Jewish tradition, and in that way P/U notions can be altered. The boundaries of Progressive ritual on *Erev Shabbat* are more porous and may be negotiated, as in the examples discussed here, when non-Jewish parents of a *bar/bat mitzvah* take part in the ritual.

Through the foregoing analysis of the role of language, music, commentaries and gestures in expressing P/U, I have shown differences that appear between each
movement’s ritual. In Progressive settings, ritual is universalised by using English, including readings and commentaries from non-Jewish writers, or introducing themes concerning issues from a wider society. But at the same time the ethnographical data confirmed what other scholars (e.g. Illman, 2018a, Petuchowski, 1996, Bronner, 2011, Liebman, 1992) have already observed: the turn toward tradition and through it to neo-particularisation of the ritual, more strongly in the case of Reform but also in Liberal ritual.
5.
Kabbalat Shabbat and Erev Shabbat Prayers

The liturgy for Friday night is rich in various biblical and talmudic texts, piyyutim,\(^{64}\) ancient writings, as well as more contemporary texts that editors of Progressive siddurim incorporate in their prayerbooks. In this chapter on Kabbalat Shabbat and Erev Shabbat prayers, I have chosen texts from three sections of great importance: Lekhah Dodi – a poem recited only for Kabbalat Shabbat, and two from the Maariv service: the Shema and the Amidah, which appear regularly in every morning and evening service, but which have specific textual variations for each Shabbat service. I also include here the Mourners Kaddish, which is common to all services.

As in previous chapters, I am not going to present an in-depth analysis of each phrase, but rather to concentrate on expressions of P/U and concepts related to them. I begin with Lekhah Dodi is an example of a traditional piyyut, which due to its form, kabbalistic origin, and particularistic ideology (concerning Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple and final redemption), was omitted from some Progressive siddurim. Reuven Kimelman (2003, 2005) provides in-depth discussion of the theology of this poem. Today, partially (LCh) or fully included (FoP), Lekhah Dodi has a well-established place in the Erev Shabbat liturgy. Through text analysis, I bring to light the particularistic elements as they appear in other texts on Shabbat and juxtapose their Orthodox state with choices made by Progressive editors and the views of interviewees.

Reciting the Shema and its blessings is a long-established practice in the synagogue context as well as in private life. It plays a central role for Jewish identity. Its narrative has both P/U notions as it reflects upon God and God’s role in Jewish history and in the world. In search of particularistic elements in these texts, I discuss the elements that make this text so central in Jewish life, as well as attempts by Progressive editors and worshippers to make it more universal. Jeremy Schonfield (2006) discusses the Shema in detail, focusing on the particular relationship between Israel and God in relation to the Torah and the Land. I shall argue that his creative interpretation based on rabbinic sources adds particularistic notions to the meaning of the texts.

As a statutory prayer, the Amidah is recited in some form or another in every service. The Amidah is often seen as a dialogical encounter between the worshipper

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\(^{64}\) Some discussed in ch. 3.
and God. Thus, I examine what a Jewish worshipper says about the Jewish People and
the world while standing in the presence of the Sovereign. Particularistic concepts of
the merit of the fathers, resurrection of the dead, redemption and Temple worship, are
named as the most challenging concepts for Progressive ideology. The Amidah’s final
benediction, Ose Shalom, finishes with a plea for peace for the People of Israel.
However, as I show, this particularistic ending displeases some Progressive Jews.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of the mourners’ Kaddish prayer, and in
light of its ideology and the modes of performing it, I talk about the ritual boundaries
around who and for whom it can be said from the perspective of my Orthodox and
Progressive interviewees. Simcha Fishbane’s (1995b) chapter concerning the Kaddish
and its relation to Jewish identity brought some light to understanding the role of this
prayer. However, its context (Canadian Orthodox) differed from where the present
research took place.

5.1 Lekhah Dodi

The piyyut Lekhah Dodi belongs to the Kabbalat Shabbat service (ADPB, pp. 254-74),
whose other constituents in the Orthodox siddur are Yedid Nefesh (an optional poem),
six Psalms (95-99, 29), Ana Bekhoach (an optional poem), Psalms 92 and 93 and
Kaddish Yatom. The liturgy of Kabbalat Shabbat was formed in the 16th century in Safed.
In the history of Progressive liturgy, the Kabbalat Shabbat service went from complete
omission to gradual inclusion: partially (as in LCh, p. 82) or fully (FoP, p. 120). The early
Reformers omitted it for several reasons: they despised mysticism, aimed to abbreviate
all the services as much as possible, and wanted to ignore any reference to Zion and
messianic redemption (Petuchowsky, 1968). In the second half of the twentieth
century with the turn toward tradition, a growing interest in spirituality and mysticism
also occurred, and some piyyutim such as Ana Bekoach (FoP, p. 194) again found their
place, even though ideologically some of the texts may not be acceptable for some
members of Progressive communities. New musical compositions such as by Shlomo
Carlebach for Kabbalat Shabbat may also have been factors in these prayers becoming
an integral and popular part of the Friday night liturgy.

The poem Lekhah Dodi was built around a Talmudic story, that on Shabbat eve
R. Chanina, dressed in Shabbat clothes and proclaimed: ‘Come and let us go forth to
welcome the Queen Shabbat.\textsuperscript{65} Similarly, on Shabbat R. Yannai would call: ‘Come o bride! Come o bride’ (B.Shab. 119a). The Kabbalists in Safed included this poem in the liturgy for Shabbat eve (Elbogen, 1993, p. 92, Idelsohn, 1972, pp. 128-9). Lekhah Dodi is a hymn with which one welcomes the Shabbat and reminds oneself of the special time that begins and the specific obligations concerning Shabbat.

The whole poem is composed of various biblical quotations, Talmudic, midrashic and kabbalistic ideas, in the style of Spanish Hebrew poetry, Renaissance meditative poetry and marriage madrigals (Hoffman, 2005). The piyyut’s message is complicated on a literal level, and even more so if one wants to understand the author’s intention. Lekhah Dodi bridges the ordinary secular week which is finishing and the holy time of Shabbat, as it speaks about the not yet redeemed world in terms of profane and holy time (Kimelman, 2005). It alludes to the rabbinic notion that Shabbat is a foretaste of the world-to-come (B.Tam. 33b, Gen.R 17:5) or one-sixtieth of the eternal Shabbat (B.Ber. 57b) – the time when everybody will recognise the God of Israel as the only God (expressing a more universalistic tone). The poem builds on the particularistic idea of Shabbat as a metaphor for marriage between God and the Jewish people, or as Kimelman (2005, p. 129) interprets it, God, Israel and the Shekhinah:

Since the Hebrew “to sanctify” also means “to marry”, to say that God sanctified Shabbat and Israel, means that God took them as brides. Similarly, when Israel sanctifies Shabbat, Israel takes Shabbat as the bride. Thus Shabbat becomes the rendezvous of God and Israel.\textsuperscript{66}

The prayer includes other particularistic elements because of which it was not part of the first Reform siddur.\textsuperscript{67} This is implicit in the striking image of desolate Jerusalem and in the concept of redemption related to a personal Messiah who comes to restore the city, the Temple and its sacrificial cult. It looks forward to the messianic rescue, using Jerusalem as a symbol for the Jewish People, and its rebuilding as a metaphor for redemption, which is the leitmotif of this piyyut (present in 6 out of 9 stanzas).\textsuperscript{68} Its abbreviated version appears only in the 6\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} edition of FoP (1931, 1977). The full version (nine stanzas, with the more ideologically problematic ones printed in blue) was printed only in the most recent edition (FoP, 2008, pp. 121-2). The

\textsuperscript{65} On the history of Lekha Dodi, see Kimelman (2003).
\textsuperscript{66} Further kabbalistic interpretation lies beyond the scope of this thesis; for more, see Kimelman (2003).
\textsuperscript{67} The early, innovative Hamburg Temple siddur (eds 1819, 1845) replaced it with a German hymn, but later on some of the stanzas were included (Petuchowski, 1968, p. 50).
\textsuperscript{68} Lekhah Dodi, as shown in this thesis, is only one of many references to Jerusalem found in Jewish liturgy, see e.g. Schonfield (2007), Reif (1983, pp. 162-70; 1997), Vincent (2010).
editors of FoP provided a short commentary about its history and ideology, explaining particularistic notes as ‘visions of generations past’ (FoP, p. 123). In Liberal prayerbooks this *piyyut* has always been abbreviated (in 1926 ed. to 2 stanzas; in 1967 and 1995 to 4), omitted (in 1903 and 1931 eds), or replaced by another *piyyut* (by Dror Nikra, LCh, p. 78 or Yedid Nefesh, LCh, pp. 86-7).

Most Progressive interviewees rejected a simplistic, literal understanding of this text and other prayers with such motifs, and in the majority of Progressive synagogues these stanzas are not sung. In Orthodox settings, those of my Orthodox interviewees who also repudiate some of these ideas, explained that actually they have no problem with singing the whole poem, because they see it as a part of their Jewish heritage and not necessarily as an expression of their own convictions (e.g. OL1, OL2, OM2, OW3), which echoes the Reform editors’ explanation.

Apart from this, another particularistic concept appears in the last stanza and is included in all three *siddurim* which speak of Israel’s status among other nations. Israel is there called ‘*am segulah*, translated in ADPB as ‘treasured people’, in FoP ‘chosen people’ or as ‘God’s people’ in LCh. The word *segulah* (‘valued property’ or ‘treasure’) appears in Ex 19:5: ‘Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine’ (cf. Dt. 7:6, 14:2, 26:18), expressing the exclusive relationship between God and Israel.

The uneasiness about election in Progressive liturgy and the various ways of dealing with it are presented broadly in chapter seven, as the election is central to the *Shabbat Shacharit* liturgy. However, as I pointed out, already here the discomfort with this concept is expressed by the non-literal translation in the Progressive *siddurim*.

Testing understanding of this kabbalistic *piyyut*, I discovered that a few of my respondents were unable to explain who *dodi* (‘my beloved’ or ‘my friend’) might be.69 A question thus arises about understanding, as well as the reasons for this song’s popularity within all three movements. It is a well-known prayer, with tunes that it is easy to join in with, but it seems not to provoke deeper concerns about the meaning of the words.70 Rather, it enables the community to create an atmosphere for welcoming *Shabbat*, to provide a feeling of belonging to both a local Jewish community and a wider Israel, and to sustain the continuity of Jewish heritage.

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69 Cooper in the ‘Study Anthology’, interprets *dodi* as Israel (FoP, p. 505), however Jacobson (1981, pp. 47–8) argues that the meaning is uncertain: possible also God or Israel.

70 On music for *Lekhah Dodi*, see Summit (2000).
In Orthodox settings, the *Shema* and its blessings follow immediately after *Kaddish Yatom*, which closes the *Kabbalat Shabbat* section. As it is a moment when the official service begins, it is preceded by *Barekhu* – a call to prayer.

The *Shema* is made up of three Torah portions (Deut. 6:4–9, Deut. 11:13–21; and Numbers 15:37–41), and is bracketed by benedictions: two precede the biblical texts and one follows in the morning; while in the evening two precede and two follow (M.Ber. 1:1–5, 2:2). The evening benedictions before the *Shema* are ‘who by His word brings on evening...’ (*Maariv Aravim*, ADBP, p. 274; FoP, p. 130; LCh, p. 93), and ‘With everlasting love...’ (*Ahavat Olam*, ADBP, p. 276; FoP, p. 131; LCh, p. 93); and after the *Shema* ‘True and faithful...’ (*Emet VeEmunah*, ADBP, pp. 281-2; FoP, p. 135; LCh, p. 95), and ‘Help us lie down ...’ (*Hashkivenu*, ADBP, p. 281; FoP, p. 136; LCh, p. 96).

Recitation of this section of the service is a long established practice, discussed and referred to over and over again in the Talmud (e.g. the recitation of the *Shema* is discussed by early tannaim e.g. M.Ber. 2:2; 3:1). Many technical, detailed halakhot surround the *Shema* concerning the recitation, posture, time and place of those who recite it. Such detailed discussion throughout the centuries implies the centrality of the *Shema* for Jewish life. The *Shema* is a philosophical affirmation of the unity and uniqueness of God and of God’s role in Jewish history. That is why the prayer must be recited by every adult male (women, who are not obligated to keep time-bound commandments, as well as children from the age of understanding, are encouraged). The *Shema* is recited with the deepest concentration (*kavanah*, ‘intent’) twice a day. Thus, if a person does not understand Hebrew, the *Shema* should be recited in the vernacular (in Progressive synagogues I observed that English and Hebrew were both used regularly). *Kavanah* also demands that the *Shema* be said aloud (with clear articulation of the last letter *daled* in the word *echad*, to differentiate it from the visually similar *resh*, which would result in *acher* ‘other’) and accompanied by specific body language. Talmud and halakhic sources say that this should begin and end each day and it should be recited at the moment of death (B.Ber. 61b; Sh.Ar., OCh 235:3; Tur, OCh 71 For origins and formation, see Elbogen (1993, pp. 17-24); Heinemann (1977); Jacobs (2007); Lange (2010), Oppenheimer (2011).
The tannaim saw this paragraph as the one that best articulates Jewish faith (cf. M.Ber. 2:2) and therefore characterised it as a creed (a declaration of Jewish faith). It is presented in various narratives as a prayer recited by Jewish martyrs at the moment of their persecution (B.Ber. 61b), a fact that was recalled from time to time in Progressive synagogues on occasions such as Remembrance Shabbat (PObs.2RefSyn.1), when a Progressive Rabbi introducing the Shema alluded to this idea and invited people to recall those who gave up their life so that others could live freely.

The first benediction preceding the Shema, Maariv Aravim, concentrates around one of the themes of the prayerbook: creation. This universalistic motif is present in the whole siddur, alongside two more particularistic topics concerning revelation and redemption (which are precisely reflected in the entire Shema section). God is presented as the Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe (as in Psalms 95-99 for Kabbalat Shabbat). Kimelman (2006) argues that when rabbis were devising the structure of the prayer, they purposely universalised the way in which God was referred to, moving away from the ‘God of Israel’ and towards ‘King of the universe’, a process that had begun with the prophets (e.g. Zech. 14:9). According to this author, in rabbinic times the ‘sovereignization of the liturgy was consonant with the emerging theological thinking of the late Empire’ (Kimelman, 2006, p. 610).

Returning to the texts, the first blessing describes God as Creator and King who ‘makes the day pass and brings on the night, distinguishing (umavdil) day from night’ (ADPB, p. 275). Here we find again the motif of separation with which the liturgy of erev Shabbat begins and also ends during the Havdalah (the same Hebrew word root) ceremony, when one praises God for making distinctions, which was part of the process of creation and order in the world. The moment of acknowledging creation coincides with the moment of acknowledging God’s special relationship with Israel, and with the Havdalah this privileged time ends and needs to be marked through words and ritual (cf. FoP, p. 508). The text of this benediction in Hebrew is the same in all three siddurim (except one phrase ‘May the living and enduring God rule over us for ever and all time’). In some Progressive synagogues on erev Shabbat, other versions have been produced for the purpose of singing, for better understanding (e.g. only in English with a repetition of the chatimah in Hebrew), or in order to shorten the service. Earlier

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73 For the clarity of argument here, I follow Frank Rosenzweig’s Creation-Revelation-Redemption triad, as it is used in the siddur. For critical approach, see Kimelman (1993).
74 Discussed in ch. 8.
editions of Liberal siddurim had such changes, and compared to contemporary siddurim they were even more radical, as they did not include the first two benedictions (e.g. LJPB 1937, p. 18) or only texts in English (traditional or a new creation, e.g. JRUL 1903, p. 10-11; SoH 1967, p. 92-3). Earlier Reform siddurim kept the traditional version and did not provide any other option in official prayerbooks.

The message of the second blessing, Ahavat Olam (ADPB, pp. 276-7), is particularistic in scope, expressing the special relationship between God and Israel, here described as ‘everlasting love’ (Jer. 31:3; LCh p. 93 ‘unending love’), which is shown by God through the gift of the Torah, which Israel is called upon to study ‘day and night’ and to obey all their life. In this second blessing there is a shift from a universal perspective about God, creator of all, to God who specially cares for a particular people. However, this love of God to Israel is directly linked to the gift of the Torah and the expectation of studying and obeying it.

The commentaries to the blessing in the Reform prayerbook offer a twofold interpretation of this prayer. Magonet, in the ‘Study Anthology’ of FoP, explains the link between the two benedictions more literally: ‘The blessings move from God as Creator of the universe to God’s special love for Israel as shown through the giving of Torah’ (FoP, p. 507). The inter-relationship between God, Torah and Israel’s obligations is further developed through the chosen Biblical texts that follow the opening verse of the Shema. However, in the sections called ‘Reflections’, David Blumenthal concentrates on the more universalistic meaning of love, concluding: ‘God loves all humanity, and individual human beings, in all these ways - as human beings love others and seek to be loved in all these ways’ (FoP, p. 328). Thus, he challenges a narrow and exclusive interpretation of the relationship between Israel and God, and instead emphasises that God loves everyone. Some of my interviewees (e.g. OL1, RR4, LR5) expressed similar views, being asked about their interpretation of the love between God and Israel, saying that, although they believe it is a particular relationship, the idea of ‘specialness’ does not mean that God cannot have a ‘special’ relationship with other peoples. When asked about the particularity of the relationship between God and Israel, LR3 said:

Yes we have a particular story, the history presented in the liturgy, but I still think that the God we are talking about is the universal God, who loves and cares for all creatures. It is difficult though, because God is God for everybody and at
the same time Jews are living in a particular framework. Other nations have another particular framework.

Such understanding allows to combine the traditional understanding of Israel’s election and at the same time prevents any notion of superiority over others. But others such as RStR8 challenged this interpretation, saying: ‘Calling everybody special does not really make sense. I believe that God chose one People – Israel, for a special relationship and the gift of the Torah’. The concept of being chosen and its various interpretations, is discussed in the next chapters, as the Shabbat–morning liturgical texts refer to this concept on a number of occasions.

These two benedictions are followed by the selection of biblical texts (Deut. 6:4–9, Deut. 11:13–21; and Numbers 15:37–41) that make up the Shema; they are the same for Shacharit. The first verse of the Shema: Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad (‘Listen Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One’; Deut. 6:4) is the best-known verse in Jewish liturgy. These first two paragraphs of the central credal statement of rabbinic Judaism (B.Ber. 13b, B.Suk. 42a) are also written on the parchment of the tefillin (which are not worn on Shabbat).

In a thorough and original analysis of this section, Schonfield (2006) argues that this verse expresses the difficulty a Jew encounters during the ritual and recitation of prayers – the problem in relating to God, understanding the words of Torah and accepting them in one’s life. The Shema has to be declared twice a day as an expression of faithfulness to God’s word. However, as Schonfield argues, ‘the text itself exemplifies the opacity of revelation, showing how reading must be accompanied by interpretation if the sense is to emerge’ (2006, p. 189). In other words, even this text is challenging to comprehend, as is the whole Torah as well as Israel’s experience of God, election and God’s ways throughout Jewish sacred history. The call to shema, ‘listen’, expressing Israel’s duty, is an invitation constantly to reflect upon who God is, God’s relation with Israel and with the whole world. The difficulty of understanding this text and other paragraphs is also expressed in the section ‘Reflections’ commenting on the Shema in FoP (p. 329). In all siddurim, this verse is printed so as to catch the reader’s attention, the ayin in the first word and dalet in the last word are printed bigger than the rest, together forming the word ed, ‘witness’.

The first verse is followed by three other texts from Deuteronomy and Numbers. However, one line separates the line of Shema and the rest of its texts: Barukh shem kevod malkhuto leolam vaed (ADPB, p. 277; FoP, p. 130; LCh, p. 50), translated by Sacks
as ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever’. Traditionally, this line is recited in a lower voice, because in a Midrash it is attributed to angels (GenR 65:21), and thereby one is not imitating them. Because this phrase was used in the Temple ritual as a response to the Tetragrammaton, Schonfield suggests that ‘its inclusion here is an attempt to recapture the prayerfulness assumed to characterize worship there’ (Schonfield, 2006, p. 192, cf. MYom 3:8). Such interpretation adds particularising notions to a text the plain meaning of which does not carry. This verse has always been kept in British Progressive siddurim and never altered.

The following biblical passage (Deut. 6:5–9), enumerates the particular ways in which Jewish faith is expressed and practised: loving God with one’s whole being, teaching about this relationship to the next generations, the obligation to recite the Shema twice a day and to bind the words of the Torah symbolically on one’s body. Traditional commentators see it as a declaration of accepting upon oneself the yoke of the kingdom of God (also in FoP, p. 130, ADBP, p. 385). In visiting Progressive synagogues, I observed that half of the members were able to join in reciting it in Hebrew. Some rabbis also used English in addition to or instead of the Hebrew to facilitate communal participation. The two other biblical passages were never read in Hebrew on erev Shabbat and rarely in English; however in some synagogues (more often Reform), time was given for individual reading in silence, often ending with a few verses chanted again.

Deut. 11:13–21 and Numbers 15:37–41 describe the consequences of following or not the Torah. Heeding God’s commandments results in the rain in its proper season and abundant harvest, something that will not happen if Israel falls into idolatry. This idea of retribution was rejected by some of my Progressive interviewees and given as the reason not to recite it (e.g. RStR3, LW2, LR9).75 The Liberal editors did not include these paragraphs in the main section of Shabbat prayers (though it is included toward the end of the siddur, see LCh pp. 539-41),76 finishing this section with just the final two verses of the third paragraph (Num 15.40-41). Some Progressive interviewees challenged this omission. RR3 said:

Sometimes it is about how I understand a text, so for example I always disliked the second paragraph of the Shema, which is about God destroying the land if

75 That is why some contemporary Progressive editors replaced text from Deut. 11 with a different one, as RStR3 indicated that in the French Liberal siddur it has an alternative version Deut. 30:11-20, see Bebe and Garai (eds) (2000), Siddur Sefat Haneshama, Geneve, Gil, p. 95.
76 FoP ed. 1931 includes only the first paragraph. From the first edition of the Liberal siddur only Deut. 6:4–9 was included.
you are ‘naughty’. It seems a harsh image of God but actually in the last couple of years, I started to re-read it as about the results of how we use the earth, and it gets destroyed.

RR3 believes that difficult texts should not simply be omitted, but rather studied and re-interpreted for contemporary users. Even though her position seems reasonable, the problem with using challenging texts (as the Shema) is that there is little time for discussion or explanation or even deeper reflection, as texts are read quickly, moving from one to another.

Going back to the text in this paragraph, two symbols, the mezuzah and tefillin, are mentioned here, both of which contain Torah texts that remind one of the obligation to study and to follow the Torah. In the final text, the People of Israel receive a commandment to wear the tsitsit – a symbolic reminder of God’s presence and of the commandments.

This section concludes with God’s call for Israel to be a people who are kadosh (trans. ADPB: ‘holy’, FoP: ‘set apart’; LCh: ‘consecrated’, which also relates to the word kiddushin, ‘betrothed’) and with a reference to the Exodus event, which introduces the theme of the third blessing in this section. These three separate texts stress the importance of studying the sacred Jewish texts, which should be seen as the primary occupation for a Jew, and on which depends their fate. However, this task seems to be extremely difficult or even doomed to failure because, as Schonfield argues, studying and reading such short passages taken out of context compounds ‘misreading’ (2006, p. 318). As the second paragraph shows, such failing results in exile, which according to the third paragraph, one is able to survive only if one’s Jewish identity find expression in garments. Schonfield (2001) goes further in the analysis of this paragraph of the Shema and describes how the talmudic sage, Rabba bar Bar Hanah (cf. B.BB 73b-84a), sees tsitsit as symbols of Zion and the Holy Land. Tsitsit as symbols should also serve in a way as a warning against misreading this text by taking the ideas of Zion and Holy Land as symbols that relate directly to a specific geographical reality. ‘The “fringes” on their garments, the origin of those now on the tallit, compensate for their lack of territory and ensure that Jewish identity will survive intact, enabling Jews to be saved again in a future Exodus’(Schonfield, 2006, p. 319). Schonfield’s creative interpretation is worth bringing highlighting, as it adds another particularistic notion related to the Land and to Jerusalem. The notion concerning the exclusive relation between God and Israel is enforced by symbolic ritual objects (mezuzah, tefillin and tsitsit) and specific gestures performed similarly in all three movements by all or in
more Liberal synagogues by some Jewish participants. Further, even though some concepts may be seen as controversial to modern Progressive minds (such as the second paragraph of *Shema*), the traditional texts are preserved in all three *siddurim* because of the *Shema*’s centrality to Jewish identity, but left to the leader’s or the individual’s choice as to reciting it or not.

After presenting God as Creator and as the one who reveals the source of Life, i.e. the Torah, to God’s chosen People, the third blessing speaks about God as the protector and redeemer of Israel, and thus recapitulates the theme of the last paragraph of the biblical texts: ‘True and faithful is all this, and firmly established for us that He is the Lord our God, there is none besides him, and that we, Israel, are His people …’ (ADPB, p. 281-2). However, here it is not God’s love and mercy that is stressed, but rather God’s faithfulness, to assure the reader that God protects Israel and repays their enemies. To sustain this image of promise, the Exodus is brought forward as the archetypal example of divine intervention. This liturgy feels not only like a retelling of past events, but a reliving of the event itself. By recalling past moments of redemption, the benediction alludes to and reaffirms the messianic hope of a time when Israel will experience full redemption, the ingathering of the exiles and eternal peace.

Heinemann (1977, pp. 33-36) examines the motif of the plea for final redemption (*ge’ula*) throughout the Jewish liturgy, mainly present in petitionary prayers, but sometimes in benedictions of praise and thanksgiving. He argues that the recurrent and persistent messianic appeals attest to the longing of many generations of Jews who hoped and prayed for full redemption. The vision of the eschatological redemption includes the complete annihilation of the wicked, the happiness and the exaltation of the upright (and of the Jewish people), the fulfilment of God’s promises given to Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple and the return of God’s Presence, re-establishing the Davidic monarchy, recognition of God by all nations, and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. In the *Ge’ulah* of *Erev Shabbat*, only some of these motifs are present, as the *Shabbat* liturgy in general does not include most of the weekly penitentiary prayers. But all these notions are related primarily to the Jewish people and their redemption, thus universalism is absent here.

Both Reform and Liberal *siddurim* omit most of the traditional texts concerning God’s vengeance with a note of triumphalism, thus this part of the *Ge’ulah* text is not included:
He is our God, who on our behalf repays our foes and brings just retribution on our mortal enemies ... who led us on the high places of our enemies, raising our pride above all our foes. Who did miracles for us and brought vengeance against Pharaoh, who performed signs and wonders in the land of Ham's children, who smote in His wrath all the firstborn of Egypt (ADPB, p. 280-1).

There are other texts in the siddurim that touch on vengeance and retribution, such as Psalm 94, which begins with the appeal to El nekamot Adonai (God of Retribution, ADPB, p. 148-9). The literal meaning of such texts may seem to be unacceptable to some modern readers. But it needs to be remembered in dealing with prayerbooks that the English translation of the Hebrew word nekamah as ‘retribution’ or ‘vengeance’ does not adequately render its meaning. It may be understood as ‘retributive justice’ (or as in FoP, p. 44 ‘measured justice’), when it relates to God. Vengeance is forbidden by the Torah (Lev. 19:18; but not self-defence of the People of Israel, cf. Num. 31:2-3).

Moreover it is God to whom vengeance really belongs (Deut. 32:35), and except in one case the siddur text mentions only God as the one who delivers or will deliver justice at a time and in a measure known only to God.

This section that depicts God and the liberation from Egypt in a vengeful way, is not included in Progressive siddurim and is one example of an Orthodox prayer that has been found ideologically unacceptable by Progressive editors. The earliest Reform siddurim kept the traditional version, but in 1931 the Ge’ulah was completely omitted, and in the 7th edition (FoP, 1977, p. 34) the traditional version was shortened to its present form. The Liberal siddurim never included the traditional version (omitting it in 1903 and 1937); in 1967, Ge’ulah took two forms: the English modified (SoH, p.81) and in both languages (SoH, p. 66) translated it as in the LCh.

Another way to deal with a more difficult text is to provide a commentary, as the Reform editors have done. They provided two interpretations which touch on the particularism of this text, explaining that Revelation is addressed to all humanity through the Jewish people and the gift of the Torah. The commentary seeks to understand this blessing in the context of the section as a whole: ‘The first blessing celebrates God’s universal concern for the whole humanity and all of nature, before focusing on God’s particular relationship with Israel’ (FoP, p. 134). The commentary

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77 One of the main themes of Purim festival is vengeance performed not by God but by Israel. The concept of vengeance in Purim and how different communities deal with it lies beyond the scope of this thesis, see Horowitz (2006), Schonfeld (1999), Zvi (2005-6).

78 See commandments concerning Amalek in Maimonides, Sefere HaChinukh 603-5. They are referred to once a year on Shabbat Zakhor, when an additional portion of the Torah – maftir (Deut. 25:17-19) is read.
does not concentrate on God and Israel’s victory over their enemies, but rather shifts the reader’s attention to the relation between particularism and universalism in Jewish theology.

Traditional Judaism does not allow changes to the liturgy, and therefore only through commentary can one challenge the literal meaning of the text. However, Sacks does not choose to do so in ADPB. The text is left without interpretation or explanation. Some Orthodox leaders achieve such reinterpretation through teaching study sessions concerning the *siddur* and the liturgy (outside the ritual), in which participants gain understanding of the meaning and the historical context of prayers. However, such sessions in synagogues that I visited were rare and reached a limited number of people. Thus, Progressive editors ask a valid question in challenging the use of parts of Ge’ulah when so many people lack the knowledge and liturgical literacy to understand their implications.

The final blessing, *Hashkivenu*, which is added only in the evening liturgy, continues the theme of God’s protection, now especially during the night. It is included in all the *siddurim* discussed here (ADBP, p. 280-1, FoP, p. 136; LCh, p. 96), although one verse which speaks about the removal of an adversary (*satan*) is either translated into English in the abstract ‘temptation’ (Reform) or omitted (Liberal). On *Erev Shabbat*, this prayer traditionally concerns Israel and Jerusalem, but in both Progressive *siddurim*, the *chatimah* is universalised. The Reform prayer says ‘Blessed are You God, spreading the shelter of peace over us, over your people Israel and over all world’ (FoP, p. 136). *Lev Chadash* in English mentions neither Israel nor Jerusalem, and takes a form of petition: ‘We praise You, o God: may Your sheltering peace descend on us and all who dwell on earth’ (p. 96). Thus in this short prayer, the Progressive editors modified the liturgy in a way that can be described, using Rayner’s terminology (2006), as ‘correctively’ (omitting) and ‘constructively’ (correcting) the traditional prayer.

The Orthodox and the Reform *Shema* section finishes with the *VeShamru* (‘...they must keep’), a biblical quotation from Ex 31:16-17 recited or sung by the whole community, recalling the special nature of *Shabbat*, portrayed as an exclusive sign between the Creator and Israel. This verse is repeated in the ritual of the *Shabbat* morning *Amidah* and *Kiddush*.

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79 Omitted in the Reform 1931, Liberal 1937 and adaptation in English, in version II.
5.3 The Amidah

The ‘standing prayer’ (*Amidah*), also called *Tefillah* (*Prayer*) or *Shemoneh Esreh* (*Eighteen*)[^1] is a statutory part of every service. In a Progressive context, the recitation of the *Amidah* may be performed more traditionally or sung/recited together as a community, with some performing the traditional gestures. It is said individually and silently in the Orthodox context on *erev Shabbat* (cf. M.Ber. 4:1; B.Ber. 27b) and is not repeated by a *sheliach tsibbur*. Only afterwards does the community together recite the *Vayekhulu* and the summary of the *Amidah*. In this part, I shall focus on those elements of the *Amidah* which relate to the theme of this thesis and which are characteristic of the *Erev Shabbat* liturgy.

The *Amidah* is traditionally thought to be constructed as a dialogic encounter between the worshipper and God. The language and ritual of the prayer address God as a subject approaches their sovereign (cf. B.Ber. 34a; this allegory is developed by Magonet in the Study Anthology, FoP, pp. 497-8). Therefore the *Amidah* is recited standing, and begins with a bow (T.Ber. 1:8). The three steps backwards that a worshipper performs in the final stage express the moment of leaving the divine presence (B.Yom. 53b). Moreover, while praying it is obligatory to face the Temple where the *Shekhinah* dwelt (T.Ber. 3:15), and to direct the heart towards the *Shekhinah* (B.Sanh. 22a; T.Ber. 3:14; Ehrlich and Avenary, 2007). Stern argues that these specific gestures are an example of a metaphorical exemplification which expresses respect for and submission to God (1988, p. 279). The direction of prayers and gestures add Jewish specificity, even particularistic notion, if the worshipper knows their symbolism.

Traditionally, the *Amidah* is said four times on *Shabbat* and festivals (three times on a weekday), often in a mantra-like fashion, worshippers mouthing the Hebrew without paying attention to every word. It is said quickly, leading me to wonder how much of the prayer is understood by those who recite it. The majority of interviewees would agree with OR1, who said ‘when you pray, you do not think about it. It is like a mantra. These prayers are the vessels that hold larger concepts difficult to grasp’. But certain persons paid attention to this text, such as RW8, who pointed out:

I see *Amidah* as kind of particular, historical and a kind of a shopping list but it’s an old shopping list; like these are the things that Jews from a long time ago felt

[^1]: This name relates to the *Amidah* version used on weekdays, although it actually contains nineteen benedictions. For history and structure of the *Amidah*, see Fleischer (1991, 2000), Heinemann (1977), Langer (1999).
were things that they needed requesting. There's some introductory stuff about who we are, about how we see God. And then there's some practical requests, and then there are some universal hopes. I like that.

On erev Shabbat, the Amidah is made up of seven blessings: three that belong to the opening blessings expressing praise (Avot ‘ancestors’, Gevurot ‘God’s power’, Qedushat HaShem ‘God’s sanctity), three closing blessings of thanksgiving (Avodah ‘Temple service’, Hoda’ah ‘thanksgiving’, Birkat Hashalom ‘Peace’) and the intermediate one which replaces the 13 weekly petitions, called Kedushat HaYom (‘Sanctity of the day’).

The first blessing, Avot, speaks of the God of the biblical ancestors, and the particular relationship between God and Israel throughout history (ADPB, p. 283-4). This blessing begins with a formula central to the revelation of God to Moses in Exodus (3:6, 15-16; 4:5), with a reference to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, each linked to the name of God. It reflects the rabbinic doctrine called zekhut avot (‘merit of the fathers’; M.Avot 2:2) which in short expresses that ‘a progeny benefit from the righteousness of their forebears’ (Shmidman, 2007). It is another topic that expresses a notably rabbinic particularism (Montefiore and Loewe, 1938, p. 204). The doctrine of zekhut articulates the conviction that a person has the capacity to accumulate merits before God. Through the Avot blessing, an ideology is expressed that a community who gathers for prayer does not appear before God as strangers but as a People in a covenantal relationship with God, and part of a chain of generations of Israel who are interconnected throughout history and time. The majority of interviewees knew this blessing and, when facilitated, related to its particularistic elements, seeing them as an integral part of Judaism. Thus e.g. RR5 stated:

Avot talks to me about the transmission and importance of heritage as being part of this family that’s spanned three thousand years. And the responsibility that one has to that family, and I like the notion in it of hasdei avot. They built it up for us so now we have to build it up for the next lot. You can’t leave the bank accounts dry and empty. It is your responsibility in that link, in that heritage, to keep things going.

81 Zekhut (aram. zakhu) means also ‘plea in defense’; ‘protecting influence of good merit, conduct’; for the comprehensive list of terms as well as their usage, see Marmorstein (1920, p. 5-11).
82 For more details on the rabbinic thought concerning Avot, see Ehrlich (2007), Ehrlich and Avenary (2007).
RR5 related directly to the rabbinical concept of *zekhut*, but broadening and interpreting it for a contemporary Jew and relating it to his/her responsibility toward Israel (similarly to a commentary in FoP, p. 339).

The Orthodox text mentions only patriarchs, thus the majority of Progressive respondents said that even though they know that *avot* can be translated as ‘ancestors’, they are pleased that Progressive *siddurim* have added *imahot* (‘mothers’) and the names of the four matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. The efforts of editors to produce an inclusive text were not always successful, as the *imahot* have not been added in all the prayers in which the *avot* are mentioned (e.g. FoP, p. 145; LCh, p. 100). Furthermore, a few of the interviewees, including LR5, spoke about two other biblical women: Bilhah and Zilpah (Jacob’s wives who were non-Jews) and reflected upon the question of including them in the list of matriarchs\(^{83}\) (as it is already in the BKY *siddur* (p.48) which is used in one Liberal community on *erev Shabbat*). LR6 was against such inclusion and said:

One of the things for me as a Liberal Jew is that I don’t need necessarily to have a Jewish mother to be a Jew and the mother can have a different god. And actually, the biblical text does not make any suggestion whatsoever that Bilhah and Zilpah have a relationship to our God. I would be open to have another list of *avot* and *imahot* to acknowledge that amongst our ancestors were some non-Jews who still contribute to our Judaism. I think I feel really passionate that there are certain places where you really have to be particularistic.

LR6 is talking here about certain prayers that should remain particularistic, as they are central to Jewish identity. She also recognizes that prayerbook texts are a reflection of a certain mindset and historical time. Accordingly, for her it is now a moment to recognize through a new text those who were non-Jews but contributed to Judaism; such an acknowledgement would also mirror the present state of many communities and the existence of Jewish families in which one partner is a non-Jew.

There are two other differences between the Progressive and Orthodox *siddurim*. One is that the Liberal *siddur* replaces the word *goel* (‘redeemer’) with *ge-ulah* (‘redemption’), to imply that most Progressive Jews do not believe in a personal Messiah, as distinct from a Messianic Age (Rayner, 2006).\(^{84}\) It is worth noting that although the Reform editors retain the traditional Hebrew word *goel*, they disguise its

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\(^{83}\) Washofsky (2010, pp. 19-25) in the responsum states that there is no compelling *halakhic* reason to forbid including Bilhah and Zilpah among the six matriarchs, as they are already mentioned in e.g. EstherR 1:12; Num.R 12:17.

\(^{84}\) This change was first introduced in David Einhorn’s *Olat Tamid* (1896, p. 5).
meaning in translation: 'You remember the good deeds of those before us, and therefore in love bring rescue to the generations, for such is Your being'. This is a good example of how to deal with concepts which no longer mirror Progressive ideology. However, such a method is questionable, first because this text is rarely used in English, so the user still says goel, and second because if the siddur is an ‘educational tool’ (as its editors claim (FoP, p. 2)), what it teaches should be clear. Changes to this first benediction of the Amidah were introduced in LCh (1995) and FoP (2008), although in most previous Progressive siddurim it was the only benediction that did not undergo changes and was always included in the erav Shabbat Amidah.

The second benediction of the Amidah is known as Gevurot (‘powers’, M.RH 4:5). The main theme is God's might, which manifests itself in the ability to determine life and death. Consequently, the traditional blessing speaks about the resurrection of the dead (ADPB, p. 286-7). This doctrine, repeated several times in this blessing, is not shared by the majority of Progressive Jews (reflected by most of the interviewees). However, both Progressive siddurim have mehayeh hametim in Hebrew, which the Reform siddur translates as 'You are endless power that renews life beyond death' (FoP, p. 142), and LCh as ‘Unending is Your might, Eternal One, You are the Source of eternal life, great is Your power to redeem’ (p. 97). Thus the literal meaning is disguised in both translations. Looking at previous versions in FoP (1977, p. 37), the English translation was not literal ('renew life beyond death'), but as to the Liberal siddur, the Hebrew and English were changed (mahayeh hakol 'grant life to all', SoH, p. 68). Thus, the blessing underwent neo-traditionalisation in the Hebrew of LCh. This benediction also speaks about the renewal of nature, traditionally expressed through the claim that God 'causes the wind to blow' and 'the rain to fall' (recorded in M.Ber. 5:3; M.Ta. 1:1), and is recited from Musaf of Shemini Atseret until Musaf of the first day of Pesah, while in the summer, Sefardi Jews additionally, declare that God ‘causes the dew to descend’ (Berenbaum and Skolnik, 2007a). In the Liberal prayerbook, both verses are recited with the addition 'causes the sun to shine' throughout the year to express God’s universal sovereignty (LCh, note 19, p. 664), while in Reform ritual only the version appropriate to the season is used. The insertion for rain according to the season in the

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85 In JRUL 1903 it was shortened and only an English version was included.
Land of Israel (as in ADPB and FoP) makes it more particularistic than the version in LCh.87

The third benediction, *Kedushat HaShem*, which has only one version for individual recitation in the ADPB, invokes God as inherently holy (cf. Isa. 6:3) – *kadosh* – that is distinctive from any other being. The Reform prayerbook (FoP, p. 143) includes an additional version, which in Orthodox settings is traditionally recited communally in the repetitions of the morning and afternoon. In LCh, a version is taken from the Cairo Geniza reflecting the ancient Palestinian rite (LCh, note 20, p. 664).

The next benediction *Kedushat HaYom*, is recited in one or another version in each *Shabbat* service. However, the first text, ‘You sanctified’, differs, while the second, ‘Our God and God of Our ancestors’, remains the same in all traditional services (Bayer, 2007).88 On *Erev Shabbat*, the blessing speaks about creation: ‘You sanctified (*Ata kidashtah*) the seventh day for Your name’s sake, as the culmination of the creation of heaven and earth (…)’ ADPB, pp. 286-9; FoP, p. 144).

The Friday night service continues with the biblical passage concluding the creation story from Genesis 2:1-3. This is not included in LCh, as the editors opted for a text in English which alludes to the theme of *Shabbat* as a gift of God for human renewal (adopted version from LJPS (1937) p. 44). These texts are universalistic in tone, but the next prayer *Eloheinu VeElohei Avotenu* (cf. T.Ber. 3:14; ADPB, p. 288; with slight differences in FoP (p. 145), and in LCh, (p. 99)) foregrounds a particularistic notion of *Shabbat* as the heritage of Israel – and thus something that distinguishes Israel from other nations (cf. Melkhita D’rabbi Yishmael, *Ki Tisa*, on Ex. 31:17; B.Sanh. 56a).

*Retshe* (ADPB, pp. 288-9) which opens the three final blessings of thanksgiving, received the rabbinic title *Avodah* (*service*; M.Tam, 5:1; M.Yom. 7:1; B.Ber. 34a).89 *Avodah* is a poetic metaphor for the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of its sacrificial cult. The Hebrew word *Avodah* is understood in the Bible as Temple worship when it is used in the context of the Temple ritual and sacrifices. In the rabbinic period, after the destruction of the Temple, the meaning shifted and it acquired that of prayer, *avodah shebalev* (*the worship of the heart*, i.e. prayer, (Heinemann, 1977, p. 232)).

87 A discussion concerning the usage of this petition for rain according to the local needs and not the seasons of the Land of Israel is presented in Lasker and Lasker (1984).
88 For the history of these variations, see Bayer (2007), Elbogen (1993, pp. 93-4); Heinemann (1977, pp. 232-4); Finkelstein (1978).
89 On the origins of *Avodah*, see Elbogen (1993, pp. 50-1).
This particularistic blessing, with specific reference to the Temple cult, underwent changes in Progressive siddurim. In early Reform prayerbooks, it was preserved, but in 1931 (p. 6) the prayer was abbreviated and all allusions to the restoration of the Temple cult were omitted. In FoP (2008, p. 145), the commentary states that the traditional version spoke about the restoration of temple sacrifices, whereas

this version asks that God accept the prayers we have just recited and find favour with the Jewish people. This hope is to be expressed by our return to the land of Israel, but the physical return should also be accompanied by the tangible presence of God.

This prayer as well as the commentary remains with particularistic tones. However the sacrificial cult of the Temple is not part of its ideology. The LCh version says (p. 100):

Eternal God, be gracious to your people Israel, and in your love accept their prayers. May our worship now and always be acceptable in Your sight. We praise You, o God, whom alone we worship in reverence.

The prayer here shifted from the request for the restoration of the Temple cult to become a petition for God’s acceptance of prayers performed in the synagogue.

The majority of interviewees shared the messianic hope expressed in this prayer concerning the full redemption of Jerusalem. However, the same speakers had difficulty with the plea for rebuilding the Temple, even those among them who considered themselves Orthodox. Three Orthodox people (OW4, OW5, OM1) spoke about re-establishing the Temple cult in positive terms. Other Orthodox interviewees like OL1 had some reservations about the idea of the Temple and sacrifices:

Temple is about the idea to be closer to God. We want to be able to express ourselves before God in a way we feel we cannot at the moment. The question about the sacrifices is difficult. When one prays for the Temple and sacrifices to be restored, there is an unspoken reservation which one hopes that God hears it.

OL1 expresses the tension that an Orthodox person lives with in their own Jewish tradition and with particularistic aspects of prayers. Belonging to a tradition that does not allow for the alteration of texts, allows him only to approach the language on another level, shifting from the literal meaning of the text to the symbolic one. However this solution is not entirely satisfying, as there is a political reality which for more conservative Jews plays an important role in reading the text, which OL1 also mentioned in the interview.
All Progressive interviewees radically expressed that they do not want the Temple sacrifice to be reinstated. RR5 said:

I would be uncomfortable praying for the rebuilding of the Temple and reinstitution of the sacrifices... I cannot even bring myself to say: well it is an interesting historical matter. I would be horrified seeing animals or loaves of bread being sacrificed. It is nothing to do with how I understand Jewish practice. And of course, the political repercussion of rebuilding the Temple would be beyond horrific. And there is no word that I would be able to pray in any metaphorical sense. But Jerusalem as a place that I am connected to absolutely. That the city should be a place of righteousness and a place where prayers of all peoples are offered. As a central location for my faith and also for others.

RR5 expresses here the Progressive attitude toward liturgical language: that even though it is symbolic, it should still reflect the modern ideology of Progressive Jews. Thus for her, the Temple’s historical role is not sufficient to justify prayers for its restoration in the siddur. She also adds the role that Jerusalem plays in Judaism. This element is more universal, and she speaks of the importance of the city as a sacred space for many other faith traditions, as Alana Vincent (2010, p. 154) has identified:

the discrepancy between the geographically accessible city and the Jerusalem of the liturgy haunts contemporary, especially progressive, Judaism. The Jerusalem of the liturgy retains its centrality not in spite of, but because of this disparity: the actual city becomes an anchor point for the redemptive hope.

Prayers for the restoration of the Temple and its sacrificial cult appear in other parts of the traditional Shabbat liturgy, such as at the end of the erev Shabbat Amidah Yehi Ratson (‘May it will be Your will’ ADPB, pp. 294-5). Progressive siddurim editors again paid close attention to such texts and introduced changes. These were indicated as the most complicated particularistic elements and as particularly provoking ideological tension for my interviewees from all three movements.

In the penultimate blessing Hoda’ah (‘we give thanks M.R.H. 1:4; B.Ber 34a; B. Meg. 17b), the reader acknowledges and praises God’s acts in previous generations and at the present time. It thus begins on a particularistic note by again evoking ancestors, but then shifts to a more universalistic level, thanking God for daily miracles, the changing of time and seasons. Giving thanks and acknowledging God’s loving acts have been seen as central to Jewish life and liturgy (B.Ber. 34a).
The final blessing, *Shalom*, is built around the theme of peace that may be granted by God for Israel, and takes the form of a plea *Shalom Rav* (‘grant great peace’) and statement *Oseh Shalom* (‘may He who makes peace’; M.Tam. 5:1; B.Meg. 18a) (ADPB, pp. 292-3; FoP, pp. 148-9; LCh, pp. 101-2).\(^0\) In the evening, the supplication is for ‘abundant peace’, as night is seen as a time of danger and uncertainty, while in the morning the *shaliach tsibbur* inserts the *Birkat Kohanim*, the Priestly Blessing (based on Num. 6:24ff), in this blessing.\(^1\) In Orthodox *siddur*, this blessing is followed by a silent Talmudic meditation, *Elohai Netsor* (‘My God guard’, ADPB, p. 292-3; FoP, p. 149; LCh, p. 102; cf. B.Ber 16b-17a), asking for integrity between human thoughts and words so that prayer may be acceptable to God.

The traditional version of this blessing is particularistic. However, it is worth noting that a more universal concluding eulogy (preserved in Lev.R. 9:9) is traditionally recited during the Ten Days of Repentance (LCh, note 26, p. 665), expressing the idea that peace for the People of Israel also depends on peace in the world. One of the interviewees brought to my attention one example of the incoherence present in the Progressive *siddurim*. When asked what he would change in the *siddur*, he said:

Coming back [to] what bothers me in the *siddur*, there is one *Sim Shalom* and *Shalom Rav* in the morning and evening. And there is the issue that in *Sim Shalom*, only Israel is mentioned, but in an earlier version, in the SoH it was *al Israel amekha veal kol ha’amim* – so praying for peace for Israel and for all peoples. But in LCh they cut it off! It is not even a prayer. It is very well to add a statement ‘yes God wants peace for everybody’, but I think we should be praying for peace. I still believe that the words we are saying are important and should represent what we are really asking (LR2).

In the Reform prayerbook, the universalising insertions are in the same place. However, the wording is *ve’al kol ha’olam* (‘and upon all the world’). Some Progressive interviewees prefer another form *ve’al kol yoshvei tevel* (‘and upon all dwellers on earth), which they find more inclusive.

The individual recitation of the *Amidah* ends here. In the Orthodox ritual, the leader continues the service with the *Vayehulu* (ADPB, pp. 294-5) and a summarised version of the *Amidah*, which is unique to the *Erev Shabbat* service, followed by the full *Kaddish*. The Reform Prayerbook includes a version of what is called ‘Repetition of the

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\(^0\) On ‘peace’ in the Bible and early rabbinic liturgy, see Reif (2007, pp. 278-94).

\(^1\) For more, see Elbogen (1993, p. 53).
Amidah’ (FoP, p. 150-1), though it is rarely used in Reform synagogues. Liberal communities recite the Amidah individually or communally only once.

5.4 The Kaddish

The Kaddish (‘sanctification’) has several variations for various moments in the ritual in traditional prayerbooks (including: The Half Kaddish (Chatsi Kaddish), The Rabbis’ Kaddish (Kaddish D’Rabbanan); Whole Kaddish (Kaddish Shalem, also called Kaddish Titkabel), and Mourner’s Kaddish (Kaddish Yatom), each serving different liturgical purposes. They are all found in the Orthodox and Reform siddurim, whereas Liberal siddurim have only three versions.

The Kaddish (ADPB, p. 296) is a doxology, declaring God’s greatness and expressing the eschatological longing for God’s Kingdom, originally used as a prayer concluding a sermon or Torah study (T.Ber. 3a; Avenary and Millen, 2007, Krygier, 2002, pp. 57-77). The name Kaddish itself relates to the biblical concept of the ‘sanctification of God’s name’, which for Talmudic sages was a synonym for martyrdom, as though recognising the pain of the mourner (Schonfield, 2006, p. 245). It later also became a mourners’ prayer (Sof. 10:7), expressing the Jewish concept of praising God even in the worst circumstances (cf. Job. 1:21; 2:10; M.Ber. 9:5).

Mourner’s Kaddish (Kaddish Yatom), the only one I discuss here, is a thought-provoking prayer for several reasons: its language, origins, and ritual (who, how and when). Progressive Shabbat services are led in Hebrew and English (in various proportions depending on the unique character of the synagogue and the Movement to which it belongs), except the Kaddish. It is a prayer that is always recited in Aramaic (with a few lines toward the end in Hebrew), whether it is an Orthodox or Progressive community. The language of the Kaddish was discussed by Talmudic Sages (B.Sotah 49a refers to an Aramaic version; in B.Ber. 3a and 21b to a Hebrew version, indicating that people should understand what they are reciting (cf. Tur, OCh 56). In modern times there were attempts to change the language of this prayer, so those who recite it

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93 Other texts in Aramaic may be recited, such as the piyyut, Ya ribbon (FoP, p. 103), however, they are optional. Aramaic also appears in ritual for Pesah, High Holidays, and Shavuot, and it is traditionally used to write the marriage contract; Those who read passages from Talmud on Shabbat will also be exposed to Aramaic.
could feel more at ease. In the early phase of the Reform movement, Kaddish was translated into Hebrew (1841). However, in 1952 (FoP, p. 10), the Aramaic version was re-introduced next to the Hebrew one. In the Liberal Movement, the Aramaic version was re-introduced next to the Hebrew one. In the Liberal Movement, the Aramaic version of the Kaddish was the only one used for Shabbat. Even though few people in Progressive movements know Aramaic, all of my interviewees confirm that only this version is appropriate. LR6 argued:

I would never have people read Kaddish in English because I think it totally defeats the object. It’s not about the words; it’s about what the sound of this prayer invokes in you. Hearing, that is what the meaning of the prayer is about, and not what it actually means.

The recitation of the Kaddish within the community is a moment of grieving, even though there may be a discrepancy between the text, the language and the understanding of its user. The prayer may provide a feeling of security, as it does not require anything spontaneous but follows a well-known ritual protocol. LR2 mentioned that in Liberal and the majority of Reform synagogues, the mourners are joined by other members in the recitation of Kaddish; thus it becomes a collectively shared moment.

Traditionally, the Kaddish is recited daily for eleven months after the death of a parent, 30 days for a child, spouse, or a sibling, and on the Jahrzeit and for public recitation it requires a minyan (Sofrim 10:7). Thus, in Orthodox communities, men make an effort to come for Erev Shabbat, thinking that one day they may also need this kind of support to be able to say the Kaddish for a close relative. In 2016 the United Synagogue published a booklet called ‘Women Mourners: A Guide to Kaddish and Mourning’, in which Orthodox women are encouraged to recite the Kaddish. However, only men are counted as part of a minyan. This public recitation of the Kaddish aims to make the community aware of those who are going through a difficult moment in their lives.

Because its words and gestures are common to all three Movements, the Kaddish is a prayer that expresses the unity of all Jewish people and the identification with the whole of Israel (Lalonde et al., 1995, p. 102). The questions therefore arises

95 Gender in relation to Kaddish is discussed e.g. in Smart and Ashkenas (2014).
96 For social aspects of Jewish mourning rites, see Fishbane (1995).
whether this prayer can be said for a non-Jews and how to negotiate ritual boundaries around such personal feelings as grief for a dead relative?

The Orthodox siddur naturally does not comment on this matter. In the Reform siddur, the commentary below the text does not indicate whether the prayer can be recited only for Jews or if a mourner can also say it for a close non-Jewish relative. But Magonet in the ‘Study Anthology’, takes into consideration such a possibility and writes:

Over time it [the Kaddish] has taken additional meanings and now, in this final version, is associated with personal memories of those who have died, and the need to memorialise them alongside those we never knew but who belonged to the community of our people, and even those who were not Jews but who accompanied us in some significant way in our lives (FoP, p. 501).

In the Liberal siddur, the texts in ‘Meditations before the Kaddish’, which are regularly used as an introduction to the Kaddish prayer, do not feature particularistic elements. God is presented as the Creator and Source of life, and no Jewish notions are included in these meditations. Moreover, one of the texts is written by George Eliot and is used regularly in the Liberal synagogues.

During Erev Shabbat Progressive rituals, whenever it is possible rabbis have the custom of providing space for people who are mourning or have yahrzeit to mention the names of the deceased in addition to the official list of names of deceased members. The majority of my interviewees said that they do not see any reason not to include non-Jewish partners of synagogue members, but there were a few, such as LR3, who said that she does not include them.

Both positions concerning this ritual boundary were passionately discussed when during my research, terrorist attacks happened a few times in London and in Israel. Some progressive leaders mentioned the victims, including both Jews and non-Jews. In 2018 the use of the Kaddish in such contexts was vividly discussed at the Leo Baeck College and in the press, as some of Progressive student rabbis and Rabbis took part in a so-called ‘Kaddish for Gaza’ in Parliament Square.

98 A number of articles and responses were written for and against using the Kaddish as a response to the shooting and deaths on the border between Israel and Gaza, e.g. https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/no-israel-tour-for-Kaddish-for-gaza-participant-1.466421 (Accessed 10 May 2020); https://medium.com/@NaamodUK/why-we-said-Kaddish-for-the-palestinians-that-were-killed-in-gaza-5ab51d3f6a53 (Accessed 12 February 2020); Schonfield, J., (in press) ‘Kaddish for Gaza: Some liturgical ground clearing’. 
It remains to mention differences in the text of *Kaddish* in the three *siddurim* I have analysed here. The traditional version included in the Orthodox *siddur* (ADPB, p. 304) ends with a particularistic asking God for peace over Israel (similarly to discussed above, *Ose Shalom*). In both Reform and Liberal prayerbooks, this prayer was universalised\(^99\) in the final verse by adding a phrase *ve'ul kol ha’olam* ('and upon all the world' in FoP, p. 316; which was added in blue ink print as an optional verse only in the 2008 edition;) or *we’al kol benei adam* ('and to all humanity' LCh, p. 524; already in 1926 *siddur* of LJS).

**Summary**

Throughout this chapter, I have brought to light those elements of *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Erev Shabbat* prayers that carry P/U ideology. Discussing in-depth some of these prayers, their origin and place in Jewish liturgy allowed me to show how deeply rooted they are in Jewish tradition and in Jewish life. Three of the prayers discussed here (*Shema*, *Amidah* and *Kaddish*) are recited several times a day by religious Jews.

All these prayers include ideas that are central to Jewish identity, such as the notion of the special position of Israel vis à vis other nations, the relation of the Jewish people to the Torah, Jerusalem and the Land, the Temple service, and the messianic age. After presenting the Orthodox texts, I showed how Progressive editors approached these texts, for example by omitting texts (such as some verses of *Lekhah Dodi*, or parts of *Retseh*), introducing other versions or new compositions (as in *Retseh*), explanatory commentaries (*Retseh*), or making changes within a text to make it more acceptable for Progressive movement ideology (*Avot*, *Geulah*). The differences in approach were noticeable especially in relation to the restoration of the Temple and the notion of redemption (including vengeance), which in the Reform *siddur* was amended or explained as a ‘vision of the past’, whereas in the Liberal one such passages were omitted completely and replaced by other formulations. As I have shown in other places, Sacks leaves the most problematic texts (e.g. *Geulah*) to individual interpretation. I will outline challenges to such approaches while discussing another problematic text, i.e. *Aleinu* in chapter seven, showing how such texts have been used against non-Jews.

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\(^{99}\) For discussion of the development of the universalisation of this prayer in non-British prayerbooks, see Friedland (1967, p. 62), Petuchowski (1968).
While discussing the Shema and its blessings, I described how ritual objects (mezuzah and tallit on Shabbat), as well as gestures, can be thought to sustain particularism and add Jewish specificity to the ritual. As it was shown, they may still be performed by some Progressive worshippers, even though the text’s ideology is in tension with their views.

To further show how the process of neo-particularisation of the Progressive siddurim can be seen within Kabbalat and Erev Shabbat, I analysed prayers in previous editions of Reform and Liberal prayerbooks. Several prayers which were omitted (fully or partially) in the past, such as Lekhah Dodi or Retseh, are to be found in full or amended in contemporary siddurim. However, as editorial choices do not always reflect the opinions of interviewees, I was able to quote voices that were critical.

I chose to study the Oseh shalom and Kaddish prayers in order to discuss universalising tendencies in Progressive communities through additional phrases where the traditional text is exclusive and concerns only Israel. However, as discussed in this chapter, the process of universalisation of the plea for peace is inconsistent in both Progressive siddurim.

At this stage of my analysis, I came back to the boundaries of the ritual while discussing the ideology of the mourners’ Kaddish. I showed here that even though this prayer does not have clearly particularistic elements which would relate to Jewish identity, because of the language in which it is recited, the community dimension related to the presence of a minyan, and its rootedness in tradition, it is seen by some of my interviewees as a prayer that can be recited only for Jews and by Jews. However, I have also shown that the reality in Progressive communities, within which one will find non-Jews and interfaith marriages, challenges such an ideology. In such communities, the mourners’ Kaddish may be recited not only in times of personal mourning, but also at moments of loss of life in wider society (e.g. in the case of a terrorist attack).

Lastly, considering ritual when these Friday night texts are recited, I got the impression that these particularistic notions, especially in Progressive settings, are taken over by the creation narrative and the perception of Shabbat as a time of rest and for strengthening family relationships. Content analysis of only the liturgy could lead to a misleading conclusion, and therefore texts need to be studied alongside data from participant observation to gain a more realistic image of the ideological aspects of a given ritual. On the other hand, the same particularistic notions present in other texts
recited on Shabbat morning are brought into focus by the ritual constructed around the central point, i.e. the Torah, as I will show in the next chapter.
6. *Shabbat Morning in Synagogue*

Leaving a Jewish home and walking to a synagogue (or driving in the case of those who are not strictly *shomer Shabbat*) is the same as on Fridays except, in most cases, for the stricter security at the entry to the building. Sending an email prior to one’s first visit was expected. On arrival, questions were asked and personal identification could be checked (usually more thoroughly in Orthodox settings). Security officers, often in black or fluorescent yellow vests, could be seen in nearby streets around some synagogues. The gate or door with a *mezuzah* or another Jewish symbol (e.g. a *menorah* or star of David) guarded the entrance to a particularistic zone, reserved for members of the synagogues and accepted guests, a liminal passage from the dangerous, unwelcoming external world to the secure and welcoming space inside.

This description of crossing between particularistic and universalistic zones on *Shabbat* is the beginning of my analysis of the ethnographical data concerning rituals performed in Orthodox and Progressive community settings. Discussing it separately from *Kabbalat Shabbat* allows me to bring to light distinctive features of this part of *Shabbat* and further explore the dynamics between P/U elements within Jewish services. I shall concentrate on five phases of the morning statutory services: the Preliminaries (*Birkot haShachar*, *Pesikei deZimrah*), *Shacharit*, the Torah service (*Kiriat haTorah*), *Musaf*, and the Conclusion. As services are followed by community *Kiddush* for those who cannot say it for themselves, I analyse it here also, as it differs in certain aspects from the Friday night *Kiddush*.

The P/U elements in the *Shabbat* morning ritual vary with the movement, but as I discuss here, through additional elements (e.g. themes, commentaries, celebrations of rites of passage) they can change dramatically, especially in Progressive contexts. On a regular *Shabbat*, which is the scope of this thesis, particularistic Jewish notions are at the forefront and are expressly voiced in the Torah service. In the Talmud, the gift of Torah is named as an objective reason for Jewish election and therefore some of my interviewees saw it as a reason for Jewish particularity. In my analysis of contemporary Orthodox and Progressive liturgy, I trace particularistic notions concerning election, distinction and mission, and compare how these are embedded within each ritual. At the same time, I bring to light universalising approaches and negotiations of boundaries, which might go unnoticed by participants.
As in previous chapters, I engage here with the ethnographical work of Heilman (1976), which was a great help in thinking about social aspects of the synagogue, especially in relation to identity and forming community boundaries. Freida K. Furman (1981) and Reiko Itoh and Leonard Plotnicov (1999) discuss innovative synagogue services in relation to their meaning to their members’ identity as Jews, which I also relate (6.3). I return to Victor W. Turner’s approach to ritual as a social drama (1974) while discussing the highly dramatized Torah service ritual.

6.1 Upon Arrival

Orthodox services usually start at 8.30am or 9am, and as soon as a few men gather, the prayers begin. The majority of women join the prayer an hour later, and those entering earlier will find an almost empty space. Some young children are brought by their fathers, but activities or services are often conducted for them in another room. Except young children, who are free to roam, men and women sit in different sections, separated by a mechitzah or special areas (e.g. a women’s gallery, see photo 26).

Photo 26. Inside an Orthodox synagogue; a view from the women’s gallery.

Small children are free to walk around, but are usually not permitted onto the bimah, which is located in the men’s section. Even though the service is conducted by the men, great attention is given to the presence of children, who are carefully included in the
service, helping to form their Jewish identity and prepare them to take on roles in the Jewish community.

In some synagogues (e.g. PObs.10rSyn.3; PObs.19rSyn.5), certain women sat together because they were reciting Kaddish for their parents, partners and children. Smart and Ashkenas (2014) argue that being publicly recognised as saying Kaddish is a sign of women’s increasing inclusion in synagogue life in the Orthodox world. These women negotiate their inclusion in synagogue ritual and life and express publicly their Jewish identity and the importance of synagogue ritual in sustaining it.

Groups are formed within the sections (and also outside the prayer space), according to Heilman (1976, pp. 151-208), by means of gossip and jokes that distinguish members from outsiders. Heilman argues that ‘gossiping and being a target of gossip may be a hallmark of membership’ (p. 158), reaffirming the group’s identity against that of another group. Some topics of gossip, especially news of engagements, births, birthdays, deaths, are confirmed at the end of the service by public announcements that are greeted with concentration and silence. Realising the importance of gossip within this milieu, it was not surprising that with each visit new people approached to ask questions related to my research. But their inquiries rarely ventured beyond my academic interests in Jewish topics. As Heilman argues, gossip from outside the sphere of the Jewish community rarely enters the conversation and might be seen as weakening attachment to the synagogue world and diluting the particularistic ‘bubble’ that the community wants to experience on Shabbat.

On my first visit to a synagogue, my seat was indicated, even though I had been told I could sit wherever I wanted or that there is no assigned seating. Heilman (1976, p. 36-45) describes how seating reveals networks of relations and social belongings, and how such boundaries are negotiated within each community. Within a few minutes, the status of a person is established and therefore whether or not this person can be included in Jewish ritual. The notion of the synagogue as a ‘house of assembly’ (Heilman, 1976) is usually more evident than on Friday night.

In Progressive communities, the service always began at the planned time (10 - 11 am), and from that moment it was the prayer leaders who guided the congregation in what to do as the prayer progressed. On entering, one is welcomed by an appointed person who shows one into the place where the service takes place and usually distributes prayerbooks, chumashim and sometimes a sheet with additional information. As on Friday night, the seating arrangement may be more in chavurah style, but the Shabbat morning prayers are usually more formal, as can be seen through
the seating arrangement. I was never told where to sit, but in a few synagogues, seats at the front were reserved for synagogue officials (rabbis, wardens, etc).

There was little talking within the service itself, but conversation and gossip flowed during the community Kiddush. In all the synagogues I visited, I could easily maintain anonymity if I wanted, although in small communities I was asked a number of times to perform a mitsvah, which inevitably led to an admission of the purpose of my visit. It is much easier for a non-Jewish person to be part of a Jewish service in a Progressive setting. However, the particularistic boundaries in the ritual also have to be more often negotiated or even protected, as shown later.

6.2 Who

The Orthodox participants on Shabbat morning come to synagogue for more varied (often mixed) reasons than on Fridays, when most participants are regulars. The majority of Orthodox interviewees said that they come to fulfil the obligation of Shabbat prayers and to support the Jewish community. Those who participate less regularly, such as OW3 and OM2, go if there is a bar mitsvah ceremony, a child has been born into their family, they were observing a yahrzeit, are in a period of mourning, are coming in response to a catastrophe (e.g. terrorist attack), or simply for social reasons.

When I asked about non-Jewish participants in one of the Orthodox synagogues, OR4 said: ‘Who? Non-Jews? No, even if they are there, they are invisible within the Jewish crowd’. However, there are some synagogues in which the attendance of non-Jews may be marked, as in the case of an official visit of government representatives (PObs.10OrtSyn.3) or when non-Jewish friends are invited for a bar mitsvah ceremony (PObs.10OrtSyn.3, PObs.18OrtSyn.4). Their presence did not interrupt the flow of the ritual and was recognised only sporadically (on one occasion when they were asked to read a prayer for the state, or at the end of the service by words of welcome).

Those who come through the doors of a Progressive synagogue will often have a choice of various prayer-gatherings, though never according to gender, as separation between men and women is not part of Progressive ideology today (unless a special service is organised for women). Most of my respondents were looking for a vibrant Jewish community that will provide Jewish life rather than to fulfil an obligation of Shabbat prayers. The younger generation of interviewees also spoke about the search
for ‘spiritual’ experience (RR9, RR4, LStR1), thus services with elements like silence, meditative texts and songs.

In a number of Progressive synagogues (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn.1, PObs.8RefSyn.3, Pobs.3LibSyn.1), the community was enlarged by those who joined in the service via streaming online, referred to as ‘virtual Jews in the virtual pews’ (RR7). Their presence was always recognised and welcomed during the opening moment of the services, though never acknowledged during the rest of the service.

Another group comprises visitors (Jews and non-Jews), who are sometimes more numerous than members themselves. Non-Jewish affiliation to Progressive synagogues is officially accepted and each has adopted a policy of inclusion to various degrees, whereby they receive the status of ‘friends of the community’ (PObs.13LibSyn.7), ‘associate members’ (PObs.11LibSyn.6), or in one case (PObs.4RefSyn.2) ‘full members’, although not equal to other members in terms of participation in certain rituals. A few synagogues (e.g. PObs.13LibSyn.7) emphasise their welcoming stance towards non-Jews from mixed marriages on their websites, and this is reflected in their services. For example, transliteration of Hebrew prayers may be provided (as LCh does not include this) and certain boundaries concerning participation may be negotiated, which I show below. Outside the context of the service, various initiatives concerning social justice take place, often in collaboration with non-Jewish institutions and projects. In a pamphlet describing one of the Liberal communities we read:

True to the universal ideas of the founders of Liberal Judaism, we see ourselves as part of the wider community and are proud to be a part of a lively multicultural area. We have a long history of activity in interfaith and community endeavours (...) We are a community with a strong focus on social justice. Such initiatives related to social justice are voiced strongly throughout Shabbat through sermons, announcements concerning various actions or in chosen themes for the services. In this way, universalistic ideology is always present in Progressive synagogues.
6.3 Various styles

The way in which services are led is always to some extent influenced by the abilities and interests of those who attend. Orthodox services last around three hours on average. In bigger communities, in addition to the *baal tefilah* (prayer leader), a *chazzan* or even a choir may help to lead the service. During PObs.19OrtSyn.5, PObs.15OrtSyn.2 the leaders of the service, as well as those who *layned* from the *Torah*, used Ashkenazi Hebrew pronunciation that is different from modern Hebrew. This distinctive style adds to a specific atmosphere, as some forms of it carry the memory of Eastern-European heritage, shtetls and a lost world. Traditionally none of the prayers should be omitted to be replaced by others. The traditional liturgy may be disrupted by celebrating rites of passage or special anniversaries or events such as Remembrance Day. However, the overall structure is retained, and all the prayers are recited each *Shabbat*, although a limited number of elements are added. This provides ‘the feeling of rootedness in tradition and being a part of the Jewish world’ (OW3).

In Progressive contexts, most of the visited synagogues had two or more different styles of service in its repertoire. When I asked RR9 for the reasons, she explained that since they started running different services, more members had been participating and had been attracting more and more members, whereas in other synagogues there has been a radical drop in participation in synagogue life. More formal services were initially strongly influenced by ritual in Protestant churches (Carlin and Mendlovitz, 1975) and are indicative of early Reformers’ idea of the universalisation of Jewish ritual. They are accompanied by an instrument such as the organ (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn.1) or piano (e.g. PObs.4RefSyn.2) with a choir (e.g. PObs.3LibSyn.1) led by a rabbi, *chazan* or a trained *sheliach tsibbur* (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn1).101

Some of these services are formal, with a professional organist and a choir, often made up of non-Jews. Such services are beautiful in style, but many of the participants remain passive, listening to the service rather than participating and engaging with the ritual (e.g. PObs2RefSyn1, PObs19LibSyn6). These services are not growing in numbers, as is confirmed by LR3. A similar observation comes from Dana E. Kaplan, who noticed that with the growth of ‘spiritual individualism’, service

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101 The organ was first introduced in Reform movement in Britain in 1859; four years later women joined in the male choir (Borts, 2014, p. 51).
participants are ‘less willing to sit quietly listening to the choir sing and the rabbi sermonize’. Rather, ‘they expect to participate actively in a common spiritual quest’ (Kaplan, 2007a, p. 180). To address this issue, additional services have been formed, hoping to attract a younger generation which is visibly missing in more formal services. Illman (2018) has also observed this shift from the formal, rational services which centre on words and their meaning toward styles in which more music and silence or other forms are used to provide what some interviewees called ‘spiritual’ experiences (RR4). These services include singing in Hebrew, a participatory style, or focusing on the body through re-introducing traditional ritual gestures (PObs.4RefSyn.2). They either run concurrently with formal services or, in smaller synagogues such as PObs.7LibSyn.4, they replace the regular service about once a month. This type of service is influenced by elements of other faith rituals, especially Eastern traditions. For some participants with a more traditional background, this may also seem ‘too non-Jewish’ (RM2, OL2) and not enough particularistic in scope.

6.4 Preliminaries

The first part of the Orthodox service consists in blessings, psalms and hymns (ADBP, pp. 2-32, 322-70) which lead to the main statutory core: the Shema with its benedictions (pp. 370-89) and the Amidah (pp. 390-404). The same overall structure is preserved in the Progressive ritual (FoP, pp. 153-234, LCh, pp. 105-146), but it is abbreviated.

The interplay between P/U elements in the Orthodox Shabbat morning ritual intensifies as soon as the sheliach tsibbur (either rabbi, chazzan or more often a congregant) begins to recite the prayers (often called in Yiddish davening), without waiting for silence or making an announcement. Davening, typical to Orthodox ways of conducting some parts of Shabbat Shacharit, involves quick reading and chanting of texts. It requires good knowledge of Hebrew reading skills and a good voice, and those who are doing it may be known in the community and receive recognition for it.

The recitation of morning blessings (Birkat Hashachar), hymns and psalms (Psukei Dezimrah) proceeds quickly, and those who are not regulars may have difficulty finding the right page in the siddur. After the completion of this part (at Shokhen ad, ‘He inhabits eternity, ADPB, p. 366), another person often steps onto the bimah who may be a better-trained shelia tsibbur or chazzan. From that point onwards, davening
slows down, especially for the Shema and the Kedushah in the public repetition of the Amidah. Singing is performed in traditional tunes, reasserted by traditional gestures performed by the majority of participants. This is also the moment in which women begin to gather in their section and join the men in the ritual or socialize with others.

The flow of the ritual is not interrupted by comments or explanations. Only in one synagogue I heard page numbers being given, and even then it was rare and designed only to point out major parts of the service. No announcement concerning gestures were made. However, whenever the talking was loud, a person would try (not always effectively) to silence it. During the service, modes of participation are varied. Some congregants pray while others converse, sit quietly, study, read or walk in or out of the prayer space (if it is not the moment of the Shema or reading from the scroll, to which I will return in a moment).

In all the Orthodox services in which I participated, the pattern was the same and I was able to observe no major variations. I always had the feeling of only observing a closed group whose boundaries and identity were clear, in a particularistic experience which would usually continue throughout the whole morning with more intensified moments. Only in a couple of instances (discussed below) was the particularistic notion of the Shabbat service altered slightly through non-Jewish presence.

In contrast, Progressive services varied greatly through the year and between various communities, and these differences are noticeable from the beginning of the ritual. Progressive prayer leaders may choose to begin the service with a niggun, instrumental music, meditation, a text introducing the service (both Progressive siddurim include a section with texts that are used for this purpose (FoP, pp. 10-26; LCh, pp. 1-9), a theme related to the weekly Torah portion (in LCh a whole part of the siddur is dedicated to ‘Themed Readings’, see pp. 161-366) or to a specific occasion (participation of representatives of non-Jewish faiths or civil representatives (PObs.3LibSyn.1, PObs.2RefSyn1, PObs.13LibSyn7) or historical commemoration (e.g. Remembrance Shabbat, Yom haShoah102 (PObs.8RefSyn.3)). There may be emphasis on a chosen topic (e.g. human rights, eating disorders PObs.11LibSyn.6; mental health awareness PObs.13LibSyn.7, Mitsvah Day PObs.8RefSyn.3), or an event in the community (e.g. special guests from Israel PObs.4RefSyn.2). Such readings are chosen from traditional sources such as the Talmud, classical Jewish commentaries, Chasidic

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102 From 1970s the British Progressive siddurim began to include prayers and texts that spoke about the experience of survivors or related to the Shoah, see Boeckler (2016).
writings, or in some cases even from non-Jewish authors (e.g. Martin Luther King’s speech against slavery (PObs.11LibSyn.6)). Such additional elements could dramatically influence the P/U impressions of the whole service.

The structure of the services is similar to the Orthodox one, but shorter; the service usually lasts between one and two hours. The prayer leader follows the general order of the prayerbook, though at any time comments may be added and pages may be skipped. For this reason, page numbers are regularly provided and often gestures such as bowing are also indicated to facilitate participation. These announcements help to unite the congregation in prayer, but on the negative side they disrupt the flow of the ritual and limit personal freedom to engage in prayer in another manner, which is more possible in the Orthodox ritual.

In the Progressive ritual, additional elements may be added at the beginning of the service when a rite of passage or another personal life event, such as naming a baby, Bar/Bat Mitsvah, Simchat Bat, Kabbalat Torah, becoming Jewish, being welcomed in the community, or a specific birthday, are being celebrated. As these events often relate to Jewish identity and belonging to the Jewish People, they add to particularistic notions. However, they can also be opportunities for the ritual boundaries to be negotiated, as I show in the next part.

6.5 The Torah service

6.5.1 The Centrality of the Torah service in the ritual and outline

Although the Torah service differs in some ritual elements (gestures, tunes, etc.) between Progressive and Orthodox synagogues, several traditional elements (including some particularistic ones) are preserved in them all. The Torah service lies at the centre of the Shabbat morning service and is also essential to Jewish identity, even for those who do not consider themselves religious. That is why important rites of passage and events in Jewish life are marked by appointing a specific person to take

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103 Or/and during the Torah service, which is also the usual time for marking some of these events in Orthodox settings.
104 In depth discussion of ritual of rites of passage lies beyond scope of this thesis.
107 See Kaplan and Baumel (2007).
the scroll out of the ark and pass it to another individual, or by giving them an *aliyah*. Such life events include e.g. *bar mitzvah*, birth of a baby (PObs.10OrtSyn.3, PObs.15Ort.Syn.2) or, as observed in Progressive settings while doing my research, *smichah* (‘ordination’) of rabbis and cantors (PObs.2ReSyn.1, PObs.11LibSyn.6) and a rabbi’s induction to a synagogue (PObs.13LibSyn.7).

The centrality of the Torah to Jewish identity is part of biblical and Talmudic tradition, where Torah is the one reason Israel was chosen and separated from the other nations (Urbach, 1975, pp. 525-56). Torah is the token of God’s special love for the Jewish people (M.Avot 3:15), and that is why Talmudic sages saw the Torah as one of the reasons for Jewish particularism. This is also why the contemporary Torah service is a moment when particularistic notions concerning election, distinction, and mission are articulated not only in the Orthodox but also in the Progressive liturgy.

Thus, the public celebration of the Torah, which reaches a climax in the *Shabbat* morning ritual when the community reads publicly from the scroll (based indirectly on Deut. 31:13, and on Neh. 8-9), begins and grows from the start of the day. Studying Torah is the central activity of Jewish identity, as is expressed in various places in the *siddur* from the first page recited (after waking up and washing one’s hands), which describes the Torah as ‘the heritage of Israel’ (see, ADPB, p. 5), through to the blessing for Torah study, which is also a part of the daily service (e.g. ADPB p. 14; 17). And even more so, the ties between *Shabbat* and Scripture are stronger, as Shulevitz (2010, p. 119) writes:

> Whenever people begin reading the Book, they start keeping the Sabbath. And when they keep the Sabbath they read the Book. It is no accident that religions centred on the Word of God and the texts in which it is written have set aside a day for absorbing them.

The recital of *Shema* – which comprises Torah texts – precedes the reading of *parashat hashavuah* and *haftarah*, and the liturgy, with its sacred dramatization, transforms the Torah reading from an act of study into an event that occurs within sacred time – the *Shabbat*.

### 6.5.2 Torah service: the ritual and its dramatisation

The analysis of the Torah service ritual follows the choreography in Orthodox synagogues, most of which are preserved in the Progressive liturgies. The Reform editors include three different Torah services (FoP, pp. 235-72): the first is traditional,
while the third ‘uses a minimum of ritual, so the time can be devoted to studying the Torah text itself or related material’. Those elements which have been modified, and which are relevant to our analysis of P/U are discussed following each smaller unit of the Orthodox Torah service. The detailed description of the Torah ritual allows to show the particularity of the Torah service and its rootedness in Jewish sacred narrative concerning Israel’s election and special relation with God.

Traditionally the Torah service begins with a series of biblical verses which speak about God as Sovereign of the world and as a source of peace for God’s chosen people, in whom hope for the restoration of Zion is placed (ADPB, pp. 404-5). From this point on, through the ritual words and actions, the moment of revelation at Sinai becomes part of the experience of the participants, while the ritual object (the Torah scroll) comes to represent and mediate God’s presence.

The ritual around the Torah reading is the most highly dramatized in the synagogue liturgy. Victor Turner claims that rituals are ‘means of doing the same, but by allowing the normal social structure to be inverted and broken out of temporarily, so that the return to everyday structure is enhanced in value’ (Turner, 1974, p. 95). Thus, the drama of the Torah service attempts to recreate the theatrical atmosphere of the experience presented in the sacred biblical narrative concerning the gift of the Torah, aiming to influence its participants as they respond to it. Reading the texts is accompanied by gestures (bowing, kissing, stretching out the hand), movements (standing, turning toward the Ark, opening the door, taking out/putting back the scroll), the recitation of prayers, singing, and responding to the leaders’ calls. As Goldman argues, their purpose is to engage the participant in the ritual and arouse the cultural memory: ‘They form its solemn and dramatic centre and none would gainsay the powerful impression which they make on the minds of worshippers’ (Goldman, 1961, p. 54).

Thus, when the Ark is opened and the scroll is taken out, a nominated person holds the scroll in front of the community and a number of biblical verses are read, which allude to the Israelites’ experience in the wilderness. At this point in the ritual, the congregants sing ‘when the ark was carried forward, Moses would say, ‘Arise, Lord! May Your enemies be scattered, may Your foes be put to flight’ (Num. 10:35), which begins the re-enactment of the march through the Sinai desert with the holy ark among the Israelites. A vision from Isa. 2:2-4 follows: ‘For the Torah shall come from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’. The words of the Shema (Deut. 6:4) are proclaimed. A procession may begin as the Torah is carried around the sanctuary, while
the congregation sings a series of verses (1Chr. 29:11, Ps. 99:5,9) expressing God’s
greatness. When the Torah is processed, participants may either kiss the mantle or
more often touch it with a tsitsit or siddur and then kiss the object that touched the
scroll.

The scroll is undressed by removing its decorated finials or crown, which often
has little bells that evoke the priests of Temple times (an additional particularistic
allusion), an ornamental silver and gilt breastplate, a mantle and a belt (illustrated in
photo 27).

Photo 27. An open ark with Torah scrolls in a Liberal synagogue.

In some congregations, the scroll is raised before the reading so that participants are
able to see the weekly passage and re-affirm the holiness of God’s words by
pronouncing ‘This is the Torah that Moses placed before the children of Israel at the
Lord’s commandments by the hand of Moses’ (ADPB, pp. 415-6). In other synagogues
this ritual is performed upon finishing the reading from the scroll. The hagbah (‘lifting’)
is accompanied by the traditional gesture of stretching out a hand with tsitsit, a finger
or a siddur and kissing it. Through this ritual, gestures and words, not only the
sacredness of this ritual is confirmed, but also the Torah’s intrinsic relationship to
every Jewish worshipper’s identity is affirmed. The disrobed scroll is placed on the
bimah and covered to show respect. From that moment the bimah becomes a place with
limited access.
It is the *gabbai* (in Orthodox settings always a man) who is in charge of the sacred space and distributes *kibbudim* to come to the *bimah*, as he did to open the Ark and to take out the scroll (or scrolls on some days). The *bimah* is thus restricted to those who have a role to play. Those who are called for a *kibbud* leave the *bimah* only on finishing their duty. Only the *gabbai* has the freedom to move around, and this only as regards the ritual. He also gives outsiders permission to approach if a specific prayer needs to be said, as in a case of someone being sick who was not included earlier in the list.

The sacredness and limitedness are also marked by the way those who are now called to read from the Torah treat the scroll itself with respect by not touching the parchment, just as the reader uses a pointer called a *yad* (‘hand’). When I enquired about the pointer, OW2 explained that is a way to protect the handwritten letters written with ink prepared in a traditional way.

The Torah service is also the moment when the turn toward tradition in Reform and Liberal rituals is clearly noticeable. This change, is sometimes welcomed with uneasiness by the leaders of those communities (e.g. PObs.3LibSyn.1; PObs.13LibSyn.7). In some Progressive settings, especially in Liberal synagogues, this dramatization is limited to a few gestures around the Ark. Traditional gestures such as turning toward the opened door of the ark by all the members (PObs.11LibSyn.6), or carrying the scrolls in a procession (PObs.3LibSyn.1) may not be required. Moreover, various traditional gestures such as touching and kissing the scroll may be seen as close to idolatry (LR1; LR9) and are not welcomed by the leaders of the community. Godleman (2018), analysing the changes in embodiment in the Liberal movement, argues that re-introducing the procession and various gestures within the Torah service has become emblematic of wider changes in Liberal Judaism, which some members welcome as important for their own identity and experience of Jewish ritual, but which others find discomforting and upsetting.

Some Progressive interviewees strongly objected to the idea of touching the scroll, and this not only for its physical protection. LR9 insisted that even though a scroll has a special place in Jewish life, it should not receive special veneration. LR9 does not see issues with opening the scroll and showing it to anybody (including touching the parchment where there are no letters, see photo 28) as long as the object is treated with respect.
Photo 28. An open scroll. On a couple of occasions when non-Jewish participants were officially invited to a Liberal Shabbat service, after the Torah reading, or toward the end of the service the Torah scroll was taken out and the rabbi explained its ritual functioning. (Photo taken outside the ritual).

In that way the hierarchical and liminal arrangement around the scroll may be de-emphasised in the Progressive context. The scroll may be placed not on a reading desk or the *bimah*, but on a small table closer to the participants (illustrated in photo 29).

Photo 29. A table with a Torah scroll prepared for a more inclusive ritual.
On one *Shabbat* morning in PObs.19LibSyn.6, the Torah reading was divided among all of those who had led services during the year (ten lay leaders), so that each person read a couple of verses from the scroll. As some of the readers were not able to learn their portion by heart or were afraid of making a mistake, they read from pieces of paper on which their text was written with vowels. On this occasion the scroll was placed on a lower table in the centre of the community and not (as would usually be the case) in front of the Ark. Such an arrangement both expressed the centrality of the Scriptures in the life of the community and, as LR9 explained: ‘it gives the impression of democracy and accessibility of the Torah, as Torah belongs to every Jew’. All interviewees emphasised that the Torah service on the *bimah* belongs to the sphere of Jewish identity, which ordinarily should exclude those who are not Jews. This kind of less traditional way of conducting the ritual was observed in other Progressive synagogues, however it was always for special occasions.

Furthermore, some of the symbolical and ideological gestures that accompany the Torah service may be challenging for Progressive participants, e.g. those during *hagbah* or the procession, although they are gradually becoming more admissible. This may relate to the different roles that ritual plays in participants’ lives and its power to express and sustain Jewish identity and heritage in a way that goes beyond rationale and focuses on embodiment and ‘spiritual experience’. The re-appearance and re-introduction of traditional gestures at this moment of the liturgy indicates the special status of the scroll as a ritual object for the Jewish community.

**6.5.3 Reading from the Torah**

The Torah is read in a specific way which is rooted in ancient tradition. In Orthodox synagogues, the whole Pentateuch is read over a year, divided into 54 portions (*sidrot*; B.Meg. 29b). The Progressive annual cycle follows the traditional annual subdivision but shortens services by dividing the *sidrot* into three. This custom reflects an ancient Palestinian triennial cycle of reading the Torah, which differs from the Babylonian annual cycle used in Orthodox communities. In one synagogue that I visited (PObs.19LibSyn.6), the ancient triennial cycle was followed, so that the Torah text was read continuously over three years and the whole text was heard by the community. This includes portions which may be seen as not important (like descriptions of sacrifices), or those that are difficult to deal with for a modern person (purity laws,
Temple cult), and which may be omitted or more universally reinterpreted through comments in other Progressive synagogues. The Progressive ritual may also include additional elements, such as the recitation of the Decalogue\textsuperscript{108} on the occasions of celebrating \textit{Bar/Bat Mitzvah} (PObs.6RefSyn.3; POb2RefSyn.1).

When the Torah is placed on the \textit{bimah} in the Orthodox \textit{shul}, the first \textit{oleh} (a Jewish man who is called to the Torah) is called by a \textit{gabbai}, and others – the one who actually reads, one who checks the reading from a \textit{chumash} and corrects the reader, and usually the rabbi, who may provide short comments on the text (based on classical Jewish sources) – gather around the scroll at the reading desk (e.g. PObs.1OrtSyn.3, PObs.19OrtSyn.3). The \textit{gabbai} ceremonially calls (often in a chanted recitation) on a reader, using their Hebrew name, which emphasises his Jewish identity and belonging to the Jewish people gathered to perform a particularistic ritual. In Orthodox services, the first of the seven people called up to the Torah will be from a priestly family, the second from the Levites, and the others from ‘Israelite’ families. This is an ancient custom based on \textit{darchei shalom} (the interests of peace, M.Git. 5:8). In every community a card-index of names is kept (sometimes in a box on the \textit{bimah} and arranged according to these three categories). During the reading of the Torah, special occasions are celebrated by calling for an \textit{alyiah} specific people who may be celebrating a special birthday, a birth, marriage, \textit{bar mitsvah}, recovery from danger, sickness, etc.

It is customary for an \textit{oleh} to take the shortest route when approaching the Torah, and a longer one when returning to his seat. The \textit{oleh} is shown the place on the parchment, which he usually touches with a \textit{tsitsit}, and then kisses before reciting the blessings (in Hebrew), holding onto the handles of the scrolls: ‘Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from all the peoples and has given us His Torah. Blessed are You, Lord, Giver of the Torah’ (ADPB, pp. 413-4). After fulfilling the \textit{mitsvah}, if the \textit{oleh} was called because of a specific occasion, this may be named, and often a special prayer or/and blessing may be recited for/by them (e.g. ADPB, pp. 412-4; 922). Such \textit{kibbud} is also a way of strengthening the relationship between members and forming a stronger community identity.

Such a special occasion is the \textit{Bar Mitzvah} of a child, and the Torah service is the main moment in the Orthodox service when the \textit{Bar Mitzvah} ceremony is marked. Then the child actually reads from the scroll and his father is called to the scroll, sometimes accompanied by additional prayers. The \textit{Bar Mitzvah} celebration is always noticeable in the ritual, since it is anticipated by the participants (for whom it may be

\textsuperscript{108} On the Decalogue in the Reform prayerbooks and ritual, see Friedland (2011, pp. 32-3).
the only reason they came to the synagogue). The performance of the *bar mitsvah* is always commented on immediately after the Torah reading and during the community *Kiddush*. It is a moment of communal joy, as from the moment he becomes *bar mitsvah*, the boy can be counted in the *minyan*, perform other Jewish rituals and commit himself to Jewish life and values. A child’s change of status is often marked by a new religious garment, perhaps a *kippah* or a *tallit*, which becomes obligatory from this age. Thus the *Bar Mitzvah* ritual has an important role of strengthening the inner boundaries of the Jewish social order (Fishbane, 1995a).

*Keriat* Torah is performed from a handwritten parchment scroll. The scroll is regarded as a sacred representation of the Torah in its original form as revealed to Moses. Reading from a *chumash* would traditionally be perceived as an affront to the dignity of the congregation (B.Git. 60a). In traditional communities the Torah is read (called *leyning*, ‘to read’ a traditional intoned reading of the Torah, the *Haftarah*, and other Biblical texts in liturgical contexts) in Hebrew, which adds to the particularity. There are various traditions of *leyning*. The Eastern Ashkenazi accent, which is distinct from the modern Israeli pronunciation, was used in the majority of Orthodox synagogues that I visited, carrying with it the memory of the past of *shtetls*, as it developed in Lithuania, Belarus, Western Russia, Ukraine Poland, etc. To be able to *leyn*, one needs to learn not only the cantillation system but also the vowels of the Torah portion by heart as the scroll contains only the consonants. Those who are able to perform are given special training. They need to practice each time, and have special status within their communities.

*Maftir*, which follows the seventh reading, is the repetition of the last lines from the reading, although on special *Shabbatot* a different portion is read from another scroll, usually recounting the sacrifices once brought on that occasion or relating to a special theme concerning approaching festivals (including *Rosh Chodesh*).

The traditional order of the person called to the Torah is not observed in Progressive communities, and when there are fewer participants, the *olim* are selected spontaneously, just before the service starts. This may result in confusion over non-Jewish participation, although all my Progressive respondents gave a basic rule that it should be a Jewish man or woman, because the traditional blessings (which are always

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109 Discussed in Marcus (2004, pp. 82-123).
110 For more see https://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/content/eastern-ashkenazi-biblical-cantillation-interpretive-musical-analysis (Accessed 04 October 2019).
111 A prophetic reading may be chosen that relates to the *Shabbat* theme.
112 The traditional reading etiquette is mentioned in the ‘Study Anthology’, but it is explained that the Reform Movement does not make such distinctions (FoP, p. 514).
used in Progressive ritual, even though in Liberal settings it was not the case before LCh was published) speak about the notion of being chosen – a traditional particularistic notion (discussed in-depth in the next chapter).

The question of non-Jews being called to the Torah, which was brought up by some interviewed leaders (e.g. LR1, LR5, RR9), touches on the significant number of intermarriages and of non-Jews joining Progressive communities. It was often mentioned in the context of the Bar/Bat Mitsvah ritual, which produced tension around non-Jewish parents’ involvement. It is viewed as important that the family should take part in this celebration, and the parent/s are always called up to keryat Torah, although this is difficult if a non-Jewish parent is called to the Torah, as the blessing is explicitly limited to the Jewish people.\textsuperscript{113} However, as LR1 and RR9 explained, some negotiation of these exclusivist boundaries has been made in practice. In the majority of Progressive communities, non-Jewish parents are invited to the bimah with their bar/bat mitsvah at the moment of opening the ark, although customarily they cannot wear tallit, open the ark, take out, lift or read from the scroll, or perform any other action around the scroll (gelilah, hagbah, etc.). Some such as LR3, LR1, allow (though rarely) a non-Jewish family member to read an English translation of parashat hashavuah, or of the haftarah, but not the accompanying blessing. The place of non-Jewish partners in rituals is usually regulated by a community decision, and often various policies are put in place to allow parents to share the moment of celebration of a Jewish child and to receive credit for raising a child in the Jewish tradition. But the particularistic Torah service ritual boundaries are nonetheless kept.

Another Progressive practice is to call a group instead of an individual to the Torah, for example to celebrate prayer leaders or volunteers (PObs.4RefSyn.2; PObs.19Lib.Syn8, etc). This gives rise to incidents of breaking the rule that only Jewish people can be called, and I have myself been called twice to the Torah as a part of a group that also included Jewish people. The leaders saw this as acceptable and felt that the exceptional nature of such a call was understood by all participants. But such exceptions are rare, and confirm how ritual boundaries and the particularistic notions around the Torah service are highly valued.

Next, the reading is done from a scroll as in Orthodox ritual. In most services the traditional way of leying in Hebrew was kept, except in one Progressive synagogue (PObs.21RefSyn.6) where it was also chanted in English. The translation is often provided as well, which is not the case in the Orthodox setting, where one can follow

\textsuperscript{113} For Reform halakhic responsa, see Washofsky (2010, p. 5).
the portion from a *chumash*, as one can in Progressive communities. This inclusion of reading in English indicates the importance of understanding and relates to ancient custom (M.Meg. 4:4). However in the contemporary world it also indicates early Reform ideology concerning the role of the vernacular language\textsuperscript{114} in the service.

Further, Progressive communities permit reading from the *chumash* when a scroll is not accessible, or when a scroll has letters that are too small for a reader (as in PObs.14RefSyn.4). LR8, asked about the importance of the scroll, said:

If we didn't have a scroll at all, we could use a book. A Torah scroll means a lot, especially to a small community. Their identity is wrapped up in that Torah scroll. Many of our scrolls have come from the Czech Torah scrolls collection, so they are *Shoah* memorials. So they contain a lot more than the words of the Torah which is found in the book – there are all those associations, we are carrying something on.

In a number of the Progressive synagogues I visited (e.g. PObs.8RefSyn.3; PObs.3LibSyn.1; PObs.11LibSyn6), but also in some Orthodox synagogues, the so-called Czech Torah Scrolls were used in the ritual. They survived the Holocaust and were brought to England in 1964.\textsuperscript{115} Every time such a scroll was used in the service (e.g. PObs.2RefSyn.1) during my visit, a short comment was given, often expressing the links between the specific community and past generations that had used the scroll, and its specific history before the *Shoah*. The Czech Torah Scrolls (as in photo 30) have an important role in sustaining and shaping Jewish identity in relation to *Shoah*.\textsuperscript{116}

\textit{Photo 30. A Czech Torah scroll (on the right wall in a transparent box) in a Liberal synagogue.}

\textsuperscript{114} Discussed in 2.7.\textsuperscript{115} These scrolls were preserved as a part of the Nazi plan for a Jewish Museum. More information on Czech Torah Scrolls. see http://www.memorialscrollstrust.org/ (Accessed 10 December 2020).\textsuperscript{116} On Jewish memory and Shoah, see Seidler Jeleniewski (2000, 2017), Vincent (2010).
The relationship between reading from the Torah scroll and Jewish heritage through using a Czech scroll raises another issue. In one case (Pobs.8RefSyn.3), such a scroll was used even though it was pasul (‘damaged’ – not fit for liturgical use, so could not be used in an Orthodox setting). The Rabbi alluded in his sermon to the damage and reflected that such scrolls symbolise not only what happened to Jewish life in Europe during the Shoah, but also to the idea that using it in the service acted as a kind of tikkun (‘repairing’) of Jewish history and a sign of hope.

When the oleh finishes the portion, he reads a traditional blessing that expresses gratitude to God for the gift of the Torah. This ritual action is repeated seven times in the Orthodox ritual and once more for a maftir reading. In Progressive communities the number may vary and is not restricted to the traditional number.

On completing the reading from the Torah, the scroll is taken by a designated person to a seat so it can be dressed. The scroll is dressed and held by the person, while the next reading takes place.

6.5.4 Haftarah

Traditionally there follows a reading from a book of the prophets – known as haftarah – which is thematically related to the Torah reading; it is preceded by two different blessings articulating again the concept of election. In Orthodox communities, the haftarah is also leyned in Hebrew (sometimes by a bar mitsvah) from a chumash, which will also contain a translation.117 This reading is given less attention than the Torah, so participants often quietly converse among themselves, a fact that not all Orthodox rabbis comment upon. Unlike the Torah portion, this reading from the prophets is concluded by a series of blessings. These present additional particularistic elements: a petition for the restoration of Zion, the coming of the messiah, and the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.

In Progressive synagogues, the prophetic readings are ideologically important, because as LR1 mentioned, Reform and Liberal Judaism were called by Geiger ‘Prophetic Judaism’. The founders of Progressive Judaism were convinced that its main aim was to bring the prophetic vision to reality, and they had strong convictions about the need to fight for social justice not only within the Jewish People but in more

117 The most popular edition in the researched synagogues was by Hertz (1981).
universalistic terms – to make the world a place of justice and peace. The equal importance of the Torah and haftarah is expressed physically in a Liberal synagogue (PObs.3LibSyn.1) by having two identical pulpits flanking the ark, one for the Torah and the other for the Prophetic readings.

In Progressive synagogues, the texts for haftarah may be chosen not only from the prophets, but from Ketuvim or other traditional sources such as the Talmud. In such cases, an alternative blessing is said (or distributed beforehand, or one from FoP, p. 245).

### 6.5.5 Prayer for the community

The Torah service concludes with a series of prayers for the community. In Orthodox communities it is one of the few moments (beside the often-repeated Kaddish) that Aramaic is used in two prayers (Yakum porkan, ADPB, pp. 418-20, which are not included in Progressive prayerbooks) for Jewish leaders in Babylon and outside it. There is also a third prayer for those who work for the benefit of the community (Mi sheberakh, ADPB pp. 421-2). These prayers reflect aspects of the Jewish heritage, but little or no attention is given to them. They are followed by prayers that are of contemporary relevance to the community, about the Royal Family and the State of Israel. During PObs.3ORtSyn.1, that for the Royal Family could occasionally be read by a Jewish woman from the women’s gallery; it was exceptionally read in English, and once by a non-Jewish person – a government representative. It was the only part of the service where I noticed the particularistic boundaries of the Orthodox ritual broken through, allowing a non-Jew to read a prayer. In Progressive synagogues, for this specific prayer the ritual boundaries were more often breached.

In all three movements, additional prayers may be added before the scrolls are returned into the Ark, such as for the sick, in times of war, community threat or disaster, or for an interfaith meeting, etc. On some occasions, and even in Orthodox communities, the prayers shifted towards wider society, as in the case of terrorist attacks, when prayers for peace and healing were recited for all who were affected.

The ritual of returning the scroll(s) to the Ark may be accompanied by a procession (ADPB, p. 432-4). In some more Progressive liturgies a few expressions of Jewish specificity may be adapted, and ritual gestures may be more restrained, but the general balance between P/U is uneven and its Jewish specificity strongly protected.
from non-Jewish participation because of the conviction of the special relationship between God, the Jewish people and the Torah.

What follows next may radically change this atmosphere. As the doors of the ark are closed, Hatsi-Kaddish is recited in the Orthodox communities and the sermon immediately follows bringing the same or new ideological notions.

6.6 Conclusion of the ritual

6.6.1 Sermon

The sermon is integral to every Shabbat morning service and much attention is given to it. It is not possible here to present the sermons that I heard in depth, but it is possible to highlight a few points concerning their overall themes. Sermons, as I mentioned in the previous chapter on the Erev Shabbat liturgy (since a sermon may also be given there), may strengthen the P/U atmosphere generated by the Shabbat prayers. In Orthodox communities, sermons are delivered by a rabbi (sometimes by a bar mitzvah) and spoken from the bimah or a stand, which emphasises the authority of the speaker. Sermons are usually based on the Torah and rabbinical sources and often strongly related to Jewish identity. Only in one Orthodox synagogue, (PObs1OrtSyn.3), in which the community is strongly engaged in social justice projects, did their rabbi regularly make more universalising digressions relating to the wider world and social justice issues. But the more particularistic scope was never wholly absent.

In Progressive contexts the balance is often reversed, as the prophetic readings and the ideology of building a just society are strong aspects of Liberal and Reform Judaism. During my visits in Pobs.2RefSyn.1, I heard sermons focusing on interfaith, Jewish-Christian relations, human rights, feminism, LGBTQI+, poverty and slavery, etc., but also sermons that touched on Progressive attitudes toward e.g. purity laws, kashrut, antisemitism, the Jewish presence in countries where they are a tiny minority, politics or events in Israel. Whenever there was a terrorist attack or a special Jewish commemoration such as Yom haShoah or Yom Ha'atsma'ut (Independence Day of Israel) the sermons were more strongly coloured with particularism, although occasionally such particularism could be challenged.
The moment the sermon ends in the Orthodox community, an Additional Service (Musaf) begins, without comment or explanation.

### 6.6.2 Musaf

The *Musaf* service ideologically carries the memory of the additional sacrifices which were offered in the Temple on *Shabbat* and festivals. After the destruction of the Temple, prayers were instituted instead of the sacrifices (B.Ber. 26b). In the Orthodox synagogues that I visited, this is the service (ADPB, pp. 439-55) in which the most people participated and in which the women felt free to join in and sing (PObs.19OrtSyn.5; PObs.1OrtSyn.3). Once again, a *chazzan* (usually) repeats the *Amidah*, which has the same structure as other *Shabbat Amidot*, but a different middle benediction. This special blessing includes an introductory prayer for the restoration of the Temple service and the return to Israel, followed by the appropriate selection from the Torah describing the additional sacrifice (Num. 18:9-10). If a New Moon falls on *Shabbat*, the central blessing is different and voices sadness over the abolition of the sacrifices and hopes for the restoration of the Temple cult.

This is one of the most particularistic services, and was therefore seen as unacceptable by some of the early Reformers, who either omitted or radically changed it. The Additional Service finds its place for the first time in the Reform prayerbook examined here. It appears in two versions: a shorter and a longer one (closer to the traditional one) (FoP, pp. 275-88). Including *Musaf* in the Reform prayerbook is indicative of the trend of neo-traditionalization in Jewish ritual, even though the editors tried to shift its meaning. The central blessing was reformulated to emphasise how prayers replaced the animal sacrifices, finishing with the universal eschatological vision of all peoples gathering in Jerusalem. However, these changes have not helped *Musaf* to become more popular in Reform synagogues, and only one of the synagogues visited (PObs.21Ref.6) actually recites this prayer. The lack of popularity even of the shorter form indicates that the narratives of sacrifices as a legitimate way to approach God and for the ingathering of the Jews in Israel are problematic. Furthermore, as an *Amidah* was already recited earlier in the service, at least one respondent held that a second one diminishes the value of the first (RR4).

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118 For a history of *Musaf*, see Petuchowski (1968, pp. 240-64), Friedland (2011, pp. 36-7).
The Musaf service concludes with another Kaddish, followed by Ein Keloheinu (‘There is none like our God’, ADPB, pp. 450-2; FoP, p. 306; LCh, p. 528), a poem which is the culmination of the whole service (as its acrostic reads ‘Amen, barukh’) and forms a bridge between incense sacrifices in the last line and a Talmudic reading concerning Temple service (omitted in Progressive siddurim).

The prayer that is common to all movements is Aleinu (ADPB, pp. 455-6; FoP, pp. 310-3; LCh, p. 520). In the majority of services, only the first words and the last of the second paragraph (expressing the hope that God will be recognised by all) are read aloud and the rest recited quickly in silence. But in Progressive synagogues Aleinu read aloud, and the rest is recited quickly in silence. But in Progressive synagogues, Aleinu is often sung in a way that forms a coda to the service. It is followed by the Mourners’ Kaddish, which is recited for the first time at this point in a majority of Progressive synagogues, along with the mentioning of the Hebrew (in a Progressive context also/or English) names of those who have died recently or whose yahrzeit is in the following week. Afterwards in Ashkenazi Orthodox synagogues there is the poem Anim zemirot (‘Song of glory’, ADPB, pp. 458-62).\footnote{Abbreviated version is included in Progressive siddurim (FoP, p. 195; LCh, p. 116), but rarely used.}

At this point, various other announcements are given, mostly concerning synagogue life and events, by a representative of the community or by a rabbi. This moment may reflect how universalistic and open the community is: through announcements, it becomes clear how much interest the leaders and members of the community have in social justice actions, and whether the focus is more on Jewish and Israeli issues, and/or on the wider world. Thus, the synagogue’s orientation and its members’ ideology may not entirely reflect the vision that the siddur creates.

Adon Olam (‘Lord of the Universe’, ADPB pp. 465-6; FoP, p. 320; LCh, p. 525) is a short liturgical poem expressing the essence of Jewish faith. It is one of the most popular ways of ending the service in Progressive settings and the usual way in Orthodox ones. It can be sung to various melodies (including popular ones (PObs1OrtSyn.3)). It is also a moment that young children may be invited onto the bimah to participate in leading it with the community. In Progressive communities there are other piyyutim (FoP, p. 306; LCh, p. 528).
6.6.3 Final benediction

The Orthodox morning services ends here, but in Progressive communities the service officially ends with a benediction, which may take various forms. Some versions are based on the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:22-27, recited by the leader or in a more egalitarian form, by the whole Congregation where the verb form is in the plural. The priestly benediction also has its place in the Orthodox liturgy, e.g. in every Amidah. This is one of the moments in the synagogue liturgy influenced by Christian liturgies and indicates an understanding of a rabbi’s role that resembles more that of a priest in terms of hierarchical and mediator function. But one also finds a more inclusive choice of texts (alternative forms are provided in FoP, pp. 321-3; LCh, pp. 529-30), some of them formulated in the first person plural and recited in unison by the whole community.

6.7 The Shabbat Morning Kiddush

The Shabbat morning service is followed by a community breakfast or buffet reception known as Kiddush, to which everybody is invited. It begins with the Kiddush text for Shabbat morning, which differs from the version for the evening. It includes the blessing over the wine (M.Ber. 6:1), preceded by two biblical texts: Ex. 31:16-17 and Ex. 20:8-11. There are only minor textual differences between the Orthodox (ADBP, pp. 464-7) and the Reform (FoP, pp. 453-4) prayerbooks, although the Liberal editors (LCh, p. 566) shortened the traditional text and changed the order of some parts. This version of Kiddush does not mention the Exodus narrative, but concentrates on the idea of Shabbat as rest, remembered through the generations as a sign for Israel. The two introductory verses combine the universalistic basis for keeping Shabbat as a ‘sign’ that imitates God’s rest, with the particularistic argument that generations of the Jews have kept Shabbat as a separate (kodesh) day.

Bird, discussing the relation between food and ritual, argues: ‘By eating together, people reconstitute themselves as identifiable groups, represent themselves to each other as such and express their sense of connectedness’ (Bird, 1995b, p. 39). Many synagogues strongly emphasize the Kiddush and expect everybody to join in, which is more optional on Friday night. Kiddush in its simplest form involves sharing
some bread and wine. Other regulations concerning food are similar to Friday night and are well known to the members of the synagogue.

Eating provides a space for casual conversations, gossip and forming new acquaintances, thus affirming bonds between members of the community (Heilman, 1976, p. 256) as well as guests. A Saturday *Kiddush* meal is more often transformed into a study session given by a rabbi, a *bar/bat mitzvah* or a guest (sometimes a non-Jew, P0bs.19OrtSyn.5), who is asked to give a talk on a subject related to Judaism or Zionism (P0bs.19OrtSyn.5), or on a theme important to wider society, such as mental health issues (P0bs.19LibSyn.6). This adds other meaning to the shared action of eating together. Thus the particularistic boundaries so present during the ritual here become more porous.

**Summary**

*Shabbat* morning in a synagogue offers the most intensive exposure to P/U ideology. The ritual takes up most of the morning (or the whole morning in Orthodox communities), during which a participant is exposed to a strongly Jewish experience through texts, modes of speaking (language, concepts, chosen sacred narratives), ways of behaviour (dress code, ritual action, gestures, ways of relating to other members and non-members), and her/his Jewish identity can be freely expressed and shared with others. I began by showing how a community is formed at the beginning of the *Shabbat* service, and boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish participants are established. The ritual boundaries in Orthodox communities were firm and rarely breached. Welcoming official non-Jewish guests, mentioning non-Jewish events happened sporadically, and was often left for the time of general announcements. In Progressive communities, often a non-Jewish visitor’s identity was not disclosed unless the person was part of an official visit, and then he/she would be mentioned at the beginning of the service. Although there is great concern that the leaders of the prayers and ritual should be Jews, the boundaries were occasionally negotiated, such as when non-Jewish members were involved in a child’s’ rite of passage. Moreover, through additional elements such as themes, celebrations and guests, more universal ideology could influence the P/U notions of the ritual.

Discussing various styles of service, I have shown that the structure of the Orthodox service remains stable even if prayers are added, which happens at specific
fixed moments of the liturgy. A firm structure emphasises Jewish particularity: rootedness in tradition, heritage and being part of the wider Jewish Orthodox community. Progressive services offer a variety of styles, i.e. formal, which resemble Orthodox services in structure, others aimed at specific groups (children, toddlers, women), and chavurah style. However, a commonality was observed in preserving elements of the traditional liturgy which play an important role in sustaining Jewish identity, such as of reciting the Shema and reading from the Torah scroll with recitations of the particularistic blessing. Even in the most abbreviated and informal services, Hebrew was the preferred language, reinforcing a shared identity and the feeling of belonging to a particular group. In more formal services, the growing number of traditional elements (prayers, ritual actions and gestures) confirmed the neo-particularisation of the Progressive Shabbat morning liturgy.

In the sections concerning the centrality of the Torah, to show its strong particularistic character I have provided a detailed description of the ritual, bringing to light all the elements which relate to Jewish narrative and Jewish identity. The exclusivity of access to the Torah for Jewish members was confirmed by leaders of the services. However, in Progressive settings some rare exceptions were made, such as including non-Jewish parents during rites of passage or official non-Jewish guests invited for a specific occasion. However, roles for non-Jews in the ritual were often limited.

Universalisation could happen more often toward the end of the Shabbat morning liturgy, especially in announcements, sermons or the Kiddush meal, as these were the times when topics from wider society were brought into the community. It was a moment that in many communities became a passage from a particularistic bubble formed by the ritual into the wider world that was waiting outside the synagogue doors. As I shall show in chapter 8, some of the interviewees were able to prolong the particularistic atmosphere of Shabbat to a certain extent, but the high point where particularism could be experienced had ended.

Before moving to Saturday afternoon, in the next chapter I shall discuss P/U elements of chosen texts for Shabbat morning in the Orthodox and Progressive prayerbooks.
The P/U ideological tension features in all five parts of the Shabbat morning ritual. Texts of Shacharit and Musaf express central ideological elements of Jewish identity, so continue to be debated in the Progressive communities with each new edition of the siddur. In this chapter, by selecting the most exemplary prayers from the five sections of the Shabbat morning prayers, I will show their P/U elements as well as a range of the strategies that Orthodox and Progressive movements employ to strengthen or weaken their ideological balance.

The first two sections discussed in this chapter – Shema and Amidah – are said daily, thus their texts were discussed in the chapter concerning Erev Shabbat. However, here I concentrate on the variations specific to Shabbat morning. The different choices of biblical narrative each week on Shabbat change the vision from universalistic (the Creation account) to more particularistic (the Exodus text). Moreover, two texts from the Orthodox prayerbook: Yismach Moshe and Lo netato (the insertions in the Shacharit Amidah) were named by several Orthodox and Progressive interviewees as deeply problematic when it comes to the representation of non-Jews.

The next section will discuss the blessings for the Torah reading which lie at the heart of the Shacharit service. I juxtapose the texts and their understanding by my interviewees, who, as shown in the previous chapter, may have to negotiate ritual boundaries due to the presence of non-Jewish participants. Here I discuss the key concepts for the P/U discussion – the notion of election – which I further develop in the last section dealing with Aleinu. This notion, central to particularism, presents an ideological stumbling block for scholars, editors, as well as my interviewees, thus shedding light on the traditional prayers discussed here and their alternatives in Progressive siddurim.

The penultimate section presents ‘Prayers of the Community’: one an ancient prayer for the government of the country and the other, one of the newest additions to the siddur, a prayer for the State of Israel. Both prayers are regularly updated, so reflect the developing ideological tension between the particular and the universal in terms of religion and politics among people who live in the diaspora as part klal Israel.
7.1 The Shema

As shown in chapter five, the Shema and its accompanying blessings are a statement of what is traditionally affirmed about God and the universe, the relationship between Israel and God, and God’s acts in history. The core texts, which are the same on all days, are taken from Deuteronomy and Numbers, but the accompanying blessings vary.

The Yotser blessing (ADPB, pp. 370-4) universalistically presents God as Creator. The rabbinic editors modified the wording of Isaiah 45:7 ‘I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe’, to ‘creates all’. They probably found the original biblical phrase too troubling for a prayer of praise (see B.Ber. 11a). This shows that liturgy is allowed to over-ride biblical authority in some cases. Several prayers follow this paragraph: Ein Ke’erkha, El Adon, LaEl Asher, Titbarakh Tsurenu (ADPB pp. 374-9), which describe God as the Creator and ruler over the world. These texts not only repeat what is expressed in the first blessing, but relate to more mystical traditions such as angels, so are mostly omitted in Progressive versions.

The final paragraph of the first benediction finishes with the LeEl Barukh prayer (ADPB, p. 381), which includes a verse once abandoned and now re-inserted by the editors of the current Reform prayerbook: ‘May You make a new light shine over Zion and may we all soon be worthy of its light’ (FoP, p. 209) – another example of the process of neo-particularisation of the Reform siddur. This shift from physical to metaphysical light changes the theme from universalistic Creation to more particularistic redemption, and the hope of Israel for the restoration of Zion. However, the text immediately returns to the universalistic tones of the chatimah: ‘Blessed are You God, who creates the lights of the universe,’ echoing the opening phrase of the first blessing.

The second blessing Ahavah Rabbah ’ahavtanu (‘You have loved us with great love’), consists in the Orthodox version of similar particularistic tones (cf. B.Ber. 11b). Its main theme is the particular relationship between Israel and God, described as an everlasting love, in which the word ‘ahavah is repeated six times: three referring to God’s love of Israel and three to Israel’s love for God, stressing the mutuality of the

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120 For the history of these prayers, see Elbogen (1996, p. 96).
121 This Ashkenazi insertion was objected by Saadia Gaon, although it remained in the siddur (Elbogen 1996, p. 19).
relationship and the obligations based on the obligation to observe Torah and praise of God.

The particularistic ideology of this blessing, even in the shortened Progressive versions, is preserved except for the line: ‘bring us back in peace from the four quarters of the earth and lead us upright to our land’ (ADPB, pp. 381-2). No commentary on this phrase appears in the Orthodox *siddur*, but a rubric directs one to gather in the four *tsitsiyot* in the left hand as a reminder of the obligation to heed *mitsvot*, and as a symbol of ingathering. Silencing this verse may express the discomfort of Progressive editors with the particularistic notion of ingathering Jews in Israel and an ideology of abolishing the diaspora. One source of the ideology of ingathering is found in the second paragraph of the *Shema* (although in the majority of Progressive services it is not recited publicly) and in places such as the daily *Amidah* in the blessing *Teka beshofar*, which Reform editors modified to express the hope that all Jews who experience exile in the physical or spiritual sense find restoration, and ‘that this liberty will be made available for all peoples everywhere’ (FoP, p. 80; cf. the Liberal prayerbook where liberation is the only motif, see LCh, p. 56). The commentators in this way widened the vision to everybody and universalised its meaning, showing how concepts may be dealt with differently by Progressive liturgists.

The last blessing, *Geulah* (ADPB, pp. 386-9; FoP, pp. 217-9, LCh, pp. 138-9), immediately follows the *Shema*¹²² and in its themes resembles the parallel blessing in *Ma’ariv*. It reaffirms the theme of the third biblical text of the *Shema* concerning the works of God in history. The ancestors are mentioned several times as well as the leitmotif of the Exodus narrative concerning the redemption of Israel from the hands of their enemies (Egyptians). The hope for the final redemption of Israel is expressed in the final words of the *Tsir Isra’el* prayer (‘Rock of Israel’). This links the prayer directly to the next part of the *Shabbat* morning, which is the *Amidah*. The traditional text at the end of this blessing is expressed in the past tense and only indirectly refers to a universal vision. *Tsir Israel* introduces words from the ‘Song of the Sea’, including the verse: ‘God alone will rule forever and ever’ expressing the triumphalist note that one day God will be recognised as the only Sovereign. The same words are repeated in one of the final prayers of the service, *Aleinu*, which ends with a clear utterance of a universal vision, to which I will return later.

¹²² Not discussed here as the texts are parallel to Friday night (see 5.2).
7.2 The Amidah

The first three and the final three benedictions of the Amidah (ADPB, pp. 391-403) are similar to those recited during the Erev Shabbat service (ch. 5.3). As on Friday, the central berakhah relates in part to the sanctity of the day of Shabbat and the commandment for Jews to keep the day of rest. On Saturday morning this narrative is repeated, yet the central particularistic notions are articulated more clearly. After the third opening blessing, the proclamation of the holiness of God’s Name, the prayer shifts abruptly to Moses. Yismach Moshe (ADPB, pp. 394-5) is a poem praising Moses, presenting him as adorned with a ‘crown of glory’ and rejoicing in what he received as his portion, which may mean Shabbat, Torah (B.Shab. 10b), or Shabbat rest, as a sign of freedom (Exod.R. 1:32). It describes Moses bringing the tablets down, citing Ex. 31:16-17, the commandment to keep the Shabbat (Veshamru), although not by everybody as in Gen. 1-2, but exclusively by ‘the children of Israel’ (bnei Israel) as a sign of their covenant with God.

A contemporary commentator, Hammer (2003, p. 116), following others, suggests that this composition and the insertion of Yismah Moshe on Shabbat Shacharit may be a protest against the Christian concept of Sunday as a day of rest and the notion of saints. Whatever the relevance of its origins, it expresses the exclusive Jewish relationship with God through the notion of the election covenant between God and Israel. These images are biblically based (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:16-17), but differ from the more universalistic vision presented in Genesis (central to erev Shabbat) or of Shabbat as the eternal rest in the redeemed (future) world (as in the Minhah service).

Shabbat as ‘a sign’ (‘ot, cf. Ex. 31:12) of the particular relationship between God and Israel is even further stressed in the next paragraph. In Lo netato, Shabbat is seen as an exclusive gift for chosen Israel and not granted to any other nation, described here as ‘idol worshippers’ and ‘uncircumcised’.

You, o Lord our God, did not give it to the other nations of the world, nor did You, our King, give it as a heritage to those who worship idols. In its rest the uncircumcised do not dwell, for You gave it in love to Israel Your people, to the descendants of Jacob whom you chose (ADPB, pp. 394-5).
Early Reformers already felt that this wording was unacceptable and that both *Ismach Moshe*¹²³ and *Lo netato* needed amendment or should be excluded.¹²⁴ *FoP* (2008, p. 228) includes an amended version of the first paragraph, but omits *Lo netato*; whereas the Liberal editors replace both by an English text, *You inspired our ancestors* (LCh, p. 142), adapted from a prayer by Mattuck (LJPB, 1937, pp. 9-10). It refers to the ancestors and speaks about the spiritual aspects of *Shabbat* as a day of rest and peace, designed to lead one to search for what is ‘true, beautiful and good’.

Three Orthodox respondents mentioned this prayer as an example of a text which may be seen as problematic (OL1). Even though it can be understood as relating to ancient realities or to internal disputes with those who broke off from rabbinic Judaism (OL2), or to the dispute between Jews and the early Christian community, it bears a different meaning for our contemporaries. OM² explained that these words ‘can be understood as deprecatory and pejorative’ and from time to time are used as an insult against Christians by more strict Orthodox Jews in the form of graffiti on the walls of the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion.¹²⁵ Moreover, it is problematic that no explanation of it is given to users of Sacks’ prayerbook. This concentrates only on the theology of *Shabbat* in its particularistic meaning – as a sign and commandment for Israel.

The central blessing of *Amidah* finishes, as does each *Amidah for Shabbat*, with *Eloheinu* (ADPB, pp. 396-7, *FoP*, p. 228) – a plea that God accept Israel’s *Shabbat* rest. In the Liberal *siddur*, *Yismechu* (LCh, p. 143) is used instead, which is traditionally included in the *Musaf* service. In this, *Shabbat* is called *oneg*: a delight for ‘the people who hallow it’, alluding to Jewish people. However, the last verse brings back the more universalistic notion of the day established to remember the ‘work of Creation’.

### 7.3 Blessings over Torah

Traditionally the Torah reading, as the climax of the *Shabbat* morning liturgy is accompanied by blessings. The *oleh*, after being called with his Hebrew name to the scroll, begins with the call which starts the main part of the service: *Barkhu et Adonai Hamevorakh* (*Bless God the Lord, the blessed One* ADPB, p. 413). Here it serves as a

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¹²³ On text’s dating and its late insertion in the *siddurim* see Elbogen (1993, p. 97), Hoffman (2007b).

¹²⁴ The traditional texts were never included in the British Liberal Prayerbooks, while the earliest Reform *siddur* (1841) omitted *Lo netato*, but kept the traditional version of *Yismach Moshe*, then omitted it in 1931, 1977 editions, and brought it back again in 2008.

reminder of the importance of the activity taking place and as a call to focus on listening to God’s words. The community responds by confirming that God is worthy to be blessed. The *oleh* repeats it, continuing with the blessing for the reading from the Torah (ADPB, p. 413):

Bless the Lord, the blessed One, for ever and all time. Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from all peoples (*bachar banu mikhol ha’amim*) and has given us His Torah. Blessed are you Lord, Giver of the Torah.

After reading, the *oleh* says:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the Universe, who has given us the Torah of truth, planting everlasting life in our midst. Blessed are You Lord, Giver of the Torah.

These prayers belong to an ancient tradition (M.Meg. 4:1), though the exact wording is not present in the Talmud. In all three *siddurim*, the Hebrew versions remain the same (FoP, p. 240, LCh. p. 482), but the English translation in the Liberal prayerbook renders the central phrase as ‘You have called us to serve You by giving us Torah’. As shown earlier, other texts used around the Torah service are filled with elements specific to Jewish identity and particularistic ideology, consolidated by ritual boundaries (as shown in chapter 6). This is underlined by the exclusive use of the Hebrew language even by those who have difficulty reading the transliteration.

The blessing literally states that God has chosen Israel and given them the Torah, ideas basic to the founding narrative of the Jewish People and their experience at Sinai. It is repeated again in the *chatimah* of the blessings, where the participant blesses God the ‘giver of the Torah’, translated in Progressive *siddurim* as ‘who gives us Torah’ (O.Ch. 47:5). RR2 explained that such rendition was designed to express not only the fact of election, but its purpose – Torah. The Progressive *chatimah* may be understood to underline the specific responsibility of Israel to study Torah, find new meanings in it and transmit it to the next generations.

The Hebrew blessing includes the word *bachar* (‘to be chosen’) – a central feature of particularistic election – that is present throughout the Bible (e.g. Deut. 7:6, Ps. 33:12, Am. 3:2) stating that God chose Israel from the nations as a treasured possession (*am segulah*, Ex 19:5),126 and established a covenant with the People of

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126 Present also in other parts of liturgy e.g. in *Lekhah Dodi* (ch. 5.1).
Israel. The concept of election, one of the most discussed topics in Jewish thought, is inextricably related to Jewish identity and thus Jewish particularism.

By presenting the different approaches to chosenness in the Shabbat liturgy, I provide only those elements that were referenced in interviews. Some embrace the belief that Jews were chosen by God and see this election as inherent to their own Jewish identity. Others struggle with the concept of being elected, seeing it as chauvinistic and inappropriate in the modern world. As I show, the variety of opinions among interviewees mirrors various, sometimes inconsistent, attitudes among editors of siddurim, which results in presentations of the concept of election in the prayerbooks that are not entirely clear.

Among academic articles and books dedicated to this notion are two by David Novak (1995, 2010), who takes a traditional approach to explaining this concept, similar to that shared by several Orthodox and Reform interviewees (e.g. OL1, OR1, OW5, RStR5, RR5). Novak perceives election as granted without any relation to merit, but as demanding active involvement of Jews in leading a religious and moral life according to the Torah. He claims that the concept of election has nothing to do with chauvinism, but that it emphasizes the universal aspects of the relationship with God as Creator, enabling Jews to function in equality with others in the areas of peace, justice and righteousness (Novak, 1995, p. 255). Novak uses the rabbinical concept of the Noahide laws (Novak, 2011), which apply specifically to non-Jews, and can be seen as a boundary between Jews and non-Jews. Some Progressive and modern Orthodox interviewees referred to them in discussing the status of non-Jews and their future redemption (e.g. OR1, LM1, OW5, RStR5). In his introduction to the siddur discussed here, Sacks recalls the Noahide laws as ‘universals of human behaviour’ (2006, p. xv), contrasting them with the Jewish specific way of worshipping God ‘through particularity of history, language and heritage’.

Other scholars, such as Amy-Jill Levine, are more critical of the concept of being chosen. She says:

In some Jewish contexts such as day schools (especially in Orthodox settings), students are told that Jews are not only the ‘chosen people’, with the ‘choice’ being that we are the ones who agreed to accept the Torah and are charged to be a ‘light to the nations’. They are also informed that Jews are specially, ontologically, racially different. More, this difference is ‘better’ (2005, p. 438).

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127 On the idea of election in Talmudic literature, see e.g. Urbach (1979, pp. 525-56).
Thus, Levine alludes here to opinions which may interpret chosenness as a category of racial superiority\(^{128}\) (even if not interpreted as racial), which is certainly problematic. For this reason, as LR9 argued, these texts ‘should be omitted from the prayerbook’.

Less radically, but in a similar vein, the biblical scholar Moshe Greenberg argues that the main stream of Jewish thought is permeated by notions of genetic spiritual superiority and that such notions should be neutralized by an internal reordering of traditional values — a reordering by which the cherished value of the universality and oneness of God is matched by an equally cherished value of the universality and oneness of humanity’(1995, p. 23).

Discussing the concept of chosenness, one of the interviewees, LR2, who received an extensive Orthodox rabbinic education, brought to my attention examples from rabbinic and Chassidic literature and others,\(^{129}\) which deny equal status to gentiles and even question whether they were created in the image of God. Even though such opinions may be seen as anachronistic, they are part of Orthodox education, so should be critically approached; as LR3 said, if left unchallenged they might shape a perception of gentiles which will result in contempt or even hostile acts against Christians and Palestinians and their sacred sites.\(^{130}\)

Various attitudes to the concept of election are reflected in the translations, as well as in adaptations of the prayers and commentaries in the siddurim, and have been present in my conversations with the interviewees. The inclusion of the traditional berakhah in the Liberal siddur for the first time\(^{131}\) shows that the concept of election is no longer completely rejected; this is as part of the return to some traditional forms of Jewish ritual. Not translating it literally does indicate discomfort with its ideology.

In both Progressive siddurim discussed here, the concept of ‘being chosen’ is present (even though the Hebrew term bachar in the Liberal Shabbat morning service appears only in the Torah service), and, is addressed in the commentaries (e.g. FoP, p. 338), or in thematic readings for each Shabbat (e.g. LCh, pp. 169-72). To eliminate the interpretation as a notion of superiority, the chosenessness of Israel is presented in

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\(^{128}\) Conception of spiritual supremacy originated in Talmudic times and became more pronounced on the account of the clash with the non-Jewish world. For further discussion, see Katz (1961).

\(^{129}\) Referred to in the introduction.

\(^{130}\) On the concept of ‘chosenness’ and how it is used in contemporary anti-Semitism and in the current Middle East conflict over the Land of Israel and in Jerusalem, see Beker (2008).

\(^{131}\) Blessings for the Torah and Prophetic readings were not included in British Liberal siddurim until LCh nor recited in the ritual of Torah service (LR10). In the Reform siddurim they were always preserved.
relation to a mission, and some commentators agree that other nations have their own
specific roles to fulfil (RStR2, RR1), as one reads in LCh (p. 172):

The God of all humanity calls every one of the families of the earth to make its
contribution. Therefore we do not claim to be chosen in any exclusive sense. But
none of that absolves us from our own, special responsibility.

The trend in non-Orthodox prayerbooks to de-emphasize Jewish separateness while
re-emphasizing the special calling of Israel began with the first Reformers and is shared
by a majority of my Progressive respondents. According to them, the specificity of the
election and mission lies mainly in the relation to the Torah, which is given or taken on
by them. In other words, not only were Jews chosen by God, but Jews chose God and
Torah – an idea already present in rabbinical thought (e.g. Gen.R. 49:2, Lev.R 23:3;
B.Shab. 88b). The aim of this election (mission) is to disseminate the Torah teaching
and to ‘bring ethical values into the world’ (RR1). Such understanding is not unique to
Progressive ideology, but is less emphatically shared by some Orthodox, such as OW1,
who explained:

God choosing Jewish people does not mean that God does not look after others
whom he created. We just have a set of laws that we take upon ourselves – the
Torah, which I want to be proud of, make a note of, publicise. I think it is a good
thing to be proud of one’s own identity, without negating anyone else’s.

The discrepancy between the Hebrew blessing for the Torah reading and its
English translation in LCh (Reform editors translate it literally), where the editor has
muted the concept of chosenness, does not erase the concept of election. Since it
includes a phrase ‘from among all peoples’, it still expresses a different status of Israel,
leaving it to each individual to interpret what it means. More radical attitudes were
shown within the history of Progressive siddurim. Abraham Geiger amended the text
by removing mi kol ha’amim (‘from among all peoples’; STD, p. 79); while Mordechai
Kaplan (for whom the traditional image of the Jews as God’s chosen people was
theologically untenable and morally undesirable (Caplan, 2012, pp. 140-3)) replaced
the phrase asher bachar banu with asher kervanu l’avodato (‘who has drawn us to his
service’, as in KolH, p. 398). Thus once again British Progressive siddurim indicate here
the turn to traditional forms and the tendency of neo-particularisation of the Jewish
liturgy.
7.4 Prayers for the State

Prayers for the British Royal Family and the State of Israel are inserted into the Torah service and are said in conjunction with other prayers, such as for the Jewish leaders and the congregation. It is an ancient practice to pray for the government where the Jewish community lives, but texts are preserved only from the Middle Ages (Langer, 2015, p. 133). All *siddurim* have their own versions but at the time of my research, Orthodox and Progressive synagogues introduced changes, which I include here. I discuss what these prayers reveal about Jewish perceptions of themselves in relation to Israel, Great Britain and the wider world, and about who is included and who excluded.

The tradition of praying for the welfare of the government goes back to the biblical prophet Jeremiah, who commands Israelites to ‘seek the welfare of the city to which I [God] have exiled you and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper’ (Jer. 29:7, cf. Gen. 47:7, Ez. 6:10; Prov. 24:21). Rabbinic writers assume that a government, even an oppressive one, is better than anarchy (M.Avot 3:2; B.AZ 4a), and the practice of praying for them has continued throughout the centuries. The wording of these prayers included wishes for well-being, wisdom, and the prosperity of the sovereign and his/her family, and in some places Jews prayed for the prosperity of the country and people among whom they lived (e.g. in one case for Muslims (Sarna, 2005, p. 206)). The unifying idea of all these prayers has been a plea that God should influence the ruler and the government to treat Jews kindly, which reflects the diaspora experience of persecution and limited rights. Such a prayer ends with a petition for peace and with the messianic hope for the redeemer to come to Zion – so on a particularistic note. Such prayers have been cited as proof of the loyalty of Jews towards rulers and the state, especially in times when Jews have been under attack (Marx, 2014b, p. 53).

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132 For examples of various prayers for the states throughout the ages, see Marx (2014b); Petuchowski (1968, pp. 277-97), Sarna (2005).
7.4.1 Prayer for the Royal Family

The prayer for the Royal Family ‘He who gives salvation’ in the Sacks siddur (ADPB, pp. 420-3) is similar to other traditional prayers of this kind. It begins with the traditional invocation Hanoten teshu’ah ‘May He who gives salvation’, presenting God as the ultimate Sovereign who distributes power to those who rule on the earth. Well-being and wisdom are requested for the Queen and her counsellors so that the nation and the ‘House of Israel’ may experience welfare. The final universalistic petition for peace over ‘all the dwellers on the earth’, is followed by a particularistic expression of hope for the coming of a ‘redeemer to Zion’.

Since 2014 this prayer has been amended, one of the few textual examples of modifying the Orthodox prayerbook. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis added: ‘May He bless and protect Her Majesty’s Armed Forces’, which is now included in the Shacharit ritual. The change linked with the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War responded to a demand by the community for a similar petition for the armed forces in the prayer for Israel. Relating to this change, OL1 said:

The addition about the British defence forces sticks out as a thorn from the text because it breaks the flow. So now, we also pray for the armed forces of this country, probably in the interest of patriotism, because it is quite strange to pray for someone else’s army (that is of the State of Israel), but not for the army of the country where you live. Whether one should pray for the army at all is an open question.

None of the Progressive siddurim uses the opening Hanoten teshu’ah, which indicates a break from the traditional liturgical paradigm. In FoP there are two versions of this prayer (FoP, pp. 246-7), both only in English. The first, which is more often used in the Reform context, is abbreviated from traditional prayers, and it is followed by short prayers for the State of Israel, congregants in need, and the congregation itself. Redemption is omitted here and from the longer version, where the traditional prayer for a redeemer was changed to the more universalistic ‘so may this kingdom find its honour and greatness in the work of redemption and the building of God’s realm here

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133 It is the same version as in Hertz siddur (1939, pp. 152-3), except an allusion to David, and more vengeful ideas toward enemies of the ruler.
134 The same as the earliest preserved wording of such a prayer from 11th century Worms (ADPB, 1976, p. 505), which from the seventeenth century becomes a standard opening phrase (Sarna, 2005, p. 207).
Furthermore, in British Reform prayerbooks, ever since early editions there has been a focus on the engagement of the Jewish community for the common good – that God may ‘help us to be good citizens working together for justice and peace at home and abroad’ (FoP, 2008, p. 246). This phrase clearly distinguishes this prayer from the Orthodox version, which is more concentrated on the welfare of the community than on its active participation.

The Liberal prayer (LCh, p. 493), which is only in English, asks God, the universal Sovereign, for blessing for the Queen, the Royal family, and those who govern the country so that they become ‘conscious of their responsibility’ of acting toward the welfare of society, and then that the Jews should actively participate in work toward the common good of humanity. Its ideology is highly universalised, like the one in the Reform siddur.

7.4.2 Prayer for the State of Israel

The need for the prayer for the State of Israel came into being after the establishment of the State. In Orthodox ritual, this prayer began to be included in the prayerbooks after 1948, which makes it the newest addition to the traditional siddur. Jewish prayerbooks (to various extents) have always mirrored the most important concerns of their users, for/by whom they were written, reflecting the religious, ideological and political views of the praying community (Marx, 2014b), which is why even in the Orthodox siddur certain changes have been sporadically introduced. On British soil, in a printed version of the Ashkenazi Orthodox prayerbooks, this prayer appears as late as 1962 and is similar to that used in the Sacks siddur except for one phrase concerning the Defence Forces. The formation of this text was complex, as there was no halakhic regulation regarding what such a prayer should include. The contemporary Orthodox ‘Prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel and its defence forces’, as it is called in ADPB (Mi sheberakh, pp. 422-3), is recited in Hebrew, whereas the one for the

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136 The earliest prayers followed other traditional prayers, as the one by Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv Isser Yehuda Unterman, who used (adapted) Mi sheberakh, on the first Shabbat after the declaration of the State of Israel; further discussion lies beyond the scope of this theses, see Tabory (2005); Marx (2014b).

137 Until the invention of the printing press, siddur texts were more flexible in mirroring the needs of the communities (and usually the prayer was recited by heart). In modern times, the Orthodox siddur is rarely changed. On the formation of siddurim, change, and its limitation, see e.g. Petuchowski (1968), Gillman (2011), Sperber (2010).
British government tends to be read in English. Thus, even the choice of the language plays a role in P/U ideology.

The prayer begins with the traditional invocation of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (ADPB, pp. 420-1) before blessing the State of Israel and its government as the continuation of the promise given to the patriarchs. The text expresses a plea to ‘put into their hearts the love and fear of You to uphold it with justice and righteousness’, to realise the prophetic vision ‘for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’ (Isa 2:3). Then the prayer turns to the Israel Defence Forces, called ‘guardians of our Holy Land’, for protection and success, yet it does not refer to ‘victory’. It is followed by a petition to ‘grant peace and everlasting happiness to all its inhabitants so that Jacob shall again have peace and tranquillity, with none to make him afraid’ and to spread peace on all peoples – thus ending on a universalistic note.

In FoP this prayer (pp. 247-8) focuses on peace within the borders of the State of Israel for ‘all who dwell in it’ – not naming separately Jews, Palestinians and other minorities living there. There is a request for ‘wisdom and understanding to its leaders, and friendship and compassion to the people’, so that there might come a ‘removal of all fears and healing of all wounds’. It ends with the same quotation from Isaiah as in ADPB, but here introduced by ‘there, may mercy and truth come together for the good of all, so that Your promise is fulfilled…’.

Similar ideas are found in the Liberal version of the prayer for the State of Israel (LCh, p. 494), but it begins by underlining the hope that the initial aspiration set by the founders of the State of Israel be fulfilled: ‘Grant blessing to the State of Israel, created to fulfil an age-old dream to be a haven for the oppressed’; and again later: ‘inspire its leaders and citizens with faithfulness to the aims of its founders: to develop the land for the benefit of all its inhabitants, and to implement the Prophetic ideals of liberty and justice’, so that the country might become a place of fellowship and peace. The prayer finishes again on a particularistic chord, with a quotation from Isaiah, common to all three siddurim.

To fill the gap in the academic discussion of these prayers, I need to refer to prayers composed in two of the researched synagogues where a new version of the prayer for the State of Israel has been composed. One by Rabbi Alexandra Wright has been accepted since April 2016 and is used by the community, replacing the old version from LCh.
Eternal God, shelter of peace for all the nations, we ask Your blessing on the State of Israel and all who live there. May its leaders strive to be true to its founding principles of freedom, justice and peace. May its citizens uphold a vision of equality and understanding, removing all fears and healing all wounds. And may we, through our loving attachment to the land, remain unprejudiced and clear in our pursuit of peace and justice. Let peace be found within her walls and safety within her borders. ‘V’yiggal ka-mayyim mishpat, u’tzedakah k’nachal etan – Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’ Amen

Explaining the need for a new version and the process of preparing it, Wright said:

I felt that we need something that acknowledges the pain of the last 68 years. There was the previous incarnation of this prayer, which referred to the Palestinian People, but of course Israel has to live with all her neighbours, so the Palestinian people came out; I think that some people might have found it quite hard to actually see in front of them the word ‘Palestinian’, but on the other hand how important!

Wright’s prayer focuses on the aspiration that the rights of all minorities living in Israel be respected, which is probably why she replaced the more particularistic quotation from Isaiah with a more universal one from Amos 5:24, expressing hope in justice for all.

The other prayer has been used in the Bromley Reform Synagogue since around 2007, written by Rabbi Tony Hammond, as the community was not content with the FoP version:

Peace Prayer. May God who is tender and compassionate, just, merciful and slow to anger give us the strength to persevere in our search to make peace where peace is most hard to find. We ask for your blessing on all those people of goodwill who seek to live in harmony with their neighbours. Most particularly we ask for your blessing on those who, regardless of nationality or religion, steadfastly work for peace between the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. May they undo prejudice and bitterness, and so turn themselves and others away from violence that together we may all come to recognise ourselves in the other, shaped in Your image as is your will, And let us say, Amen

It is the only text known to me that names Israelis and Palestinians in the prayer used on Shabbat morning. It is well-balanced in the way it speaks about the long-lasting
conflict in Israel and presents a more universal vision of everybody being shaped in the image of God.

Summing up, it is striking that in all three British siddurim, what the prayers do not say reveals more about the Jewish community than what they do express. Discussing the prayers, OL1 said:

British Jewry has no problem in prayed for the State of Israel, but would have a problem with a text that undermines their place in British society and as well with the messianic overtones which are present in some of the Israeli prayers.

British writers, composing their own prayers, eliminated or watered down traditional and particularistic elements present in Israeli or American siddurim, such as the presentation of the State of Israel as the first sign of messianic redemption, the idea of the ingathering of the diaspora Jews in Israel, an allusion to the Messiah, or notions of eschatological triumphalism and victory. This indicates that, British Jewry may not have one and the same vision concerning the State of Israel. Furthermore, British Jews appear to see themselves as an integral and important part of British society, who feel that what belongs to the messianic times should be left where it belongs (moreover, as it is also already expressed in other prayers, why repeat it here?). Last but not least, in none of the three versions is it clear who is included in the category ‘all inhabitants’. Only in the Bromley Reform prayer does the word ‘Palestinians’ appear, which indicates the complexity of the politics and demography of the State. Finally, none of the Progressive siddurim editors provide a commentary to these prayers (as Sacks does, concentrating on the history of the inclusion of the prayers and a hope for peace), leaving its interpretation to the participants in the ritual.

7.5 Aleinu

Aleinu (‘It is our duty’) prayer’s two paragraphs articulate both P/U notions. The first expresses a specifically Jewish responsibility to praise God (‘It is our duty to praise the Master of all...’), while the second paragraph calls for the universal recognition of God by everybody (‘and all humanity will call upon your name’). This makes the prayer a

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139 On Messianic issues in the Prayers for the State of Israel, see Tabory (2005, pp. 235-8).
good study case for the ideological tension between P/U. Moreover, it can also serve as a test case to show innovation across the ages and how a liturgical text may respond to the world one is living in. Next to *Birkat haMinim*,\(^{141}\) it has been one of the most discussed prayers in the field of Jewish liturgy and several academics chose it, among others, as an example of a troublesome liturgical composition for their discussions concerning Jewish self-understanding (Berkowitz, 2012, Friedland, 2002, 2003, Langer, 2003, 2011, Yuval, 2008). Liturgists as Ruth Langer (2005b, 2005c) or Dalia Marx (2015), perceive this text as an example of a prayer that should be challenged and adapted (which is the choice of the Progressive editors, as will be presented here,) rather than used in the traditional form. Analysing changes that were rather than used in the traditional form. Analysing changes that were introduced to *Aleinu* in various prayerbooks,\(^{142}\) Friedland argues that they are a sign of ‘a battle against prejudice in its myriad forms and promotion of diversity and tolerance’ (2002, p. 49). My goal in the following paragraphs is to consider how successful such changes are in British Progressive liturgies.

The text of *Aleinu* is modelled on biblical motifs\(^{143}\) and rich in religious and historical significance. Its origins, controversial language, reputation as a martyrs' prayer\(^{144}\) and musical setting are the carriers of the ‘storied and sometimes tragic past’ (Friedmann, 2012, p. 140). Originally *Aleinu* was included in the *Rosh Hashana Musaf*, where it remains, but since the Middle Ages (Avenary, 2007) it concludes every daily service. The traditional prayer includes two parts: one relating to the duty of Israel, and the second expressing concern for the whole world – or, as Sacks says, the: ‘particularity of Jewish faith and its universal aspiration for humanity’ (ADPB, p. 141).

The prayer presents the Jewish people as essentially different from the rest of the humanity.

It is our duty to praise you Master of all, and ascribe greatness to the Author of creation, who has not made us like the nations of the lands nor placed us like the families of the earth; who has not made our portion (*chelkenu*) like theirs, nor our destiny (*goraleinu*) like all their multitudes (ADPB, pp. 302-3).

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\(^{141}\) *Birkat HaMinim* is a blessing included in the weekday *Amidah*, thus discussion of it goes beyond the scope of this thesis, see Horbury (2003); Instone-Brewer (2003), Langer (2012).

\(^{142}\) For the list of the changes in European Progressive *siddurim*, see Petuchowski (1967, pp. 298-306), Friedland (1967, pp. 226-53).

\(^{143}\) Discussion of each phrase lies beyond the scope of this thesis, for Bible and *Aleinu*, see Hoffman (2002, pp. 133-48).

\(^{144}\) On *Aleinu* and its association with martyrdom, see Friedmann, 2012, pp. 139-40.
Scholars and the interviewees indicated several ideological problems here relating to particularism: being chosen and distinct from others, and also how these ideas are formulated. Moreover, it is not the only version of this prayer. A liturgical insert known to Orthodox Jews but not included in the prayerbooks researched in this thesis, was mentioned disapprovingly by all Orthodox interviewees, e.g. by OL1 and OW4. It appears in the Artscroll *siddur* (p. 526), available in four visited Orthodox synagogues as an alternative to the Sacks *siddur*. It does appear in the USA and Israeli version of his *siddur*, the *Koren Sacks Siddur* (2009).

After the passage quoted above, an additional phrase says: ‘they bow down to vanity (*hevel*) and emptiness (*varik*), and pray to a god who cannot save them’.

This has been omitted in Ashkenazi prayerbooks since around 1400s in Europe, because it was alleged that the word *varik* relates to the word *yeshu* (the Hebrew term for Jesus), and because this and its related term have a Hebrew numerical value of 316.

As *varik* reminds a Hebrew speaker of the unrelated word *lirok*, ‘to spit’ in some synagogues it was usual to spit on the floor at this point, a custom still in use in Chabad communities. Thus these lines gained an anti-Christian function, even though the prayer is originally pre-Christian (Langer, 2011, Ta-Shma, 2004, Yuval, 2006).

The hardships that Jews in Europe experienced over the centuries, including persecution, occasional pogroms and Christian exclusivist claims resulted in such prayers. As Marx (2014, p. 125) argues, the liturgy may provide a weapon for an oppressed minority group: ‘the language of chosenness was for many centuries a survival mechanism, the weapon of the weak, a form of spiritual resistance’. But whether such words are acceptable today is an open question, to which I shall return later.

Returning to the text as published in the Sacks’ *siddur*, even without the omitted phrase and the spitting custom, the first paragraph presents a challenge. Only OR1 said that she did not see any problem with reciting it, as particularism is essential to Jewish identity. All the others questioned some of its formulations. OW3, who regularly utterer this prayer, said:

145 12th and 13th century manuscripts included other anti-Christian courses, such as one found in England, where text continued: ‘to send them malediction, rebuke and confusion….who cannot save - man, ash, blood, bile, stinking flesh, maggot, defiled men and women, adulterers and adulteresses, dying in their iniquity and rotting in their wickedness, worn out dust, rot maggot’ (Yuval, 2006, p. 119); see also Brodie and Hazan (1962, p. 126).


147 Some claim these words represent, *Yeshu* and Muhammed (although and the numerical values do not fully work) in Gematria 413, see Avenary (2007).

*Aleinu's* language is violent. The chosenness is described as a difference that makes my faith superior and I feel that superiority should never be expressed in terms of faith. I need a meaning for chosenness that can express my identity, but here it is setting me apart from other people.

OW3 points to the problem of how particularity is formulated – what images a prayer, such as *Aleinu* evokes.

The introductory paragraph of the prayer praises the Creator of the Universe who has singled out the Jewish People and has ‘made them not as’ others. As the distinction is made as a negative locution, the separatist language is felt here even more strongly than in other prayers, such as the *Havdalah* (discussed in the next chapter). This kind of comparative form was strongly objected to by LR1:

I absolutely loathe ‘who has not made us like the nations of the world’. If you include the words like ‘for they bow down to hevel and rik’, but ‘we bow down to true God’, while you are praying that in the little bubble of your own synagogue, and then you step outside, what are you carrying within you outside ‘you bow down to hevel and rik’? Thinking ‘I got the right religion’? That seems triumphalist to me. By repeating it week after week, the language will have an influence on you, especially if you are a child. And I think it is an insult to non-Jewish people among whom we live, work and talk. And I think it should be eliminated from any prayerbook.

LR1 is not the first to see this phraseology as inappropriate in modern times. It was replaced in the first British Reform *siddur* (FoP, 1841, p. 67) with the positively formulated ‘who hath chosen us from amongst all people, and hath given us his Law’. The traditional Hebrew notion of being chosen (*bachar*) for the Torah remains in use in FoP (2008).

This was not the case with early editions of Liberal prayerbooks. In some services in the 1936 prayerbook, Mattuck did not include the traditional version of *Aleinu* at all; and in others new compositions in English were added, which relate to *Aleinu* but avoid particularism (e.g. LJPB, 1936, p. 166). Today, LCh includes a version based on a text prepared for SoH (1967), rendered in English as ‘whose unity it is our mission to make known, whose rule it is our task to make effective’ (LCh, p. 520). The Hebrew version uses two traditional words (present elsewhere in the traditional liturgy) to express biblical particularistic notions related to election: *chelekenu* (our portion; Deut. 32:9) and *goralenu* (‘our lot’, allotted portion; Ps 16:5). But instead of

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149 Such changes occurred even before the Reform, see Ellenson (2002).
emphasising the difference between Jews and others, this version alludes again to the ideology around the purpose of the election and ‘mission’, which here is understood as working towards recognition of God by everybody (similar to the idea in the last paragraph of this prayer). This task can be seen as an aim to be accomplished not only among non-Jews, but within the Jewish community itself. The rest of the first paragraph proclaims the supremacy of God, its recognition by the Jewish people and the uniqueness of God (preserved in all three *siddurim*).

The second paragraph is universalistic in scope and expresses the hope that the whole world will accept God as the only One. The traditional Hebrew wording of the second paragraph is accurately rendered by the ADPB English version which says ‘that we may soon see the glory of Your power, when You will remove abominations (*gilulim*) from the earth and idols (*elilim*) will be utterly destroyed’. The Hebrew terms used here for idol worship filled with contempt, raise the question of how one understands idol worship today. This may influence how one relates to non-Jews in general.

Asked about his understanding of this phrase, OR1 said that he did not see the necessity of amending the prayer, because changing *Aleinu* has no bearing on what people actually do in the world. I do not think people make the connection between what the texts say and what it means for them. I think change in the world comes not by changing the prayers but by talking to each other.

However the events which repeatedly occur in Jerusalem prove the contrary. For example, in 2015 part of this phrase from *Aleinu* was written on the church of Tabgha, which underwent arson attack by Jewish extremists. Even though one may argue that such an interpretation is not representative of the majority of Jews, reciting the words of the prayer without providing an interpretation may lead to supporting extremist interpretations and contempt or even acts of violence.

Progressive liturgists preserved the Hebrew traditional text; however during my visits it was read in Hebrew only on a couple of occasions, as usually it is either omitted or read in English. Neither of the Progressive *siddurim* translates it literally, but instead provide an interpretation. FoP speaks about abstract ideas: ‘when the

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151 For the article mentioning the arson and the graffiti, see https://www.timesofisrael.com/left-wing-lawmakers-to-visit-burned-jesus-loaves-church (Accessed 23 October, 2019).
worship of material things will pass away from the earth and prejudice and superstition shall at last be cut off', and LCh ‘when false gods will vanish from the hearts and idolatry cease for ever', which can be seen addressing people also within Jewish community. Most Progressive respondents said that in reciting this paragraph they did not have in mind any other religion in particular. But a few respondents (e.g. OW4, RW2, LM1) said that they believed that some religions are idol worshippers or polytheists, who they hope will one day recognize that their beliefs are wrong.

Furthermore, this is not the only issue concerning language about ‘us' and ‘others' in the second paragraph. The prayer continues with the universal messianic hope expressed with triumphalist overtones, that

all the world’s inhabitants will realise and know that to You every knee must bow and every tongue swear loyalty. Before You Lord our God, they will kneel and bow down and give honour to Your glorious name. They will accept the yoke of your Kingdom and You will reign over them soon and for ever.

The text ends with quotations of two biblical phrases:

As it is written in your Torah: The Lord will reign for ever and ever' (Ex. 15:18) and it is said: Then the Lord shall be King over all the earth: on that day the Lord shall be One and His name One' (Zech. 14:9’).

In a Progressive context, the ideology of the words forming a coda of Aleinu is strengthened by its performance – a well-known tune by Solomon Sulzer (Friedmann, 2012, p. 140) strongly and loudly sung in the communities visited, makes a strong impression on participants. Other tunes (such as by Phillis Alden, or Ein od – an American camp tune) are not frequently used, but they tend to tone down the possible interpretation of the notion of triumphalism.

None of the editors provided a more specific interpretation under the text itself,152 regarding what kind of a vision these words present and how the future will look. It is open for individual interpretation whether in eschatological time the worship of God will differ from what is now known (as most interviewees thought) or whether the nations will recognise and join the Jewish way of worship.153

Because of the ideological complexity of this text in Progressive Judaism, several leaders indicated that they use other texts often more universalistic in scope instead of the second paragraph, such as the one by Cooper (FoP, pp. 346-7), by Judy Chicago

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152 FoP has two commentaries in the ‘Study Anthology' one by Magonet (p. 501) and another by Katz (p. 515), however neither deals with the difficulties this text presents.

153 Other eschatological formulations in the siddur, such as in the Amidah, or Yigdal, never present a precise vision of the end of the times; concerning Jewish eschatology, see Cohen (1988).
(LCh, p. 213; FoP, p. 347), or the song *Ein k’Elohe nu*, (FoP, p. 303, LCh, p. 528). Furthermore, in FoP there is an alternative *Aleinu* (printed in blue) to ease the feelings of those who struggle with the triumphalism of the older version,\(^\text{154}\) by presenting a vision of a more diverse world. So instead of recalling the election (2\(^\text{nd}\) line), it speaks about the gift of Torah and life in the form of God’s precepts. To replace the phrase ‘therefore we bend low’, editors quote Micah 4:5: ‘For all peoples walk in the name of their gods, but we walk in the name of the Eternal our God forever and ever’. The Micah verse can also be seen as problematic, as it does not accept the ‘other’ and the triumphalist note is still heard. However, replacing the phrase ‘every knee must bend, every tongue swear allegiance’ by ‘all who inhabit this world shall meet in understanding, and shall know that we are all partners in the repairing of Your world’, is more successful.

Although there are other texts that could be recited at the end of the services, it is *Aleinu* that is best-known and most widely used, perhaps due to its catchy melody.\(^\text{155}\) Maybe that is why it was one of the first prayers that I learned by heart. During my participation in PObs.1OrtSyn3, when civic representatives were invited, I noted that instead of the usual recitation of only the first few lines and the last one, the rabbi sung the entire first paragraph and slowly recited the second paragraph. It made me reflect again on the discrepancy between text, ritual and participation. Similarly, RR2 said:

> There are things in *Aleinu* that I would like to change. I only spot it when I am praying and there are non-Jews. Otherwise, you are kind of in the rhythm of it and you do not think about it.

> But as unreflected repetition has an influence on those who regularly recite/sing a prayer no matter who is around, editors and commentators need to consider how they not only reflect past events, but inspire others to work for a better future for the whole world in which Jews and non-Jews will live together.

**Summary**

Through discussion of a selection of prayers from various parts of the morning service, I aim to show how ideology concerning Jewish identity and Jewish relations with the

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\(^{154}\) For a discussion of conservative changes within Reform *siddurim* and *Aleinu*, see Petuchowski (1967, pp. 298-306), Ellenson (2002, pp. 139-40).

\(^{155}\) Historically, *Aleinu* was recited silently. In majority of Orthodox services, only a few lines at the beginning and at end are recited aloud.
wider world is present within the *Shabbat* morning services. Jewish specific and particularistic ideology has always been an important aspect of the *Shabbat* morning texts. Recent changes, and the reintroduction of some more traditional texts and formulations even in the most amended prayerbook (i.e. the Liberal *siddur*), indicate that such ideology is also welcomed by contemporary users. Nonetheless, traditional formulations of prayers discussed here, such as *Aleinu* or the Prayer for the State of Israel, present a constant challenge to more Progressive worshippers due to particularistic and triumphalist notions expressed there and their vision concerning non-Jews and the world.

The analysis such as in the sections dedicated to the *Shema* and the *Amidah* demonstrates how a new text inserted in the same context can shift the balance between P/U. I have presented several ways of dealing with challenging concepts or texts, indicating different strategies used by prayer leaders, editors and worshippers, which relate to the way ideology is moulded by belonging to a particular movement. Thus in the case of *Aleinu*, even Reform editors provide several ways of making a traditional text more universal in scope, allowing prayer leaders to choose which one is more appropriate on a given day. Moreover, in Progressive contexts there is always a possibility of replacing it with another text, as was shown in the example of two prayers for the State of Israel introduced into Reform and Liberal services. Those who feel that ritual cannot be changed, i.e. all the Orthodox participants, can only de-emphasize parts with which they disagree by silent recitation. Providing explanations is another tool, though this is possible mainly in Progressive communities, as the Orthodox ritual flow is rarely broken by additional comments. Commentaries printed in the prayerbooks can also correct misconceptions, but this route is not generally used. Self-censorship has removed the most offensive remarks, but others remain.

The analysis found further evidence for the tendency to reinstate traditional texts in Progressive prayerbooks, which means that more particularistic elements are present today than in the early Reform and Liberal *siddurim*. One such example are the blessings for the Torah readings. Discrepancies between the Hebrew text and the translation show editorial discomfort with traditional notions of chosenness. Liberal editors occasionally offer a creative vernacular adaptation of the traditional Hebrew blessing to express the continuing Progressive commitment to universalism.

Nevertheless, changes to the traditional text can take other forms. The particularistic verse related to Jewish election and mission in the *Aleinu*, ‘who has not made us like the nations of the earth’, has not been replaced in Progressive liturgies by
a more universalistic one. In the Reform *siddur*, it is rendered by another particularistic one: ‘who has chosen us from all the people’ (FoP, p. 310) and in the Liberal one by a phrase related to a specific task: ‘whose [Creator’s] unity is our mission to make known’.

The clear return toward tradition has its limits and, as in the case of the most contested of the texts discussed here, *Lo natato*, its particularistic ideology is too pronounced to be amended. Thus in both Progressive *siddurim* it is omitted and in Liberal *siddur* it is replaced by a composition by Mattuck, which better reflects Progressive ideology.

It must be added that, the experience of the ideological tension between P/U mediated through a text may vary from one community to another. The *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Erev Shabbat* services are less problematical than *Shacharit*, as the liturgical texts and ritual on Friday emphasise the *Shabbat* from a more universalistic point of view (as the text uses the Genesis story about *Shabbat*). *Shacharit* focuses on *Shabbat* as a ‘sign’ for Jewish people, although individual texts can be more or less emphasised through the ritual, music or additional comments. In addition, the variety of strategies used to rebalance P/U notions in the *siddurim* may not always be effective in shifting that tension, since each element of Jewish ritual plays its own role, as shown in the previous chapter on ritual.
Before beginning an in-depth discussion of the final ritual of Shabbat i.e. the Havdalah, another part of the day needs to be analysed first: the afternoon. For Saturday afternoon another prayer service, Minchah, is prescribed, which may be followed by the Ma’ariv (known also as Aravit, evening service). The latter belongs to the first day of the next week. Some choose to spend the rest of the day resting at home until dusk, without performing any other religious acts. Others prefer to take part in an Oneg Shabbat or Se’udah shelishit which may or may not include prayers. P/U elements of this part of Shabbat are expressed in the text and ritual, although they can be weakened or strengthened like on Friday night through music, conversation and themes for discussion, as will be shown below.

Together with the first ritual of Shabbat, Hadlakat Nerot, the closing service, Havdalah, forms a frame for the sacred time of Shabbat. As the lighting of the candles explicitly marks the transition from the ordinary to the sacred Shabbat time, extinguishing the Havdalah candle accompanies the return to weekly activities. Through this, I examine the ideology of differentiation and distinction, and its relation to P/U notions. From its beginnings, the Havdalah ritual has been an important ritual for Jewish individual and group identity. With the establishment of Progressive Judaism, its role has undergone amendments and transformations due to the Havdalah’s particularistic vision of relations between Jews and the rest of the world. This makes the Havdalah a fine example for the discussion of P/U in texts, ritual and ethnographical research.

Hayim Donin (1960, pp. 328-54), Sol Roth (1982) and Yehuda A. Zvi (1994) present some ideological aspects of Havdalah and its ritual, although only from an Orthodox perspective, while Lawrence A. Hoffman (1987, pp. 21-45) adds an American Progressive view. These and some smaller publications (e.g. Nulman, 1993, Sacks, 2016, Ta-Shma, 2007) typically present traditional views on the concept of separation and differentiation from non-Jews, arguing that these are integral to Judaism, and do not carry notions of superiority, so should not evoke negative feelings. Their research lacks ethnographical data which, as I show, challenges some of their understandings.
8.1 *Shabbat* afternoon and *Minchah*

The word *Minchah* relates to a grain sacrifice offered in the Temple before the evening. Today, it designates the afternoon synagogue service (cf. M.Ber. 4:1; B.Ber 26b; SRA 30a). I was able to participate in the *Minchah* service regularly in the women’s section of one of the Orthodox synagogues (PObs.10OrtSyn.3), where afternoon prayers would begin immediately after the *Kiddush*. In other Orthodox communities, if a *Minchah* was organised, it was performed late in the afternoon, followed by a third *Shabbat* meal, *Se’udat shelishit*, either in *shul* or more often in a private setting. On rare occasions, such as an annual ‘UK *Shabbat*’, when additional lectures and events are organised throughout the day and people stay in the synagogue, there would be more participants. The service was always conducted quickly, and it was sometimes barely audible for those in the women’s section.

Even though the *Minchah* service is included in Progressive *siddurim*, according to the interviewed leaders it rarely takes place, as *Shabbat* afternoon is considered mainly as a time of rest (afternoon *shluf* and spending time with family and friends. As it includes a Torah service, *Minchah* can be chosen (instead of *Shacharit*) to celebrate a *Bar Mitzvah*, (PObs.21RefSyn.6) or a baby-naming ceremony (PObs.7LibSyn.4), both of which occurred during my time of research, although it hardly ever takes place in the majority of Progressive communities. On such occasions, the ritual was conducted with care, concentrating on the moments marking the rite of passage when the particularistic elements related to Jewish identity and responsibility for Jewish heritage were additionally voiced. In other settings (especially in more Liberal synagogues), it could be toned down by universalistic digressions (e.g. responsibilities toward wider society).

The *Minchah* service (ADPB, pp. 476-523, FoP, pp. 290-1, LCh, pp. 147-54) is the shortest of all *Shabbat* services and consists of Ps. 145 (*Ashrei*), the recitation of ‘And a redeemer will come to Zion’; and a portion of the Torah: the first section of the following week’s portion is read before the *Amidah* and *Aleinu*, so that even before one *Shabbat* is over, Jews begin to prepare for the next one. In winter months, a number of Psalms are read, and in the summer a chapter of *Pirkei Avot* (Rema, OC 292:2). These

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156 Halakhically *Minchah* should take place before sunset (B.Ber. 26b–27a); if so, it can be followed by *Ma’ariv* service (Magen Avraham to Sh.Ar. OCh 233:1).
157 In British Reform *siddurim*, the amended *Minchah* was always included; in Liberal *siddurim*, its shortened version is included only in SOH (pp. 167-9).
158 A nap or *Shabbat*-afternoon rest; on Jewish theology of sleep, see Shalev (2018).
texts and the Torah readings were introduced to mark the *Shabbat*, once again, as a time of Jewish ‘devotion and instruction’ (Goldman, 1961, p. 57).

Ideologically, the texts of *Minchah* concentrate on the *Shabbat* rest, and anticipate the eschatological time when peace and harmony will be enjoyed not only by Jews but by the whole world. This is expressed in prayers before the Torah reading, but explicitly during the *Amidah*’s central blessing (ADPB, p. 497, based on 1Chron. 17:21; B.Chag. 3b; B.Ber. 6a). The prayer begins with particularistic notions expressing the uniqueness of God: ‘You are One, Your Name is One (’*ata ‘echad veshimkhah ‘echad*, cf. Deut. 6:4, Zech. 14:9) and Israel: ‘a nation unique’ (*goi ‘ehad*, cf. 2Sam. 7:23), which indicates a unique, particularistic relationship between God and Israel. Surprisingly, in the following verses *Shabbat* is not mentioned, but the root of the word *menuchah* (rest, serenity) appears eight times, giving an image of how an idyllic, redeemed world (a universalistic vision) is ‘tasted’ on *Shabbat*.

The Hebrew of this text is preserved in the Reform *siddur* (FoP, p. 299). In LCh (p. 153) the patriarchs’ names are omitted and the phrase reinterpreted as concerning those who recite the prayer: ‘May our rest on this day be one of love and devotion (...) the perfect rest that You desire’.

Hence, in all three *siddurim* the P/U notion is similar, and concentrates on the idea of rest on *Shabbat*, alluding to the promise of universal redemption. In practice, the rest should include the third and last meal prescribed for the celebration of *Shabbat*, which may take the form of *Oneg Shabbat*.

8.2 *Oneg Shabbat* and *Se’udah Shelishit*\(^\text{159}\)

*Oneg Shabbat* (’Joy of the *Shabbat*’) is an informal gathering in private homes or within the community setting. During this research it was rarely organised in synagogues, and when so, mainly for occasions as the annual *Shabbat* UK. *Oneg Shabbat* is often accompanied by *Se’udah shelishit* (a third obligatory *Shabbat* meal, Sh.Ar. 291:1). This tradition was mentioned by five of my respondents. OW2 described an *Oneg Shabbat* in her home:

We women get together regularly on Saturday afternoon because we would sing *Shabbat* songs. I connect probably more through songs with other women than

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\(^{159}\) For an ethnographical analysis of the third meal in an ultra-Orthodox setting, see Heilman (1992, pp. 140-67).
through the text, and I personally would prefer to pray alone in my house rather than in a shul. It is not women's obligation and I feel like women have a strong sense of community, but in different ways. We have a meal and one of us sometimes prepares a short study session.

OW2's description includes most of the typical elements for this ritual. The Oneg Shabbat is distinct from an ordinary meal because it is organised on Shabbat by Jews (sometimes in the presence of non-Jews) specifically to strengthen the relationship among them. When a study session is included, it also serves to sustain Jewish identity. Even though more universal in scope, conversations are conducted, and Shabbat zemirot (see ADPB, pp. 574-7) or other Jewish songs are sung. As at different moments of the Shabbat, songs and music constitute an integral part of Jewish experience and are tools for maintaining Jewish continuity (Heilman, 1992). Formal or informal study of Jewish texts is led by one of the participants. Additionally, in the synagogues (and in more religious homes), the meal is accompanied by prayers (although Kiddush is not required for this meal; Sh.Ar. 291:4). It may be followed by an Aravit service or the Havdalah ritual. Se'udah shelishit (as well as two other Shabbat meals), as Heilman (1992, p. 156) explains, 'provides a window of cultural understanding and the opportunity to interpret some of its essential qualities' and to freely exhibit its Jewish identity.

Se'udah shelishit and Oneg Shabbat are also means of prolonging the peace and joy of Shabbat, the characteristic features of the sacred day. But as the sacred time ends, the significant difference between the holy and profane, Shabbat and ordinary days, must be marked through prayers as well as through a specific ritual, the Havdalah, which is the coda for the Shabbat.

8.3 The Havdalah – the Ritual of Separation

Havdalah was named by my interviewees as one of their favourite Jewish rituals, as it is short, engaging, participatory, and has 'catchy' music. But at the same time, it is ideologically complicated in relation to P/U dynamics, making it a perfect example for culminating the discussion concerning the P/U elements of Jewish prayerbooks and rituals. It went through various stages of inclusion and transformation in British Judaism, even though in Orthodox Judaism it has been an important part of the liturgy since the Talmudic period and is perceived as building and sustaining Jewish identity.
and Jewish boundaries (Bieler, 2008, Donin, 1960, Zvi, 1994, Sacks, 2014, 2016). Particularistic notions of the *Havdalah* ritual are usually presented in a relatively positive light (e.g. Nulman, 1993, Sacks, 2016, Ta-Shma, 2007), however my ethnographical data shows that British Progressive attitudes vary and several of prayers leaders were critical toward the traditional text.

My research goes beyond text analysis to engage with ritual performance within the British Orthodox and Progressive movements in private and communal contexts. The data from the interviews and fieldwork conducted during this research show that traditional home and synagogue setting for *Havdalah* have not radically shifted within the Orthodox Movement. Within Progressive ritual some changes have taken place, which I will discuss after reviewing the traditional ritual. But due to contact with non-Jews as well as in interfaith settings, *Havdalah* might present a challenge, and cause anxiety even for those for whom this ritual is an unchangeable part of Jewish heritage.

Similarly to the ritual of *Hadlakat Nerot* and *Kiddush*, *Havdalah* invites to examine the interaction between text, objects, place, time and action and how these relate to P/U elements of Jewish ideology. I first present a short overview of the history of the ritual and rabbinical teaching regarding it to shed light on the modern ritual. Then, analyse the text and ritual through the lens of P/U in Orthodox and Progressive liturgies. Finally, I examine the data coming from participant observation and interviews, indicating also adapted versions of the *Havdalah* ritual, highlighting the ideology present in the texts and ritual, as well as the convictions of those who perform and participate it.

### 8.3.1 Origins of the *Havdalah*

Jewish particularism is expressed not only by the notion of being chosen (actually this concept does not appear in the ritual of *Havdalah*) but also by being holy (*kadesh*, which is often translated as ‘holy’ but also means ‘set apart, separated, as sacred to God’) and being distinguished (*badal*, ‘to be divided, distinct from’, from which the name of the *Havdalah* ritual is derived). Thus the *Havdalah* ritual is closely linked with Jewish identity and by some is perceived as a ritual that can help to preserve or even reinvigorate Jewish identity, as Roth (1982, p. 10) argues:
To encourage the selection of the Jewish option, it is necessary to maximize Jewish life and experience it in the context of a Jewish community in which Judaism is lived intensively, that is to say, it is necessary to stress Havdalah.

The term *Havdalah* is associated with the ritual generally performed at home, and the complete name for this ceremony is *Havdalah al hakos* (‘Havdalah over the cup [of wine]’). The primary function of the ritual is to separate between degrees of holiness in time, either between *Shabbat* and ordinary workdays, or between the supreme holiness of *Shabbat* and the holiness of a festival.

Already in antiquity *Havdalah* was transferred to the synagogue at a certain point (cf. B.Ber. 33a). Moreover, by the second century this benediction had also been inserted into the *Amidah* of the *Shabbat Maariv* service, in the fourth benediction called *Da’at* (‘knowledge’) (Elbogen, 1993, Hammer, 2008). It was included there because Talmudic rabbis saw it as essential to being human to be able to distinguish between two different matters (B.Ber. 33a). Both traditions of an insertion and as a separate ritual have been retained. With time, further arguments were added for sustaining both the *Amidah* insertion and the separate ritual, and saw the *Havdalah* performance as a condition for eternal life (B.Pes. 104a; 113a).

### 8.3.2 Ritual

The ritual of *Havdalah* is not complicated and is often shortened to a chanted prayer comprising four blessings over ritual objects. Hebrew is the preferred language for this prayer which transmits *Havdalah*’s sacred narrative: the boundaries between sacred and profane, between members of the Jewish people and non-Jews, particular and universal. Thus, Hebrew emphasises the purpose of *Havdalah*, as it strengthens the boundary between what is Jewish and what is non-Jewish.

*Havdalah* as reflected in the interviews conducted for this research is more about doing and feeling than understanding the ideological nuances concerning P/U. Moreover its message is communicated non-verbally, through a moment in time when one experiences the play between darkness and light, as well as objects that engage all five human senses: taste (wine), smell (spices), sight (the light of the *Havdalah* candle), touch (feeling the warmth of the light) and hearing (recitation of the blessing).

Catherine Charlier (1995) claims that even though hearing and reading words is

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important in Judaism, engaging other senses in religious practice makes the Jewish religion distinctive. *Havdalah* is a good example of this, as the whole person is involved, regardless of whether they understand the words that are spoken or not. This was confirmed during this research.

*Havdalah* is mainly a home ritual, but it is also performed by a *sheliach tsibbur* in the synagogue following the *Ma’ariv Motsei Shabbat*, when the text is the same, except for the introductory paragraph. In the following paragraphs, I focus on the ritual performed at home. The home ceremony contains three parts. It begins with verses to help one face the end of the festive time and to welcome the coming weekdays. The middle part is a series of blessings relating to the first activities one undertakes after the end of *Shabbat* such as striking fire for the candles as night approaches and the preparation of food. The last section is the *Havdalah* blessing, which praises God for separating the sacred from the profane.

### 8.3.2.1 When and Who

Before discussing all three parts, it is essential to discuss the timing and participants, as they relate to P/U notions. Talmudic sages described how *Havdalah* is recited on Saturday night as soon as it gets dark (OCh 298:2). If it is not performed at that moment, it can be done any time until the end of Tuesday afternoon, when only the benediction over wine is recited (B.Ber. 33a; OCh 299:6). Work is prohibited until the recitation of *Havdalah* in the *Amidah*, and work should not be performed until the recitation of the *Havdalah* at home. If there is indispensable work to be done before the *Amidah* with its *Havdalah* blessing, one must at least recite: ‘who distinguishes between sacred and secular’ (OCh 299:9).

*Havdalah* therefore is performed at a moment that Turner (1974) describes as liminal, when people perceive themselves in a situation of prospective danger between two categorical dimensions, and where chaos seems to prevail and potential danger lurks. In such an ambiguous situation, says Douglas (1966, p. 94), it is a human need to impose order, not just to banish chaos, but to create something from it.

*Havdalah* reminds participants of the obligation to create order, to make distinctions and to live a sacred (separated, thus specifically Jewish) life designed for Israel not only during the privileged time of *Shabbat*, which is about to end, but especially in ordinary time, when there is more possibility of various categories to mix. To what extent such a binary view of the world (light – darkness, sacred – profane, Jews
– non-Jews, etc), coupled with an understanding of a mixing as dangerous appeals to modern Jewish minds is an open question. In several Progressive synagogues it takes places outside *halakhic* time. But as we will see, the contemporary revival of this ritual is due more to its aesthetic appeal than to its ideology.

Regarding participants, the performance of the ritual of distinction (what *Havdalah* is about) today does not require anyone with a special function. A shift happened after the destruction of the Temple, when the role of separating the holy (*kodesh*) from the mundane (*chol*), once seen as mandated to the priestly tribe by God (cf. Lev. 10:10), was shifted to the whole of Israel after the fall of Jerusalem, as the responsibility for distinguishing between sacred and profane became a part of the life of every Jew. A male religious Jew is bound to perform this ritual at home (B.Ber. 33a; OCh 294:2), while women are commanded to hear *Havdalah* (OCh 296:8). Others argue that she may or even should say it herself (Steinslaltz, 2000).

In Progressive liturgies a Jewish man or woman can conduct a *Havdalah* service. The idea that a non-Jewish person should not lead a public ritual is shared by the majority of the Progressive Interviewees, but in the home context, the particularistic boundaries may be more negotiable, as I show below.

### 8.3.2.2 Material culture and *Havdalah*

Material objects play an important part, as in other *Shabbat* rituals, strengthening or weakening the P/U expressions of the *Havdalah*. It suffices to have a cup, wine, some spices and two candles; a majority of the interviewees said they preferred to use more specific objects assigned for this ritual and meaningful for their Jewish identity.

The special *Havdalah* candle is made of at least two wicks which are plaited or twisted. If one does not have such candle, one may use two single candles or even two long enough matches; even electric light or gas lights may be used if necessary (Sh.Ar. 298:1). A candle of at least two wicks should be used, as the blessing recited over the fire speaks in the plural about ‘lights of the fire’ (Heb. *morei ha’esh*), that is, one fire formed of more than one flame. The plural form of ‘light’ is said elsewhere and represents ‘the various colours in the flame’ (B. Ber. 52b). Some candles are made of six wicks, symbolizing six days of the week (Rothschild, 2016). The light should form a ‘torch’, a strong light (Pes. 103b), a symbol of ‘creation’, which can also be understood as related to the ‘redemption’ of Israel (Siegel et al., 1973). Some choose white and blue
colours for the wax candle, which are associated with Israel and strengthen the particularistic notions in the ritual.

For *besamim* a combination of cloves and bay leaves is often used, usually kept in boxes of various shapes,\(^{161}\) sometimes called a *hadas*, 'myrtle', which traditionally has been used for this ritual. The kind of spices is not specified here, but there should be more than two types, since the blessings speaks about spices in the plural; even a tea bag can do (Rothschild, 2016).

Finally a cup is needed for the wine. Those who keep kosher, may use a *kosher* wine, but many will use the products (including wine) sold in the neighbourhood, not necessarily ones with a *kashrut* certificate. The cup used here, often reserved for Jewish ritual, is usually made of metal (e.g. silver), and may be decorated with Jewish symbols, adding a more Jewish specific touch to the ritual.

The majority of the interviewees confirmed that they pay attention to what is used for their ritual, but some, such as LW3, said they like to prepare their own set (similar to the one in photo 31), and use more organic material.

*Photo 31. Homemade Havdalah set made for travelling. Objects are resilient and look attractive.*

Even those who rarely perform *Havdalah* own a purchased or received set, consisting of a plate, cup and sometimes candle holder (illustrated in photo 32).

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\(^{161}\) About shapes of *hadas*, see Ta-Shmah (2007).
A few (e.g. OW3, RW3, LR5, LW3) always use a braided Havdalah candle. LR5 explained that for her this expressed Jewish diversity and the way all Jews belong to klal Israel. Several interviewees also spoke about meanings attached to Havdalah objects related to their families (e.g. OW1, LW3). RStR1 has a Havdalah set bought in Jerusalem, and RR7 a cup and plate passed from one generation to another. OW4 spoke about the hadas given to her son, which had belonged to her mother born in Poland in the 19th century. The specific history attached to the objects used for this ritual, their shape and origin further add specifically Jewish or more universal notions.

8.3.2.3 Orthodox Havdalah performance

Elements of Havdalah related to P/U appear both in Orthodox and Progressive settings. But as the interpretations may vary, the next section is dedicated to more creative approaches to Havdalah.

In the synagogue, the Havdalah benediction is inserted into the standard fourth benediction (Da'at) in the Amidah and recited as part of the Ma’ariv service. The Havdalah words are not especially distinguished from other benedictions and are recited quickly, making it possible for particularistic elements of the texts to go unnoticed in the flow of other words.

Thus my focus here is on the home ritual. Before all the benedictions, which are said in a fixed order – wine, spices, light and separation (B.Pes. 103b) – a cup, a candle and spices have to be prepared. Havdalah is said over a cup of wine (B.Ber. 33a; M.Ber.
If there are no spices or even a candle available, wine is enough to perform it (OCh 298:1), but it can be performed over beer or brandy, just as long as it is _chamar medinah_ (a national drink);\(^{162}\) cf. Sh.Ar. 296:2).

_Havdalah_ is usually performed standing (Klein, 1986, Donin, 1980). If a child is present, he or she may hold the candle, while the leader holds the cup of wine in the right hand and the spices in the left. The recitation at home begins with a short introduction, after which the leader pronounces the blessing over the wine. As each benediction is completed, the related object is made accessible to other participants. The _Kiddush_ cup is held so it can be seen by others, and may be passed for everyone to take a sip. The benedictions over the wine and the _besamim_ belong to the category of benedictions called _birkhot hanehenin_ (‘pleasure benedictions’), expressing gratitude for enjoyable food (Zvi, 1994). A container with spices is passed around so that everyone can smell it. When the benediction over fire is said, the candle is held up and the participants turn their hands over, palms in and bend their fingers, as it is customary to look at one’s fingernails. Various folkloric interpretations are related to it, e.g. as the nails are growing, some interpret this as a sign of blessing and prosperity hoped for the next week (Nulman, 1993), or as a reminder or the primary state of Adam and Eve in Eden, who wore ‘skins of fingernails’ (Ginzberg, v. 42, pp. 97, 103-4).\(^{163}\)

While the lights of _Shabbat_ are kept until they have burnt out, the fire of the _Havdalah_ candle is extinguished with a few drops of wine poured into a dish. Some (as OL2 and RR3), instead of wine, pour brandy, whiskey or vodka into a bowl, to make the effect more spectacular (as in photo 33).

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\(^{162}\) Under this category are beverages which may be served to guests but not simply in order to satisfy the thirst, such as water, milk, tea, coffee, etc. (OCh 2:76).

\(^{163}\) For more, see Schonfield (2006, pp. 88-9).
The majority of the Orthodox interviewees perform *Havdalah* at home on Saturday night to mark the end of the *Shabbat* time, following the traditional scheme of the ritual. During participants observation, in families where children were present, much attention was given to the objects and gestures (sometimes with explanations for what one should do) and to the performance itself (through music). As much as entering the *Shabbat* time is marked with particularistic elements on Friday night, participants welcomed the return of ordinary time with relief and joy, even if it meant leaving the bubble of the 'Jewish world' formed by *Shabbat*.

### 8.3.2.4 *Havdalah* in Progressive settings

Asked about their experience of *Havdalah*, only two Reform (RR3, RStR4) and two Liberal (LM2, LW3) interviewees said that they do it on a regular basis. Some perform *Havdalah* on special occasions such as when they have guests at home. They are motivated by their perception of *Havdalah* as one of the most beautiful Jewish rituals, and because of the material objects used and the gestures involved. StRR3 said, 'I only do *Havdalah* when I have guests because I think it is nice to do it with guests, to share a bit of warmth and a bit of cultural background with them'. He sees *Havdalah* as an opportunity to share Jewish culture and finds it a good way to do this because of the ritual objects he has collected for this ritual. He rarely explains the particularistic ideology attached to it, because he finds it enough to experience it through performance and to concentrate on universal notions of beginning a new week as a time of 'creation' (work).

Another interviewee, LW3, who also likes to perform the ritual when guests are present, is also one of the few Liberal interviewees to do it regularly at home. She uses the ritual to remind her children, raised in an interfaith family, of their Jewish identity. Children like it, as they can participate in it, specifically enjoying the fire and the wine elements, which are otherwise inaccessible to them (as in photo 34).
LM2 said regarding his non-Jewish partner's participation on the few occasions he was not present, his partner had led the prayers. The formation of their children in Jewish life prevailed over the argument that it should be done only by Jews. Thus in the home context, certain Jewish ritual boundaries may be more easily negotiated when it concerns non-Jewish participation in or even performance of the ritual.

Similarly to LW3, LR4, who never marks the end of Shabbat by Havdalah when alone or with his partner at home, said he performs it for the sake of his grandchildren, who had known the ritual from attending camps and asked him to do it. Some Jewish schoolchildren learn about Havdalah, which may be performed on Sunday or Monday morning as an opening ritual to a weekly schedule. RW4, who teaches at such a school, explained:

We were looking for formalising the assembly and teaching the children ritual. And normally the Havdalah is done with the families at home, but most of our families are not from traditional backgrounds; they would not do it on their own. And it is a way of having the children experience a kind of ritual on a regular basis. We use Friedman’s composition, sometimes played from a computer with images and text prepared by ‘Moshe House’ (2011), which helps to teach words and the ritual itself.

The educator hopes that this ritual is taught so that the children learn it and hopefully re-introduce it in their home setting. Two interviewees confirmed that this aim is

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achieved in their Progressive families, where the children now regularly perform it in their homes. The Havdalah ritual separates Shabbat from the rest of the week, which in the school context means work and studies. It is also often seen as a ritual that helps to create a feeling of belonging to a Jewish community, which confirms Jack Bieler’s (2008) argument that Havdalah can play an important part in forming Jewish identity and reinforcing the religious experience of Shabbat.

There is one more purpose for Progressive interviewees to perform Havdalah in a less traditional way and with a modified meaning. Five Progressive interviewees told me that, even though they do not regularly perform Havdalah, they used (or participated in) this ritual to mark special occasions such as the end of a divorce process, a wedding anniversary or bar/bat mitsvah celebrations.\(^{165}\) In such creative Havdalah rituals, certain traditional elements are retained, especially the wine and candle, while others might be added. The ideology of the ritual may also be transformed and accented, such as by changing Havdalah from a ritual of separation into one of transition, in the course of which the traditional particularistic notions may be completely ignored. One respondent cited the use of Havdalah to mark the moment of receiving the get (Jewish divorce document):

> I wanted this ceremony to be the slow beginning of the process of healing and the journey forward. She asked the children at the beginning, to a life of peace and happiness. Transitions are often difficult. It is probably for this reason that I have always loved the ritual of Havdalah, which I experience as acknowledging the abrupt transition from the rhythm of Shabbat to the uncertainty of the coming week (RW1).

Another interviewee, LR1 integrated the renewal of marriage promises into a Havdalah ritual celebrated in a family context. Traditional elements were retained, but some wording and meanings were altered. The wine was interpreted as a symbol of the couple’s love and life together and of anticipated joy and hope. To the spices, which are traditionally a symbol of the departing neshamah yetirah, was added the idea of the continuation of a happy and peaceful life.

LR5 had the experience of conducting Bar/Bat mitsvah ceremonies combined with the Havdalah ritual. Instead of using the traditional introductory passage, she asked the children at the beginning, ‘what do you want to take with you from your

\(^{165}\) The influence of internet resources on the development of Jewish ritual is not a part of my project, but those I have interviewed and who are interested in Jewish ritual have cited the Reconstructionist website, as well as other resources (e.g. ‘Lilith’ magazine) as the source for their creativity.
childhood, what do you want to leave behind? What distinction are you making with this ceremony?’ In this way she used the Havdalah ritual to mark not a moment in a week, but a rite of passage in Jewish life between childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Both mark a liminal phase in Jewish identity and particularistic distinctiveness (election).

Since Havdalah is seldom present in most Jewish Progressive homes, its celebration seems to be shifting from its traditional home setting to a community one. There it has found a regular place, even in Liberal synagogues where for several decades it was an ‘abandoned and unwanted ritual because of its particularistic notions’ (LR4). According to the Progressive leaders I interviewed, in the synagogue contexts Havdalah is performed either on a regular basis (e.g. once a month as in PObs.8RefSyn.3) or when it accompanies a specific gathering, such as study sessions (e.g. PObs.17LibSyn.8), meals (se’udah shelishit, e.g. PObs.16LibSyn.8), Jewish concerts (e.g. PObs.7LibSyn.4), festivals (e.g. in the week of Chanukkah PObs6LibSyn.3, or before Rosh Hashanah as in photo 35), as an aspect of community building.

Photo 35. Havdalah set in a Reform synagogue used on Saturday night before the Selichot service.
Before or after the *Havdalah* ritual, topics related to Jewish or world events may be discussed. Some gatherings may include a more formal study session such as Talmud, prayer, music or politics. The texts of the *Havdalah* may be adapted. LR2 prepares her own sheet and adjusts elements to suit the occasion. Once she omitted the traditional introduction *Hine El ‘Yeshuati*, and used a reading linked to Brexit, omitting the particularistic separation ‘between Israel and the nations’; this changed the balance between P/U. Thus the universalistic themes during the discussion may obscure the particularistic ideological elements of the *Havdalah* ritual.

Several interviewees spoke of the experience of the *Havdalah* ritual at Jewish youth gatherings, conferences or camps, that for them was meaningful when it was done with a group of people. RW1 said: ‘I remember a special *Havdalah* at the *Limmud*[^166]. Everybody was singing led by one person, all holding hands and swaying and doing *Havdalah* together’. The aspect of communal experiences of Jewish ritual performed together in a specific, traditional way played an important part. It allowed participants to experience even if for a short time being part of a Jewish world and forgetting the diasporic experience. As RW1 said: ‘It was a moment to be a Jew among the Jews and not worried about the outside world, even if for a limited time’.

Summing up the Progressive attitude toward *Havdalah*, the data coming from ethnographical research in a Progressive environment indicates that it is on the one hand seen as a ritual sustaining Jewish identity and community belonging. On the other hand, the particularistic ideological elements can be reduced to the notion of marking the end of *Shabbat* (Jewish time) and the beginning of weekly activities. The shift from a home to a community ritual has been observed, and the focus is on creating a Jewish experience for the group. Markers of Jewish identity traditionally present in this ritual, whether expressed through words, symbolism or gestures, may become more universalistic through creative approaches to this ritual, such as I have presented above.

[^166]: *Limmud* is a British-Jewish educational charity (founded in 1980) which organizes i.a. a large annual winter festival, see its website: [https://limmud.org](https://limmud.org).
8.3.3 Prayers

8.3.3.1 Texts of Havdalah ritual

The Orthodox liturgy of Havdalah\textsuperscript{167} begins with eight\textsuperscript{168} biblical verses (Is 12:2-3; Ps. 3:9; Ps. 46:12; Ps. 84:13; Ps. 20:10; Esther 8:16 with the addition of ‘so may it be before us’ and Ps. 116: 13) which introduce the Havdalah service:

\begin{quote}
Behold, God is my salvation (Hine El yeshu’ati). I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the springs of salvation. Salvation is the Lord's; on Your people is Your blessing, Selah. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Stronghold, Selah. For the Jews there was light and gladness, joy and honour – so may it be for us. I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord (ADPB, p. 609)
\end{quote}

Such a selection of verses neither speaks about separation nor the Havdalah ritual, but the verses are formulated as statements or even as a creed expressing trust and belief in God’s deliverance. Only the phrase: ‘so may it be for us’ may be understood as a plea, but the word in the first verse \textit{’evtach} is a prayer which is sure to be heard by God; it is often translated as ‘trust’, and expresses security and confidence that God will fulfil God’s promise (cf. BDB, p. 105).

This is clearly particularistic, allowing Jews who recite the prayers to look forward to the coming week because God is their deliverance (Hammer, 2008). Confidence in having God on one’s side is fundamental to beginning a new week and facing the struggles ahead. Hope in God’s protection is narrowed to the Jewish people, whereas the universal element is seen as an approaching danger, a vision strengthened by the final benediction relating to the Jewish people’s historic dependence on the benevolence of their non-Jewish neighbours. The atmosphere created by this text may also speak to today’s participants in times of anti-Semitic incidents. But such a vision may be challenging if recited in a time of security by people who feel at home in British society. This text does not explore the Jewish diaspora’s role in building a better world for everybody.

\textsuperscript{167} The Havdalah insertion in the Amidah for the Ma’ariv Motsei Shabbat service (ADPB, 216, FoP 77, LCh does not include it) ideologically is closely related to the prayers of Havdalah for home ritual and would not add to the P/U discussion, I concentrate here on the latter.

\textsuperscript{168} The discussion of various versions lies beyond scope of this thesis, see e.g. Idelsohn (1972, pp. 148-9), Jacobson (1981, pp. 402-3).
Four benedictions follow the introduction – benedictions over wine, spices, fire and the Havdalah itself. The first three blessings use universalistic symbols for images related to creation and the approaching week. The final blessing moves from universalism to particularism in separating the Shabbat from workdays.

When the Havdalah candle is lit, no blessing is said, although it relates to the third one. Fire is rich in symbolism and according to a Midrash text (Gen.R. 11:2), it was the first thing created after Shabbat. It is God’s gift to humanity, representing the first fire created by Adam with God’s help. As it is achieved by human effort it also exemplifies human creativity (cf. B.Pes. 54a, Stern, 1988, p. 277). It is the first work that a person is permitted to do after Shabbat (Munk, 1963, Nulman, 1993) and it is seen as a symbol of civilization and human creativity and of the work that a person will undertake the following week (Zvi, 1994).

The wine is poured into a cup to the point of overflowing in order to depict God’s abundance of blessings (B.Eruv. 65a; OCh 296:1) and as a good omen for the coming week (Robinson, 2000, Munk, 1963). The first blessing is recited over this cup: ‘Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine’, but the wine is not drunk yet.

The cup is then switched to the left hand and the spices are taken in the right hand for the benediction of thanks to God ‘who creates various spices’ (borei minei besamim) (M.Berurah 296:29). The origin of the blessing over spices is not clear (Posner et al., 1975), but some assume a hint to the burning of the incense at the end of meals in the Greco–Roman period (Tabory, 2008). For some commentators the spices symbolize the spiritual richness of Shabbat as a source of strength, sanctity and consecration (Munk, 1963). Another interpretation is related to the traditional belief that, on Motsei Shabbat, when Shabbat goes out, the neshamah yetirah departs from a person as well (B.Tana. 27b; cf. B.Beits. 16a). That is why some understand the custom of smelling the spices as reviving one’s spirits after the loss of the additional soul (Goldberg et al., 2015) and soothing the soul after the departure of neshamah yetirah (Hammer, 2008, Zvi, 1994).

Some interviewees saw the particularistic concept of neshamah yetirah, as ‘something’ that is given exclusively to Jews when Shabbat begins, but they had difficulty in explaining what it really meant. OW4 saw it as related to the atmosphere and what Shabbat brings to Jews rather than anything ontological. At the same time, OW4 said that the ‘additional soul is given only to Jews, as the Shabbat is for Jews’. Half of the interviewees, e.g. LStR1, said that before the interview they had never thought
about this concept and they did not consider it important for the ritual itself. Once again
here, as was shown in the previous chapters, an intellectual approach to the ritual may
be suspended, provided, as RW3 argued, the ritual is working well in terms of material
culture, gestures and music, which is in the case of Havdalah.

Now follows the blessing over fire: ‘Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the
Universe, who creates the lights of the fire’ (M.Ber. 8:5; B.Ber. 51b-52a). It is
accompanied by a gesture: one looks at one’s hands, palms and nails when the light
falls on them (Rothschild, 2016). The light of the Havdalah candle forms a shadow and
light, a kind of play between darkness and light. It bonds with the blessing itself, which
refers to the separation of light and darkness. It is a moment of gratitude for the

The last central Havdalah benediction is rendered as follows:
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who distinguishes between
sacred and secular, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations,
between the seventh day and the six days of work. Blessed are You, Lord, who
distinguishes between sacred and secular.

These verses constitute the actual Havdalah (OCh 296). In a commentary to
Havdalah, Gray ponders on the order and he notices that, like in the Kiddush ritual on
Friday night, the distinctions precede from the universal to the particular (2004, p.
174). Thus, the text begins by invoking God as the source of holiness, before mentioning
the separation between holy and profane, light and darkness – part of the creation
process - and the particularistic division between Israel and the nations. It ends with
the division between Shabbat and weekdays. The chatimah relates to the essence of
what Havdalah is about – the distinction between Shabbat and the rest of the week.

The source of this text and its interpretation lies in Talmud texts, in which the
wording of the Havdalah benedictions (e.g. Y.Ber. 5:2, 9b-c), their order (M.Ber. 8:5;
B.Ber. 51b-52a) and number are discussed. In B.Pes. 104A, sages made several
distinctions including those in the Havdalah ritual, but neither Mishnah nor Gemarah
discusses in depth the meaning of the distinctions, including the phrase ‘between Israel
and the nations’. Such an omission is peculiar, but it may be explained by the fact that
in other places, Talmudic sages relate to the cause of being separated and the concept
of election,\textsuperscript{169} and numerous passages strictly regulate the relationship with the non-Jewish world (e.g. B.Ber. 13b; B.Sanh. 58b).\textsuperscript{170}

Various versions of the text are known from the earliest prayerbooks of Saadia and Amram, until the text was finalised in all the rites (Elbogen, 1993, p. 42). The existence of Talmudic and ancient manuscript variations\textsuperscript{171} encouraged Progressive editors in modifying it.

The phrase ‘who distinguishes between Israel and the nations’, central for P/U theme, calls for interpretation, but few commentaries elaborate on it. Even Sacks does not comment on it. To provide a better understanding, I turned to other contemporary writers commonly quoted in sermons.

The \textit{Artscroll siddur} presents the distinction between Israel and the nations as a source of joy for Israel, since it was God’s will to choose Israel, and the recitation and ritual of \textit{Havdalah} bring ‘awareness that God took Israel to Himself as His Chosen Nation’ (\textit{Artscroll}, 1987, p. 621). Here both particularistic concepts, election and distinction, are brought together, further emphasising the uniqueness of Israel. As in the case of \textit{Aleinu} (ch. 7), particularism is again emphasized here.

Joseph Soloveitchik, whose philosophy influenced Sacks, sees the divisions in the \textit{Havdalah} as arranged from the clearest to the most hidden: between light and darkness, through sacred and profane, to Israel and the nations. The difference between Israel and the nations is desired by God, which is why it is ‘imperative’ as well; the distinctiveness of the Jews based on their relation to the Torah must be evident for all to see ‘as the difference between light and darkness is visible to all’ (Soloveitchik, 2011, p. 756).

In a similar vein, Hertz sees the role of the \textit{Havdalah} as a tool: ‘to impress upon us the reality of moral distinctions in the universe. Whenever men are blind to such distinctions, or even deny their existence, we have religious chaos and immoralism’ (ADPB, 1974, p. 278). Israel, through keeping \textit{Shabbat}, learns to separate between holy and profane and this knowledge should lead to a deep religious life. Thus, the role of the \textit{Havdalah} benediction is not so much to stress the difference between Israel and the nations but rather to help to live ethical life according to Jewish tradition.

\textsuperscript{169} Discussed at length in ch. 7.
\textsuperscript{170} For non-Jews in the Talmud, see also Greenberg (1995), Katz (1961), Korn (1994); Sperber and Friedman (2007), Tripero (2012).
\textsuperscript{171} On variations of this prayer, see e.g. Elbogen, (1993), Idelsohn, (1932), Kaunfer (2014), Ta-Shma (2007).
Zvi also belongs to a group of commentators who see the boundary as necessary and positive, and not as opposition. The distinction between *kodesh* and *chol* – the core theme of *Havdalah* – reflects ‘our human recognition and appreciation of the singularity and significance of the particular ... *Havdalah* points to uniqueness, but implies no antagonistic, conflicting extremes’ (Zvi, 1994, p. 85). However, looking at the arrangement of the text, it is difficult to agree with his interpretation, since clearly all the pairs are arranged to contrast with one another.

A surprising commentary is found in the *siddur* Or Chadash (a Conservative *siddur*, however often consulted by Orthodox and Progressive interviewees), which links the *Havdalah* distinction with a verse from *Aleinu* prayer:

> between the people Israel and others. This is the same idea as expressed in the *Aleinu*. We have been blessed in coming to worship the one true God, while others continue to worship false gods’ (Hammer, 2008, p. 299).

Hammer’s comment does not include what he means by ‘false gods’ nor which religions belong to this category. However, in the commentary to *Aleinu* (p. 297), he distinguishes between those who are part of ‘monotheism’ (including Judaism) and those of the pagan world and idolatry, which he widens to ‘idolatry of mind’ as well.

Due to the fact that there are few comments in *siddurim*, I was interested in how these separations concern worshippers. A majority of Orthodox (e.g. OR4, OW1, OW2), but also a few Reform participants (e.g. RR1, RStR4) explained that they have no problem with reciting these distinctions as they do not define what or who is ‘good or bad’ but rather state an objective fact that things are different. RR2 explained:

> It is part of Judaism to make all sorts of distinction beginning with separating *Shabbat* from the rest of the week in the Genesis story, followed by the election and separation of Israel from other nations. We mention these distinctions in the liturgy to show where are the boundaries and to give a particularistic framework to our lives.

Other respondents expressed reservations or objections to these texts. Three Orthodox interviewees (OR1, OL1, OL3) who have been exposed to interfaith work expressed difficulty in reciting *Havdalah*. OR1 admitted:

> I see how the *Havdalah* speaks about separation, that it puts the nations on the side of darkness. However, as in Orthodox synagogues the presence of non-Jews is still not experienced, as intermarriages are not happening openly, thus we go along with this language, thinking we have no obligation to change it.
Similarly, OL1 spoke about the difficulty with *Havdalah* and the unease he felt in the presence of non-Jews; thus he would begin the ritual by explaining it and its origins. Also during my research, for three years in a row, a comment of this kind was made during interfaith events, where Jews and non-Jews were part of the *Havdalah* ritual; these were the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Conference and the Bible Week (see photo 36). Interviewees who are experienced in dialogue have also expressed concerns about the ritual, and said that ideologically the traditional version is complex and needs clarification, while Progressive leaders preferred to use the abbreviated version. At the JCM week in 2017 an Orthodox leader introduced it by saying:

I would like to admit also the weakness in our Jewish tradition, as I was trying to do over the past week. In this ritual, there is a list of differences; the text distinguishes between holy and profane, light and darkness, *Shabbat* and the six days, but also between Israel and the nations. This parallelism, that many Jews accept also as reflecting a value, puts Israel with light, holy and *Shabbat*, and the nations on the same side as darkness, profane and working days. So, when I recite this text, I am obliged to remember that this has the potential to be used by voices of separation and hatred, but I do not accept this parallelism.

*Photo 36. Havdalah at Interfaith event (Bible Week 2019); A Liberal rabbi introduced the ritual by explaining the traditional problematic aspects of this ritual for Orthodox, Progressive and non-Jewish participants.*

In the Orthodox context, the text of the *Havdalah*, is recited as it is included in the *siddur*. Particularistic elements in the introductory part and in the *Havdalah*
benediction are not seen as problematic, except for a few leaders who performed this ritual in the presence of non-Jews, which provoked them to reflect on the ideological meaning of the ritual and its texts. During the interviews, a majority of my Orthodox respondents said that they had not reflected on the Havdalah ritual and its ideology before our meeting, but perform it as a part of the Jewish tradition. During our conversations, they struggled to explain the meaning of the Havdalah differentiations, even though it was a regular practice in their Orthodox homes. The concept of being different/separated meant for them something positive, related to Jewish identity and obligations coming from the Torah. The ritual itself and its role in separating sacred and ordinary time was meaningful enough for them to value it and keep it as an integral part of Jewish observance.

8.3.3.2. Havdalah in Progressive siddurim

In modern British Progressive siddurim, the Havdalah text has undergone several changes. The first Reform siddurim either omitted the phrase bein Israel laamim (‘between Israel and the nations’ 1840, 1881) from the Havdalah, did not include the Amidah insertion at all (1881), or even omitted both (1931). The Havdalah for home ritual did not find its place in the Liberal prayerbook until PJW (1962; amended version). The next siddurim, SoH (1967) and LCh follow this tradition.

Concerning the differences within the texts in FoP (p. 458), the Hebrew text of the introduction Hine El Yeshu’ati (‘Behold, God is my salvation’) is the same except for the final verse from Ps. 20:10 (‘Sovereign, answer us on the day we call’). This verse strengthens the messianic notes about the hope for the final salvation expressed also through the verse from the book of Esther (Est. 8:13; cf. FoP commentary to Havdalah ritual, p. 457). However, in the English translation there is a significant difference. The Hebrew name of God ‘Adonai Tsva’ot (God of ‘hosts’ or ‘army’) is rendered as ‘the God of all creation’, which universalistically indicates that God is the ultimate Sovereign above all, rather than mainly a warrior protector of Israel.

The Liberal prayerbook (LCh, p. 457) shortens the traditional introductory paragraph, but the editors included an additional meditation which tones down the notion of danger and shifts to hope in the final redemption. The shift from the sacred time of Shabbat to weekdays is seen not only as the time of ‘toil’ (an impression given by the traditional text), but ‘the resumption of the daily round also raises fresh hope’. Thus even though the main ideology of the Orthodox introductory paragraphs is
preserved, the changes amend the traditional sharp notions of distinction in a subtle way.

The benedictions in the Reform *siddur* follow the traditional text. The commentaries there do not provide a satisfactory explanation for such a choice, whereas the Reform interviewees differed in their opinions about the particularistic ideology. One Reform Rabbi, RR2, who edited the *siddur*, was asked if the *Havdalah* prayer can provoke discriminatory understandings and lead to such behaviour, answered:

The question is: people for whom these attitudes exist, will have them, no matter what the Jewish prayerbook says. And they will use it to their own advantage. I think you have the responsibility of clarifying what it actually says, not to misuse it. But that should not lead you to get rid of it, because you would then be surrendering to those who misuse it.

On the other hand, even though RR2 would not change this prayer, he admitted that at interfaith meetings he is conscious of the misunderstanding this wording may cause.

The Reform interviewees were divided between those who agreed with the inclusion of the traditional text (as RStR4, RR1) and those who avoid it. RR6 explained why she does not see a problem with the traditional *Havdalah* ritual:

Judaism has a lot to do with marking boundaries and how you negotiate between two different, equally valid things. It is part of our system of ethics and belief. The purpose of *Havdalah* is to teach about negotiation, prioritisation and respect for the other who loses out on this particular occasion.

However, there were also those who strongly objected to using the phrase ‘between Israel and the nations’ and claimed that they find ways not to include it when they lead the ritual by using Friedman’s tune (RW6) or leaving a space for those who want to recite it but not reciting it themselves (RStR2).

In LCh, the main difference to the traditional (and the Reform) version lies in not including the problematic third distinction of the final blessing. This is how Rayner explained this omission:

The traditional ritual for the conclusion of the Sabbath (*Havdalah*) avers that God distinguishes between ‘holy and profane, light and darkness, Jews and Gentiles, the seventh day and the six working days’, with the implication that Jews are related to Gentiles as holy is to profane and light is to darkness. Our new *siddur* omits that insult, as the Tradition could have done long ago since
from a halachic point of view three 'distinctions' are sufficient (B.Ber. 103b). We Jews have often demanded of the Christian Churches that they expunge the anti-Jewish references from their liturgies, and to a large extent they have obliged. Is it really too much to expect the Jewish people to reciprocate by removing anti-Gentile sentiments from their liturgy? (Rayner, 2006, p. 139)

For the editor of LCh the connection between the contrasting pairs and how non-Jews may be perceived through such a lens is clear. He also provides an additional reason for changes in the liturgy, which few Jews voice even today. He calls for a reciprocal attitude among Jewish editors of difficult texts of the Jewish liturgy, as is demanded from Christian liturgists concerning anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish texts. Seeing their own liturgy through the eyes of the 'other' or in the presence of the 'other' exposes these texts and calls for re-interpreting, changing or omitting parts of the Jewish liturgy that treat others in problematic ways.

The majority of Liberal interviewees shared similar views to Rayner's. Two Liberal rabbis (LR1 and LR2) objected strongly to the inclusion of the phrase bein Israel la'amim in FoP. LR2 said:

I rejected on principle the concept of bein Isra'el la'amim many years ago and I feel quite horrified when people use it. I think it is in the Reform siddur and I find it disgusting and appalling that they decided to keep that in – quite unforgivable.

Whereas LR1 added

I can still be Jewish; I can still feel secure in the Jewish identity without saying I am different from you. I do not need to reinforce that because we share more in our humanity than that which divides us.

Liberal editors seem to share similar views, as the challenging distinction is not part of the official siddur, so is normally not pronounced in Liberal ritual.

Concluding the discussion around the Havdalah texts, it is clear that understandings and attitudes concerning the particularistic notion of separating and being distinct are various. Within all three movements some worshippers perceive them as integral to Jewish identity and to social boundaries; they claim that all four distinctions should be recited and that there is no need to challenge them. Others see the text as problematic and express the need for educating ritual participants regarding its historical context and meaning. Finally, there were those who strongly objected to the distinction 'between Israel and the nations', claiming it should never be part of the Havdalah.
This is often not the final text used in the *Havdalah* ritual. Several songs may be used to end the ritual and their analysis is presented in the next section.

### 8.3.3.3. Concluding songs

Some families have the custom of finishing the ceremony with a song associated with *Shabbat* such as *Hamavdil*\(^{172}\) (ADPB, p. 612) or more often ‘*Eliahu haNavi*’,\(^{173}\) which reflects an ancient tradition of singing hymns about the prophet Elijah at the end of the *Shabbat*.\(^{174}\) This is included in Progressive *siddurim*, but not in Sacks’s *siddur* for the *Havdalah* ritual, although it was mentioned as sung by OW5 and OL3. This hymn is associated with the end of *Shabbat*, as the Talmudic sages taught that Elijah would come at the end of *Shabbat* to announce the Messiah. It was believed that this would happen if the whole of Israel observed *Shabbat* (B.Erub. 43b; B.Shab. 118b). The coming of Elijah to announce the Messiah is associated with *Shabbat*, because in B.Ber. 57b *Shabbat* is called a ‘taste’ of the world-to-come and Elijah is understood as the messenger of the final deliverance which will happen at the end of *Shabbat*. To be more inclusive and feminist, in FoP another song is proposed: *Miriam haNevi’a*. It was written by Leila Gal Berner and Arthur Waskow, and is sung to the tune of the traditional melody for ‘*Elijahu HaNavi*’. The song was introduced into the *Pesach seder* and *Havdalah* rituals by those who felt the need to include more women’s voices and contemporary issues in prayers.\(^{175}\)

Harold Fisch sees Elijah as the ‘wanderer archetype … who does marvellous deeds – to annul evil decrees, to save individuals in distress, to heal the sick, succour the poor, and in general perform useful social services’ (1980, p. 125). Elijah is a liminal figure betwixt and between, who is found at the ‘crossroads’ of time in Jewish liturgy (in the blessing after the *Haftarah* reading, *birkat hamazon*, *Pesach seder*, circumcision ceremony) as a forerunner of the messianic time. These rituals mark moments of transition in the life of Jewish people: from slavery to freedom, entering the covenant or, in the case of the *Havdalah*, moving from sacred to ordinary time (Adelman, 2009, pp. 184–6).

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\(^{172}\) For more, see Posner et al., 1975.

\(^{173}\) In Progressive *siddurim* only the song’s refrain is given. In the more Orthodox *Siddur Ahavas Shalom* (1987), this hymn has many strophes and it relates events from the life of the prophet Elijah.

\(^{174}\) For its history, see Idelsohn (1972, p. 103).

\(^{175}\) For new rituals proposed by feminists such as an orange at the Passover *seder* and Miriam’s cup, see e.g. [http://jwa.org/blog/he-orange-on-seder-plate-and-miriams-cup-foregrounding-women-at-your-seder](http://jwa.org/blog/he-orange-on-seder-plate-and-miriams-cup-foregrounding-women-at-your-seder) (Accessed 02 October 2019).
By invoking Elijah, the particularistic notions of the Havdalah are strengthened, although some move rather toward a more universalistic tone by ending the ritual with the greeting: Shavua tov! or in Yiddish A gut woch! (FoP, p. 461; LCh, p. 570) which can be sung, wishing that the peaceful and joyful atmosphere of Shabbat be extended into the whole week.

Summary

In this chapter, I have analysed P/U notions found in the Shabbat afternoon with its distinctive Minchah service, Oneg Shabbat and Se'udat shelishit and the concluding ritual of Shabbat – Havdalah. Havdalah with its ideology of differentiation and distinction as well as its relation to P/U notions, is a perfect example to show various approaches of editors of the texts and creative approaches (individual and communal) to its performance.

The traditional role of Havdalah, even without the contested distinction bein Isra’el la’amim, and its ritual is to create a shared experience of marking the end of the distinctive Jewish time of Shabbat before going back to an ordinary one in which Jewish identity is voiced less often and less strongly than on Shabbat. All the participants regarded the Havdalah as a particularistic ritual because of its ideology in relation to Shabbat. This ideology is not only expressed through words (the prayers and any commentaries included), but also through the performance of the ritual: music, gestures and material culture, which are the markers of a distinct time and religion belonging to a specific People and their particular narrative. However, an opposite process can also take place through the use of the same means but proceeding from the non-Jewish context, which may result in toning down the particularistic notions.

While discussing P/U notions, some changes in the Havdalah performance have been described to illustrate changes in the perception of Havdalah mainly within the Progressive setting. Havdalah is also an example of a wider phenomenon of the re-institution of once-abandoned rituals into the practice of the Progressive Movements. But the data gathered for my research shows that the traditional context of the Havdalah mainly at home, is today shifting more and more to the community. The ritual, especially in Progressive Jewish homes and communities, has not fully ‘returned’ in its traditional form, but as I have shown, is perceived by some leaders and educators as an important part of Jewish life, identity and education. It also has its own new place in community and individual contexts. Moreover, when the Havdalah ritual is
performed, it may receive a different interpretation to the traditional ideology, such as
in marking the end of the divorce process. *Havdalah* is therefore an example of a
‘creative retraditionalisation’ (Illman, 2018a) of Jewish Progressive ritual, turning
toward tradition but in a way that gives new, creative meanings to a traditional ritual.
Conclusion

The relationship between the Jewish people and the rest of the world has always been complex and inconsistent. Accordingly, the particularistic and universalistic ideology of prayerbooks and ritual presents a multifaceted picture. A siddur is a repository of prayers, thoughts and experiences of the Jewish community, their aspirations and visions concerning God and self. As such, to be faithful to the biblical founding narrative where God is not only the God of the Jewish People but also of the whole universe, it must also engage with the world beyond particularistic boundaries. Thus Jewish liturgy is also a place of unresolved tension and movement between particularism and universalism, where (depending on the community ideology and historical circumstances) one aspect may be more strongly voiced, though the other can never be completely obliterated, as it would lose the intrinsic feature of Jewish liturgy.

Examining the journey through Shabbat in contemporary British Orthodox and Progressive Judaism confirms fluctuations in particularistic and universalistic elements. This study examines the Orthodox siddur and critically evaluates the changes made by the editors of Progressive prayerbooks in both the forms of the liturgical texts themselves and in the commentaries. It seeks to understand whether their modifications meaningfully change the P/U ideology of the texts and elements of the Shabbat ritual for contemporary users, and the extent to which they reflect the convictions of its users concerning Jewish identity and belonging to a wider society.

Conforming to the approach to religion as ‘lived reality’ (Bowman and Valk, 2014, Harvey, 2013, Primiano, 1995, 2014), content analysis of the siddurim is accompanied by an examination of ethnographic material drawn from participant observation and interviews concerning the Shabbat ritual conducted in Orthodox, Reform and Liberal synagogues in London between 2014 and 2019. Choices made by leaders and worshippers (e.g. concerning language, gestures, music, leaders’ comments, ritual objects, space or the presence of guests) affect their understanding of the prayerbooks and their participation in rituals. Thus, the official ideology concerning P/U in each movement presented in the prayerbooks has been triangulated with the convictions of those who prepare and participate in the Shabbat liturgy at home and in synagogues.
To achieve this, the following research questions were formulated:

- How are P/U expressed in prayerbooks and ritual?
- How do the liturgy and the ritual reflect the P/U convictions of participants? Do the chosen prayerbooks ‘encapsulate the self-understanding of a given community at a given moment in time’, as the editors of *Forms of Prayer* claim (*Forms of Prayer*, Preface)?
- Have the editors of Progressive prayerbooks succeeded in universalising the traditional texts, which early Jewish Reformers accused of ‘overstating the distinctiveness of the Jews from other peoples’ (cf. *Lev Chadash*, p. xv)? Do the changes introduced in the three modern prayerbooks significantly change the P/U of the text as well as of those who pray?
- What is the relationship between the liturgical text in the prayerbook, the ritual itself and the understanding of the ritual in the minds of worshippers?

**Developing the argument**

Chapter 1 discussed the preparation for *Shabbat* and began to trace particularizing nuances of Jewish ritual which are tools to create and enter *Shabbat*. Shopping, cooking, arranging the space, choosing garments, inviting guests, giving *tseddaakah*, studying and praying involve choices, which in turn influence to what extent one wishes to create a particularistic atmosphere for *Shabbat*. These choices were made according to personal adherence to Jewish traditions regarding the keeping of the *Shabbat* laws, but it was also shown that through conversations or in the presence of invited guests, even a carefully created *Shabbat* atmosphere could be universalised to a certain extent. This chapter focused on ritual practices in order to show that certain particularistic themes such as those related to the Temple or the notion of election are expressed not only through words in prayerbooks but also symbolically through ritual gestures or material objects.

Chapter 2 focused on the analysis of the ritual of lighting candles, which marks the beginning of the sacred time. I showed that P/U ideas are embodied within the performance, performers and objects involved in the candle lighting, and also within additional texts and commentaries included in the *siddurim*. Such texts may modify the message of the prayers that are recited. Data gathered from the interviewees showed that the ritual of candle lighting is strongly associated with Jewish identity and with...
belonging to a particular group. For some, it is the only element in the Shabbat ritual that they practice, and therefore it is the only reminder of their Jewishness. For others, the lighting of candles initiates a series of other traditional Shabbat practices, which are an integral part of who they are and what they do on this sacred day. Hadlakat Nerot can also be performed in a synagogue setting; in Progressive synagogues, some leaders changed the particularistic symbolism of the practice by adjusting its performance.

The next three chapters examined the ritual of Erev Shabbat and certain prayers used on Friday night. I showed how the P/U balance of every Shabbat evening ritual can differ, not only because of the level of one’s adherence to tradition, but also because of the way of performing or through the presence of guests. One of the essential ritual elements of Friday night is consuming a meal at home or with the community. What one eats, when, how, what is said and with whom, all will give an indication of how individuals, families and communities strike their balance between P/U. Furthermore, while discussing prayers for this part of Shabbat, the role of the sacred narrative was examined more deeply through the texts of the liturgy of Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma’ariv for the eve of Shabbat, as well as prayers for the mealtime. One of the commandments of Shabbat is to remember, but what is remembered in the prayerbooks expresses P/U ideology. I showed that the Creation aspect of Shabbat in prayers is more dominant on Friday than on Saturday. Thus, those who participate only on Friday may experience the liturgy differently. However, Friday night liturgical texts are not free from more particularistic expressions. Therefore, I included an analysis of how interviewees interpret such texts.

The Shabbat morning synagogue ritual, discussed in chapter 6, has several distinctive features related to Jewish notions and identity and therefore allowed for further examination of the P/U dynamics of this part of the liturgy. The Shabbat morning service offers the most intensive exposure to particularistic ideology, especially during the Torah service, which is the peak of the Shabbat liturgy. Such particularism is also expressed through other prayers, modes of speaking (language, concepts, sacred narrative), gestures, ways of relating to others, additional themes, and ritual boundaries in relation to non-Jewish participants.

In the next chapter, I continued to examine the Shabbat morning ritual. However, I shifted focus to content analysis of the liturgical texts and expressions of P/U contained in them. Through a selection of the most exemplary prayers, I showed the range of strategies that Orthodox and Progressive editors and prayer leaders employ to weaken or strengthen their P/U ideological balance. Yismach Moshe and Lo
were named by several Orthodox and Progressive interviewees as the most problematic when it comes to the representation of non-Jews. Furthermore, I discussed various versions of *Aleinu*, since it is a powerful example of a prayer that forces its editors to grapple with issues of P/U and particularly the question of Jewish chosenness. Prayers for the Community were also analysed, as they are the newest addition to a *siddur* and they are among the few liturgical texts that are regularly updated. I showed how the tension between P/U in these prayers also relates to people's convictions concerning the vision of the role of the Jewish people among whom they live in the diaspora, being a part of *klal Israel*.

The final chapter was dedicated to a discussion of P/U notions found in the *Shabbat* afternoon with its distinctive *Minchah* service, *Oneg Shabbat*, *Se'udat shelishit* and the concluding ritual of *Shabbat: Havdalah*. As in previous chapters, the textual analysis was triangulated with the data gathered from participant observation and interviews in order to show how P/U are strengthened or modified through the practice and personal opinions of interviewees. The text of the *Havdalah* ritual is a perfect example for discussing approaches by individuals and communities when they present a particularistic ideology. Its symbolism, however, is not only expressed through words (by which I mean both the prayers and commentaries), but also through the performance of the ritual: music, gestures and material culture, which are the markers of a distinct time and of a sense of religion belonging to a specific people and their particular narrative. *Havdalah* was also chosen as an example of a wider phenomenon of re-instituting once-abandoned rituals in Progressive Movements. I showed that the turn toward tradition is often done creatively, so that some elements may be reinterpreted for personal needs and thereby lose their particularistic meaning. My research also showed that the traditional context of the *Havdalah*, which is mainly at home, is today shifting more and more to the community, synagogue or school, or other communal gatherings. Clearly, its particularistic role as a ritual of building Jewish identity is seen in some contexts as important for sustaining Jewish life.

I conclude that the interplay between P/U is an important ideological aspect of Jewish prayers and ritual. Particularism is intrinsic to Jewish liturgy, as the performance of prayers and ritual constitute a collective moment in which Jews gather as a part of the Jewish people and in which they confirm their commitment to Jewish values and responsibilities flowing from convictions about the covenantal relationship with God. But universalism is not absent even from traditional liturgical compositions,
as can be seen in prayers concerning the messianic age. Furthermore, without particularistic expressions, universalism loses its clarity, whereas particularism without universalism may suggest chauvinistic or fanatical sentiments.

**Mapping P/U in Orthodox and Progressive Movements**

An Orthodox prayerbook contains some formulations that are more particularistic in scope and some phrases which express violence, exclusivism and triumphalism over non-Jews. However, I have shown with regard to certain prayers (e.g. *Aleinu*), that Progressive prayerbooks as well are not completely free of such notions, though they may be radically toned down. These particularistic sections are expressions of a history in which Jews often found themselves to be a persecuted minority in the lands of their dispersion. However, interviewees indicated them as problematic. Thus, I have identified various strategies, which often depend on the approach to change of specific worshippers and prayer leaders, that are used in prayer and ritual concerning undesired particularistic formulations.

Until today, Orthodox Judaism takes the position that the majority of liturgical compositions cannot be changed, and therefore texts which are seen as difficult for a contemporary worshipper to recite, continue to be included. Such prayers are in every part of the *Shabbat* liturgy, and a few Orthodox interviewees named these texts as challenging. They also searched for alternative ways of embracing this disharmony through concentrating on the role of ritual rather than the content of the texts themselves. Some preferred to recite such texts silently instead of with the community.

The editor of Orthodox prayerbooks did not consider the possibility of universalising texts as a strategy to make particularistic prayers more acceptable. Alternative ways of dealing with printed texts could be through non-literal translations or commentaries. However, Sacks retained the traditional Orthodox formulations and no radical changes were introduced. Such a position may reflect the controversies which arose around his more universalising vision presented in his book *Dignity of difference* (2002), discussed in the introduction. Thus Sacks was persuaded to take more traditional and particularistic formulations concerning the representation of non-Jews than he at first wished to do.
Similarly, I have shown that the Orthodox Shabbat ritual in a community setting has particularistic boundaries, which limit participation to synagogue members. Thus, in the majority of cases, the ritual was conducted in a traditional way and rarely were any exceptions made (e.g. recitation of the prayer for the British government). However, as the ritual allows inclusion of additional prayers during the Torah service, sometimes in the case of tragedy such as terrorist attacks non-Jews were named and included in community prayers. On the other hand, in home settings where non-Jews were present, some negotiation and inclusion could take place. Such compromise was restricted to certain elements of ritual (e.g. candle lighting), and would not allow for the recitation of a blessing on behalf of a Jew. Thus, within home ritual, similarly to progressive synagogue settings, notions of P/U could be strengthened or even overturned in favour of the ideology of participants. They were able to do this through conversations around the liturgy and choices they made, selecting some while omitting others, performance, gestures, origin of used ritual objects, language, etc.

Reform and (to an even greater extent) Liberal siddurim have been amended. However, like the Orthodox prayerbook, they contain particularistic content, and I have shown that the prayerbooks being used in Progressive synagogues today contain a liturgy that is more particularistic than that presented by early reformers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This turn to particularism is manifested through some traditional formulations and prayers within Progressive prayerbooks. I observed a turn toward tradition and the presence of neo-particularisation, which was stronger in the Reform context, but also present in Liberal prayers and ritual. Progressive interviewees’ opinions varied concerning these tendencies. Some interviewees rejected them, by omitting or replacing them with more universalistic texts. I observed this rejection and omission taking place not only in the home context but also in synagogues, since leaders of progressive prayer can bring their own texts and replace those printed in the siddur, if the ideology is perceived as not appropriate or not responding to a specific moment.

However, others (especially in the Reform movement) spoke about the value and role of particularism for Jewish identity. They felt comfortable with the ideology presented in FoP. The preference in both movements for Hebrew over English for the recitation of prayers and especially for singing also confirmed this trend. Interviewees indicated that the role of Hebrew was important in relation to their Jewish identity and belonging to a particular group. However, there were also voices, especially of Liberal
respondents, who met this turn with ambivalent feelings, as they thought the prayer language should be understood and that use of Hebrew could be seen as distancing, alienating and even elitist.

Like their prayerbooks, Progressive ritual as it is practised today incorporates more traditional elements. However, as in the example of the Havdalah that I discuss above, Progressive prayer leaders may adapt certain elements of the service in order to align them better with their ideology.

Ethnographic data showed that the P/U balance in the ritual of Progressive synagogues not only varied according to the movement’s ideology presented in the siddur, but also between each service. At the same time, some Liberal communal services were more particularistic in scope because of the influence of leaders who had a Reform background and for whom particularism was an important part of their ideology. Furthermore, the perception of P/U notions by the interviewees also depended on political and sociological circumstances. Particularistic expressions in siddurim were seen as necessary and valued especially when the Jewish community or Israel was under attack. Similarly, universalistic prayers were brought into the ritual whenever there was a concern for wider society, and the Jewish community wanted to express solidarity and belonging within it. Thus, the possibility of adaptation to circumstances in which services were conducted could result in a different outcome.

I have also shown with various examples such as the official recognition of a non-Jewish presence during a service, mentioning and celebrating events from wider society, or even including additional themes chosen for a specific Shabbat, that the P/U ideology of prayers could be strengthened or weakened. Thus, the specifically Jewish atmosphere, or ‘bubble’, which the ritual on Shabbat provides, is often porous. Ritual boundaries are negotiated, especially at those moments when life-cycle events take place with the participation of a non-Jewish parent or non-Jewish synagogue members.

From my analysis of the data from the interviewees, a specific understanding emerged of the role of ritual in general and of the different ways in which it is understood by individual leaders (who engage with the study of liturgical texts or with leading the services) and participants (who do not). Being asked about the meaning of chosen complex texts, respondents from the second group said that the ideology of texts was less important for them than the ritual action itself and engaging with
meaning was difficult. This is in line with Schonfield’s observation when he talks about the phenomenon of the ‘incuriousness of the Jewish worshipper’ (Schonfield, 2006, p. 11). It also confirmed the theory that ritual is more about doing than about what is said (Bell, 1992, Seligman et al., 2008) and that ritual has multiple referential bonds to objects, so when one meaning is irrelevant another interpretation that is meaningful for a participant may be added (Scheffler, 1981). As this thesis engages mainly with ideology, further research is needed on the role of Jewish ritual in general and the question of which elements are appreciated by participants in order to help make the ritual more meaningful and appealing to a contemporary worshipper.

As I have shown with reference to the example of Aleinu, the message of particularistic texts is more likely to be neglected when it is accompanied by an established musical composition or modern ‘catchy’ tune. Thus, music may overrule the intellectually honest approach, as the feeling of attachment that music provides allows worshippers to go beyond words and focus on the experience, memories that may be attached to it, emotions, feelings, etc. Similarly, gestures that carry the weight of Jewish tradition are more likely to be performed in services than was the case even a couple of decades ago. When I asked interviewees about the meaning of some gestures, the answer I received was more related to the perception that this is simply what Jews do while praying. Thus, such gestures provide the worshipper with a link to tradition, a notion of authenticity, and they fulfil a need for embodiment more than providing a specific symbolism.

Although the majority of Progressive leaders confirmed the need for a siddur and ritual to ‘encapsulate the self-understanding of a given community at a given moment in time’ (FoP, Preface), they spoke about their reservations toward particularistic expressions. On the other hand, the ideal of a universal ethical Judaism, so prominent in Progressive movements, today seems not to be enough. Editors of Progressive prayerbooks, who once strongly amended particularistic expressions in their liturgical texts, have opted in editions currently being used for some texts in their traditional forms. This trend shows how strongly prayer is attached to tradition, history and the self-understanding of community. Yet all Progressive leaders and editors agreed that neither siddur nor ritual should include ideology which would be seen as unacceptable to be said in the presence of ‘the other’.
It was also noted that in LCh as well as FoP there is a lack of consistency in some prayers, for example, in relation to the word *bahar* (‘chosen’). Sometimes the English version differed from the Hebrew, or the traditional version was kept in Hebrew, whereas the English translation contained a more interpretative formulation. This shows a wider acceptance of traditional formulations, which once were seen as problematic because of their particularistic ideology. Especially the Reform *siddur* indicates such a tendency. This also seems to be the case in the Liberal movement, as was indicated in the course of a conversation with an editor of a draft of the new Liberal *siddur*, the first version of which had been used in some communities while this research was in its final stage. Thus, a further examination of this trend would be worthwhile.

Thus, there is a tension between tradition and reform. But there is also a need to change and innovate that keeps religion relevant to the lives of its adherents. Tradition in Progressive Judaism was seen as a source not only in need of preservation, but of exploration, development and adaptation to the needs of contemporary worshippers. This corresponds to Vanessa Ochs’s finding that ‘turning to the past evokes certainty, security and imagined community’ (2007, p. 6), providing the feeling of legitimacy and continuity to new practices.

**Unresolved tensions**

To conclude, the ideological tension between P/U is left unresolved in all three *siddurim*. This thesis is about how Jewish communities, editors and liturgists struggle with speaking about their own particularity and their reasons for it, and at the same time expressing that Jews are the same as everybody else. Traditional texts which relate to the historical experience of the Jewish community present an understanding of the contemporary world to a lesser degree. Thus, each new edition of the *siddur* needs to adapt tradition if only through the inclusion of commentaries, as in the Orthodox case, or through modification of Hebrew and/or English prayers, so that a contemporary worshipper finds it meaningful. The P/U ideology of prayerbooks presents a challenge mainly to a reader who understands Hebrew, who makes the effort to reflect upon the received texts, who engages in the study and preparation of the *Shabbat* liturgies.
However, the prayer texts are not the only place in which P/U is expressed. Ritual objects, space, music, body gestures, style of service, etc. provide additional meaning to that embedded in the words, and this needs to be taken into consideration while examining the ideology of a prayerbook. Moreover, particularistic texts often come to light in the presence of the ‘other’, though in Orthodox synagogues such occasions are rare, which is maybe why in Progressive settings leaders more often voiced their concern about the presentation of non-Jews and the wider world in the siddurim.

Thus, precisely because those who do not engage with the ideology of prayerbooks still experience the P/U ideology through the ritual itself, the outcome would be different were one simply to focus on the meaning of the prayers. This study has demonstrated that it is not enough to examine only verbal expressions of the ritual. By triangulating the reading of the text with ethnographical methodologies, this thesis provides a better understanding of the way in which Jewish liturgy works as lived religion. In this way, it contributes to further discussion of P/U notions within the Jewish liturgy and serves to advance methodological thinking about siddurim and Jewish ritual.

Future research

This project provides a foundation for further engagement with other moments of the Jewish liturgical year in which tensions between P/U may be found. Succot and Purim would be good contexts to begin the next research project, as they represent two ends of the P/U spectrum. In the first festival, universalistic elements are strongly voiced, whereas Purim is highly particularistic in its focus. Work on remaining parts of the Jewish liturgy such as daily prayers or festivals should be continued in order to help those who are preparing the next editions of the prayerbooks. This research has also shown that engaging with data coming from interviews and participant observation, i.e. the triangulated methodology approach, sheds additional light that should be taken into account by those who are editing new prayerbooks.

On the basis of the promising findings presented in this thesis, other research with the same methodology could be conducted within other faiths, in order to research P/U elements within their liturgical texts. For example in Catholicism, where the liturgical texts have undergone theological scrutiny especially as regards the
presentation of Jews, the work is still not entirely successful, since there are texts which use (for example) triumphalist language. Moreover, engaging with ethnographical data could bring out other particularistic notions which are expressed through non-verbal elements in the ritual.
Appendix

List of interviews

LM1 – Liberal Man 60s 16.10.18
LM4 – Liberal Man 60s 11.01.17
LR1 – Liberal Rabbi Woman 50s 31.05.16
LR2 – Liberal Rabbi Man 50s 26.05.16; 30.05.16
LR3 – Liberal Rabbi Woman 60s 07.06.16
LR4 – Liberal Rabbi Man 70s 29.11.16; 03.12.18
LR5 – Liberal Rabbi Woman 50s 27.02.17
LR6 – Liberal Rabbi Woman 40s 19.04.17
LR8 – Liberal Rabbi Man 40s 02.11.17
LR9 – Liberal Rabbi Man 60s 05.12.17
LStR1 – Liberal Student Rabbi Man 40s 08.02.17; 09.02.17
LStR2 – Liberal Student Rabbi 40s 26.03.18
LStR3 – Liberal Student Rabbi Man 30s 14.03.17
LStR3 – Liberal Student Rabbi Woman 40s 01.03.17; 18.10.17
LW1 – Liberal Woman 40s 10.01.17
LW2 – Liberal Woman 60s 23.05.18
LW3 – Liberal Woman 50s 10.01.17; 23.10.18
OL1 - Orthodox Prayer Leader 60s 31.05.16
OL2 – Orthodox Prayer Leader Man 60s 01.06.16; 03.02.17
OM1 – Orthodox Man 60s 12.03.18
OM2 – Orthodox Man 40s 12.03.18
OR1 – Orthodox Rabbi Man 40s 08.06.16
OR3 – Orthodox Rabbi Man 50s 12.01.17
OW1 – Orthodox Woman 60s 06.05.17
OW2 – Orthodox Woman 40s 23.04.17
OW3 – Orthodox Woman 40s 08.05.17
OW7 – Orthodox Woman 40s 11.05.17; 22.05.18
RM1 – Reform Man 40s 13.12.18
RR1 – Reform Rabbi Woman 50s 31.05.16
RR2 – Reform Rabbi Man 60s 04.12.17
RR3 – Reform Rabbi Woman 40s 09.03.16
RR4 – Reform Rabbi Man 40s 02.11.17
RR5 – Reform Rabbi Woman 60s 28.11.17
RR6 – Reform Rabbi Woman 50s 11.10.18
RR8 – Reform Rabbi Woman 50s 03.05.18
RR9 – Reform Rabbi Woman 30s 10.09.19
RStR1 – Reform Student Rabbi Man 40s 03.11.16
RStR2 – Reform Student Rabbi Man 30s 08.02.17
RStR4 – Reform Student Rabbi 50s 25.03.17
RStR5 – Reform Student Rabbi Man 30s 13.02.18
RStR6 – Reform Student Rabbi Man 30s 14.02.18
RW1 – Reform Woman 30s 14.03.16
RW2 – Reform Woman 30s 20.03.16
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