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### *Changing Structures of the Transmission of Memory of National Socialism in Families of Nazi Perpetrators and Followers in Germany and Links this Investigation to Questions of National Identity*

This paper is based on my PhD research, which examines the changing structures of the transmission of memory of National Socialism in families of Nazi perpetrators and followers in Germany and links this investigation to questions of national identity. In particular, it looks at the grandchildren of perpetrators and followers and asks the question of how they remember their families' National Socialist past and the Third Reich and the Holocaust more generally. Unlike their parents' generation, these so-called 'third generation' Germans have grown up with a highly developed, i.e. institutionalised and ritualised, official and public as well as an increasingly transcultural or cosmopolitan Holocaust memory. Thus this paper analyses how the grandchildren's narrative family memories of National Socialism draw on and/or contest public (trans)cultural memories of the Third Reich and especially the Holocaust. Theorists of transcultural or cosmopolitan memories (Levy and Sznajder 2006; Hirsch 2008; Landsberg 2004) have remarked upon how the structure of collective memories in high modernity has changed dramatically to argue that the boundaries between 'private' family memories and public memories have become very fluid and permeable. As Marianne Hirsch (2004: 114) writes: 'family life, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in a collective imaginary shaped . . . by a shared archive of stories and images that inflect the transmission of individual and family remembrance.'

In drawing on interviews conducted with members of this 'third generation', this paper shows how tropes, narrative fragments and images that clearly derive from the context of the historical and cultural memory of the Holocaust have found their way into the family narratives of the grandchildren of Nazi perpetrators and followers and how the latter use these to illustrate their own grandparents' wartime suffering and underline their status as traumatised victims of war and expulsion. Based on this empirical analysis, this paper thus argues that the overwhelmingly positive attributes many theorists ascribe to cosmopolitan or transcultural memories and their transmission, as encouraging empathy and ethical thinking as well as 'nonessentialist nonidentity politics' (Landsberg 2004: 152), is perhaps premature and overly optimistic.

The interviews not only show how the grandchildren employ Holocaust narratives and tropes to recount their own very fragmented, silenced and nebulous Nazi family histories in a continuous and seamless way but also demonstrate how they thereby establish a form of competitive victimhood that seeks to equate victims of the Holocaust with German victims of

war. Many 'third generation' Germans thus im- or explicitly use these family stories of their grandparents' traumatic victimhood to challenge what they sense to be a predominance of representations of Jewish suffering in the German public sphere (esp. in education). Hence, this way of narrating Nazi family pasts is also an expression of a growing desire among 'third generation' Germans to reconfigure German national identity as no longer tainted by the perpetration of the singular crime of the Holocaust, but rather as marked by its own history of traumatic suffering and loss.