

TRANSMEMO The Sorrows of Belgium: WWII memories and family transmission

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Axis 3: Cultural, historical and scientific heritage





NETWORK PROJECT

TRANSMEMO

The Sorrows of Belgium: WWII memories and family transmission

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ABSTRACT

Scholarly literature from different academic disciplines has repeatedly confirmed that the Second World War was the main dividing historical event that caused political, cultural and social conflict in 20th century Belgium, but also led to the creation of the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities as different communities of memory, reinforcing the (political, cultural) cleavages between both. By using the angle of family memory transmission, this interdisciplinary research investigates the creation and consolidation of both family and collective memories, the parallels between historical narratives of existing interviews and family memories among several generations, and the conditions for stimulating reconciliation processes between different groups with different memories.

Interviews with 194 participants from 77 different families; individual and triadic interviews with three participating families and a quantitative survey among 922 French-speaking and Dutch-speaking Belgians of all generations confirm that the issue of collaboration during WWII still divides the Belgian society and underline the added value of a multilevel approach in the understanding of social psychological phenomena. The results underline the added value of a multilevel approach in the understanding of social psychological psychological phenomena.

1. INTRODUCTION

75 years after the liberation, historians, psychologists and political scientists of the TRANSMEMO research team investigated how Belgian families with a collaboration or resistance past during WWII remember and experienced the war and its aftermath. They interviewed about 200 members of 77 families about their memories of the war. They aimed to answer a series of questions, such as : How is the memory of war passed on from generation to generation until today? Does the weight of the past diminish or is society still struggling with the war? How does the past live on both sides of the language border?

2. STATE OF THE ART AND OBJECTIVES

There is a considerable and varied body of literature analysing the 'divided WW II-memories of Belgium' in a broad sense. The main focal points remain political and social divisions and the nature of the fragmentation of memories (Gotovitch and Kesteloot, 2002; Lagrou, 1999; Tollebeek, Deneckere et al., 2008; Benvindo and Peeters, 2011; special issue of the *Journal of Belgian History*, 2012, 2-3). In recent years, there were also new attempts to envision the tensions between conflicting collective memories from a more psychological perspective (Luminet et al., 2012) insisting on stereotypes feeding diverging collective memories (Klein et al., 2012), unconscious defense mechanisms such as repression and dissociation (Heenen-Wolff et al., 2012) and cognitive mechanisms such as the paradoxical memory effects related to action and inaction (retrieval-induced forgetting) (Hirst and Fineberg, 2012).

There remain, however, many unanswered questions on the exact mechanisms of memory transmission. Although some work exists (Stone et al., 2014), one of the essential gaps concerns the issue of intergenerational transfer of memories. This research investigated how conflicting memories survive and are sustained through the narratives of descendants of both resistance members and collaborators, in both constitutive communities of Belgium. To understand the durability and resilience of these diverging memories in Belgium, we needed to look at intergenerational, intrafamilial transmission. Family is to be analysed as the intermediary between individual or autobiographical memory on the one hand and cultural memories on the other hand (Welzer et al., 2002). While previous research mainly focused on macro-level representations of the past, this research project adopted a micro-level analysis by examining the actual mechanisms of this memory transmission from below.

TRANSMEMO has sought answers to three scientifically and socially important questions about the transmission of WWII memories in families and society.

- 1. What is the role of intergenerational, intrafamilial memory transmission in the creation and consolidation of both family and collective, public memories? Are there differences between Flanders and French-speaking Belgium? Are there differences between families where the war generation was either a member of the resistance or a collaborator? How do these factors (the linguistic community or family type) influence the range and content of the transferred memories?
- 2. Are there parallels between the historical narratives of existing interviews and those we detect in the family memories of children and grandchildren? If so, what does this say about the connection between the individual and the collective and between communicative and cultural memory (Assman and Assmann, 1988; Assman, 1992).
- 3. What are the conditions that can stimulate or prevent the reconciliation processes between different groups with different memories?

These are ambitious questions that our research has not been able to answer definitively. During the project, the scope was adjusted in function of the collected data. For example, it turned out to be much more difficult than expected to find participants in French-speaking Belgium willing to take part in the study. In particular, far fewer testimonies from families with three generations were processed, making intergenerational analyses more difficult.

The importance of the study and the need for follow-up workis demonstrated by the large social response. TRANSMEMO is at the basis of radio and television programs in Flanders and French-speaking Belgium that had a large reach and generated a lot of media attention. It ensured an unexpectedly large dissemination of the research results, but it also demanded a lot of time and energy from the TRANSMEMO team.

3. METHODOLOGY

TRANSMEMO is first and foremost an interdisciplinary project consisting of historians, political scientists, and social and cognitive psychologists. Together, our main objective was to examine the intergenerational transmission of memory in families with an ancestor who either resisted during WWII or was accused of collaboration after the war in Belgium. Designing a shared methodological approach was a first and important challenge to tackle. It took quite a few meetings before we finally created a methodology that was mature and workable for everyone. The most difficult thing was to find a good balance in the questions we wanted to ask the respondents. Each discipline had to deal with certain topics, but we did not want to overburden the interviewees with too many questions. Our methodology ultimately consisted of questionnaires, participants information forms and semi-structured interviews, so that researchers from the different disciplines could analyse the data according to their field's tradition of research.

As such, we created a unique, shared method for an interdisciplinary investigation on the same pool of subjects divided in four focus groups:

- Families of the Resistance in French-speaking Belgium (RF)
- Families of the Collaboration in French-speaking Belgium (CF)
- Families of the Resistance in Dutch-speaking Belgium (RD)
- Families of the Collaboration in Dutch-speaking Belgium (CD)

Our initial aim was to meet 20 families for each of our four identified groups and interview three members of different generations within each family. For the rest of this report, we will refer to each generation by their number: Generation 0 (G0) being the collaborator or the member of the Resistance, Generation 1 (G1) their child, Generation 2 (G2) their grandchild and Generation 3 (G3) their great-grandchild.

3.1. Procedure and Materials

Participants were contacted via word of mouth, personal contacts of members of the research team, social media, by the press and through advertisement in the CEGESOMA newsletter. We allowed families to select themselves the participating members as long as they were over 15 years of age and did not suffer from any memory-related disorders. Participants were first contacted by telephone or by mail so that we could explain our project to them and the research procedure, and we agreed on a meeting time and date.

About a week prior to the face-to-face interview, participants received by mail a *questionnaire* and a *participant information form*. The *questionnaire* contained a series of closed questions (i.e., questions where the participant chooses one of the proposed answers) derived from the social psychology and cognitive psychology literature. These questions covered topics such as participants' knowledge of the collaboration, the resistance and their family past; their perception of the suffering during or after the war and to the present day whether for their

family, the group of collaborators, the group of resistance members or the Belgian civilians in general; whether they felt that the resistance and the collaboration were justified or necessary during the war and received the appropriate treatment after the war; their political prospects for the future of the country and their level of social identification with Belgium. The *participant information form* gathered data about the participant (socio-demographic data, socio-political affiliations, etc.) and their ancestor (socio-demographic data, socio-political affiliations, and their involvement before, during and after WWII).

On the agreed upon day, interviewers met with participants, usually in their home. For the Dutch-speaking families, interviewers were students following the seminar on oral history at UGent. For the French-speaking families, interviewers were three of TRANSMEMO postdocs (Pierre Bouchat, Aline Cordonnier and Florence Rasmont) and three masters students working on their masters' thesis under Aline Cordonnier's supervision.

Before starting the interview, we provided participants with a short explanation of the project and we reviewed with them the two conventions they could sign: one about their agreement to participate in our study, be recorded and offer their testimony to the archives, and one about the use of their interview for communication, reproduction and diffusion purposes.

The interview was done individually and tape-recorded. There were four main subsections to the semi-structured interview: (a) family relationships, (b) family historical knowledge, (c) memory and sources of their knowledge and (d) conclusion.

- (a) Family relationships: after briefly introducing themselves, participants helped us draw their family tree. This exercise allowed the interviewer to get a good understanding of the different family links and also to have a useful support to rely on for the rest of the interview. Then, participants indicated their relationships with the other members of the family that would participate in the project using an adapted version of the IOS scale (Aron et. al., 1992). Finally, they also indicated how often they saw each other and talked about their past together.
- (b) Family historical knowledge: before discussing what participants knew about their family history of what happened before, during and after the war, we asked them to narrate a single story/anecdote in relation with G0 and the resistance/the collaboration. For younger generations, we also asked them whether they could tell us in their own words the anecdote chosen by the parent/grandparent. After each anecdote, we asked participants to tell us about their emotional state by filling in a scale listing 16 different emotions.

The rest of the section was an open discussion following a relative linear fashion, pointed out by the analytical findings in a thematic issue on oral history and the deconstruction of memories in Belgium (Wouters and Aerts eds., 2014 92-2). The conversation starts with the life of the family before the war, then the way they experienced the war itself, how they got enrolled in the resistance or what they did to collaborate with the Germans, before discussing the repression and the evolution of

their family after the war. We also discussed with them more general topics, such as their opinion on the Royal Question and the amnesty for collaborators.

Memory and sources of their knowledge: we then talked about how these family memories were discussed, transmitted and perceived within the different generations. We asked them where they got their knowledge of the war (was it from other family members or from external sources) and how often they talked about that past in their family. We also discussed other modes of transmissions, such as museum visits or watching movies about WWII.

(c) Conclusion: we ended the interview by asking participants how important this family past and its transmission to the next generation was and why. Finally, we thanked participants for their time.

These recordings were then transcribed verbatim. All paper documents were scanned. We then created participant files with the audio recording, the transcriptions and the scans that were donated to the CEGESOMA archives, added to the already rich wealth of preserved Belgian war heritage oral sources.

3.2. Participants

Overall, we met with 194 participants from 77 different families (see Table 1 for a summary of demographic data). Our initial aim was to meet 20 families for each of our four focus groups (resistance and collaboration in Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium) and interview three members of different generations within each family. There are two main reasons why we could not reach our initial goal of 240 interviews.

First, we did not reach the objective with regards to the Dutch-speaking families, as only 31 families (93 participants) were interviewed. Data collection relied on the students following the seminar on oral history in the second semester of each academic year at UGent and the classes were smaller than previous years. However, this was not deemed as a problem as Koen Aerts and Bruno De Wever had already collected a lot of similar data in the previous years that were used in parallel to inform the historical analysis.

Second, with regards to the French-speaking families, it became quickly apparent that we would not be able to reach 20 "complete" families (i.e., where three different generations agree to talk to us) in the collaboration group. Within this sample, researchers were only able to recruit one family where three generations were aware of their grandfather's collaboration and agreed to express themselves on the subject. This phenomenon is the result of a real uneasiness within the other families, often characterized either by a deep silence or lively debates on the subject of collaboration. This difficulty was not encountered on the Dutch-speaking side, which in itself offers both an interesting point of comparison and an empirical result of our study.

A consequence of this issue was that we ended up with a G1 much younger on average for our CF group than for any other group. This means that the oldest children (G1) of collaborators are rare in our sample. Those who agreed to testify are those born after the war, which explains why their average age is close to that of the generation of grandchildren (G2) in other groups. In other words, witnesses who have a personal memory of their parent's actions during the war are rarely willing to speak out. On the contrary, we were contacted by a majority of people born after the war in families where collaboration was a taboo subject. These people often seek to document their parent's story and understand family silences.

TABLE I Demographic Data

	French-speaking			Dutch-speaking		
Generation	Participants	Mean age (SD)	Gender (F-M)	Participants	Mean age (SD)	Gender
Resistance	23 families - 64 participants			17 families - 50 participants		
G0	4	94 (1,7)	1 F – 3 M	8	94 (2,4)	1 F – 7 M
G1	24	80 (9,7)	14 F – 10 M	16	77 (12,9)	6 F – 10 M
G2	20	53 (10,8)	9 F – 11 M	17	47 (12,4)	9 F – 8 M
G3	16	28 (7,1)	9 F – 7 M	9	28 (7,2)	5 F – 4 M
Collaboration	aboration 23 families - 64 participants		14 families - 43 participants			
G0	0			1	95	1 F
G1	14	67 (7,6)	8 F – 6 M	14	85 (5,8)	8 F – 6 M
G2	18	50 (15,1)	8 F – 10 M	15	57 (6,4)	8 F – 7 M
G3	5	29 (14,5)	4 F – 1 M	13	38 (18,1)	6 F – 7 M
TOTAL	101	57 (22,2)	53 F – 48 M	93	61 (24,0)	44 F – 49 M

3.3. Additional data

Furthermore, some additional data were collected through other means. As already mentioned above, previous interviews of children and grandchildren of collaborators and members of the resistance done by Koen Aerts, Bruno De Wever and their students were used to inform the historical analysis of memory transmission within families.

Pierre Bouchat also carried out a large-scale quantitative survey among 922 French-speaking and Dutch-speaking Belgians of all generations to obtain broader baseline data for the context of the TRANSMEMO project. Questions about attitudes towards collaboration and amnesty were of particular interest for our project.

Florence Rasmont organised some additional individual and triadic (three family members together) interviews with three participating families in the context of her podcast project "Les Transmission: La Guerre en Héritage".

Finally, Aline Cordonnier contacted TRANSMEMO's participants after the study day at the Senate to better understand how their participation to the project had impacted them and their family and to gather some feedback on their experience during the study day.

3.4. Data analyses

Data were analysed through multiple prisms. Koen Aerts conducted historical analyses at the macro level, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand how collective memories shared at a cultural level can interfere with the private sphere of family remembering. Florence Rasmont conducted historical analyses at the micro level (families and their members) using, among others, case analysis techniques and parts of the historical narratives of existing interviews. Aline Cordonnier examined the transmission of memory across generations through a cognitive psychology perspective, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative analyses. Pierre Bouchat approached the data from a social psychology angle with quantitative analyses of the macro level. Finally, Aline Cordonnier collected follow-up data to measure the impact our research and the study day at the Senate had on our participants and their families.

4. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Analyses of TRANSMEMO data from a psychological perspective

Eight main research questions were analysed from a psychological perspective in the context of peer-reviewed articles, master theses or presented at the study day in the Senate. In this section, we will briefly review the main findings of each research question.

A. Attitudes towards collaboration and amnesty (Bouchat et al., 2020)

As a first step, we ran a large online survey in order to appraise the attitudes towards the collaboration of individuals from the main Belgians communities. This survey conducted on 922 Belgian French- and Dutch-speaking participants showed that, overall, Dutch-speakers perceive collaboration as more moral and support amnesty of the former collaborators at a higher level than their Francophone counterparts. In addition, we showed that these attitudes were predicted by the generational belonging, linguistic, and national identity of the participants. Finally, we found that attitudes towards WWII collaboration were linked to specific political prospects for the future of the country only among Dutch-speakers. These findings suggest that 75 years after its end, the issue of collaboration during WWII still divides Belgian society. Furthermore, they underline the added value of a multilevel approach in the understanding of social psychological phenomena.

B. Perceived victimisation of collaborators, members of the resistance and Belgian civilians (Cordonnier, 2019)

As a follow-up to the macro study on attitudes towards collaboration (see point A), we wanted to examine the ways TRANSMEMO participants perceived the suffering of their families but also collaborators, members of the resistance or Belgian civilians during and after the war and nowadays. For each of these categories, participants indicated whether they agreed or not (on a scale from 1: not at all to 5: completely) with the statement: "I feel like, during WWII, my family/the collaborators/the members of the resistance/Belgian civilians particularly suffered" or "my family/the collaborators/the members of the resistance/Belgian civilians still suffer nowadays about what happen during or after WWII". These analyses were conducted with the data available at the time on all groups (i.e., RF - RD - CF - CD) and presented during our study day at the Senate.

Results show that all groups agreed on certain measures. They all agreed that Belgian civilians suffered moderately during or just after WWII and that today they feel little suffering. They also confirmed that, like other Belgians, their own family feels little suffering today. On the other hand, we found significant differences across groups on the suffering experienced during or after the war.

First, families linked to the collaboration (CF and CD) only moderately agreed that members of the resistances suffered during WWII, whereas families linked to the resistance (RF and RD) strongly agreed with it. Of all the groups, it is the CD families who thought that the members of the resistance suffered less and the CF families who thought that the resistance fighters suffered more. With regards to the suffering experienced by collaborators, only one group stands out: the CD families felt that collaborators suffered a great deal during or after the war, even more than the members of the resistance. But what is particularly interesting is that, when asked whether their families had suffered greatly, the same participants indicated that they had not. We suggest two possible explanations (not mutually exclusive) for these results. First, it is quite possible that our sample is simply not representative and that the families we met were not the ones who suffered the most after the war. The second possibility is that there is a discrepancy between historical beliefs and family experiences. In other words, due to collective memory associated with the collaboration in Flanders (see the historical analyses), participants held the belief that there was a strong repression against Dutchspeaking collaborators after the war and thus, that collaborators suffered a lot. Yet, such experiences of suffering were not part of their family narratives.

C. The heroisation and victimisation of family ancestors that either resisted or collaborated during WWII (De Bock et al., 2019)

Heroisation and victimisation are two opposite yet complementary concepts. The first one was mostly discussed within the work of Welzer (2005) under the term "cumulative heroisation". Welzer's study on descendants of former members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party highlighted how family memories are often remembered in a more positive light by younger generations. The second relates to a wider field of research in social sciences that examines collective victimhood and its relation to memory and attitudes (Bouchat et al., 2015).

In this research, we wondered whether we would find a phenomenon of cumulative heroisation within the French-speaking families associated with the resistance. Participants of this group (RF) were asked whether, in their opinion, their ancestor was a hero. Qualitative analyses showed that there were no differences across generations. Often, not all family members would agree on the hero status of their ancestor. Furthermore, the heroisation that we found across all members in some families was not linked to a better knowledge of the family past. In some families, the cult of hero was maintained through vivid and constant retellings that became family myths. In other families, younger generations knew very little but still considered their ancestor a hero.

As a second step, we also investigated the figure of G0 as a victim in both resistance and collaboration families (RF and CF). Within the resistance group, we do not find any differences across generations. If participants see their ancestor as a victim less often than as a hero, it is not completely uncommon either. About one third of participants indicated that, for them, their ancestor was a victim. The reasons that they give are, however, fairly different from person to person. However, most participants within the collaboration group (CF) indicated that, for them, their ancestor was a victim. The victimhood of G0 was generally explained in one of two ways. The first is to provide justifications to G0's acts of collaboration. These include personal characteristics, financial needs, third party influence and the political context. The second way is to talk about the post-war period, mainly invoking the sanction (miscarriage of justice, too strong, unjustified), the political context and the outcome of the war.

D. The consequences of a family past of collaboration on relationships, representations and memory (Darcis et al., 2020)

Seventy-five years after the end of the Second World War, the collaboration of francophone Belgians with the Germans is still a sensitive subject in Wallonia. Lack of knowledge of historical facts, feelings of shame, desire to protect loved ones are some of the many factors that can explain the perpetuation of silence among families. The aim of this research is to focus on the families of former French-speaking collaborators (CF) to study the impact collaboration may have had on individual perceptions, relationships and family historical memories. With the use of qualitative analysis on the interviews done with the CF families with at least two members, we examined the following questions: How is the collaborator perceived today by his children and grandchildren? How does the relationship between ancestor and descendant affect individuals and their perception of familial and historical events? How does this specific family history, often kept secret, impact future generations?

Results showed that family relationships played a particularly important role in the ways family stories are told. There seems to be a connection between the way participants perceive their ancestor, how they acquire historical knowledge and their use of justifications to explain the events that transpired during the war. When participants reported having had a good relationship with G0, they were more likely to know the family past directly from him and showed more confidence in their knowledge. They also provided similar justifications across

generations that seemed more grounded in their discourse. On the other hand, families with a rather difficult, tense or changing relationship tended to give hesitant, extrapolative and interpretive justifications. Moreover, we found that family relationships are particularly linked to the way an individual copes with family secrets or with the cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) of having a father or grandfather (often dearly loved) that collaborated with the enemy.

E. The transmission of family historical memories across three generations (Cordonnier et al., 2020)

Collective memory of historical events can be transmitted in two ways: through cultural memory but also through communicative memory, shared by people who have lived through these particular times (Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995). The main aim of our research was to examine the extent to which communicative memory of lived historical events was transmitted across multiple generations when the events have a positive connotation within the group. In this study, we asked participants from the French-speaking resistance group (RF) to choose an anecdote about their ancestor in relation to the resistance and retell it in detail. As a second step, we tested whether the middle and youngest generations could recall the same anecdote as the one provided by the oldest generation. All narratives were transcribed and coded for level of elaboration.

Overall, resistance memories seem to be transmitted across more generations than found by other studies on more general family historical memories (Stones et al., 2014), suggesting that the content of the memory and the role the memory might play in shaping family identity may matter. But we also need to emphasise that many of the third-generation participants did not have access to the retold memories of the oldest generation, and what they did remember spontaneously did not have the same level of detail as we observed in the middle generation memories. In this regard, our results provide some evidence that communicative memory may have a shorter lifespan than initially suggested by Assmann (2011), even in instances, as was the case for the present study, when the chances of finding robust intergenerational transmission are maximised.

Within our RF sample, we also found three cases that could be considered "family myth", where all generations interviewed could tell that particular story with many details. These three "myths" were different in content: one was a narrative of a dangerous – yet heroic – act that was a close call but had a happy ending; one was comical; another traumatic. What they have in common in the high emotional content, which highlights the important role of emotions in memory transmission.

F. The role of relationships in the transmission of family historical memories (Wéry et al., 2019)

This research focused once more on the transmission of memory within Belgian Frenchspeaking families whose ancestor carried out acts of resistance. The aim of the research was to investigate whether the quality of family and inter-individual relationships affected the degree of family historical transmission. In other words, this study builds up on the data and the results discussed above and adds a new variable to the analyses: the interpersonal relationship.

To measure relationships, participants indicated how close they were with the other participating members of their family and with their family in general, using an adapted version of the IOS scale (Inclusion of Other in Self; Aron et al., 1992). We also measured participants' pride towards their family and how important it was for them to belong to their family. The low and non-significant correlations between all of these measures and measures of memory transmission showed that the relationship did not enhance or hinder the transmission of elaborate anecdotes from one family member to the next. Some families were close but knew little about their past, while others were more distant but were very aware of what had happened during WWII.

G. The functions of family historical memories (de Lantsheere et al., 2020)

Much research in cognitive psychology has examined the functions of autobiographical memory. The most known model proposes three functions: self, social and directive (Alea and Bluck, 2003). Studies on collective memories have also suggested three major functions: group identity, intra-group relationship and world interpretation (Hilton and Liu, 2017; Hirst et al., 2018). It is thus easy to draw a parallel between the functions of these two types of memories. However, no research has yet investigated the functions of vicarious memories (recollections people have of salient life episodes that were told to them by another person, such as a friend or family member; Pillemer et al., 2015) and more specifically of family historical memories. In this study, we asked participants from the French-speaking sample (CF and RF) whether it was important for them to know and transmit their family stories about the war and why. Answers were coded as serving personal or collective functions. Within these two categories (personal vs collective), functions were coded as self, social and directive.

We found that family historical memories served first and foremost a role at the personal (individual and family) level, more so than at the collective level. Interestingly, collective functions were found more often within families associated with the resistance than families associated with the collaboration, whereas personal functions were proposed more often within families associated with the collaboration. In other words, memories of the collaboration served mostly personal functions (knowing the family past) whereas memories of the resistance served both personal functions and collective functions. We did not find evidence of differences across generations.

Overall, these war-related family stories generally helped our participants to create their personal and family identity. This is the most important function reported by all participants. In the resistance group, another major function was the directive function at the collective level. Knowing their family past helped them understand the way the world is today and guided the way they thought people should behave in the future. For some, it also provided them with a sense of group identity with other families sharing a similar resistant path. For the collaboration

group, these memories helped them better understand their families and the relationships between the different members.

Finally, a few participants suggested reasons why their family past was not important to them. The most important reason was the lack of personal interest for these memories or that it occurred too long ago to matter. But some also suggested that their ancestor had a right to stay silent or indicated that this past was too emotional to share.

H. The impact of a research such as TRANSMEMO on emotions and memory transmission (Van der Wilt et al., 2020)

During the interview process, we, the TRANSMEMO researchers, felt like participants were particularly open with us and shared very intimate parts of their life. Furthermore, many participants also indicated that they rarely (if not never) had the chance to discuss this family past at length with someone interested in their story. We knew that talking with health professionals, during therapy for example, was beneficial for patients, bringing them many positive impacts. However, we did not know whether scientific research could bring these same benefits. Consequently, we decided to attempt to measure the impact TRANSMEMO had on its participants.

We collected data a few weeks after our study day at the Senate. Forty-three participants from the French-speaking TRANSMEMO sample (CF and RF) answered questions about the emotions (pride, admiration, admiration, shame, anger, sadness, anxiety and guilt) they experienced about their family past *before* the interview, *just after* the interview and *now* (at the time they filled the questionnaire). We also asked them whether participating in the TRANSMEMO project had an impact on the family transmission of the war past.

Results showed a decrease in all negative emotions over time. In the resistance group (RF), only the emotion of sadness was experienced before the TRANSMEMO project. Participants indicated feeling less sad after than they did originally. In the collaboration group (CF), all negative emotions were experienced originally and, more importantly, all decreased over time, particularly the emotions of shame and guilt, two emotions that are generally difficult to share socially. Furthermore, all participants from the collaboration group (CF) indicated that participating in the TRANSMEMO project facilitated the discussion about their past within their family. It also helped the discussion with the resistance group (RF) but to a lesser extent, maybe because they already talked about it freely beforehand. Overall, this study shows that the TRANSMEMO project had a positive impact on its participants, whether by decreasing negative emotions or facilitating family transmission.

4.2. Analyses of TRANSMEMO data from a historical perspective

A. Dutch-speaking sample (Aerts, 2018; Aerts and Meerpoel, 2020)

As part of the TRANSMEMO project, interviews with Flemish children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of collaboration and resistance families were conducted at the History Department of Ghent University during the academic years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Carried out by third bachelor students, this approach had the advantage of generating a heterogeneous group of respondents. The students often used their own network, which on the one hand leads to a broader recruitment (students come from different regions, have different backgrounds, ...) and on the other hand to a higher willingness to collaborate as personal contacts increase the willingness of the respondent. The creation of this collection and the coordination of these exercises, in the context of our project, has led to fundamental results in several areas. It concerns both the building up of expertise and useful experiences in a continuous learning and research process as well as the concrete scientific output and social dissemination of results.

Although the sample of 93 interviews is too limited to be statistically representative to make firm statements about the general dynamics of the transmission of the past, a first quantitative survey of the dataset proved to be promising. In an internal report, the analysis of the completed *questionnaires* and the *participant information forms* already uncovered substantial patterns or intriguing recurrences and correlations between, for example, the transmitted past and the actual political commitments or voting behaviour (Aerts and Meerpoel, 2020).

Of the 93 respondents, 24 did not answer the question about their political preference (16 respondents from the resistance group and 8 respondents from the collaboration group). Therefore, the population consists of only 69 respondents. Of the few respondents who listed two parties, we have taken the party/ideology for which they most recently voted or would vote. The analysis shows a demonstrable difference between the voting behaviour of the two groups. Among respondents with a family history of collaboration, 64% voted for a Flemishnationalist party, as opposed to only 15% of respondents with a family history of resistance. The voting pattern among respondents with a history of resistance is mainly determined by a dominant CD&V (28%), followed by 'liberal' (18%), N-VA (15%), Groen (12%) and 'neutral' (18%). A first qualitative discourse analysis of the interviews shows that the participants with a Flemish-nationalist political preference from both groups – collaboration and resistance – have more similarities in their memories and evaluation of the war years than participants with other political preferences. This first puncture of the sources confirms the value - and is therefore delivering an important result - of the project itself, namely: the creation of a very relevant collection of oral sources that allow to shed a different light both on the actual history of the occupation period and on the intergenerational, family transmission of the memory of war in particular. It ensures future academic, original research for years by providing hundreds of pages of both prosopographic data and complete life stories related to that war past. The in-depth analysis of these narratives themselves in particular deserves further attention, especially as far as the resistance families are concerned. These sources will be further

explored and valorised both in new research for master's theses and in ongoing doctoral research (Babette Weyns, 2018-2022).

The analysis of the Flemish collaboration families and their narratives has already been partly incorporated in a book (Koen Aerts, 2018) based among others on the badge of sources collected in the first year of TRANSMEMO – and confirmed by a comparison a posteriori with the second badge of sources as registered in 2018-2019. It shows how the social frameworks of the family memory are interfering with the political instrumentalization of the war in the public debate of Flanders in both directions. An extensive discourse analysis of the transfer of memories within families related to the resistance should make clear whether and how this reciprocal influence is measurable there as well.

B. French-speaking sample (Rasmont, 2021)

Florence Rasmont preferred to adopt an inductive approach, starting from the constitution of family monographs and micro-scale analysis. In the French-speaking sample, we found a common pattern for the majority of families in the "resistance" group (RF). The transmission of family narratives on the subject is characterised by a progressive depoliticisation of the G0 experience, but also by a decontextualisation of the facts. Concrete information such as the name of the network (Independence Front, Secret Army, intelligence networks, etc.) is rarely known by the younger generations, nor is this information valued by the older generation. On the contrary, resistance tends to be perceived as a set of actions that are independent of political, social and historical logics, and carried out solely to defend consensual values such as freedom or democracy. In order to understand this phenomenon, Florence Rasmont has taken an interest in the process of transmission in one family in particular.

This family was selected for several reasons. First of all, the family is composed of four generations who knew each other as adults (the G3 was already 21 years old when the G0 died). In addition, the G0 played a very important role in the daily education of each generation of the family. It is a family in which dialogue and exchange on the facts of resistance have been constant and recurrent over time.

Secondly, it is a family whose G0 remained a political activist until his death. Member of the communist resistance during the war, he remained in the party until the organisation was dissolved in 1995. His daughter (G1) and granddaughter (G2) both attended communist youth movement. There is therefore a continuity between the G0's political involvement during the Second War and his political involvement in the post-war period when he became a grandfather and great-grandfather.

Finally, this family was selected because, despite all the above points, the two younger generations had very little knowledge and interest in the communist nature of their GO's resistance. At the centre of the family narrative, the resistance and political commitment of the G0 was largely overshadowed by another, more consensual theme: the deportation and survival of the G0 in the Mauthausen concentration camp. Despite all the factors favouring a

situated and informed transmission of the G0's resistance, this family nevertheless follows the trend of the majority of other families. The family heritage linked to the resistance is depoliticised and above all perceived through its consensual values.

It should be noted that this family is also the one who participated in the radio series project "Les transmissions", directed by Florence Rasmont and Guillaume Abgrall as part of the *Valorisation Act*. On this occasion, Florence Rasmont obtained the manuscript of the G0 memoirs. She also mobilised a former G0 interview done by a CegeSoma historian in 1981. This means that there was a first-person account of four generations in the same family. Above all, the production of the series gave rise to a collective recording of the family. From a scientific point of view, this recording was instructive, as it offered the possibility of observing a collective dynamic less obvious through individual interviews. These different stages of work have led to the creation of a "family monograph".

To construct her analysis, Florence Rasmont drew on reflections developed by French sociology on the relationship between family, transmission and narratives of the past (Bourdieu, 1993; Pagis, 2014; Billaud et. al, 2015). In this corpus of literature, the production of family stories is envisaged as an extension of classical anthropological and sociological theories of the family. The family is defined as a group of people who carry a common heritage, whether material or symbolic. These transmissions ensure the reproduction of the social, cultural, political and financial capital of a family or its members. However, the interest in transporting a heritage may vary according to the societal context, which may diminish or increase the interest in that heritage. As a result, the production of family stories is constantly caught at the centre of wider social and power relations. This explains why the production of family stories, just like the transmission of material goods, has the potential to unite families, or on the contrary to divide them. It also explains why family histories evolve over time. They are transformed or forgotten.

The analysis focuses on the evolution of the memory of the resistance of the family according to three points:

- The sociological profile of G1, G2 and G3 and their life course. On this point, Florence Rasmont notes that the working class and communist milieu in which the G0 grew up has been considerably transformed over the generations. To explain this, Florence Rasmont identifies macro factors (de-industrialisation of Belgium and the Cold War) and micro factors (marriages, working life, maternity, etc.). Thus, the G3, born a few years before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the PCB, no longer belongs to the same political trend as its great-grandfather. The increasingly distant relationship of each generation to this communist heritage could therefore explain why the interest in a more "political" version of the facts of resistance is greatly diminishing.
- The participation of the family in commemorations and rites related to the memory of the deportation. From the 1970s onwards, the G0 became involved in the "Amicale des anciens de Mauthausen", in parallel with its trade union and political activities. For the

rest of the family, this investment resulted in numerous family trips to the Mauthausen camp. These rituals became more intense over time as PCB-related activities gradually disappeared. Florence Rasmont concludes that these family rituals were more effective in building a common heritage, than other traces left behind by the G0 (notably her autobiography published by a communist party not-for-profit organisation). Florence Rasmont also points out that the friendships of former deportees have tended to present increasingly consensual discourses and tools over time, undoubtedly helping to influence the family's relationship with its resistant past.

Finally, Florence Rasmont turned her attention to the dynamics specific to the family. She shows the great disparity between the narrative of G1 - born before the war and for whom her father's resistance was a painful first-person experience - and the narratives of G2 and G3, which, on the contrary, have inherited already "constituted", heroic and positive memories. Above all, Florence Rasmont shows how this divergent relationship to the event also reflects real tensions between the different members of the family, who also feel they have different ideas of what a "good family" is. In this family configuration, G1 is isolated from the coalition formed by G2 and G3. This "coalition" is paradoxically formed by two women with very different political views. According to Florence Rasmont, the family configuration would therefore fuel the need to cultivate a more consensual and "a-political" memory of the G0, whose heroic history serves as an intangible heritage for the family.

4.3. Recommandations

A. Further research based on the TRANSMEMO project.

One of the major lessons learned regards the need to extend the duration of research projects. Collecting data on sensitive and even sometimes explosive issues, dealing with the methodological challenges of interdisciplinarity, and ensuring appropriate dissemination of the lessons learned, take time. As the experience of the TRANSMEMO team shows, a two-year duration allowed the establishment of a frame and an initial series of analyses. However, it did not allow to find and convince the expected number of French-speaking families, let alone carry out complexe qualitative and interdisciplinary analyses on such rich data. In order to obtain structural results, it is recommended to continue this project and take it as a basis for further research devoted to the intergenerational transmission of memories after a war:

- Reflexivity: what is the impact of this kind of research on the individuals and families who do accept to take part in the process? Does it contribute to alleviating the weight of the past? If yes, to what extent? If no, why, and what should be absolutely adjusted in order not to harm?
- Political impact: is there any correlation between specific family trajectories and current political preferences? If yes, comparative analyses of such correlation should be encouraged.

- Broadening of the issue: rather than concentrating on families only, it is decisive to analyze transmission processes within associations, networks and political parties.

The research clearly revealed an unknown phenomenon in French-speaking Belgium, namely the survival of family solidarity networks of former collaborators after the war. From this point of view, the phenomenon is the same as that observed by Koen Aerts in Flanders. In the case of our corpus, this phenomenon particularly concerns the former Walloon legionnaires of Léon Degrelle. Entire families lived in isolation after the war, led by men who had just left prison and who only found employment in companies that were themselves run by former collaborators they had met in prison. The solidarity was real and probably comparable to the solidarity studied in Flanders by Koen Aerts. However, unlike in Flanders, the phenomenon seems to have been limited to the generations that were adults during the war. In the families studied on the French-speaking side, the following generations rejected this primary political socialisation in favour of opposing political postures. But at this stage, the number of families concerned that we have been able to study is too small and does not allow us to draw firm conclusions. A broader study would undoubtedly allow us to recruit families with a different evolution. Future research could also, by delving deeper into this question, try to understand the mechanisms by which generations are politically transformed. It is possible that family stories and the construction of a positive common heritage linked to collaboration could not be realised in the absence of a meaningful political identity outside the family. Indeed, the extreme right has had only very marginal success since the Second World War in Frenchspeaking Belgium. Also, the debate on amnesty for collaborators has not had the same extent in French-speaking Belgium. Did this set of contextual facts contribute to the political evolution of these French-speaking families? This also confirms the premise that, in order to be transmitted, family stories must find meaning outside the family and for all members.

B. Work of memory at the societal level

The core of the work to be carried at the societal level lies in the articulation between the official memory of resistance/collaboration during WWII on the one hand and the individual memories of resistance/collaboration on the other. The notion of official memory refers to the way in which political representatives discuss - or not - the resistance/collaboration. As the TRANSMEMO research shows, this public narrative of the past is not systematically similar to the memories shared by the population, whether these memories were lived or transmitted. These two phenomena (official and individual representations of the past) function according to their own logic. However, they interact to some extent. Political authorities may try to influence privately transmitted memory, whether through school textbooks, monuments or commemorations. But the dissemination of a historical interpretation cannot be considered as a simple imposition. Citizens exposed to official discourse co-construct the message that is transmitted to them. They are not reduced to a pure receptacle.

The dialogue that we started to promote between official representatives, descendants of resistance fighters and descendants of collaborators allowed us to observe a certain number of discrepancies between representations of resistance/collaboration among Belgian citizens.

One of the main questions that arise in this regard concerns the degree of compatibility of these representations. Do the various narratives of the past reveal a simple plurality of points of view, a tension crystallized around key events, or a fundamental contradiction that would mean that what is asserted by some is systematically denied by others?

The duration of the TRANSMEMO project was not sufficient to multiply the meetings between Belgian citizens (be they descendants of resistance fighters, descendants of collaborators, descendants of victims, and/or descendants of bystanders). However, research carried out so far (in Belgium and abroad) about the scope and limits of a memory work at the societal level allows us to highlight two common features. First, an effort towards cross-narration and progressive integration does not mean that representations of the past should be perfectly uniform. The objective of a memory work is not to erase all "dissenting" memories, but to favour the passage from contradictory memories (the hero of some is the criminal of others) to divergent memories. In this regard, the work of memory that could be encouraged in Belgium will always remain the work of memorie**S** (in the plural). Secondly, the consideration of several points of view does not mean that all perspectives are equivalent. Acknowledging the plurality of representations of the past does not call into question the existence of a reality below these representations. Hence the crucial character of the historian's work. The memory work that could be promoted at the societal level is therefore not based on relativism, but on the idea that a common past (in terms of actual facts) inevitably leads to divergent experiences (in terms of individual perceptions).

The purpose is therefore not to put all narratives on an equal footing, but to progressively "reshape" the "stories" that we tell about each other on the basis of historical findings (Ricoeur, 1992). This objective implies challenging the persistent prejudice that only the future is open and indeterminate, the past being closed and determined by nature. As Faulkner points out, the past is never completely fixed, nor is it fully past. Facts are certainly indelible. No one can undo what has been done, nor make what has happened not be done. The meaning of what has happened is never fixed once and for all (Ricoeur, 1985), but a better understanding of the past and its diverging memories depends on a further societal exploration of the historical knowledge and sources.

C. Plea for a strengthening of the federal science and archives policy

To measure the impact of our research it is not enough to point to the publications, the numerous lectures and formal interventions in the media alone. The real evidence is often invisible to the general public, difficult to detect, but clearly tangible in the many daily informal contacts of relatives (of both collaboration and resistance families) with the researchers involved. Replying to e-mails, letters and telephones is time-consuming but very satisfying and the best proof of the vitality of our research questions. It is a dynamic communicative process that serves both our scientific knowledge and the personal research of the generations involved. The contact allows us to continuously focus and enrich our own results on the one hand and to offer hermeneutical and empirical answers to the next of kin on the other hand. The archivists in charge of the archives have in any case noted a clear increase in the number

of requests for consultation of the archives for the documentation of collaboration and resistance activities. This observation is not only a strong measure of our results, but this pressing evolution also ties with one of the most important recommendations and meets our third objective, notably: what are the conditions that can stimulate or prevent the reconciliation processes between different groups with different memories?

Throughout our research trajectory it became very clear that the perusal of the facts, and mutatis mutandis the archives, is a key element for family members to gain a better understanding of the impact the war years had. Many transmitted memories, among both collaboration and resistance families, proved incomplete, idealizing, selective, or distorted in comparison to the empirical data from the sources and the analyses from historiography. Participants who were able, with or without our guidance, to consult the archives and historical works proved to be much better able to coming to terms with the past. The historiographical knowledge and archival sources of this period apparently function as individual, mini-truth commissions, that might contribute through to a better understanding and thus a social pacification about this painful past. Strengthening that dynamic nevertheless comes at a price, literally and figuratively. For the sake of opening up the sources and guaranteeing their proper preservation for the generations to come - including through digitization - additional investments are highly needed. Federal science policy would benefit from increased resources to support qualified archival personnel and researchers, through hiring more people on the one hand and investing in the infrastructure of archival repositories on the other. In addition, the prevailing legal provisions on access to court records concerning collaboration are still very stringent and cumbersome. The current dependency of the Justice Department perpetuates a formal discriminatory treatment that gives researchers connected to universities and research institutes more rights than non-academics. If the full competence could be transferred to the State Archives, a wider public could be directly informed than what is possible today. We believe that such decision-making can generate both a significant scientific and societal impact.

5. DISSEMINATION AND VALORISATION

5.1. Kinderen van de collaboratie - Kinderen van het verzet - Les enfants de la collaboration

On a social level the results are unmistakable. Being a research member of the TRANSMEMO-project Koen Aerts took the initiative of the documentary series on both children of the collaboration (2017) and children of the resistance (2019), which appeared on the Flemish public broadcasting channel (VRT-Canvas) and were followed by a documentary about children of the collaboration in French-speaking Belgium, aired on the Francophone public broadcasting channel (RTBF-La Une, 2020) and the Flemish public broadcasting channel (VRT-Canvas, 2021). All researchers of TRANSMEMO have been directly and indirectly involved in the production of these documentaries. In all these cases, the viewing ratings were remarkably high, with a weekly average of respectively 500.000, 369.000 and 361.000 viewers. Particularly in Flanders, it stirred up (along with other initiatives and events) a broader debate on the legacy of the Second World War, even leading to real acts of policy. Not only mandataries were deprived of their membership of a political party because of statements made about the war years, but also streets named after the notorious collaborator Cyriel Verschaeve were finally renamed in the wake of the reactions to the series. For a behind-the-scenes view, some epistemological reflections on the making of the series were actively communicated through the blogspace of belgiumwwii.be. Throughout the following and ongoing debate, all the researchers of TRANSMEMO took – and still take – actively public stands on these clearly socially urgent and pressing themes, building upon the available datasets and accumulated expertise.

5.2. Study day at the senate (3rd of October 2019)

The TRANSMEMO team presented its initial results on October 3, 2019 at the Senate, which also welcomed the families who participated in the research, the specialized press, academics, artists and the general public. In a daylong program, TRANSMEMO presented the results of the research and examined the legacy of this past with political scientists, psychologists and historians. With artistic interventions and a debate between opinion makers from both sides of the language border, this program addressed a broad audience (the maximum permitted number of 200 attendees). Specialists gave advice on sources for reconstructing one's own family history.

Speakers were the members of the TRANSMEMO research team: Nico Wouters and Florence Rasmont (CegeSoma-Rijksarchief België), Olivier Luminet, Aline Cordonnier, Pierre Bouchat and Valérie Rosoux (UCL), Bruno De Wever and Koen Aerts (UGent). The course of the day was coordinated by Chantal Kesteloot (CegeSoma/State Archives). Speaking as external specialists were : Jan De Mol (psychologist, UCL) and Chris van der Heijden (Dutch historian, De Groene Amsterdammer). Artistic breaks were provided by Laurence Vieille (theater and poetry) and Wim Claeys (music). The debate took place between Christian Laporte (*La Libre Belgique*), Béatrice Delvaux (*Le Soir*) and Marc Reynebeau (*De Standaard*).

5.3. Podcast "Les Transmissions. La guerre en héritage"

The research led to the development of a podcast entitled "Les transmissions. La guerre en héritage", directed by Florence Rasmont and Guillaume Abgrall. This project was supported by BELSPO as a valorisation project (Call 2018) and was the subject of an additional report. The series "Les transmissions" is composed of three episodes, each of which tells the story of a family met through the TRANSMEMO project.

The series is currently finished and available as a podcast on the CegeSoma website, on Spotify and on Radio Panik. It has been already broadcasted by Radio Campus, Radio Panik, 48FM, La Première-RTBF and other community radio stations. Discussions are underway with Canadian and Swiss radio stations.

The series has been selected for the grand prize at the French radio and listening festival "Longueur d'ondes", which took place in Brest in February 2021. This selection gave visibility to the series, but also to the research project.

5.4. Research Project ARC - RE-MEMBER

The research carried out in the framework of TRANSMEMO confirmed the need for further work on the intergenerational transmission of memories and emotions related to WWII. Some members of the team applied for a UCLouvain Concerted Research Action (ARC project) on "The transmission of memories related to stigmatisation: Official and family memories related to collaboration and colonisation in Belgium" (RE-MEMBER - 2020-2024). In this new research project, we aim to conduct analyses of the official and family narratives of two controversial episodes in the Belgian national past: the purge of collaboration after WWII and the return of Belgian colonists to Belgium in 1960 (after the independence of Congo). This project will explore the inescapable tension between public and private practices of remembrance, and between official and underground memories. Like in TRANSMEMO, it will examine the transmission of memories across three generations and will try to articulate the role of three main variables in the construction of these controversial pasts and their consequences for individuals and groups: (1) the degree of stigma (contextual variable), (2) the linguistic community (French speakers vs Dutch speakers), and (3) the generational dimension (G1: one of the children of the collaborator/colonist, G2: one of their grandchildren, G3: one of their great-grandchildren). From a methodological perspective, we will combine three main approaches: discourse analysis of a corpus of official speeches; interviews with families affected by the repression of collaborators or the return of colonists (across three generations); and experimental studies. Each of these methods will be conducted by two researchers from different disciplines (history, political sciences and psychology) working in tandem.

Beyond the specificities of this new project in terms of comparative analysis (since it focuses on the long-term impact of both collaboration and colonisation), it is worth underlining the direct filiation between TRANSMEMO and RE-MEMBER. One of the explicit purposes of the project is to complete the research that we could start with families affected by the collaboration, but that remained unfinished in many ways. The cumulative dimension of these dynamics (TRANSMEMO – RE-MEMBER) is crucial to properly understand the intergenerational transmission of memories in Belgium. Knowing that the social and even political implications of this transmission are paramount, we will be keeping on working from an interdisciplinary perspective during the 4 next years. Concretely, it means that despite the fact that all ARC projects are initially introduced in one single university, all the members of the TRANSMEMO team will remain closely associated to the UCLouvain members who initiated this new project (Aline Cordonnier, Olivier Luminet and Valérie Rosoux).

5.5. Televised appearances, discussions on the radios, interviews in written press, lectures and debates.

Throughout the TRANSMEMO project all the affiliated researchers did widely communicate and disseminate the results of the project in various ways and on various themes.

Television

- Aerts Koen, "Kinderen van het verzet", *VRT-De Afspraak*, 22 oktober 2019.
- Cordonnier Aline et Rasmont Florence, "'Une petite histoire va avoir un impact pendant très longtemps", *LN24 midi*, 4 octobre 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Radicalisering in de klas", VRT-De Zevende Dag, 3 maart 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Kinderen van de repressie", VRT-De Afspraak, 9 oktober 2018.
- Aerts Koen, "Negationisme in Kinderen van de collaboratie", *VRT-De Afspraak*, 14 december 2017.
- Aerts Koen en De Wever Bruno, "Kinderen van de collaboratie", *VRT-De Zevende Dag*, 19 november 2017.
- Aerts Koen, "Kinderen van de collaboratie", VRT-De Afspraak, 7 november 2017.

Radio

- Rasmont Florence, interview par Martha Regueiro, présentation de Transmemo et de chacun des trois épisodes de la série "Les transmissions. La guerre en héritage", *Le dresse oreille-Radio 48FM*, 13, 20 et 27 décembre 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "Les enfants de la collaboration", *Radio 1-Interne Keuken*, 28 november 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "Kinderen van het verzet", *Radio 1-Interne Keuken*, 19 oktober 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, Luminet Olivier et Rosoux Valérie, "Mémoire intergénérationnelle de la collaboration", *RTBF-Les Eclaireurs*, 21 septembre 2019.

Written press (interviews)

- Aerts Koen, "Ik ben heel trots op mijn grootvader", interview door Pieter Lesaffer, *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 25 november 2020.

- Aerts Koen, "Ik ben heel fier op mijn grootvader", interview door Pieter Lesaffer, *Het Nieuwsblad*, 25 november 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "De pitbull van de BRT is terug. Maurice De Wilde en zijn tv-reeksen over WOII maken comeback op VRT.NU", interview door Yannick Verberckmoes, *De Morgen*, 24 september 2020.
- Aerts Koen en De Wever Bruno, "Les collaborateurs flamands n'ont pas payé un tribut plus lourd que les Belges francophones", interview door Jeroen Depreter, *Le Vif*, 11 september 2020.
- Aerts Koen en De Wever Bruno, "De collaboratie was veel grimmiger dan we ooit hebben beseft", interview door Jeroen Depreter, *Knack*, 9 september 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "'Laat mij gerust met dat vlagvertoon.' 'Ik vind het mooi als mensen daar trots op zijn. Maar mag het ook mijn vlag zijn?', interview door Sarah Vankersschaever en Matthias Verbergt, *De Standaard*, 14 augustus 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "Waarom wordt einde van WOII niet herdacht?", interview door Yannick Verberckmoes, *De Morgen*, 8 mei 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "De Canvasreeks die onze kijk op de geschiedenis veranderde.", interview door Timmie van Diepen, *Het Belang van Limburg*, 2 mei 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "De Vlaamse worsteling met het verzet", interview door Marijke De Vries, *Trouw*, 22 april 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "75 jaar bevrijding. Was opa een nazi? Of een held?", *Knack-Historia*, 22 april 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "De lokroep van de wolven", interview door Tomas Vanheste, De Groene Amsterdammer, 15 april 2020.
- Aerts Koen, "België zoekt niet meer", Het Nieuwsblad, 14 april 2020.
- Luminet Olivier et Rasmont Florence, "Wallonie: des collabos parmi nos grands-pères, Souviens-toi de la dernière guerre", interview par Nicolas Lahaut), *Magazine Wilfried,* n°11, avril 2020, pp. 48-57.
- Aerts Koen, "Verschaevestraat loopt nog niet overal dood", interview door Yannick Verberckmoes, *De Morgen*, 30 januari 2020.
- Luminet Olivier en Rasmont Florence, "La mémoire familiale de la guerre 40-45 touche à sa fin", *Le Soir,* 13 décembre 2019.
- Rosoux Valérie, "Réconcilier les peoples", interview par Hugues Dorzée, *Magazine Imagine*, n° 136, novembre décembre 2019.
- Aerts Koen en Luminet Olivier, "Ook Wallonië worstelt met zijn collaborateurs", interview door Marc Reynebeau, *De Standaard*, 28 november 2019.
- Aerts Koen en De Wever Bruno, "Andere straatnaam is nog geen oplossing", interview door Yannick Verberckmoes, *De Morgen*, 26 november 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "De daden van verzetsmensen zijn in de schaduw gesteld door de beeldvorming in de naoorlog", interview door Karl Drabbe, *Doorbraak*, 6 november 2019.
- Aerts Koen en Wouters Nico, "Aerts: 'Een Vlaamse canon is onzinnig.' Wouters: 'Maar als die er komt, moeten we er aan meewerken'", interview door Jan-Frederik Abbeloos en Lieven Sioen, *De Standaard*, 26 oktober 2019.

- Aerts Koen en Wouters Nico, "Het vergeten verzet", interview door Bert Heyvaert, *Het Nieuwsblad*, 19 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Het verzet in ere hersteld: 'Ze wonnen de oorlog, maar verloren de strijd om de herinnering'", interview door Tom Pardoen, *Humo*, 15 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Het verzet heeft de strijd om de herinnering verloren", *Het Nieuwsblad*, 2 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Aangrijpende getuigenissen door 'Kinderen van het verzet'", interview door Timmie van Diepen, *Het Belang van Limburg*, 2 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "'Het verzet heeft de strijd om de herinnering verloren'", *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 2 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Verkiezingsthema migratie stopt aan de taalgrens", interview door Tom Cochez en Steven Vanden Bussche, *Apache*, 8 maart 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "'Je gaat die mensen toch geen stem geven?'", interview door Roel Daenen, *Faro*, 1 maart 2019, pp. 14-17.
- Rosoux Valérie, "La réconciliation: utopique ou impérative?", interview par Nancy Goethals, *Le Journal Dimanche*, 3 avril 2019.
- Wouters Nico, "Historici moeten hun eigen agenda heroveren", interview door Marc Reynebeau, *De Standaard*, 11 mei 2019.
- Wouters Nico, "La Belgique est-elle atteinte de commémorite aiguë?", interview par Pierre Havaux, *Vif/L'Express*, 14-23 mars 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Extreemrechts rukt op in Vlaamse scholen: 'De Pano-reportage was een keerpunt'", interview door Yannick Verberckmoes, *De Morgen*, 27 februari 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Ruk naar rechts in de klas", interview door Nina Bernaerts, *Het Nieuwsblad*, 26 februari 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "'Na de oorlog zijn duizenden mensen veroordeeld zonder tastbaar bewijs'", interview door Marc Reynebeau, *De Standaard*, 23 februari 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Leerkrachten weet zich geen raad met Schild en Vrienden-hype", interview door Karl Van den Broeck, *Apache*, 22 februari 2019.
- Aerts Koen, "Veilig thuis aan de welvarende dreef", interview door Jeroen Depreter, *Knack*, 31 oktober 2018.
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Lectures/debate

Belgium

- Wouters Nico, "Waarheid en democratie: tussen historisch onderzoek en oorlogsherinnering, Da-Vinci lezing voor de Koninkelijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen", 23 september 2020.
- Aerts, Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Turnhout, 11 september 2020.
- Aerts, Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Gent, 10 maart 2020.
- Aerts Koen, *Kinderen van de collaboratie en verzet*, Felixarchief Antwerpen, 7 maart 2020.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Gentbrugge, 9 februari 2020.
- Luminet Olivier et Rosoux Valérie, *Mémoire(s) européenne(s),* "L'Europe et ses valeurs au cœur d'émotions contradictoires", European Values de l'UCLouvain, Bruxelles, 5 mars 2020.
- De Wever Bruno, Over Vlaams-nationalisme en Tweede Wereldoorlog. Een gesprek met de acteurs van het NTGent naar aanleiding van de toneelopvoering Yellow: the Sorrows of Belgium II: Rex, Gent, 27 februari 2020.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Wondelgem, 13 december 2019.
- Aerts Koen, Kinderen van het verzet, Debat Canvas-Bozar, 2 december 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, *Oostfronters toen en nu. Panelgesprek Buren van de Abdij*, Gent, 18 december 2018.

- Rosoux Valérie, L'éthique reconstructive dans la transition post-conflit armé, "Transition(s) et reconstruction", la Chaire Démocratie, cultures et engagement -UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 6 décembre 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, *Collaboratie en repressie in WOII en de nasleep ervan*, Mol 24 november 2019.
- Aerts Koen, *Wie waren de weerstanders van WOII?*, Debat Café Apache, Antwerpen, 13 november 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, 75 jaar einde Tweede Wereldoorlog. De impact van de oorlog op de Belgische samenleving, ARhis, Roeselare, 12 november 2019.
- De Wever, Bruno, *The afterlife of WII in Belgium*, Transition(s) et reconstruction, la Chaire Démocratie, cultures et engagement - UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 28 oktober 2019.
- De Wever, Bruno, *De geschiedenis en gevolgen van de collaboratie in België*, Kazerne Dossin, Mechelen, 14 oktober 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, *De geschiedenis en gevolgen van de collaboratie in België*, Aalter, 7 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Antwerpen, 5 oktober 2019.
- De Wever Bruno, *De geschiedenis en gevolgen van de collaboratie in België,* Openbare Bibliotheek Heuvelland, 4 oktober 2019.
- Aerts Koen, Mémoire et historiographie. "Des passions encore brûlantes sont mauvaises inspiratrices pour qui veut faire oeuvre de raison et science", Studyday Oorlog, Familie en transmissie/Guerre, famille et transmission, TRANSMEMO (BRAIN-Belspo), Brussel, 3 oktober 2019.
- Bouchat Pierre, *Houding ten opzichte van collaboratie,* Studyday Oorlog, Familie en transmissie/Guerre, famille et transmission, TRANSMEMO (BRAIN-Belspo), Brussel, 3 oktober 2019.
- Cordonnier Aline, *Het Transmemo Project,* Studyday Oorlog, Familie en transmissie/Guerre, famille et transmission, TRANSMEMO (BRAIN-Belspo), Brussel, 3 oktober 2019.
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- Aerts Koen, Kinderen van de repressie, Literair Café, Brasschaat, 26 september 2019.
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- Cordonnier Aline, Luminet Olivier, *What am I allowed to remember and transmit? Stories of resistance and collaboration during World War Two in Belgium*, Belgium Association for Psychological Sciences (BAPS) meeting, Liège, 14 mai 2019.
- Rasmont Florence, *Les transmissions. La guerre en héritage,* Journée d'études La fabrique de l'histoire publique, Centre de recherche Mondes Modernes et Contemporains (MMC), ULB, Bruxelles, 2 avril 2019.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Mol, 29 maart 2019.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Kortrijk, 7 maart 2019.
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- Aerts Koen, Het verdriet van Vlaanderen, Debat Bozar, Brussel, 20 februari 2019.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Lochristi, 18 februari 2019.
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- Rosoux Valérie, Mémoire et post-conflit, Débat Mémoire et démocratie: transitions vers la pleine démocratie en Europe, La délégation du gouvernement de Catalogne auprès de l'Union européenne, Bruxelles, 26 novembre 2018.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Herentals, 23 november 2018.
- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Lichtaart, 22 november 2018.
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- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Olen, 26 april 2018.
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- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering,* Deurne, 19 januari 2018.
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- Aerts Koen, *Journalist Gui Polspoel en historicus Koen Aerts*, Gesprek Overlezen, Turnhout, 10 december 2017.
- De Wever Bruno, *Het Interneringscentrum Lokeren in de publieke herinnering*, Opening van de tentoonstelling over het IC Lokerern, Lokeren, 8 december 2017.
- Aerts Koen, SS of IS, wat te leren uit het verleden?, Debat Canvas-Bozar, 5 december 2017.
- De Wever Bruno, *De Tweede Wereldoorlog herdenken in de 21ste eeuw*, Stad Antwerpen, District Deurne, Academische zitting Vredesmonument Deurne, 21 november 2017
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- Aerts Koen, *Bevrijding, collaboratie en repressie: geschiedenis en herinnering*, Geel, 17 november 2017.
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Cyprus

- Luminet Olivier, *Psychological approaches of collective memory*, Department of Psychology, Cyprus University, Nicosia, November 2017.

Czech Republic

- Rosoux Valérie, *Negotiating narratives after a war,* Center for Theoretical Studies (CIS), Prague, 19 novembre 2018.

Danemark

- Rosoux Valérie, *Reconciliation and Memory Work after a War,* Annual Memory Studies Association Conference, Copenhague, 16 décembre 2017.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Negotiating Closure after Mass Atrocities: a Comparative Analysis,* Annual Memory Studies Association Conference, Copenhague,14 décembre 2017.

France

- Rosoux Valérie, *Transformations des usages du passé dans les contextes de conflit et post-conflit*, Journée d'étude avec Sciences Po Lille, Lille, 13 janvier 2020.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Réconciliation intercommunautaire: portée et limites,* Centre d'analyse, de prévision et de stratégie (CAPS) du Ministère français de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, 25 avril 2019.
- Cordonnier Aline, *Transcending individual memory: Family stories of Belgian resistors and collaborators of World War II,* International Convention of Psychological Science (ICPS), Paris, 9 March 2019.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Travail de mémoire: portée et limites*, l'Institut des hautes études de défense nationale (IHEDN), Ecole Militaire, Paris, 13 novembre 2018.
- Rasmont Florence, *TRANSMEMO. Sur les traces des mémoires familiales de la résistance et de la collaboration en Belgique,* Séminaire de recherche Expérience de guerre et familles, EHESS, Paris, 8 mars 2018.

Germany

- Rosoux Valérie, Narratives about hate and forgiveness in post-conflict societies, Conférence Narratives and Negotiations, German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg, 29 et 30 août 2019.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Alternative Stories. Can mediators reconfigurate incompatible memories?*, Conférence New Dipomacy for new type of Conflict, GIGA, Hamburg, 2 et 3 juillet 2018.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Negotiating Reconciliation in Peacemaking,* Séminaire GIGA, Hamburg, 21 septembre 2017.

Italy

- Rosoux Valérie, *Taming memories in the aftermath of mass atrocities,* How to narrate the history of Europe?, European University Institute, Florence, 3 et 4 décembre 2018.

Luxembourg

- Rosoux Valérie, *Redefining Security, Revisited,* Séminaire de recherche, Département de Sciences Politiques de la Clark University, Luxembourg, 1-2 juillet 2017.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Procedural Approaches to International Negotiation*, Department of International Law du Max Planck Institute, Luxembourg, 9 mai 2017.

Netherlands

- Rosoux Valérie, *Memory versus Reconciliation*, Training Programm Diplomacy and International Law, Clingendael Institute, La Haye, 27 août 2018.

Russia

- Rosoux Valérie, *Memories in the aftermath of repressive regimes*, l'Association Memorial, Moscou, 6 novembre 2019.
- Rosoux Valérie, *Dealing with the past: Local versus official narratives*, Book Fair, Krasnoyarsk, 4 novembre 2019.

Spain

- Bouchat Pierre, Cordonnier Aline, Luminet Olivier, Rosoux Valérie et al., Methodological and Practical Challenges for Studying Intergenerational Transmission of Collective Memory, Annual Conference of the Memory Studies Association, Madrid, 27 June 2019.
- Cordonnier Aline, *Heroism, shame and ignorance: The intergenerational transmission of WWII memories in Belgian families of resisters and collaborators*, Annual Conference of the Memory Studies Association, Madrid, 27 June 2019.
- Rasmont Florence, *TRANSMEMO: WWII memories and family transmission*, Annual Conference of the Memory Studies Association, Madrid, 27 June 2019.
- Luminet Olivier, Discussant symposium *Memories of Terror: Between Traumatic Reactions, Ordinary Social Dynamics and Political Stakes*, Annual Conference of the Memory Studies Association, Madrid, 27 June 2019.

Sweden

 Rosoux Valérie, Negotiating on behalf of previous generations, Workshop Negotiating Justice, Département de sciences politiques de l'Université d'Uppsala, Uppsala, 22 septembre 2017.

Swiss

- Rosoux Valérie, *Transitional Justice and Memorialization*, UN Expert meeting on Memorialization in the context of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, Genève, 10 et 11 décembre 2019.

United Kingdom

- Luminet, Olivier, Cognitive, emotional, and social factors influencing memory for important public events in the Belgian context, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, November 2020.

United States of America

- Cordonnier Aline, Luminet Olivier, *Deafening silence and repeated stories: How family memories of collaboration and resistance are transmitted across generations*, SARMAC XIII, Cape Cod, 8 June 2019.
- Luminet Olivier et Cordonnier Aline, Local vs. broader social identity: How are they associated to Flashbulb memories and their predictors?, SARMAC XIII, Cape Cod, 8 June 2019.

- Rosoux Valérie, Scope and Limits of Reconciliation as a Peace-building Process, On the new frontiers of peace-building, International Peace and Security Institute (IPSI), American University, Washington DC, 26 juillet 2018.
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6. PUBLICATIONS

6.1. Peerreview

2021

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- Aerts Koen, De Wever Bruno, Huyse Luc et. al, La répression des collaboration, 1942-1952. Nouveaux regards sur un passé toujours présent (Courrier hebdomadaire n° 2469-2470), Bruxelles, 2020, 66 p.
- Bouchat Pierre, Luminet Olivier, Rosoux Valérie, Aerts Koen, Cordonnier Aline, Résibois Maxime, Rimé Bernard, "A Social Psychological Perspective on WWII Collaboration in the 21st Century: A Belgian Case", in: *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 2020, 7, pp. 1406-1424.
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