# To Galicia and Back: Heritage Journey and the Construction of a Local-Communal Memory

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My research explores the construction of local memory among Israelis of Galician descent through ethnography of a family heritage tour. The tour was organized by Israelis who are second generation to families who came from Czortków, once a vivid Jewish center in East Galicia. Some of the participants originated from other towns, and the journey included visits to these towns and a wider exploration of Jewish heritage of East Galicia and other parts of Ukraine.

Kugelmas and Boyarin (1983) highlighted the importance of the communal memory books in the construction of collective memory among East European Jews in Israel through the 1960s and 1970s. This memory project was shaped after the Holocaust by the people who migrated to Israel as young '*Halutzim'* (pioneers), together with some Holocaust survivors. However, this project had limited ability to shape the memory of the next generations. Still, in the last decades new arenas of collective memory were form by decedents of Galician families who were born already in Israel. In the case of Czortków, there are several examples of these arenas, or 'sites of memory': memorial gatherings and rites; the revival of "landsmannschaft" associations (hometown society of immigrants from the same town) who now operates virtually in the internet and heritage tours. The current study explores the latter, as a first step in a wider examination of these different sites of collective memory.

The study is based on ethnographic materials gathered during a heritage tour. I will examine how such tours allow re-connection between Israeli born participants and the physical and cultural worlds which their parents left behind while immigrating to Israel. At the same time, the study reveal the challenges and difficulties in constructing such a connection - taking into account the gap of the years, the burden of historical events, and the influence of the changing political frameworks in the region.