Ghosts of the Holocaust, are they still among us?

An analysis of a Jewish third generation’s lifeworld.

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Abstract

To what extent does the Holocaust shape the Jewish third generation’s lifeworld?

This study aims to reveal the extent to which the Holocaust shapes the lifeworld of the third generation Amsterdam Jews. It approaches this inquiry in a binary fashion. First, the theory to and the aspects of the analysis of a generation’s lifeworld are elaborated with the introduction of the lifeworld existentials approach. Thereafter, the transmission of trauma is elucidated to uncover how the Holocaust might shape a generation not existent at the time of the event. This transmission process is also approached in a twofold manner. The study argues that the third generation is shaped by their families and/or the community. The idea behind the familial path is illustrated with the process of epigenetics and the familial approach is regarded by introduction of an integrative approach to transgenerational transmission of trauma. The communal path is considered to be represented with the illustration of a form of chosen trauma and the influence of a shared identity. Even though some lifeworld determining aspects are attributable to the familial path, the study reveals that more aspects of the third generation lifeworld are determined by the community’s path. Ergo, it is implied that the culture and history of the Jewish people shapes the lifeworld of the generation, which is reinforced by the Holocaust experiences of the first generation, just not determined.
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Introduction: from radio transmission to trauma transmission

About half a year ago I started listening to NPO’s daily radio-show ‘Met het oog op morgen’. The show presents the latest news and provides insights into likely events of tomorrow and contemporary, more complex topics are explored and explained with the help of expert interviews. On Sunday, September the 23rd, I learned that a worthwhile documentary had been shown about the Jewish family Hond. A team of the Dutch television show ‘Kruispunt’ spoke with and followed Iris Hond and her father Steven. Together they journeyed to Auschwitz in an emotional attempt to confront their shared Jewish history. Moreover, they went there to break the silence between one another related to the history of their family and the Holocaust.

Iris, a world famous pianist, partakes in this journey at the time she has been requested to write music for the theatre world premiere of ‘The Pianist’ - an American theatre production about a Jewish pianist during the Second World War (KRO-NCRV, 2018). In addition to the journey aiding her in this writing process, her purpose is to improve the bond with her father and therewith establish the possibility to discuss what her father attempts to ignore: his Jewish background and the wounds that World War II inflicted on their family.

During the war, her grandfather and father of her father, Salomon Hond, survived by going into hiding. While he was hiding his whole family deceased in German concentration camps. Iris has been intuitively aware throughout her life that these events related to the war should not be discussed with her father. It is precisely because of this silence that the lives of three generations of this family have been shaped by their family’s history. It is a form of silence which feeds the notion that emotions are something to be feared and repressed.

Steven:

"My father always made the same defensive gesture when we asked about the war. That meant not asking questions, so I didn’t know anything” [my translation from Dutch].

This had major consequences for the life of Iris as well. As long as she remembers, she has had nightmares:

“As a little girl I dreamed about the war several times a week, they took my family away and I stayed behind. I dared not to sleep anymore because of that”. “I dreamed again last night
The nightmares of Iris signal at an invisible pain that stems from past experiences of earlier generations. It implies that emotional experiences of one generation can have lasting effects on future generations of a family. The emotions tied to these past experiences are therewith transmitted from one generation of a family to future generations - i.e. a process that is conceptualized as transgenerational transmission of emotions tied to particular experiences.

The documentary about the family Hond triggered me to start looking for more material related to transgenerational transmission regarding experiences related to the Second World War. After a while, I found a documentary on 2doc called ‘elke dag 4 mei’ (Van Weezel, 2014). Natascha van Weezel, the producer of this documentary, is a third generation holocaust survivor, which entails her having grandparents who survived the Holocaust. She interviews acquaintances and friends in ‘elke dag 4 mei’ about their experiences as a third generation with World War Two and whether they, as a generation who did not directly experience the event, may experience trauma in relation to the Holocaust. Consequently, she portrays differing perceptions of fellow generation Jews considering the effects of the Holocaust on the lives of their families and on their own lives. For some, the loss of entire parts of their family had such an impact on their lives now that it led to depressions and anorexia. To others, it was considered as something from the past...a horrible past yes...but not something to have a determining influence on their lives now.

In the documentary she questions the plausibility of herself being troubled by a war she did not experience firsthand. At these times she feels guilty for appropriating its misery, a process which according to her however is unintentional. She finalizes her story by stating that she cannot claim other third generation Jews to equally appropriate the historical misery - or trauma, but she does observe them to illustrate signs of a similar tendency to investigate the history of their grandparents.

When I reflect back at that time I also have to consider my personal past as an important trigger for me to act as I did. I have to consider the bond I have with my father and his behaviour concerning matters related to Jewry and Israel as the main sources to my interest into these subjects and for my investigation. As neither my father nor my mother have any Jewish background, the level of intensity my father showed and still shows when the subject...
is mentioned in any form of media or during personal discussions has always fascinated me. His reactions are of a defensive nature and tend to illustrate protective behaviour concerning the Jewish people and the state of Israel, not necessarily its politics. My father and I have a great and open bond as we can talk and discuss about anything. Consequently, his choice to remain vague or even silent on why he acts as he does, is very likely the main motivator for me to have a more than average non-Jewish interest in topics related to Jewry and on relations between generations.

The combination of these documentaries with my personal motivation stimulated me to start an investigation into the process of transgenerational transmission of trauma, a process hinted at in this material. In particular I was looking to explore its effects on the lifeworld of the third generation for two reasons. Firstly, the effects of the Holocaust on the first and second generation Jews’ lives had already been extensively researched, the possible impact for the third generation has not. Secondly, earlier generations and third generation Jews themselves have expressed doubts related to the plausibility and fairness of a third generation trauma, resulting in existential feelings of uncertainty by others part of the third generation. They feel uncertain about being allowed to perceive their lifeworlds being affected by certain war-related traumatic experiences of their ancestors. This study understands the lifeworld of a generation to describe a state of affairs of the world in which they perceive to live.

In my academic research of material related to transgenerational transmission of trauma and its effects on the lifeworld of a generation, I found multiple papers describing a different process with a similar outcome. This process argues for the influence of a community’s culture on trauma transmission moving between generations, thereby shaping newer generation’s lifeworlds. This finding halted me to consider the community’s relation to the process of trauma transmission.

To consider the position of a community to shape a generation’s lifeworld, it meant that I had to take into account the identity of the Jewish community and determining factors of it. I regarded anti-Semitism to be a prevailing factor to have an impact on this community. Numbers, provided by the Anne Frank Stichting (Wonderen & Wagenaar, 2015: 13) and the Centre for Information and Documentation Israel (CIDI, 2018: 2), indicated an increase of anti-Semitism from 2011 to 2018 in forms of physical threats, name calling, destruction of properties and anti-Semitic threats on the internet. Furthermore, there were the jihadist terror attacks on Toulouse (2012), Brussels (2014) and Paris (2015) and a study by the Fundamental
Rights Agency (FRA) showed that almost ninety percent of their Jewish respondents indicated to have the perception that anti-Semitism had been growing over the last five years.

In addition to the raw numbers and the community’s perceived increase of anti-Semitism an intriguing pattern appeared, that consisted of a reflex by the non-Jewish community to automatically relate matters concerning Jews to the Second World War. On Tuesday morning the 12th of March, Gert-Jan Segers and Dilan Yesilgöz (respectively members of parliament of the ChristenUnie and the VVD) were being interviewed about the report of the CIDI (2018). The report stated that the number of registered anti-Semitic incidents in the Netherlands had increased by nineteen percent compared to the year before.

At the time of the publication, Segers and Yesilgöz had just finished working together on an initiative paper to curb this rise of anti-Semitism. They presented their first draft to Wolfgang Kotek - A Jewish World War II survivor living in Rotterdam, who as a little boy experienced the Kristallnacht and rising hatred of Jews in Germany. Kotek warns for recurring anti-Semitism: “I find it very ominous, because it forces you to hide your Jewish identity as a result.” (NPO, 2019)

The fact that these MPs handed over their initiative paper to a first generation Holocaust survivor, illustrates the pattern that contemporary Jewish issues, such as anti-Semitism, remain to be directly linked to the event of the Holocaust. This raises the question whether this behaviour, which thus appears to be symbolic of a dominant reflex within the Dutch society, can similarly be found in newer generations of the current Dutch Jewish community.

As a critical researcher I am aware of the fact that with the context of my study I further validate the trauma attributed to the event of the Holocaust. However, it is not necessarily my goal to do so as my personal conviction to do this research is to increase my understanding of two processes. 1) To learn how traumatic experiences of one generation can affect later ones, and 2) to enhance my comprehension of a tendency towards defensive behaviour concerning the Jewish people shown by particular non-Jewish people like my father.

This study’s academic research goal is twofold in my venture to find out the extent to which the Holocaust shapes the lifeworld of third generation Jews in Amsterdam. As I conceptualize lifeworld to entail both the intimate familial and the lesser intimate community’s processes, I consider both pathways in my research. Consequently, my research question is as follows: To what extent does the Holocaust shape the third generation Jews’ lifeworlds in Amsterdam?
To enable an answer to this question first two subsections will be elaborated. The first part will strive to provide answers to the question: *what comprises a lifeworld?* The second part aims at elucidating the aspects that constitute the lifeworld of a generation. Thus answering the question: *how do transmissions of trauma occur, by skipping a generation?*

**Precedent Imperative Information**

In this thesis there will be many entries of forms of experiences and perceptions. Because the terminology can get confusing at times, it is deemed relevant for this thesis to identify how they are conceptualized for this study and to elucidate their differences.

This study discusses the experiences of a Jewish generation that lived during the Second World War. It refers to their involvement of and exposure to war-related events, particularly to the Holocaust. It thence refers to their actual observations and confrontations at the time and the conscious and unconscious effects those had on their lives.

Contrarily, perception, in agreement with Daniel Schacter (2011), is understood to comprise the identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to comprehend the information and the environment. To this study this implies that the perceived environment of the third generation - their lifeworld - is considered to be shaped to a certain extent by both the identification and interpretation of their grandparents’ experiences, or by the identity and culture of their Jewish community.
1. Lifeworld Theories and Existentials

Through time, social scientists have sought to conceptualize the ways in which people become acculturated participants in the social environments around them. In the end, the term lifeworld would be coined by phenomenological sociologists and philosophers (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). They refer to it as the familiar world of everyday life, and specifically to a given way of life. Dogs and people, for instance, can be understood as inhabiting the same familiar environment but different lifeworlds.

In the phenomenological tradition, to understand and explore the lifeworld, researchers have used the notion of lifeworld existentials. For this research, first Van Manen’s (2016) four lifeworld existentials will be introduced to allow for an operationalization of these existentials in a later chapter with a social constructivist approach. In doing so, the usefulness of the lifeworld existentials as a phenomenological method for lifeworld analysis will be portrayed. First the term phenomenology is explained to grasp the origins of the sociological and philosophical studies that founded the lifeworld concept.

1.1. Phenomenology

The term phenomenology is accompanied by confusion about its nature (Spiegelberg, 1982). It originates from the Greek word *phaenesthai*, which means as much as to flare up, to show itself, to appear (Moustakas, 1994). Consequently, the motto of phenomenology is to focus on the things that matter (Van Manen, 1990: 184). This process, described by Brentano (1838-1917) as ‘*intentionality*’, is said to be the fundamental concept to understand and classify conscious acts and mental practices with. It implies that all perceptions have meaning (Owen, 1996) and refers to the internal experience of being aware of something (Moustakas, 1994).

There is a variety of perspectives on phenomenology with differing features located in multiple paradigms; in positivism (Husserl, 1970), interpretivism (Heidegger, 1962) and post-positivism (Merleau-Ponty, 2002) (Racher & Robinson, 2003). These paradigms are introduced below to illustrate where the concept of lifeworld originates from and how understanding of it has changed through time. Additionally, the thesis uses this understanding to introduce its own social constructivist approach to lifeworld analysis using lifeworld existentials.
1.1.1. Positivist perspective.

The positivist perspective considers the concept of lifeworld to entail the relation between individuals and objects in the environment, which implies certain ‘positive’ knowledge to be based on natural phenomena, their characteristics and relations. Information is extracted from sensory experiences to form all certain knowledge, which is interpreted through logic and reason. (Laudan, 1996) Thence positivism is based on empiricism. As a view of epistemology, the study of human knowledge, it focuses on the role of perceptual observations by the senses in knowledge. (Curd & Psillos, 2013) Positivism therewith holds that society operates according to general laws free of introspective and intuition (Navarro Sada & Maldonado, 2007: 55).

The first positivist conceptualization of phenomenology by Husserl identifies it to entail a rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear in order to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and lived experience (Valle et al., 1989). He regards lived experiences as the main sources of knowledge and to shape understanding of the lifeworld, thence the idea of the lifeworld is essentially the world of the lived experience (Rich, et al., 2013: 500).

According to Husserl (1970), lifeworld is what individuals experience pre-reflectively, without resorting to interpretations. These lived experiences therefore involve the immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life. This implies that descriptive attempts to understand phenomena should be as free as possible from cultural contexts. Rapport (2002) is critical of this argument and responds by stating that phenomenology is not a pure empirical analytic science, but a human science in which the ‘object’ can be defined through the medium of ‘subject’ and its relationships. In agreement with this form of criticism, the interpretivist answer by Heidegger is explained to illustrate the difference in view on the importance of description of things themselves rather than understanding.

1.1.2. Interpretivist perspective.

Heidegger proposes that it is an interpretive process to explore the human experiences as they are lived (Racher & Robinson, 2003). It is an interpretivist stance, which implies that the social realm cannot be studied with the scientific method of investigation applied to nature. Fundamental to interpretivists is the belief that the concepts that researchers use in their researches shape their perceptions of the social world. (Smith & Osborn, 2004)
Correspondingly, Heidegger advocates the consciousness not to be separate from the world of human existence, and he argues for an existential adjustment to Husserl’s positivist ideas. He believes that the primary phenomenon concerns the concept of being, which refers to the meaning of a phenomenon. This means that he considers individuals’ interpretations of phenomena and lived experiences to play a role in their lifeworld comprehension.

1.1.3. Post-positivist perspective.

Built on the writings of Husserl and Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty introduces a different type of phenomenology. His ideas for this perspective on phenomena are post-positivist-based, which critiques the previous perspectives to suggest that perceptions of the social world are solely based on the concepts used by the researcher (Racher & Robinson, 2003). Post-positivists believe a dependency to exist between the researcher and the researched object, as theories, background, knowledge and values of the researcher can influence what is observed (Robson, 2011). The goal of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is to help us view our experiences in a new light by relying on our pre-reflective experiences (Dowling, 2007). Thus, in order to understand our lived experiences we need to comprehend the origins of our theories, knowledge, background and values.

1.1.4. Social constructivist perspective.

Post-positivists and social constructivists show similarities in their ways to shape their understanding and definition of the lifeworld (Miller, 2005). Social constructivism examines the development of collectively constructed understandings of the lifeworld, which are argued to compose shared assumptions about lived experiences.

As a communication theory it focuses on the notion that meanings are constructed in coordination with others rather than separately within each individual (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). These social constructs can vary based on the society and the events related to the time period in which they exist. Examples of such constructs are individual identities and group identities which will be discussed later when these are related to trauma. For now it is important to notice that these constructs demonstrate how people in society compose ideas or concepts that may not exist without the existence of others to validate those concepts. (Andrews, 2012)
1.2. The Lifeworld Existentials

A summary of the above tells us that phenomenological perspectives attempt to uncover the essential perceptions and meanings of particular lived experiences as they are perceived by particular individuals and/or groups, therewith elucidating a deeper comprehension of these lived experiences. To be able to construct a lifeworld analysis approach composed by lived experiences, first the four existentials that form the fundamental structure of the concept of lifeworld are elucidated. These four existentials are originated by Van Manen (2016) to comprise ‘lived body’, ‘lived time’, ‘lived space’ and ‘lived human relations’.

In their study, Rich et al. (2013: 503-504) use Van Manen’s existentials as an analytical approach to the exploration of the lifeworld of childless women. They reflect on the existential of lived body to resonate strongly with their interview content, as they understand their study’s topic to be composed of bodily concepts attached to the fields of biology and reproduction. The content regarding the women’s bodily experiences is argued to provide tangible and accessible elements to explore. Namely, the existential of lived body refers to our bodily presence in our everyday lives. This presence includes all that we feel, reveal, conceal and share through our lived body. Van Manen’s approach implies that we are always present in the world through our body. This means that we communicate, feel, interact and experience the world with it;

Furthermore, they indicate the existential of lived time to indicate the time as we experience it. Contrary to factual/objective time, this entails a subjective understanding of time as it refers to how we experience time based on our feelings. Conversely, time placed constraints, freedoms and demands affect how we feel and experience our world on a temporal level;

Lived space is introduced to entail our subjective experiences with spaces. This means that it concerns itself with the felt space: how a certain space that we find ourselves in makes us feel and how our feelings determine our experiences about a particular space;

Finally, lived human relations is implied to consider our relationships with others in our lifeworld. It includes how we establish and experience these relations through interactions with others.

1.2.1. Changing existentials.

Even though these existentials comprise differing focus points, they are not completely separate identities. As constitutional aspects to the exploration of the lifeworld, they are
interwoven and interact with one another. Rich et al. (2013) existentials approach aims to illustrate how lived experiences of their subjects would shape their lifeworlds. Nevertheless they do this with a biological bodily focused analysis. My approach builds upon their ideas, but regards the bodily focus to be deficient for my research. As I argue that the lifeworld of my subjects is represented by their perceived well-being, I ignore the bodily experiences and introduce a new additive existential, conceptualized as lived ‘well-being’.

Lived well-being refers to our individual self-reflection of our daily lives, including all the feelings, discoveries and struggles we self-reflect upon. In this day and age, there is an apparent increased tendency towards self-reflection upon our lives. See for instance the huge influx in Western society of mindfulness’ popularity this last decade (Grossman, 2015: 17). This tendency coincides with the long-existing Jewish tradition to self-reflect; as such, this existential uncovers how we reflect on how we feel and perceive ourselves.

This study acknowledges the process of flattening (Lang et al., 2003) and strives to overcome its defining effects on the understanding of well-being by exploration of social and cultural contexts in particular moments in time. The process of flattening implies that excessive usage of a term like trauma or well-being in varying academic contexts can lead to a overdone generalization (i.e. flattening) of the term, thence it is required to consider the social and cultural contexts and moment(s) in time the term is referring to whenever it is used. For this study it is therewith deemed paramount to first acknowledge the perceived well-being of the interviewees, after which the time, cultural and social contexts related to it are explored with slight changes to the illustrated existentials of Van Manen (2016).

Lived time turns into ‘time-bound perceptions’, which explores the interviewees’ perceptions of particular topics that would change or remain stable over time.

Lived space changes to ‘spatiality’. Given the more abstract nature of lived space, the application of this existential required a simpler way of thinking. Contrary to it also entailing the emotional space, divisions between public and private space and invasion of personal space, solely the physicality of space in terms of physical locations would be considered in the analysis. The existential therewith examines the spaces within which the interviewees live their daily lives and how they relate to each other.

Finally lived human relations remains to act in a similar fashion, however to better fit the approach of this thesis, its renamed: ‘social & cultural relations’.

In summary, this thesis investigates the relation between the first generation’s lived experiences of ill-being and the third generation’s perceptions of well-being. It therefore
approaches the lifeworld analysis with the existentials in a different manner than Van Manen (2016). It conceptualizes the lifeworld of the third generation to be constituted by their well-being perceptions. Contrary to Van Manen’s foundational existential of lived body, the existential used as a basis for this study’s approach will thence constitute from the individual’s perception of well-being.

For the analysis of what constitutes the lifeworld of a third generation Amsterdam Jews, the existential lived body will be changed to that of lived ‘well-being’. Before this new additive approach to lifeworld analysis can be further elaborated however, the concept of well-being must be elucidated. Moreover, the influences on the perception thereof in relation to the Jewish community and its members are required to be explained. To that end, first the relations between experiencing ill-being and trauma and their connection to well-being perception is examined. Thereafter, two possible pathways of the transmission of these traumatic experiences from the first to the third generation are introduced and explained. This will allow for a comprehension of the well-being aspect deemed foundational to the constitution of lifeworld of the third generation Amsterdam Jews.
2. Well-being and Ill-being in Traumatic Events

On the ground level, this thesis concerns itself with the extent of well-being and ill-being experienced by the third generation Jewish Holocaust survivors. These forms of being combined shape the lifeworld of this generation. The main research question related to this matter can thence be split in two. On one hand it concerns the manners in which the event of the Holocaust shapes the third generation of its surviving Jews. On the other hand it implies an investigation into the lifeworld of this third generation. The latter will be discussed in the following section.

First, with the introduction of well- and ill-being approaches, the debates surrounding their definitions are illustrated. Additionally, the link between ill-being and trauma is explained. The signature move of well-being and ill-being approaches is to focus on the person’s or community’s priorities and perspectives. Consequently, it not solely considers external ‘objective’ measures of welfare, but also people’s own ‘subjective’ perceptions and experiences of life. Second, the concept of lifeworld is looked at and its role for this thesis is explained. Furthermore, the relation between well-being, ill-being as part of a generation’s lifeworld experience is elaborated.

2.1. Perception of Well-Being

The time for academics to study worldly phenomena by analyzing well-being has come (White 2010: 159). A growing multi-disciplinary academic literature on the topic of well-being has continued to expand since the turn of the millennium, gaining dedicated journals, such as the Journal of Happiness Studies and the International Journal of well-being, which present perspectives largely from the schools of economics, psychology, anthropology, development studies, philosophy and education (Scott & Bell, 2013). Moreover, amongst government bodies, an increased interest in operationalization of happiness and well-being research has been evident (Eckersley, 2008; Frey & Gallus, 2013).

As the concept of well-being has risen in popularity for academics and policy makers, its definition remains to be a point of debate. In part this is due to people understanding well-being as a different concept in differing contexts. In 2008, separate studies by Devine and Camfield et al. showed how the understanding of social relationships is key to defining well-being. In their studies people repeatedly pointed at the centrality of relatedness in their lives. A centrality which is confirmed by standard numerical indices of well-being, such as the
place based ‘happiest town’ indices, inter-country comparison scale ‘Happy Planet Index’, or national frameworks like the ‘Measuring National well-being Program’ (Bache et al., 2016; Oman 2016). These indices link low quality of life with social exclusion and personal isolation, and high quality of life with social connectedness (White, 2010: 161).

According to White (2010) there are two aspects to the relational aspect of well-being. The first refers to being treated right by others and to personal honor. The second aspect associates with the more intimate and personal relationships. In other words, the first aspect relates to social relations and access to public goods, where the second entails capabilities, attitudes towards life, and personal relationships.

The division between these aspects of well-being is based on an old philosophical distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic approaches. The hedonic approach equates wellness with pure hedonic ‘happiness’ while the eudaimonic approach emphasizes broader notions of human flourishing and life satisfaction over time (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

The hedonic perspective posits that only that which can be deemed pleasant or has pleasant consequences is intrinsically good (Delle Fave et al., 2011). Hedonic perspectives, with their outcome-based conceptualization, seem to lend themselves particularly well to scientific measurement, and have thus constituted the majority of studies in the science of happiness field. An example of such an hedonic approach is ‘Subjective well-being’ (Headey & Wooden, 2004). This approach is characterized by a focus on the satisfaction any individual perceives to have based on the balance of their positive and negative emotions. Proponents of this approach claim that the nature of this approach allows each individual to evaluate their own life in terms of happiness rather than experts imposing value judgements on what a good life entails, as is attributed to the eudaimonic tradition.

The eudaimonic approaches entail that not all desires or outcomes a person might value necessarily bring about well-being. Rather the eudaimonic approaches to well-being look at the processes which enable self-fulfillment, meaning and purpose (Deci & Ryan, 2008). They aim at the realization of the daimon or ‘true self’. The daimon represents the human potentiality and therewith, according to the eudaimonic approach, the greatest fulfilment in living of which any individual is capable (Waterman, 1993: 678). There are three major examples of eudaimonic approaches: ‘Psychological well-being’ (Caddick & Smith, 2014),
‘Eudaimonic well-being’ (Waterman et al., 2010) and the ‘Self-determination Theory’ (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The first approach is characterized by aiming at personal flourishing and the fulfillment of your true human potential. The second approach is based on the first, but narrows it down to a “distinctive subjective state” (Waterman et al., 2010: 239). This state concerns the pursuit of virtue, excellence, and self-realization. The last approach refers to the three basic psychological needs; autonomy, connectedness and competence as minimum requirements for self-realization and psychological well-being. However, these needs are seen as nourishments allowing people to flourish. This approach is applicable to relational (La Guardia et al., 2000) and community contexts (Deci et al., 2001).

The short illustration of these well-being approaches strives to show that they overlap in certain areas yet are divergent as well; and that they implicitly or explicitly propose various approaches to the pursuit of well-being.

The approach to well-being for this thesis regards how the members of the third generation perceive their well-being to be, when they consider their lives in Amsterdam as Jews. These perceptions of their well-being therefore shape their lifeworlds. It was illustrated by its existentials that the perspectives of the generation’s members are subject to physical and social surroundings and vary over time. Thence, the analysis of their well-being now may differ from similar analysis done by future research.

Nonetheless, the aspects to their well-being are found when matters of family-bonds and friendships, school, work and living situations, hobbies and relationship to Jewry, Jews and non-Jews are considered. These topics therewith shape the data collection process that will be discussed later. Nevertheless, as this study examines that these issues may be subject to lived ill-being experiences by a traumatized, first generation Holocaust survivors, the relationship between ill-being experiences of trauma, well-being and the perception of lifeworlds is further elaborated.

2.2. Experience of Ill-being

A study by Ryff et al., (2006) illustrates the distinction between ill-being and well-being. As a biological study it shows seven out of nine researched biomarkers to portray their distinction hypothesis rather than their mirrored hypothesis. This result implies, in agreement with psychological studies of Headey et al., (1993) and Diener et al., (1999), that well-being
and ill-being are not necessarily flip-sided concepts, but constitute separate, independent dimensions of a person’s state with different causes.

As well-being concerns itself with personal growth and reaching your true potential, ill-being comprises anxiety, depression or other negative affects. Any individual can experience high levels of well-being at the same time that they experience levels of ill-being. (Headey & Wooden, 2004: 25) Moreover, the absence of ill-being is no guarantee of possessing high well-being (Keyes, 2002; Singer et al., 1998) Thus, even when an individual is free of major psychological disorders, it can lack meaningful life engagement.

Psychological disorders are at times the consequences of traumatic experiences. Thence forms of ill-being follow from experiencing traumatic events. The type of trauma that is discussed in this thesis concerns psychological trauma experienced by the first generation Holocaust survivors. They experienced forms of psychological damage following the distressing, traumatic event of the Holocaust. This form of trauma is the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeded the generation’s ability to cope, or integrate the emotions involved with that experience. Their trauma is therefore defined, corresponding the definition by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as the:

“direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; threat to one's physical integrity, witnessing an event that involves the above experience, learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death, or injury experienced by a family member or close associate.” (APA, 2013)

However as was pointed out by Michael A. Simpson, such a definition has an excessive emphasis on seeing trauma as a sequel to sudden, unexpected and intense stress, referring to single, short, sharp events. It therewith ignores stress which is gradual in onset, or recurrent, expected/dreaded, and of varying intensity over time. (1993: 601) This belief coincides with the writings on ‘continuous traumatic stress’, which argues that many of the world’s traumatic experiences are relentless, structural and continuous (Straker, 2013).

Thus, experiencing traumatic events has different effects on people. Not all people who experience a possibly traumatic event become psychological traumatized; some people are more susceptible to developing a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, after exposure to these events, then others (Storr, et al., 2007).
Following from the above, the concept of trauma for this thesis is defined as varying psychological ill-being experiences of a generation subjected to the Holocaust.

This definition considers that experiences of ill-being are not exclusively associated with being present at the site of a trauma-inducing event. It is also possible to sustain trauma after exposure to something from a distance (APA, 2013). Consequently, repeated exposure to an identity or culture of trauma may also result in the development of trauma related symptoms. The vulnerability to probable traumatic events thence differs per individual and this thesis proposes that it is determined to varied extent by intimate, individual familial and external, communal interactivity.

2.2.1. A perspective on the relationship between a lifeworld and traumatic ill-being experiences.

A critical view of the relationship between trauma and lifeworld is presented in phenomenological studies on trauma by Bracken (2002) and Stolorow (1999). According to their perspective, which aligns with Habermas’ (1987) ‘colonisation of the lifeworld’ thesis, trauma entails a systematic attempt to break communicative, social and political relations. This teaches us to consider the varying ways in which trauma entails the breaking of our meaningful engagement with the world. The goal of this teaching is to illustrate how lived traumatic suffering might be existentially experienced and how these experiences can lead to the destruction of a person’s or a group’s social and political world through processes of social alienation, interconnected experiences of betrayal and political demobilization. (Matthies-Boon, 2018: 159-161; Matthies-Boon & Head, 2018: 259)

Based on this teaching, Matthies-Boon and Head (2018) argue that the assumptive world of people is broken down due to grave violence or the immanent and persistent threat thereof. The assumptive world comprises the people’s generalized beliefs about self-worth, meaningful others and the benevolence of the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), which are akin aspects to what I understand well-being to comprise of. Thence, the shattering of it destroys the people’s social relations, which thence connects individual trauma with social trauma.

The critical perspective on the connection between trauma and lifeworld suggests that lived ill-being experiences have a tendency to destroy the lifeworld of the generation subjected to the traumatic events. Even though, my thesis also aims to examine a corresponding relationship between the lifeworld and traumatic experiences of ill-being, it does so by exploring possible processes of transmission between generations.
3. The Pathways of Trauma Transmission

The study for this thesis investigates the relation between the third generation’s lifeworld and traumatic experiences of their ancestors. It hypothesizes that the experiences of ill-being of one generation to an extent shape the perceptions of well-being of a later generation. As the effects of these traumatic experiences on relationships in a family or community context are still relatively unexplored (Dickson-Gomez, 2002: 419), this study aims to elucidate these intersubjective relationships with an integrative approach of anthropological, psychosociological and historical aspects.

Intersubjectivity is defined as a concept which describes how people’s’ experiences and perceptions of the world are shaped by interactions with one another. This process has been shown to shape the identity of individuals in intimate familial situations and amongst communities (Stone et al, 2012).

The elaboration of the community’s identity may create a traumatized culture amongst its members. Thence, communal intersubjectivity argues for a “joint cultural understanding” (Correa-Chavez & Roberts, 2012: 99-108). Conversely, intimate behaviour within families may lead to transgenerational transmission of traumatic experiences. The distinction illustrates how processes of both intimate interactions and lesser intimate external interactions to a various extent play a role in the transgenerational transmission of trauma.

3.1. The Role of the Community

“At what point can the historical trauma shared by members of a culture be so pervasive and long-standing that it is considered a part of their culture?” (Dickson-Gomez, 2002: 434)

This statement by Julia Dickson-Gomez (2002: 416) portrays a particular process through which individual members of a community with a shared culture shape its identity with traumatic aspects. These aspects consider a worldview of fear, pessimism and violence. They can shape the community’s shared nature to integrate a culture of trauma. An example of such an integration is the in the introduction mentioned Dutch reflex to relate all matters concerning Jewry to the Second World War Sustaining such culture creates a situation of ‘normal abnormality’. In this situation, the changes in personality and behaviour are shared by the members of the group, they are reinforced by the member’s everyday interactions and are continually part of the lifeworld that can be transmitted to future generations (ibid: 418).
The following section will consider this continued process by investigating the extent to which a traumatized community’s identity shapes the lifeworld of its members.

An important part of the lifeworld of Jewish community in Amsterdam lies in having a second culture/extra identity. Even when someone does not perceive itself as "really" Jewish, for example, when one does not practice the Jewish faith in any way, one still claims to feel connected to the Jewish people somehow. It is a relationship that produces feelings of uniqueness, but also of unelected solidarity with other Jewish people. This latter fact is most likely reinforced by the past of the Jewish people. It is a past of oppression, exclusion and destruction. For example, countries such as the Netherlands, which were impacted heavily by World War II, have only a small portion left of what was once their Jewish community. Traumatic events such as these have led to a shared identity of survival within this community. How such shared collective traumas can shape the identity and thus the lifeworld of the Jewish group and its individuals will now be discussed.

To understand how the lifeworld of individuals of the third generation holocaust surviving Jews may be shaped by a shared Jewish communal identity, first the relation between the identity of an individual and his or her group is clarified and their interaction is elaborated.

Volkan (2001: 80-84), in his section on identity in psychoanalytic theory, refers to a well-known reference on identity by Freud. According to him Freud delivered a speech to B’nai B’rith, in which Freud wondered why B’nai B’rith was bound to Jewry since, as a non-believer, he had never been instilled with its ethnonational pride or religious faith. Nevertheless, Freud noted a “safe privacy of a common mental construction”, and “a clear consciousness of inner identity” as a Jew (Freud, 1926: 274).

However Volkan also states that Freud never fully investigated this link between his individual and the community’s identity (2001: 81). Thence he introduces a definition of identity by Erikson, a psychoanalyst with a focus on identity, who described it as

“A persistent sameness within oneself … and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others.” (Erikson 1956: 57)

Based on Erikson’s description, Volkan (2001) defines a community’s identity as
Subjective experience relates to the everyday social interactivity between people and how they perceive themselves and the world around them. The sense of sameness results in a commonly carried main task the members of such a group share to maintain, protect, and repair their group’s identity.

Volkan’s formulations on the community’s identity are implied by him to have evolved from his participation as a facilitator for over 20 years, in unofficial psychopolitical dialogues between representatives of large enemy groups such as Arabs and Israelis. These dialogues took place within small-group settings. He claims to have repeatedly observed that when these group’s representatives come together in a small group and are given the task of discussing the conflictual relationship between their respective groups, the issues pertaining to each side’s identity assumed primary importance and their personal identity faded into the background. Each individual participant in the dialogue feels that his or her side is under personal attack and is compelled to defend their group and become its spokesperson. The personal stories that emerged reflected what ‘others’ did to ‘us’ and additional aspects of group conflicts and group identity difficulties.

Volkan (2001, 83-84) elaborates the above with a cloth/tent metaphor. He argues that participants of the dialogues appeared to wear two layers of ‘garments’. The first one fits them snugly and is their individual identity - the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness. The second layer is a loose covering made of the canvas of the group’s tent (the group’s identity) through which the person shares a persistent sense of sameness with others in the group. Both garments are said to provide security and protection, but because both are worn every day, the individual hardly notices either one under normal circumstances. At times of collective stress however the garment made of the tent canvas takes on greater importance, and individuals may collectively seek the protection of, and also help defend, their group’s tent. The more stress the group members perceive or experience, the more they become involved in maintaining and repairing the canvas.
3.1.1. Chosen trauma.

Within every community there exists a shared mental representation of a traumatic past event during which the community suffered loss and/or experienced helplessness, shame and humiliation in a conflict with another group. The transmission of such a shared traumatic event is linked to the past generation’s inability to mourn the deaths of their people, land or prestige. Furthermore, it indicates the group’s failure to reverse narcissistic injury and humiliation inflicted by another group. (Volkan, 2001: 87)

Over generations these historical events become more than a memory or shared piece of the past. They become ‘chosen traumas’ (Volkan, 1999), events that become woven into the canvas of the group’s tent. Events of which is important that through sharing of the chosen trauma members of the group are linked together.

Since a group does not choose to be victimized or suffer humiliation, some take exception to the term ‘chosen’ trauma. In agreement with Volkan however, I believe it to reflect a group’s unconscious behaviour to add a past generation’s mental representation of an event to its own identity. Moreover, the fact that, while groups may have experienced any number of traumas in their history, only certain ones remain alive through time.

Chosen traumas are recalled during the anniversary of the original event. The ritualistic commemoration helps bind the members of the group together. Many of the Jewish traditional commemorations in Amsterdam have a focus on self-reflection and on commemoration of the lost and fallen loved ones during times of oppression and violence. These defining traumatic events are there to be relived. Passing on traditions to your children is perceived as the most important task for Jewish parents as they strengthen the Jewish collective sense of connectedness with each other and previous generations. These traditions are therewith an integral part of the Jewish culture (Abram, 2006).

Some examples of these traditions are mentioned in the following to illustrate the community’s inhibited culture of self-reflection and to commemorate historic events related to times of oppression. Considering charity and self-reflection, examples are found in ‘the first ten days of repentance’: in anticipation of ‘Yom Kippur’, it is exceedingly appropriate to practice teshuvah, an examination of one’s deeds and repentance for sins one has committed against other people and God (Maimonides, 1180). Yom Kippur is appointed as the holiest day of the year. Its central themes are atonement and reconciliation with God through total abstinence of food and drink. Regarding the commemoration of fallen ones during times of
oppression however, feast such as Purim, Hanukkah and Pesach are representative. During Purim as the holiday of remembrance, the Jewish people commemorate Esther, the wife of the Achaemenid Persian King Xerxes the first, and her actions to save the Jews from being killed by Haman, the royal vizier to the king. Hanukkah (Festival of Light) marks the defeat of Seleucid Empire forces that had tried to prevent the people of Israel from practicing Judaism. Lastly Pesach, the Jewish Easter or Passover, commemorates the liberation of the Israelite slaves from Egypt (Exodus 12:14).

Throughout history, the Jewish people have been subjected to excessive forms of subjugation. This resulted in definition and redefinition processes by the Jewish people. Struggles of differentiation and independence ensued, and some continue today, of which the Israel - Palestine conflict is an apparent example.

Volkan (2001: 83) implies that once a chosen trauma is reactivated within a group by traumatic events, a time collapse occurs. Fears, expectations, fantasies and defenses associated with a chosen trauma, reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the mental representation of the past trauma and a contemporary threat. This process is said to magnify the image of current enemies and current conflicts, and an event that happened many years before will be felt as if it happened yesterday. An historic enemy will be perceived in a new enemy, and the sense of entitlement to regain what was lost, or to seek revenge against the new enemy is fueled.

Concluding this section, that awareness of the chosen trauma should in the analysis of my data reveal the following:

1) A persistent sense of sameness and shared essential characteristics between the interviewees;
2) A reflex amongst the interviewees to be compelled to defend his or her group when they perceive it to be under attack and become its spokesperson, thence keeping the tent metaphor in mind that the more stress the group member experiences, the more it becomes involved in maintaining and repairing the canvas of the group;
3) A shared tendency to relate contemporary forms of violence, oppression and acts of anti-Semitism to horror of the Holocaust;
4) A common sentiment involving an existential threat posed by others (non-Jews);

Finally, it should reveal the importance of traditions and passing on of traditions to teach the value of self-reflection, kindness, and commemoration of the fallen.
3.2. Familial Transmission of Trauma

As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, there are questions introduced in Van Weezel’s and Hond’s documentaries about the processes of transmitted suffering from their grandparents. Iris Hond mentions having to deal with nightmares all her life based on untold stories of Holocaust experiences by her grandfather. Van Weezel complementary illustrates how Holocaust related feelings of distrust, uncertainty, defensive tendencies and a permanent sense of existential threat have become part of the identity of her third generation interviewees. Furthermore, van Weezel shows that amongst the first generation survivors of their families, there were doubts related to the validity of the third generation trauma experiences as being related to their own. These doubts amplify already uncertain identities of this newer generation.

“Sometimes I wonder how I can suffer from a war that I have not experienced myself and I feel guilty when I appropriate that misery. I don't do it on purpose” [my translation from Dutch]. (Van Weezel, 2014)

In addition to investigating the extent to which external factors may shape the lifeworld of the third generation, the impact of familial ties also need to be considered. To do so, this thesis will elaborate on social interactions between the survivors of the Holocaust, their children and grandchildren, with a focus on the latter. The following will first illustrate the process of transgenerational transmission with an example out of the medical world - epigenetics. Thereafter, an integrated approach of anthropological, psychosociological and historical factors will elucidate the conscious and unconscious ways by which familial interactions can pass down trauma to newer generations.

3.2.1. Epigenetics.

In a recent new academic line of research called epigenetics, the transmission of traumatic experiences is being looked at with the study of heritable phenotype changes. These changes do not involve alterations in the DNA sequence (Dupont et al., 2009). Contrarily, epigenetics implies features that are added to the traditional genetic basis for inheritance (Rutherford, 2015). It denotes that effects on cellular and physiological traits may result from external/environmental factors. Effects, which are claimed to be heritable in either the progeny of cells or even organisms - organisms such as humans. (Berger et al., 2009)
Amongst the epigenetics academia, a relatively new branch has started to look into what this could imply for transgenerational epigenetic inheritance, also defined as transgenerational transmission. More than a hundred cases of transgenerational transmission phenomena have been reported in a wide range of organisms, including prokaryotes, plants and animals (Jablonka & Raz, 2009). Furthermore, these findings inspired others to investigate the transgenerational transmission of behaviour such as: early life stress (Caspi, et al., 2003), addiction (Vassoler & Sadri-Vakili, 2014), anxiety and depression (Short, et al., 2016) and fear conditioning (Szyf, 2014).

Complementary to this research on different forms of behaviour is the research done on the epigenetic transmission of trauma. Kellerman (2011) claims that regarding major traumas, such as the Holocaust, its survivors are marked epigenetically with invisible marks. In addition to numbers tattooed on their forearms, the victims are marked with a coating upon their chromosomes. This coating is argued to represent a biological memory of what the survivors had experienced during the war. Kellerman further argues that symptoms related to traumatic experiences of the survivors are being transmitted epigenetically to their children and even grandchildren (p. 2). Epigenetic transmission implies that specific forms of vulnerability to particular external stimuli, because of traumatic experiences of the generation experiencing those traumatic events, are similarly identifiable in later generations (Berger, et al., 2009).

That the coating is found on the survivor’s children and grandchildren illustrates that epigenetic research adds a new psychobiological dimension to the explanation of transgenerational transmission of trauma. With the integration of heredity and environmental factors, epigenetics adds a new psychobiological dimension to the explanation of transgenerational transmission of trauma. It illustrates how trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next, thereby providing ground for the idea that traumatic events like the Holocaust shape the lifeworld of later generations not existing at the time of the event.

3.2.2. Integrative approach to transgenerational transmission.

A different take on a similar transgenerational process is provided with an integrative approach, which includes the anthropological studies of Dickson-Gomez (2002) and psychosociological/historical study by Kellerman (2011). Dickson-Gomez (2002) illustrates that individual trauma does not stem from a traumatized community, as was argued before,
rather, that individual social interactions can perpetuate a family’s trauma from one generation to the next. This process relates to the theme of heredity – the transmission of characteristics from parents to their offspring (Kellerman, 2011: 2).

Dickson-Gomez (2002: 423-425) argues that although war-related trauma is embodied in individual ill-being, family narratives of trauma communicate something about the way the world is. She therewith implies that, within families, traumatic behaviour is communicated to children through everyday conversations via adults’ reactions to contemporary shocking events. These events are often discussed and therewith become causes of great concern for the newer generations of these families as well.

The integrative approach shows that the discussions related to the interpretations of traumatic events can be transmitted conscious and unconsciously. Familial discussions are an example of relatively conscious ways in which lessons of the war are communicated to children and grandchildren. They are told to expect resembling immoral behaviour in the future based on lessons learned by a shared traumatic history (Dickson-Gomez, 2002: 430). These lessons teach these generations to feel responsibility for the undoing of the tragic pain of their ancestral past. A burden that leads them to show overly protective feelings towards their parents and/or preoccupation with matters concerning death and persecution (Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

Manifestations of this particular trauma transmission, for example in recurrent Holocaust nightmares reported by the children and grandchildren of survivors, can be understood as a manifestation of the displaced unconscious fears of the parents. The newer generations experience what the parents themselves cannot perceive and express. Additionally, it can be explained as the result of a specific kind of social learning and parenting as a child responds to the anxieties indirectly expressed in harmful parenting. It could be the result of family entrapment and unspoken communication. A situation in which the child is trapped in a closed environment and where survival mechanisms are omnipresent. The support that traumatized family members demand is an unconscious plea for children to undo the pain caused by past trauma.

At first glance, this integrative view of trauma transmission seems fairly representative. Upon closer inspection however, in agreement with Kellerman’s (2011: 2) argued criticism, it tends to be too general to actually explain the specific process of how the impact of trauma can
cross generations. Children are naturally influenced by their parents in a variety of ways, either through heredity or upbringing, or through both (Maccoby, 2000). Studies of human heritability are plentiful and decades of social science research have indeed established clear correlations between social, educational, behavioral, and economic qualities of parents and children. This implies that there is little illuminating about the approach and it could be equally well applied to explain the transmission of traits such as child abuse, criminality or intelligence. Basically, it is argued to solely confirm the well-known saying that ‘an apple does not fall far from the tree’, which does not comprehensively explain how similar patterns are observable between grandparents and grandchildren directly.

Kellerman (2011: 3) therefore introduces a new approach to this form of transgenerational transmission. It is a type of transgenerational transmission that is directly relevant to identity issues on the individual level.

“It involves the depositing of an already formed self or object image into the developing self-representation of a grandchild under the premise that there it can be kept safe and the resolution of the conflict with which it is associated can be postponed until a future time”.

(Volkan, 1997)

The ‘deposited image’ is like a psychological gene that shapes the grandchild’s identity. This idea is based on a process similar to that of ‘replacement children’ (Teréz, 1984; Anisfeld & Richards, 2000; Schwab, 2012). It implies that the grandchildren self-representations include the images of dead siblings or other dead or lost relatives that are transmitted to them through their interactions with their parents and grandparents.

These interactions shape the child’s developing identity and lifeworld in varying manners. They can manifest in ‘tasks’ the child is unconsciously impelled to perform, such as conducting the mourning that a parent cannot perform, or repairing a parent’s psychological health (Kellerman, 2011: 1). This could also imply for later generations to skip puberty (Van Weezel, 2015: 121). In the case of Holocaust surviving families, it can also result in wariness of the social environment. As the Jews were so easily betrayed and shunned away during and after the war by non-Jews, the latter group has remained, to varying degrees, unworthy of complete trust.
The approaches to trauma transmission in transgenerational transmission of trauma and collective transmissions are not by nature mutually exclusive. A combination of shaping influences is very plausible and highly probable. To get a sense of the extent in which these approaches shape their lifeworlds, the concept of lifeworld, its theoretical origins and an approach to analysis of lifeworlds are looked at.
4. Methodology: An Integrative Approach to Lifeworld Analysis

In this chapter, the methodology of the study is introduced to portray the study’s data collection process comprised of its researched concepts of lifeworld, well-being and ill-being. It therewith offers the theoretical understanding and justification of the method used. (Howell, 2012) Ergo, the process and progression of the study and the composition of the data subjects are introduced to clarify who the analysis concerns and how the data was established. After the exploration and illustration of the thesis’ study and data collection, the proposed changed lifeworld existentials analysis approach is introduced and elaborated. To finalize this chapter with an operationalization of the categorical division between the familial and community’s pathway of trauma transmission.

4.1. The Study of a Third Generation’s Lifeworld

The study discussed for this thesis was conducted over the course of the earlier months of 2019. Especially during the months of March, April and May interviews were conducted for the collection of data. The aim of the research was to establish life-story accounts of third generation Jews by discussing their perceptions and experiences with Jewry and being Jewish in Amsterdam. Additionally, the knowledge they would possess of their ancestors’ Holocaust-related experiences would be talked about.

The significance of these perceptions and experiences is established in accordance to interpretivist phenomenological principles (Flood, 2010). It assumes that the descriptions provided by these interviewees are already meaningfully interpreted by the interviewees themselves, thence my analysis of these accounts is also considered to be a relevant interpretation of their lifeworld.


The life-story method prioritizes individual testimonies of lived experiences and perceptions, whilst firmly embedding these in social interactivities (Matthies-Boon, 2017). This allows me to identify the interviewees’ experiences and perceptions that constitute their lifeworld. The method has a focus on personal narratives, which allows me to establish accounts sensitive to intersubjective experiences of well- and ill-being.

The purpose of the method is to have the interviewees tell you their stories with the least amount of steering by the researcher. The openness coinciding with the method of life-story interviews enabled me to let my interviewees tell their stories in the way they wanted...
to. In my attempts to rely on open questions I strived to let them talk about the themes I prepared without forcibly discussing traumatic experiences. I aimed to discuss the matters relevant for this research in a natural way for them to talk about. The analysis of their stories will therewith be able to pick up on silences and emphasized topics relevant to the interviewees.

The choice of using a life-story method approach to the interviews entails with it a number of basic issues (Thompson, 2003: 81-83). The first one that has to be considered is the question of credibility of retrospective interviewing, and the nature of memory. This issue relates to not only to what people say and whether it is true, but also to how people remember things: what they won’t say; what they forget; the silences of memory; the transformations that take place in memory; and the inventions. It implies that because these interviews included third generations' individual accounts of experienced historic, traumatic events, there is no way to validate their accuracy.

The second issue relates to sampling, how to decide who to interview, depends on the availability of interviewees pressured by a shortage of time. As there were only effectively two to three months to find and get people for the interviews, a number of late applications had to be cancelled. Moreover, I solely held one-off individual life-story interviews, as my original plan of doing a follow-up interview had to be let go.

Finally, the third issue indicates it paramount for me to understand, whilst interviewing, not to press for certain topics relevant to the study when not touched on by the interviewee. The life-story technique is based on listening and creating space, thence I had to be prepared to drop my questions, listen and never try to interrupt, to get an interviewee flowing.

In using the life-story interview technique, a number of ethical issues come to the fore: anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (Richards & Schwartz, 2002).

It is important to request consent whenever a certain interviewee is cited for research. Some might desire to stay anonymous, whilst others might have the desire to be heard under their own names. I expected this to be relevant to the Jewish community, as there are extreme beliefs present regarding the usage of their belief and tradition and the imparting of these with non-Jews. The mentioning of real names may thus place these interviewees in perilous positions within their community and place their autonomy at risk. As I gather and interpret data, I will therefore have to strive to minimize the possibility of intrusion into the autonomy
of the interviewees (Sanjari et al., 2014). Consequently, before I would commence my interviews I would ask my participant for the consent regarding his or her name usage. Contrary to my expectation, most of the interviewees concurred with the proposition to use their real name in references used for this thesis. Some however expressed their desire to only be referred to by their first name.

I also considered it important to indicate my own position to the interviewee and the reader as my background, social context and convictions may color the data gathered from the interviews as the interpretation of that data. Asides from the past experiences with black feminists as was earlier discussed, I also perceived it fair to be the interviewee who is asked to lay bare a life-story to be able to learn about mine.

Finally I tried to recognize the role of informed consent as an integral part of my research. I perceived it important to clarify for the participants what data will be collected and how it will be used (Hoeyer, et al., 2005). This clarification comprised the nature of the study, the participants’ potential role and how the results would be used (Orb, et al., 2001). Additionally I would tell the interviewees about the objective of the research. Nevertheless this was done in the end of the interviews to bypass any steering of the interviewees’ initial stories by me.

4.1.2. The interviewees.

Nine interviewees were found with a snowball approach using social media (Facebook) and through friendly connections. In addition to my own reconnection with a Jewish friend from my past, the people who allowed me to have access to the interviewees comprised my father, my niece and two good friends. They connected me to third generation Jewish friends or acquaintances who were asked to participate in interviews regarding their perceptions of Jewry and experiences with being Jewish in Amsterdam.

The established group of interviewees consisted of all Amsterdam-based Jews that are part of the third generation. I interviewed three females and six guys and I spoke Dutch with all of them. The age scale ranged from twenty to thirty-six, with four of them being closer to twenty and the others closer to thirty. Considering the level of Jewry, I have interviewed a relatively likeminded, liberal oriented group with no one being very religiously Jewish.

In my endeavor to acquire data, I expected the possibility of silences in the topic. I suspected the Dutch Jewish community to portray itself as being strongly connected but to be wary of outsiders (non-Jews). I expected this situation to probably imply certain carefulness amongst
the interviewees whilst they were asked to talk about Jewry-related topics by a non-Jewish researcher (me).

This expectation was further substantiated by my own past experiences with studies done related to marginalized groups of black feminist females. They would call out for the researcher (me) to act in a policing and silencing way as being neither a female or black person myself. Thus I would be unable to understand their struggle and write about the topic without prejudice.

4.1.3. The interview process.

The interviews ranged in duration from between 35 minutes to one and a half hours and were fluid and open in nature. The nature of the interviews would be important for me to allow the talk to be largely led by the interviewee. In this manner, which corresponds with Laverty (2003), I aimed at the interview process to remain as intimate and true to the lived experiences of the interviewees as possible.

The open and fluid nature of the interview method presented me with the task to navigate fairly dissimilar interview data, to be able to reveal common patterns and aspects of the experiences of ill- and well-being related to the Holocaust trauma. In order to uncover the implications of the transmission of the Holocaust trauma, this resulted in me having to balance the interviews that remained close to the perceptions and experiences, with being able to achieve a level of abstraction from the data.

A theme-based topic guide was used to ensure that interviews would progress in a flexible manner. The themes were determined in advance of the interviews and were based on topics portrayed in the documentaries of Van Weezel and Hond. They encompassed the interviewee’s identity development in a particular environment at a certain moment in time, the relationship with Jewry and the Jewish community and relationship with the family and their history.

Interviews would always begin with personal questions about who they are, where they are from and how old they are, where they went to school, where they live now and what they do. These questions would shape an initial picture of the interviewees’ identity for the researcher (me) to get a sense of who I was talking to. The identity of the interviewee would thence be established to get a sense of their essential characteristics, their perceived sense of well-being and it would allow for the exploration of patterns of perfectionism or other forms of self-imposed pressures (e.g. skipping puberty).
Additionally, I perceived it to be a fair starting point for the interviewee to get comfortable with being interviewed whilst discussing familiar, easy topics. Thereafter, based on what the interviewee was talking about, either the second or the third theme would be discussed, or a combination of both. As the destination of the interview would preemptively be determined by the researcher (me), the road to get there would be determined by the interviewee.

Discussing Jewry and the interviewee’s relation with being Jewish in Amsterdam would allow for observations of the perceived importance of traditions and the related value of commemoration, kindness and self-reflection. It would help to uncover a sense of sameness and shared characteristics between the interviewees. Furthermore, the reflex to be compelled to defend the group and become its spokesperson at moments of experienced attacks would be revealed. Also tendencies to relate contemporary forms of violence, oppression and acts of anti-Semitism to the event of the Holocaust would become noticeable.

Deliberating on the relationship and level of intimacy with family members, especially the grandparents, would reveal pressures to act caringly in particular ways. Hints of transmitted vulnerabilities to certain aspects of life could be picked up on and sentiments involving a perceived existential threat posed by others and wariness with the social environment would be established.

In summary, the first theme relates to the individuals’ personal characteristics and perceptions. The second and third to a combination of the cultural/communities’ influences on the individual and the transgenerational transmission of trauma.

4.2. The Integrative Analysis Approach

In section 1.2.1. It was illustrated that the integration of my thesis’ research goal with the presented aspects of lifeworld analysis by Van Manen (2016) and Rich et al. (2013) resulted in me having to establish a new, changed lifeworld existentials approach. As my thesis strives to portray the extent of how the lifeworld of third generation Amsterdam Jews is shaped by the traumatic event of the Holocaust, it is established that these lifeworlds are shaped by their perceived well-being. These perceptions have been argued to be shaped by familial and/or community’s lived experiences of ill-being. This chapter illustrates that the integration of a categorical interpretation method with the changed lifeworld existentials analysis approach will provide answers to the questions of this study.
Categorical lifeworld approaches based on lived experiences and perceptions with the use of lifeworld existentials have already been done in the research areas of nursing, health, and education (Rich et al., 2013: 501). However, none of these lifeworld analyses have done so with the introduced well-being angle, considering trauma transmission of lived ill-being experiences.

4.2.1. The integration process.

A new challenge arose when the time came to assemble and organize the accounts of the interviewees. First the renewed lifeworld existentials approach would prove essential as a lens to extract the relevant data with from the transcripts. Thereafter the categorical intimacy-based approach is used to interpret and partition this data.

The approaches have a particular affinity, where the categorical approach considers the division of intimacy between familial and communal relations; the lifeworld existentials establish the experiences of their ancestors and perceptions of the third generations’ lifeworld. Thus, the lifeworld existentials divide the relevant from the non-relevant data and the categories interprets and divides those findings considering their intimacy level regarding the interviewee.

4.2.2. Operationalizing the lifeworld existentials.

After careful reflection and deliberation, I decided that rather than taking one transcript at a time, exploring it for all four lifeworld existentials, and then moving on to the next one to repeat this process, a different approach would be more suitable. One existential at a time would be used as a lens to examine the nine transcripts with. This process allowed all of the interviews and existentials to be approached on equal footing (Rich et al., 503).

To ensure the latter, the order in which the existentials would be applied to explore the body of data with was not based on importance or size; rather it would be data-based. After re-reading the transcriptions several times over, it would be revealed that the existential of human relations was the most dominant and omnipresent. As such, this existential would be explored last, to guarantee equal visibility and opportunity for the other existentials. The existential of lived well-being would be discussed first, not because it was talked about the least, but it was considered to present particular topics that would make the other existential more accessible. After the lived well-being examination, it became apparent that the spatiality existential would require more consideration in terms of how it was experienced by the interviewee’s than matter related to time and well-being. Due to it being more abstract, it
would be explored third. The least amount of time would concern itself with matters of time-bound perceptions; ergo this would be explored second.

4.2.2.1. Lived well-being.

During this phase, the data is examined with regards to the manner in which the interviewees discuss and describe their lives in Amsterdam as Jews. This would be illustrated by remarks of their self-reflected personal feelings, discoveries and struggles and goals, values and norms, and senses of freedom and safety.

4.2.2.2. Time-bound perceptions.

All the transcripts were explored according to the existential of time-bound perceptions. This way a variety of perceptions of particular topics that would change or remain stable over time were explored. The past, present and future thoughts on certain issues would be revealed. These issues would relate to legacy/inheritance pressures, progressive or immovable ideals, and future expectations.

4.2.2.3. Spatiality.

For this existential the physicality of space in terms of physical locations is considered. The existential therewith examines the spaces within which the interviewees live their daily lives and how they relate to each other. Considering the research question of this thesis, it is obvious how remarks on Amsterdam, and particular places in Amsterdam (school/work/home) would be relevant to look at. Also their relation and/or considerations related to Auschwitz need no explanation. However the reason for this analysis to regard their perceptions on Israel and the role they perceive it to play in conflicts requires clarification. Because it is perceived by the interviewees that issues related to Israel are often automatically related to Jews and the Second World War and therefore also to the Holocaust, it is relevant to analyze and interpret how they view Israel its role in the world. Lastly, the residence of their grandparents during the war is looked as an illustration of their experiences.

4.2.2.4. Social & cultural relations.

In the final phase of the existential exploration of the data, the accounts were examined on references to human relations and how they were discussed by the interviewees. The ways in which they described and interpreted their interactions with others as Jews were explored.
Social & cultural relations was perceived through the sense of having to defend Jewry or other Jewish people, perceived shared identity and issues of trust and mistrust of others.

It was found that although much of the data can be related to the social & cultural relations existential, a substantial part had already been assigned to either the well-being, time or space existential. As mentioned before, the existentials while being able to be differentiated from each other, do not exists in complete isolation (Moene et al., 2006; Van Manen, 2016).

The use of the four existentials proved to be a valuable method for reflective analysis of the life-story data provided by the interviewees. It showed to be a helpful lens to gain insights into the relevancy of particular data. Moreover, it aided in clarifying the more abstract components of the experiences that the participants would talk about and it allowed me to uncover any commonalities and shared perceptions related to the themes discussed.

4.2.3. Operationalizing the transmission of trauma.

The presentation of the relevant data allows for a reflection upon this data with questions exploring the extent to which either intimate family connections or cultural community aspects determine the transmission of trauma and therewith shape the lifeworlds of the third generation.

The following aspects are assessed to reveal the extent of distinction and overlap between familial and community’s transmission of trauma. Based on the chapters of this thesis that explore these categories, these interpretation topics are categorically divided by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Community’s Role</th>
<th>The Family’s Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared identity &amp; characteristics</td>
<td>Identity doubts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of sameness &amp; uniqueness</td>
<td>Wariness with the social environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of traditions</td>
<td>Autonomy &amp; Self-imposed pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Jewry</td>
<td>Value of emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel &amp; defensive behaviour</td>
<td>Vulnerabilities &amp; Fears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential threat</td>
<td>Family-related Trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of self-reflection, commemoration and kindness</td>
<td>Silences/Taboos</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate contemporary anti-Semitism to the Holocaust</td>
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Table 1. *Analytical aspects checklist for the community and familial pathways to transmission of trauma.*

The interpretation of the relevant data will go as follows. First, in a similar fashion to how the transcripts were analyzed, each existential will be considered on its own in the same order as before. The implications of the raw outcome of the data analysis are therewith first elucidated. After each existential, these implications will be considered whilst exploring the aspects of Table 1., regarding the two pathways. Thereafter in the conclusion and considerations section, the results that will be provided by this method will be related to contemporary developments to illustrate their societal applicability and the main research question will be answered.
5. The Data: What Do the Life-stories Tell Us?

The analysis of this study’s data will break down the entirety of the collected data into separate components for individual examination. The data analysis will thus be converting the interview transcriptions into useful information, with which certain considerations and theories will be tested and of which certain abstractions will ensue with the categorical data interpretation.

It will be a qualitative data analysis as the number of interviewees is deemed too few to enable strong generalizations from. The data analysis will therefore indicate at particular patterns which will substantiate or oppose theories provided in this study. To do so, for each discussed uncovered pattern it will be indicated whether there is a large, average or small part of the group that supports it, or that the topic is ungeneralizable.

5.1. The Data Analysis: the Integrative Lifeworld Existentials Approach

Prior to my first interview, I am sitting on a bench in the sun reading one of Natasha van Weezel's (2017) book about how the Jewish and Muslim communities have recently clashed. Jaïr, my first interviewee, sees this apparently, because while going inside for the interview, he tells me that he knows Natasha a little and has read her book about the third generation. He tells me to see it as a fairly radical vision of how Jewish people still experience the traditions and the Second World War today. He certainly does not claim that it is all nonsense and that it is a lone wolf’s perspective, but he does say that it is less intense in general. He also warns me against taking her story as a reference point for my research. The warning is very interesting to me because up to this point, I had indeed taken this vision as a guideline, and it made me even more enthusiastic about the upcoming conversation and further future interviews.

For the data analysis of the transcriptions, I decided to assemble the interviewees’ remarks deemed to discuss a similar topic per existential. For example, under the existential of spatiality, all comments related to Israel and deemed appropriate to this existential were put together. This allowed for a clear overview of similarities and discrepancies found between the interviewees perceptions regarding particular issues.

For the integration of the existential- and categorical approach, the analyzed data was interpreted on the basis of the categorical classification as introduced earlier. This would
clarify the extent both pathways would have a role in the transmission of trauma from the first generation Holocaust survivors to their grandchildren.

To refresh our memory, the two pathways introduced to represent different manners by which transmission of trauma may occur from the first to the third generation are related to the role of the community and to that of the family.

The first role is argued to be aware of the processes and aspects belonging to the conceptualized chosen trauma. Its implications were that a perceived unique but shared identity and valued feelings of connectedness would be revealed due to a shared culture of commemoration, self-reflection and kindness. Further substantiating aspects would be found in the perceived necessity for defensive behaviour due to a believed existential threat and in a sense of pride towards Judaism.

Considering the Family’s role, aspects would comprise doubts of the generation about their identity and place in society, wariness of their social environments, and a self-imposed responsibility to perform. More aspects would illustrate any forms of silences and neglect of emotions. Once assembled, these aspects point at the transgenerational transmission of traumatic experiences and their influence on the third generation.

In the presented analysis, each subsection begins with the introduction of the analyzed relevant existential data to illustrate the discovered similarities and differences, after which, with the categorical approach, the implications of these data are explained.

5.1.1. Lived well-being.

To commence with lived well-being. This existential portrays the self-reflection, values & norms, sense of freedom and discovery of the interviewees. The self-reflection considers the feelings of fun, drive, fear and doubt, which illustrates their character. This character is further explored by any values and norms that are discussed and the freedom that they perceive to have to be who they are. In the last section, discoveries, it is illustrated how their character and their feelings shape their sense for discovery of themselves and their past. These aspects therewith exhibit the three basic psychological needs; autonomy, connectedness and competence as minimum requirements for self-realization and psychological well-being (Waterman et al., 2010: 239).
5.1.1.1. Self-reflection.

Lived well-being’s section on self-reflection has been subdivided into: traditions & connectedness, work ethic and personal struggles, to showcase the interviewees’ self-reflected feelings of fun, drive, fear and doubt.

5.1.1.1.1. Fun: traditions and connectedness.

In the chapter on chosen trauma it was proposed that many of the Jewish traditional commemorations in Amsterdam have a focus on self-reflection and on commemoration of the lost and fallen loved ones during times of oppression and violence. These defining traumatic events are there to be relived. Moreover, it was suggested that passing on traditions to your children is perceived by the community as the most important task for Jewish parents, as it strengthens the Jewish collective sense of connectedness, with each other and previous generations. These traditions are therewith an integral part of the Jewish culture (Abram, 2006). In agreement with the hedonic perspectives, it is therewith implied that the way in which the community perceives their traditions shapes their lived well-being, as they posit that only that which can be deemed pleasant or has pleasant consequences is intrinsically good (Delle Fave et al., 2011).

There is a prevailing sense among the interviewees that they enjoy doing the traditions a lot. They perceive them to represent coziness and fun, but also to strengthen their feelings of belonging to a second extra group.

“To me it is important that I experience the traditions and parties because my father wants that, and it is also special to have a kind of second cultural background” [my translation from Dutch]. (Dexter)

The ritualistic commemoration thus helps to bind the members of the group together. Attaching to the value of traditions does not automatically seem to imply that feelings towards Jewish religion are also strengthened, nor that it automatically results in perceived elevated pride.

“It is more like I am Jewish, I am not necessarily religious but I do value certain customs” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaron)
5.1.1.1.2. Drive: work ethic.

In Van Weezel’s book (2015: 55, 121) and documentary (2014) it was proposed that children, who are confronted with family members that are affected by traumatic events on the scale of the Holocaust, show the tendency to take care of these family members even at a young age. This is illustrated for instance by striving mentality to become independent at a young age. Skipping puberty and perfectionism in work and study are thence exemplary burdens which leads them to show overly protective feelings towards their parents and/or preoccupation with matters concerning death and persecution (Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

Considering their mentalities, there would appear to be a strong pattern amongst the interviewees to be driven characters in school, work and/or hobbies. Many of the interviewees mention to have had a successful academic career even when faced with major adversities.

“I think so. I just want to show everyone that I can do it. When they told me at my primary school, you should go to VMBO-T, I was actually so angry that since that time I have always tried to reach for the highest” [my translation from Dutch]. (Loes)

Moreover, it was revealed that many of them showed passion to do multiple things at the same time.

“I play football, boxing and tennis and I have been studying business economics for two years and one year in law. I am busy this year because of the two studies and combining them with sport and social life ... Especially during exam weeks it can be difficult and I have to dig deep, but I don't think I can complain” [my translation from Dutch]. (Noah)

It is therewith shown that overall the interviewees have a strong sense of belonging and a driven passion to improve their lives wherever possible. Nevertheless when I asked them about their perception whether they felt they needed to take care of their parents, physically and/or psychologically, this was not the case. Some of the interviewees did indicate that they observed possible trauma-related behaviour with some of their parents and grandparents, but they did not feel that this implied that they needed to change themselves accordingly.
5.1.1.3. Fear and doubt: personal struggles & insecurity.

Nonetheless, the group did portray to have personal doubts and struggles in relation to various other things. The aforementioned sense of belonging would also entail a sense of uniqueness, which at times is perceived as pleasant could at other times result in feelings of fear, insecurity or disconnect. Fear followed from the news that certain Jewish shops were violently ambushed due to it being Jewish. Insecurity was felt with regards to them being singled out in social environments such as high school; also financial insecurity is something that would shape their choices and their perceived disconnect stems from their family’s history being extremely different to others.

“Yes, I actually feel quite unique, I don't find that difficult necessarily, but it can be scary sometimes. I mean you never know” [my translation from Dutch]. (Loes)

These vulnerabilities related to their unique position in their social environment could stem from epigenetic transmission. This form of transmission was illustrated to imply that specific forms of vulnerability to particular external stimuli, because of traumatic experiences of the generation experiencing those traumatic events, are similarly identifiable in later generations (Berger, et al., 2009). Additionally, it substantiates Dickson-Gomez’s (2002: 423-425) argument that although war-related trauma is embodied in individual ill-being, family narratives of trauma communicate something about the way the world is. That, within families, traumatic behaviour is communicated to children and grandchildren through everyday conversations via adults’ reactions to contemporary shocking events.

5.1.1.2. Values and norms.

The transcriptions uncovered that the group of interviewees would discuss the topics of religion, self-reflection and anti-Semitism in a valued manner. This implies that these topics are considered strongly by them, and are therefore imperative as illustration of their values and norms.

5.1.1.2.1. Religion.

As the first section illustrates the character of the interviewees, the second section demonstrates their sequential values and norms. Regarding their vision on religion, it was already mentioned that my group of interviewees are, not at all or very little, religious. Thence, it is understandable that in general they exhibit a liberal oriented mindset. The fact
that the interviewees mention that they mostly do not follow the religious rules of Judaism, emphasizes that they perceive themselves to differ from the more orthodox strict religious branch of the Jewish community. This likely relates to their relationship with other Jews and non-Jews, a topic that is further explored in the social and cultural relations section.

5.1.1.2.2. Self-reflection.

The historical value allocation of the Jewish culture to self-reflection goes hand in hand with the recent emergence of a societal tendency towards self-reflection upon our lives. When this aspect is examined, it needs to be considered that the interviews were life-story interviews, thus intrinsic to self-reflection. Furthermore, the interviewees who found themselves willing to participate in these interviews had prior knowledge to the interview that it would regard their personal lives as Jews in Amsterdam. Thence, all interviewees are suspect to a decent level of self-reflection despite of actually having discussed the topic extensively during the interview. Among those who did, they pointed it out as an important factor of everyday life for everyone to participate in as the process enables self-fulfillment, meaning and purpose. They therewith agree with the eudaimonic approaches, which claim that in order for people to flourish, they are required to aim at self-realization of their true human potential (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Waterman, 1993)

“I also think that those who do that have too little self-reflection. This is also a reason for me to do my work. I therefore think that the development of self-reflection in this society is really fantastic. And even if these people do not follow good training programs or coaches, when it’s just a mess, even then it is better than the no self-reflection that has been there for a long time.” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaron)

5.1.1.2.1. Anti-Semitism.

This quote by Jaron indicates a sentiment commonly shared by the interviewees, that self-reflection is a paramount aspect to countering the growth of societal anti-Semitic inclinations. Anti-Semitism is perceived an obvious impactful aspect of their lifeworld. It is stated that apart from the fact that they themselves are Jewish, anti-Semitism is a persistent and terrible development to be disgusted by all. This substantiates their liberal orientation, as they indicate that there is no such thing as a bad demos, just bad people. However, it is also
indicated that these ‘bad’ people are very likely not to be intrinsically malicious, rather they act out of frustration due to lacking certain societal privileges, thus act out of jealousy.

In addition to the believe that anti-Semitism has always been here one way or the other, it is remarked that there is a perceived growth of anti-Semitism in recent years. This growth is not solely attributed to recurrent forms of open anti-Semitic behaviour by fascist right-wing extremists, it is also perceived to be observable in anti-Zionist tendencies at times of enhanced strive between Israel and Palestine.

“There is an initiative of the VVD and the ChristenUnie that wants to create more awareness about anti-Semitism, that it really can no longer be this way. This is because there is an increase in anti-Semitic expressions. I don't experience it face-to-face, but you just know it's there” [my translation from Dutch]. (Noah)

5.1.1.3. Sense of freedom and safety.

The perceived growth of anti-Semitism has an apparent effect on the interviewees’ perception of freedom and safety. For instance, it leads to a perception among the interviewees that it is not always necessarily safe to be openly Jewish in our society. The sense that one has to be careful about who they are where they are, is visible in many remarks.

“But I experience anti-Semitism with some people and I dare not always say that I am Jewish in the Netherlands. I always first judge my environment when I find myself in a new situation. I first check whether it is safe how people think about me and then I say it or not” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaïr)

This further illustrates that the interviewees’ lived well-being is affected by their surroundings. Directly, it is affected by social interactions. Indirectly, it coincides with this study’s definition of ill-being experiences, which considers that experiences of ill-being are not exclusively associated with being present at the site of a trauma-inducing event. It is also possible to sustain trauma after exposure to something from a distance (APA, 2013), as it was in the case of the shop-violence and other forms related to the perceived growth of anti-Semitism. These forms would comprise racist remarks regarding family members, exclusion from certain elite areas at sports clubs or inclusion of their personal verified data by the
Israeli secret service. The latter two can be related to the segregation of Jews during the War and Dutch lists of Jews which made it easier for the Germans to round them all up.

This direct sentiment is reinforced by the feeling of being caught between two fires. Discussions about Judaism are at times avoided to prevent conflict and it resulted in difficulties of identifying one’s position in certain situations.

“Yes, I am now also at the point that I want to avoid such a discussion in the first instance. I don’t feel like it anymore, because it almost always doesn’t work out. They are irritations and nobody knows enough about the conflict to really discuss it. Not even my Jewish friends, even though they themselves pretend to do so” [my translation from Dutch]. (Dexter)

This has resulted in behaviour of the interviewees to at times avoid political discussions about Israel or Judaism and even to avoid mentioning to have any affection with Jewry. These tendencies are likely to be bolstered by the small size of the Jewish community in the Netherlands relative to what it was before the war. Compared to the Jewish community in America where these tendencies are non-existent because of the size of the community there and its powerful positions in society (Van Weezel, 2015: 198).

5.1.1.4. Discoveries.

In line with the emphasis on self-reflection, the identification process of one-self is something that many of the interviewees have strived to establish. By looking at the history of their family and of the Jewish people, they have tried to achieve an improved understanding of themselves and their close relations. The severity of their family’s and community’s history, although at times perceived intense, has not steered them away from the desire to learn more about it.

“I like to know more about the whole piece, as if your background is completed, or something ... Yes, I think that's it. I read quite often about it. Yes it always interests you” [my translation from Dutch]. (Loes)

Their tendency to expose their past implies that the severity of what happened during the War and to their families does tweak their interest in the past. Whether this impacts their lifeworld will be discussed in the time-bound existential section.
Taking all this in consideration, it would seem that on one hand being Jewish is perceived as a blessing with outside curses tied to it. The interviewees reveal their desire to understand their Jewish-self through their family’s history and the position of the Jewish community. Their unique position, which is understood to be under greater threat of anti-Semitism by each year, also seems to be a driving force for them to not dilly dally and make the most of the time that is given to them. However, it is also this force that makes them increasingly wary of their surroundings.

Considering the influence of the community on their lifeworld, most of the interviewees indicate to have fond feelings towards the Jewish traditions and being part of a second culture, by being part of the Jewish community, implies that they enjoy sharing fundamentals of a culture and perceive themselves as unique in this sense. Additionally, in accordance to the Jewish values, they emphasize the importance of self-reflection. The rise of self-reflection tendencies in society is valued highly as the process is perceived to be a critical characteristic for any human to flourish in a eudaimonic way and to enhance their understanding of others. The last development is deemed important as it is claimed to counter the growing sentiment of anti-Semitism.

However in line with aspects related to the familial pathway (See table 1.), the growth of anti-Semitism in combination with their perceived uniqueness does reinforce any doubts and fears they perceive to have concerning their identity and their freedom in society. Moreover it seems to be a driving force for them to have developed a fighter's mentality, set high standards and/or do multiple things at the same time.

5.1.2. Time-bound perceptions.

In eudaimonic fashion, to substantiate the psychological needs that are seen as nourishments allowing people to flourish, the next three existentials present the exploration of the interviewees’ social and cultural contexts in particular moments in time. In agreement with the anti-flattening argument by Lang et al. (2003), the aspects to their well-being are found when matters of family-bonds and friendships, school, work and living situations, hobbies and relationships to Jewry, Jews and non-Jews are considered. This is done so to illustrate how these contexts determine the perceived well-being and it allows the categorical data interpretation approach to distinguish the implications of any similarities found in the data.

The time-bound existential comprises the interviewees’ thoughts on the connections they have with their past, present and future. The present portrays any of their perceptions that have changed over time due to progressive insights and personal growth. The
connections they feel with their past are explored by looking at any perceived pressures they might feel due to historical events. Their future ideas on the other hand, discuss their current standpoint on how they expect to live as Jews regarding a possible family. Moreover, any remarks considering the future of the position of Jewry in Amsterdam are portrayed as well. These expectations illustrate the generation’s perspective on the extent of their freedom to choose their own destiny without being burdened by a community’s and/or familial past.

5.1.2.1. Past, present and future.

In the section on chosen trauma, it was suggested that once a trauma is reactivated within a community by experiences of ill-being, a time collapse occurs. Fears, expectations, fantasies and defenses associated with the trauma reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the mental representation of the past trauma and a contemporary threat. This process is argued to magnify the image of current enemies and conflicts, and an event that happened many decades before will be felt as if it happened yesterday. An historic enemy will be perceived in a new enemy, and the sense of entitlement to regain what was lost, or to seek revenge against the new enemy is fueled. The following section will illustrate whether this process of a time collapse is revealed in family-related burdens.

Regarding the history of the war and the losses led by the Jewish community during the Holocaust, amongst the interviewees, there is distinct sense of sorrow with regards to the losses of family members.

“The main thought I had: sometimes I can be quite lonely. I do have nice parents and so on, but the lack of a larger family, even if I would not have had much contact with them, but I never had the chance to have it in the first place, that is what is taken away from me” [my translation from Dutch]. (Esther)

The belief, that things could have been different if the lost ones would not have been taken away, is strong among the interviewees. It is to be considered as a form of ill-being, which most of the time lies dormant, but at other times is experienced consciously. At these times the group praises itself lucky to be alive and well. For some, this thought was a reason to feel an abiding sense of guilt in the early years of their existence, a feeling that would disappear as they grew older. Others claim to have always felt free from any sort of burden to act despite the history.
Reflecting back on what was revealed in the analysis of the interviewees’ mentality, the felt sorrow could be another unconscious reason for their well-developed drive. Moreover, at a later age, after their period of feeling guilt, for some the perceived loss drove them to try and get a better grip on the actions and motivations of their parents and grandparents. This implies that they, in a certain way, are willing to account for behaviour of their family members following their traumatic experiences. Additionally, it creates a sense of importance to commemorate their lost kin, which coincides with the value they allocate to their traditions.

However, it also corresponds with the introduced value that even though traditions are important and commemoration is as well, it again does not necessarily apply a form of perceived pressure on the generation to have their lives guided by the rules of the Jewish religion. Furthermore, it is uncovered not to determine the interviewees’ considerations of their partners.

“It is different for me; I want to fall in love with who I fall in love with. Also because the Jewish community is very small here, I think that something like 'I really want a Jewish girlfriend' should only be done in a very large Jewish community, for example in New York or Israel, but here there are too few Jews left” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaïr)

It does however determine their desire to hand down the traditions to their children. They regard it as important to themselves but also to the older generations to keep the traditions alive and to pass them along. This aligns with Volkan’s argument (2001) that the sense of sameness results in a shared main task of the community members to maintain their group’s identity.

Considering the future of their children, and the aforementioned wariness of their surroundings, a necessity it felt for improvements to the Dutch education with regards to Judaism.

“Certainly .... but I think that someone does not come up with it themselves. They learn it from their fathers. Education therefore plays an important role in this. Someone does not think of that himself” [my translation from Dutch]. (David)

The desire for an improved educational system with more emphasis on the explanation of different cultures goes along with the interviewees’ argued necessity for further increased
self-reflection tendencies. Taken together, education on others plus the reflection of the self and your own community is perceived to counter conflicts between ‘them’ and ‘us’, therewith it is perceived as a counter to anti-Semitism and to the wariness they have of their surroundings.

The categorical implications are that some of the analyzed data regarding the time-bound focused existential substantiates the role of the family. The perceived loss of what could have been a large family indicates the reasoning behind a persistent sense of sorrow, which leads to the interviewees’ desire to commemorate the fallen and keep the traditions alive in future generations. This loss of many of the first generation does not constitute pressure on the third generation to live their lives according to the Jewish religion nor does it force them to seek out a Jewish partner exclusively.

However, it does enforce their determination to hand down the traditions to their children, thereby keeping the Jewish traditions and culture of commemoration alive. These group’s reactions to the loss of a bigger family illustrate how well-being and ill-being are not necessarily flip-sides concepts, but constitute separate, coexisting dimensions of a person’s lifeworld (Headey et al., 1993).

For a flourishing future of their families and the community, a requirement is perceived to lie with the improvement of the current education system and stimulation of the society’s self-reflection. Consequently, even though the group is well-aware of the past of their families, the argued time collapse in relation to familial losses and the family’s historic ill-being experiences is not revealed. The data does not indicate the interviewees to perceive their contemporary struggles to be related to their family’s traumatic experiences.

5.1.3. Spatiality.

The existential spatiality examines the spaces within which the interviewees live their daily lives and considers the perceptions they have towards these places. It therewith portrays how they feel about and felt in particular places in relation to them being Jewish. Whether they felt safe, happy, uneasy, sad or angry when reflecting on these areas. Ergo, this existential regards the interviewees’ eudaimonic, psychological need for connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000) at these locations.

The spaces looked at are: school, home, Amsterdam, Israel and Auschwitz. These spaces represent the places people grow up in, are formed by and, in the case of the Jewish community, feel strongly related to or are strongly related to by others. Moreover, the spaces
their grandparents resided at during the second world war are examined, to uncover additional interviewees’ sentiments they have towards those places.

5.1.3.1. School, home and Amsterdam.

In general the time spend in school, high school and studies, is fondly considered by the interviewees. It is in these environments that many lasting friendships were established. Nonetheless, there are no other generalizations to be revealed. To some, these established relationships would have them embrace their Judaism. They would seek a group to fit in, which is normal behaviour at that age, for them this group would comprise of fellow Jews based on their shared history and traditions. To others, these environments would represent places of freedom of self-exploration unbound by any form of religion or tradition.

“Freedom, I think, appealed to me. It was not so with rules. Monday homework, Tuesday off. And the impression I got from the people there was that it was very relaxed. I don’t like authoritarianism very much, I can’t handle that very well, thence this particular school seemed nice” [my translation from Dutch]. (Loes)

Instead, these traditions were perceived as something fun and meaningful to do at home with family members. As their homes are located in Amsterdam, and the largest part of the Dutch Jewish community is here as well, many interviewees feel connected to the city. However, the already the introduced safety doubts persists when particular areas and people of the city are considered.

“Not necessarily, I work in Utrecht and there is also an attack. Everything indicates that that will get worse in the coming period. There is no reason to believe that this will remain the only attack. I also run a project in Amsterdam-West with Moroccans and I have good contact with them. I have a Moroccan wife and a colleague who says that I am just like a brother. So I also have Moroccan roots. I have a kind of reflex sometimes when I see Muslims that I get scared for a while, but at the same time I have good contact with many Muslims” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaron)
5.1.3.2. Israel.

The group’s perception of the first three spaces, school, home and Amsterdam, indicate that considering feelings of safety and freedom, solely their families and/or homes are regarded to be able to provide these aspects to their well-being. To the interviewees who had difficult times at home, other family members would come to the rescue. Even if others of the Jewish community provide a sense of connectedness and belonging, they do not universally provide safety and freedom. This last sentiment is reinforced by the analysis of the group’s perception of Israel.

The country of Israel is the center of many discussions. There are many different beliefs surrounding its role as a home for the Jews, its role in the conflict with Palestine and its role as a representative for an entire community. It is seen as an aggressor, but also as a safe-haven, as a vacation country, but also as home that needs defending against hostiles. The role Israel plays in the lives of the third generation interviewees is analyzed here to illustrate how they perceive its role to be for them and for the Jewish community.

The country that was built to be perceived as a home, or at least a second home for all Jewish people, Israel, is perceived in two ways by the interviewees. On one hand it is seen as a beautiful country, perfect for holidays and source of relatedness due to a common identity and culture. On the other hand, it is perceived as an unsafe place of strive and tension.

“I experienced the people’s toughness as unpleasant and I know what unsafe things can happen. People there think it’s safe there, but I don’t feel that way. I don’t think it is such a beautiful country” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaïr)

Many of the interviewees indicate that they perceive the Israelis to be a tougher type of people then they would have considered beforehand. This toughness is perceived to differ per place. It is strongly related to Jerusalem, but not to Tel-Aviv, as some consider that to be a city more free-spirited than Amsterdam and the Jewish community to be more modern.

On the other hand, some interviewees felt more confronted with the past of the Holocaust there, than they do here. These feelings would be incited by Jerusalem’s Holocaust commemoration-museum Yad Vashem and by the constant threat of the Israel-Palestine situation.
These feelings are likely to stem from contact with the toughness of the Israelis, a characteristic of the people there that implies a form of continuous traumatic stress to be experienced by them. However, the fact that not all the interviewees feel this way, substantiates the argument by Storr et al., (2007) that claims some people to be more susceptible to developing stress when confronted by forms of trauma.

The culture of toughness also results in a high majority of the interviewees stating to not perceive Israel as a second home for them, even though it is regarded by them to be the second home for all Jews. Together with the insecurity felt due to the constant Israel-Palestine conflict, this toughness thence keeps them from moving to Israel.

Less ambiguity of the interviewees’ perceptions is uncovered by an analysis of the remarks related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. To the majority of the group it is perceived as a very complex issue, with either side being at fault, notwithstanding their tendency to conceive Israeli actions to be understandable considering a constant threat of violence.

“Yes, I think it's terrible from both sides. I have never said, and I will never say: I understand this side, or I understand that side. I understand them both. They both do terrible things. And that never goes well” [my translation from Dutch]. (Loes)

The fact that they imply to see both sides to be at fault to some degree further implies Volkan’s (2001: 83) argued time collapse to not be present in the way he argues it to be activated by traumatic events. Corresponding to his idea, it is shown that the interviewees’ considerations of the Holocaust are to an extent reactivated in Israel by contact with the conflict and the continuous traumatic stress of its people. It is likely that the confrontation does lead to the image of the current conflict to be magnified, but it is revealed that it does not lead to the interviewees to feel as though the event of the Holocaust happened yesterday. Ergo, no real time collapse occurs.

5.1.3.3. Auschwitz and the war-stories.

Even though the threat of violence is a reason for some to be deterred from spending much time in Israel, the threat of the memory of violence does not seem to be a deterrent for most to have been or to want to go to Auschwitz. Even for the interviewees that claimed to be only a little Jewish in everyday life, distinct special feelings would arise once they found themselves in Auschwitz.
“So I went with him on that journey once. And that was very special. At first I thought, what a nuisance, you are still struggling about this now? But it was really very special” [my translation from Dutch]. (Esther)

This sentiment likely stems from the fact that many of the interviewees have had close family members reside and pass away in camps like Auschwitz, and they are pretty well aware of the hardships these relatives went through during and after the war.

Considering the above, the fact that the interviewees have considerable knowledge of their ancestors past war experiences seems to imply different things to different individuals. To some the Jewish history enforces their sense of uniqueness, to others it results in feelings related to ‘what if my family was still alive?’ which refers to the earlier described sense of sorrow.

To conclude by regarding the role of the community and the family play on the perceptions of the discussed spaces. To some of the interviewees their Jewish identity flourished in high-school. They would befriend other Jewish kids and expand their perceived relatedness by sharing their family’s experiences and participate together in traditions. To others who did not find or purposely seek out fellow Jewish kids in school did not experience these connecting processes related to Judaism. To them doing the traditions is considered a family matter.

As Amsterdam is considered by many to be a relative safe place, considering that it is the place where their homes and families reside, Israel is a place of more ambiguity and contradictions. To the interviewees who had their Jewish identity flourish in high-school, the country is, or was during that time, perceived as a second home. This perception came from the sentiment that they would feel connected with the Israeli community based on their shared culture, identity and traditions.

“Israel was a bit like coming home. I was super proud then. Wore a chain with a star of David” [my translation from Dutch]. (Aaron)

To others, these feelings lessened over time to even be non-existent, or it was perceived as just a holiday country in the first place.
Taking into account the remarks related the first three existentials and the interviewees’ knowledge of their ancestors’ history, a pattern appears. Once the perceived extent of severity and horror of their ancestor’s traumatic experiences are considered in combination with a sense of wariness of the individual interviewee, the wariness to be openly Jewish in particular social surroundings does not seem to correlate to a detailed awareness of their grandparents’ traumatic experiences.

5.1.4. Social & cultural relations.

The final existential describes the interviewees’ social and cultural interactions based on the level of intimacy. It regards the levels of trust and mistrust they seem to have with various outside influences in their lives.

It commences by looking at the bond they have with their friends and acquaintances in relation to them being Jewish. Thereafter the role of a shared identity is considered by consideration of their perceived shared culture and commemorations and pride. Also the role of what they perceive the media and Dutch politics to have is portrayed as a representation of their trust of other, unfamiliar non-Jews. The shared identity is followed by illustrations of their behaviour in response to perceived mistrust and wrongdoings of others. Furthermore, the relatedness felt through the shared defensive behaviour is revealed. Finally their bond to their family is examined by illustrations of family discussions about the war and the role their grandparents play in their lives.

5.1.4.1. Friends & Acquaintances.

The wariness issues of trust and mistrust are revealed by descriptions of the interviewees’ relationships to their acquaintances, friends, family and community. A dominant perception among the interviewees is felt regarding their position in groups of friends and discussions related to Israel and Judaism. It is perceived that many friends and acquaintances lack the knowledge to understand both. Moreover, this is said to lead to misconceptions related to the conflict in Israel and Jews living in Amsterdam.

“Veel mensen vergissen zich daarin. Dat alle joden straf voor Israël zijn. Maar in onze vriendengroep zijn er heel veel discussies over het conflict. Sommigen hebben veel kritiek, anderen zien Israël als het heilige land. Het is een chaos” [my translation from Dutch].

(David)
Other mentioned misconceptions refer to how others regard their: perceptions of Arabic people and their identity and characteristics based on prejudices. For example, they indicate that it is being made difficult for Arabic younglings to make Jewish friends as they are perceived to be pressured by other Arabs to avoid Jews, based on biased, estimated anti-Arab sentiments attributed to the Jewish community.

These sentiments clearly relate to the aforementioned wariness of their surroundings as presented in the sections on the interviewees’ reflection on their freedom and safety and on the spaces of Amsterdam, home and school. They are connected in the way that these portray the relationships the interviewees have with non-Jewish others and how these relations are affected by a lack of understanding.

5.1.4.2. Shared identity.
The following reveals how a sense of sameness due to shared characteristics is perceived by the group. Moreover, defensive reflexes regarding the community are uncovered and perceived threats on their community by others are illustrated. First however, the relatedness between the interviewees and other Jews, due to a perceived shared culture, is considered.

These aspects are considered to uncover Volkan’s (2001, 83-84) cloth/tent metaphor. In correspondence with his argument, the transcripts should reveal two layers of ‘garments’. To remind ourselves, the metaphor implied the first snuggly inner layer to portray their individual identity - the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness. This layer was illustrated in the analysis of the well-being existential. The second layer is portrayed as a loose covering made of the canvas of the group’s tent (the group’s identity) through which the interviewees should share a persistent sense of sameness with others in the Jewish community.

Both garments are said to provide security and protection, but because both are worn every day, the individual should hardly notice either one under normal circumstances. At times of perceived collective stress on the community however, the garment made of the tent canvas takes on greater importance, and the interviewees should be revealed to be willing and able to defend their group’s tent. The more stress the group members perceive, the more they become involved in maintaining and repairing the canvas.
5.1.4.2.1. Connectedness through culture, commemoration and pride.

The argued lack of knowledge would not be considered by the group when dealing with other Jews. Consequently, there is an apparent perceived connectedness with others based on sharing the same culture, traditions and understanding.

Again the importance of traditions and other Jewish cultural events are implied, as was introduced in the first section of this analysis. Moreover, the value of commemoration is indicated and the feelings of connectedness that emerged for some, for instance upon first arrival in Israel, due to a perceived sameness with everyone is emphasized.

The shared culture and the sense of relatedness do not automatically imply that all interviewees share a similar sense of pride towards them being Jewish. Some consider it a beautiful thing to be. The slow and steady growth of the post-war Jewish population and the community’s loyalty to their culture and traditions are regarded proudly.

Others regard their Jewry and the Jewry others as just a fact of life. Yes, they feel a sense of connectedness, but they don’t see it as something that they achieved themselves, thus not as a feat to be especially proud of.

A third sentiment that is represented, regards being proud of one’s Jewry is to distinguish oneself from others. By regarding yourself as an exclusive group, you endanger the group of being excluded by others. It regards pride as a factor that is counterproductive to the stimulation of self-reflection. As we now know, a lack of self-reflection is perceived to grow misconceptions and conflict between Jews and non-Jews.

"Many Jewish people are unaware of how the history of being excluded is now causing the behavior that they are excluding themselves. What I tell about how I exclude myself, exclude myself from the group. I am aware of that and that is crucial. If you don't have that, then you do that and then you think it's normal, and then you create a difference between you and the other ... It's a fact that collective distance is created. And that has to do with not using the possibilities to develop self-reflection" [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaron)

5.1.4.2.1. Media, politics and defensive behaviour.

Despite the groups differing ideas on Jewish pride, there is a common perception that the media in the Netherlands are neglecting the true stories or emphasizing the wrong aspects of the Jewish struggles, especially considering the Israel-Palestine conflict.
Many of the interviewees consider Israel to be portrayed incorrectly as the main source for the persistence of the conflict. Yes, Israel has more power and capabilities, but the other side is just as guilty in the continuation of the conflict. There is no such thing as world domination by the Jews, but that is how they see it to be presented in media and social media.

Moreover, it is suggested that some political parties, even when not openly anti-Semitic but anti-Israel, do not care to act against anti-Semitism in the Netherlands. The neglect of this danger is perceived just as dangerous.

Ergo, according to many interviewees, the perceived faulty presentation of the Israel-Palestine conflict by the media and certain politicians leads to misinformation among non-Jews in our society. As mentioned before, this misinformation is perceived to result in misguided beliefs of the others to Jews and Judaism and enhances anti-Semitic sentiments. Thence, most of the interviewees feel the necessity to defend Israel’s position and themselves when discussing the conflict with others. They feel that they are forced to pick that side, because of the wrong ideas that circulate in society.

“That is a very good question, it depends on the situation. I always like to talk to people about it, but some people who think that when I say "I am Jewish" they think I am Israeli. So they don't know the difference, they don't know anything about the history of Israel. When you first meet them and you tell them: I'm Jewish, and they immediately start talking about Israel, I find it a bit tricky, because then they are in fact immediately being linked to each other. Then, even though I would not agree, I feel the feeling of "wait a minute, now I must defend something". While I would not want to in every situation because I don't agree with everything either” [my translation from Dutch]. (Jaïr)

These defensive tendencies align with the canvas metaphor. As the community is perceived to be under attack by the media and not to be properly defended by their own politicians, defending their tent and repairing the loose covering of the group’s identity takes on greater importance.

For some of the interviewees this perceived necessary defensive behaviour leads to increased feelings of connectedness, to others it a reason to stay clear of discussions related to it. This division is also uncovered by the fact that some of the interviewees were considering to go to Israel and defend it in person or that they knew others who had done so, whilst others could not image going there to join the army.
To summarize the above, the shared identity of the Jewish interviewees is based on their sense of sameness and shared characteristics based on sharing the same culture, traditions and understanding of their community’s position in our society. Reflecting on these aspects reveals to build the group’s sense of connectedness to and pride of their community’s identity.

The community’s tent (Volkan, 2001) of the interviewees is therefore held up high by their perceived shared characteristics, shared culture and their will to defend their community from outside threats of the media and politics.

5.1.4.3. Jewish family-engagements.

At the end of the analysis of the spatiality existential, it was argued that the interviewees’ families and homes are the places they would feel free and safe in. It is therefore interesting to analyze the war- and Holocaust-related discussions within these family’s homes to uncover any forms of silences, or emphasized issues talked about by particular members of the family. It illustrates the extent of openness and willingness between the three generations to discuss the traumatic event. Moreover, it describes what these talks mean for the third generation. Lastly, the exploration of the bond between the grandparents and the third generation shows how a self-reflecting generation relates itself to their possibly traumatized ancestors.

Considering discussions and stories of the war within the familial sphere, it would appear that for those who still had a chance to talk with their grandparents, they learn about the experiences from them. Others would hear about it from their parents. Even though it was stated in my first interview that openly talking about the war was more an exception within Jewish families than rule, amongst my group it would turn out to be other way around. Nevertheless, it would appear that it is harder for some to discuss these matters with their parents, than with their grandparents.

This is likely also the case due to the fact that most of those who knew their grandparents had a great relationship with them.

“Ja, mijn opa is overleden toen ik negen was dus die heb ik wel gekend. Echt een leuke opa. Ik heb alleen maar positieve herinneringen aan hem. Hij was er ook vrij veel. Ik ben slecht met tijd, maar ik heb wel het gevoel dat hij er was. Hij woonde in Eindhoven en haalde me dan vaak op” [my translation from Dutch]. (Aaron)

The stories told by the grandparents, often the grandfather, would be detailed illustrations of what had happened to them during the war. Some interviewees even indicate that they suspect that the telling of the stories helped the first generation to cope with the trauma of the Holocaust. These interviewees perceive this as a good thing, and are happy that they could fill this role for them. They also claim not to be ill-affected by the stories or by the knowledge that comes with them.

Moreover, they indicate that it was often their parents who did not want to know or who did not want them to know about these historical events. These parents would try and stay silent on the matter, even whilst working for the Auschwitz Committee they would listen to others, but not delve into their own history. Whenever this was the case for an interviewee who did not have grandparents left to ask about these events, they would reveal to have done research on their family’s history themselves via for instance online genealogy data or other family-members such as aunts, uncles or other family-acquaintances.

5.2. Categorical Implications of the Combined Existentials.

The perception that their environment is becoming increasingly dangerous is uncovered in the social and cultural relations existential to be constituted by: the perceived faulty media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict, a lack of knowledge and self-reflection among non-Jews, a lack of political willingness to fight anti-Semitism and to the fact that all issues concerning them and the Jewish community seem to be automatically linked to Israel and the Holocaust.

The first argument relates to their desire and perception that an improved education would counter the growing anti-Semitism, which would also help with the second argument. The third is believed hard to counter, as it concerns perceived hidden forms of anti-Semitism found in anti-Zionism and anti-Israel sentiments. These are also believed to shape the first
part of the fourth and last argument. Regarding the last part of the last argument, contrary to
popular tendencies, the majority of this group strives to stay clear of connecting fears, doubts,
vulnerabilities and other issues to the Holocaust. Moreover, there are some who state that by
identifying oneself with past trauma, one set itself apart from others, which could result in
exclusion of the entire group from society by others.

Contradictory though, defensive behaviour is revealed once hidden or plain forms of
anti-Semitism are come across by the interviewees. They have the urge to feel the necessity
to defend their community and Israel whenever other people discuss it negatively. This
remains true even when they are critical of Israeli politics themselves. This sentiment
uncovers the conscious and unconscious reflex to protect the existence of the safe tent of their
community.

Nonetheless, even though non-Jews are suspect to be lesser knowledgeable regarding
the topics of Israel and Judaism and in their comprehension of what it means for people to be
Jewish. Contrary to some black feminists that I researched last year, it is revealed that the
defensive behaviour of this group of interviewees aims at the stimulation of education and
self-reflection as weapons against anti-Semitism. It is thence perceived possible for non-Jews
to learn of their position and gain sufficient comprehension about these matters.

To summarize, regarding the familial path, the uncovered data imply that the third generation
struggles with their identity and with their position in social environments due to a perceived
uniqueness. This seems to fuel their activities to reach for high goals and work hard. It does
not fuel them to become religious or seek a Jewish partner.

Taking this into account, it is revealed that more aspects of the third generation
lifeworld are determined by the community’s path. The group perceives traditions to be
important and meaningful, to be handed down to their children and to be important tools to
commemorate fallen loved ones with. Their relatedness through shared culture is valued and
it leads to defensive reflexes whenever the community is perceived to be wronged.

It is true that they understand their environment to be something to be increasingly
wary of, however this is perceived as such due to contemporary anti-Semitism growth and
other societal issues.
6. Considerations and Conclusion


In the final passage of her book on the third generation, Van Weezel describes how she hopes that the influence of the Second World War and the Holocaust does not come to haunt the seven generations following the event. This is revealed to be the wrong question to be asked, as this study uncovers that the Holocaust is not the instigator but merely an extreme confirmation of an already existent lifeworld perception of the Jewish community. It therewith agrees with Jaïr’s warning that the introduced experiences of Iris Hond and Natascha van Weezel are extreme indications of lifeworld perceptions shaped by their community’s culture and history.

The changed existentials approach allowed for the portrayal of a third generation which is characterized by being driven, free-spirited, non-religious but culturally loyal, historically aware and open-minded to other cultures. However it is also shown to act defensively whenever it experiences an attack on their community and to perceive their surroundings as increasingly hostile and untrustworthy.

The sentiment revealed by the lived well-being existential, that regards the interviewees’ increasing uneasiness to be openly Jewish, is substantiated by recent political and public developments. Felix Klein, the German government commissioner, called out the Jewish community to no longer always show their Judaism in public for their own safety. He reportedly did this to increase awareness to an issue seemingly forgotten but more relevant by the day. (Soetenhorst & Pen, 2019) According to Hanna Luden, president of the Centre for Information and Documentation Israel (CIDI), seventy percent of the Dutch Jews indicate not to be openly Jewish in particular areas. Furthermore, European and American hotlines indicate an increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. (Fogteloo & van Gool, 2019: 40)

Nevertheless, Deborah Lipstadt (2019) claims that we should not let our analysis be guided by just this fact. According to the American historian and professor of modern Jewish history and Holocaust studies, the source of our current problems lies with the returned perception that there is an ‘almighty Jewish conspiracy’ that controls all evil. In her book
‘Antisemitisme hier en nu’ (2019) she reveals tendencies within conservative and progressive university circles to turn anti-Zionism into a hidden form of anti-Semitism. She illustrates how both ends of the political spectrum make use of an ancient stereotyping regarding the Jews, where what is hated most is projected onto the group: capitalism or communism, nationalism (Zionism) or cosmopolitanism. Left-wing oriented people solely see the anti-Semitism on the right and vice versa. She claims that both are right, but are blind to their own forms of anti-Semitism.

According to Abraham de Swaan (2005: 168) the newer generations non-Jews perceive anti-Semitism to be a preoccupation of their parents and grandparents. They are relieved of the guilt and shame of recent history primarily because they are young, ergo it concerns issues from before their time. They perceive themselves to not at all be concerned with the Jews, neither anti-pro nor pro; they only dislike fascist, capitalist, imperialist and communist Jews.

A recent example of these younger generation’s sentiments is revealed at a recent award ceremony of the P.C. Hooft-prijs. The prize was gifted to a writer and first generation Jewish Holocaust survivor named Marga Minco. She received the prize by jury-president Gillis Dorleijn, who was uncovered to be the grandchild of the family described in Minco’s book ‘Het adres’ (1957). This family would comprise of ‘bewariërs’ which is a combination of ‘ariër’ and ‘bewaren’. As this family was asked to take care of the family Minco’s property during their departure to Poland, they would steal it for themselves upon Minco’s return from the camps. When confronted with these facts, the grandchild, instead of apologizing for his family’s history, he stated that he and his family are hurt and that it portrays an unsavory history from before any of them were born. Thence, he and his family now had nothing to do with what happened to Marga Minco back then. (Roodnat, 2019)

Going back to Deborah Lipstadt’s book, she emphasizes the role of the people who are not blatantly anti-Semitic, but who do facilitate anti-Semitic tendencies in progressive and conservative circles. Therewith she strives to create awareness to the ‘new’ growing forms of anti-Semitism, which distinguishes itself from the old that it no longer considers all Jews to be evil, but only the Jews from the other side. Israel is the litmus test, as the left believes the Zionist Jews to be wrong and the right the anti-Zionists. This distinction is worrisome as anti-Semitism flourishes in society’s that are intolerant to the ‘others’ (Fogteloo & van Gool, 2019: 43).
When we combine what we learned from the data interpretation with the above, we can conclude a number of things. First of all, the perceived increase of anti-Semitism by my group of interviewees is not unsubstantiated. Additionally, in agreement with the perception of my interviewees, it is worrisome for the society to groundlessly relate all Jewish-related issues to the Holocaust as that used to create a taboo about discussing anti-Semitism as a societal problem in the past (Fogteloo & van Gool, 2019: 40).

Moreover, the prevailing perception my interviewees indicated to have of a necessity for an improved education of the newer generations seems warranted. It was illustrated by the example of Gillis Dorleijn and his lack of understanding and empathy for the Minco’s history. As de Swaan (2005) indicates, the newer generations lack historical consciousness and they disregard any happenings from ‘before their time’ to be important.

To summarize, that what was concluded earlier, that the lifeworld of the third generation is for the majority shaped by the community’s path, appears to be warranted as the society is revealed to be in dire need of change and self-reflection to counter the upcoming anti-Semitism.

Now that the data results have shown what comprises the lifeworld of a third generation and to what extent it is influenced by either familial or community’s pathway, the final question that remains unanswered is: to what extent the lifeworld of the third generation is influenced by the traumatic event of the Holocaust?

The perceived uniqueness of the third generation can be argued to have been reinforced by family-stories portraying their family’s first generation’s traumatic experiences during the Holocaust. The stories create a sense of sorrow amongst the third generation and a perceived uniqueness. These factors are shown to imply that this history has had the unconscious side-effect that it constitutes a very free and driven generation.

However, as indicated, in the conclusion of my interpretation, it is likely that the generation’s lifeworld is shaped to a greater extent by the culture of Judaism, which goes back well before the Holocaust. Obviously, the event of the Holocaust only further bolstered already existing wariness of others and the social environment of the Jews based on older historical experiences. A wariness which is now reinforced by reactions to the Israel-Palestine conflict of others based on a faulty or shortage of knowledge and by the renewed upcoming forms of anti-Semitism in our contemporary society.
6.1. Academic Considerations

If my interdisciplinary background of future planet studies taught me one thing, it is to strive to build bridges between multiple disciplines when tackling difficult issues. It is during this bachelor that I learned the value of: reaching out to other academic ideas and try to explore whether any forms of integration is possible and desirable. This learning process is a precious thing between social sciences, but moreover between social and exact sciences.

In a recent development, the first female Rector Vice President of the UvA, Dymph van den Boom, has become suspect of plagiarism in her dissertation back in 1988. In a discussion at the program ‘Buitenhof’ of the VPRO with Emeritus Professor Willem Koops, an issue was addressed that has been a thorn in social sciences side ever since its constitution; that it is perceived to be a lesser science than its exact counterparts (VPRO, 2019).

I perceive that with the introduction and further development of the academic field of epigenetics and its acceptance and integration into future social science studies a bridge could be reinforced between the two major fields of science.

A more personal academic consideration would be to do a similar research with a larger group of interviewees, cross-country, and including a similar study to a different cultural group to explore any differences.

Moreover, considering this study it would have been pleasant to be able to do follow-up interviews with my group in a number of years from now to see whether age and time and changing surroundings have had an effect.
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Appendix I: Thematic Topic Guide

They encompassed the interviewee’s identity development in a particular environment at a certain moment in time, the relationship with Jewry and the Jewish community and relationship with the family and their history.

Starting theme: identity & character development

- Upbringing
- Schools
- Work/hobbies
- Holidays

With no particular order

Theme on the Family & Friends

- Friends
- Family
- Background
- Trust
- Struggles

Theme on Judaism & Israel:

- Traditions
- Commemoration
- Auschwitz
- Israel, the country
- Israel, the conflict
- Anti-Semitism
- Safety (NL vs. Israel)
Appendix II: List of Interviewees

In order of the interview:

*Name:* Jaïr  
*Age:* 34

*Name:* Dexter  
*Age:* 20

*Name:* Jaron  
*Age:* 36

*Name:* David  
*Age:* 20

*Name:* Noah  
*Age:* 20

*Name:* Aaron  
*Age:* 34

*Name:* Loes  
*Age:* 21

*Name:* Nienke  
*Age:* 34

*Name:* Esther  
*Age:* 30