(UN)BOXING THE GENDERED SILENCED PAST: THREE GENERATIONS' SELF-IDENTIFICATION PROCESS WITH JEWISH IDENTITY IN (POST)YUGOSLAV SPACE

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ABSTRACT

The main research question of this thesis is *how is self-identification process with their Jewish heritage negotiated by second and third generation Jewish women in (post)Yugoslav context through three means: marriage, identity doubling and community belonging.*

My research has three main objectives. Firstly, I aim to uncover how certain identities and subjectivities are either silenced or expressed within family structures, and their impact on daughters and granddaughters. Secondly, I delve into the phenomenon of shifting and blending identities, focusing on the agency individuals have in choosing narrative strategies to shape their sense of self. This examination spans marriage dynamics and extends to broader social contexts. Lastly, I investigate the influence of participation in Jewish communities on women's identity and subjectivity. To achieve these goals, I employ three methodological approaches: oral history, (auto)biography, and archival visual research utilizing my grandmother's archive as a metaphorical 'box' symbolizing the silenced narratives of the gendered past across generations.

I identifyed three main findings. Firstly, the significance of interfaith marriage for a sense of safety has declined across generations. Secondly, identity 'doubling' remains present in the second and third generations, often viewed as liberating and enriching. Finally, family is no longer the primary transmitter of Jewish heritage and traditions; communal identity has strengthened, especially among the third generation, with increased participation in international Jewish youth seminars and gatherings.

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Above all, I want to convey my appreciation for my overall health, which includes both my physical and mental well-being, as this thesis would not have materialized without them. I am thankful that my health has remained more or less steadfast, allowing me to complete this emotionally intense, exhausting, yet incredibly inspiring research journey. *Hvala.*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 30,975 words

Entire manuscript: 31,713 words

Signed: Sara Simić

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1. Introduction

1.1. The box

I feel very sorry for knowing so little about it, but maybe I just felt that mum can't talk about it, so I did not ask… I did ask actually and we were looking through some pictures and documents that were left, but there were so little of them. And also, later, when my grandmother died, we were going through some stuff which were very well stored, they were... you know… it was not accessible, like an album or you know… for people to look at it, just put away and we only moved it from one drawer to another, in our apartment, like a box. (Sanja, Zagreb)

Growing up in early 2000s Zagreb, I got to know my Grandma's story quite early, even though she personally rarely mentioned her father's family. She was silent most of the time when her childhood was mentioned. My mother was her mediator, always speaking for her as if Grandma does not have *a voice.* I never quite understood my mother's role in being grandmother's translator, and even though I did not understand the reason, I was bothered by it. 'Why are you not letting Grandma speak?' I will protest, but this voice alternation has never happened, as if her emotional ability suddenly disappeared. As far as I can remember, I was aware of her former last name which sounded different to me, so beautiful and special, so for her 65th birthday, on August 22nd, I wanted to surprise her by adding her former surname to my own – Sara Simić Hochberger, but instead of tears of joy I, maybe naively, had expected up until this day, I only remember her silence.

I remember how my mother, Grandma, and me were standing in her living room, nobody quite grasping the situation and why the festive birthday atmosphere suddenly changed, and why there were not those expected tears of joy. The experienced silence was deafening, so present in the room that, when we finally got out of that unexpected situation by the interruption of a family member, I felt like I had just, without realizing it at first, accidentally put in motion the entire array of emotions and memories that the surname 'Hochberger' was carrying with it. This event was a month before my 16th birthday, so I felt ready and much eager to get an understanding of the reasons behind the experienced silence. As a young teen whose overly-protective mother still did not let me spend my after-school time alone listening to early 2k punk rock, I was obliged to spend my afternoons at my grandparents' apartment, in a typically Eastern European, socialist-housing neighborhood, across the Sava river, built in the early 1960s. During one of those obligatory, but nevertheless joyful, warm and loving visits, I accidentally stumbled upon a small, red, beautifully embroidered box, tied up with a white

piece of cloth. Not knowing neither its origin, purpose, nor the context behind different items found in it, I put it away,[1] but not forgetting its existence.

Today, almost 15 years later, the box inspired me to start this research journey. In this project, I aim to specifically focus on women's narratives on experiencing gendered intergenerational trauma and silences related to the Holocaust in families in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context, specifically targeting two Croatian cities – Zagreb and Osijek. In this thesis, I aim to focus on theoretical intersections of gender, Holocaust and memory studies, as well on oral history, (auto)biographical, and archival visual methodologies. Within the framework of analyzing three generations of mother-daughter relationships (Grandmother Lea – Mother Sanja, and Mother Sanja - myself), I undertake an examination through the lens of three interviews had conducted with my mother over a span of nearly 2 years, starting in 2021 until April 2023. Additionally, I engage with the narratives of five other women from both the second generation (born between the early 1960s and early to mid-1980s) and the third generation (born between the late 1980s onwards), coming from from Jewish communities of either Zagreb or Osijek. By delving into their experiences through a series of interviews, I seek to understand the ways in which the gendered narratives of the Holocaust are entanglingly and simultaneously silenced and expressed throughout generations of Jewish women. With this research, my aim is to address the gaps in literature focusing on the experiences, self-identification with(in) their Jewish heritage of second and third generations and their

[1] "see: Semel, Nava. "Intersoul Flanking: Writing about the Holocaust." *Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors&Perpetrators*, by Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger, Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2001.,p. 67." At twenty-seven, a year after I myself became a mother, I went to the table and started putting down letters. Something bothers me. A single story she told me the night before my wedding. Titus's mosquito is stinging and won't leave me along. A beautiful story. About grace within bestiality. About a woman she knew in the camp. Nothing shocking, just compassion. A kind of human splendor. From the backdoor, I enter unwittingly. And I write and put it aside, and later on, I grope for another memory and put it aside, and later on, I grope for another memory and put it aside, and a third one also comes up, drawn to the same place. Just feeling my way, I let myself off the hook, and push everything into a remote drawer."

encounters with their mothers' and/or grandmothers' narratives of gendered silences, reservations, or rejection of Jewish identity. I explore how these generations remember and recount their own lives, as well as the lives of their grandmothers, within the context of Yugoslav and post Yugoslav times. Given that the third generation often possesses only fragments and echoes of their mothers' and grandmothers' past, as it was the case in most of my interviewees' families, this research sheds light on their narratives and recollections about 'women who came before' but also about intergenerational narration of gendered memories and experiences. This research is a continuation on many others about multi-generational silences and Holocaust in different context and media, such as the very important work of, just to name a few, Marianne Hirsch with coining the term *postmemory*, or Susan Suleiman's[2] and Helen Epstein's[3] writing about their personal family histories which greatly influenced my own project. Apart from academic work in its narrow sense, there are multiple examples of family histories being narrated in, for instance creative, more to the point, film projects, both within and outside historical context of Holocaust. One of the examples of delving into familial history through archives and interviews with the mother in film is Mila Turajlić's project *The Other Side of Everything* (2017) while the example of a film about Jewish women's history discovered through the archives is the film *Nelly&Nadine* (2022). In this regard, I am cognizant that exploring one's family history through interviews with older relatives or delving into public and private archives is not a groundbreaking methodology or topic. However, this research undertakes a specific focus on two aspects that, to my knowledge, have not been extensively discussed or researched. Firstly, I delve into the gendered multigenerational history of Jewish women within the former Yugoslavia. While acknowledging the substantial contributions of scholars such as Naida Michal Brandl and Ivo Goldstein, among others, to Jewish history in

[2] Rubin Suleiman, Susan. *Daughters of History - Traces of an Immigrant Girlhood*. Standford University Press, May 2023.
[3] Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust : Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1988.

the former Yugoslav territory and the broader Balkan region, my research specifically examines the gendered multigenerational histories within this particular area, with a specific emphasis on the second and third generations. Secondly, building upon the aforementioned point, my inquiry extends beyond the Yugoslav-Jewish historical framework and explores how the second and particularly the third generation of women navigate and transcend various gendered silences and familial traumas imposed upon them. In essence, this research contributes not only to the history of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Jewry but more precisely to the Jewish gender history within the post-Yugoslav context. With a total of six interviewees and seven interviews, including three interviews conducted with my mother over nearly two years, I acknowledge that the scope of this research offers only a limited perspective on the recent and contemporary narratives of second and third generation (post) Yugoslav Jewish women. It is evident that this interview sample is not extensive enough to draw comprehensive conclusions on a larger scale. However, I believe that it does provide valuable insights into the contemporary gendered narratives and the transmission of (gendered) silences surrounding the Holocaust trauma in (post)Yugoslavia from one generation to the next.

While delving into the exploration of memories and silences through my reflective and autobiographical approach and trying to ‘unbox them’, I find myself in a unique space that intertwines elements of a family archive, historiography, childhood recollections, and the narratives of fellow Croatian Jewish women in Zagreb and Osijek, two cities with historically significant Jewish communities. Embracing an intersectional and conceptual perspective, I aim to incorporate this approach into the writing and overall structure of my thesis. Here I seek to clarify my approach to academic and creative writing, as well as the overall framing of this thesis. In adopting a blend of academic, essayistic, and autobiographical styles, I sought to expand the intersectional understanding of thesis structure in yet another dimension. At the beginning of each chapter, I metaphorically "boxed" either interview quotes or, in the analytical

chapters, various items discovered within a box I encountered at my grandmother's residence. This visual representation serves to amplify the oral history and archival narratives, and subsequently aims to "unbox" them throughout each chapter, providing an alternative to silence. The relationship between boxing and unboxing extends beyond mere concealment and revelation, encompassing aspects of abandonment and preservation, curiosity and apathy, and expression and silence. These aforementioned interview quotes or items serve as a point of departure and inspiration for crafting each chapter.

1.2. Brief historical context

The following subchapter offers a succinct historical overview of Jewish history in the Southeastern Europe/Yugoslav region, starting from the pre-World War 2 period. Its purpose is to establish a contextual framework for the ensuing discussion and to grasp the existing scholarship on Jewish history in the 20th century. Starting from the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the turn of the twentieth century that the notion of a regional Jewish identity began to take shape, or at least to be envisioned. This was primarily driven by the emergence of the Yugoslav Jewish community following the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918. Therefore, understanding the development of these Yugoslav Jewish communities is crucial for a more profound understanding of Jewish communities on the Yugoslav territory.

The disparate Jewish populations from the region that became part of the new Yugoslav kingdom in 1918[4] were institutionally integrated into a culturally diverse, Serbo-Croatian-speaking Jewish community whose leaders referred to it as “Yugoslav Jewry” which became the foundation for post-World War 2 pan-Jewish population paradigm in Yugoslavia. In 1920s

[4] As Kerenji writes, “despite the fact that since their settlement in the Balkans in the sixteenth century they had followed the common Ottoman Jewish model described by Benbassa and Rodrigue in their landmark study of the Balkan Sephardism, by the middle of the nineteenth centurt the northwestern Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire increasingly became peripheries that diverged politically from the Ottoman center.” (also see: Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *The Jews of the Balkans: The Judeo-Spanish Community, 15th to 20th Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

and 1930s, southern Slavic Jewry,[5] referring to the cultural elite, upper-middle and upper class, by the time mostly educated either in Vienna,[6] Budapest, or Istanbul, organized and led various international organizations and publications in German, Ladino and Serbo-Croatian language[7] whose goal was to connect deeply divided south Slavic Jewry, on both historical, cultural and language premises.[8] On the other hand, there were attempts, mostly from Zagreb-based Jewish leaders and press publications, such as Lavoslav Šik and Zionist publication *Židov,* to claim and even celebrate[9] numerous existing differences between Yugoslav Jewry, as well as providing „a forum for discussing common issues facing Jews in the south Slavic Balkans."[10] Nevertheless, these endeavors were only moderately efficacious and of fleeting duration, primarily due to the swift escalation of the upcoming war and, consequently, the end of Jewish intellectual activities in the region, such as the prementioned publishing and literary projects.

On April 6th, 1941, Nazi Germany, along with its regional ally[11] - Italy's fascist regime with Mussolini in charge, with a local fascist regime *Ustaša,*[12] invaded Kingdom of Yugoslavia „and overran the country in twelve days, amidst general demoralization and mass desertion."[13] From

[5] Ashkenazi and Sephardi, see: ibid.51.
[6] "Although the members of *Esperanza* (Viennese intellectual club of Sephardi intellectuals from the Balkans) apparently communicated among themselves in Ladino,… the new intellectual elite among the Jews from the Slavic-speaking Balkans (from Croatia to Bosnia-Hercegovina to Serbia, and to some extent Bulgaria)- both Sephardim and Ashkenazim- regarded Vienna, the German-speaking *Kulturbereich*, and the complex fin de siècle Zionist blend of cosmopolitanism and Jewish nationalism, as its true intellectual homeland." Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan., p 49.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Due to big disparities in both language, and culture, Zionism was the movement which had to 'glue' together south Slav Jewish communities into a coherent group.
[9] As Emil Kerenji writes, *Židov* and other Croatian Zionist publication promoted the creation of of Yugoslav Jewish unity as it was actively and consistently writing about "a common history and culture of the Yugoslav Jews." As many linguistic and cultural differences could not be denied, diverse Jewish population in Yugoslavia, according to different Zionist publications in the region, "with their different histories and cultures were branches of a common [and shared Jewish] destiny." Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan., p 94.
[10] Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan., p 48.
[11] Axis Powers in World War 2 were Germany, Italy, and Japan with five other nations joining the alliance: Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Croatia. See: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/axis-powers-in-world-war-ii
[12] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ustasa
[13] Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan.p. 96.

the earliest months of the war, Partisans were fighting on several fronts with several different armies and guerrillas. Fistly, they fought German allies – Independent State of Croatia under the leadership of Ante Pavelić, who was under the direct infuence and political instructions of Hitler's regime, including the implementation of racial laws. Even though anti-Jewish and „purification" policies[14] varied with individual regimes, Jews across Yugoslavia, broadly speaking, „experienced the fate similar to that of other Jews in Nazi-dominated Europe."[15] In Croatia,[16] the elimination of the Jewish populace was considered as an integral component of a broader genocidal enterprise initiated by Nazi Germany aimed at purging the territories of minorities beyond solely the Jewish population per se, as both Roma and Serbian population was also targeted. The biggest concentration camp on the territory of NDH was Jasenovac, also colloquially called "the Balkan Auschwitz"[17], both in the number of fatalities and territorial expanse.[18]

In these first years of Second World War, every republic had its sociopolitical specificities,[19] but for the purpose of this thesis, my primary focus is on events and atrocities[20] commited

[14] Inspired by Nürnberg laws from 1935, on 30th of April 1941, three antisemitic laws were implemented in NDH: *Zakonska odredba o rasnoj pripadnosti, Zakonska odredba o državljanstvu* and *Zakonska odredba o zaštiti arijske krvi i časti hrvatskog naroda.* Additional to these laws, several of them were implemented on 4th of June 1941: For instance, *Zakonska odredba o zaštiti narodne i arijske culture hrvatskog naroda* forbites Jews to participate in any cultural, sport, art, and social events.

[15] For the detailed overview of crimes against the Jews in Yugoslavia, see Zdenko Levental (ed.), Zločini fašističkih okupatora i njihovih pomagača protiv Jevreja u Jugoslaviji (Belgrade: Savez jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, 1952).

[16] Practiced also in parts of today's Bosnia and Hercegovina.

[17] Goldstein, Ivo. 2019. *Jasenovac*. Академска Књига, Novi Sad: Akademska Knjiga.

[18] "JUSP Jasenovac - Jasenovački Stradalnici." n.d. Www.jusp-Jasenovac.hr. Accessed April 6, 2023. https://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=5463.

[19] Slovenia was partitioned between Nazi *Reich* and Italian fascist government, parts of Kosovo and Montenegro were also under Italian rule, Macedonia was annexed by Bulgaria while in Serbia a civil war was raging among the Serbs – between the Communists and Serbian Nationalists (*Četniks)*.

[20] "The Jasenovac camp was primarily a death camp. In the Jasenovac camp system, there were execution sites where detainees were killed in the most primitive ways. Methods of killing included hanging, killing with knives, hammers and axes, and firearms. The killings took place at various locations within the Jasenovac camp complex and related camps, but also in the vicinity of Jasenovac and nearby villages." - JUSP Jasenovac - Jasenovački Stradalnici." n.d. Www.jusp-Jasenovac.hr. Accessed April 6, 2023. https://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=5463. According to the historian Slavko Goldstein, there were almost 40 thousand Jews on the territory of Yugoslavia, while only less than 10 thousand

against Jews in Nazi Reich's puppet state– "Independent State of Croatia" (known as NDH, *Nezavisna država Hrvatska*). As of 1941, the partisan movement, led by Josip Broz Tito, successfully organized resistance against the „various occupiers and puppet regimes on the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia"[21] and was, at least on the surface, „suppressed mercilessly...any instances of ethnic prejudice and discrimination,[22] so, many Jews, both men and women,[23] were saved because they joined the movement. From „an estimated two million Yugoslav women participated in the National Liberation Movement",[24] most of them served mainly as nurses, intelligence gatherers, couriers, telegraph operators and cooks, while ten percent were joining the fights." As Jews were in general warmly received without any discrimination,[25] Jewish women made „roughly half of 1,075 Jewish medical workers in the National Liberation Movement."[26]

Despite ongoing efforts to establish an accurate figure, the number of victims from this period remains undetermined, and has been frequently manipulated for political purposes, especially from the 1980s onwards.[27] Since the post-Homeland War era, there has been a significant shift in the political context surrounding the Croatian Holocaust. The reevaluation of Ustaša and

remained alive. After the war, from 1948, the majority will leave the country. - Goldstein, Slavko. *1941: The Year That Keeps Returning*. New York Review of Books, 5 Nov. 2013.

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] [23]

[24] Freidenreich, Harriet. "Yugoslavia." *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*. 31 December 1999. Jewish Women's Archive. Last accessed on May 5, 2023) <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/yugoslavia>.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

[27] Kosanović, Saša. 2018. "Andriana Benčić: Negatore Jasenovca Treba Kazniti." *Novosti*, April 6, 2018. https://www.portalnovosti.com/andriana-bencic-negatore-jasenovca-treba-kazniti. Newspaper *Novosti* is a weekly newspaper magazine published by Serbian National Council in Croatia focusing on the maters of cultural politics, minorities' rights, politics of memory and remembrance in contemporary Croatia, and workers' rights. Due to this, I thought that precisely this source was appropriate, since both Serbs and Jews were two the most targeted population during Independes State of Croatia regime.

Nazi crimes, prompted by Croatia's perceived unsuitability[28] for its involvement in the establishment of Tito's Yugoslavia and its participation in the Partisan uprising, has led to a substantial transformation of the country's politics of remembrance and memory of Second World War.[29] As the rise of nationalist discourse in early 1990s Balkan region came to be increasingly prominent, the ways of remembering, memorializing and commemorating both the Holocaust and its victims have been subject to a great change. As John Hutchinson states in his chapter in *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism- History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations,*[30] "the study of warfare is central to an understanding of nation-formation, [and] it is hardly an exaggeration to say that nationalism, in both its civic and ethnic varieties, was born in war."[31] In this sense, as Homeland War was, and still is, portrayed in the public discourse as a fight between "us" (Catholic Croats) against "them" (Orthodox Serbs, Communists and Yugo nostalgic 'traitors'), Jasenovac, as a place of the Independent State of Croatia's atrocities against Serbs, Jews, Roma people, and politically "unfit" population, and pan-Yugoslav fight against the Nazi regime, the discourse of Croatia's involvement in both had to be amended during the 1990s. Consequently, even though the current Croatian government does not officially deny the Croatian Holocaust and there is a "proclamation of commemorative days of 'remembering'"[32] there is big reservation towards, for instance,

[28] See: Connor, Walker. *Ethnonationalism the Quest for Understanding*. Princeton University Press, 2018. or: Miroslav Hroch. *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe a Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotis Groups among the Smaller European Nations*. New York Columbia Univ. Press, 2000.

[29] Kolstø, Pål. "Bleiburg: The Creation of a National Martyrology." *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 62, no. 7, 9 Aug. 2010, pp. 1153–1174, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2010.497024.

[30] Leoussi, Athena S, and Steven Elliott Grosby. *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism : History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, Cop, 2007.

[31] Hutchinson, John. "Warfare, Remembrance and National Identity." *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism - History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, by Athena S.Leoussi and Steven Grosby, Ediburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

[32] Barahona, Alexandra. *The Politics of Memory : Transnational Justice in Democratizing Societies*. Oxford, Oxford Univ. Pr, 2004. Introduction, p. 1.

politically distancing itself and condemning famous fascist salutation,[33] used by Ustaša soldiers during the war and stop sponsoring the commemoration in Bleiburg[34] where Partisans banished and killed numerous Ustaša and fascist-inclined soldiers.

Estimations suggest that the total number of fatalities falls within a range of 90,000 to 120,000 individuals, predominantly comprising Jews, Roma, and Serbian populations.[35] As it is the case in many other countries occupied by Nazi Germany, the Second World War "and the immediate post-war era fundamentally changed the image of Jewish communities in Croatia, i.e., post-war Yugoslavia."[36] A rough estimation, though the exact number of casualties were never officially confirmed, is that "between 75 and 80 percent of the Croatian Jewish population was killed in Holocaust.[37] In the last years of war or during the first post-war years, several Jewish organizations were restored, primarily religious ones, such as "*Savez jevrejskih veroispovednih opština Jugoslavije – SJVOJ* (The Federation of Jewish Religious Communities of Yugoslavia) which was considered to be "the umbrella Jewish organization in Yugoslavia"[38] or *Udruženje ortodoksnih jevrejskih veroispovednih opština* (Association of Orthodox Jewish Religious Communities). Furthermore, "unlike other Eastern European countries, where the Jewish communities sought to restrict the function of Jewish communities to religion by establishing a variety of parallel organizations,[39] Yugoslav Jewish communities maintained most of their existing activities within the already existing communities. Aside from the re-establishment of Jewish organizations, the immediate post-1945 period "was marked by the return of

[33] *ZDS,* in short

[34] Kolstø, Pål. "Bleiburg: The Creation of a National Martyrology." *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 62, no. 7, 9 Aug. 2010, pp. 1153–1174, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2010.497024.

[35] Kosanović, Saša. 2018. "Andriana Benčić: Negatore Jasenovca Treba Kazniti." *Novosti,* April 6, 2018. https://www.portalnovosti.com/andriana-bencic-negatore-jasenovca-treba-kazniti.

[36] Brandl, Naida-Michal. 2015. "Jewish Identities in Croatia after the Second World War." *Nacionalne Manjine U Hrvatskoj I Hrvati Kao Manjina - Europski Izazovi, Dobrovšak, Ljiljana I Žebec Šilj, Ivana (Eds.), Institut Društvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar*, January. https://www.academia.edu/20358423/Jewish_Identities_in_Croatia_after_the_Second_World_War.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

survivors",[40] but, at most cases, as 80 percent of Yugoslav Jewish population was killed, they found themselves alone, without any surviving family members, nor, in most cases, any property, as most of it was nationalized by Yugoslav authorities after 1945[41]. Finally, with above-mentioned percentage of Jews murdered in Holocaust, the big majority of survivors, or sometimes their children who were old enough to leave, eventually departed from the country, mostly to Israel, in late 1940s and early 1950s, when, in the first half of 1950s, "the large waves of emigration to Israel, were over, due to the beginning of more stable economic situation and lack of "state-organized anti-Jewish agitation or the wide persistence of antisemitic prejudice among the general population"[42] as it was the case in other countries oriented, at that time, towards the Soviet Union. Consequently, as Kerenji writes, the number of Jews in the country finally became stable at about 7,000."[43]

[40] Ibid.
[41] See: ibid.
[42] Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan.p 238.
[43] Ibid.

2. Methodological Framework

She had these big fears since they were going through what were they going through you know… and I feel that many of those fears she transferred to me… and sometimes I see that some of those fears I also transferred to you. (Sanja, Zagreb)

As I was inspired by different autobiographical, as well as historically layered and entrancingly-written works by Jewish women about gendered memories such as Helen Epstein,[44] Ewa Sidorenko,[45] and, for instance, Susan Suleiman,[46] I became increasingly aware of my distinct position within this research and started to contemplate how I should approach writing this thesis. I questioned whether it should lean towards an "essayistic" style, take a more strictly "academic" tone, or find a balance somewhere in between these two sides. As Epstein, Suleiman[47] and Avakian and Attarian[48] demonstrated in their writings, being caught up "in-between" – respecting the importance of traditional academic referentiality whilst maintaining one's voice and perhaps traversing boundaries of genres – has the potential of being liberating and revolutionary, I became inspired to choose being "in-between". Being on the verge of, a traditionally framed, "distant" researcher of other women's experiences of transgenerational Holocaust narratives and, on the other hand, personally involved writer of a reflexive and experiential analysis of women of my family's experiences, from the beginning,

[44] Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust : Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1988.

[45] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Rubin Suleiman, Susan. *Daughters of History - Traces of an Immigrant Girlhood*. Standford University Press, May 2023.

[48] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. 2015. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (4): 476–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

my attention, but also the biggest potential methodological, theoretical and ethical traps, was to approach this project in a reflexive (auto)biographical[49] but, at the same time, analytical, 'academic', and referential manner. So, in the process of framing this research, I was wondering how to mediate between experimental and referential, between personal and scholarly, primarily referring to and thinking of different second-generation artists, scholars and writers producing various "artworks, films, novels, and memoirs, or hybrid "post memoirs" (as Leslie Morris calls them in her book "Unlikely History.[50]

Navigating various approaches — be it visual, archival, autobiographical, or through oral history — I encountered numerous dilemmas. These ranged from the choice of writing style to the delicate balancing act between different roles (researcher, (grand)daughter, local Jewish community member), and determining how to interact with diverse materials (interviews with numerous women, visual and archival analysis). Additionally, I grappled with the need to justify my decision to interview multiple women and integrate their narratives alongside my family's story. These challenges were ever-present throughout my research journey. However, I am aware that mentioned traps are not rare in multidisciplinary, intersectional and highly personal projects,[51] so I do not consider myself unique in this position. Nonetheless, from the beginning, aside from predisposed ethnographic duality of every researcher's position – *insider* (affiliated with the community and/or an individual) vs. *outsider* (information seeker and interviewees' recruiter) – I was aware that my starting, and ending point was the story of my family, more to the point, my mother and her experience of growing up with a Holocaust

[49]Ibid., Chapter 5, page 65.

[50] Morris, Leslie. "Postmemory, Postmemoir." *Unlikely History - the Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis 1945-2000*, edited by Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes, Springer, 2000.

[51] Joan W.Scott writes about the position of experiental within historical research and how, even when trying to make experiences visible "of a different group, [it] exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as constituted relationally." - W. Scott, Joan ""Experience."" *Feminists Theorize the Political*, by Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, New York, Routledge, 1992., p. 25.

survivor in socialist Yugoslavia. Probably the longest process in this research was to find methodologically and ethically appropriate means of analyzing my interviewees' narratives, without, as Hirsch[52] stated, while referring to Susan Sontag's work *Regarding the Pain of Others*,[53] "appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and, without, in turn, having our stories displaced by them."[54] Recognizing this but, at the same time, knowing the relevance of big historical events, such as Holocaust in shaping private lives of different individuals,[55] I decided to move towards a more experi(m)ental methodological approach that would allow me to put different narratives in conversation and relation to one another, without prioritizing neither of them. While answering my main research question - how were, and still are, gendered silences negotiated by second and third generation of Jewish women in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context through three means: marriage, "doubling" strategy and community belonging – I use three methodological approaches - oral history, (auto)biography, and archival research. By simultaneously operating within the boundaries of these approaches while also interrogating their position within my study, my objective is to gain novel insights into the Holocaust narratives of postgenerations.[56] Also, I reflect on my positionality in analyzing personal family history through a triangulated approach involving three different relationships: researcher in Vienna, Austria, daughter, and Jewish community member in Zagreb, Croatia. Through this approach, I explore the challenges of assuming the role of autoethnographer when examining personal family history, while simultaneously interpreting the oral history narratives

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[52] Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory : Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.

[53] Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York, Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 2003.

[54] Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory : Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2012. Introduction.

[55] See: Rubin Suleiman, Susan. *Daughters of History - Traces of an Immigrant Girlhood*. Stanford University Press, May 2023. or: Hirsch, Marianne.2008, 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Columbia University Press.

[56] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.

of other women from the same ethnic and religious background in its capacity as a researcher. The analytical chapters will negotiate three distinct analytical positions – Marriage, 'Doubling' and Community, resulting in a more nuanced understanding of silenced family narratives. To begin with, my exploration of my interviewees' narratives surrounding marriage aims to uncover the ways in which certain identities and subjectivities are either concealed or expressed, and how these dynamics impact the daughters and granddaughters within these family structures. Secondly, building upon the concept of 'doubling', I will delve into the phenomenon of shifting and blending identities, as well as the agency to choose between various narrative strategies in shaping one's sense of self. This examination encompasses both the realm of marriage, where identity dynamics are influenced by mixed marriage systems, and extends beyond it to encompass the broader social context. Finally, in the third analytical chapter, I will investigate the impact of belonging to and actively participating in Jewish communities on women's sense of identity and subjectivity.

Moreover, what I called *(un)boxing as a metaphor* in this research serves as a methodological tool for finding new connections between personal, familial and communal narratives through the analysis of familial archival and visual material found within the box. Inspired by several scholars who used their own family archives and family visual material for the research of their family's past, such as Ewa Sidorenko,[57] Marianne Hirsch,[58] and Roland Barthes,[59] I pay close attention to both visual aspects of archival material and their material qualities, following Elizabeth Edwards' thoughts on "materiality,"[60] that possesses the capacity to unravel social dynamics along with various micro and macro histories surrounding the archive. In every

[57] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.
[58] Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames : Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1997. Introduction, p. 7.
[59] Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography*. New York, The Noonday Press, 1988.
[60] Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011., p. 49.

analytical chapter, I select an item from the box, and prior to the textual examination of the chapter's subject, I explore the item's attributes, both visual and material. I also reflect on my personal connection, thoughts, and memories associated with it. Additionally, I consider the item's symbolic connection with chosen chapter topic. Through this act, while my primary focus isn't on the experiences of the first generation, their presence is subtly interwoven through the items I' unbox'.

As far as the writing process is concerned, I can easily say that my writing process has been a long and often quite emotionally draining process. Different approaches, styles and methodologies, such as experimenting with first-person (self) narration and third-person analytical formulations with a highly interdisciplinary approach, allowed me to destabilize or, at least for this stage of research, to question authorial position as a "means of making the past intelligible."[61] In this manner, along with the picture of an item from the at the beginning of each chapter, including the introductory, theoretical, and methodological one, I metaphorically depict 'the box' in which I put different interview quotes which refers to the gradual process of unveiling, which happens through the process of writing the chapter. This unveiling is accomplished through either a quote (in the introductory, theoretical, and methodological chapters) or a descriptive portrayal reminiscent of a museum-like description of a specific item found within the box in the three analytical chapters. Each of these quotes or items serve as both a point of departure and a source of inspiration for the corresponding writing process. With respecting and addressing the uniqueness of each person's story, I believe, as Adele Hugo mentions in her chapter in *Biography as Autobiography*[62] that for families, that are "linked

[61] Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories – Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence, ed. Ayşe Gül Altinay and Andrea Pető. Part 3: Commentary, page 182.

[62] Marilyn Yalom, "Biography as Autobiography: Adele Hugo, Witness of Her Husband's Life", Chapter 4, page 59.

together[63] through shared history, similar presents and possible futures, there is indeed a justification of synchronically telling their stories. Therefore, in this project, my aim was to follow this line of thought and to reflect on different women's narratives, from either second or third generations. While my primary focus isn't on the experiences of the first generation, their presence is subtly interwoven through the items I unbox and analyze at the outset of each analytical chapter, as well as in the "boxed" quotes I dissect. Instead, my investigation centers on the narratives of the transgenerational second and third generations, particularly concerning their upbringing alongside Holocaust survivors, especially their mothers and grandmothers.

2.1. Participant recruitment

At the outset of 2022, as I recognized what I would like to work on specifically, I began contemplating potential interviewees and devising strategies for their recruitment. However, during the fall semester of 2021, as part of an Oral History class, I conducted a substantial in-person interview with my mother, both as an important starting point of my research, but also to gain more self-assurance with the interview process. This initial interview not only inspired and motivated me to embark on this research journey but also provided me with a valuable methodological and theoretical framework, as well as a portion of oral history material. However, it became apparent to me that the potential of this topic could be greatly amplified by incorporating the narratives of other women. Thus, at the commencement of the fall semester in 2022, I initiated the process of gradually reaching out to women of second and third generation within and outside of my community in Zagreb. In choosing my interviewees, I had several criteria. Firstly, as my thesis focuses on second and third generation of Holocaust survivors, my interviewees had to be born between mid-1960s (second generation) and middle to late 1990s (third generation). Furthermore, the selection of my interviewees was not influenced by factors such as class background, educational background, gender identity or

[63] Ibid., p. 59.

sexuality. This is due to the fact that mentioned categories were not my research focus. However, certain class and educational distinctions did emerge, particularly when examining the historical context of the Holocaust within the broader history of Jews in the former Yugoslavia. These distinctions were briefly touched upon during the interviews or addressed in subsequent discussions. Additionally, I engaged in more frequent conversations with my mother, conducting two additional interviews during the aforementioned period. As I resided primarily in Vienna and faced limitations on my ability to travel back to Zagreb and particularly in Osijek, these interviews with my mother took place either via telephone or video calls in Croatian.

In addition to conducting interviews with my mother, I engaged in conversations with three other women: two from the third generation and one from the second. Given the substantial role that autoethnography and reflexive methodology played in my research, I position myself as one of the 'interviewees' within this study. In this regard, journaling and recording my reflections through audio recordings served as my primary methods for 'interviewing myself.' Excluding the autoethnographic aspect, I conducted three interviews with my mother, one with Paula, one with Maja, and one with Ivanka. I encountered unexpected challenges in both identifying suitable participants and organizing interviews while not being physically present in Zagreb, but studying in Vienna. The significance of in-person contact became apparent, as nonverbal cues, facial expressions, and the overall atmosphere during the meetings proved to be crucial elements that were difficult to capture through remote communication methods.[64] Nevertheless, online interviews were effective on two occasions, but I remained acutely conscious of their methodological distinctions. I paid meticulous attention to my interviewees' speech patterns, facial expressions, and even their eye movements (whether they looked at or

[64]See: Deakin, Hannah, and Kelly Wakefield. "Skype Interviewing: Reflections of Two PhD Researchers." *Qualitative Research*, vol. 14, no. 5, 24 May 2014, pp. 603–616, journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1468794113488126, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794113488126.

away from the camera, for instance). As I conducted three distinct interviews with my mother, I remained cognizant of the potential variations in the interview atmospheres, her willingness to talk, and her openness, which is entirely normal but nonetheless a phenomenon that merits consideration. I ensured that both of us were well-rested, in a comfortable and tranquil setting, and that the interview times were agreed upon in advance before conducting interviews with my mother.

During those months of both excitements, worry and anxiety over finding enough interviewees for this project, my mother was going to our local Jewish community often, as both several communal events, such as book publications and lectures were organized as well as it was the time of big Jewish holidays, such as *Hannukah* in December. As the weeks progressed and I gradually formulated my research questions and overall methodological approach, I received contact information from an increasing number of women, both from Zagreb and Osijek, primarily through acquaintanceships with other members of the community in Zagreb. Subsequently, during weeks of late winter and early spring, I made two separate trips to Zagreb and Osijek to personally meet and engage in discussions with my interviewees. Throughout these journeys, I maintained a journal, documenting my observations and impressions of the cities, the people I encountered, and the communities I engaged with primarily to remember my impression of the people and conversations we had made as well as the atmosphere of events I visited. These notes helped me to write my upcoming subchapters (3.2. and 3.4.) in a more detailed manner.

2.2. Communities, holidays, cemeteries – fieldworks described

In the late winter of 2022, I embarked on my first fieldwork experience with the Jewish community in Osijek. Situated in the eastern part of Croatia, Osijek is the country's fourth-largest city with a population of approximately 96 thousand people, from the latest population

statistics in 2012.[65] While the Jewish community in Osijek may be small in size, it is vibrant and actively involved in a range of activities. Unlike the larger Jewish community in Zagreb, the community in Osijek organizes annual trips to Israel, international youth gatherings, children's summer camps, guided tours and public lectures. During my initial official fieldwork, I had the opportunity to visit Zagreb during the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which took place in late September 2022. I had the privilege of participating in the traditional festivities and dinner organized by the Zagreb community, accompanied by my mother. While I was aware that this marked the commencement of my official thesis feldwork, I couldn't fully immerse myself in the festive atmosphere due to a certain level of unease. However, as the evening progressed and I encountered familiar faces, coupled with the delightful indulgence in Rosh Hashanah sweets, my discomfort gradually dissipated. It was one of those joyous occasions when families united, breathing life into the community, and I felt a genuine sense of belonging. During the Rosh Hashanah dinner, I had the opportunity to converse with our rabbi. Being a naturally talkative individual, he eagerly filled me in on all the events that had transpired in Zagreb during my absence. Although his account was informative and pleasant, it proved to be somewhat draining and exhausting. However, when my mother joined our conversation, the rabbi unexpectedly invited a young woman to join us. She was a tall, blue-eyed, blond girl named Maja, coming from Osijek but with numerous friends and professional connections within the Zagreb community. As it turned out, Maja was also someone I would be interviewing in the near future.

During my initial visit to Osijek, which was more extensive and detailed than the second one, I had the privilege of meeting with Boris Lichtenthal, the current head of the community. He graciously welcomed me into his office, offering both warmth and generosity, and we engaged

[65] *Population by Age and Sex, by Settlements, 2011 Census: Osijek"*. Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011. Zagreb: *Croatian Bureau of Statistics*. December 2012.

in an introductory conversation over a cup of strong black coffee. “I hope you like the black one too”, he said in a humorous and friendly manner. Luckily, strong, black coffee is indeed my favorite, so I did not have to pretend. During our meeting, Mr. Lichtenthal inquired about the individuals I was scheduled to interview and kindly offered his assistance if needed during my stay in Osijek. Before I left his office, he generously provided me with several complimentary copies of their community magazine, Menora, which were scattered throughout his spacious, turn-of-the-century wooden office. With the magazines in hand which unfortunately did not find their place in my research, I set off to meet my first in-person interviewee from Osijek, whose house was a pleasant 15-minute walk from the community through green parks, small suburban-like streets, and secession-style, one-storey buildings.

As I made my way to Ivanka's house, the street was unusually quiet on that early Tuesday morning. Located a bit away from the city center, I arrived at her residence. Nestled amidst a Hansel and Gretel-like garden, Ivanka appeared with a warm smile, asking if I was there to see her. We entered her dining room, where she had already prepared warm tea and freshly-baked pastries. Known among her circle of friends and family for her hospitality, Ivanka had graciously extended the same gesture to us that morning. The shelves and walls of her dining room were adorned with cherished memorabilia, including pictures of loved ones and ancestors, small menorahs collected from different travels, and a collection of ceramic green frogs, which Ivanka mentioned as one of the first things upon my arrival. As we sat surrounded by family photographs, menorahs, and ceramic frogs which she collects, we slowly began our conversation. From the outset, I felt a positive and comfortable atmosphere, both of us at ease despite having only met moments before the interview. Over the course of approximately one hour and forty minutes, we delved into various aspects of her mother's, her own, and her sons' childhood and youth, as well as the discriminatory experiences her family has faced in the present. As she answered my question in a long and relaxed way, I was, on the other hand

aware of, what Louise Vasvari calls, "filtering process of remembering"[66] was always present during every interview process, as it is in every process or re-telling one's memories also outside of academia.[67] As I left her home, I experienced a mixture of emotions – joy, empowerment, and a deep sense of encouragement regarding my chosen topic, methodology, and interviewees. Some of the insights she provided unveiled new avenues for research. Rather than overwhelming me, this enrichment of my research further fueled my confidence and excitement. The following day, still motivated by the success of the previous interview, I joined Mr. Lichtenthal for a small guided tour organized by the community, exploring Osijek's Jewish history. After a month of exchanging texts and attempts to meet on Zoom, I finally had the opportunity to meet my second interviewee from Osijek – Paula. As one of the most active and engaged young members of the community, Paula received a warm welcome from everyone gathered at Osijek's main square. Caught between insider and outsider positions, I initially felt a bit out of place, as I was not a member of Jewish community in Osijek and knowing only two or three people. However, after greeting Paula, Ivanka, her grandchildren, Mr. Lichtenthal, and several other individuals I had met at that moment, I felt welcomed and joyful.

Although my next visit to Osijek was shorter and did not involve any interviews, it was still a meaningful experience for different reasons. Initially, I had not planned to return to Osijek so soon, but my needed to confirm some birth certificates of her mother and grandmother, who

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[66] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._., p. 142. Vasvari writes about Klüger's memoir and her thinking about how all Holocaust memoirs are in fact "filtering process of remembering" - KlügerRuth. *Still Alive : A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*. New York, Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2001.

[67] "…one person's memory operates within a winder context that includes memory produced and maintained by family, community and public representations. Individual memory then, is not seen as a straightforward psychological phenomenon but a socially shared experience"-Abrams, Lynn. "Memory." *Oral History Theory*, by Lynn Abrams, Routledge, 2010., p. 79.

were both born in Osijek and buried in the Jewish cemetery. This presented like a good opportunity for me to accompany her, visit our ancestral grave together, and perhaps gather some official documents from the community. Upon arriving in Osijek, our first stop was the community, where we collected the printed copy of the birth certificate that Mr. Lichtenthal had kindly prepared for us.We soon made our way to the cemetery and found the grave. As I later wandered through the streets of Osijek alone, I couldn't help but reflect on the significant chapter of my life that I was in the midst of opening, both in Osijek and in Zagreb. It struck me that, although I had randomly chosen Osijek as my second research location without being aware of my family's connection to the city, I felt a strong sense of being in the right place at the right time.

2.3. Mother and I – *our* research

When considering my multiple positionalities in this research as a granddaughter, Jewish community member, and researcher, I must acknowledge the significant contribution and cooperation of my mother, which has been crucial to the development of this project from both an ethnographic and organizational standpoint. Engaging in a collaborative effort with my mother, I have delved deeply into the subject of our family's history over the course of several months. As one among many second-generation individuals who are confronting the wall of silence[68] surrounding the narratives of her mother's past ,throughout her life, as she said multiple times in the interviews conducted, this experience has had a profound and transformative effect on her. Throughout these months of intensive research and self-reflection, my mother has consistently offered her assistance, whether it be by providing photographs from our family, Shabbat dinners in the community she attended when I was in Vienna or connecting me with people she met in the community as my potential interviewees. This support has been especially valuable as I have been primarily studying in Vienna and unable to physically

[68] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702

engage with the community on a regular basis. As a result of the support and collaborative spirit, along with the sharing of information during interviews and the provision of visual and archival materials, I started noticing a significant transformation in my family's dynamics. It became apparent that the long-standing barrier of silence was slowly being put into the light of day, as she began to openly share her narratives about growing up with a Holocaust survivor in former Yugoslavia.

While I understand that, in certain research contexts, some of these tasks may typically fall under my own responsibility, I recognized early on, over a year ago, that this endeavor ceased to be solely my research. It gradually evolved into a collaborative effort, as both my mother and I wholeheartedly delved into our family's past and our intertwined lives as individuals who have lived alongside a Holocaust survivor. From that moment onward, my mother became more than just a source of inspiration and motivation. She became a pillar of support, offering the inspiration and fortitude essential for navigating the challenges of conducting research about women and places while being so far from them. Furthermore, in addition to providing me with information and archival materials, my mother would also share videos and photographs from community dinners, events, and celebrations to ensure that I, as she said over a phone call, "do not feel excluded."[69] In the beginning of this research journey, I perceived her attempts to exert control and influence over my research and its outcomes. It seemed as though my research was veering off in a direction that was not aligned with my original intentions. However, following my initial interviews with the women I personally reached out to through people I know through the community, this research remained my own, and her previous actions, I understood as small acts of love, and a genuine desire to assist. These gestures played a significant role in mitigating the sense of isolation I experienced during my time in Vienna and bolstered my motivation for a project that occasionally felt overwhelming.

[69] Words by S.V., phone call, the end of 2022.

Through these gestures, I upheld a companion on this research road - both as a daughter and an engaged member of the community, as well as a researcher with a distinct objective.

Through this intergenerational support, I found solace in knowing that I am not alone, for in my quest for knowledge, I forge a profound and intangible connection with numerous women from the second and third generations. Our narratives, experiences, and familial histories intertwine, creating a connection that binds us together. As mentioned in earlier accounts, despite embarking upon my research expedition rooted in my own familial narrative, my intention from the very beginning was to interweave the narratives of other women. Through the establishment of connections and the practice of simultaneous contemplation, my methodology strives to dismantle a hierarchical approach that prioritizes the stories of one generation over another. Instead, it seeks to foster an inclusive and equitable space where the narratives of all generations can be honored and given equal significance. This is precisely why I view the collaboration between my mother and myself as a crucial methodological element in this research.

2.4.Making a full circle – towards a reflexive (gendered) oral history

Within the context of my thesis, it is essential to allocate a brief yet clearly defined subchapter to delineate my writing strategy and analytical approach utilized for analyzing and contextualizing the interviews I conducted. This section will also encompass a reflection on personal narrative. Drawing inspiration from many other esteemed scholars,[70] I have tried to imagine the term which would describe my methodological approach the best. Thus, through

[70] See: Sommer, Doris. ""Not Just a Personal Story": Women's Testimonies and the Plural Self'." *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography*, by Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 107–30., or: Culbertson, Roberta. "Embodied Memory, Transcendence, and Telling: Recounting Trauma, Re-Establishing the Self." *New Literary History*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1995, pp. 169–195, https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.1995.0007. Accessed 21 Apr. 2020., or: Passerini, Luisa. ""Mythbiography in Oral History."" *Myth We Live By*, by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, London, Routledge, 1990, pp. 49–60., or: W. Scott, Joan ""Experience."" *Feminists Theorize the Political*, by Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, New York, Routledge, 1992., p. 25.

the term "reflexive gendered oral history" I wished to encapsulate my methodological strategy for analyzing both the oral history materials and incorporating my own autobiographical input, as well inspiration drawn from reflection on my family archive, i.e., the box with different archival material.

In this term, several other theoretical and methodological ideas are incorporated. Firstly, the idea of *reflection*, i.e., idea of one's narrative *being reflected into* someone else's,[71] inspired by MacKay's and Yalom[72] readings signifies not strictly autobiographical nature of the project but the fact that the starting point is not *about me*, but rather it comes *from within me*, i.e., from my and my mother's experience and narrative in a form of feminist autoethnography[73]. In other words, this internal foundation acts as a catalyst, propelling the exploration into diverse realms and undergoing transformative changes as it intersects with the stories of other women. Secondly, through the introduction of a gendered frame of reference, my intention was to underscore the core theoretical frameworks of my research, namely gender studies, in conjunction with Holocaust and memory studies. This underscores the importance of integrating a gendered analysis for a comprehensive examination of the Holocaust. Gender, along with other identity categories like class, ethnicity, and religion mentioned earlier, plays a central role in understanding the nuanced intersections of these experiences and the subsequent development of memories and narratives. Consequently, the concept and methodology of "reflexive gendered oral history" aim to intertwine and foster a dialogue among the various narratives shared by women from the second and third generation of Holocaust survivors. Its purpose is to facilitate a thoughtful examination and the "unboxing" methodology

[71] Hanbery MacKay, Carol. "Biography as Reflected Autobiography: The Self-Creation of Anne Thackeray Ritchie", Chapter 5, page 65.

[72] Revealing Lives – Autobiography, Biography, and Gender", ed. Susan Groag Bell, Marilyn Yalom

[73] Ettorre, Elizabeth. *Autoethnography as Feminist Method*. Taylor & Francis, 25 Nov. 2016. Ettore's book was primarily read to learn more about the relationship between 'agency' and the usage of the form 'I' in the autoethnography

to uncover the complex dynamics involved in revealing gendered silences and familial secrets that have persisted across generations.

3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

When I think about it more, my Jewish identity did not come from my mother and grandmother, since my mother did not feel it like I do, but it came from other people, from community… from summer camps, from dance groups and now, when I am older, from organizing, with my friends, most of them also daughters of Jewish grandmothers and mothers, events for younger members and from meeting other young people around the world. (Maja, Zagreb)

Well, there was never an expectation from me to marry a Jew because, you know, haha, when we organize a seminar or other events for younger people, there are only 25 of us, so there are not so many choices in Croatia… But if I ever have kids, with whomever, I would like for them to experience what I did – being a member of our Jewish community. (Maja, Zagreb)

Through an examination of recollections and narrations of family histories among second and third generation women Holocaust survivors in Croatia, four, interconnected but still separate topics have been identified – Jews in Croatia, Jewish women in Croatia, Holocaust in Croatia, and Jewish women who survived the Holocaust in Croatia. While acknowledging the interconnectedness of these topics, I approach them as theoretical concentric circles, each containing broader aspects of analysis, with some of them being closer to the core of my research focus. Within this framework, the fourth circle, the closest one to the "center", emerges as a significant focal point—the narratives of descendants of Jewish women who survived the Holocaust in Croatia and how their experiences of being the (grand)daughters of Holocaust survivors have shaped their subjectivities and self-representation. The exploration of this specific research "circle" holds profound importance in unraveling the intricate layers

of identity and understanding the profound impact of historical trauma on subsequent generations.

In conceptualizing my interviewees' narratives and putting them into relation with the metaphor of 'unboxing', i.e., as well as connecting them with an autobiographical segment of the research, I primarily draw inspiration Carol Hanbery MacKay's, "Biography as Reflected Autobiography: The Self-Creation of Anne Thackeray Ritchie",[74] Ewa Sidorenko's work,[75] and Elena Soler's *Long-Term Ethnicized Silences": Family Secrets and Nation Building.*[76]

Starting with the examination and exploration of Jewish ethnic minority[77] after Second World War in both Yugoslavia[78] and Croatia to get a clearer picture of *our*[79] regional and local positionalities, mainly grounded in works by regional authors Veselinović[80], Kerenji[81] and Mihail Brandl,[82] in my research, I make a conscious effort to incorporate a wide range of gender-aware academic literature and analysis within the field of Jewish literature. Despite the existing fragmentation and predominant focus on masculine perspectives in Jewish studies

[74] Hanbery MacKay, Carol. "Biography as Reflected Autobiography: The Self-Creation of Anne Thackeray Ritchie", Chapter 5, page 65.

[75] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.

[76] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 - 129

[77] Referring to Ashkhenazi Jews

[78] It is important to mention that Jewish communities in Balkan region are diverse, especially on Southern Bosnian border where both Askhenazi and Sephardic Jews have been co-existing for centuries. Having in mind the scope of this thesis, I will be primarily focusing on Yugoslav Republic of Croatia and, in some cases, will mention its correlation with others, but will not go into deeper contextualization.

[79] Considering my positionality in this project, it is imperative to view it from three angles: researcher – Jewish community member in Zagreb (and Croatia) - family member of Holocaust survivor. Tensions and intersections between these three positions are at the center of my research.

[80] Veselinovic, Jovanka. "Jevrejska žena u Beogradu od druge polovine 19. veka do drugog svetskog rata." The Jewish Women in Belgrade from the Second Half of the nineteenth Century to the Second World War). Belgrade: 1999. (published conference paper). Also see: Ramet, Sabrina P., ed. *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

[81] Kerenji, Emil. 2008. "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974." University of Michigan.

[82] Brandl, Naida-Michal. 2015. "Jewish Identities in Croatia after the Second World War." *Nacionalne Manjine U Hrvatskoj I Hrvati Kao Manjina - Europski Izazovi, Dobrovšak, Ljiljana I Žebec Šilj, Ivana (Eds.), Institut Društvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar*. https://www.academia.edu/20358423/Jewish_Identities_in_Croatia_after_the_Second_World_War.

academic literature, my particular focus centers on the gendered aspects. Specifically, I delve into the lives of Jewish women, exploring communal expectations and responsibilities, gender-specific responses to trauma, as well as their roles as mothers, grandmothers, and working women in the postperiod. This exploration is primarily centered on the regional Jewish ethnic context, with a specific emphasis on Jewish women in Zagreb and Osijek.

The starting point of this project is my own family narrative, (my mother's and my own), animated through the '(un)boxing metaphor which is then viewed through several theoretical lenses, such as concepts of postmemory,[83] gender-specific, familial[84] and ethnicized silences[85] as well as different theoretical works from authors across disciplines, such as Hoffman,[86] Suleiman,[87] Epstein,[88] Vasvari,[89] and Avakian and Hourig[90] writings, whose work has primarily been in the intersection of memory, Holocaust, and gender studies. Furthermore, I refer to various works in the fields of archival and visual studies, particularly when conducting archival and visual analyses at the outset of each chapter using materials sourced from my grandmother's collection.

[83] Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory : Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. Introduction. New York, Columbia University Press, 2012

[84] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702. Accessed: April May 5th, 2023

[85] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 - 129

[86] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.

[87] Rubin Suleiman, Susan. *Daughters of History - Traces of an Immigrant Girlhood*. Standford University Press, May 2023.

[88] Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust : Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1988.

[89] Vasvari, Louise O. n.d. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony, and The Gendered Imagination." Accessed May 5, 2023. https://jewishstudies.ceu.edu/sites/jewishstudies.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/73/vasvari.pdf.

[90] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. 2015. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (4): 476–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

This analysis is primarily grounded in the work of Elizabeth Edwards[91] and Marianne Hirsch.[92] Drawing from their writings, my objective is to develop theoretical insights and delve deeper into the mechanisms through which self-narration and the embrace of Jewish identity operate within the context of intergenerational gendered silence. Apart from the aforementioned theoretical works, I highly ground my research in analysis of my interviewees' narratives (oral history methodology). This exploration will be anchored in three distinct focal points: marriage, doubling, and communal identity.

As a point of departure, it is important to briefly reflect upon the term *Jew* as such, in the context of Central European Jewry and the Second World War. To start with, as the traditional or *Halakhic* tradition defines, "a Jew is a person born of a Jewish mother or who has converted to Judaism according to certain rules, prescribed by Jewish law.[93] As the Jewish Enlightment period or *Haskalah* in the 18th century "gave rise to the religious reform,"[94] European governments started to see, and categorize Jewish population as a religious one from the 18th century, or both as national and religious category, as it was the case in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and in today's political systems in Central-Eastern Europe and, consequently, in contemporary Croatia. However, as is the case with many other categories of classification, *Jew* as a term is highly insufficient, since both gender, class, race and ethnicity[95] are left out of

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[91] "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011.

[92] Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames : Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1997.

[93] Halahka (הלכה) is the Jewish law, which includes biblical laws (613 micvot or commandments), Talmud and rabbinical laws as well as customs and traditions.

[94] Brandl, Naida-Michal. 2015. "Jewish Identities in Croatia after the Second World War." *Nacionalne Manjine U Hrvatskoj I Hrvati Kao Manjina - Europski Izazovi, Dobrovšak, Ljiljana I Žebec Šilj, Ivana (Eds.), Institut Društvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar*, January. https://www.academia.edu/20358423/Jewish_Identities_in_Croatia_after_the_Second_World_War.

[95] Jewish "race" during Nazi Germany was the official categorization. See: Brandl, Naida-Michal. 2015. "Jewish Identities in Croatia after the Second World War." *Nacionalne Manjine U Hrvatskoj I Hrvati Kao Manjina - Europski Izazovi, Dobrovšak, Ljiljana I Žebec Šilj, Ivana (Eds.), Institut Društvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar*, January. https://www.academia.edu/20358423/Jewish_Identities_in_Croatia_after_the_Second_World_War.

the analytical scope. In this section, I delve into the intersectional approach of incorporating gender analysis into research on the status of Jewry in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. This period was marked by the destruction or significant alteration of financial status, family relationships, community cohesion, and identity among Jewish individuals, primarily due to the prevalence of mixed-marriage practices. These unions often resulted in surname changing practices among women,[96] often leading to the legal erasure and silencing of their Jewish identity, both within and outside the familial context.

As Louise Olga Vasvári stated in her review of "Holocaust memories" project,[97] the intersectional approach of both Holocaust and gender studies can reveal specificities of gender-related suffering, but also means of survival and forging new paths for future generations by analyzing them as not disparate, but disciplines that are always in synergy, finding a path towards a new understanding of our social, political and historical reality. The question of suffering during Holocaust, as Vasvari wrote, is not about "who suffered more, but rather that gender analysis enhances our understanding through consideration of as many individual stories as possible." [98] Thus, gender cannot be understood as "merely a substitute for women, as it is too often used, [as] a term to describe the relation between the sexes, the social organization of sexual difference.[99] Even though mixed-marriages between a Jewish woman and non-Jewish man were in existence as a practice in different former Nazi territories after 1945[100] I argue that, the mentioned, rather known practice, in most cases, had a different and

[96] While today it became quite often that both spouses take each other's surnames, until recently it was specifically reserved for women, so we might consider it as a gendered privilege.

[97] Vasvari, Louise O. n.d. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony, and The Gendered Imagination." Accessed April 7, 2023. https://jewishstudies.ceu.edu/sites/jewishstudies.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/73/vasvari.pdf.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] See: Bukey, Evan Burr. *Jews and Intermarriage in Nazi Austria*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

more layered connotation, which is deeply connected with the role of agency and autonomy. In recent years, the field of bioethics and research ethics, among other disciplines, has experienced a shift towards a more relational perspective in terms of theory and academic discourse. Scholars such as Mackenzie, Luna, Rogers, and Dodds[101] have argued that understanding vulnerability from a relational standpoint goes beyond mere protection from harm, and also includes promoting autonomy and agency. Relational approaches recognize that "identities, circumstances, and opportunities are shaped through interactions with social structures and processes [and] [t]herefore, vulnerability, autonomy, and agency are seen as socially constructed."[102] Despite these theoretical advancements, ethical guidance and practices regarding research with individuals commonly considered vulnerable, still tend to rely on essentialized and homogenized notions of vulnerability. These approaches often fail to fully acknowledge and respond to the autonomy and agency of these individuals. As Mackenzie, Rogers and Dodds argue, there is a substantial need for a greater implementation of feminist relational approaches in everyday research ethics practices and ethical guidance for research involving vulnerable populations. Inspired and motivated by their work, I spent a great amount of time reflecting on the role of agency and autonomy in first generation of Jewish women during and after the Holocaust in Yugoslav context, as their entering into marital unity could easily be viewed as merely a sense of 'desperation', which, I believe is not true. It is crucial to perpetually highlight the complexity of human agency in contexts of structural and other forms of trauma and to offer different valuable insights to better inform researchers' ethical obligations. While the concepts of "agency" and "autonomy" are distinct - with autonomy often understood as self-determination, self-reflection, and self-rule, and agency as the capacity to do or act - it is agency that often takes center stage in discussions within gender

[101] Mackenzie, C., Rogers, W., & Dodds, S. (Eds.). (2014). *Vulnerability: New essays in ethics and feminist philosophy*. Oxford University Press; Luna, F. (2009). Elucidating the concept of vulnerability: Layers not labels. *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, *2*(1), 121–139., p. 131.
[102] Ibid.

studies, as Jennings[103] writes. Autonomy, on the other hand, is typically incorporated into broader conceptions of agency to provide a comprehensive understanding of individuals' capabilities and capacities.[104]

Mixed, or also often called, interfaith marriage and, consequently, surname-changing practices in Jewish women, was a common strategy for different kinds of "protection", both financial as well as social and political, even though a life-threatening regime, referring to occupying forces of Nazi Germany and its allies, was over. However, even more relevant, by changing a surname, using Pine's and Haukanes' term, the *wall of silence*[105] between *them* and *the world* – state, future generations, and community in general - is built, as their memories and identity are silenced by a name and "boxed" from the world, both from their families, communities and society in general. In this sense, by *boxed* identity, I do not mean primarily hidden, but rather securely confined and put away from others' eyes, with clearly defined margins separating their public and private sphere in which a public, i.e., societal sphere would be denied access to the mentioned identity.

3.1. About silences

In my interviews, I detected different kinds of silences and memories of experiencing them in interviewees' familial context. As my interviewees were either second or third generation of Holocaust survivors, therefore, not having a 'direct' experience of war and persecution, but instead being, as Eva Hoffman[106] says, "the hinge generation" the ones whose childhood

[103] Jennings, B. (2016). Reconceptualizing autonomy: A relational turn in bioethics. *Hastings Center Report*, *46*(3), 11–16.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702. Accessed: April 7th, 2023. Understood as a process of drawing boundaries between generations, insiders and outsiders of communities, as well as between people and the state.
[106] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.

experiences, memories and experienced silences were "being transmuted into history, or into myth."[107] Due to the proliferation of genocides and collective catastrophes at the close of the twentieth century and into the first decade of the twenty-first, along with their cumulative impacts, the manner in which trauma can evoke or rekindle historical recollections surpasses the confines of conventional historical archives and methodologies. It also challenges the conventional scope of oral history. In this context, scholar Raul Hilberg in his work *The Destruction of the European Jews*[108] while critiquing oral history and testimonies for their factual discrepancies, recognized the importance of narrative storytelling and poetry as essential skills for historians dealing with complex historical events. Regarding the power of "artistic practices" as well as creative and expanded usage or both oral history and archive material, it is an ever-growing practice of expanding and broadening "the traditional historical archive [as well as testimonies] with a "repertoire of embodied knowledge that has previously been neglected by many traditional historians."[109]

As silence is necessary for a sound to even exist, one is a crucial element of speaking, and therefore voicing one's memories. So, is there silence in *speaking out*? The easiest answer would be 'yes', but the real question is, *where* could silence, as an act of masking, hiding, or revealing, exist or, maybe even more provocative question, how is silence, once "located", narrated and remembered through generations, and where does gender as an analytical category fit into this, rather complicated matrix? To start with, and as I have also tried to focus on in interviews I have done, silence - either about one's past or about, in the case of my project, my

[107] Ibid.
[108] Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews. Vol. 3*. New Haven ; London, Yale University Press, 2003.
[109] *The Generation of Postmemory : Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 2012.

interviewees' mothers' or grandmothers' narratives of the past – is often located in a psychological and emotional "space" between remembering and forgetting,[110] constantly negotiating between the two, on the first glance, separate poles. In other words, the matter of choosing what to say, reveal and what to conceal are two sides of the same coin as during the interviews, when someone is "revealing" something to us, this simultaneously means that the active choice of choosing left something behind, or, in other words, not to reveal something. So, it is safe to say that telling and concealing, as well as remembering and forgetting, are far from being far away from each other. They are, in fact, two processes simultaneously happening on both cognitive and emotional level of a person. However, we can also understand silence as a mediator, or the moment in which, or before which, "sound" happens, i.e., one is speaking, voicing their memories. In this context, I understand the voice as "knowledge", inspired by Avakian and Attarian's writing in their article.[111] As they state:

"For some people, knowledge can be source of power, or social or economic capital; for others, or in other contexts, being excluded from or rejecting knowledge, thus not being privy of the subtexts of silence, may be the source of freedom and potential for stability."[112]

Thus, in this project I try to see how does silence function and how is it narrated in the context of (Holocaust) "post-memory generation", following the term of Marianne Hirsch[113], and even "postgeneration" as such, following Eva Hoffman's[114] terminology? In the context of mixed-marriage silences, the one connected with Jewish women choosing, in a way, to "start a new

[110] Ibid.

[111] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. 2015. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (4): 476–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Hirsch, Marianne. 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Introduction. Columbia University Press. 2012.

[114] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.

life" after Holocaust, silence is deeply intertwined with, on the one hand, silencing the personal and familial trauma (Holocaust persecution), masking the Jewish identity, i.e., being identified as a Jew for both themselves and their potential children in the eyes of a wider public, but also with agency of "taking their lives into their own hands" and, as some of my interviewees mentioned, not risking another experience of radical antisemitism based on their religion or ethnicity.

As I will present and analyze more in-depth in upcoming analytical chapters, the narratives of my interviewees put to question to what extent silence frameworks and strategies of discovering and confronting the past have been employed and understood as intergenerational strategies for family unity protection, stability or even resistance to provide answers to lived traumatic experiences of Holocaust survivors? As I have talked and listened to my interviewees, I wondered about their experiences of growing up "in silence" "shaped their subjectivities and representation of the Jewish self.[115] As I grappled with numerous difficult and potentially inscrutable queries, my mind began to ponder how I could incorporate the perspectives of other Jewish women from the second and third generations, while ensuring the project remained ethically undisputed.

3.2. About "post" in postmemory, [116] and postgeneration[117]

According to Maranne Hirsch,[118] postmemory describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experience they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, behaviors among which

[115] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 - 129
[116] Hirsch, Marianne., 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Introduction. Columbia University Press. 2012.
[117] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.
[118]Hirsch, Marianne., 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Introduction. Columbia University Press. 2012.

they grew up".[119] However, she asks herself, as well as various other scholars, some of them being Eva Hoffmann,[120] Leslie Morris[121] or Dominick LaCapra,[122] what does the "post" in postmemory mean? Or, put differently, what does it signal, except the rather obvious temporal difference or aftermath? Drawing inspiration from the scholarly work of the aforementioned researchers, I have delved deeper into the concept of temporality within the realm of memory practice and memory studies as a whole. Consequently, in this particular subchapter, I am exploring the notion of "post" and the aftermath of trauma in greater detail. As my project is focusing on second and third generation, in other words, generations of *post*-World War 2 and *post*-Holocaust period, it is important to briefly reflect on the *post* as a conception and what implication does it have in the context of memory, Holocaust and gender studies.

As Hirsch also realized, the "post" in "postmemory" is far from referring only to a mere temporal delay or "a location in an aftermath."[123] Rather, it is more understood, as there is an increasing number of "post" disciplines and" post" movements appearing, as "uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture."[124] Even though this is not limited to (post)memory, but it is rather a known and already greatly theorized[125] phenomenon, postmemory is neither a movement nor a method. It is rather "a *structure* of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience.[126] This complex categorization and

[119] Ibid.
[120] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.
[121] Morris, Leslie. "Postmemory, Postmemoir." *Unlikely History - the Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis 1945-2000*, edited by Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes, Springer, 2000.
[122] LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Cornell University Press, 1998.
[123] Hirsch, Marianne.2008, 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Columbia University Press.
[124] Hirsch, Marianne, 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Introduction. Columbia University Press. 2012.
[125] See: Morris, Rosalind. *New Worlds from Fragments*. Routledge, 20 May 2019. Or: Derrida, Jacques, et al. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.
[126] Hirsch, Marianne. 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust', Introduction. Columbia University Press. 2012.

apprehension of the "post" within postmemory framework is one of the focal points of Hirsch's book, and it carries a significant portion of my own theoretical groundwork.[127] Since I first started to think about the main research questions and framing of this project two years ago, without even being aware of Hirsch's work, I knew that stories of women of the "generations after"[128] would be at the center of my attention, so, the idea of "post" was also in focus when conceptualizing and analyzing my interviews later on.

Even though I did not specifically mention neither the term "postmemory" nor "postgeneration" during the interview process, as I wanted to give my interviewees the space to express themselves using their own words, but also to distance myself from academic terminology while they narrated about personal experiences and memories, in all of my interviews the descriptive notion of the term postmemory appeared, either as *generacija nakon*[129]*, mi mlađi*[130] or just *mi,*[131] which, either from showing my interviewees being aware of different experiences of their generation, it also suggest an inherent sense of communal experiences, since neither of them talked merely in singular, but rather mixing singular and plural pronouns – *Ja-Mi,*[132] even when talking about their own families's experiences and their own, as children or grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. This realization was thought-provoking, as in the work of Joanna Cukras-Stelągowska[133] is shown,[134] the, so-called "unexpected generation," mostly referred to as the third generation, in many countries in

[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid,
[129] "we, the generation after"
[130]"We younger"
[131] "We". I asked them who is "we" and they referred to as the generation after.
[132] I-We
[133] Joanna Cukras-Stelągowska is a Polish researcher and professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University, primarily focusing on the intersection of ethnicity, society, and Jewish history in Poland. One of her recent studies was targeting the issues of identity-seeking strategies in the third-post war Polish Jew generation, as well as mixed marriage practice and its affect on young adult Jews in Poland.
[134] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

Eastern Europe[135] is a growing phenomenon[136] and identity marker, as "self-identification [challenges] are becoming more vivid".[137] Postgenerations,[138] the one born after Holocaust and "unexpected generation"[139] could, but not necessarily have to be the same, as the later term signifies people born from mid-1980s until mid-1990s. However, even though the generation in question does not face same issues as their (grand)parents, the problem that they face "is rather the lack of a generation of reference[140] as their parents, in most of the cases,[141] as many of my third-generation interviewees stated, did not identify with Jewish culture and tradition, until later in life, if at all. For instance, in the case of Paula's family, her parent, even though not denying his Jewish roots, was "actively ignoring it"[142] whereas her grandmother, after spending most of her life silencing her Jewish identity, as a consequence of Paula's firm initiative, started to slowly get interested in learning about her Jewish ancestry and even sharing some memories of her childhood with Paula. Other than "silencing", boxing also means

[135] Cukras-Stelągowska's research is focusing on Poland.

[136] "From in-depth interviews with 10 people born in the 1980s and 1990s conducted in the Wrocław environment, we learn that through contact with the Jewish community, young people's identification started to be filled with positive content, and social ties were strengthened by a community-based youth clubs…This generation does not have to hide their Jewish roots; they live in very different conditions from their grandparents and parents, and the external causes that caused their parents and grandparents to leave Jewish religion and culture no longer exists today" (Pactwa & Domagała, 2008, p. 21).

[137] Ibid., p. 86.

[138] Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge : A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. London, Vintage, 2005.

[139] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007., p. 89.

[140] Pactwa, B., & Domagała, A. Meandry tożsamości mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce: Trzy pokolenia rodziny żydowskiej w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim. In J. Mucha & B. Pactwa (Eds.), "Status mniejszościowy" i ambiwalencja w społeczeństwach wielokulturowych. Śląskie Wydawnictwa Naukowe, 2008., p. 84.

[141] However, second generation (generation of parents) can also be viewed differently, as Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger stated in their book *Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors&Perpetrators*: "The second generation are "guardians of an absent meaning". Berger, Alan L, and Naomi Berger. *Second Generation Voices Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators.* Paw Prints, 2008.

[142] Paula's words. Interview held in 2022. Translation is mine.

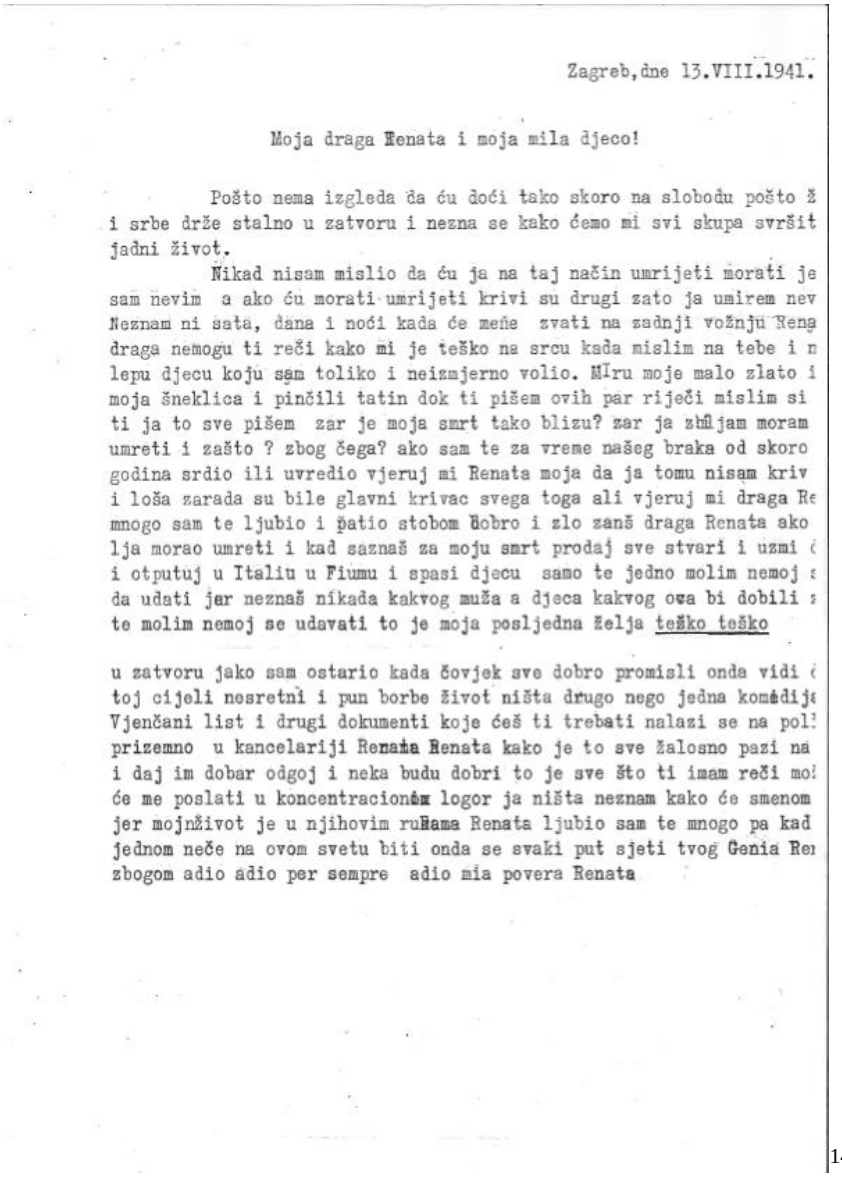
preserving for future and for generations to come, so, in a sense, we can reflect on Paula's "unboxing" initiative as a wish to preserve and even carry on her grandmother's Jewish roots, history and identity, and, consequently, preserving her own. In this sense, the "aura of inauthenticity"[143] is also a common feeling which signifies displacement and detachment from their cultural ancestry "resulting from the lack of continuity of the intergenerational message and a need to seek new forms of reference",[144] in contemporary times often found in local Jewish communities and youth clubs, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 6.

Also, as it was also the case with most of my interviewees, as well as myself, we "were raised in assimilated or mixed families [where either the mother of father is Catholic] ... and firmly [rediscovering our] Jewish identity not earlier that during adolescence."[145] For this reason, Cukras-Stelągowska states, the word "unexpected", or even "rediscovered" are most often employed. To sum up, the theoretical notions of postmemory, postgeneration, and the concept of the "unexpected generation"[146] are intertwined and hold significant importance in the examination of intergenerational gendered silences and their influence on the subjectivity of the second and third generations. These ideas act as essential frameworks through which I investigate and contemplate the consequences of intergenerational gender dynamics and self-identification with Jewish heritage.

[143] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007., p. 91.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007., p. 89.
[146] Ibid.

4. "She couldn't wait to get married"[147]

Object: A Letter



Zagreb, dne 13.VIII.1941.

Moja draga Renata i moja mila djeco!

Pošto nema izgleda da ću doći tako skoro na slobodu pošto ž
i srbe drže stalno u zatvoru i nezna se kako ćemo mi svi skupa svršit
jadni život.

Nikad nisam mislio da ću ja na taj način umrijeti morati je
sam nevim a ako ću morati umrijeti krivi su drugi zato ja umirem nev
Neznam ni sata, dana i noći kada će meńe zvati na zadnji vožnju Reng
draga nemogu ti reči kako mi je teško na srcu kada mislim na tebe i n
lepu djecu koju sam toliko i neizmjerno volio. MIru moje malo zlato i
moja šneklica i pinčili tatin dok ti pišem ovih par riječi mislim si
ti ja to sve pišem zar je moja smrt tako blizu? zar ja zbŭjam moram
umreti i zašto ? zbog čega? ako sam te za vreme našeg braka od skoro
godina srdio ili uvredio vjeruj mi Renata moja da ja tomu nisam kriv
i loša zarada su bile glavni krivac svega toga ali vjeruj mi draga Re
mnogo sam te ljubio i patio stobom dobro i zlo zanš draga Renata ako
lja morao umreti i kad saznaš za moju smrt prodaj sve stvari i uzmi
i otputuj u Italiu u Fiumu i spasi djecu samo te jedno molim nemoj
da udati jer neznaš nikada kakvog muža a djeca kakvog ova bi dobili
te molim nemoj se udavati to je moja posljedna želja teško teško

u zatvoru jako sam ostario kada čovjek sve dobro promisli onda vidi
toj cijeli nesretni i pun borbe život ništa drugo nego jedna komédija
Vjenčani list i drugi dokumenti koje ćeš ti trebati nalazi se na pol
prizemno u kancelariji Renata Renata kako je to sve žalosno pazi na
i daj im dobar odgoj i neka budu dobri to je sve što ti imam reči mo
će me poslati u koncentracionóm logor ja ništa neznam kako će smenom
jer mojnživot je u njihovim ruHama Renata ljubio sam te mnogo pa kad
jednom neče na ovom svetu biti onda se svaki put sjeti tvog Genia Re
zbogom adio adio per sempre adio mia povera Renata

148

[147] "Jedva je čekala da se uda." Interview with S.V. in 2022. Translation is mine.

[148] Translation: *Since therere is no chance that I will get out on freedom from here so soon, and since Serbs are held here in jail all the time, it is not sure how we will all end our pathetic lives.*
I never thought that I will end my life in this way… I am innocent and the others are guily and I am dying anyway. I don't know the hour or the day and night when they will take me on the last ride my dear Renata, I can't tell you how it's hard in my heart when I think of you and on.. beautiful children whom I loved so much. My Mira, my little precious, and my šneklica and my pinčili… Is my death really so near? Do I really have to die and why? What for?... My dear Renata, when you find out about my death, sell all the things if you can and go to Italy,to Fiume and save the children if you can, I ask you only one thing, don't ever marry, you never know what kind of husband you will get, and children the father, this is my last wish
I go old in this jail, and when man thinks about it, this life is all one big comedy. Wedding certificate and all the documents you will need are in the drawer in my office…. Give them a good raising and good education, make them good and that is all I want. They will maybe send me to the concentration camp, I don't know, my life is in their hands…. Adio mia povera Renata

Summer, 1941.
Independent State of Croatia's main police station in Petrinjska ulica, Zagreb
Place from where prisoners of local fascist regime were being taken away to extermination camps
Paper, ink.
Language: Croatian
Renata please, I am begging you one thing, don't ever marry again because you never know what kind of father would children get, and you a husband, this is my last wish.

I find it distant to be writing about marriage. Not wanting it, not feeling a need for it and, certainly, not searching to find a refuge in it, the process of discussing and thinking about its alleged importance for many Jewish women during and after Holocaust, made me nervous, detached, confused and, dare I even say it, less of a "feminist" for writing about women's urge to be married, and, from what I understood then, even "saved". At first, I felt the need to run away from the topic and focus on a more straightforward "historical" theme from an "academic" standpoint, but throughout my research, every time the topic of *marriage* came crawling back secretly, unnoticeable…in silence. However, my discomfort did not disappear with its consistent reappearances, it only made my anxieties and insecurities more prominent. It took me a while, more to the point, entire two semesters to realize the marriage's full research potential and to frame my fieldwork findings, interviews, theoretical and methodological frameworks into a way that does not degrade, question or, in any other way, denies women's agency. The reason for this long research process was precisely because marriage often seems like a feminist point of discord[149] when it comes to understand women's agency, especially in

[149] Karen Blaisure writes, supporting her research upon different other theoretical works on the institution of marriage such as Bernard's book *The Future of Marriage* from 1972, that, even though it has been long discussed and, in recen times, a true positive change to "upgrade marriage for women", there is still a long way to go, since family work was "still more alked about than discussed". (Bernard, 1982) Blaisure, Karen. *FEMINISTS and MARRIAGE: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS*. By Karen Blaisure, 1992, pp. 5–19. vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/37416/LD5655.V856_1992.B525.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed 10 Aug. 2023.

the times of fear and aftermath of trauma, such as post Second World War period. Analysis of women's narratives about the topic is crucial for a more profound understanding of narrated self-identification process in relation to silencing their Jewish identity**.** At the same time, it has been crucial for me to grasp, firstly, what agency and autonomy mean when we speak of voluntarily entering into marital unity for Jewish women, considering the context of the Holocaust, and secondly, how the marriage and/or partner choices in the following generations were marked psychologically, ontologically and socioeconomically by the choices made 70 years ago.

Drawing upon a variety of discussion about 'agency', I understand it as the importance of recognizing women as active agents and advocates for their own rights, with a will to decide, rather than passive objects of outside control or manipulation. When I started to conceptualize my research in the mentioned direction, I no longer viewed marriage as a threat to my feminist credo. Now, I perceive it as a prospect for fostering a dialogue across three generations of Jewish women, a platform through which to explore self-narratives of their Jewish womanhood. Put differently, marriage emerges as a multi-dimensional identity marker, spanning institutional, religious, cultural, and communal realms. For the inaugural generation of Jewish women who entered into unions with Christian men, marriage encapsulated a form of "rite of passage." It symbolized not just a new beginning but also a pathway to safety and optimism for themselves and their present or future children. With greater precision, I began to comprehend marriage as a pivotal constituent in commencing a fresh chapter in life, especially when considered against the backdrop of the socio-political climate of that era—a sentiment that echoed on a broader societal scale.

In this context, for this chapter, I've selected a letter from the box I discovered in my grandmother's apartment fifteen years ago, that she, her sister and mother received from their father/husband Eugen Hochberger, a Jewish man and a devoted communist. He was imprisoned

in the Ustasha's prison in Zagreb in the summer of 1941 and awaited to be taken away to one of the concentration camps. Already yellow, but surprisingly well kept, most probably due to being most of its existence kept in the mentioned box, the letter suggests[150] that was typed in a hurry, impatience and insecurity for the future. Written almost without any interpunction, except the question mark and multiple mistakes in spelling, it feels like this letter was written also a lot for himself. Only two underlined words – *teško teško*, meaning „difficult, difficult", summarize both his situation, as well as the reader's, whilst reading about his condition and situation at the time. The reader's attention is immediately drawn to the mentioned words, almost as if they are priming the reader for the incredible thoughts about to be encountered. At that moment, as I read those words, I felt a profound connection with both the writer of the letter, the circumstances in which they found themselves while writing, and my own current emotional state in dealing with this topic overall. Also, the letter was not handwritten but rather typed on a machine. This certainly opens up different questions about the condition he was in, as well as about the nature of the item as such. On one hand, typed letter may strip away a certain degree of what we might call "personality," as each person's handwriting, as it is a unique expression and a reflection of their approach to conveying written thoughts. Handwriting can also potentially reveal the writer's psychological state at the time of writing. However, when a letter is typed on a machine, it becomes standardized; everyone's letters look identical, and there is no risk of inadvertent information leakage – each letter can be read without difficulty before being sent. In Sidorenko's paper[151] about her familial archive, she is

[150] Edawrds, building upon Miller's work in "Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter" (1998), delves into the concept of creating a discursive environment for contemplating "how things matter." In simpler terms, this involves granting objects the opportunity to be subjective and, in a sense, enabling them to convey their own narratives in relation to the reader and the context in which they are being examined, observed, or read. Keeping this perspective in mind, I am approaching the analysis of these objects in a similar fashion.

[151] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.

also making the visual analysis of letters from the concentration camp. Some of the similarities are striking as she is also talking about how typed letters were easier to control as prisoners were not supposed to "truthfully describe… conditions in [their] letters home,[152] instead they were writing in a positive good/neutral way or even avoided including any description at all, as it was the case in the letter found in my familial archive.

On the other hand, the absence of punctuation and the somewhat disjointed nature of the thoughts suggest that each prisoner perhaps had only a few minutes on the typewriter, uncertain when the next opportunity might arise, if ever. So, even though many of the qualities from a handwritten letter was taken away, I argue that there are still multiple „resourceful"[153] qualities within the fact that it was typed, Including the previously mentioned absence of punctuation, numerous misspellings, and the unstructured flow of thoughts in its writing style. However, one specific sentence specifically caught my attention and that is why I chose it to somehow present the importance of analysis of marriage for Jewish women. It is a sentence in which he, literally begs my grandmother's mother not to marry again because „no one knows what kind of husband she would get and children the father." In my view, among many historial layers, this letter reveals, the complexity and layeredness of a marriage for a woman. *For* my grandmother, as well as Paula's and Maja's, marriage was far from only a choice of love. It was a choice of new life, hope and security, her mother lost when her (Jewish)[154] husband was killed:

[152] Ibid., p. 367.

[153] Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011., cited from Miller, Daniel. *Material Cultures : Why Some Things Matter*. London, Routledge, 2003.

[154] According to my mother, as I will analyze more in this chapter, this is one of the reasons why she would never marry a Jewish man.

Sara, I am sure that mother did not marry father only because he was Christian, but for her it was important to, in a way, fit in the wider community, and to change her apparent Jewish surname. You know that they really loved each other, but the more I think about it, his ethnicity and Christian roots were very important… I am sure she would never marry a Jew, for sure… maybe not even him.[155]

Marital union, especially in context of war, post-war and experience of persecution, is viewed as a deeply gendered act i.e., a woman is getting married to find her children a suitable father and financial provider and not for her own, emotional needs and free will:

You know my dear Renata, if I really have to die, sell all the stuff if you can and go to Italy, just please Renata, I am begging you one thing, don't ever marry again because you never know what kind of father would children get, and you a husband, this is my last wish.[156]

This part of my grandmother's father letter reveals how a woman's decision to marry or not to marry was often mediated and influenced by external factors, such as reputation of re-marrying or her role as a mother. By choosing this letter as my metaphorical research starting point, which symbolizes the presence of first generation of Jewish women in my research, I am opening up a discussion on marriage's role in first-generation Jewish women's self-identification with their Jewish heritage and, on the other hand, ask how a marriage can be in correlation with the ways gendered narratives of the Holocaust are entanglingly and simultaneously silenced and expressed throughout subsequent generations.

[155] Words by S.V., interview held in September 2022. Translation is mine
[156] Except from a letter written by E. Hochberger to his wife and children from prison in Zagreb

The first analytical chapter focuses on recognizing and actively interacting with emotional states, conceptual notions, and relational patterns that were derived from five interviews, two with my mother and three from other women conducted between 2021 and April 2023, in which the subject of marriage emerged as a significant topic. By leveraging this approach, I aim to make a contribution in unraveling the complex phenomenon of mixed (interfaith) marriages between Jewish women and Christian men, both during and after the Second World War in Yugoslav context. Taking this into consideration, I analyze the narratives of second and third-generation Jewish women, examining their perspectives on the broader subject of marriage and the choices they make in partnerships. In this regard, my main question in this chapter is how Jewish women through marriage, i.e., choosing a partner are constructing their narratives on experiencing gendered, familial and intergenerational Holocaust silences in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context.

4.1. Mother-daughter relationship and silence

This inquiry extends beyond the institutional aspects of marriage to encompass related practices, such as surname-changing/ hiding/ forgetting/ silencing, which were, and still are, speaking broadly, in direct correspondence with entering the marriage for women globally.[157] Within the life narratives of Jewish women interviewed in this research across different generations, the notion of marriage and the process of selecting a partner exhibit significant variations. However, one almost universal emotion when discussing first generation's urge for marriage that appeared in my interviewees' narartives is fear:

I remember… I remember how she told me several times…that she… not that she could not wait to get married…in the sense that… don't take this in the wrong way, she and dad loved

[157] See: Humphries, Leigh Ann . "Dr. Maiden Name Will See You Now." *Harvard Medical Student Review*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2015., "Maiden Names, on the Rise Again." *The New York Times*, 27 June 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/upshot/maiden-names-on-the-rise-again.html. Accessed 10 Aug. 2023.

each other very much, but that she did not hesitate, at any moment, to move her surname Hochberger…that surname only brought her misfortune and terrible sufferings, she wanted to… maybe even protect "the future me" in this way, I don't know.[158]

In this complexity of mother-daughter relationship after the Holocaust on which I am focusing here, mothers' fear was, through different means often either mirrored, manifested or just channeled through daughters.[159] According to different second-generation interviewees I conducted, their Jewish mothers, who got married either during or a maximum of 7 years after the war (the case of my grandmother who married in 1952), did so, possibly among other factors, to ensure stability for themselves and, if applicable, for other family members as well. As Ivanka – Jewish woman from Osijek - whose mother was the only one in their family who survived the war – mentioned:

After the war, she immediately got married and then had four kids, but at the same time, she lost her entire generation of colleagues[160]*, and she simply…she could not… how should I tell you this…for instance, I was telling her to find some friends in our community,*[161] *but she was always telling me, "I have you", that is enough for me, she was always by my side… but never talking much, which maybe she would have if she had someone, I don't know…*[162]

[158] Words by S.V., interview held in November, 2021. Translation is mine.
[159] One of the most important book chapters on the mother-daughter relationship after the Holocaust and the memory of it was for my work of Gabby R. Glassman "10 Survivor Mothers and Their Daughters: The Hidden Legacy of the Holocaust" - GLASSMAN, GABY R. "10 Survivor Mothers and Their Daughters: The Hidden Legacy of the Holocaust." *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*, by MYRNA GOLDENBERG and AMY H. SHAPIRO, University of Washington Press, 2013, pp. 218–238.
[160] "kolegice" – female friends, mostly in the context of either schooling or work, colleagues, but it can also signify friendship.
[161] Referring to Jewish community in Osijek
[162] Words by Ivanka, interview held in November 2022. Translation is mine.

Despite perhaps the apparent unrelatedness between the idea of marriage and the mother-daughter relationship, my analysis of the interviewees' narratives has revealed a significant connection. The emotions of loneliness, sadness, hope, and a sense of security within a new marriage are intertwined with the protective instincts towards one's child or children in the context of post-conflict (post-Holocaust) times. Through this lens, I realized that women's autonomy, agency, and active role as protectors and decision-makers within a family setting, for both current household members as well as for future generations, specifically their daughters, were a significant part of their decision-making process in marrying a Christian Croat man. Due to the presence of daughters and the perceived safety gained from marrying for someone outside of their own Jewish community, there were no apparent, constant reminders of the past, which, in a way, seemed to be erased both from private and familial narratives. This decision of interfaith and interethnic marriage[163] also resulted in and, according to my second generation interviewees' narratives, their mothers' silencing of their roots and past. As if, in other words, now they had a "good enough" reason to hide their heritage. In this regard, interfaith marriages between Jewish women and Christian men in post-Second World War Yugoslavia are in direct correlation with silencing Jewish women's past and hiding their identity:

I think dad told me that he did not even know she was of Jewish descent until after they married. He met her mother once, and I think sister, and he knew that her father was, as they apparently

[163] "…intermarriages became the norm, rather than the exception." ... "An extremely high rate of intermarriage, a very low birthrate, and a steadily aging Jewish population characterized Jewish life in Communist Yugoslav during the Tito era and thereafter. Jews constituted an officially recognized national minority; Jewish communities defined themselves in national or ethnic, rather than religious terms, although synagogues continued to function, albeit minimally, in larger centers such as Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Zagreb." Source: https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/yugoslavia#pid-14463 Last accessed on August 31st, 2023.

told him, "not around", so he did not ask much at that point in time. After a while, she told him that her father was Jewish and got murdered, but nothing in detail for a very long time.[164]

This act of hiding or erasure of one's ethnicity and religious identity, manifested also through the surname change, and was facilitated by Jewish women's official marriages to Christian Croats and the creation of their "new family setting" that symbolized safety and protection for Jewish population during Yugoslav times, even though Jewish population was not in danger of government persecution anymore. The mentioned feeling of safety could probably be most visible in public sphere through different commemorative practices honoring the, so-called, "fallen heroes,[165] as well as intense memorialization and musealization of different former concentration camps.[166] Duality between silence about the past war and persecution in private sphere and prominent public and political narrative about it, reflects the complex nature of life in the aftermath of World War Two and during the Yugoslav era.

However, the complete loss of one's generation, as was the case with Ivanka's mother, also impacts the subsequent generation, in this instance Ivanka herself. Drawing from Ivanka's account, it can be contended that Ivanka's mother discovered comfort and refuge in Ivanka's

[164] Words by S.V., interview held in September 2021. Translation is mine.
[165] "Pali heroji" refers to fallen Partisan soldiers, other members of Resistant movement, such as doctors, nurses, etc, as well as individuals murdered in concentration camps during Independent State of Croatia fascist regime.
[166] At the end of the 1950s, the first steps were taken to mark Jasenovac camp. According to the report from the Conservation Institute of the National Republic of Croatia dated April 15, 1956, it was noted that remnants of barracks, buildings (including foundations and partial walls), a significant portion of the brickyard, sections of the camp railway, and the base of the camp wall have endured over time. The report also proposed measures to safeguard these remaining structures and to appropriately commemorate the mass graves. To this end, a wire mesh fence was erected along the foundation of the camp wall, and plaques with inscriptions were placed to identify the camp facilities. In September 1960, the Central Committee of the Federation of Associations of Fighters of NOR Yugoslavia enlisted architects Zdenko Kolac and Bogdan Bogdanović to devise a plan for commemorating the Jasenovac concentration camp. Ultimately, Bogdan Bogdanović's design, the Flower monument, was chosen. The monument was officially unveiled on July 4, 1966, while first permanent exhibition about Jewish, Serbs and Roma genocide was put on display in Jasenovac in 1968. Source: https://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=5083 Last accessed: August 28th, 2023

company, underscoring the intricate dynamics within their mother-daughter relationship. Consequently, akin to the narratives recounted by both my grandmother and Paula's grandmother, it can be posited that many Jewish women, post-war, grappled with social isolation from the lives they had previously been integrated into. The known social connections they had prior to the war, referred to by Ivanka as "kolegice,"[167] were lost—either due to murder or fleeing the country. Consequently, their social interactions revolved mainly around their marriage and family life. In other words, based on both Ivanka's and my mother's interviews, I discovered that their Jewish mothers primarily interacted with families of non-Jewish origin, primarily Christians and ethnic Croats, who were friends of their Christian husbands, as their Jewish relatives were mostly killed during the war of exiled. As these interviews revealed, Ivanka and my mother, as daughters, strongly felt the social isolation that permeated their mothers' lives. Despite this, they also experienced a strong sense of family unity, feeling of protection and need for assimilation[168] into the wider community. The need for protection from existing threats and the fear of history "repeating itself" often continued to linger long after the danger had passed. These fears manifested either through external triggers or, as my mother stated, occasionally by accident within their family dynamics.

I remember that I asked my mum how come grandma was coming alone on our family gatherings, where is grandpa, and from that moment I think she knew she had to start explaining some things…. But she wanted to protect me, as she thought I would be safer not

[167] Kolegice – friends from professional life (work, academic career, etc.)
[168] Assimilation of Jewish survivors after the Second Word War into the wider community was a highly gendered act. Often, precisely through marriage, women have tried to hide their Jewishness and assimilate into, most often into a wider Christian community. Marriage was a very common strategy for protection and assimilation. According to Louise O.Vasvari's article *Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination* (2005-2007) and Myrna Goldenberg and Amy H.Shapiro's book *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust* (2013), gender-specific trauma and sufferings are not restricted to rape, sex violence and "victimization of women" in general, but it is rather generated through different mechanisms of institutional control and power, such as Christian marriage in a Chrstian-majority state. In other words, gender as analytical category of Holocaust analysis proves itself crucial for understanding of "as many individual stories as possible." (Louise O.Vasvari)

knowing, not being aware of this history…she did not want to talk about it, as if that part of her never existed…[169]

In the writings of Budapest-born scholar Louise O. Vasvari,[170] whose work delves into the voices of women survivors from a gendered standpoint, with the aim of contributing to both Holocaust and gender studies, memory is perceived and comprehended as "an active process that continues to undergo constant evolution."[171] Absent family members, but still present precisely through their absence often have the ability to reveal and, through time, unbox silenced family histories and, for subsequent generations, even unknown narratives. My mother's story exposes the void left by her grandfather's absence during family gatherings, shedding light on the existence of "realms of silence" within communities, families, and households, silences between genders and generations, [as] silences [were] held closely inside individual people."[172] My first interviewee, Paula from Osijek who studied German language and literature along with Jewish Studies at University of Vienna, accentuated how her grandmother, who was taken away in one of the concentration camps as a small child, felt constant insecurity, but also how an early marriage outside of her Jewish community and ethnic-religious background was a way to, as Paula put it herself, 'feel safe.'

… my grandmother, so she was in a concentration camp as a child and this all left consequences and she did not want to deal with that and that her Jewish identity was known because she was constantly feeling unsafe in a way… and yes, from a woman's perspective,

[169] Ibid.
[170] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._.
[171] Ibid., p. 18.
[172] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702

she married very young, already at the age of 19, I suppose because she wanted safety, after she was liberated from the camp… it was the same with her mother, my grand-grandmother since she also needed to marry a Christian man during World War 2 to get some sort of safety and protection from ongoing persecution… they were at least not killed, so it probably helped.[173]

In above-mentioned Paula's narrative, I observed the strategic use of marriage among Jewish women as an intergenerational approach, with the goal of ensuring safety and protecting their identities. A prevailing pattern was observed, wherein even those who bore children from Jewish partners subsequently lost to persecution, often engaged in marital unions with Christian men from Croatia.[174] This phenomenon is exemplified not only in Paula's case but also in instances involving Ivanka, Maja, and my own familial lineage. As articulated by Paula during the interview, this practice offered a certain degree of safeguarding, effectively shielding women and their offspring from being singled out and targeted based on their ethnicity and religious affiliation. This discreet practice persisted for an extended duration both within family circles and the realm of scholarly discourse. Lenore J. Weitzman and Dalia Offer[175] propose that such gender-specific phenomena were initially disregarded due to skepticism about their potential contribution to a more comprehensive and nuanced comprehension of the Holocaust. This extends to encompassing its aftermath and the prevailing gaps and unspoken aspects associated with it. Within the realm of silence, various levels or forms exist, including state-imposed silences, communal silences, and those originating from within the family. The household, in a way, becomes a new political arena, bringing together different generations,

[173] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022. Translation is mine.
[174] Independent State of Croatia (NDH) until 1945 or Socialist Federative republic of Croatia from 1945 until 1989.
[175] Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. *Women in the Holocaust*. New Haven, Ct, Yale University Press, 1998., Introduction.

social contexts, and worldviews. This dynamic is often intertwined with interactions and violations related to family, gender, religion, and state ideologies. It extends both to a wider social circle and the local community. During one of my initial interviews with my mother back in 2021, she shared that in the late 1970s, as she started school and became more involved in a wider social circle, my grandmother began wearing a cross around her neck regularly. Additionally, she started attending church more frequently than when my mother was younger. Similarly to Paula's grandmother, my own grandmother also married a Christian Croat, my grandfather, when she was 20 years old. These family-based experiences shed light on the complex dynamics of navigating identity within the interplay of personal, social, and religious influences.

4.2. Non-Jewish surname and a cross necklace

She told me several times…that she… not that she could not wait to get married…in the sense that… don't take this in the wrong way, she and dad loved each other very much, but that she did not hesitate, at any moment, to move her surname Hochberger… which would for me… if I'd had survived that, that surname would have given me an extra force, so I feel very sorry about that, I would have kept the surname. [176]

Upon my grandmother's decision to alter her original surname—a surname interwoven with the historical narrative of her family—a latent trauma associated with undisclosed familial losses surfaced, exerting a sudden and enduring influence on my mother's life trajectory, and consequently, my own. My mother's narrative may suggest that her self-perception and retrospective understanding of her personal history are intricately intertwined with her mother's experiences, as repeatedly affirmed throughout the interview. This act of erasure, entailing the deliberate suppression and even concealment of ancestral history, appears to have engendered

[176] Words by S.V., interview held in November, 2021. Translation is mine.

a profound affinity with her Jewish identity and her maternal lineage, mirroring patterns observed in the cases of Paula and Ivanka. The alteration of a surname, which serves as a symbolic marker of shared history and collective experience within a family, holds substantial significance for succeeding generations of Jewish women. Surnames emerge as among the limited "tangible" remnants that authenticate their affiliation with the Jewish community. The deliberate surname alterations made by their forebears, echoing the example of my grandmother, appear to render them estranged from their Jewish lineage, as implied by the resonance of their names. This resonance, in effect, conveys a sense of detachment from the Jewish communal context. When discussing the value of a surname and its potential threat in the past but, for the third generation a signifier of belonging and a moment of pride, Ivanka stated:

When I started dating in some more serious manner, I was never hiding my identity. Even though there was a true possibility of them not liking who I am and my background, I always told them the truth, very proudly: "I am a Jew, and if you have problem with that, you can go." There was never an obvious statement of a "problem", if you know what I mean, but you know… it was not the most desirable thing. When I met my husband, I also told him right from the beginning, and that I also go to the community and synagogue often, and with him, there was never really a problem, also never with his parents.

However, even though she was always decisive of not hiding her Jewish identity in her relationship and with future spouse, big discrimination her family and herself experienced, also reflected the lives of her children, even causing them having to break off their relationship and even engagements:

But for instance, my oldest son was dating a girl maybe 20 years ago or so, and, even though she was ok with his ancestry, his parents were not, so they had to break-up. But you know, the [Homeland] war had just ended and nationalism was big then…I remember that I was very shocked, I never really thought that our identity would cause problems for my children.[177]

The mentioned discriminatory practices were the most prominent during late 1980s and early 1990s, as Croatia was starting to defend its independence against the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), due to increased sense of nationalism and unity of Catholics and Croatians, while in the public discourse many others, predominantly former members of Partisan resistance and Serbs, but also individuals from other religious groups were portrayed by the mainstream media as a threat and an enemy[178]. As Cukras-Stelagowska[179] writes, the dividing line in this sense is for sure 1989 in which the rise of democratic political system in Poland, but also in many countries in Central Europe, meant also the renaissance of an idea of ethnic identities in general, so the Jewish one was not an exception. as Ivanka mentioned, even though the Homeland War in Croatia ended in the 1990s, the mentioned emphasis on ethnicities, but, at the same time, division between them, meant that Croatian Jewry, many of them belonging in the World War 2 generation, did not feel safe and accepted by their communities, especially after occasional, but persistent antisemitic incidents on ethnic and religious grounds. Knowing that Ivanka in her youth, but also her children experienced is only a sign that both ethnic and religious discrimination in Croatia had its ramifications long after the Second World War was over.

[177] Words by Ivanka L., Interview held in November 2022. translation is mine.

[178] Goldstein, Ivo . "Goldstein Prikazao Cijelu Povijest Antisemitizma U Hrvatskoj: "Protiv Židova Su Govorili I Radić I Strossmayer" ." *Telegram*, 29 May 2022, www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/telegram-intervju-golstein-prikazao-cijelu-povijest-antisemitizma-u-hrvatskoj-protiv-zidova-su-govorili-i-radic-i-strossmayer/. Accessed 10 Aug. 2023.

[179] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

Through Ivanka's and my mother's interviews, it becomes evident that marriage, typically viewed as the merging of two individuals and their lineages, was a particularly delicate matter. In three interviews I conducted with my mother, the topic of surname and its importance for both her and my grandmother kept reappearing. However, reasons for its importance were diametrically different for the first and second generation. For the first generations of women, it often meant a burden, a painful reminder of the past as well as an indicator of a constant threat which was important, often crucial to remove from their lives and social as it did for my grandmother. On the other hand, for their daughters, both my mother and Ivanka, as well as for most of the third generations of women interviewed, it is a sign of belonging to the community and historical context of which they are proud of and consciously wanting to participate in. In this sense, the idea of boxing and unboxing reveals another dimension – the one of choice:

My mother was never openly against for me to marry a Jew, but I sensed that she would rather that I felt safe, in a way, you know… Even though I did not marry a Jew, but not on purpose, I just fell in love in a Christian man, I was always very open about my heritage and that was always a non-negotiable thing for me, my boyfriends before and then my husband, he could not say anything about it.[180]

Unfortunately, you know that Ranko[181] *is not very pleased with me going to the community and actively participating in its activities, but I don't really care. This is both for me but also for my mother, and in a way, for you. It meant a lot for me when we went together to trace our family grave in Osijek and to try to find Hochberger family in Israel, even though it was not successful. You told me you are thinking about adding back the surname to "Simić", this also*

[180] Words by Ivanka, interview held in November 2022. Translation is mine.
[181] My mother's current husband

makes me very happy… that it means also so much to you… that means your potential kids will also know their heritage… I am a bit sad from time to time that I did not start exploring my family's past sooner…[182]

From the testimonies provided by my mother, her self-perception and retrospective understanding of her personal history are intricately intertwined with her mother's experiences, as repeatedly affirmed throughout the interview. Upon my grandmother's decision to alter her original surname after marrying my grandfather—a surname interwoven with the historical narrative of her family—a latent trauma associated with undisclosed familial losses surfaced, exerting a sudden and enduring influence on my mother's life trajectory, and consequently, my own.

The act of erasure or deliberate suppression appear to have engendered a profound affinity with her Jewish identity and her maternal lineage, mirroring patterns observed in the cases of Paula and Ivanka. It becomes evident that the alteration of a surname, which serves as a symbolic marker of shared history and collective experience within a family, holds substantial significance for succeeding generations of Jewish women. Surnames emerge as among the limited "tangible" remnants that authenticate their affiliation with the Jewish community. Through the examination of the conducted interviews, it becomes evident that intergenerational trauma can be effectively mitigated through the strategic act of selecting a life partner. Presently, the immediate peril of persecution—particularly akin to that witnessed during the Second World War—no longer looms, thereby affording Jewish women the latitude to opt for a transition from their natal surnames. This shift is more pronounced for those who operate within non-traditional Orthodox familial frameworks. In this context, surnames and marital unions cease to function as imminent threats; rather, their significance has undergone a

[182] Words by S.V., interview held in September 2021. Translation is mine.

profound transformation from vulnerability to empowerment. Jewish surnames, as expressed by my mother, seem to harbor a desire for reinstatement within official state registries, thus striving for enhanced visibility. The sense of "safety" experienced by women during and long after significant crises and targeted persecutions, such as the Holocaust, through marriage with individuals from non-targeted communities, has been extensively studied in the field of memory and Holocaust studies, such as in the works of Louise O.Vasvari,[183] Elissa Bemporad[184] and Joyce W. Warren.[185] In the cited studies, these scholars have conducted thorough investigations into the interplay and maneuvering of gendered memory and trauma, with Vasvari notably coining the term "gendercide"[186] – a "corollary of genocide… not restricted to victimization of women, such as rape… but also includes the victimization of men, such as the targeting of battle-aged male population."[187]

Nonetheless, Paula's situation, which I will elaborate on extensively in the following chapter, deviates due to the specific reasons underlying her decision to adopt a surname. In her case, her late grandmother's maiden name carries a dual significance: it serves as a means of

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[183] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._.

[184] Bemporad, Elissa, and Joyce W Warren. *Women and Genocide : Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*. Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2018.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._., p. 18.

[187] See: Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*,www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._., Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. *Women in the Holocaust*. New Haven, Ct, Yale University Press, 1998., Goldenberg, Myrna, and Amy H Shapiro. *Different Horrors, Same Hell : Gender and the Holocaust*. Seattle, University Of Washington Press, 2013.

preserving family history while also acting as a symbol of her personal creative and intellectual endeavors. Incorporating this name into her professional work functions as a means of reasserting her identity as a woman Jewish author originating from the Balkans, rather than being seen primarily in the context of a marital union of her previous generations, such as it is in my mother's and my case.

Through the examination of the conducted interviews and analyzed narratives, I argue that intergenerational trauma can be mitigated through the act of selecting a life partner. Presently, the immediate peril of persecution—particularly akin to that witnessed during the Second World War—no longer looms, thereby affording Jewish women the latitude to opt for a transition from their natal surnames. This shift is more pronounced for those of us who operate within non-traditional Orthodox familial frameworks. In this evolved context, surnames and marital unions cease to function as imminent threats; rather, their significance has undergone a profound transformation from vulnerability to empowerment. As I've communicated consistently over the years, my Jewish surname that was officially considered "lost" seems to encapsulate a yearning for acknowledgment within governmental records, signifying a quest for heightened visibility. In Paula's case, her late grandmother's maiden name serves not only as a remembrance of familial history but also as an emblem of her own creative and intellectual pursuits. Incorporating this name into her professional endeavors works to reaffirm her identity as a female Jewish author from the Balkans. In a sense, it also unravels the obscured surname, and through that symbolic act, unveils both history and familial identity. Such acts of reclamation resonate as endeavors to reintegrate and reassert identity within a more secured and enabling societal context. The deliberate surname alterations made by our ancestors, also echoing the example of my grandmother, appear to render us estranged from their Jewish lineage, as implied by the resonance of their names. The decision to either retain or abandon

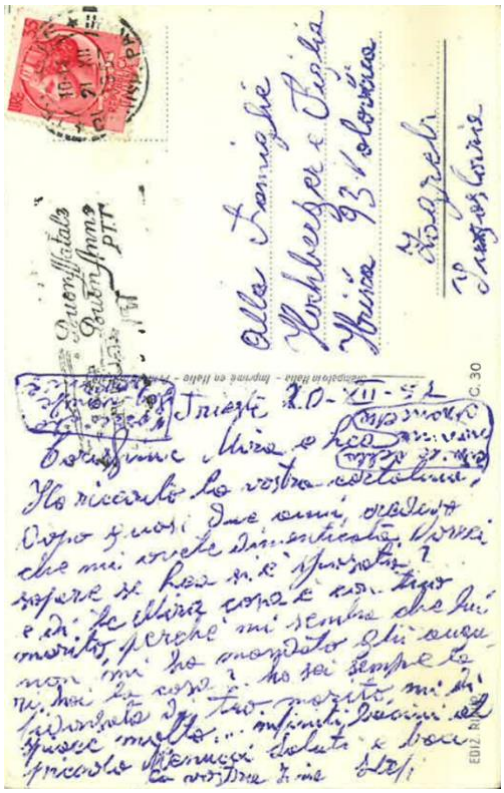
one's Jewish surname emerged as a significant aspect, also reflecting a narrative strategy of identity doubling, which I will discuss more in detail in the next chapter.

In summary, this chapter delved into the evolving dynamics of second and third generation Jewish women's identities and how that intergenerational gendered silences shaped their self-perception and subjectivities within both family circles and the broader social context. Through my analysis, I explored the significant influence of marriage on the narratives of various generations of Jewish women. I investigated the suppression of distressing historical experiences and marginalized identities, including the Jewish identity, in contrast to the overt expression of other identities like being recognized as a Christian Croat in the times of discrimination. This inquiry took place within the framework of family dynamics and the wider societal landscape, with a particular focus on the role of marriage. Through my examination and contemplation of the narratives shared by my interviewees, my finding is that marriage triggered profound shifts in how these women saw themselves, and this often manifested in changes to their surnames. Nonetheless, the evidence also reveals that the aforementioned changes in surnames could manifest in various ways. It often occurred as a consequence of marriage, particularly prevalent in the marital unions of the first generation. However, in certain instances involving my third generation interviewees, as I will elaborate on in the subsequent chapter, it represented a deliberate revival of a lost Jewish surname, serving as a statement of identity and pride in the face of the wider society. Nonetheless, from the literature read and interviews conducted, I believe there still remains a significant gap in research on women's experiences and moments of "in-betweenness," specifically the narrative strategy of navigating dual identities in the context of the Holocaust and, more importantly, in post-Holocaust academic literature. There is a significant room for additional research, particularly within specific national and regional contexts, such as Yugoslavia and the post-Yugoslav era.

For me, marriage has taken on a significantly different meaning. The anxiety associated with it hasn't vanished; rather, it has evolved. As I delved deeper into understanding the profound significance that marriage held for countless individuals during times of personal, familial, and political turmoil, a profound respect and a kind of 'nervousness' emerged. This 'nervousness' stemmed from the realization that I had a responsibility to contribute to a broader comprehension of marital unions among second and third-generation Jewish women in Southeastern Europe from a scholarly standpoint. Marital unions were not actions devoid of free will or driven by a need to be 'saved.' While these elements were often present, as I've discussed in this chapter, it's essential to consider them within a more comprehensive, contextual framework. In fact, changing one's surname through marriage was a gendered privilege, meaning that Traditionally, this practice was exclusively reserved for women, and this fact contributes to why it was frequently used as a strategy to evade persecution. Its accessibility and simplicity played a crucial role in this regard. Therefore, it would be an oversimplification and an un-feminist perspective to hastily assume a 'lack of agency', as it was a conscious and deliberate choice. Through the demanding process, both emotionally and academically, of uncovering intergenerational gendered silences and exploring self-identity processes through marital unions and surname changes, I conclude that the practices of altering surnames through marriage and the (grand)mother-daughter relationships are intricately intertwined. They play a central role in the process of self-identification with their Jewish heritage for second-generation women, and even more significantly for those in the third generation.

5. *Doubling*

Object: Postcards



Postcards from Trieste and Bologna for Easter and Christmas, sent by grandmother's family
Postcard, ink
Language: Italian

Winter, 1952
Bologna, Italy – Zagreb, Yugoslavia
Carissime Mira e Lea. Ho ricevuto la vostra cartoline dopo quasi due anni, credevo che mi avete dimenticato. Vorrei sapere se lei si e sposata? Spero che stiate tutti bene adesso. Saluti e baci la vostra zia Stefi.

Spring, 1955
Trieste, Italy -Zagreb, Yugoslavia
Carissima Renate, ti ho spedito il pachetto il giorno 22.3.55 e una cartolina, ancor oggi non ho ricevuto la vostra risposta. fammi sapere se l'hai ricevuto. Augurolosi le prossime fest'Pasquali a te, Lea, Mira e Branco. Con saluti e bacioni la vostra affetuosa sorella e zia Stefi

Figure 1 Dear Mira and Lea. I received your postcard almost two years ago, I believed you have forgotten about me. I would like to know if she got married. I hope that now you are well. Your aunt Stefi sends greetings and kisses. (Buon Natale, 1952) ***she= Lea, my grandmother

Figure 2 Dearest Renata. I have sent you the package and a postcard on March 22nd 1955, but I never received any response. Let me know if you have received it. Happy Easter to you, Lea, Mira and Branko. With regards and kisses your dearest sister and aunt Stefi. (Buona Pasqua, 1955) *** Branko is Mira's (my grandmother's sister) husband.

These postcards appear to transport one to an alternate realm, a place untouched by the cataclysmic events of World War 2 and the Holocaust. In the bosom of a former fascist regime, the observance of Easter and Christmas within my grandmother's mother family seemed to proceed as if the tumultuous backdrop of losing her husband, the father of her children, my grandmother and her sister, and enduring the struggles of surviving in the war-ravaged landscape of post-Yugoslav statehood had not occurred. Admittedly, a sense of resentment wells within me, prompted by the perceived insensitivity of her immediate family and their seeming neglect of her plight back in Yugoslavia. While it remains undeniable that her matrimony to a Jewish man rendered her "no longer fitting" the conventional Christian mold, the very fact of her Christian birth had indeed been instrumental in preserving her life. In this

complex interplay of realities and identities, the challenge arises: how to navigate a path when one's connection to their Jewish identity has been violently severed? With her Italian relatives scattered afar and many Jewish acquaintances having either fled to Israel or murdered during the Holocaust, she was virtually devoid of any familial support. To my interpretation, the postcards encapsulate a concept I've used in this research - "doubling" – a state of being suspended between divergent realms, where the sense of belonging and the parameters that govern it are uncertain. This notion of doubling potentially alludes to the fluidity of identity, the selection of which facets to unveil and which to conceal contingent on life's circumstances. Given the disappearance, flight, or tragic fate of numerous family members on both sides of her lineage, the family could find themselves adrift, bereft of both historical and genealogical moorings even within the same locale and region. Additionally, despite the geographical closeness to predominantly Christian nations like Italy, numerous individuals involved in interfaith (Jewish-Christian) unions found themselves marginalized within their respective social spheres. This was the situation faced by both my grandmother's mother and my own grandmother. The accumulation of these meticulously stored items, amassed over years of infrequent familial exchanges conducted primarily during significant holidays, constituted sporadic prompts that evoked a sense of twofold identity silencing. This duality stemmed from their Jewish connections, which had either dispersed in flight or perished during the wartime upheaval, while concurrently, the maternal family maintained a cautious detachment in locales such as Bologna and Trieste. From my perspective, as I read these postcards and recall various stories from my Italian family since childhood, they appear to have been intended to maintain a tenuous connection. Paradoxically, they ended up serving as poignant catalysts, prompting my great-grandmother Renata, her daughter Mirit, and my grandmother Lea to grapple profoundly with the magnitude of their losses in terms of familial connections.

Also, these postcards carry within themselves a significant both micro and macro-histories hidden within their sheer materiality, "that is material parts and their unfolding social relations which are entangled in different and significant ways."[188] In simpler terms, the two postcards that have been presented, each featuring prominent Christian symbols representing the two most significant holidays (Easter and Christmas), and the fact that they were dispatched during these periods of emotional family gatherings, as well as the closely written text, almost as if there wasn't enough space on the paper for all the thoughts that a sender wanted to transmit, unveil distinct social and familial relationships of that era. The sturdy, rather than delicate paper adorned with exceptionally idyllic illustrations of a girl holding Easter eggs and a snow-covered church was intended to evoke feelings of love, tranquility, and serenity in the recipient. They convey a sense of family affection and a glimpse of Christian heaven. In other words, according to Edwards: "Such sets of social relations are manifested archaeologically through marks, traces, material accretions, and disturbed surfaces of the archival objects, and through multiple material configurations and multiple formats of the distributed object. They reveal traces of, for in-stance, systems of truth production at any given historical moment in the ways in which photographswere acquired, owned, stored, displayed, exchanged, and collected. In this the archive becomes a material manifestation of social relations in which images are active."[189] Nevertheless, these postcards do not form part of a publicly accessible archival collection, one in which we could pose more profound and thought-provoking questions, such as how they were circulated and the networks involved in their exchange. These postcards were dispatched either from Trieste or Bologna to Zagreb, and their intended recipient was a singular individual, Renata Hochberger, who read and held onto them.

[188] Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011., p. 49.
[189] Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011., p. 51.

However, what is interesting to think about is how these postcards, as well every archival item in the box found, was how it *travelled* geographically, (not until recently anyways when I took it with me to Vienna to write my thesis about it), but *generationally*, as the box was mostly kept in one space (the cabinet), opened first only rarely by my grandmother, then it was found by me and then my mother and me together. However, at first, from all three of us, it was opened only when someone wanted to read or "check" something and immediately closed it back. It was really rare that my grandmother went to read something, so I am probably the only who is opening and closing the box most frequently in the last ten years. So, these items from our familial archive, in my view, *travel* as well, at least the eyes that are seeing them are different, filled maybe less with direct trauma and pain of experienced past and more with curiosity and responsibility to tell the story. Also, they certainly serve as tangible testaments that elucidate the intricate navigation through a traumatic World War 2, turbulent Yugoslav times, past and a challenging post-war present. They illuminate the convoluted path undertaken while simultaneously embodying diverse ethnic and religious affiliations within the confines of closely-knit family circles. To put it differently, a member of the Italian family (Stefi) seems to make an ad hoc assumption about their fervent Christianity and membership in a Christian church, without appearing to consider the sensitivity associated with newly implemented antisemitic laws targeting individuals of a different faith and ethnicity. In my interpretation, these postcards, featuring prominent Christian symbols like Easter eggs and an idyllic Christian church prepared for a Christmas evening mass, either affirm or seek to affirm the family's Christian, and consequently, Croatian, identity. The symbolism utilized is potent enough to categorize an individual or a family, either as the senders or recipients of these postcards, within a "Christian framework." This dynamic necessitates a delicate equilibrium between concealing and unveiling facets of the self, contingent upon the circumstances that arise.

In this chapter, I use several concepts to analyze my research material. Firstly, I will provide a brief contextual framework of Rosi Braidotti's concept of "mythmaking" as a feminist approach. This will help illustrate the inspiration and motivation behind my examination of practices related to identity shifting practices in third generation interviewees, particularly in breaking intergenerational gendered silences. Subsequently, I will center my attention on the narratives shared by the interviewees, emphasizing their individual encounters with identity doubling as a narrative strategy for assuming authority over their identities and subjectivities. This primarily involves processes such as changing or choosing non-Jewish surnames, as well as navigating the complex terrain of simultaneously inhabiting multiple ethnic and religious identities within close-knit family circles, as Ivanka articulates in the interview. In this context, I would like to elucidate my decision not to center my attention on the terms of dissimilation, which took prominence in the previous chapter regarding marriage. My primary emphasis here is on the act of decision-making regarding identity-altering practices and the formation of a narrative regarding one's self, identity, and family heritage. The conscious selection of this research emphasis should not be misconstrued as disregarding the significance of assimilation through surnames, which is indeed a pertinent and appropriate area of research. However, my decision here stems from a desire to redirect my attention towards the phenomena of identity formation, which emerged prominently from the narratives shared by my interviewees.

Through these means, this chapter’s primary goal is to shed light on how second and third generation of Jewish women in Croatia’s cities Zagreb and Osijek take agency in shaping their own sense of self. Of particular significance will be Paula's deliberate decision to modify her Jewish surnames based on different situations in her either private or professional life. This discussion will emphasize the conscious choices made by women when navigating their identities and the impact it has on their lived experiences, as well as on subsequent generations. I plan to ground this discussion in different scholars’ writings and research, such as Ewa

Sidorenko's article *Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival*[190], and Elena Soler's *Long-Term Ethnicized Silences": Family Secrets and Nation Building*[191].

5.1. Surname-choosing and narrativity

Braidotti views mythmaking "as a means of advancing the development of new subject positions"[192] and argues that "subjectivity is to be understood as a process,"[193] which the subjects-to-be themselves might influence, and concludes that "narrativity is a crucial binding force."[194] Even though the author adds the strong political dimension later in the argument, I would like to focus on the *narrativity* in relation to the *mythmaking process*. According to Paula and numerous other interviewees, untold narratives concerning the Holocaust and its persecutions have been uncovered by second or third generations. These revelations often occur unexpectedly, such as in Paula's grandmother decided to share her own story more in depth while applying for German reparations approximately 10 years ago. Similarly, another interviewee, Ivanka from Osijek, mentioned that these stories surfaced "randomly, during a dinner conversation."[195] Thus, "secrets of the house were often in fact guessed, speculated upon"[196] or, such as in Paula's and Ivanka's cases, discovered as a mere "family anecdote", as just another piece of their families' puzzle. Strong gendered aspect of this analysis is intergenerational transmission of family stories, i.e., women's role within a family as storytellers and "memory-keepers". As every of my interviewee said, even the ones whose Jewish background was patrilinear,[197] in a big majority, women, i.e., grandmothers and/or mothers, were the ones trying to maintain traditions, telling and re-telling stories and, we could

[190] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.
[191] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 - 129
[192]Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Words by Ivanka L, interview held in November 2022, translation is mine.
[196] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702, p. 101.
[197] In Jewish tradition, one is a "proper Jew" by his/her/their mother's side.

even say, perpetuating family mythologies. Here I am primarily referring to Estrella Lauter's ground-breaking work *Women as Mythmakers*[198] and previously mentioned Braidotti's view on myths and mythmaking as a potent way 'to step out of the political and intellectual statis of our times'[199] and immerse oneself into a position that could be best described in a following manner – *desidero ergo sum*.[200] Braidotti dismisses Descartes famous dictum *cogito ergo sum*, as, she writes, 'no one is master in their house'[201] and "affectivity, rather than rationality… is a more accurate depiction of making meaning."[202] Here, affectivity refers to the desire to 'belong', emotional connection, and feeling like a part of community which is, according to Braidotti, crucial for *meaningful* meaning-making and mythmaking processes within communities and families. In other words, as she continuously writes referring to Gilles Deleuze, it becomes clear that "it is more important that a notion generates an effective response than that it be true."[203] The sentiment of interconnectedness assumes pronounced relevance within the context of selecting a surname, an endeavor which, as per the scope of my investigation, notably aligns with the assertion of a woman's affiliation within the Jewish community, or her wish not to be associated with it after World War 2. This phenomenon appears to intricately intertwine with the theoretical construct of myth-making processes. Moreover, it can now be contended that this practice also resonates with the notion of (un)boxing concealed familial histories. The deliberate process of choosing and altering one's surname profoundly molds the individual's self-perception vis-à-vis external realms, and reciprocally, informs the external perceptions of the self. Here, it is important to mention that

[198] Lauter, Estella, *Women as Mythmakers*. 1984.
[199] Braidotti, Rosi Political Myth." (2011) Rosi Braidotti. *Nomadic Subjects : Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2011. p. 26.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Kjellgren, Adam. "Mythmaking as a Feminist Strategy: Rosi Braidotti's Political Myth." *Feminist Theory*, 16 Oct. 2019, p. 146470011988130, 10.1177/1464700119881307. Accessed: March 3rd, 2023.
[203] Ibid.

my intention is not to state that my interviewees' stories and subjectivities are not "true" and consequently historically less "valuable", but rather that the "trueness" as a factor is not in my research's focal point. All of my interviewees told me stories that are *true for them*[204] and, this is, for me, precisely the value of an effective response Braidotti had been referring to and rightfully defending.

The act of choosing what to conceal and what to disclose, as well as the decision to "take something out of the box," is a complex process that is influenced by various factors such as the idea of its own identity and subjectivity, timing, and the specific social, political or cultural context in which individuals find themselves. This seemingly dichotomous relationship between hiding and revealing, boxing and unboxing, is far from being a straightforward binary. It is contingent upon an individual's intention, as Paula highlights, to convey certain aspects about themselves and the significance of their surname and identity, both on a personal level and within a broader social framework.

Yes... [my grandmother's surname] is now Rehm, and before it was Dujmić as her dad was a Croat from Bosnia, but her mom, a Jewish woman, was Mautner, and now my Facebook name is Paula Mautner.[205]

Sara: Do you remember when and how did you come up to have this surname as your Facebook name?

Paula: I really don't remember, but I just know that it was somehow connected to what I wanted to publicly reveal about myself...

[204] Inspiration and one of the crucial works for the idea of "trueness" in oral history was the work of Luisa Passerini, more specifically her article "Mythbiography in Oral History" - Passerini, Luisa. "Mythbiography in Oral History." *Myths We Live By*, p. 49-60., edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, London/New York, Routledge, 1990.

[205] Paula consented that her full Facebook name was revealed.

In Paula's case, her multiple family identities ("doubling") are encouraging her to choose in what context to be a descendant of her Jewish family. As previously mentioned, Paula is rather publicly expressing her Jewish identity, being one of young ambassadors of her local Jewish community and by choosing to name herself as mentioned on Facebook, only accentuates her previous statement. As Bemporad writes in the first chapter of her and Warren's book, *Women and Genocide Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators,*[206] "the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and class plays a crucial role in the way women experience genocide."[207] It may also influence how they live during conflict die from it, but also, experience its aftermaths. The experience and memory of war atrocities and genocides are inseparable of wider social and political structures. Nevertheless, gender-aware and conscious scholarship of Holocaust and war in general is quite recent phenomenon in the academia, especially when we include the research of 'postmemory generation. As Ruth Kluger, Holocaust survivor, writer, and scholar in the field of German literature once stated, "wars, and hence the memories of wars are owned by the male of the species."[208] Thinking about Elisa Bemporad and Joyce W.Warren's writing in the preface of their book *Women and Genocide*[209] how "conventional narratives have not pointed out, or in some cases even mentioned, the separate ways in which women have functioned during genocidal actions"[210] or in this regard, after them, Paula's rather intriguing story of *surname-shifting practice*[211] as a public manifestation of belonging, but also choosing

[206] Bemporad, Elissa, and Joyce W Warren. *Women and Genocide : Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*. Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2018.

[207] Ibid., p.1.

[208] Ibid. p. 5. Citation is originally from Ruth Kluger's memoir - KlügerRuth. *Still Alive : A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*. New York, Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2001.

[209] Bemporad, Elissa, and Joyce W Warren. 2018. *Women and Genocide : Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

[210] Ibid., p. ix. It is important to mention that changing the name with a marital union is a gendered privilege. This was back then only reserved for women.

[211] When referring to "surname-shifting," I am specifically alluding to Paula's deliberate choice of which surname to present publicly, the reasons behind this choice, and the specific circumstances under which she decides to adopt a particular surname. I will detailly discuss this phenomenon in Chapter 5.

her own identity marker. In Paula's case, her multiple family identities, or the act of "doubling," serve as a catalyst for her to contemplate and make choices about how she identifies as a descendant of her Jewish family. These diverse familial identities present Paula with the opportunity to navigate and determine the context in which she embraces her Jewish heritage. By accepting her legal, paternal surname Rehm, Paula maintains a connection to a traditionally perceived "Jewish" surname, while simultaneously keeping her maternal Jewish surname reserved for her self-reflexive research and authorial work. Paula contemplates switching to the surname Mautner when publishing pieces explicitly centered around her Jewish identity and the experiences of Jewish women in her family from Osijek. Through this decision, she becomes an agent of her family's history, actively choosing to embrace that particular surname as a means of connecting with her Jewish heritage. This deliberate act can be seen as her willingness to bring forth and reveal a specific part of her Jewish ancestry, effectively taking it out of the *box* and sharing it with the world.

Sara: Have you ever thought of changing it legally?

Paula: No, but I was thinking to, since I published some books, sign my name like that. But that was also not possible because I had already published something under a different name, so that could not be possible…. but in future, I want to publish articles or books related to my [Jewish] identity under Mautner, so that I can differentiate my, let's say, two selves, depending on what I want to say about myself.[212]

As she said in the interview, she never thought about changing it legally nor adding the surname to her existing one. For her, the case of legality and "legally" being Paula Mautner, was never important. In her case, the act of unboxing goes beyond the simple dichotomy of revealing or

[212] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022. Translation is mine.

preserving her family's memory for future generations. It becomes a deliberate moment of choice, with a specific goal in mind: determining what aspects of her identity she wants to share in a particular moment with a specific group of people. This concept of identity doubling, being both Rehm and Mautner but selectively presenting one at a given time, offers a new perspective on unboxing one's identity. It doesn't necessarily involve unveiling a traumatic family history for the sake of self-awareness, but rather emphasizes agency – the power to choose and curate what aspect of her she wants to engage with, express and present to others. The act of unboxing in this context encompasses a feeling of liberation, the recognition of multiple identities, and the presence of choice. While I previously viewed unboxing primarily as an emotionally challenging and potentially traumatic process, Paula's example demonstrates that engaging with one's intergenerational familial narratives can also be emancipatory. It opens up opportunities for younger generations to have more options and freedom in determining their own self-presentation, choosing whom to reveal themselves to, and understanding the reasons behind their choices.

As I contemplated Paula's words and her relationship with her surnames, it prompted me to reflect on my own mother and myself, and our connection to our maternal surname. For both of us, this surname carries great significance in relation to our Jewish identity, as our paternal surnames do not have Jewish origins, but rather, it is this particular surname that we strongly identify with. Over the years, especially for me, I have considered legally adding my grandmother's surname or, at some point, to even change it and remove *Simić* entirely. Like Paula, I recognize the importance of surnames as representations of intentional and selected affiliation, as well as the agency that comes with identifying as either *Simić*, *Hochberger*, or *Simić-Hochberger*. This recognition has been instrumental in acknowledging and embracing both my Southeast European, more to the point, Western Balkan and Jewish heritage

simultaneously. However, our approaches to implementing this change diverge. In my case, legality has always been the exclusive avenue for choosing my surname. It is my aspiration to have that surname legally recognized, publicly acknowledged, and recorded in official state documents once more. On the other hand, for Paula, it is a matter of presenting herself as either Rehm or Mautner through her written work, depending on the topic and her desired persona. While the concept of unboxing also relates to my agency in choosing the surname I want to legally adopt, for Paula, legality is not the focus. Instead, it revolves around what she writes and wants to present at the given moment. Despite these differences, both dimensions of agency are intricately linked to the concept of unveiling and unboxing one's identity, but through different instruments of power and legitimacy. The disparity lies in the manner in which each individual exercise control over their subjectivity and identity. This signifies that the act of unboxing holds the potential to be an empowering endeavor, offering a variety of possibilities for future generations' identification processes. Depending on our unique preferences, identities, and subjectivities, the process of unveiling challenging and traumatic family memories and histories can be a transformative and potentially life-altering experience, as it was for Paula, myself, and my mother.

6. Ethnic and religious identity

Another compelling instance of the concept of doubling that surfaced during my interviews became evident in the dialogue with Ivanka, who, akin to Paula, defines herself as a non-Orthodox Jewish woman originating from interfaith marriages, while concurrently embracing her affiliation with her identity as an ethnic Croat. This concurrent duality of identity, thereby manifesting the coexistence of their Jewish heritage and their Croatian ethnic allegiance, seemingly facilitated an elevated level of comfort within their immediate surroundings. Consequently, this heightened sense of ease in identification with both facets could be attributed to the amalgamation of these dual markers. In Paula's statement, following Cukras-

Stelagowska's term of "unexpected generation"[213] even if antisemitism is far from being eradicated from the local (Osijek) and national (Croatian) level, she, as the third generation, does not feel either frightened or worried for her safety, on the contrary, as she said, "[she] will even show her identity even more." As Pierre Nora stated, "to be Jewish is to remember that one is such."[214] As Ivanka from Osijek stated – the question of hiding/revealing one's identity is, we could almost say, a non-negotiable one, even with her adult children:

There is no "a bit of this, a bit of that." Never! You have to make a stand and stick by it. Everybody know it and that is it. Many years ago, I told my sons that they would not declare themselves as Jews before they turn 18, as this decision is for their entire lives and they have to take it very seriously. And they did. One of them is a President of our [Osijek] *Jewish community, while other one does not even celebrate holidays and he even baptized her daughter, and that is ok. But they know who they are and they made a choice.*[215]

However, according to Ivanka, identity and community belonging is not something that can and should be taken for granted. In this case, doubling as a narrative strategy should not be misunderstood. In Ivanka, but also her children and grandchildren's case, there is an awareness of both their Christian and Jewish roots, however they chose to either be part of one or another community. Here, ethnically being both is possible, but religiously and emotionally it is not. This phenomenon of ethnically being both is possible (and very often the case), but everyone has to choose to only to be a part of one community. Apart from the question of surname-changing and surname-choosing practice, Ivanka several times came back to the topic of her

[213] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.
[214] Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de memoire,* 1989, pp. 7-24.
[215] Words by Ivanka L., Interview held in November 2022. translation is mine.

act of "giving" freedom for [her] sons to choose"[216] whether or not they will embrace their Jewish identity and how will they identify in the public sphere. Their decision affected both them as well as Ivanka's grandchildren, as her sons did not feel complied to follow their mother's heritage, but rather to follow their father's:

My mother did not baptize us, I have two brothers and a sister and she [her mother] was always saying that she got persecuted becsuse of her faith and that she will not to inforce anything on us... when you will be grown-ups, you will decide for yourselves. I did the same thing with my boys, I did not let them [to join the Jewish community] until they were 18, and then I told them once they decide that, this is it, it is a decision for their entire lives. They needed to know that it is not so simple and they never know what can happen to them, but if they decide, then that's it![217]

Ivanka's decision not to impose any religious markers on her children, influenced by her mother's own choice, carries significant implications. Primarily, Ivanka's mother, who survived the Holocaust and personally experienced the repercussions of her Jewish identity and faith, may have influenced Ivanka's decision to allow her sons the freedom to choose their religious beliefs and sense of belonging. This decision can be viewed as a liberating strategy, granting the children the autonomy to decide which community and religious and ethnic context they wish to be a part of. The participants I engaged with, hailing from lineages of interfaith unions and lacking affiliation with the Orthodox community, were never subjected to a coercive imperative that would necessitate their complete assimilation into their respective local Jewish enclaves. Rather, their engagement stemmed from distinct motivations, predominantly centered on broadening their social connections and acquaintances within the local milieu,

[216] Words by Ivanka L, interview held in November 2022, translation is mine.
[217] Ibid.

coupled with a yearning to draw nearer to their ethnic and religious legacy. However, this narrative strategy of non-imposition holds different meanings for the second[218] and third generations, as revealed by my interviews. For example, second-generation women like Ivanka or my mother readily identify with both the dominant Croatian and Christian cultures, as their fathers were not part of the Jewish community but the Christian community, a dominant one in Croatia. On the other hand, third-generation interviewees, such as Paula and Maja, appear to be more receptive to fully embracing their "lost" Jewish roots and openly appreciating and participating in Jewish holidays and their local communities. In essence, for the third generation, who often lacked a significant connection with their Jewish family during early childhood and even if they do have some kind of reference, the stories they are told are often "rehearsed narratives"[219]. This is why their communities serve as a crucial space to gain a deeper understanding of Jewish customs,[220] knowledge that their parents received from the first generation or, in the case of my interviewees, never even had the opportunity to establish.

Lastly, the connection between the mentioned fluidity of identities or the act of "doubling" as a narrative strategy, and the concept of unboxing one's subjectivities is deeply intertwined with the idea of unboxing one's sense of belonging, subjectivity and identity. Many of my third generation interviewees, emphasized the importance of choosing the appropriate identity markers, exercising the freedom to decide what to "pick" and adopt as their own, as well as what to exclude from their identity due to a lack of personal identification with those particular markers:

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[218] Berger, Alan L, and Naomi Berger. *Second Generation Voices Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators.* Paw Prints, 2008

[219] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4, 18 Oct. 2015, pp. 476–483, p. 481. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

[220] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. 2015. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (4): 476–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

I think this identity question is very interesting, especially in this region where we are all very mixed in a way, we all have Croatian, Serbian, Hungarian, Austro-German and Czecho-Slovakian blood, so we can choose to identify with what we want in a way and what is closer to our own feelings and personal identity.[221]

This unique self-narration strategy is exclusively observed among the third generation in my research, as second-generation women never changed their surnames to their ancestral Jewish ones or experimented with them based on the situation and the message they wished to convey, unlike Paula. The practices of changing surnames and selecting one's identity markers are closely tied to the question of breaking gendered intergenerational silences through three means: marriage, doubling, and community. In the context of breaking gendered intergenerational silences, doubling as a narrative strategy grants individuals the power to choose who they want to be and how they want to be named. As several of my interviewees demonstrated, this ability to make choices regarding their identity markers was a crucial moment of empowerment, self-awareness, and identity exploration. It gradually led them to become active members of their local Jewish communities, and in Paula's case, pursue a postdoctoral degree in Jewish studies at the University of Vienna, while Maja became a project coordinator for Central and Southeast European countries in one prominent global organizations[222] that connects Jewish youth worldwide. Mentioned examples show one similarity – the correlation between the act of 'unboxing' and identity doubling as a self-narrative strategy. The process of unboxing emerges as a potent mechanism for dismantling gendered silences that persist across generations within familial narratives. Simultaneously, the

[221] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022, translation is mine.

[222] Referring to the organization B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO). BBYO is a Jewish teen movement, organized as non-profit organization, with its headquarters in Washington, D.C. in the United States of America

strategy of doubling, when employed as a self-narrative strategy, emerges as an efficacious means for locating one's voice and establishing a distinct position both within the societal context and within the familial framework. Consequently, the act of unpacking concealed familial and wider social histories and the concurrent practice of doubling one's identity become mutually intertwined with the processes of self-identification and self-narration. By unraveling her family's narrative, Paula can liberate herself from the confines of societal norms and externally imposed identities. This grants her the agency to discern which facets of her identity warrant emphasis and dissemination. This process thus evolves into an empowering endeavor of self-definition, enabling her to purposefully craft and curate her own narrative, accentuating her distinct encounters and viewpoints.

As I had a really mixed family lineage, but most prominent ones were Austro-German and Jewish one, I was open and tried to explore both sides and see where and with what I communicate more. That is why I left to Vienna to study as it is a German-speaking city, but I decided to study Jewish studies because of my strong Jewish roots. Very fast it became clear to me that my home was within my newly-found Jewish community at Uni Wien and in studying about Jewish history and thought in general.[223]

Historically, certain narratives and experiences have been suppressed or overlooked due to societal expectations and different cultural norms, particularly when it comes to gender roles and expectations. However, by embracing the process of unboxing, Paula can challenge these gendered silences and reclaim their agency in shaping their own narratives according to their identities. Through proactive involvement with intergenerational familial narratives, she has

[223] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022, translation is mine.

the potential to unearth silenced stories, experiences, and viewpoints that have remained obscured due to conventional gender roles, often privileging patrilineal lineage while relegating matrilineal aspects to the periphery, which was the case with her own father. This process of recognizing and comprehending one's familial context fosters a more profound self-awareness, concurrently unveiling the array of identities that coexist within a single family unit.

By doing so, she not only challenge the gendered silences within her family but also contribute to a broader social transformation, dismantling traditional gender norms and perhaps empowering others to do the same within their own communities. Unboxing also enables individuals to navigate the complexities of their heritage and identity in a way that aligns with their own values and aspirations. It allows them to embrace and celebrate their heritage while also forging their own path and identity.[224] By consciously selecting which aspects of their identity to engage with and present to others, individuals can shape their personalities and create a sense of authenticity and empowerment. In this context, unboxing can become a means of liberation, self-discovery, however, not necessarily. Although it provides younger generations with increased independence and the ability to shape their own identities, breaking free from predefined gender roles and societal expectations doesn't necessarily lead to the anticipated "liberation" and "self-discovery." I contend that it's crucial to recognize the generational gap that exists between known, concealed, and newly uncovered stories, as bridging this gap is often a challenging task. Understanding the historical and social context is frequently necessary to comprehend what was truly happening in a historical sense, as well as why and how these familial silences and secrets were perpetuated and preserved. Transitioning from discovering an unknown familial (or other) fact to comprehending its context, significance, and contemporary implications is far from a straightforward process. The act of

[224] See: Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

unboxing, as a method of discovery, involves teaching, learning, patience, and dedication. It's only through this, combined with their educational background and general cultural knowledge, that individuals, like Paula, for instance, can embark on a path toward a deeper understanding of their family's history and their own position within it:

As both my father and grandfather are writers, I was always interested more in literature than in religion itself, but as all children went to Christian religious classes in school, I went as well. However, I never truly "found myself" neither in Christianity nor in Bible, but Judaism made somehow more sense to me… Not in religiouse sense necessarily, but in its approaches to sacred texts, its teachings and content of Torah in general.[225]

Ultimately, Paula's example demonstrates that unboxing intergenerational familial narratives has the potential to not only emancipate individuals from gendered silences but also inspire a broader societal transformation towards greater acceptance, understanding, and celebration of diverse identities. Previously in my research process, I predominantly viewed unboxing as predominantly an emotionally challenging and potentially traumatic process. Nevertheless, Paula's case serves as an illustration that active participation in intergenerational familial narratives can yield emancipatory and liberating outcomes. Her engagement facilitates openings for the younger generations of Jewish descent in the context of post-Yugoslav space, potentially affording them increased flexibility and autonomy when it comes to shaping their own self-portrayal. It may empower them to make selective disclosures about their identity and decide to whom they wish to reveal themselves, while also fostering a deeper comprehension of the underlying motivations guiding their choices. By embracing the act of unboxing one's overlooked and silenced identity, individuals like Paula can navigate their narratives strategies in a nuanced and thoughtful manner. In Paula's situation, the act of unboxing surpasses the

[225] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022, translation is mine.

simplistic dichotomy of revealing or preserving her family's memory solely for the sake of future generations. It transforms into a purposeful moment of choice, driven by a specific objective: deciding which aspects of her identity she wishes to share with a particular group of people at a given moment. The idea of identity doubling, encompassing the dual designations of Rehm and Mautner, as well as embodying both her German and Jewish heritage, but ultimately aligning with her Jewish lineage while strategically revealing either name contingent on the context, brings forth a novel angle to the notion of unpacking one's identity. It moves beyond the notion of unveiling a potentially traumatic family history purely for self-awareness and places emphasis on agency—the ability to choose and curate which aspects of herself she desires to engage with, express, and present to others. In this context, the act of unboxing evokes a sense of liberation, acknowledging the Paula's example demonstrates that engaging with intergenerational familial narratives can also be emancipating, thus showing the existence of multiple identities and embracing the power of choice. It opens up opportunities for younger generations to have greater autonomy and freedom in determining how they present themselves to the world, whom they choose to reveal their true selves to, and comprehending the motivations underlying their choices. Through her journey, Paula exemplifies that unboxing one's identity can be a transformative and empowering experience, allowing individuals to shape their narratives while honoring their heritage.

On the other hand, after the horrors of war and being left alone with both sides of the family – for one "not Jewish enough" and left for the United States and then Israel and the other being oblivious of the suffering, financial situation and pain of the daily life of two daughter and a mother in Yugoslavia, identity doubling was not such much of a choice, but a condition, the way, let's say, various "postcards got shuffled"[226] and left a Jewish-Christian family in an identity limbo only one family member abroad who writes to them every two years. Hence,

[226] Cards got shuffled is a standard idiom

doubling as a narrative strategy possesses the potential for empowerment, yet it can also impose a sense of involuntary in-betweenness. Suddenly, all one yearns for is complete immersion, an unequivocal sense of belonging within a specific societal context, devoid of any traces of insecurity and uncertainty. Through a meticulous analysis of conducted interviews and scrutinized narratives, it becomes apparent that doubling as a narrative strategy embodies a multifaceted significance. It serves as the catalyst for various modes of connecting with and responding to one's heritage, while simultaneously shaping individual familial and personal narratives. This underscores that a rich familial background carries a dual nature—it can serve as a wellspring of inspiration and liberation, or conversely, elicit emotions of abandonment and disorientation in the interstice between different worlds.

In conclusion, Paula's contemplation of adopting the surname Mautner for certain professional activities such as future academic publications that focus on her Jewish identity and the experiences of Jewish women in her family from Osijek reflects her active role in shaping her family's history as well as hers. Through the analysis and active adoption of this particular surname in her life, she forges a direct link to her Jewish heritage. I argue that this decision moves beyond the simple act of revealing or preserving her family's memory for future generations; it becomes a deliberate moment of choice, driven by a specific purpose. Paula aims to determine which aspects of her identity she wants to share at a given time and with a particular audience. I claim that this notion of identity doubling, encompassing both her original surname, Rehm, and the adopted one, Mautner, while selectively presenting one or the other, offers a fresh perspective on unboxing one's identity. It does not necessarily involve unveiling a traumatic family history solely for the purpose of self-awareness. I contend that instead, it highlights agency—the power to choose and curate the aspects of her identity she wishes to engage with, express, and present to others. I argue that the act of unboxing, in this

context, embodies a sense of liberation, the recognition of multiple identities, and the presence of choice. Conversely, as illustrated by the excerpts from two unboxed postcards in the introduction, doubling as a narrative strategy can assume an entirely contrasting aspect, one that raises questions about the concept of 'liberation.' In my grandmother's case, her experience of a dual identity, navigating a sense of incomplete belonging, and striving to assimilate into the prevailing Christian Croatian culture through her marriage choice and active assertion of her affiliation with this dominant culture, such as wearing a cross around her neck, may have represented a burden and stress associated with not feeling "Catholic and Croatian enough." She recalled this as potentially dangerous and a potential threat to her life.

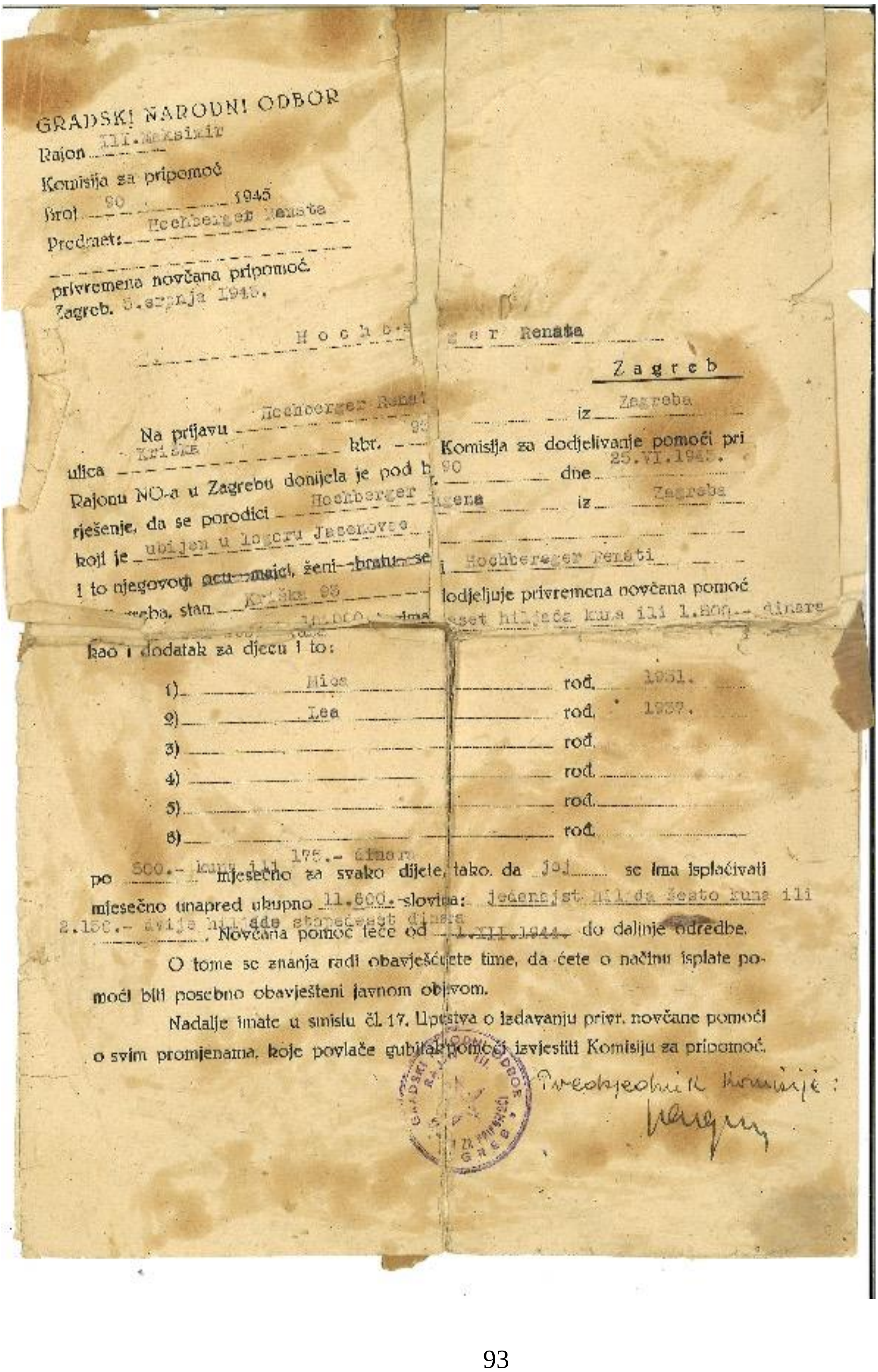
As I embarked on an immersive, deeply personal, and emotionally charged exploration by reading these postcards and contemplating their significance in the post-war era, as well as for me today, I came to a realization. None of the concepts I encountered in my interviews, including doubling as a narrative strategy, can be simplified into a single meaning or dimension. In each family, circumstance, time, place, and general context, it embodies a unique amalgamation of struggles, challenges, and the potential for intergenerational trauma healing. While it may be challenging to assert that these postcards directly contribute to intergenerational 'healing,' I argue that they certainly unveil new dimensions of my family's story. Along with other archival materials, postcards as archival material can potentially lead to new discoveries and historical connections. The mere fact that they were preserved in a relatively small box for so many years, read and examined, also indicates a strong connection between my grandmother's self-identification and that side of the family. As I contemplate these postcards and their potential significance, both in terms of their materiality and the written content, it becomes evident that identity doubling as a narrative strategy was also present in

my grandmother's life, as my mother has also conveyed to me in the interviews conducted, however her Jewishness was more present through silence.[227]

[227] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 - 129

7. Community and Communal Identity

Object: Statement for temporary financial help from Yugoslav government due to the death of a close family member in a concentration camp



GRADSKI NARODNI ODBOR
Rajon III.Maksimir
Komisija za pripomoć
Broj 90 1945
Predmet: Hochberger Renata

privremena novčana pripomoć
Zagreb. 5.srpnja 1945.

Hochberger Renata
Zagreb

Na prijavu Hochberger Renat[illegible] iz Zagreba
ulica Kriške kbr. 95 Komisija za dodjelivanje pomoći pri
Rajonu NO-a u Zagrebu donijela je pod br. 90 dne 25.VI.1945.
rješenje, da se porodici Hochberger Igena iz Zagreba
koji je ubijen u logoru Jasenovac
i to njegovoj ~~ocu—majci,~~ ženi—~~bratu—se~~ Hochberger Renati
~~[illegible]~~, stan Kriške 95 dodjeljuje privremena novčana pomoć
[illegible] 1.000.- dinara

kao i dodatak za djecu i to:

1) Miša rođ. 1931.
2) Lea rođ. 1937.
3) rođ.
4) rođ.
5) rođ.
6) rođ.

po 500.- kuna ili 175.- dinara mjesečno za svako dijete, tako da joj se ima isplaćivati
mjesečno unapred ukupno 11.600.- slovima: jedanajst hiljada šesto kuna ili
2.150.- dvije hiljade stopedeset dinara. Novčana pomoć teče od 1.VII.1944. do daljnje odredbe.

O tome se znanja radi obavješćujete time, da ćete o načinu isplate pomoći biti posebno obavješteni javnom objavom.

Nadalje imate u smislu čl. 17. Uputstva o izdavanju privr. novčane pomoći o svim promjenama, koje povlače gubitak pomoći izvjestiti Komisiju za pripomoć.

Predsjednik Komisije:
[signature]

GRADSKI NARODNI ODBOR
Rajon III. Maksimir
Komisija za Pripomoć
Broj 90 1945.
Predmet: Hochberger Renata

Privremena novčana pripomoć
Zagreb, 5. srpnja 1945.

...Komisija za dodjeljivanje pomoći... dne 25.VI.1945. rješenje da se porodici Hochberger Eugena iz Zagreba koji je ubijen u logoru Jasenovac...Hochberger Renati dodjeljuje privremena novčana pomoć iz Zagreba... 1800 dinara i dječji doplatak za svako dijete:

1)Mica rođ. 1931.
2) Lea rođ. 1937.

od 175 dinara jedan mjesec unaprijed.

Figure 1 City's public council. Rajon III. Maksimir. Commission for financial help. Number 90 1945. Case: Hochberger Renata. Temporary financial help. Zagreb. 5th of July 1945. Commission for assigning financial help... on the 25th of June 1945 decided to give to the family of Eugen Hochberger who was killed in Jasenovac concentration camp to Renata Hochberger from Zagreb temporary financial help of 1800 dinars and child allowance for every child... of 175 dinars one month in advance.

Among all these boxed remnants, this particular one exudes the most profound sense of harsh reality of life after the experience of death, of life after the war. Gazing upon these rigid and almost clinical mode of writing, with the names of the newly established state and the triumphant figures of the war, alongside the names of my family members who were in dire need of help, whose lives were disturbingly altered in ways I had never comprehended before, imparts a surreal feeling. The tale I've been told about these horrendous first post-war years only recounts how my grandmother's mother worked day and night as a seamstress in a local factory, who indeed received financial help from the Yugoslav government, but the entire financial situation of the country was far from stable.[228] As a result, she and her children Lea

[228] https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/022/0008/004/article-A004-en.xml Last accessed: August 30th, 2023.

and Mira, much like many other surviving Jewish-Christian families who endured the war, relied heavily on this support. When I first discovered this boxed item, I felt a sense of relief. It was as though I had obtained tangible evidence that, although the assistance may not have been substantial, they were not on the brink of starvation. They still had their apartment, their mother worked as a seamstress, and they received official financial aid and a child allowance. However, as I examined the document, which was surprisingly in a dismal state yet managing to somehow hold its pieces together, I sensed an overwhelming sadness, not solely for their hard financial circumstances. What intrigued me even more was the question of their social connections and the people they were acquainted with after the war. This was especially interesting given that my grandmother's mother primarily associated with the wives of her deceased husband's friends prior the war. Subsequent to the war, they found themselves far away from their Italian relatives, with only one aunt occasionally inquiring about their welfare, so as far as I remember from what I heard in my childhood both from my mother and grandmother, all "friends" and social ties they had after the war was their neighbors and deceased father/husband's surviving friends from work. Experiencing[229] this document while simultaneously enacting the role of a detective and a careful archivist, I embarked on a continuous endeavor to scrutinize the script, while without a loss of, what Alan Trachtenberg calls, "accidental details of everyday existence,... [and] without sacrifice of concrete particulars on the altar of abstraction."[230]

[229] Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive." *Photo-Archives and Art History*, by Elizabeth Edwards, edited by C. Carrafi, Munich/Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011., p. 2.
[230] Ibid.

My aim was to decipher the writing while delicately handling this "sleeping"[231] document, wary of causing any unintended harm or inadvertent destruction, as it exhibited an unusual level of deterioration despite its relatively recent date of origin in 1945. This deterioration contrasted starkly with the notably better preservation of documents from the 1920s. This delicate material state posed intriguing questions. What hidden messages might this fragility hold? Did it indicate subpar paper quality prevalent in post-war Yugoslavia, or did it suggest that this particular administrative document had experienced frequent use and scrutiny? If the latter was the case, then why was it examined so frequently? Folded twice to fit within the confines of the box, over time, two of the four folded sections have frequently come loose and needed to be delicately reattached, all without damaging the fragile paper. Evidently, it has been handled quite regularly, as evidenced by numerous stain-like marks on its back. I also notice that it has been taped once or twice, with the tape now appearing noticeably browner than its original color. I can envision how this document served as proof of their financial support and, as such, was perhaps one of the most crucial documents for their very survival. In contrast to the postcards, which are meant to be sent and received, often without any further purpose, and are typically retained as keepsakes, this document is also a memento but serves an essential external function as well – it was a tangible means to secure financial assistance. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that this document appears so worn and weathered, aligning with Edwards' observations on how both the materiality, or "objecthood," and its presentation can reveal significant insights about the object itself.[232]

[231] According to Paul Ricoeur - the philosopher of history, documents are'sleeping' while photographs themselves are often assigned 'voices' which 'speak' in tones from'shouting' to 'whispering'. Ricœur, Paul, et al. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago, Ill. Univ. Of Chicago Press, 2004., p. 169.

[232] In her article *Material beings: objecthood and ethnographic photographs* (2002), Edwards specifically focuses on historical still and ethnographic photographs, however, I believe her thinking about objecthood and the importance of looking both and visual and material aspects in order to think about the meaning, is also applicable in this case. Edwards, Elizabeth. "Material Beings: Objecthood and Ethnographic Photographs."

Precisely because of this last question, I started "thinking materially",[233] i.e., pondering the questions of the position of community and communal identity within the post-war times, as well as where is the position of the community for second and specifically third generation of Holocaust survivors today. Aside from the official Jewish community, which had not yet been re-established in the immediate post-war months, I couldn't help but wonder about the lives of similar families across Croatia and even Yugoslavia, who were enduring circumstances akin to my own family's. Where was their local community,[234] of the "left behind"ones? Those who had to find a way to survive after losing a close family member, in this case, the traditional breadwinner, meaning a husband and father. As these feelings and thoughts swirled in my mind, I began to feel a sense of pride and happiness for how their lives eventually unfolded. However, the notion of the possibility of a community of fractured families continued to haunt me. Within this chapter, an endeavor is made to unwrap the potential of community formation both in Yugoslavia and the post-Yugoslav context. Moreover, diverse instances are explored, featuring various generations of Jewish women who confronted challenges, harbored fears of connection, and grappled with the specter of further persecution. Concurrently, these women discovered sources of support and, in a sense, connected with aspects of themselves that were

Visual Studies, vol. 17, no. 1, 2002, pp. 67–75, www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/methods/edwards.pdf, https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860220137336. Accessed 31 Aug. 2023.

[233] Ibid.

[234] So-called "Jewish councils" (*judenraete*) were seen as instruments of Nazi oppression, aiding the process of isolating and deporting the Jews they were ostensibly representing. As a result, they have chiefly been remembered as forms of collaboration. It is known that they were present in almost every occupied country during the war. See: Laurien Vastenhout. *Between Community and Collaboration*. Cambridge University Press, 30 Sept. 2022., Trunk, Isaiah. *Judenrat : The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*. Lincoln, University Of Nebraska Press, 1996. , https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-councils-judenraete Last accessed on September 1st 2023. However, in Independent State of Croatia, I did not find any records of such organizations in concentration camps. Other Jewish organizations and activits after the war in Yugoslavia were mostly centered in larger centers, like Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb, and women played a significant role in them. Many women activists, who were also in partisans during the war, worked together with other international organizations, such as American Joint Distribution Committee and the Red Cross. Other help centers and communities, continued their volunteer work through dispersed Jewish communities, "while younger [mostly] women tended to extend their sphere of activity beyond the Jewish framework." https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/yugoslavia#pid-14463 Last accessed on August 31st, 2023.

hitherto unknown. Consequently, this chapter unveils a tapestry of multiple women coexisting within each individual, and this narrative extends to subsequent generations within their local Jewish communities in Croatia.

In the last analytical chapter, my primary goal is to explore the influence of local Jewish communities on women belonging to the second and third generations within the two separate communities of interest. However, I approach this exploration from distinct angles, considering their unique historical contexts and backgrounds. My focus is on how these communities shape the identity, sense of belonging, and personal perspectives of my interviewees. Specifically, I delve into the intersection between the sense of belonging and communal strategies, as highlighted in the two preceding analytical chapters: the themes of marriage and the narrative strategy of doubling. These are reexamined through the lens of belonging, communal identity, and the community as a space for learning, affiliation, and heritage comprehension.[235] Additionally, I reflect on instances of encountered gender biases and some experienced uncomfortable situations. These experiences unveil underlying structural and historical challenges pertaining to "endangered" religious and ethnic identities. My objective is to unravel these interconnected elements to comprehensively comprehend the role of the community in addressing intergenerational gendered silences. This exploration aims not only to contribute to a nuanced understanding of these dynamics but also to foster new local, regional, and international bonds with the younger Jewish demographic globally. The findings coalesce in the concluding segment of this chapter, synthesizing the various facets discussed throughout.

[235] I was driven to invest significant time engaging with and immersing myself in the communities I was interested in. Over the course of two years and various contexts, I conversed with individuals spanning different generations. This initiative was kindled by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's discourse on the challenge of authentically studying within the confines of academic institutions. Their article proposed that the most insightful moments lie "beyond" the formal university settings, emerging unexpectedly in the course of life and interactions with people, transcending the conventional boundaries of academia. https://ou.edu/content/dam/Education/documents/the%20university%20and%20the%20undercommons.pdf Last accessed: August 31st, 2023.

Throughout this chapter, I employ several conceptual frameworks to analyze my research material. Initially, I provide a brief contextual backdrop using the works of Cukras-Stelągowska[236] and Ewa Sidorenko[237] on the third generation of Polish Jews. These works, focusing on ethnography and autoethnographic narratives, inform my observations of similar patterns within the communities of interest. This context establishes the rationale behind my exploration of practices relating to the second and third generations' connection with communal activities and its relevance to their overarching identity of second and third generation of Jewish women. Subsequently, I delve into examining the commonalities and disparities between the generations' engagement in community activities and its potential influence on their sense of belonging. This examination encompasses complexities such as negotiating multiple ethnic and religious identities within families, particularly in interfaith marriages among the first generation, as evidenced by interviewees like Paula and Ivanka. This phenomenon, termed "the aura of inauthenticity" by Cukras-Stelągowska,[238] aligns seamlessly with my research framework.

Furthermore, I draw upon Elena Soler's[239] and Pine and Haukanes's[240] notions of memory and silence as both comforting and limiting factors. This serves as a basis to scrutinize the narratives shared by interviewees, shedding light on their relationship with communal belonging and heritage understanding. Lastly, I delve into a gender-specific analysis within these communities, exemplifying how second-generation Jewish women navigated entrenched

[236] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.
[237] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.
[238] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.
[239] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 – 129
[240] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, p.100. 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702

gender roles in the mid-20th century. I also explore the position of third-generation women in relation to their communities and professional lives, vis-à-vis their Jewish heritage and identity. This gender-focused analysis draws on the work of scholars such as Gaby R. Glassmann,[241] Myrna Goldenberg, and Amy H. Shapiro,[242] who employ oral history narratives to dissect the significance of gender during and after World War II. In this context, I find inspiration from Louise O. Vasvari's[243] work, which explores the intertwining of gender, memory, silence, and the "warmth and solidarity"[244] nurtured within communities that share similar familial destinies.

7.1. Identity and communal activities

To begin with, it's crucial to emphasize that the Jewish communities in Zagreb and Osijek, which pique my interest, possess distinct characteristics and are not in any manner comparable to each other. Even though "first Jews known to have lived in Croatia"[245] [are] probably in Zagreb, modern-day synagogues were built in the same year – in 1867, while Osijek, at the beginning of the 20th century outnumbered Zagreb's community, becoming one of the most viable community in the region. With that being acknowledged, it's important to emphasize that although my interviewees primarily come from the aforementioned two cities and communities, I generally didn't make distinctions among them during the interviews. In other words, I regarded them as integral members of the broader regional Jewish society. However, I am mindful of the historical and communal distinctions inherent to their respective

[241] GLASSMAN, GABY R. "10 Survivor Mothers and Their Daughters: The Hidden Legacy of the Holocaust." *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*, by MYRNA GOLDENBERG and AMY H. SHAPIRO, University of Washington Press, 2013, pp. 218–238.

[242] Goldenberg, Myrna, and Amy H Shapiro. *Different Horrors, Same Hell : Gender and the Holocaust*. Seattle, University Of Washington Press, 2013.

[243] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._.

[244] Ibid., p.2

[245] https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/zagreb Last accessed on August 29th 2023.

communities and their affiliations. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that the contemporary Jewish communities in Zagreb and Osijek do share several similarities. Despite both being funded by Croatian government from the obligatory yearly budget for minorities,[246] both communities have been facing the challenge of an aging membership, with barely a thousand members in Zagreb community[247] and only slightly more than 100 in Osijek,[248] most of whom have limited or no contact with the community. As a result, organized communal activities have become vital for fostering connections among members and nurturing a shared sense of identity.[249] Based on feedback from all my interviewees, either from second or third generation, their local Jewish communities played a central role in establishing a link to their Jewish heritage throughout their lives, from childhood through adulthood:

Well, in my case it was always more of an intellectual curiosity let's say, never a religious or a familial one… After my Erasmus to Israel, I officially joined the community, but I was a part of their work for a long time before, and after that everything sort of fell into its place in a way, I found myself through my community's activities, and my PhD in Jewish studies of course.[250]

[246] Jews, classified as religious and ethnic minority in Croatia, were funded 971.000 kunas (128873.85 euros) in 2022. This money is distributed to every city's organization that applied for government's funds and projects. Jewish community in Zagreb, for all of its activites received 547000 kunas (72599.38)
[247] Jewish community in Zagreb has around thousand members: https://www.zoz.hr/hr/
[248] Jewish community in Osijek has 150 members: https://www.zo-osijek.hr/category/o-nama/
[249] See: Intriguing study on the correlation between social identification and community belonging. This research has been important to understand the importance of self-identification with the Jewish community with my interviewees: Patricia Obst / Katherine White: Three-Dimensional Strength of Identification Across Group Memberships: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis'. In: Self and Identity, 4 (2005), 69–80.; Patricia L. Obst / Katherine M. White: An Exploration of the Interplay between Psychological Sense of Community, Social Identification and Salience'. In: Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 15 (2005), 127–135; Elvira Cicognani: Social Participation, Sense of Community and Social Well Being: A Study on American, Italian and Iranian University Students. In: Social Indicators Research, 89 (2008), 97–112.
[250] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022, translation is mine.

My entire family, we declare ourselves as Jewish and we go to the Community often, but at home I can't say that we go by any strict rules… so, yes, Community is our strongest bond with religion, but also culture and heritage.[251]

When my mother was still alive and I was in my thirties or something, we also went to the Community, at first, she did not want to go, but I insisted because it turned out that there are other people of her generation whose children also wanted to go there [to the Community] *with their parents, so we went there together until she died, and she always declared herself as Jewish, even though she was reluctant at first go to the Community.*[252]

This was due to their families either not observing significant Jewish holidays or only engaging in symbolic celebrations, such as lighting candles for *shabbat* or occasionally baking *challah*. For the third generation, often referred to as the "unexpected" or "rediscovered" generation, the process of reconnecting with their Jewish identity often involved broader social circles rather than immediate family ties. While, for instance, Cukras-Stelągowska's[253] and Ewa Sidorenko's[254] research primarily focuses on the third generation of Polish Jews with the focus on both ethnography, autoethnographic narratives and, in the case of Sidorenko's work, on family archives, I observed similar patterns in my own study with women from the communities in two cities in my research focus. Although the experiences of my interviewees in engaging with their local Jewish community varied, those whose ancestors survived the war and were community members before it played a significant role in reestablishing their lost[255]

[251] Words by Ivanka L., interview held in November 2022, translation is mine.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.
[254] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881

[255] Noteworthy literary works and personal accounts concerning the journey of reconnection with one's past are the memoirs authored by Paula Marcus, Charlotte Delbo, and Ruth Klüger. As referenced by Louise O. Vasvari

or unknown connection to their Jewish heritage. For instance, Maja and Paula, both belonging to the third generation, did not celebrate Jewish holidays or discuss their family history during their upbringing. However, Maja became more connected to her Jewish identity through active participation in communal activities before starting high school, while Paula independently explored her local Jewish history before officially joining the community. These experiences amplified their sense of belonging:

When I found out that we are Jewish, I started to explore it more, but independently. I read a lot about the Bible, about the characters in the Old Testament, for me it was a novel with a very strong philosophical background. Then, at my PhD, I focused myself on Jewish theosophy and philosophy in general, as well as the literature. I brought this knowledge to the community and now I am the one who hosts all the literary evenings and cultural events as such, which I find great, because two pieces of me in a way got connected.[256]

The concept of the "aura of inauthenticity" proposed by Cukras-Stelągowska[257] strongly resonates with my interviewees, reflecting a feeling of displacement and detachment from their cultural ancestry. This sentiment arises from a lack of intergenerational continuity and the necessity of seeking new forms of connection in today's society. Throughout my interviews, I observed that communal belonging and knowledge of one's heritage possess multifaceted

in her article "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination" (2006), Paula Marcus, a Hungarian Jewish woman, recounts her experience of finding liberation through being heard and seen. In addition, Charlotte Delbo, described by Vasvari as a "gentile political prisoner" (ibid., p. 3), and Ruth Klüger both contribute significant insights into the significance of memory, leaving a profound impact on both women's studies and Holocaust studies. Moreover, in the context of my research on oral history narratives, an essential aspect emerges as highlighted by Vasvari—the "filtering process of remembering." This concept becomes particularly pertinent in considering the crafting of Holocaust experiences into written accounts.I tried to expand this thinking on second and third generation of women and on Hirsch's term "postmemory" in relation to filtering process of (post) remembering.

[256] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022. Translation is mine.
[257] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

implications. They can be both empowering and burdensome, similar to the dual nature of silence which is, as Pine and Haukanes,[258] as well Elena Soler[259] argue, in an ambiguous space between "calm stillness"[260] and repression and restriction. In this context, local Jewish communities provided a space of freedom and possibility for second and third generation interviewees to confront their intergenerational traumas, feel safe, understood, and accepted among a larger group of individuals who shared similar experiences. Within these communities, it became easier for individuals to establish connections and share their personal narratives, as families often carry significant emotional burdens and struggle to openly discuss the past. Communal spaces served as a refuge where individuals could break the silence and express their identities and stories, which, within their families, were often associated primarily with traumatic symbolism and kept hidden from the outside world. However, primarily to the second generation individuals, the ones who were either not interested in their heritage, such as Ivanka's sister and my mother in her young age, or did not put much attention to their matrilineal ancestry,[261] communities were not of any value, or they focused more on helping in organization of events and preparing the food:

In the last several years, I actively joined the community's activities, but more from an organizational standpoint, as this is what I know the best. I still don't know how to cook any proper Jewish meals, so I can't contribute in that way, but I plan to help also in this way. I do not manage to go to Shabbat dinners and sermons, but maybe in the future I will also participate in it, who knows…[262]

[258] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, p.100. 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702
[259] Elena Soler, *Long-Term "Ethnicized silences": Family Secrets and Nation-Building,* Ethnologia Polana, vol. 42: 2021, 113 – 129, p. 100.
[260] Haukanes, Haldis, and Frances Pine. "Silences and Secrets of Family, Community and the State." *Ethnologia Polona*, vol. 42, p.100. 30 Nov. 2021, 10.23858/ethp.2021.42.2702
[261] As Paula's father mentioned, "heritage in our culture is passed on from father, not mother" (Words by Paula, interview held in October, 2022, translation is mine)
[262] Words by S.V., interview held in November 2021, translation is mine.

It's actually very interesting that both the organizer of children's Jewish dances groups and of many more other cultural activities in the community is the wife of a member and she is not even Jewish, but she wanted to participate somehow and contribute. Through her engagement and that dance group, I started to travel a lot and meet other kids from the region and, eventually, that is how I got my current full-time job at the organization [BBYO].[263]

The third generation presents a certain sociocultural phenomenon in the region of my interest which is Croatia, as well as in Poland, as Cukras-Stelągowska writes, in a sense that there is a "lack of generation of reference"[264] as they are trying to rebuild their identity, since in the majority of the cases, "the Jewish tradition was [partly] transferred from the grandparents' generation to the generation of the grandchildren, whereas the parents' generation did not identify with Jewish culture and tradition."[265] Also, third generation faces a constant need to "authenticate" themselves, both in front of local population within their own country as well as with a broader international (Orthodox) community. In the past, our non-Halachic background might have been regarded as an issue; however, as the community's membership numbers dwindled rapidly, community leaders found themselves compelled to welcome children and grandchildren of mixed marriages. Consequently, the identity of the third generation could be viewed as existing in a perpetually delicate state, subject to the need to continually validate its "authenticity." This aspect gains even more relevance in light of the growing prevalence of international youth exchange programs, a trend partly attributed to Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013, as well as the overall increase in various global youth exchanges and summer camps. As Cukras-Stelagowska writes where she

[263] Words by Maja, interview held in November 2022, translation is mine.
[264] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007., p. 91.
[265] Ibid.

mentions the work of Wójcik & Bilewicz [266] in which they mention that where"communities… allow people from mixed families to participate in the religious community [they] develop much more dynamically".[267] The mentioned work proved to be important for my thinking of contemporary Jewish communities in relation to the third generation also because, as Wójcik and Bilewicz mentioned, "contemporary Jews in many countries become linked by the bond of choice instead of bond faith"[268] and obligation. Of course, this situation differs from case to case and from community to community, yet, according to their research, as well as my own in communities in Osijek and Zagreb, this is truly a prevailing case. In the contemporary context, the third generation is actively shaping and reaffirming their identity on a global scale. These experiences are facilitated by encounters with peers facing similar challenges, fostering opportunities for collective discussions and the exchange of shared experiences.

As my grandfather did not grow up with any reminders of his past, he only later in life decided to join the community and somehow got aware of it all, my mother also did not have any connections with Jewishness at all, only in her late teens as I remember, but she did not feel it was something important, I guess. But for me, as my grandfather joined the community, I also joined some children groups, like classes and similar things, so from early on, my Jewishness was definitely defined on social grounds, so in Osijek community and in dance groups. So, my Jewish identity is a social and cultural, rather than religious one, for sure. Now, all of my closest friends and work colleagues are from Jewish seminars, groups, camps and exchanges I met over the course of 20 years. This is really who I am.[269]

[266] Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. file:///Users/sara/Downloads/wojcik_bilewicz_update.pdf Last accessed: August 30th, 2023

[267] Ibid.

[268] Ibid.

[269] Words by Maja, interview held in December 2022, translation is mine.

Maja's words are aligned with what Cukras-Stelągowska writes and that is how "young people's… social ties were strengthened by a community-based youth club."[270] In my interviewees' gatherings, camps and seminars, all of the young people (either teenagers for teen summer camps or students and young people for seminars) were invited, no matter their non- Halachic and non-Orthodox origin. In this regard, I can conclude that modern-day Jewish communities in Croatia are indeed an open and inviting place for learning and exchanging knowledge about young people's Jewish heritage and Jewish culture more broadly. As both Maja and Paula mentioned in the interviews, young Jewish people (born in the 1980s and 1990s) have a so-called "post-ethnic, more cosmopolitan identity"[271] while simultaneously being highly connected with their Jewish identity, creating an "open, dynamic and postmodern"[272] mixture of identities. Or, as Wójcik, and Bilewicz said, identification process with Jewism differs a lot from first, second and third generation. While in first and even in second generation of survivors, "the sensitivity to anti-Semitism and Holocaust experience"[273], the case with contemporary "younger of Polish Jews [belonging to the third generation], "seem to rely their identification on more cultural than religious basis."[274] According to their mentioned research, "knowing other Jews" as a factor of importance for their Jewish identity, emerged as the most important one.[275] In this context, their investigations into young Polish

[270] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007., p.89.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. Research cited: Barbara Engelking: Zagłada i Pamięć (Holokaust and Memory). Warsaw: IFiS Publishers, 2001, p. 8.; Małgorzata Melchior: Jewish Identity: Between Ascription and Choice. In: Polish Sociological Review, 109 (1995), 49–60.; Małgorzata Melchior: Threat of Extermination in Biographical Experience of the Holocaust Survivors. In: Polish Sociological Review, 137 (2002), 53–70.
[274] Ibid.
[275] Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des

Jews, along with the research conducted by Barbara Engelking and Cukras-Stelągowska, strongly resonate with the current state of identification among the young Jewish population in Croatia, as indicated by my research findings. This underscores the notion that the community, as a space for connection and interaction, serves as the central arena for fostering an understanding of one's forthcoming academic and professional journey. As viewed by my third-generation interviewees, their local Jewish communities played a pivotal role in shaping their present career and academic paths, a fact they proudly emphasized. For example, Paula's journey is illustrative of this process. Through her sustained involvement with the Osijek Jewish community, she embarked on a gradual exploration of Jewish customs and traditions. Simultaneously, she initiated conversations with her grandmother, delving into their family's Jewish heritage. This trajectory culminated in her decision to embark on an academic path, pursuing a doctoral research role in Jewish studies at the University of Vienna. In parallel with her studies, Paula actively engages in local and regional cultural events centered around Balkan Jewish history—a subject that coincides with her dissertation focus. Her research zeroes in on her great-grandmother's narrative and their women-centric Jewish family history.

Exploring the accounts concerning security and a cultivated sense of esteem among the succeeding generations of young Jewish women within their immediate communities offers captivating findings. Paula and Maja, representatives of the third generation, collectively hold a steadfast conviction that their Jewish identity merits visibility, even amid the prevailing currents of local-level antisemitism. As the interviews unfolded, it became increasingly evident that their affiliation with the Jewish community stands as a pivotal catalyst in fostering a profound sense of empowerment, active involvement, and a harmonious sense of belonging—prerogatives that their foremothers did not enjoy. In summary, while the second generation

Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. Table is visible on page 3. file:///Users/sara/Downloads/wojcik_bilewicz_update.pdf Last accessed on August 30th, 2023.

primarily focuses on the growth and maintenance of their local communities, the third generation actively strives to expand these communities and establish connections between youth worldwide. In the following subchapter, I will delve into gendered aspects of belonging to and being part of a Jewish communities in Zagreb and Osijek, exploring how these experiences have influenced the identity narratives of my interviewees. In the next subchapter, I will feature a more pronounced auto-ethnographic narrative, following and inspired by the work of Ewa Sidorenko,[276] Luisa Passerini,[277] Louise Vasvari,[278] Edna Lomsky-Feder,[279] Helen Epstein,[280] Arlene Avakian and Attarian Hourig,[281] Their literature delving into personal encounters, family histories, trauma, and the exploration of family archives and visual remnants of genocide and trauma has left a significant impact on me. Their work has served as both a source of encouragement and inspiration, prompting me to recount certain experiences of mine linked to the Jewish community in Zagreb.

[276] Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881.

[277] Passerini, Luisa. "Mythbiography in Oral History." *Myths We Live By*, edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, London/New York, Routledge, 1990.

[278] Vasvari, Louise. "Women's Holocaust Memories: Trauma, Testimony and the Gendered Imagination." ." *Central European University Press*, 2006. *Jewish Studies Project, Central European University*, www.academia.edu/555724/_Womens_Holocaust_Memories_Trauma_Testimony_and_the_Gendered_Imagination._.

[279] Lomsky-Feder, Edna. "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories." *Ethos*, vol. 32, no. 1, Mar. 2004, pp. 82–109, p. 86. https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2004.32.1.82. Accessed on 18 Feb. 2022.

[280] Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust : Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1988.

[281] Avakian, Arlene, and Hourig Attarian. "Imagining Our Foremothers: Memory and Evidence of Women Victims and Survivors of the Armenian Genocide: A Dialogue." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4, 18 Oct. 2015, pp. 476–483, https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506815608327.

7.2.Women in the communities

In this section, I examine the gender dynamics within communal activities and explore the roles and positions that my interviewees assumed in their interactions with the broader communal space. Consequently, I investigate how women respond to these dynamics in their communities. It is important to note that my research encompasses both the second and third generations, and I have observed that interviewees from the second generation display a comparable level of involvement in community activities, albeit with some differences in approach in comparison with the third generation. For example, women from the second generation, such as Ivanka and my mother, throughout the years, primarily engaged in organizing cultural events as well participating in communal culinary activities. On the other hand, women from the third generation, like Maja and Paula, were more focused on planning regional and international collaborative events, summer schools, seminars and exchanges, primarily targeting teenagers and young professionals within international Jewish organizations and research academic institutions:

In our community there are many book talks and educational seminars let's say, and for many of them, as I am very into literature and I author myself, I am charge of planning and structuring them. It makes me very happy.[282]

So yeah, basically my day-to-day job is to organize workshops and seminars for teenagers of Central and Southeast Europe to learn leadership skills and to help them on their future career path in a way. We are trying to build a community of Jewish teens from the region and to, above all, connect them for the future as you never know what kind of personal and professional

[282] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022, translation is mine.

relationships will arise from these seminars... I try to make Jewish teens more active in their communities.[283]

This observation aligns with Cukras-Stelągowska's[284] research of Polish third generation's willingness for a rich international collaboration with diverse Jewish organizations. Also, her study is similar to my own findings in terms of comparison with the relationship between second and third generations and their identity, which is, in the big majority of cases, more expressed, especially with the public, with the third generation. However, the mentioned research, as well as some others that are focusing on intergenerational Jewish narratives,[285] do not focus on the gendered aspect, especially when talking about younger generations. During the course of my research, I encountered several instances that revealed the presence of significant gender dynamics within the Jewish communities, particularly from members' younger years into their adolescence. Despite the majority of members in both the Zagreb and Osijek communities identifying as secular Jews, there were certain gatherings, often organized by first or elderly second generation members, where young individuals, no matter the gender, would be "casually" informed about the existence of other younger members from "respectable" families who could potentially be suitable Jewish partners for them. One of these experiences was my own.[286]

[283] Words by Maja, interview held in November 2022, translation is mine.

[284] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

[285] Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. Table is visible on page 3.

[286] I found inspiration from several significant works, particularly those by Helen Epstein: Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust : Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Penguin Books, 1988. and Ewa Sidorenko: Sidorenko, Ewa. "Remembering the War: An Autoethnography of Survival." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 Jan. 2022, p. 107780042110668, https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004211066881. ,which informed both my writing style and my approach to addressing sensitive and potentially disconcerting subject matter. Their captivating and evocative first-person narratives, coupled with a meticulous attention to detail, recount haunting tales of their childhood, adolescence, and overall coming-of-age experiences. These

When I was sixteen years old and made my first official visit to the community, I encountered an elderly first generation woman who was still actively engaged in communal activities. She was, as she said, "impressed" by my "appropriate Jewish name and appearance" and expressed her desire for me to meet "nice and suitable" young Jewish men from the community. At that moment, I found her remarks to be completely out of place, to say the least. I tried to navigate my way out of that uncomfortable situation with a smile and a slight nod, hoping that someone would interrupt our conversation or that we would quickly shift to a different topic. Fortunately, a new subject arose soon after, but during that moment, I felt a great discomfort. As a result, I temporarily distanced myself from the community because I did not know how to respond and I was afraid of actually being introduced to someone, an outcome I did not desire. At that time, I hoped that this was an isolated incident, but as with most of the so-called "isolated incidents", that was not the case, but it showed both gender and generational dynamics on the communal, but also on the level of (local) Jewish identity and the importance of "continuation" of Jewish presence in the society. It wasn't until the previous year that I recollected the incident I had discussed with Maja, pertaining to her perspectives on marrying within the Jewish community and her broader outlook on marriage. While I had extensively addressed the subject of marriage in Chapter 4, revisiting it holds significance, particularly when considering it through the lens of communal identity and the normative pressure to marry within the Jewish fold.

Within the context of post-war Croatia and Yugoslavia, women of the first generation often entered into marriages with non-Jewish men, primarily motivated by a profound apprehension of enduring additional persecution and the lingering trauma linked to their Jewish surnames. This phenomenon resonates with my own grandmother's experience, alongside those of Ivanka's maternal lineage and grandmother, as well as Paula's grandmother. However, with the

stories reveal a backdrop of silence, uncertainty, and a sense of in-betweenness, where a feeling of something happening lingers, yet remains elusive.

third generation, there is a significant shift happening, as Cukras-Stelągowska[287] and Wójcik and Bilewicz[288] explained in detail while explaining the positionality of the third or "rediscovered generation" in Poland. Third generation interviewees are, at the same time, very similar to their findings, of a "cosmopolitan" mindset, while being inclined towards more traditional Jewish lifestyle in the future, which includes marrying a Jewish person. Coming back to Maja's experiences about the expected view on expectations about marrying a Jewish person, she told me that she did not experience any direct interrogations about her plans for the future in terms of marriage and that even, according to her, no one from her local community "expects" her to get married for a Jewish person, since "on every youth gathering there are then, maybe fifteen younger people in total."[289] Nonetheless, while Maja is not necessarily anticipated to enter a union with a Jewish individual, what holds paramount significance for her is facilitating her children's involvement in Jewish communal life and fostering interactions with fellow community members—parallel to her own experiences. This underscores a recurring theme where, akin to the third generation, future iterations are likely to mold their Jewish identity in tandem with and amidst their local communities. This differs from the trajectory observed in the first generation and to some extent, the second generation, where the shaping of Jewish identity predominantly occurred within the confines of the family household. Community becomes the new family in terms of educating about and connecting new generations with their ethnic, religious origins and social history:

[287] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

[288] Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. Table is visible on page 3. file:///Users/sara/Downloads/wojcik_bilewicz_update.pdf Last accessed on August 30th, 2023.

[289] Words by Maja, interview held in December 2022. Translation is mine.

Well, as I grew up in Croatia, there was never an expectation for me to marry a Jew and that we will have a "proper Jewish life in a sense, you know… As we are doing these seminars in different communities, we have groups of 25 people, so, it is a low probability that there will be someone who I would want to spend my life with you know and also, I have a very busy schedule, and with my job and everything I do, so I do not think about having a proper, strict or let's say "traditional" Jewish family life. But on the other hand, I would love for my kids to experience what I did within the community and would like for them to do all the activities I did and for them to connect with other Jews of their generation, that is I think very important. I would not like for them to be Orthodox Jews, but I would like for them to be knowledgeable and proud of their roots. But again, that in the end depends on them, but I will try to connect them and offer them that world, as much as I can.[290]

Maja's words highlight various phenomena. Firstly, in the context of Zagreb and Osijek, marrying within or outside one's community is not the foremost concern for most young people, at least in two communities of my research focus.[291] The traditional practice of maintaining closed familial circles and passing on Jewish customs to successive generations has gradually given way to a more communal approach, emphasizing the importance of caring for one's Jewish identity and knowledge of their roots. Therefore, according to Maja, being a non-Orthodox Jew, the community holds the primary role in education, connecting with one's heritage, and passing on Jewish traditions and knowledge.

[290] Words by Maja, interview held in December 2022, translation is mine.

[291] In the research, people of primarily third generation were asked about the types of their, as researchers called it," community engagement", that is, the members' engagement in group activities. The research showed that, out of 4 points, having a Jewish wedding and their kids having a Jewish wedding got 3,18 and 3,44 points. It means that marriage and finding a Jewish partner was one of the top priorities of third generation Polish interviewees questioned in this research. It gave me a different perspective on my own research, as it showed clearly that my interviewees did not consider having a "proper" Jewish wedding and finding a Jewish partner that important also in comparison to other Jewish communities in Europe, such as Polish one.

Furthermore, the perspective of the third generation brings about a significant sense of flexibility and freedom. They are open to allowing their potential children to choose their level of engagement with the community, leaving the decision up to them, even though they would "like for them to be knowledgeable and proud about their roots", as Maja said. On the other hand, Ivanka, as mentioned earlier, did not even let her children decide on their community affiliation until they reached the age of eighteen, which shows a certain level of caution and taking community affiliation seriously. These narratives showed me several phenomena. To start with, this relatively new shift (shifting the focus from the nucleus of family unity as the locus for transmitting traditions and beliefs to broader communal contexts) is very significant in understanding the dynamics of passing on knowledge and tradition. During this research journey, it became quite clear to me that this role is now on communities, both local, regional and international ones with their strong connections with younger generations' networks around the world. In this context, it becomes essential to deliberate, as Edna Lomsky-Feder[292] has also noted, on the fact that the "memory field is not an open space, and the remembering subject is not free to choose any interpretation he wishes." In light of this, the narratives of their personal pasts, are encompassing both the second and third generations, and have evolved concerning the locus of memory and narrative construction. To elaborate, the self-narratives of individuals like Paula, Ivanka, or Maja, from what I discovered during this research, have diverged if their Jewish identity had been forged within the confines of their own family households. Further, Maja's choice to sustain a community-oriented education rather than a familial one could potentially exert an additional transformative influence on the narratives of future generations regarding their familial history. From a gendered perspective, this pivotal

[292] Lomsky-Feder, Edna. "Life Stories, War, and Veterans: On the Social Distribution of Memories." *Ethos*, vol. 32, no. 1, Mar. 2004, pp. 82–109, p. 86. https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2004.32.1.82. Accessed: February 8th, 2022.

question also invites exploration. As my interviewees attested, their families did not rigidly demarcate religious responsibilities based on gender within the household, such as lighting candles or leading prayers—distinctively identifiable features of Judaism—mirroring the dynamics within the larger communal sphere. Women actively engaged, adapting to the particular generation they belonged to, in either local, regional, or international community-building educational activities. Over the course of my research, I noted instances of "soft" and indirect gender-related inquiries pertaining to marriage, family, and child-rearing. However, in my own case, these inquiries were more direct. Despite the generally impartial and inclusive stance towards third-generation women within the binary of community and family, sporadic instances of pressure to conform to a traditional "appropriate" Jewish family lifestyle endure, shaped by the idiosyncrasies of specific local communities. These experiences prompt inquiries about the subsequent generations' outlook toward their roles and positions within both familial and communal contexts, and how they will perceive and shape women's roles within Jewish families and communities. From my conversations with interviewees, it becomes evident that, particularly for women in the second and third generations, and even more so for the latter, the primary tether to their sense of belonging rests with the community. This connection extends through local, regional, and, most prominently, international and global Jewish communities.

7.3. Going global

As conveyed by my third-generation interviewees, they frequently partake in diverse regional and worldwide initiatives that seek to enrich and expand connections among young Jewish individuals and adolescents on an international level. As highlighted by Cukras-Stelągowska in her study[293] of the Polish third generation, my interviewees from the third generation have similarly played a crucial role in upholding their communities and forging links with other

[293] Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007.

communities, both at the local and global levels. These individuals of the third generation exhibit a socio-cultural identity that is distinctive, flexible, and simultaneously imbued with nostalgia as they embrace their profound Jewish heritage:

My parents were very strict, I don't know how they let me go alone to America with people [from BBYO] whom they don't know, but it was the best decision they had because after I was, and I come from a community that has a maximum of 10 teenagers, and at that moment it was 1,500 teenagers at the seminar, and they are all Jewish teens who want to do something for their community, and then we became an Ex-Yu board and started making programs... and the point is that teens make programs for their peers... and then slowly, after I finished high school, they created a position for me as "advisor for the Balkan region". Now this is my full-time job and I am progressing on a daily basis.[294]

This instance underscores the depth of involvement in larger-scale events and collective excursions, which played a notably significant role in Maja's engagement with communal activities. Nevertheless, what sets the third generation in my study apart is their substantial participation in regional and global events designed to connect Jewish youth and propagate Jewish culture on a broader scale.

Many young individuals initiate their connection to their communities through local cultural and artistic pursuits, gradually expanding their involvement to encompass regional activities. For those who continue along this trajectory, it can ultimately lead to establishing connections with Jewish communities worldwide. Maja's case serves as an illustration; she built an entire career within an international organization dedicated to promoting Jewish cultures among teenagers across the globe. Consequently, the third generation emerges as a cohort with a

[294] Words by Maja, interview held in December 2022, translation is mine.

mission to foster worldwide bonds among Jewish youth and to educate newer generations about the parallels and distinctions between Jewish communities worldwide. Crucially, all the interviewees, descendants of interfaith marriages and not affiliated with the Orthodox community, were never coerced into joining their local Jewish communities; they opted to do so willingly. This aspect underscores the role of the community as a platform for shaping their identities, alongside considerations such as marriage choices and the doubling strategy, which were discussed in earlier analytical chapters. Moreover, both the second and third generations play integral roles in sustaining the vibrancy of their communities, albeit from distinct perspectives. The second-generation interviewees displayed a more pronounced focus on nurturing their local communities and ensuring their vitality. Their efforts encompassed organizing informative tours exploring local Jewish history, participating in religious gatherings, and contributing to festive preparations. In contrast, the third-generation interviewees showcased a stronger inclination toward a global outlook, organizing workshops and educational seminars. For example, Maja consistently collaborates with various organizations, scholars, and individuals worldwide through her professional role within international platforms like BBYO:

In Osijek, the community is quite active with children, and for about 6 years, the secretary of our community in Osijek asked me if I wanted to come and dance with their group in the municipality, and when 6 children got together, I stayed involved the whole time... sometimes once a week, or even twice a week... we went to Serbia, we went to Zagreb, everywhere, we went to Hvar,[295] Opatija[296] and we would have a performance... and that's how I got involved and went to a seminar [when] the girl [in charge] from the seminar asked me if I wanted to go to America with them, and then she explained to me that there is an organization for which

[295] Croatian island in the southern part of the country.
[296] Small town in the northern part of the coastline.

I now work BBYO that tries to connect Jewish teens around the globe and they want to include Croatia in their community, and they did![297]

Paula, on the other hand, has been very active in representing Osijek Jewish community in the public and in the media in general. She has told me several times how her grandmother is continuously afraid for her safety, but Paula's public engagement is persistent, strong and versatile:

…I think she [her grandmother] felt that big insecurity while I, on the other hand, even though I am fully aware of a persistent antisemitic behavior, but I can't say that I feel insecure. [as] I am already making public appearances in the name of Jewish community in Osijek and then my grandmother calls and asks me why do I do this, that it is dangerous and that I should not do this, and so on. But I don't feel threatened and my public engagement is, I can say, really frequent and on several "fronts".[298]

Paula's professional domain predominantly revolves around literature and the study of regional Jewish history, alongside her pursuit of Jewish studies in Vienna. On the local front, she concentrates her efforts on orchestrating literary events within the Osijek community. Thus, in addition to her discernible regional and global orientation, both Maja and Paula remain deeply involved in their local communities. They contribute by delivering educational workshops and seminars, imparting the expertise they've acquired from diverse countries across a spectrum of subjects. In the upcoming years, Maja and Paula are planning to continue their work and engagement within local, regional and global Jewish communities through various activities:

[297] Words by Maja, interview held in November 2022. Translation is mine.
[298] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022. Translation is mine.

My big plan for the future is to write a novel, a play or something about my grand-grandmother Zlata Mautner who really had an interesting life in Slavonija[299] *and to, through that, trace in a way a history or the surname Mautner… I already started to do some research about the surname, and where are people in the region with that surname live and so on… I would really love to do that. And of course, to publish it under my "Facebook name" haha, which is Paula Mautner.*[300]

My plan is to continue working for BBYO and try to help teenagers in the region and around the world to find their place in their community and who want to do something for it. I find this very important and I will try to find teenagers also here [Croatia] who want to do the same, because I think I can help them.[301]

In conclusion, after in-depth interviews with Maja and Paula about their regional and international studies and careers related to their Jewish identity and heritage, I realized, on the one hand different from the second generation understanding of their active engagement with their community and their positionality within it, while, at the same time, how it is surprisingly similar with the third generation individuals and their experiences and testimonies with other post-socialist and post-communist countries, like Poland[302] or Hungary,[303] particularly

[299] Eastern region of Croatia. It boarders Hungary, Serbia and Bosnia.
[300] Words by Paula, interview held in October 2022. Translation is mine.
[301] Words by Maja, interview held in November 2022. Translation is mine.
[302] See: Cukras-Stelągowska, Joanna. "The Jewish Identity of the "Unexpected Generation" in the Context of the Upbringing Model in a Mixed Family." *Colloquia Humanistica*, no. 9, 31 Dec. 2020, pp. 85–100, 10.11649/ch.2020.007. , Wójcik, A., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case. W L. Wohl von Haselberg (Red.), Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden. Berlin: Neofelis Verlag. Table is visible on page 3.
[303] Portuges, Catherine. "The Third Generation: Hungarian Jews on Screen." *The Subjective Lens: Post-Holocaust Jewish Identities in Hungarian Cinema*, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2006, file:///Users/sara/Downloads/The_Third_Generation_Hungarian_Jews_on_Screen.pdf. Accessed 31 Aug. 2023. The project is primarily focused on film studies; however, it talks in detail about testimonies of the third generation in Hungary recorded for different documentary projects, most prominent ones from Péter Forgács and "Miklós Jancsó's three-part documentary series, *Jelenlét* (Presence) begun in 1965 and completed

concerning the lack of awareness about familial history, the phenomenon of identity doubling, and the resurgence of Jewish identity in the present. Through my interactions, I came to realize that the third generation individuals I engaged with exhibit a sense of empowerment, pride, and an absence of apprehension toward potential anti-Semitic incidents that might arise within their local milieu. Similar to their counterparts in Poland, they prioritize the preservation and advancement of their Jewish identity, seeking connections with fellow Jewish individuals and places where communal gatherings occur. This underscores the significance they attribute to belonging and identifying as Jewish in the company of others. Consequently, it's evident that the narratives conveyed by my interviewees emphasize the paramount importance of belonging and identifying as Jews in the presence of peers. This stands in contrast to earlier generations, particularly the first and second, for whom upholding traditions at home, celebrating Shabbat, or adhering to kosher dietary practices held greater prominence. Nonetheless, I observed lingering instances of gender-specific roles within the community's activities and undertakings, particularly in areas such as culinary preparation, dancing, and event coordination, which tend to be traditionally associated with women's involvement. However, this trend is gradually dissipating with the active engagement of the third generation in larger international communities. Here, roles are less constrained by gender, and individuals of all genders can participate, assuming substantial administrative and research responsibilities, while also having the option to engage in activities like dancing, singing, or cooking as per their preferences and choices. My conclusion is drawn from the accounts provided by both Maja and Paula, elucidating their professional roles and associated responsibilities. Nevertheless, as my own experiences have shown, there are instances that unexpectedly crop up—these "isolated

in 1985, and the half dozen pieces of the *Kövek* üzenete (Message of Stones) from the early 1990s: *L'Aube* (Dawn, 1985), set in Palestine, and two documentaries, *Elmondták-e?* (Have You Been Told?, 1995) and *Zsoltár* (Psalm, 1996)" ibid., p.3.

incidents" gently serve as reminders of deeply ingrained gendered expectations for young (Jewish) women, often revolving around the notion of marrying a "suitable" Jewish man. genuinely anticipate that as the third generation becomes progressively more engaged within their communities and expands their presence in broader social contexts, these "incidents" will cease to occur. It is my sincere hope that these antiquated gendered expectations will eventually fade away. No individual should experience discomfort in a space where they have sought to embrace their true selves, express a facet of their identity, and uncover deeper insights about their family heritage and personal journey.

In the end, the sense of a "lost community" that initially gripped me when I discovered the box swiftly dissolved as I delved into my interview process and commenced my hands-on research. Instead, I experienced a sense of elation and genuine belonging, a sentiment that my grandmother, her sister, and mother did not have a chance to experience. Their recourse for seeking assistance was confined to a government-issued statement for temporary financial aid, addressing only monetary concerns. The emotional and psychological wounds, which could have potentially been ameliorated by Jewish communities, either did not exist or were overshadowed by the weight of a silenced past and deep-seated fears that deterred them from seeking out families with comparable experiences. By focusing on Jewish communities and communal identity, my aim was to unpack and reevaluate the document from a distinct perspective and through the lens of a different generation. This document, prior to the commencement of my research, offered a glimpse into the government's provision of support for Jewish families. Through this official government support, they gained a chance for the future, the future which I am currently living.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have delved into the complex dynamics of intergenerational mother-daughter relationships, the silenced familial past, and the process of self-identification with one's Jewish heritage. My research has centered on women within the Jewish communities of Zagreb and Osijek in Croatia, specifically focusing on the second and third generations. I have sought to illuminate the self-identification processes of these generations concerning their Jewish heritage, with a particular emphasis on three key themes identified through the interview process: marriage, the concept of identity "doubling," and communal identity. I have underscored the stark differences in how second and third-generation women survivors relate to and identify with their Jewish heritage compared to their (grand)mothers. This concept refers to an identity securely confined and separated from the public sphere, with clear boundaries between public and private aspects. This separation denies the societal sphere access to this identity, which may not be hidden but is carefully concealed. By highlighting the pivotal role of communities for both the second and third generations, especially considering that many lacked a strong connection with their Jewish families during early childhood, I have explored how each generation perceives its place within their Jewish communities. This recognition underscores that contemporary communities provide knowledge that their parents received from the first generation or, in some instances, never had the opportunity to establish. As many third-generation interviewees stressed the importance of choosing identity markers and the freedom to decide what to adopt or exclude based on personal identification, I discussed how the act of unboxing becomes a deliberate choice, emphasizing agency and the power to curate one's identity for specific moments and audiences.

In the beginning of my research, I posed the question: *How is self-identification process with their Jewish heritage negotiated by second and third generation Jewish women in (post)Yugoslav context through three means: marriage, identity doubling and community*

belonging? Based on my findings and analysis, I presented an argument that self-identification process is highly multi-layered and depended on each generation's specific situation and also depending on specific familial heritage and traumatic past. Also, I identified how second and third generation are very different in perceiving and understanding their own identity within the context of both their own family and wider social sphere. As I also dealt with archival and visual analysis, I developed the concept of a "boxed identity" which is inspired by my grandmother's box and different archival and visual material found within it. This concept has helped me conclude throughout my research, I emphasized the role played by the question of marital union, doubling as a narrative strategy, and communal identity in influencing and molding two generations' self-narration processes.

In chapter 4, I focus on analyzing the narratives of second and third-generation Jewish women, examining their perspectives on the broader subject of marriage and the choices they make in partnerships. In chapter 5, my primary goal was to shed light on how second and third-generation Jewish women in Croatia's cities, Zagreb and Osijek, take agency in shaping their own sense of self. In chapter 6, my primary goal was to explore the influence of Jewish communities in Zagreb and Osijek on women belonging to the second and third generations..

Ultimately, my research contributes to the broader scholarship on memory, Holocaust, and gender studies with a specific thematic focus on the usage of familial archives on intersectional and interdisciplinary research on intergenerational gendered and familial silences in the post-Yugoslav space, more precisely in Croatian cities of Zagreb and Osijek. Identifying areas for future research is crucial to continue deepening our understanding of the strong interplay between the still highly present traumatic Holocaust past and newer generations whose identity is fastly changing and identifying with a more international, diverse, and open Jewish society, more focused on cultural rather than strictly religious identification.

In the future, I would like to expand this research on a broader scope of the post-Yugoslav space, primarily Bosnia and Serbia, as the majority of Jewish communities in Croatia had a deep connection with the communities in the countries mentioned, as they were, for a long time, the same country. I believe that in regional Holocaust and memory, as well as gender studies, such regional study is crucially missing and highly needed.

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