THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE UNTOLD, AND WHY ONE NEEDS TO KNOW

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The article takes its starting point in more than 160 personal narratives from former migrants, their children, and grandchildren. The testimonies have been collected by cultural-history museums in seven European countries – Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Croatia – and provide a haunting impression of the long-term consequences of war and forced migration for at least three generations. The research aimed at understanding how exactly the Untold and the silence of the first generation – the not-sharing of what they, as time witnesses, experienced – can be sensed by their children and grandchildren and influence their lives, family relations and the surrounding society in a negative way. The findings show that the need for personal and public information by the second and third generations cannot be overestimated and that sharing and getting to know could be a key to more healthy relations between family members and within communities.

Keywords: silence, collective memories, difficult heritage, intergenerational transfer of trauma, long-term consequences of war and migration, three-generational perspective

INTRODUCTION

> Under the surface of our societies, there are thousands and thousands of stories that could add shades and details to a black-and-white picture of historical events. But many of these stories are too personal or too traumatic to share, and one may decide consciously or unconsciously not to tell anyone about events that have been crucial for one's life. However, the Untold can have long-term consequences for the generations to come as well. It can directly influence the lives of one's children and grandchildren, intergenerational relations, relations between members of the same societies and, on a higher level, our common perception of history.

This quote has, with some adaptations in different contexts, become a general introduction when describing the main topic of the large-scale international collaboration project

Identity on the Line (I-ON).[1] In it, museum professionals from seven European countries wanted to address the Untold, the not-addressed, those parts of a local society's history that still affected its members but were rarely talked about in private or in public. We wanted to explore the long-term consequences of war and forced migration and the role that museums as knowledge-providing institutions can play in healing processes. Several fields of study, such as psychology, neuroscience, and epigenetics, have long dealt with the consequences of painful or traumatic experiences for individuals and their relation to others and with how trauma can be passed down from one generation to the next. The fields of study that museums normally operate within, such as ethnology, anthropology, and history, have addressed important questions about how to relate to and display the difficult, sensitive, dissonant parts of the past, but have not yet fully embraced the concept that the past may continue to affect individuals and societies for generations. As information-providing institutions, museums must rethink how they address their informants and visitors who might be directly or indirectly affected by a troubled past, often without even knowing it. This also presupposes that museums should know as much as possible about how information or the lack of information affects individuals, groups and societies.

I define the *Untold* as *a sphere of memories of former events that are linked to emotions which prevent individuals from sharing their experiences with others who affect or are affected by the same sphere*. This means that someone has a certain knowledge – here in the form of subjective memories – that others have no access to. As such, the Untold per se separates the individual from other individuals or a group of individuals, while at the same time being connected to each other within a certain cultural, social, and historical frame of reference. Museums have a unique opportunity to explore and explain these frames of references as well as the connection between subjective memories and more objective facts about the past.

In this article, I will first discuss the key findings from our projects' empirical material to find answers to the following two-stage research questions:

1. What is the nature of the Untold, and how does it affect the children and grandchildren of the time witnesses?

[1] In 2019, the *Identity on the Line* project was granted funding for a period of four years (2019 – 2023). The seven migration processes – subprojects within the overall project – included long-term consequences of the German occupation of Norway during World War II (Norway), the migration from Greenland to Denmark after 1945 (Denmark), the forced migration of Sámi from the North to the South of Sweden (Sweden), population exchange in the former German Pomerania after 1945, exemplified by Słupsk (Poland), the Holocaust for Lithuanian women (Lithuania), the migration from the former Yugoslav republics to Slovenia after World War II and the impact of the country's independence in 1991 on migrants (Slovenia) and of the complex political history of the Istrian peninsula and its multi-ethnic population related to 200 000 emigrants after World War II (Croatia). Detailed information about the *Identity on the Line* project is available online (www.i-on.museum; www.identityontheline.eu), updates are continuously shared on social media profiles such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or YouTube, and the partners have published digital articles describing the overall project as well as its seven subprojects in detail (www.i-on.museum/online-publication/). In September 2022, we received the European Museum Academy Prize, which is awarded only occasionally, for outstanding results and our potential influence on a museological discourse at the international level.

2. What role does having or not having information play in long-term consequences of the Untold?

I will start by presenting the empirical material that the partner institutions have collected by using methods including qualitative interviews, fieldwork, observation, questionnaires and text analysis while being in contact with former migrants, their children and grandchildren. Next, I will concentrate on those segments of the material that are directly related to the Untold. The analysis will take its starting point in interdisciplinary research results mainly from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and epigenetics, as well as the theoretical approach to the struggles for recognition by the German social philosopher Axel Honneth, as I regard this theory to be particularly helpful in understanding and classifying the different levels and spheres in which an individual connects with its surroundings.

There has been growing interest in the long-term consequences of the Untold and the silence that accompanies it, both among researchers from different fields of studies and the affected children and grandchildren themselves. In the last two decades or so, an increasing number of books has been published by the second and third generation of those who experienced war, migration, oppression, discrimination, persecution or social exclusion, but not talked about what had happened. What combines the narratives of the children and grandchildren is an urge to understand what lies behind the silence and the secrets surrounding the events that were decisive and distinctive for their parents and grandparents, and, in turn, also for their own upbringing and identity-forming processes. This is precisely what is explored in depth in this article, as a starting point for further research into the role that museums as information-providing institutions can play in identity-forming processes on deeply personal and societal levels.

FINDINGS WITHIN THE I-ON PROJECT: THE UNTOLD AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

The museum professionals working at I-ON's seven partner institutions conducted a total of 164 in-depth interviews with former migrants and their descendants.[2] As the yet Untold was a starting point of the project, all interviews contain parts significant for this analysis in one way or another. Nevertheless, I will concentrate on the extracted and translated quotes

[2] Each of the interviews was between 1.5 and 15 hours long. The material contains audio, video, and text files as well as objects and photos, and each country used its material to present their migration project as a separate exhibition in their country. After joint reflections and discussions about the central aspects that emerged during the process, the partners identified common features within all responses, extracted 62 to-the-point quotes and translated them into English. Each partner summarized the approach and results in one's own country in an article that can be found at www.i-on.museum/online-publication.

that point directly to the Untold and its repercussions which are, therefore, of particular interest.

Nearly half of the quotes originate from the Norwegian subproject *Keep it quiet! Family secrets after WWII,* comprehensive material that I have unlimited access to.[3] It is important to note that the material from Norway differs from the empirical material collected in the other countries as it largely contains narratives from the descendants of those who somehow interacted with Germans during the German occupation of Norway 1940; actions that were socially not accepted and partly punished after the war. Over the course of the last decades, many studies within several fields of research studied in depth the long-term consequences of victimhood versus perpetration (e.g., Wiseman et al. 2006; Gobodo-Madikizela 2021a; Kimbles 2014; Bohleber 2010), strongly suggesting that the reason for not addressing a former event is of crucial importance.

However, joint discussions among all project partners suggest that it is primarily not addressing a former war or forced migration process and only secondarily the reason for the not addressing, that leads to personal and societal challenges for all those involved. I will, therefore, combine the material and reflect on this impression at the end of the analysis.

In what follows, my starting point will be the testimonies of 30 informants. The findings are based on a detailed analysis of the whole material, arranged and processed with all the available details so as to cover all the valid aspects, even if only some quotes are used to illustrate the main ones.

NO	INFORMANT	GEN	COUNTRY
1	Woman, aged 75. The daughter of survivors from the Šiauliai ghetto and the Dachau and Stutthof concentration camp.	2	Lithuania
2	Woman, aged 34. Her parents moved to Slovenia from the Serbian part of Bosnia.	3	Slovenia
3	Woman, aged 99. A survivor of the Kaunas ghetto and the Stutthof Concentration Camp.	1	Lithuania
4	Woman, aged 88. A survivor of the Kaunas ghetto. She was rescued by locals, but her parents and older brother were killed.	1	Lithuania
5	Woman, aged 71. The daughter of a Vilnius ghetto survivor and partisan.	2	Lithuania
6	Woman, aged 43. Belongs to a family that was forcibly migrated to a new area with their reindeer herd.	3	Sweden

[3] In addition to being the project leader for *Identity on the Line*, I was also in charge of the collection and preparation of the personal narratives that were collected for the Norwegian subproject. Here, personal narratives of 21 informants were summarised as written testimonies of 3 to 5 pages each and translated into English (Pabst and Aaby 2022). The material from the Norwegian subproject was partly analysed before, see Pabst 2021, 2022. The material collected turned out to be so relevant when studying the long-term consequences of not knowing and not addressing, that we applied for and received funding from the Arts Council Norway to dig deeper into the topic. More information about this follow-up project entitled: *What Happens to the Unspoken? Long-term Consequences of Secrets in an Intergenerational Perspective* can be found at www.unspokenhistory.com and at https://www.vestagdermuseet.no/what-happens-to-the-untold-an-ongoing-research-project-with-three-parts/.

7	Woman, aged 82. She and her family were exiled when she was a baby.	2	Poland
8	Woman, aged 59. The descendant of a family that had to migrate several times during and after WWII.	2	Poland
9	Man, aged 86. Had to leave with his parents for Italy, leaving all the family belongings in Vodnjan, Croatia.	2	Italy
10	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 38. The daughter of a Danish-Greenlandic mother, who neglected to talk about their Greenlandic roots.	2	Denmark
11	Woman, aged 54. The descendant of a family that had to move several times during and after WWII.	3	Poland
12	Man, aged 64. The descendant of a Sámi family living where forced migrants arrived.	2	Sweden
13	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 48. The grandchild who discovered that her beloved grandfather had a dark past.	3	Norway
14	Man, wants to be anonymous, aged 79. The son of a Norwegian who accepted an offer to enlist and serve in the German occupying forces.	2	Norway
15	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 79. The daughter of a Norwegian who helped the Germans during the war.	2	Norway
16	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 32. The descendant of members of the Nazi Party.	3	Norway
17	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 55. The daughter of a German soldier who served in Norway.	2	Norway/ Germany
18	Man, aged 77. The son of a German soldier and a Norwegian woman, who had experienced understanding and support from the local society.	2	Norway
19	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 83. The daughter of a teacher imprisoned by the Germans.	2	Norway
20	Man, aged 77. The son of a German soldier and a Norwegian woman. His father was kept a secret from the public to protect him.	2	Norway
21	Man, wants to be anonymous, aged 85. The foster brother of a son of a Norwegian woman and a German soldier who was known as a torturer.	2	Norway
22	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 94. She was abandoned by her family and the local society when she married a German soldier.	1	Norway
23	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 62, the daughter of no. 22. At the age of 20, she learned that her mother had been married to a German soldier.	2	Norway
24	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 33. The daughter of no. 23 and the granddaughter of no. 22.	3	Norway
25	Man, wants to be anonymous, aged 79. The son of a member of the resistance movement in Norway and a close friend with sons of those who supported the Germans.	2	Norway
26	Man, aged 82. The son of a man who joined the NS-movement in Norway for work reasons without being punished by the local society afterwards.	2	Norway
27	Man, aged 43. The grandchild of a man who had been tortured by the Germans, sent to a concentration camp, and talked openly about all his experiences.	3	Norway
28	Son, wants to be anonymous, aged 77. Haunted by not knowing why his parents and grandparents left Norway during the war.	2	Norway
29	Woman, aged 55, who is haunted by the secrecy around her granduncle's fate, who died as a young soldier either supporting or fighting against the Germans.	3	Norway
30	Woman, wants to be anonymous, aged 79. The daughter of a communist who was punished by the Germans during the war and by the local society afterwards.	2	Norway

The overview shows that there are 20 women and 10 men between the ages of 32 and 99. Three informants are from the first generation, here defined as those who were adults when the events that became a part of the Untold occurred. Nineteen informants come from the second generation, which means that they were children at the time of the events, or children of the time witnesses. Eight informants come from the third generation, here defined as children of the second generation and grandchildren of the first. In all cases, cross-references are made to the other generations. For example, the second generation refers to their parents' actions and how they handled them in the aftermath. Some also explain why and how these experiences with the first generation, the parents, led to a particular behaviour toward their own children, i.e., the third generation. The informants from the third generation reflect upon their parents' and grandparents' actions and how they both related to one another and affected their own life. In this way, the empirical material displays crucial information about how actions were received and how they affected the informants personally.

This suggests a crucial starting point for the analysis: the empirical material is based on subjective experiences, and it is neither possible nor desirable to validate the narratives as such in a more objective context or setting (Pabst 2016: 175–178). Virtually all narratives describe how the actions or reactions of others affected our informants on a very personal and emotional level. Within the scope of this article, I cannot deal with the broad interdisciplinary discourse of emotionology (e.g., Kleinginna and Kleinginna 1981; Stearns and Stearns 1985; Bourke 2005), or dig deeper into which psychological or physiological states of mind and body the informants referred to when they used expressions such as *fear*, *pain* or *shame*.

In what follows, I take emotions to refer to

> a complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors, mediated through neural and/or hormonal systems, which give rise to feelings (affective experiences as of pleasure or displeasure) and also general cognitive processes toward appraising the experience; emotions in this sense lead to physiological adjustments to the conditions that aroused response, and often to expressive and adaptive behaviour. (Kleinginna and Kleinginna 1981, as cited in Stearns and Stearns 1985: 813)

According to this definition I will call the informants' expressions "feelings", understood as "affective experiences as of pleasure or displeasure".

DIVING INTO THE INFORMANTS' NARRATIVES: THE REASONS FOR AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE UNTOLD

An initial in-depth examination of all interviews as a group clearly showed how critical the answers to the first three questions were for an accurate description:

1. SCOPE: Did the parents and grandparents share what had happened, at least the main parts? How much information was required by the children and grandchildren who suffered due to the Untold?

2. VICTIM OR PERPETRATOR:[4] Was the parent or grandparent the victim or the perpetrator, were they exposed to injustice or did they commit injustice, during the events of the Untold? Were moral standards of the surrounding society violated?

3. SPHERE: What kind of information was required, personal or publicly available?

The narratives of those who struggled with the not-sharing or not-knowing reveal clear differences between the generations. Starting with the first generation, both the informants themselves and their children and grandchildren mainly mentioned the urge or wish to forget what had happened and the need to protect themselves against social judgement. A 99-year-old survivor of the Kaunas ghetto and the Stutthof Concentration Camp "just wanted to forget, just to delete everything". In some cases, the memories of the past and not being able to talk about them became too difficult to handle, as the daughter of survivors from the Šiauliai ghetto and the Dachau and Stutthof concentration camp, aged 75, told us:

> The shadow of the Holocaust has accompanied me ever since I began to understand things. My mum survived the Holocaust physically, but not spiritually. At night, she often used to wake up and shout, "Help! Nazis!" […] In the end, she committed suicide. She couldn't keep it all inside her.

When a behaviour was not socially accepted, such as being involved with soldiers of the enemy troops, a person could feel "forced to shut down parts of myself" to be able to cope in "a village where I was non-existent", as a Norwegian woman who had married a German soldier during the German occupation of Norway put it. Local punishment and social exclusion that often followed in the aftermath came at great personal cost: "I had this hatred inside me, that I was a good-for-nothing. So, I became stubborn and promised myself that I should get through this on my own". In another family, the granddaughter, aged 32, described how she saw the consequences for her grandmother, who had been registered by the parents as a member of a youth organization of the NS-party in Norway, as:

> My grandmother's shame and guilt must have been so heavy that she chose to remain with a man who exacerbated her misery; in a way, she got what she deserved, she accepted her punishment from the society. Her way of compensating for the situation was to build an appearance while she on the inside became powerless and sad, and outwardly bullied others […] I think the arrogance was a reaction to her feeling of shame; that she tried to balance the pain she found in her shame by extolling herself in relation to other people.

[4] Even if the use of the victim-perpetrator dichotomy is a generalization in itself, given that all events are part of a complex pattern of interactions, causes and connections, it can help in establishing an initial categorization.

The consequences of the "shame and guilt" that the parents or grandparents presumably experienced were mentioned in many testimonies, directly and indirectly, regardless of the cause. While the previous quote related to a child that was part of a family who chose to become members of the political party of the occupiers, other informants would talk about their relatives' actions which, in all probability, directly caused the loss of property or even death. For example, the 55-year-old daughter of a German soldier of the Nazi regime who had served in Norway told us that her father was haunted the rest of his life by something that he had done during the war:

> I don't know what it was, but I have thought a lot about it […] That he was involved in destroying the lives of the people and the country he had fallen in love with. […] He, and many of his generation, chose to carry the weight of the burden on their own and only talk about the bright sides of life, as if that could blot out the painful things that had happened.

Not knowing what happened affected the second generation more than the third. Virtually all testimonies demonstrate the need of the second generation to understand the cause of their own struggles, their parents' behaviour during their upbringing, or the reactions of the surrounding. Rumours in the local community or their own doubts could lead to extensive efforts to find confirmation. The 79-year-old daughter of a Norwegian man who had helped the Germans during the war and was sent to prison afterwards learned about her fathers' wrongdoings through a newspaper article after she turned 50.

> I was told that […] that my father was convicted as a traitor because he had worked as a spy for the Germans. This was the first time I heard that story. […] It was horribly painful […] I had […] a need to investigate the story myself. I went to the archives and was allowed to see his file. In the file was his sentence […] Having read this, the story became, perhaps for the first time, solidly confirmed.

But even without any wrongdoings or public exposures that were difficult to handle, not knowing strongly affected the second generation. The 38-year-old daughter of a Greenlandic woman and a Danish father explained that

> Being Danish and a quarter Greenlandic is like putting together a confusing puzzle. The pieces do not quite fit together, and a number of pieces are missing – especially from the Greenlandic side. The challenge has been to create myself as a whole person with the pieces I had available to me. […] There is a big chapter of my life that my mother did not talk about much [Greenland]. That has created a hole, or a sense of want, in my identity, which is about what my roots are like.

Several informants expressed the pain of sensing something that one did not know how to address. Not talking could be perceived as repressed feelings that one could not make sense of. A Norwegian woman, aged 62, who learned as an adult that her mother had been married to a German soldier of the enemy troops and that she had been punished harshly by the family and the local society, told us

> In my adolescence I often felt different. In a way I could never really live out my feelings, everything was suppressed and hushed up. There was so much under the surface, but nobody touched it; silence was everywhere. […] None of the things we talked about had real importance, everyday matters were all we discussed. I reacted with anger, revolt, and a lack of respect for the authorities, but only outwardly. At home I had accepted that the silence was untouchable. The feeling of knowing that something was wrong, without understanding what it was, was painful.

Her mother, aged 94, later confirmed in her own interview that indeed there was silence, and explained it as necessary protection against the pain of being away from the German soldier she had deeply loved and the social exclusion she had faced:

> I have worked hard to ensure that we could have a family life where everybody was well cared for. I have been forced to shut in parts of myself to achieve that […] I guess I became tough, cold, by living this way, and in fact I did not know what my children knew. But I would have answered if they had asked, I really would have.

Considering that her daughter did not know what to ask and how to ask it, mother and daughter did not start to really connect before decades had gone by. The narratives of this mother and daughter can also demonstrate how closely intertwined individuals and their surroundings are: while the mother had been excluded from the local society after marrying a soldier of the enemy troops, the daughter was excluded from knowledge about this event as such, as both her mother and the local society would not talk about it:

> I happened to learn about it at a pub in the city, that my eldest brother was only my half-brother. Even my best friend knew about it all her life, but had been told so strictly not to mention it to me, that she didn't dare […] Secrets which everybody knows about, except yourself, are perhaps the worst. Because it does something to the confidence one is supposed to have in those who are one's nearest and who ought to have said something.

The third generation struggled mainly with their parents' reactions to the events that their grandparents had experienced. A 32-year-old granddaughter, the descendant of Norwegian members of the occupying Nazi Party in Norway – who were punished by the local community afterwards – described her grandmothers' and mothers' overall attitude as crucial for her own upbringing:

> One should be polite, clever and make the best of oneself; show the world that one is equal to the others. My mother used the expression "the others" a lot – I had to act like "the others". I remember from my youth that I snapped back "who are they, 'the others'"; who are these "others"? Perhaps "the others" is a transferred symbol of social shame. I myself felt that I was prevented from living my own life, as if the opinions and thoughts of others are more important than what I want from my life.

Like their parents, they went to great lengths to gather information to understand family relations or the upbringing which they perceived as disturbed. For example, a grandchild, aged 48, who always ran to her beloved grandfather when his son, her father, physically

abused her, got a strange feeling when she heard on the radio that a Norwegian archive finally released court documents of those who had supported the enemy during WWII. This feeling

> made me contact them to learn whether there was something in the files about my grandfather. I received a bundle with 200 pages of documents. […] It was a terrible shock to me when his wartime history was unveiled. […] All the suffering from the past gave my father a painful adolescence, which in turn gave me a painful adolescence, which has now taken me several years of therapy to attempt to come to terms with.

Another granddaughter, aged 33, told us that she had the opportunity to ask her grandmother directly about what had happened when she married a German soldier of the enemy troops, and how important it was to receive honest answers:

> If my grandmother hadn't been so frank with me later, I think I would have ended up with a totally different relation to history and to her. In that event, I should neither have had access to her perspective, nor understood her ideas and the underlying feelings of her choices. As a result, I would have been left with bare facts which would have meant little or nothing to me. This would only have triggered more questions and possibly given rise to distance, since people of my generation are very open and actually have trouble understanding why this was something one could not talk about.

Loneliness was mentioned by all generations, often in combination with experiences of anger, shame and guilt related to something one had or had not done. The first generation felt lonely when they were not able to talk about what happened, as several survivors of the Holocaust mentioned, or when they were punished by their families or their local communities for something they had done, as the above-mentioned quotes show. The second generation was likely to inherit the experiences of loneliness when they were excluded from the knowledge that others, such as family members or members of the community, seemed to have. In addition to the already mentioned quotes, this is, for example, also present in the testimonies of the children of a Norwegian man who supported the Germans during their occupation in Norway. His daughter, aged 79, told us:

> Before I came to know what had happened, I often felt that people knew more than I did: my friend at school, my in-laws, my uncle, and other members of the family. They all knew something I did not. That made me feel uncertain […] I am still afraid that more secrets will be disclosed.

These experiences often led to anger, impatience, strictness towards others, and in some cases even violent behaviour. Several informants of the second and third generation mentioned impatient, strict, or even violent parents and grandparents. But they themselves also reacted in anger to what they faced. The daughter of survivors of the Šiauliai ghetto and the Dachau and Stutthof concentration camp, aged 75, reacted to her mothers' suicide with experiences of guilt and anger:

> I blamed myself. I could have saved my mother. That was how I felt. I couldn't speak because I was taught from childhood not to speak about what was important to you

> […] After my mother's death, I wasn't myself. I was a completely different person. […] I became angry, very nervous. I had no patience for anyone.

The daughter, aged 79, of a Norwegian man who helped the Germans during WWII, felt guilt for not asking the right questions in time:

> Two of the strongest feelings in all of this have been guilt and uncertainty. I feel guilty for not having come to the bottom of it. I never confronted my mother or father. My mother had a tough time throughout her life. […] I think [my father] owed me an explanation, they both did. But then, I never asked for one, and that is where my guilt is buried. It seems like it is my fault that we never moved on […] As long as there is doubt about the truth, it becomes difficult to relate to, reconcile myself with it, and forgive.

And the son, aged 79, of another Norwegian man who had supported the Germans during the German occupation of Norway, mentioned a range of feelings related to what his father had done, as well as anger for not getting the answers which he needed to distance himself properly from his fathers' actions:

> The shame I once felt is no longer with me, but the aversion lingers […] I have a feeling that what I say also reveals something about me. It could add to the process of defining me. I want to shield myself from that. My father certainly did the same thing. He did not keep quiet to shield the family, but to shield himself. […] He would never approach ideology and what he stood for. He never said why he had made those choices.

As mentioned initially, what was most difficult was not the Untold itself, but rather being excluded from something that others seemed to know, especially parents or grandparents, as well as members of the local society. However, both the second and third generation could handle secrets well when they were in on them, i.e. when they knew what was kept a secret and why, and when they perceived keeping it a secret as well-intended.

> From my early childhood I was instructed not to tell anyone that I came from Germany. In the aftermath [of the war], I understood that these cover stories were good for me. I had friends who didn't have such cover stories, and who ended their lives as adults, shooting themselves because they couldn't cope with it anymore,

the 77-year-old son of a Norwegian woman and a German soldier said. The female descendant of Polish displaced persons, aged 59, explained:

> Aunt Bogusia was already 11 […] She told us a lot about the bunker that their grandfather built, about the beginnings of the "scary nights", when the [Volhynia] massacre started. They went there every evening to hide, each time choosing a different route through the ridges, so as not to end up marking a path to their shelter. The children had to promise that they wouldn't tell anybody – not even their cousins or their neighbours – about the dugout. The dugout undoubtedly saved the lives of the whole family.

Last but not least, the testimonies of those who received or found out all the information they required showed that this contributed to individual and intergenerational healing processes. The more the first generation was willing to answer questions and the better the relations between the generations had been initially, the larger the will to understand and forgive.

A granddaughter, aged 48, discovered her beloved grandfather's dark past many years after his death:

> It was a terrible shock to me when his history from the war was unveiled: Was this my grandfather? Was he a true Nazi? Was he a sadist? Working my way through all this material has been an emotional roller coaster for me […] All in all I think I [now] understand. And if one understands, it is easier to forgive. And I have forgiven. My grandfather was so young when he entered the war, only 19 years old. He was still not completely developed as a person, and everything he experienced during the war in combination with a hot-tempered mind, resulted in anger […] And my father prolonged this by letting me suffer. But the love that my grandfather gave me had the effect of stopping it there.

Considering how charged these few quotes making up only a small part of the 30 testimonies are, it becomes very clear that the content of the interviews is extremely diverse, covering testimonies about war and migration processes from different generations, times and countries, as well as individual human patterns of self-development, acting, reacting and interacting. The empirical material contains so many different aspects and topics which could be studied in depth, such as, for instance, individual emotional responses, individual family histories, communication patterns within families or what an earlier event meant in the light of the prevailing social norms and values at a certain time and place. Therefore, the limited scope of this article dictated selecting only some aspects and presenting the relevant interdisciplinary approaches accordingly.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE UNTOLD AND AXEL HONNETH'S THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE STRUGGLES FOR RECOGNITION

THE UNTOLD, TRAUMA AND SILENCE

I have defined the Untold as *a sphere of memories of former events that are linked to emotions which prevent individuals from sharing their experiences with others who affect or are affected by the same sphere.* Researchers studying emotion and communication stress their many interpersonal aspects, and how closely emotions are intertwined with interpersonal communication (e.g., Izard 1992; Andersen and Guerrero 1996; Guerrero and Andersen 2000; Assmann 2016). Given that individuals are shaped by and operate within social, cultural and historical frames, the complexity of factors influencing emotions and attitudes cannot be overestimated (e.g., Assmann 1997; Assmann 1999, 2010; Kimbles 2014: 55–61). A *sphere* refers to both private and public sphere, and should be generally understood as "an area of activity, influence or interest; a particular section of society".[5]

[5] Oxford Dictionary (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/sphere (accessed 19 January 2023)).

Within the spheres that an individual shares with others, a large variety of psychological, biological, cultural, societal and interrelational aspects determine the complex structure of *memories*; including the circumstances of their origin as well as if, how and how often they are communicated (Assmann 2016: 9–44). This makes memories highly subjective, and at the same time directly dependent on the social contexts they occur in:

> All individual remembering […] takes place with social materials, within social contexts, and in response to social cues. Even when we do it alone, we do so as social beings with reference to our social identities. (Olick et al. 2011a: 19)

When related to events that others were a part of, memories contain important information about both the event as such and the individual, about the memory's frame of reference and its basis for interpretation. Accordingly, individual and collective memories are closely connected (e.g., Olick et al. 2011b; Assmann 2006, 1999, 2010; Fukuyama 2018) and both form a natural part of fields of study such as ethnology, history or anthropology. This includes memories related to war and migration, forced or voluntary, as well as their impact on all those affected (e.g., Marschall 2018; Creet and Kitzmann 2014; Innocenti 2014).

Research in psychology, epigenetics and neuroscience shows that memories can be transferred from one generation to the next, either within the same family or from generation to generation of a society. The transfer seems to be particularly pronounced when the images involve experiences that were difficult or impossible for the individual or society to handle and were, therefore, not properly addressed. In many cases, this includes traumatic experiences.

The American Psychological Association defines trauma as

> an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms.[6]

Research states that a trauma always affects an individual in one way or another, irrespective of the individual consciously remembering it. Individuals may be haunted for decades by unprocessed trauma that, among other things, can influence how events are experienced, reacted to and remembered (e.g., Shalev et al. 2000; Van der Kolk 2015; Wolynn 2017; Bourke 2005, 2014; Maté and Maté 2022). Children and grandchildren can be affected by behavioural patterns and types of stress markers which follow genetic material through conception (e.g., Yehuda and Lehrner 2018; Lehrner and Yehuda 2018; Mucci 2022).

Individual personality, character, and communication traits – among other things – are decisive in determining how exactly trauma will develop and turn out, with social and

[6] https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma (accessed 12 January 2023).

cultural frames at a particular time and place again having immense impact (e.g., Shalev et al. 2000; Danieli 1998). This is true of the first generation who experienced a trauma, as well as of the second, who is directly affected by it:

> Extreme trauma, the unmastered loss, the mute secret: all these belong to the reality of the parent generation but are transmitted into the imaginary realm of their children by means of identification. (Bohleber 2010: 69)

This means that it is the first generation – the one that experienced the trauma itself – who react to it in a certain way, whereas the second generation – their children – must relate to a reaction.

Many studies about intergenerational transfer of trauma relevant for our empirical material were conducted with Holocaust survivors and their offspring (e.g., Bar-On 1995, 1996; Wiseman et al. 2006; Gobodo-Madikizela 2021a). Furthermore, there are a number of studies on how the war traumatized the perpetrators as well, and how the descendants of those who had supported or conducted Nazi crimes coped with the emerging feelings such as anger, guilt and shame (e.g., Hirsch 2012; Horn 2021; Bohleber 2010; Fonda 2022).

Studies about intergenerational communication between Holocaust survivors and their children show how traumatic events are kept silent by the survivors themselves in an attempt to forget, to cope with the new social setting and to provide the best upbringing for their children (e.g., Bar-On 1999). The children, the second generation, clearly feel that something is being hidden from them, but are too sensitive to their parents' pain and needs to ask what exactly it is. This in turn leads to a "conspiracy of silence" that the generations silently agree on (Danieli 1998: 4), no matter how intense the emerging feelings of anger and guilt within the second generation towards the first may be, when the "tension between the 'silence' about the parents' traumatic experiences and the 'noise' of the trauma" increases (Wiseman et al. 2006: 183). Studies conducted among the families of those who had contributed directly or indirectly to Nazi crimes show many similarities in how the second generation reacts to the silence and the associated emotions – for example, related to their "inability to ask" or "not wanting to know" (Bohleber 2010: 79; Macdonald 2008). Coping with silence and secrecy are the challenges faced by the second generation, both children of the victims and children of the perpetrators, given that

> children of the perpetrators must also become carriers of a secret ensuing out of a pact of silence, a secret they are nevertheless aware of and take on unconsciously by means of identification. This secret, however, is different, stemming from an utterly different past that silently yet tyrannically intrudes into the psychic reality of the child. (Bohleber 2010: 71; Bergmann et al. 1998)

Accordingly, while both children of the victims and perpetrators express similar feelings – such as anger, shame or guilt – the background and reasons for these emotions differ to a large degree, and are inextricably linked to the surrounding society (e.g., Welzer et al. 1997; Gobodo- Madikizela 2021a; Bohleber 2010; Rzeszutek et al. 2020).

Analyses dealing with the silence that comes with the Untold approached it from several angles, and terms such as "ghosts", "shadows", and something that one is "haunted by" were used for the painful, difficult feelings that one could somehow sense, but not fully grasp. A close connection to trauma as well as the interrelation between the individual and their surroundings in joined spheres are broadly emphasised. Within cultural history, anthropology, ethnology or ethnography, trauma and silence were mainly treated as part of memories about a difficult, troubled past (e.g., Kavanagh 2000, 2002; Simon 2005; Arnold-de Simine 2013), for the most part without further focus on the many implications that working with traumatic memories can have for all those involved. It is only lately that researchers have started to examine silence as a cultural phenomenon, as an "affectively charged action purposefully stimulated and maintained to achieve – or avoid – specific effects" (Hrobat Virloget and Škrbić Alempijević 2021b: 2). Here, the focus is mainly on the mutual influence of the individual and its surroundings, often related to difficult, dissonant or sensitive cultural heritage and to letting unheard voices be heard (e.g., Macdonald 2008; Smith, Wetherell and Campbess 2018; Hrobat Virloget and Škrbić Alempijević 2021a; Hrobat Virloget 2021, 2023; Murawski 2021; Pabst 2016, 2021).

Studies within psychology and psychoanalysis, where researchers concentrated on silence and silencing as early as the 1980s, show a broad range of functions, facets and angles (e.g., Ronningstam 2021; Akhtar 2021; Dimitrijević and Buchholz 2021b). For instance, Samuel Kimbles describes how unshared memories affect and are affected by "collective shadow processes" and "phantom narratives" that provide "structure, representation, and continuity for unresolved or unworked-through grief and violence that occurred in a prior historical cultural context that continues into the present" (Kimbles 2014: 21, 42–43). Individuals are inextricably tied to them through "cultural complexes" that describe

> how deeply held beliefs and emotions operate in group life and within the individual psyche by mediating an individual's relationship to a specific group, nation, or culture […] [They] serve the basic individual need for belonging and for individual and group identity through linking personal experiences and groups experiences. (Kimbles 2014: 51, 83)

Many reasons for remaining silent or being silenced are directly related to trauma, both individual and social; as Alexandar Dimitrijević states: "Silence is rarely as present and prominent as in cases of trauma. All too often, everyone involved, victims as well as perpetrators or witnesses, avoid talking about their experiences at all costs" (Dimitrijević 2021: 198). This implies that long-term consequences of silence and silencing are unavoidable, and that the not-addressing and not-knowing continues to affect generations to come.

This can be clearly seen in many studies about long-term consequences of collective trauma after, for example, wars, forced migration, genocides or racial segregation such as apartheid (e.g., Danieli 1998; Straub and Rüsen 2010; Gobodo- Madikizela 2003; Shalev et al. 2000). These collective or group traumas affect and are affected by how individuals and societies remember history in their everyday life: "Traumatic memories and history are kept alive by continuous collective narrations as expressed through interactions, ritu-

als, ceremonies, and stories" (Kimbles 2014: 77). The most direct way of transmission, however, is from parents to children, given that "the child is a mediator for ancestral processes as socialization through identification operates on preverbal levels – in other words, implicitly and unconsciously through affect states" (Kimbles 2014: 42).

AXEL HONNETH'S THEORY OF RECOGNITION

In his major 1992 work *Kampf um Anerkennung* (The Struggle for Recognition), Axel Honneth constructs a social theory where all forms of exchange and change in social life are generated through the needs of individuals for recognition on at least three different levels: "the emotional affection we know from relations of love and friendship, lawful recognition and attachment of solidarity" (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 103), here referred to as recognition as love, recognition as an inalienable right, and recognition as solidarity. Honneth describes recognition as a fundamental, intersubjective and indispensable need common to all mankind, which is necessary for confirmation and motivation, and obtained through a mutual, social and symmetrical relationship between two or more co-acting individuals (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 73–148; Deranty 2009: 271–308; Lysaker 2010: 93–113). In line with psychoanalytical traditions, he regards interaction with others as crucial for identity-forming processes – especially the early parent-child-relations that can be found in the first category, recognition as love (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 104–116; Deranty 2009: 287–293). The very relationship between the mother or father and the child is the starting point for the process of becoming an individual, separated from, but accepted by others. Subsequently, the process of continuing individualization leads to the need to be recognized and accepted by larger and larger groups of other individuals (Pander 2017: 27). The second category, recognition as an inalienable right, lifts the perspective one level up, to individuals as citizens with elementary rights, here understood as "anonymized indices of social esteem" perceived as righteous (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 128). The third and last category of recognition, recognition as solidarity, refers to the individual's need to be part of a civil, cultural and democratic society, where each individual is valued through his/her adherence to the community (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 130–139; Deranty 2009: 300–308). Honneth describes solidarity as "one variety of a relation of interaction where subjects take part in each other's life cycles because they respect each other symmetrically" (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 137). Accordingly, adhering to shared values that most community members agree on is crucial, and acting against these values and related social norms will lead to painful reactions by other community members and, in the worst case, to social exclusion. These shared values, as well as reactions when they are violated, depend on specific frames of reference, which change continuously.

The importance of separating between oneself and others, the subject and object, and the need to be recognized by others is, as also mentioned above, regularly discussed in several fields, including psychoanalysis, pedagogy and cultural studies (Greverus 1995; Nothdurft 2007; Schaeffter 2018; Pander 2017). In all settings, applicable social and cul-

tural frames of reference influence an individual's self-image and the interaction between individuals. Honneth states that everyone expects and demands their individual needs for recognition to be fulfilled; and fulfilment usually requires that a person fight for it in one way or another because of "morally motivated social conflict" with others, who normally have different points of view or interpretations of the shared spheres (Lysaker 2010: 4; Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 101). This necessarily leads to not always getting one's needs and expectations fulfilled, which may again result in the feeling of being offended and can trigger reactions such as anger and rebellion (Honneth 2007; Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008: 101–139; Deranty 2009: 271–308; Lysaker 2010). Honneth mentions three ways of being offended: through physical violence or abuse, by contempt for a person's moral sanity by means of, e.g., fraud or judicial discrimination, and through neglecting a person's social significance by ignoring or stigmatizing them (Honneth 2009: 170). He is clear, though, that offending an individual on any of the three levels can do massive damage to his/her positive self-image and thus represent a serious threat to the individual's identity perception. If the offence leads to the feelings of intense fear, helplessness or despair, it can be experienced as traumatizing (Pander 2017: 45–48).

To sum up, a broad range of interdisciplinary studies looked into crucial parts of the Untold: memories of individuals that are too painful to share, influencing and being influenced by others that they are in an interdependent relationship with. Honneth's theory of recognition can help to shed light on the overall dependency and influence others have on the individual, and to assign these relationships to spheres that make an analysis clearer and more manageable.

The circle of influence and dependency starts with the closest relations, i.e., those who provide most essential care and are most relevant for identity-developing processes – parents and grandparents. It extends in concentric circles from family to friends, neighbours and acquaintances, to unknown others in the local society and, finally, to the nation or state.

At all times and places where particular actions are socially accepted, some memories are kept alive within families or by the majority of the local society; some parts of joint history are suppressed or highlighted, and, consequently, deviant experiences are silenced. Trauma can strengthen these processes as well as their continuation.

SUMMING UP AND ANALYSING THE FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL: THE NATURE OF THE UNTOLD, AND WHY ONE NEEDS TO KNOW

The Untold as a sphere of unshared, painful memories divides individuals and others by definition, and this separation can be found at all three Honneth's levels of recognition.[7]

[7] All quotes from the informants can also be found in the presentation of the empirical material, and their context will, therefore, not be explained again.

At the first level, recognition as love, children and parents are separated, and by extension, so are grandchildren and grandparents. All of our informants talked about feelings, and most of them were directed towards those that they were most dependent on: their parents. Researchers from several fields point to the vital importance that the child-parents relation has for identity-forming processes (e.g., Honneth 2010; Pander 2017: 46–47). The second generation wants to understand what shaped their parents and, consequently, themselves, and is, first and foremost, dependent on their parents to receive this information. "[…] I think [my father] owed me an explanation, they both did. But then I never asked for one, and that is where my guilt is buried. It seems like it is my fault that we never moved on".

In the empirical material, which largely contains narratives from descendants of Norwegians who supported or interacted with German soldiers during the German occupation of Norway, silence is particularly strong, as Werner Bohleber writes:

> If the parents' involvement in Nazi times was a taboo subject, this resulted in the children being unable to openly question and come to terms with their parents. Even when they confronted their parents with greater or lesser hostility, parental ties made them respect their taboos, so that in many families there was no footing on which a dialogue could even begin. A complete blackout on the subject was thereby enforced […] Every frightening or painful reality seems easier to bear, since it can be understood, thus helping one come to terms with the parental object. (Bohleber 2010: 71–72)

Here, challenges between generations most probably also appeared due to what Samuel Kimbles refers to as "collective shadow processes" that are related to "unresolved or unworked-through grief and violence that occurred in a prior historical cultural context that continues into the present" (Kimbles 2014: 21, 42–43). While, for example, a first-generation informant who had interacted with a soldier of the enemy troops said that "I […] did not know what my children knew. But I would have answered if they had asked, I really would have", her daughter did not even consider asking because "There was so much under the surface […] silence was everywhere. […] At home I had accepted that the silence was untouchable".

It is also here, on the first of Honneth's three levels of recognition, that the Untold, the not-sharing and not-getting-to-know, disturbs and partly impedes healthy identity-forming processes the most. To be able to develop an understanding of the "I" and "the other" one needs information about oneself and the closest carers that one must separate from – the parents. If they have information about events that shaped them and, in turn, often also the upbringing of the child (the second generation) this is important information which the child needs to develop his/her own identity. When confronted with the Untold, the second generation could *sense* that crucial events had taken place, but they did not receive the information needed to determine the relevance of the event for their own life. In this way, their needs were not met, they were not recognized by their carers and they did not receive the recognition that they needed and demanded. This offence often led to desperation, anger and rebellion: "My father certainly did […] not keep quiet to shield the

family, but to shield himself. […] He would never approach ideology and what he stood for. He never said why he had made those choices".

At the second level of importance, recognition as an inalienable right, we find the massive offence and the long-term consequences that the violation of human rights, war and forced migration can lead to (e.g., Honneth 2009; Danieli 1998; Straub and Rüsen 2010; Gobodo- Madikizela 2003; Shalev et al. 2000). Our informants were exposed to injustices committed by the state or members of the local community, and these injustices ranged from the most extreme forms of violation – as seen in the Holocaust – to expulsion from homelands to being bullied or excluded from the local society. Given that this always affected individuals on a very personal level, their children needed information to understand what exactly had happened and how it affected their carers. Children and grandchildren would often find themselves still exposed to the same injustice, for example by remaining outsiders in the local community due to nationality, last name or appearance, and could start fighting back against the state or aggressors within the surrounding society. If the event led to an immense trauma, as was the case with the Holocaust victims, all energy had to be used in the personal sphere to take in the incredible scope of injustice committed by individuals and the nation, and to resolve the consequences for one's own identity-forming processes as well as interfamily relations.

When an ancestor acted against prevailing social norms, the content and degree of his or her wrongdoing and the reactions of the central members of the social environment were of critical significance. Here, Honneth's third level of recognition, recognition as solidarity, also comes into play, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to the close relationship between an individual and its surroundings, and the need to belong to and to be recognized by a group (Honneth and Holm-Hansen 2008; Greverus 1995; Nothdurft 2007; Schaeffter 2018). Generally speaking, the less socially accepted the actions, the harsher the reactions of the local society. The strength and scope of these reactions mostly affected the reactions of those who acted in a non-acceptable manner and their descendants, directly and indirectly. For the first generation, breaking current social norms often meant physical expulsion from the family setting and social exclusion: "I had this hatred inside me, that I was a good-for-nothing. So, I became stubborn and promised myself that I should get through this on my own". This often led to feelings of shame, guilt and loneliness, which the first generation tried to cope with by shutting out their feelings and pretending not to care. This could affect the following generations directly, as they sensed that something was not coherent in their parents' or grandparents' behaviour but did not receive information enabling them to understand what they sensed. When the joint spheres where interaction took place were characterized by collective, unprocessed trauma or a strong ongoing belief in values that the parents or even grandparents might have violated, the second generation was likely not to be recognized by their carers or by their group (e.g., Olick et al. 2011b; Assmann 2006; Assmann 1999; Assmann 2010; Fukuyama 2018); or, using Honneth's levels of recognition, they were offended by both their closest carers and the group they belonged to. This could result in feelings of being

excluded from knowledge that both their parents and friends had, but would not share: "Secrets which everybody knows about, except yourself, are perhaps the worst. Because it does something to the confidence one is supposed to have in those who are one's nearest and ought to have said something", one informant explained. The empirical material suggests that the power which the local society has to increase, decrease or maintain feelings of shame, guilt or loneliness, cannot be overestimated. At the same time, interdisciplinary research clearly shows how members of the local society are also subject to group processes and long-term consequences of collective memories and collective trauma, which makes it almost impossible to challenge the silence or – even more difficult – challenge the current social norms (e.g., Macdonald 2008; Smith et al. 2018; Hrobat Virloget and Škrbić Alempijević 2021a; Hrobat Virloget 2021).

The third generation, now growing up in a time with social norms often different than those that the former generations had to abide by, and with more general information available about historical events, often found it less difficult to ask their grandparents direct questions about what had happened. This can be explained, among other things, by distance in time, social and societal changes, and less dependency on the grandparents than the parents (Honneth 2010; Pander 2017: 35). There was a clear exception to this general tendency, however, which related to the relationship between the third generation and their parents, the second generation: if the social exclusion or punishment their grandparents had suffered from led to reaction patterns that negatively affected their parents, the third generation could still feel their repercussions. In this way, social exclusion and stigmatization could have long-term consequences for at least three generations, both within families and spheres joint with members of the local community. This was especially true when the former events were still regarded as reprehensible (Honneth 2010; Pander 2017: 38). Again, an analysis of the empirical material indicates that an adequate amount of information was the crucial factor that decreased negative consequences of the Untold and led to improved family relations, even after long periods of silence:

> It was horribly painful […] Working my way through all this material has been an emotional roller coaster for me […] All in all I think I [now] understand. And if one understands, it is easier to forgive.

As for the role that trauma plays for the Untold, the collected material has its natural limitations. Taking into account the interviewers' professional background – museum employees with educational backgrounds mainly in history, ethnology, anthropology or pedagogy – as well as the methods used in all interactions with the informants, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the degree of potential trauma felt by the people we talked to or those that our informants referred to. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the immense trauma that the Holocaust caused its victims, and it is also reasonable to assume that the events that our informants talked about, such as forced migration, social punishment and exclusion from the community, led to individual and collective trauma, that still characterized their joint spheres (e.g., Danieli 1998; Shalev et al. 2000). Carefully transferred to Honneth's theory of recognition, one might also say that trauma is a reaction to a massive offence that

can happens on all three levels of recognition. This offence could be physical or mental abuse by one's own parents – the opposite of recognition as love, an individual could be exposed to massive abuse by the state – the opposite of lawful recognition, or they could be excluded from the local society, which, moreover, might punish them harshly – the opposite of recognition as solidarity (e.g., Honneth 2010; Pander 2017: 47–51).

All three generations talked about feelings such as shame, guilt, anger or loneliness. While it made a crucial difference if their relatives were exposed to injustice or themselves contributed to the injustice, the feelings of relating to something unknown and untold themselves, were often similar. Within the scope of this article it is not possible to study the mentioned feelings in depth or to compare our findings with the findings of the many studies dealing with the long-term consequences of WWII with descendants of both victims and perpetrators. Instead, I want to briefly reflect on loneliness as the one feeling most of our informants mentioned, directly or indirectly.

Loneliness is a state where one is alone and, therefore, separated from others. If loneliness was initiated by feelings such as shame or insecurity in interactions with others, our informants suffered due to a feeling of being excluded from the surroundings they wanted to belong to, and, accordingly, their need for recognition by a group was not fulfilled. In the centre of this loneliness, one finds the impossibility to communicate as needed, including communicating one's own experiences or asking for experiences of one's closest carers. This was especially painful for our informants from the second generation, as they needed information from both their closest caregivers and members of the local society to understand why the community as such reacted in the way it did:

> Before I came to know what had happened, I often felt that people knew more than I did: my friend at school, my in-laws, my uncle and other members of the family. They all knew something I did not. That made me feel uncertain […] I am still afraid that more secrets will be disclosed.

In this regard, I interpret the withholding of crucial information, for whatever reason, as an important factor in not feeling recognized, first and foremost, on two of Honneth's levels of recognition: recognition as love and recognition as solidarity. The severity of the consequences that this entailed for individuals lends credence to the conclusions of joint discussions within the *Identity on the Line* project, i.e. that personal and societal challenges for all those involved are primarily due to a former war or forced migration process not being addressed, and only secondarily due to the reason why they were not addressed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION

Knowledge differs from information, and it can be defined as "awareness, understanding, or skill that you get from experience or education. Information is the facts or details of a subject. They are related: knowledge is the knowing of something, and information is

what you can (or can't) know".[8] This difference between knowledge and information, even if not consciously communicated by our informants, could be clearly seen in the empirical material. Most of our informants described that they "sensed" the Untold and talked about a more or less undefinable feeling of a "something" that influenced them, without them being able to capture what this "something" was. This sensing can be interpreted as a form of knowledge; an awareness and understanding that can not necessarily be described in words. Information about the cause of the "sensing" was important to be able to understand and interpret the decisive event as such, and it simultaneously functioned as confirmation that the sensing had been correct. "This is exactly the crux of the second generation's difficulty", Eva Hoffman writes,

> that it has inherited not experience, but its shadows [...] something that is both very alien and deeply familiar, something that only the unconscious knows. And sometimes, it needs to be said, wrestling with shadows can be more frightening, or more confusing, than struggling with solid realities. (Hoffman 2005: 66, also quoted in Gobodo-Madikizela 2021b: 1–2)

A closer study of all the 30 testimonies shows that it was most often the mismatch between sensed, unconfirmed knowledge and the amount of information available to validate the knowledge and place it in larger settings that our informants from the second and third generation struggled with. "The feeling of knowing that something was wrong, without understanding what it was, was painful". The first generation experienced the event themselves and had both personal knowledge and factual information. If not in a helpless situation, they could choose one action over another. They also had their own moral compass telling them if an actively chosen action was in line with the current moral and social codes of the society that they were a part of. Not talking was a need to protect themselves from their own memories or the reactions of others, the feeling that nobody would understand or wanted to listen, as well as the desire to spare the people they loved the most; those who were normally found in close relationships.

To which degree the second and even the third generation suffered because of this depended on several factors. An overview of the entire empirical material reveals that the more profound and imprinting the experience (and, accordingly, the greater the impact on the individual) the greater the need for information for the following generations – and the larger the negative effects of the Untold. Both the second and the third generation knew – i.e. they had the knowledge – that there was an Untold event that affected their parents and grandparents, but they often did not have enough information to fill in the missing links or blanks in their knowledge. They had the knowledge, but they needed more information to make sense of their knowledge. The more crucial the information that was held back for identity-shaping processes, especially when one also had to cope with painful reactions from the surrounding society, the stronger the reactions to the not-

[8] Britannica Dictionary (https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/eb/qa/Knowledge-and-Information (accessed 11 January 2023)).

sharing and the more disturbed the personal relations, manifesting as anger or rebellion. It was personal information from their closest carers, their parents that our informants from the second and third generation were most dependent on.

The empirical material also reveals that certain factors determined how the second and third generation reacted towards the important information being withheld. If one was able to understand and comprehend the reason for the not-sharing and interpreted it as protection rather than disrespect and exclusion, the reactions were first and foremost positive.

> In the aftermath [of the war], I understood that these cover stories were good for me. I had friends who didn't have such cover stories, and who ended their lives as adults, shooting themselves because they couldn't cope with it anymore.

Moreover, the more loving the relationship in the first place, the more goodwill the children showed when trying to accept and understand their parents' silence or a former, negative behaviour. The more the relationship was characterized by distance, the more information was needed to be able to forgive the parents for any wrongdoing during one's upbringing. In the end, a personally satisfying amount of knowledge was significant to improve relationships and to find peace of mind: "As long as there is doubt about the truth, it becomes difficult to relate to, reconcile myself with it, and forgive".

Regarding the scope and sphere of the information needed, the analysis of our informants' narratives clearly shows that the second and third generation needed both personal and public information; personal information about what exactly happened, what it felt like and what it led to, and general public information about the event as such. Here, it was undoubtedly personal information that was mostly needed, for the reasons described above. If personal information was not available, incomplete or not in line with how the reactions of the local society were perceived, publicly available information became crucial, as an informant from the second generation told us:

> I had […] a need to investigate the story myself. I went to the archives and was allowed to see his file. In the file was his sentence […] Having read this, the story became, perhaps for the first time, solidly confirmed.

SUMMING UP AND POINTING TOWARDS FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

> Silence, at best, is ambiguous. It may protect, attack, or give consent. One may be reduced to silence either by humiliation, or out of failure to find the right word […] Persons or groups might find themselves silenced through acts of familial, cultural or political domination, even by violence. (Orange 2021: 7)

This quote by Donna Orange directly points to the nature of the Untold as an unknown, unclear and unaddressed sphere where individuals influence each other and, thus, contribute to maintaining the silence that characterizes the sphere. Collective memories, for the most

part based on collective trauma, are long-lasting and change slowly, and they have the potential to influence and silence time witnesses, their children and even grandchildren for decades. The empirical material and its analysis have shown that the Untold leads to not sharing and not receiving of information crucial for personal and societal development, as the latter depends on the individuals' contribution to change.

As mentioned initially, the empirical material is so comprehensive that the findings touched upon call for further analysis. Fields of study such as psychology, psychoanalysis and neuroscience can provide important answers to identity-forming processes and how individual feelings, memory and communications patterns can be influenced. Cultural history can help to understand societal and cultural aspects that defined the frames of reference within which individuals acted and interacted at a certain time and place. It can also help to understand the importance and role of subjective memories in societal processes and collective memory development.

Furthermore, the question of the role that information or the lack of information plays for children or grandchildren of the time witnesses requires more attention. The initial overview of the empirical material already revealed how important a certain amount of information was for our informants on a very personal level, as well as for their relations with their parents or grandparents. In all cases where relevant information was not available, the Untold led to a lack of information that demanded a lot from the following generations, in the form of extensive interpretation or research processes of the actual events. The less information was accessible and the more important it was for identity-forming processes, the greater the demand to interpret and research.

The processes were largely the same for the third and second generation, if the second generation had not tried to understand and come to terms with the untold experiences and actions of the first generation. In that case, the Untold still marked the family relations and could also be sensed by the grandchildren. Again, it was mainly the relationship between the parents and children that suffered, but it was now the relationship between the second and third generation. Why it was easier for the third generation to ask questions about the first, was explained through greater distance in time, changed social norms and a larger degree of publicly available information.

Our findings also showed that sharing information, even after painful periods of silence, led to improved family relations and most probably also contributed to improved relations within local societies. These findings should be subject to further studies as soon as possible, as they indicate new possibilities for cultural history museums to embrace their novel role as social actors in their community, and contribute to healing processes for individuals, within families and societies. The urgency of adjusting to the needs of today's societies, where millions of people suffer from long-term consequences of trauma, is well summarized by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela:

> Few topics stake a more compelling claim on humanities research than the legacies of historical trauma – the impact of mass atrocities not only on individuals and groups that

> experienced the violence directly, but also across multiple generations of the descendants of survivors. (Gobodo-Madikizela 2021b: 1)

More research into theoretical approaches as well as practical experience from the institutions and their employees is needed, but the result will be worth the effort. Museums have a unique opportunity to contribute information to identity-forming processes and to connect with informants and visitors in ways other institutions cannot. They have a large, yet unexploited potential to tell the Untellable, and to make the Untold told. Incorporating theories and approaches from other fields of study and daring to explore painful parts of our joint history are first effective steps to contribute to the healing of individual and collective trauma.

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POSLJEDICE NEIZREČENOGA I ZAŠTO SE SKRIVENO MORA SAZNATI

Ovaj se rad temelji na više od 160 osobnih narativa bivših migranata, njihove djece i unuka. Svjedočanstva koja su prikupljali kulturno-povijesni muzeji u sedam europskih država (Norveškoj, Danskoj, Švedskoj, Poljskoj, Litvi, Sloveniji i Hrvatskoj) pružaju uvid u mučne dugoročne posljedice rata i prisilnih migracija na barem tri generacije. Cilj je istraživanja bilo odrediti kako djeca i unuci mogu osjetiti ono što je neizrečeno i šutnju prve generacije – nedijeljenje onoga što su pripadnici prve generacije, kao svjedoci vremena, iskusili – te kako to može negativno utjecati na živote, obiteljske odnose i okolinu njihove djece i unuka. Rezultati ukazuju na to da druga i treća generacija osjećaju izraženu potrebu za privatnim i javnim informacijama te da dijeljenje informacija i njihovo saznavanje može biti ključ za postizanje zdravih odnosa među članovima obitelji i unutar zajednica.

Ključne riječi: šutnja, kolektivno pamćenje, teška baština, međugeneracijski prijenos traume, dugoročne posljedice rata i migracija, perspektiva triju generacija