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## SPAIN AND SEPHARDIC-JEWISH IDENTITY FORMATION IN SARAJEVO TODAY<sup>2</sup>

*Abstract:* The following paper highlights issues pertaining to the Sephardim in Medieval Spain beginning with the Sephardim's arrival. Thereafter, I describe the circumstances regarding the newly enacted Sephardi Spanish citizenship law which enable Sephardim all over the world to return to Spain and/or obtain a double citizenship. I explore the perceptions on the new law among the Sephardim.

Moreover, I describe the situation for Jews in Spain after the expulsion. In this regard the objective is to shed light on how historic and ideological preconditions have influenced identity formation as it expresses itself from a Sephardic perspective. Lastly, I address the status quo for the Sephardi minority in today's post-communist Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim is to generate knowledge of the circumstances that affected how Sephardim came to understand themselves.

Furthermore, I present empirical findings from my semi-structured interviews with Sarajevo-Sephardim of different generations (2015, 2016). In this regard I focus on Spain as an identity-creating factor for the Sephardim in Sarajevo today. I ask my interviewees: what are the reflections upon the Sephardi-Spanish citizenship law? What do they think, no one will speak Sephardish in Sarajevo in a couple of years? Do they think one can be Sephardic without Sephardish? Is the Sephardic culture important?

This unique Sephardi setting in Spain and in Bosnia and Herzegovina is non-existent elsewhere since there has been no such social engineering. Henceforth, this article is of great relevance for those interested in medieval and (post-) modern Spanish and contemporary Sephardic culture in Sarajevo, and in the role and function of ideology in creating conditions for identity formation and transformation.

*Keywords:* Sephardim in Medieval Spain; the Sephardi Spanish citizenship law, Spain after the expulsion; Spain and contemporary Sephardi culture in Sarajevo.

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Rock is an Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Scholarship Fund Research Fellow at the Humboldt University in Berlin at the Institute for South Slavic Languages. Ms. Rock's doctoral thesis addresses how, in Sarajevo, the challenge for the Sephardic Jews lies in cultivating Jewish life after the *Shoah* and the fall of Communism.

<sup>2</sup> This work was supported by the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Scholarship Fund.

## ИСПАНИЯ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ СЕФАРДСКОЙ ЕВРЕЙСКОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ В САРАЕВО СЕГОДНЯ

*Резюме:* В статье приведена краткая история сефардов средневековой Испании, начиная со времени их прибытия. Описываются обстоятельства, касающиеся недавно принятого в Испании закона о гражданстве сефардов, который позволяет сефардам во всем мире вернуться в Испанию и / или получить двойное гражданство. Я изучил представления о новом законе среди сефардов.

Ситуация с евреями в Испании после изгнания описывается для того, чтобы разъяснить, как исторические и идеологические предпосылки повлияли на формирование идентичности сефардов. Кроме того, обсуждается статус-кво сефардского меньшинства в современном посткоммунистическом Сараево в Боснии и Герцеговине. Цель работы — выяснить, какие обстоятельства повлияли на формирование сефардского самосознания.

В работе также представлены эмпирические выводы из полуструктурированных интервью с сефардами из Сараево, представителями разных поколений (2015, 2016). В интервью делался акцент на Испании как на важном факторе идентичности для сефардов в Сараево сегодня. В частности, ставятся вопросы о реакции на закон о гражданстве для сефардов, о сохранении языка джудезмо в Сараево в будущем, о сохранении сефардской идентичности при утрате языка, о важности сохранения сефардской культуры.

Подобных сефардских поселений, как в Испании и Боснии и Герцеговине, не существует в других местах, так как больше нигде не было такой социальной инженерии. Данная статья имеет большое значение для интересующихся средневековой и современной испанской и современной сефардской культурой в Сараево, а также ролью и функцией идеологии в формировании идентичности и ее трансформации.

*Ключевые слова:* сефарды в Средневековой Испании, испанский закон о сефардском гражданстве, Испания после изгнания сефардов, Испания и современная сефардская культура в Сараево.

### INTRODUCTION AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In this case study with the Sephardim in Sarajevo I describe the development of the Sephardim in relation to Spain. I discuss in this frame the significance of the newly enacted Sephardi citizenship law. My paper bridges a South-Slavonic and Jewish-Sephardic cultural sphere and from this perspective I make the situation for the Jews in Sarajevo visible.

Regarding the structure of this article, I will first present the identity-creating factor Spain, which I find crucial to understand the topic of the Sephardim in Sarajevo today. Hence, I place the historical chronology in the background

of the contemporary Sephardim in Sarajevo so that it will be possible to grasp historic parallels. This will also facilitate a better understanding of how concepts of Sephardi culture are formed in relation to macro social environments — in Spain and today in Bosnia and Herzegovina — as well as simultaneously in the periods of time.

In terms of sources, apart from secondary literature, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Sarajevo Sephardim of different generations in April 2015 and in March 2016.

In my analysis I aim to create a meaning of the informants' subjective interpretations and experiences. Thus, it is not about facts (that in turn also are more/less constructed) but rather about memory and the role of memory in creating meaning (cf. Zahavi 2003: 9, 42). The phenomenologist Ricoeur (1985) writes — that it is by highlighting narratives that people contribute to a culture-building process and that a personal identity is a *narrative* (cf. Ricoeur 1992).

I familiarize myself with the perceptions of the interviewees without judging or interpreting their views (phenomenological reduction). I seek the essence in my informant's experiences and I leave out unimportant aspects (eidetic reduction) (Fejes & Thornberg 2009, Zahavi 2003: 54).

The goal is to correlate the perceptions of identity with the hypotheses. Consequently, the hypotheses and conceptions of identity will be applied and tested against each other as new theories derive and develop (cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg 2007, cf. Zahavi 2003: 135).

## THE IDENTITY-CREATING FACTOR: SPAIN

In Medieval Spain, Moors (who conquered the peninsula in 711–718), Sephardim, and Catholics lived together, which was a unique situation in Europe. In Muslim al-Andalus (711–1474) — just as in Muslim Babylonia — Jews and Muslims were living in tolerance with each other. Nevertheless, they were not allowed to intermarriage or to live in the same quarters and to consult the same doctors (Alpert 2001: 9, Schapkow 2011: 16–17, 24, 33).<sup>3</sup> Jikeli (2015: 205) recognizes that the Sephardim had to subordinate themselves as *Dhimmi* (cf. Alpert 2001: 8). Nevertheless, Jews were active in all areas of the economy (Benbassa&Rodrigue 2000: xxix, xxviii). During this time there were eight synagogues in Toledo (Ehrenpreis 1927: 40).<sup>4</sup> Two of these are still existing remnants: Santa Maria la Blanca and El Transito (Ehrenpreis 1927: 49).

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<sup>3</sup> The Arabic language was replacing Hebrew even in religious contexts and, in fact, Jewish culture was totally oriented towards the Arab language and culture.

<sup>4</sup> There is an understanding that Toledo was founded by Jews who came together with the Babylonian king Nebukadnessar 586 BCE, i.e., after the destruction of Jerusalem. The city then got its Hebrew name *Toledot*/generations (Ehrenpreis 1927: 40).

Likewise, after the Christian victory of Spain in 1085, Jews were free to practice their religion. From 1000–1300, Toledo was a thriving Jewish center. Jews persecuted by the Muslim Almohads<sup>5</sup> arrived in huge numbers from the Portuguese and Tunisian territories (Ehrenpreis 1927: 42–44, Alpert 2001: 8). In Christian Spain, however (from 1474 onwards), Jews started to be treated as a *Fremdkörper* and the inquisition from 1492 was the culmination of this logic. The proof of having pure blood was necessary in order to be employed in the politics (Schapkow 2011: 26–28). The purity-of-blood anti-converso-legislation, however, began already in 1449 with the adoption of the *Sentencia-Estatuto* that was stipulated in Toledo. This regulation was the result of a popular uprising against the royal authority (Maryks 2010: 2). For example, it was stipulated in the regulation that all Jews who had converted to Catholic Christianity and their descendants were not allowed to hold public offices or testifying in Catholic courts. The reason for this was because of their perceived impure faith since they continued to practice Judaism (Maryks 2010: 3).

Successively, the Spanish church started to preach about intolerance towards Jews and Muslims and as a result, in 1475 the Inquisition began. In response, non-Catholic-conformant Moors and Sephardim left Toledo, leaving it deserted (Ehrenpreis 1927: 44–46). Zionists have said that Jews were completely assimilated in the Spanish Christian society but this is incorrect: they were not integrated and protected and their lives were under threat (Schapkow 2011: 49–50). There was moreover a prevailing belief that non-converted Jews would prevent the second coming of Jesus. Their synagogues el Transito and Santa Maria la Blanca were thus turned into churches (Alpert 2001: 9–10, Gitlitz 2002: 7).<sup>6</sup>

Ferdinand and Isabella signed the royal edict authorizing on behalf of the king the Inquisition<sup>7</sup> by the Supreme Inquisition Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1492 (Alpert 2001: 14). The edict is nowadays housed in the Madrid National Library.<sup>8</sup> Anger towards Jews stemmed from the belief that Jews were seducing

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Because of this myth that the Jewish presence in Spain can be dated back to the first destruction of the Temple there is a perception that the Jews had the right to Spanish soil (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: 12, 192).

<sup>5</sup> The Almohads was a caliphate that originated in Morocco.

<sup>6</sup> Claudia Lichnofsky has written a bachelors' thesis about Luther's *protestant* anti-Semitism (cf. Lichnofsky 2002: 20–43). Protestant anti-Semitism relies more on ideas about divisions in *peoplehood*, i.e., Jewish vs. German, and Jews are seen as a people rather than a religion. Luther moreover developed the stereotype that the Jews were lazy parasites and capitalists whereas the Christians were good workers and socialists. On the contrary, Catholic anti-Semitism is manifested in ritual prejudices towards Jews: Jews were seen as evil (Alpert 2001: 9–10). Moreover, the Spanish conversos were seen as the Jews who had killed Jesus (Maryks 2010: 33).

<sup>7</sup> *Inquisitiomeans* investigation and its mission was to expose those Jews who had formally converted to Christianity but in reality still were practicing Judaism (Jakubowski 2015).

<sup>8</sup> In front of the library's main reading-rooms is a monument in memory of Menendez y Pelayo: *Y comprendo, y aplaudo, y hasta bendigo la inquisición* (I understand, I like, yes, I bless the Inquisition) (Ehrenpreis 1927: 64).

faithful Catholics. The Catholics in mind are the baptized Jews — *Marranos* (pigs) — who maintained their Jewish rituals in secret (Ehrenpreis 1927: 53–54, 78–79, 87, Schama 2013: 400–401, 403, Alpert 2001: 12, 14).<sup>9</sup> Their practice nowadays is being referred to as a crypto-Judaism (cf. Halevy 2009: 14, 215). Other underlying reasons for the expulsion of the Jews were the notions that they were dangerously open-minded, cultural nomads, and too closely tied to each other even if they were never a separate group until the Christians forced them to be so (Schama 2013: 403).

The Jews who converted to Christianity, at least in the public sphere, negotiated their individual and social identifications and were often secret Jews or “forced pigs”. Many Jews were cut off from Judaism and struggled instead with blending into the Christian mainstream. These new Christian converts were neither inside or outside of the community — they were simultaneously both and they didn’t have any choice to remain outside the social pressure — they were victims of confessionalization (cf. Y. Kaplan, Personal Communication, 2016-01-28).

The Judaic error was incurable and it was a question of “impure infected blood” and the “impurity of one’s faith” (Graizbord 2004: 1–3, 116–117). This obscure situation led to a fragmentary and confused “Asian” observance and to the capacity to switch identities according to the context in order to protect oneself (Graizbord 2004: 151, 157–158). The word Asian refers to the conception prevailing at that time: that the Jews didn’t belong to Europe but reached Europe only after the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem (cf. Schapkow 2001: 68).

In the *Catalogo de causas del tribunal de la Inquisición de Toledo* (Madrid 1903), there is a list of ten thousand trials at the Inquisition Court in Toledo.<sup>10</sup> Those who didn’t agree to convert were exterminated (Ehrenpreis 1927: 55–56). The suspected were judged even after their death. Those who repented were excused from being burned alive (Ehrenpreis 1927: 65–66).

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century many *anussim Marranos* also left Spain (and likewise Portugal<sup>11</sup> and Mexico<sup>12</sup>) (cf. Alpert 2001: 15, Chava Halevy 2009: 12, Ehrenpreis 1927: 74, Mazower 2006: 47). The Marranos who left did so especially

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<sup>9</sup> It is not clear that the origin of the word *marrano* is pig. Another interpretation claims that the term comes from the Hebrew word *mara*, which means to rebel. The idea is that Jews were rebelling against the Catholic Christ (Maryks 2010: 36).

<sup>10</sup> The National Archive in Lisbon contains a record of more than 40,000 inquisition trials and most are against Marranos (Ehrenpreis 1927: 76).

<sup>11</sup> In 1496, non-converted Jews in Portugal were expelled. The expellee’s children (under 14 years old) were, however, kept and baptized in Portugal. This prompted many Jews to change their mind, of course, and they converted to a phantom Catholicism (Ehrenpreis 1927: 86). In Portugal, the Spanish statutes of *Limpieza de sangre* were abolished in 1768–1774 and the inquisition ended in 1821. Freedom of religion was only officially allowed in Portugal beginning in 1910 (Ehrenpreis 1927: 89–90).

<sup>12</sup> The Mexican inquisition lasted from 1571–1821 (Chava Halevy 2009: 11).

because of the Spanish statutes of *Limpieza de sangre* that took further discriminatory measures against “Old Jews”. “New Christians” were for instance only allowed to be active in restricted areas of the economy (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000: xli).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the ones leaving were not allowed to take any property with them so many people made profit out of their departure (Alpert 2001: 27, Gitlitz 2002: 26).

Kamen (1996: 21–22) moreover clarifies that there were many opponents to the *limpieza* amongst kings, bishops, theologians and tribunals (Pedro de Soto, Melchor Cano, Jesuit Juan de Mariana and others) (cf. Maryks 2010: 158–213). This public criticism culminated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Agustín-Salucio published his *Discursosobrelosestatutos de limpieza* (1599) (Kamen 1996: 23). Conversos entered elite professions but they were not promoted (Kamen 1996: 25). Relevant to remember is moreover that German, English and French tribunals executed — at the same time-period — more heretics than Spain’s Holy Office did (Kamen 1996: 26).

## LAW OF RETURN: THE SEPHARDI-SPANISH CITIZENSHIP

Today there is an estimation that approximately 3,5 million Jews in the world have a Spanish ancestry. There are about 16 Million Jews in total so the Sephardim constitute 22% of the world Jewry (Jakubowsky 2015).

Since October 1. 2015 the bill granting Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews came into effect. The law will be valid for three years as a testing-time and then the law might be valid longer after that (§ 4). Since March 2. 2015, Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin are entitled to apply for Portuguese nationality as well (Portuguese Nationality Act for descendants of Sephardic Jews).

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<sup>13</sup> In 19<sup>th</sup> century German Jewry integrated the Sephardic liturgy, synagogue architecture, literature and scholarship. These domains offered an alternative to one’s East European origins (Schorsch 1989: 47). This fascination with Sephardism and Spain derived from self-criticism within the German Jewry. In fact, the Haskalah enlightenment movement was inspired by Spain (Schorsch 1989: 48–49, Schapkow 2011: 9–10, 28). There was a conception existing that the Sephardic branch of Judaism was more capable to be integrated in a larger society (i.e., just as the Jews were in Muslim Spain) and meet the political needs of a modern age (Schorsch 1989: 52–53, 63).

The purpose of orienting towards Sephardi culture was to remember it and not to see it as foreign, Sephardic Fremdkörper, but rather as simply Jewish. Thus, it should of course be incorporated in the architecture of German’s Jewry — as for instance in the synagogue on the Oranienburgerstraße that has a Sephardic-Oriental shape. Moreover, Zionism was considered a movement responding to Anti-Semitism and therefore the Sephardi hybrid culture was appreciated as an attractive alternative. Jews on the Iberian Peninsula were recognized as mediators between Muslim and Christian majority-cultures and Jewish minority-cultures. This was especially admired and thought of as a role model for German Jewry (Schapkow 2011: 10–11, 28, 31, 33, 41).

## JURISDICTION RATIONEMATERIAE, JURISDICTION RATIONE PERSONAE

According to the Spanish law, one of the possible means of evidence to prove that someone is a Sephardi of Spanish origin is to prove the use and knowledge of Ladino or Haketia (§1:d). It is however not determined by the law how to prove one's language use. Gonzalez Garágorri, who is responsible for the applications at the Embassy of Spain in Tel Aviv, suggests that for Israeli candidates it can be useful to obtain certificates either from the Israeli National Ladino Authority or from any well-known Israeli university with Ladino studies. The purpose of this sub-paragraph is that the persons who still speak Ladino/Haketia today will have the chance to make it count.

For the rest, there are many other ways listed in §1:a-f to prove that someone is a Sephardi. (M. Gonzalez Garágorri, Personal Communication, 2015-07-23). For instance, another means to prove one's Sephardi status is to hand in a report from an appropriate entity that proves the membership of the family names of the applicant to the Sephardic lineage of Spanish origin (§1:f). According to Gonzalez Garágorri, many people are confused about the value of the family name as a means of proof of the Sephardi origin. There are non-official (and sometimes fake) lists circulating that are giving the impression that if your name is on one of these lists, then you are automatically eligible, and if you are not on one of these lists, then you shouldn't even try. Both alternatives are however false and the family name is only one of the possible means of evidence (M. Gonzalez Garágorri, Personal Communication, 2015-07-23).

Paragraph 2 of the bill consists of 6 sub-options how to prove one's special connection to Spain. Two ways in this regard are 1) again, to verify one's knowledge of Ladino/Haketia (§ 2:b) and 2) proof of a blood relationship (§ 2:d). Other requirements listed in § 3 are 1) a birth certificate, 2) a minimum of A2 Spanish-proficiency and 3) knowledge of the Spanish Constitution and the social and cultural reality of Spain.

The application is to be submitted online and the documents attached to it have to be translated into Spanish. Gonzalez Garágorri explains that this is because the documents will come from different countries and for instance, in Israel most of them will be in Hebrew. To prevent fraud and to ensure the accuracy of the translations, it is mandatory that they are done by official translators, accredited by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that are listed on the embassy's websites (M. Gonzalez Garágorri, Personal Communication, 2015-07-23). The conception that is reflected in the law is that English is not a *lingua franca* in Europe when you address national (as the Spanish one in question) governments. Nevertheless, one can use English when applying for a Swedish citizenship but one must apply for a French citizenship in French.

## REACTIONS ON THE LAW ON SEPHARDI-SPANISH CITIZENSHIP FROM THE SEPHARDIM

Gonzalez Garágorri reveals that already since the announcement of the new law (that took place several months before it was finally passed) there was a lot of interest from the Israeli Sephardim. The embassy received calls and E-Mails every day and generally the reactions were positive. "People were expecting the law to come into effect and wanted to get ready" (M. Gonzalez Garágorri, Personal Communication, 2015-08-03). Tamar Alexander who is president of the Ladino authority expresses in this context the following: *I am afraid that millions of Jews will want to go to Spain. Lawyers are calling me and ask for help regarding some people who have interest in leaving and want to do the language test but I am not answering their questions. We are a national Ladino authority under the roof of the Ministry for Culture. I will not help my co-nationals to leave this country!* (T. Alexander, Personal Communication, 2015-11-10).

On the contrary in Sarajevo, according to Mr. Blanco, who is responsible for the Sephardic nationality-issue at the Sarajevo Spanish Embassy, the interest in obtaining a Spanish citizenship was not massive (J. Blanco, Personal Communication, 2015-07-23). Mr. Blanco accentuates that it is a *nationality* law and not a law of return. The point with the proof of one's Sephardic status is to be sure that the applicants have a Sephardic connection and according to Blanco thus only a few persons will be eligible in Sarajevo. "Until July 2015, one community-member, who also has a good command of Ladino, has asked about the new law" (J. Blanco, Personal Communication, 2015-07-23). Moreover, the nonresidential rabbi in Sarajevo, Eliezer Papo, does not think it is in the interest of the Sephardim to return to Spain because it's "too late", the Jews are "too few", and most of them are not homeless refugees and thus the need to leave is not urgent (E. Papo, Personal Communication, 2015-11-26).

There is a private legal firm in Madrid "Tulexabogados", specializing in immigration to Spain and according to the staff member and lawyer Milica Stojkovic the firm currently has many Sephardic clients who are interested to apply for the Spanish citizenship. However, she is aware that since the applicant at least once shall travel to Spain during the proceeding some potential applicants will not be able to apply due to their lack of economical means (M. Stojkovic, Personal Communication, 2015-10-21).

According to Milica Stojkovic the firm currently has a significant number of clients mainly from Argentina, Venezuela and some others Hispanic countries. In total there are about 50 applicants but Milica Stojkovic is confident that this number will rise in the future. Regarding x-Yugoslavian countries there are currently around 20 applicants from Serbia and currently the firm is working closer with the Jewish Association from Sarajevo so they presume there will be a number of applicants from the region. There are no ones' from Thessaloniki (or some others Greek places) showing interest so far. However, the firm is

setting up collaboration with an Israeli law firm in order to work together with Sephardim from Israel that may be interested to apply for the Spanish nationality.

The law was passed with consensus of all parties in the Spanish Parliament. MilicaStojkovic tells that PSOE (the socialist party) and IU (the communist party) and some other associations wanted to include in the law those descendants from the Moorish population who were also expelled from Spain from 1609 and 1613.

In the Facebook-groups dedicated to Sephardic issues (elmundosefarad, El MundoSefaradhi, The Sephardic Diaspora) where, I am a member, there is almost nothing written at all or discussions ongoing concerning the Spanish nationality option for the Sephardim. I do however know from informal sources that about 2.000 Sephardim in Israel have applied, since the new law to the Spanish citizenship. It is of course a sensitive matter for the Ladino Authority to “let go” of their conationals and in a way to admit that they were not feeling happy Ladinoists in Israel and were due to the political situation as well as other reasons turning to Spain.

There is however, even if little is written about the new law in the internal public, there is a Facebook-page titled “Sephardic Spanish Citizenship” (<https://www.facebook.com/SephardicSpanishCitizenship>) with about 1,100 “likes” (2015-09-23) and a few ongoing discussions concerning proof of one’s Sephardic status and possible eligibility to apply for a Spanish citizenship.

There is a conception that bringing into light the Sephardic-Spanish nationality is a symbolic act rather than indemnifying (so that the majority of the Sephardim will actually have the chance to “return” to Spain, cf. the German Contingent Refugee Act<sup>14</sup>).

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<sup>14</sup> From 1991 until 2004 the German states/*Bundesländer* accepted Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. This action was based on the Contingent Refugee Act/*das Kontingentflüchtungsgesetz*. When the Immigration Act/*das Zuwanderungsgesetz* (ZuWG) of January 2005 came into effect, the Contingent Refugee Act was voided.

The Contingent Refugee Act consisted of 6 paragraphs, and referred to the Geneva Convention/*Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention* and the Immigration Act. The definition of a refugee, as stated in the Geneva Convention paragraph 1:A, is, among others, a person who fears persecution because of race, religion or nationality and belonging to a certain social group, or a person experiencing any other kind of insecurity in the country of citizenship. According to the Contingent Refugee Act, people from the former Soviet Union who are Jewish, as well as their husband, wife and children (even if non-Jewish) were welcome to the Federal Republic of Germany. Only criminals were excluded as applicants.

The Federal Authority for Immigration and Refugees/*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* (BAMF) is responsible for applicants who wish to migrate to the Federal Republic of Germany (AufenthG, §75:8). On the 23rd and 24th of June 2000 there was a conference of the Interior Ministry; a modified legal basis was created and the old rules were amended (JZ 2007: 2). Paragraph 23 sub section 2, in combination with paragraph 75 sub section 8 of the Immigration Act served as the new legal basis, as well as the guidelines of 24th of May 2007 from the Federal Ministry of the Interior. It was now necessary to prove Jewish ancestry, whereas previously this was not the case (you could also bring your non-Jewish

Moreover, with Spain's unemployment rate (26 %, i.e., every fourth person) it is questionable if Spain is a proper place for Jews to turn (Borgestede & Müller 2014). On the other hand, the Spanish passport is at the same time a European Union passport with which one can live and work in any of the 28 member-nations.

Already between 2010 and 2013, about 121 Sephardic Jews were granted Spanish nationality, after meeting Spain's residency or naturalization rules. This was a small proportion granted citizenship of those who actually applied (Minder 2015).

Furthermore, a conception circulates in the media that it is "unfair" that the Sephardim have the right to obtain Spanish nationality whereas the Moors, who were also expelled from Spain in the late 15th century and who were thus previously tied to Spain, don't (Roman 2015).

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relatives). Since 2005 not only was a birth certificate required, but the applicant had to gain membership to a Jewish congregation who vouched for them throughout the process of integration (Bradley 2005: 2). Moreover, the applicant had to show a positive integration prognosis: German language skills (unless under the age of 14) and experience of employment. The applicant had to be a citizen of the former Soviet Union or a stateless person who has been living there since January 2005. One parent was to be Jewish and not confess to another religion. Persons who experienced Nazi persecution did not however have to demonstrate an integration prognosis; they did not have to know any German. It also concerned their husbands and wives, even if they were not Jewish (JZ 2007: 2).

Since 2007 the Residence Law/*das Aufenthaltsgesetz* (AufenthG) serves as the legal basis for issues surrounding Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, Article 116:2 of the German Basic Law/*das Grundgesetz* (GG) from 1949 give those Germans who fled during World War II, such as Hannah Arendt, the right to come back and gain German citizenship. This clause only concerns ethnic German Jews and not the worldwide Jewish community.

Steinmeyer (Referatsleiter 334 at BAMF: responsible for the Jewish-Russian migration to Germany) states that the Contingent Refugee Act was created so that Germany would be in a state of alert for people living under difficult conditions (T. Steinmeyer, Personal Communication, 2010-09-28, Rock 2012). The law was voided in 2005 and focus was switched to pre-integration. Another underlying motive for the creation of the Contingent Refugee Act was that already before October 3, 1990, the date of reunification, more than 4,000 Jewish people migrated to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and in order to respond to their wish to move to the Federal Republic of Germany, the Contingent Refugee Act was enacted in 1991 (Eggerz 2006). The Jewish Culture Association in East Germany had asked the government of GDR to respond to the threatening anti-Semitism, which existed in the former Soviet Union. The government of Maizère therefore made a decision encouraged by Irene Runge, giving Jewish people the right to come (Runge 1995: 77).

Between 1991 and 2004, 219,604 immigrants came to the Federal Republic of Germany and they were defined as a collective victim category/*Opfergemeinschaft* (Becker 2001: 51). Between 2005 and 2008, 10,985 Jewish people from the former Soviet Union migrated to the Federal Republic of Germany, 47% from Ukraine and 33% from Russia (Hirsland 2009: 11–12). Jewish people coming from countries like Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria did not have the same right to come to Germany as those from the former Soviet Union (J. Kessler, Personal Communication, 2010-07-11).

## SPAIN AFTER THE EXPULSION

The Inquisition was abolished on 15 July 1813 (Alpert 2001: 202). Alpert (2001: 203) concludes that (...) *the Inquisition was not itself directly responsible for the growth of obsession for 'pure' ancestry, it contributed to it because the Holy Office administered the system of genealogical investigation* (Italics JR). Moreover, modern economics' was seen apart from the divine Catholic world and therefore suspect. The heretics were minor businessmen, merchants and artisans. They were furthermore always found guilty of not being completely Christian (Alpert 2001: 203, Gitlitz 2002: 13). To conclude, beginning in 1869 non-Catholics in Spain were legally protected (Menny 2013: 136). However, in 1945 national Catholicism rose to be a strong political force. The government's passing of a regulation declaring that Catholicism be the state-religion was a clear indication of this thinking (Menny 2013: 138–39). Non-Catholic faiths were “tolerated” but other religions were not recognized as official communities. Consequently, non-Catholics could not fully practice their religions. For example, Jewish wedding or burial ceremonies were not allowed. (Menny 2013: 140–41).

Nonetheless, after the expulsion, Jews — Ashkenazim from West and central Europe and especially Moroccan Sephardim at the time of the war in Morocco in the 1860's — have been returning *peu à peu* to Spain. In 1935 there were about 500 Jews in Madrid and 3.000 Jews in Barcelona (Menny 2013: 53–54). Since 1956, after the termination of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco, about 2.500 Moroccan Sephardim immigrated to Spain (Menny 2013: 58). Furthermore, in the 1980s Jews from Chile and Argentina immigrated to Spain as well, escaping their dictatorial home-countries. These Jews were secular and understood themselves as political left refugees (Menny 2013: 59) and didn't approach the established Jewish institutions in Spain. Rather, they formed their own sub-institutions, which led to internal conflicts between themselves and the established Jewish institutions (Menny 2013: 60).

Important to say, 123 years after the expulsion, in 1936, there was a civil war and no Shoah in Spain and thus it is only since about ten years — in line with the general transnational trend in Europe — that Spain is successively being absorbed into the wider European narrative about culture and memory (Baer 2011: 95). At the same time, the small Jewish-Spanish population (approximately 6,000 Jews in 1936) was never deported and Jews and others were not forced to obey racial laws. Baer (2011: 96) recognizes that the anti-Semitic climate in Spain at this time was different than that in Germany (cf. Weindling 2015a). Spain was, however, not neutral and Franco cooperated with Hitler militarily and economically, i.e., by exchanging raw materials and exporting soldiers to the Nazi-German army (Baer 2011: 96–98, cf. Menny 2013: 295).

Moreover, the expulsion of the Sephardim and the discrimination against the New Christians in Medieval Spain set a precedent to the Nazi-crimes during

World War II in which the void of Sepharad was already present (Baer 2011: 97). These memories are thus intertwined (cf. Baer 2011: 114, Weindling 2015b: 154).

Sephardim returned to Spain in the 1950's and 60's with the independence of Morocco. By this time, many women converted to Judaism in Morocco. In Spain, however, it was not possible and it is still not possible to convert to Judaism and today Spaniards make the conversion in Israel (A. Quintana, Personal Communication, 2015-09-08, Baer 2013: 101).

In fact, it was only at the end of the 1960s that the legal definition of freedom of religion was questioned — i.e. why the Catholic religion was legally the only true religion — and so the law was amended in 1967 (Menny 2013: 150, 153). As result, non-Catholics and the non-religious were now considered full Spanish citizens (Menny 2013: 154). However, as Menny (2013: 175) maintains the Spanish majority-population had internalized the idea of a homogenous Spanish Catholic culture, and this sentiment is still prevalent.

However, secularization has reduced the number of Catholics in Spain. It is estimated that in the year 2000 only 17% of the population were practicing Catholics (Menny 2013: 176). Nevertheless, most Spaniards still identify as Catholics despite the lack of faith and maintenance of traditions (Menny 2013: 177).

When Spain joined NATO in 1982 and the European Union 1986 the Europization-process was of course at its peak. Moreover, with the victory for the Spanish Social Democrats in 2004, the concept and heritage of *convivencia* was on the agenda again (Menny 2013: 178–79). But did the politicians remember that it was only after the Spanish Jews had been deported from Saloniki to Bergen-Belsen in 1943 that Franco was ready to accept Spanish-Jewish refugees to Spain? (cf. Menny 2013: 56).

Every so often the Holocaust comes to forefront thanks to Hollywood films such as Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and Polanski's *The Pianist* (Menny 2013: 293, T. A. Linhard, Personal Communication, 2016-06-09). With the opening up towards other European countries in the 1990s, Spain started to confront their own involvement during the war and a commission was established to investigate the (previous) economic transactions between Spain and the Third Reich (*Comisión de Investigación de las Transacciones de Oro procedente del Tercer Reich durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial*) (Menny 2013: 295). Since 2008/09 the confrontation with the Holocaust is an obligatory topic in school and this is of course another attempt to acknowledge this period in history (Menny 2013: 300).

Another way of putting it is that since Spain joined the European Union in 1986 (and only then did Spain recognize Israel!) the Holocaust has been on the national political agenda, and since then collective national memorials have been commemorated (Baer 2011: 98, Baer 2013: 101). In 2007, Sephardim was the theme of the memorial. In 2008, the theme was Europe and the passing of memory to succeeding generations. In 2009 the theme was solidarity and humanity broadly and what lessons one can draw from the Holocaust (Baer 2011:

103–104). The Holocaust has accurately become a globalized and cosmopolitan memory beyond groups and beyond those nations who were directly affected. As a consequence, people are finding structural resemblance with the Holocaust and their own traumatic experiences (Baer 2011: 95).

There is said to be an asymmetric relationship between the memories of the various victims of World War II. For instance, in her speeches at the ceremonies held by the Madrid parliament, Esperanza Aguirre, who is president of the Autonomous Community of Madrid and member of the Popular Party, never mentioned other victims (such as Spanish Republicans and Romani people) than the Jews that were persecuted by the Nazis (Baer 2011: 106).

Furthermore, parallel with commemorating the Holocaust, there is a perception of having a new Holocaust in Palestine (Baer 2011: 110–112). For instance, at a conference on anti-Semitism at Madrid's Complutense University (the second largest university in Spain) there were many students demonstrating against Jews. Jews were portrayed as a financial elite being specialists in victimization and manipulation in order to silence criticism concerning their crimes against Palestinians (Baer 2013: 95).

Baer (2013: 97) argues that anti-Semitism in Spain today is most of all inspired by the Christian tradition and the notion of a "Catholic Spanish essence". Furthermore, it is grounded in a political anti-a-Jewish-Israel belief rather than based on a biological racist ideology (cf. Weindling 2015a).

Israel's image in the Spanish press is colored by an openly expressed pro-Arab sentiment. An overlap between anti-Zionism and anti-Americanization is obvious and the prevalent use of stereotypes rooted in religious and anti-Jewish rhetoric (Baer 2013: 103–104, Baer & López 2012: 3). Despite the absence of Jews in Spain itself (Jews constitute only 0,1 % of the total Spanish population), survey questionnaires show high levels of anti-Semitism (Baer 2013: 107, 109). Spain is even considered to be the most anti-Semitic place in Europe (Baer & López 2012: 1, 3, Baer & López 2015, Pedrosa 2007).

Spanish anti-Semitism today is of course an anti-Semitism without Jews since it is estimated that the contemporary Jewish population in Spain only constitutes 0.1 % of the total population — 40.000 Jews (Menny 2013: 60, 63). At the same time, there are many attempts in Spanish society to have an infrastructure for Jewish issues. For instance, there is a faculty for Hebrew literature and the Medieval Ages' history of Spanish Jews at the University of Madrid (Menny 2013: 78). Governmental discussions about how to protect the Spanish-Jewish culture and about Spanish-Sephardi citizenship have been ongoing since 1950 (Menny 2013: 86, 90). Furthermore, the memorial site *Museo Sefardí* opened in Toledo 1964 and it eventually became a state national museum 1969 (Menny 2013: 322, 325). Other sites such as the Jewish quarter in Girona promote an idealistic "heritage tourism" in Spain and are partly private and non-Jewish initiatives that in turn attract Jewish tourists to visit Spain (Menny 2013: 340, 344).

## THE JEWS IN SARAJEVO TODAY

The Jews in Bosnia-Herzegovina face the special situation of having three major ethnic groups dominating the country: Muslims, Serbs and Croats. In Sarajevo in 2003, Muslims constituted 80.5 % of the city's total population, the Serbs constituted 7.5 % and the Croats 12 % (Sundhaussen 2014: 352). Jewish identification either with the Muslims, Serbs or Croats was according to Kerkkänen (2001: 194) unnatural and thus a quest for a renewed Jewish identity emerged (cf. Hofmeisterová 2016: 279).

During the war of 1992–1995, a majority of community members, about 1.900, fled to Israel, with help from their respective communities and the Jewish Agency (Kerkkänen 2001: 174, 177). Obviously, they fled because of the war and not with a Zionist motivation (Kerkkänen 2001: 176, 178). Moreover, there were not only Jewish refugees in the convoys but also non-Jews were included.<sup>15</sup> Many Jews decided to return to Bosnia after the war. There are only about a few hundred Bosnian Sephardim in Israel today and the Sarajevo community constitutes of 1.000 members (E. Papo, Personal Communication, 2016-06-13, SeitzShewmon 2008: 264). Post-Yugoslav Jewry has been characterized as an ethnic community and currently a reinforcement of religion is going on (Kerkkänen 2001: 198).

Today, the Bosnian Jewish Community is registered in accordance with the Law on the Freedom of Worship and the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities. Religious communities (such as the Jewish one in question) in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not integrated into the budget of the government and thus must be self-financed.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a distinction between the three “constituent Bosniac (Bošnjaci), Serb, and Croat peoples” and the “others”. Others are members of ethnic minorities and persons who do not declare affiliation with any particular group. As a matter of fact, only persons declaring affiliation with a “constituent people” are entitled to run for the House of Peoples (the second chamber of the State Parliament) and the Presidency (the collective Head of State).

Because this regulation is discriminatory, the president of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Jakob Finci, and the Roma Monitor of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Dervo Sejdić, filed a lawsuit in the European Court of Human Rights, which in turn (2009) found that the constitution violates human rights (*Case of Sejdić and Finci*

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<sup>15</sup> There is a film by Ella Alterman illustrating the evacuation of Jews and non-Jews: *The woman from Sarajevo* (2007).

<sup>16</sup> Benevolencija Deutschland e.V. and the Claims Conference are the two organizations that are supporting the community financially at the present time (R. Kohn, Personal Communication, 2015-11-26).

v. *Bosnia and Herzegovina*). Consequently, Bosnia's politically planned *contingent* confessional system in turn creates a polarized monoculture in which minorities, such as the Sephardim, are excluded (H. Grandits, Personal Communication, 2015-11-26).

## METHOD AND MATERIAL

The interviewees are from heterogeneous backgrounds having various occupations: studying music, working as guides, coordinating cultural activities, teaching at a university, and counseling ethnic-religious cooperation. As for the three generations I think in terms of persons of three groups: 1) who were socialized in Yugoslavia and lived most of their life there, 2) persons who were socialized in Yugoslavia and Bosnia and 3) persons socialized in Bosnia (cf. Dilthey 1990: 37).<sup>17</sup> Many from the generation older than 55 years are pensioners.

The interviews were conducted in conversation form, and since new questions arose afterwards I have since had E-Mail/Facebook/Skype-contact with some of the interviewees.

I did not present myself as a Jewish person, though the interviewees asked me, and possibly they were less suspicious when I told them that I have a Jewish background. They also asked about my translator who has a Sarajevo-Muslim background. I am aware that the researcher is part of the research process, and that the interviews take form out of a social dynamic between the researcher and the interviewees (cf. Lamnek 2010: 14).

Moreover, as Lagerholm (2005: 55–56) points out, the environment of the interview can influence the interview-situation. It is important to meet in a place where the interviewees feel relaxed in order to hear more detailed descriptions. With most of the interviewees we met in the Jewish community-facilities or in the Viennese Café in Hotel Europe. I also had conversations at home when someone suggested so.

The narratives are aiming at giving a voice to the different experiences that the interviewees have in relation to Spain. I believe that the narratives can evoke memories and that the intergenerational dialogue helps to better understand our present moment in time (cf. Ilić 2014: 15).

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<sup>17</sup> Dilthey (1990: 37) gives the following definition of a generation: a homogenous group of persons who, in their formative years, have had the same major experiences, and who are, so to speak, dependent on the same big changes and events. In contrast, I argue that individuals of a generation can hold different interpretations of the same experiences because they (the individuals) do not necessarily comprise a homogenous group. I do, however, agree with Dilthey's definition of a generation in the sense that it is not about one's age but more about the social experiences for certain persons that are decisive, i.e.—as in my case—that the individuals have been socialized in one or two different political systems.

## SPAIN AND JEWISH-SEPHARDIC IDENTIFICATION IN SARAJEVO TODAY

Within the younger than 30 years old generation, in the backdrop of the concept of transnationalism, English is considered important. The 22-year old girl, AA, said that: “It’s difficult without English because English is universal”. The 18-year old girl, TA, added: “English is international”. However, when deliberating upon the collective Jewish languages Hebrew and Ladino this generation elaborates:

I communicate in Bosnian with relatives in Israel... I just learnt very little Hebrew in the Jewish community and there is no possibility to learn Ladino, there are no teachers. I learnt a little Spanish though at the community. But only elderly speak Ladino and in five years, no one will be able to speak it.

Among this generation there is thus a prevailing belief that Ladino, in the near future, will no longer exist among the Sephardim in Sarajevo. When further discussing Ladino, the 22-year old explained:

The Sephardi culture is important but there is no chance to preserve it here. It’s positive of course to revitalize Ladino in Israel.

Another 30-year old male person, VA, from this generation expressed the following when discussing the option for the Sephardim to return to Spain:

I mean Spain did that politically to justify the actions of their predecessors. It doesn’t have anything to do with the European crisis. Spain gave that chance to all Sephardim all over the world to connect to their Sephardic roots. I would never go to Spain, but a lot of refugees will surely take that chance to get to, for example, Germany. The EU is very attractive to me even though the EU made a mistake by taking on some countries that weren’t able to catch up with the successful ones, for example Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, or even Greece. Bosnia is also not ready for the EU economically nor for some EU-values. But I am always for the EU! I would like it for Bosnia to be in the EU from a personal perspective...

The same person clarified in a Facebook-message on another occasion (2015-04-05) under what premises Spanish was thought in the Sarajevan Jewish community:

We were 8 people aged 22–50 years old that attended a Spanish course at the Jewish community. It was between November 2013 and July 2014 but the group fell apart so we couldn’t continue.

A male interviewee, IK, from the generation older than 30 years and who is counseling ethnic-religious cooperation regards the vitality of Ladino in subsequent:

I have Sephardi and Ashkinazi roots but the Sephardic culture is richer... It's not as ghettoized and isolated as the Ashkinazic culture.

There is no in depth interest in learning Ladino. I for instance read translations from Ladino to Bosnian about Laura PapoBohoreta but I listen to Flora Jagoda in Ladino. Actually, I've heard that in Israel people first study Spanish and then Ladino. Anyway, you can of course be Sephardic without the Sephardic language; look at our community!

The same 35-year-old man, IK, says about the option to return to Spain:

I think this should have happened a long time ago, not only for Sephardim but for all the people who were expelled during the Spanish Inquisition. Anyway, it's never too late and the Sephardi culture is homogenous in that sense: although still living in exile they see themselves more as a Spanish than an Israeli diaspora.

From a personal perspective, I wouldn't apply. I don't even know if I can because only the half of my family is Sephardi and the other one is Ashkenazi. I don't feel connected to Spain but to the Bosnian Sephardi culture. We have been here for 450 years and that is special in the Sephardi world.

When talking about the new Spanish citizenship law two women from this generation say:

TT: It was 500 years ago and the new law doesn't directly influence me.

ML: Anyway, the whole world is changing with movements.

TT: *In my opinion, they are free to take the Arabic refugees instead of Jewish refugees; they need a home more than we do.*

For the generation older than 55 years, the ideas about Ladino are expressed through the following conceptions:

AG: *I like to read Laura PapoBohoreta and I deeply love Ladino music. There are such beautiful songs by Flora Jagoda.*

Another woman, BK, of this generation elaborates:

I love to listen to Spanish. When my parents were in Madrid they found a street called Levi and my mother was a Levi! Ladino is important of course because there is so much wisdom...

Members of this generation, like the other generations, do not experience a Ladino revival in Sarajevo today:

LP: There is no point for young people to learn Ladino. I personally feel connected to the prayers in Ladino and to the Romanzas.

The president of the Jewish community, Jakob Finci, contemplates as follows upon the Spanish law:

There are a lot of questions to Bosnia and Herzegovina: Are the Sephardim interested in the new law? Would they apply for the Spanish citizenship? Of course, it's too early to talk about it because the legal process hasn't started yet, but it's a kind of gesture from the Spanish government. A kind of gesture to say we are sorry for the sins in the past; the persecution of the Jews and later all non-Catholic nations. It was the first example of a total ethnic cleansing and we witnessed another ethnic cleansing lately in the civil war in Bosnia.

Spain did have a similar law before, which made it possible for Sephardim to obtain a Spanish citizenship but one condition by then was to have lived two years in Spain. This is the first time that Sephardim can obtain citizenships without taking a step on the Spanish ground. You can manage it all through lawyers, public notaries etc. The biggest interest comes from Turkey and Israel. Other western European countries are not so interested in it because many of them got the Schengen.

I don't think there are going to be many residents in Sarajevo who would like this double citizenship, maybe 20–30 people. The Spanish Embassy and the Cervantes Institute from Belgrade will organize a testing of Spanish, at least Judo-Spanish, i.e., the kitchen language and the language of my grandmother. It would be hard to talk about democracy and human rights in this language. I think this testing will discourage people even to apply.

On the other hand, we hope to be a part of the EU soon so our passport will have the same value as a European one. In Israel it's a little bit different: they know they will never be a part of the EU, so theirs is a stronger interest, especially because of the whole situation in the Middle East. They would like it to have a double citizenship and the Spanish one covers 28 European countries.

The historian Eli Tauber, who is 65 years old and responsible for cultural issues at the Jewish community tells in one of our conversations (2015-11-21):

I am personally interested in obtaining a Spanish citizenship. I think in some ways it belongs to me. I am into the Sephardic culture in Bosnia and we don't know what will happen in Bosnia, where and when there will be an ISIS attack. What I am working with could be more progressive in Spain... I plan to apply. There special criteria to fulfill... I will help some people to get prepared. There was a person from the Embassy informing us about the law. The problem is that one has to go to Spain and apply and the procedure is... It will take time for people to adapt. We are a small community, about 80 young people... Just some of them are interested in the new citizenship. We are not under pressure. Its positive but too late... 500 years ago so who has a Spanish connection? Actually we are really connected. Just a few

are speaking Ladino but many know what they are singing, the Sephardic Romanzas... We are a Spanish diaspora here. We preserved Spanish not Hebrew. Spain was a homeland. I always thought my roots are from Toledo. The Transito synagogue... I felt I know these streets, they were so familiar, and the form of the synagogue... So in the same moment you have a connection.

If not in Sarajevo, I would live in Toledo... I feel close to those streets and our synagogue in Sarajevo looks like the one in Toledo. My ancestors probably came from Toledo because of what I felt when I was there. I didn't feel Sephardic when I was living in Israel but more Jewish. In Toledo it was magic.

For the first and third generations, the generational language shift is described as something destructive: "The Sephardi culture is important but there is no chance to preserve it here". The tendency is to focus on the loss, grief, and confusion of the Sephardic language. As for the second generation, the shift is described as productive. As IK expresses: "of course one can be Sephardic without the Sephardic language; look at our community". Moreover, the Sephardi tradition is valued more than the Ashkenazi tradition for those who have mixed backgrounds: "It's not as ghettoized and isolated as the Ashkenazi culture".

I argue that the vulnerability of linguistic identity among Sephardim reveals a catch-22 situation. They are, so to speak, between a rock and hard place: on the one hand they want to maintain a minority but on the other hand they have had little support to do so. Moreover, I consider there to be a restoration of tradition from the Ottoman period taking place within the Jewish community today since the community is more tradition-oriented than before.

## CONCLUSION

Based on what the interviewees revealed to me, it is obvious that from a generational perspective, the elderly are emotionally attached to Judeo-Spanish and to the Sephardic culture. For example, one person said, "I deeply love Ladino music". However, at the same time another stated that there "is no point for young people to learn Ladino". The statements from the middle generation clearly indicate that the Sephardim in Sarajevo are well integrated and thus the aspiration to return to Spain is non-existent: "We have been here for 450 years and that is special in the Sephardi world". Nevertheless, among the youngest, a wish to come closer to the EU is expressed, but this has to do with Bosnia being economically weak, i.e., it has little to do with the Sephardi identification. "I am always for the EU!" AA maintains.

Jakob Finci who has a judicial background points towards the fact that the "Spanish Embassy and the Cervantes Institute from Belgrade will organize a testing of Spanish, at least Judo-Spanish (...). I think this testing will dis-

courage people even to apply”. Yet, there is a conception from Eli Tauber that Toledo is magical and that “(...) If not in Sarajevo I would live in Toledo...”.

Nevertheless, to my mind, sephardization is transferred to younger generations through the belief that yes, one can be Sephardic beyond *Sefarad* and the Sephardic language. Spain as an identity-creating component for the interviewees is, however, acknowledged through their conceptions of Ladino and Spanish.

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