



# **Teaching Tolerance through History**

**A practice perspective on school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust**

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## **Abstract**

This work studies the practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust with the aim of investigating how history is used in order to form tolerance among the participating students. The study employs a theoretical foundation of practice theory and literature on the academic debate on learning from the past. Thematic analysis is used for analyzing commonalities and differences in 7 interviews with teachers who have experience in organizing the practice. The study finds that the practice uses a predominantly genealogic view of history which puts the Holocaust as an example of what can happen if people do not dare to speak up when they come in contact with intolerance. The bystander is, in this context, interpreted as the role that is in power of preventing atrocities by deciding to speak up against intolerance. The Holocaust is also used as a foundation for discussing both moral dilemmas and current issues that students can hear on the news.

Keywords: history; tolerance; the Holocaust; practice theory; memorial sites

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## 1. Introduction

The notion that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it has been continuously expressed by so many people that it has turned into something that is commonly taken as a fact.<sup>1</sup> However, scholars have questioned the assumption that we can change our values by learning about the dark moments of history.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, efforts aiming to transform society by passing on moral lessons from history to future generations have been developed and implemented since the late 1990's in Europe, North America and other parts of the world.<sup>3</sup>

School students are oftentimes especially targeted when it comes to memory policies carried out by memorial museums and public policy tools in the school system.<sup>4</sup> The *raison d'être* of schools can be viewed not just with the purpose of teaching facts and skills that are necessary to know as an adult, but also to convey certain values that are deemed important by the state. The purpose of the emergence of the big and expensive governmental project of schools since the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be understood as a means to achieve integration of the newly emerging nation states by building a foundation of unity in the face of diverse religious, linguistic, social, and regional identities. This major task was achieved through so-called mind-shaping school subjects, such as national literature, Christian religion, and history.<sup>5</sup>

Conveying certain values through the history subject is, however, not a practice of the past. According to the Swedish school law (2010:800), the elementary school is supposed to convey certain values to students. Skolverket, the Swedish National Agency for Education, defines these values as the democratic values on which society is built, which include among others the inviolability of human life, the freedom of the individual, integrity, all people being equal in worth, equality between men and women, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable.<sup>6</sup> The history subject has been given a special responsibility in the curricula when it comes to conveying common values, although Skolverket has not given an explanation as to

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<sup>1</sup> Todorov, "Memory as remedy for evil", 447

<sup>2</sup> See Todorov, "Memory as remedy for evil", Gensburger, "Visiting History, Witnessing Memory: A Study of a Holocaust Exhibition in Paris in 2012", Gensburger & Lefranc, *Beyond Memory: Can we really learn from the past?*

<sup>3</sup> Gensburger & Lefranc, *Beyond Memory: Can we really learn from the past?*, 1

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 26

<sup>5</sup> Demantowsky, *Public History and School*, 2

<sup>6</sup> Skolverket. "Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet: 1 Skolans värdegrund och uppdrag" [Curriculum for elementary school, grade 0, and youth recreation centers.], 1

why that is. The previous high school history courses “History A” and “History B” have been described as a catalog of the values that the Swedish school aims to convey.<sup>7</sup>

A historical event which is largely used as a basis of conveying moral values is the Holocaust. The Holocaust is a part of history that has gone from being treated as more of a peripheral event into becoming a foundational event for the European historical culture and the negative core event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> Since January 27 1995, when the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust was established in the EU, the European Parliament has been linking commemoration and education to the prevention of racist violence.<sup>9</sup>

In the EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life from 2021, the foundation of the European integration project is explained by a need to ensure that such atrocities that occurred during the Holocaust would never happen again. Moreover, the European Union is explained as being founded on values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality of the rule of law, and respect for human rights and minority people.<sup>10</sup> The Nazi genocide on European Jews (rather than other explanations like the support from the Marshall Plan, the increasing antagonism towards the Soviet Union that gradually turned into the Cold War or the experience of how narrow and inward-looking nationalism could lead to two world wars) is therefore thought of as not only the foundation of European values, but also as a founding story about the union’s roots and driving force.<sup>11</sup>

In the strategy, education plays a significant role in combating antisemitism and the member states are encouraged to ensure that the universality of the Holocaust is reflected in education and assess the effectiveness of the education.<sup>12</sup> The core message is that in order to learn from history, we must master it dually: not only should we remember and condemn what happened, but in the same operation of thought, we should react on manifestations of current antisemitism and the stigmatization of people based on the certain groups they belong to.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Karlsson & Zander, *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [*The History is Now: An introduction to history didactics*]. 281

<sup>8</sup> Diner, “Restitution and Memory: The Holocaust in European Political Cultures”, 43

<sup>9</sup> Gensburger & Lefranc, *Beyond memory - Can we really learn from the past?*, 14-15

<sup>10</sup> *EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)*. European Commission, 1

<sup>11</sup> Karlsson, *Europeiska Möten Med Historien: Historiekulturella Perspektiv På Andra Världskriget* [*European Meetings with History: History Cultural Perspectives on the Second World War*], 306

<sup>12</sup> *EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)*. European Commission, 20

<sup>13</sup> Karlsson, *Europeiska Möten Med Historien: Historiekulturella Perspektiv På Andra Världskriget* [*European Meetings with History: History Cultural Perspectives on the Second World War*], 307

An EU country which has taken a leading role in promoting the significance of both remembering the Holocaust and educating the youth about its history is Sweden. In 1998, the former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson initiated what later became the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in 1997 the Swedish Government initiated an authority called Forum for Living History, to work towards the objectives of educating about the Holocaust and counteract tendencies of intolerance, racism, and contempt for democracy present during this time.<sup>15</sup>

This work studies a Swedish context of a practice which uses the history of the Holocaust as a foundation for teaching values to the future generations – school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust. This practice is not uncommon in a Swedish context since there is school staff with experience in organizing school trips to Holocaust memorial sites in at least one third of the municipalities in the country.<sup>16</sup> The study focuses on trips carried out in the grades 7-9 in elementary schools (with students that are 14-16 years old) and high schools (with students that are 17-19 years old).

### 1.1. Purpose and research question

The purpose of this work is to study the practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust with the aim of understanding how the Holocaust is used as a foundation for teaching tolerance to the students. ‘Tolerance’ is to be understood as the “willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them”.<sup>17</sup> It is the opposite of intolerance which is the refusal to accept it.<sup>18</sup> The practice will be studied through interviews with teachers who have organized school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust. The analysis aims to answer the following question:

- How do the practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust use history to form tolerance?

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<sup>14</sup> Holmila & Kvist Geverts, “On Forgetting and Rediscovering the Holocaust in Scandinavia: Introduction to the special issue on the histories and memories of the Holocaust in Scandinavia”, referenced by Flenegård & Mattsson in “Democratic pilgrimage: Swedish students’ understanding of study trips to Holocaust memorial sites”

<sup>15</sup> Karlsson & Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 15

<sup>16</sup> Flenegård, “Besöksmål Auschwitz: Om svenska resor för elever till Förintelsens minnesplatser”. [Destination Auschwitz: Swedish trips for students to the memorial sites of the Holocaust], 6

<sup>17</sup> Cambridge Dictionary, “Tolerance”

<sup>18</sup> Cambridge Dictionary, “Intolerance”

## 1.2. Relevance to study program

This work is written as a dissertation for the Master of Arts Program in European Studies with a humanistic profile at Lund University. Although the work focuses on the practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust in a Swedish context, it has a clear European dimension. School trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust are not unique for Sweden, but they can also be connected to contexts of cultural Europeanization. Sweden did not emphasize its relationship to the Holocaust until the middle of the 90's when the country joined the European Union and the trips can be seen as a result of the increasing Swedish engagement with the European Holocaust memory.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the trips can be connected to the wider context of the academic debate about whether or not we can learn from the evils committed in the past in order to not repeat a similar outcome in the future. This can also be connected to debates about genocides in other places of the world, although some scholars would oppose to such contextualization.<sup>20</sup> I would argue that this debate is very relevant for studies in humanities.

Additionally, studying European studies with a humanistic profile allows you to not only big actors, but also more personal experiences. The people who go on the trips that are studied in this work travel from one European country to another. Teaching about the Holocaust is also something that takes place not just in Sweden and it is hard to overemphasize the significance of the Holocaust in the European history culture.

Furthermore, it is a work that connects to the interdisciplinarity of the program by touching several different research fields such as memory studies, history didactics, practice studies, and teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

## 1.3. Disposition

This work consists of five chapters. The first chapter contains an explanation of the limitations of the study and previous research on school trips to memorial sites of the Holocaust in a Swedish context. The second chapter explains the theoretical framework and starts with a literature review about the academic debate about whether or not we can, or should, learn from the dark moments in history followed by an explanation of two ways of viewing history which are useful for making sense of this debate. Additionally, there is an

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<sup>19</sup> Flennegård, Ola & Christer Mattsson. "Democratic pilgrimage: Swedish students' understanding of study trips to Holocaust memorial sites". 1

<sup>20</sup> See Dawidowicz. "How They Teach the Holocaust" in *What is the Use of Jewish History*

explanation of how the concept of practice is understood and used in this work. The third chapter sets the methodological framework by clarifying how the primary empirical material was collected and where it comes from. Moreover, there is a description of how thematic analysis is used for analyzing the primary empirical material. The fourth chapter is the analysis and the fifth chapter contains the findings, how the findings are similar/different from previous studies about these trips in a Swedish context, and suggestions on future research.

#### 1.4. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are connected to the empirical material and to what extent they can say something about the studied practice. Interviews can be considered problematic since they are not the practice itself, but they talk about practices<sup>21</sup> and some scholars would argue that interviews without field work would be considered an oxymoron.<sup>22</sup> Interviews can be seen as in-direct observation because they lack the material dimension of what a practice is.<sup>23</sup> Interviewing can also be seen as a practice in itself<sup>24</sup> and using interview data as a material to study raises the issue of validity. Since the interviews in this study revolve around past experiences for the interviewees, the fact that you can forget over time is also something to bear in mind.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, the interviews are limited in quantity due to time restrictions.

Moreover, an important group is absent from this work – the students who take part in this practice. The reason for not including a student's perspective has to do with the fact that interviewing students under the age of 18 requires parental approval, which would take additional time.

Due to the limitations of the empirical material, the study should not be viewed as a comprehensive explanation of the practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust. Interpreting it as a partial and limited explanation which could complement existing research and/or encourage new research would be more reasonable.

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<sup>21</sup> Bueger & Gadinger. *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives*. 89

<sup>22</sup> See Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work and Organization: An Introduction*. 218

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 94

<sup>24</sup> Brinkmann, "Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing", in *Oxford Handbook in Qualitative Research*, edited by Leavy, 295

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 294



### 1.5. Previous research

The previous research on Swedish teachers who have organized school trips to Holocaust memorial sites is quite limited and quite recent. I have found three previous studies on this topic. The earliest study is from 2017 and is written by PhD student Alida Skiple. This work focused on a specific Swedish educational program aimed to reduce tolerance and racism among youths called the Tolerance Project, which culminates in a trip to Holocaust memorial sites in Poland. The study investigated the perspectives of front-line professionals (which involved teachers and social workers) when it came to how the participating students were selected and which problematizations of racism and intolerance that were made during conversations and municipality-level meetings. The study found that the program was understood as a way of putting an end to generational racism by changing the perspectives of school students and possibly even the attitudes of the parents. Further reasons for implementing the program were the growth of the political party Sweden Democrats, and a normalization of racist language in the school environment. Students in need, i.e. students who had a need for special attention or monitoring to prevent further social unrest at school, as well as students who could not express themselves through writing or had low self-esteem were especially targeted.<sup>26</sup>

The second work is a descriptive government report from 2018 which was initiated by *Forum för Levande Historia*, [*The Forum of Living History*] an authority under the Swedish Ministry of Culture that works with the task of educating about the Holocaust and the crimes of communist regimes in order to prevent history repeating itself. The report is built on interviews with eleven teachers who have participated in school trips to Holocaust memorial sites. Three types of school trips to Holocaust memorial sites were identified: the school trip with the goal of letting the students experience something different together outside of the ordinary school environment, the history trip with the goal of teaching students about the Holocaust and the existential and moral dimensions of the history subject, and the social-pedagogical trip with the goal of giving the students an opportunity for personal development and the further goal of affecting the future as a consequence of letting the students have an identity change.<sup>27</sup>

The third work, written by the researchers Christer Mattsson and Ola Flennegård, the latter being the author of the previous report, is an article from 2021 which employs critical

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<sup>26</sup> Skiple, "Youth Delinquency or Everyday Racism? Front-line Professionals' Perspectives on Preventing Racism and Intolerance in Sweden"

<sup>27</sup> Flennegård, "Besöksmål Auschwitz: Om svenska resor för elever till Förintelsens minnesplatser". [Destination Auschwitz: Swedish trips for students to the memorial sites of the Holocaust]

discourse analysis to analyze nine teacher interviews. The study concludes that the causes of the evilness of the Holocaust are absent and replaced by a socio-emotional experience which fulfills two main purposes. Firstly, the trips are used with the purpose of changing the social dynamics in the group and, as a consequence, promote personal development of the students. Secondly, the trips are used as a way of learning about the importance of democracy and human rights. The Holocaust functions in this way as a total opposite of democracy and human rights and the experience at the memorial site is supposed to be transformed into action by the students.<sup>28</sup>

This study differs in its way of viewing the trips from a practice theory perspective. The focus is also a bit different since it focuses on trips that would be considered history trips and socio-pedagogical trips, borrowing the definitions stated in the previously mentioned report.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, it differs in how it connects the trips to the wider academic debate on learning from the past and national recommendations on how to educate about the Holocaust.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. The academic debate on learning from the past**

There is a broad spectrum of academic works regarding the topic of learning from the past in connection to Holocaust education. The works mentioned in this literature review are just a fraction of what has been written on the topic. As shown below, scholars have different understandings, both when it comes to how Holocaust education should be carried out, and whether or not Holocaust education could lead to more tolerant citizens.

The philosopher Tzvetan Todorov has reflected on the assumption that remembering the evil committed in history can make us avoid repeating it in current times. Todorov argues that the memory of the past could help to tame evil, but not completely erase it, on the condition that we realize that the difference between victims and perpetrators has nothing to do with biology, but rather the different circumstances in which their destinies unfold.<sup>30</sup> This means that we have to acknowledge that there is evil in all people which we have to live with since

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<sup>28</sup> Flennegård & Mattsson. "Teaching at Holocaust memorial sites; Swedish teachers' understanding of the educational values of visiting Holocaust memorial sites"

<sup>29</sup> See Flennegård, "Besöksmål Auschwitz: Om svenska resor för elever till Förintelsens minnesplatser". [Destination Auschwitz: Swedish trips for students to the memorial sites of the Holocaust]

<sup>30</sup> Todorov, "Memory as Remedy for Evil", 453

we cannot fully remove it.<sup>31</sup> Understanding that the perpetrators in history are as human as we are is, according to Todorov, what allows us to get closer to them. Furthermore, discerning what it is in us that is similar to what can be seen in them and therefore understanding that they are human and that we are capable of becoming ‘inhuman’ amounts to the same enlightenment.<sup>32</sup> Todorov therefore criticizes the practice of only explaining the Holocaust through the perspective of victims who were passive and endured violence without being able to react since it does not teach us any lessons because it cannot teach us how to act. The key to avoid a ‘repetition of events’ according to Todorov, is to instead focus on the circumstances of the evil act, the motivations of the people who were responsible, and the means they applied.<sup>33</sup>

The historian Lucy Dawidowicz argued that the Holocaust was a unique event that should only be understood within strict limits of contextualization. Using Holocaust education as a way of teaching values to students is, according to her perspective, not something that should be encouraged since Dawidowicz stated that approaching the Holocaust through a comparative framework would send students down a path of relativism by encouraging them to view the Holocaust as a result of peer-pressure and out-grouping instead of a culmination of a tradition of hostility.<sup>34</sup> It is therefore not a question of whether or not you can prevent atrocities by history education, which Todorov reflects on, but rather a question of why you would teach about the Holocaust by contextualizing it for this purpose.

The historian Alexander Karn has written an article about teaching values through Holocaust education from a teacher’s perspective. He argues, contrary to the perspective of Dawidowicz, that there would not be much purpose in trying to understand the operations and evolution of death camps unless the horrors had some universal implication. He states that Holocaust education would turn “into obscenity” unless we can use our emotions and political imaginations in a way which would allow us to see what is universal in the particular.<sup>35</sup> Karn states that Holocaust education must always be seen as an ideological enterprise in the sense that any attempt to influence the future will be ideological, but not in terms of political indoctrination. Contrary to Todorov, Karn warns that too much moralizing would create resistance in students if they feel like they are being associated too much with the perpetrators. Karn argues that good Holocaust education should aim to find a balance between

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 454

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 453

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 451

<sup>34</sup> Dawidowicz, “How they teach the Holocaust”, referenced by Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 226

<sup>35</sup> Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 227

moralizing and the pursuit of facts which may heighten the risk of students feeling indifferent to what they learn.<sup>36</sup> In this way of thinking, Holocaust education requires a two-fold commitment, one that follows history back to the causes of particular events and another which takes the past and projects it forward in a way which enlarges students' capacities to see the ramifications of their choices and make ethical and political commitments.<sup>37</sup>

The sociologist Sarah Gensburger and the social scientist Sandrine Lefranc state that memory policies (i.e. "actions that mobilize references to the past in order to impact on society and its members and transform them")<sup>38</sup> have not achieved a more peaceful and tolerant society.<sup>39</sup> They make the point that the people who take part in memory policies are ordinary in the sense that they continue with their regular lives also while taking part of memory policies. They may or may not be deeply affected by what they see and some may even become activists or consider changing their careers. However, the people who get deeply affected oftentimes already possess certain sensibilities which get amplified by what they see.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, Gensburger made a study where she observed and interviewed adults, schoolchildren and children with parents who visited a Holocaust exhibition in Paris. Gensburger concluded that the exhibition, rather than achieving its goal of transmitting moral values, was understood as a value in itself by legitimizing the social importance of memory. Some visitors who were interviewed ended up mobilizing ethnic stereotypes despite saying that in the beginning of the interview that their intention was to respect the duty of memory and fight against intolerance.<sup>41</sup> The children in the study seemed to already possess the values of tolerance and indignation when faced with discriminations. It suggested that attending the exhibition allowed the children to publicly display these values and have others witnessing it, which may reinforce their internalization of these values.<sup>42</sup> The question here would rather be why you would initiate memory policies if they do not work. Gensburger and Lefranc argue that rather than focusing on the content of memory policies, we should focus on the link between the actors that are behind them.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 228

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 225

<sup>38</sup> Gensburger & Lefranc. *Beyond Memory: Can we really learn from the past?*, 2

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 82

<sup>41</sup> Gensburger, "Visiting history, witnessing memory: A study of the Holocaust Exhibition in Paris in 2012", 2-3

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>43</sup> Gensburger & Lefranc. *Beyond Memory: Can we really learn from the past?*, 95

## 2.2 Theorizing the debate on learning from the past

The notion that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it is present in practices of remembering the Holocaust with the aim of creating a more tolerant future generation that will stand up against racism. The study adopts a theoretical tool from history didactics where there are two contrasting ways of viewing our meeting with history – the genetic and the genealogical perspective.

### 2.2.1 The Genetic Perspective

According to the genetic view of history, we will never meet history since history is always behind us and follows us as we go through life and history can therefore not be repeated.<sup>44</sup> The genetic perspective views history as something which must be understood prospectively and analyzed in terms of causes and effects in a chronological timeline. Following this logic, history cannot be repeated since it emphasizes how history was different from our present time, rather than similar. This perspective has been the dominating view of history in schools and universities. The choices of which parts of history that deserve to be studied can, according to this view, be justified by a need to explain. This can be achieved by relating what should be explained to a chronological development and/or current societal structure.<sup>45</sup>

### 2.2.2 The Genealogic Perspective

The genealogic perspective meets history by actively seeking it out. According to this perspective, we meet certain situations and problems as we go through life, which make us retrospectively look back on history in the search of meaning and orientation. Contrary to the genetic perspective, history does not meet us, but we meet history. The relationship between then and now is uncomplicated since there is a similarity or continuity which enables us to establish a contact with history.<sup>46</sup> Following this logic, history is seen as something which could be repeated in the sense of patterns that re-appear. While the genetic perspective emphasizes how history was different from our present time and sees it as something which should be reconstructed with the help of a specific system of rules guided by a progressive

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<sup>44</sup> Karlsson, *Europeiska Möten Med Historien: Historiekulturella Perspektiv På Andra Världskriget* [European Meetings with History: History Cultural Perspectives on the Second World War], 40

<sup>45</sup> Karlsson & Zander. *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [The History is Now: An introduction to history didactics], 44-45

<sup>46</sup> Karlsson, *Europeiska Möten Med Historien: Historiekulturella Perspektiv På Andra Världskriget* [European Meetings with History: History Cultural Perspectives on the Second World War], 43-44

chronology, the genealogical perspective sees history as something which we are culturally connected to and can therefore make use of in an ongoing life- and societal project that looks backwards and constructs the past in order to satisfy current needs.<sup>47</sup> School students' prior knowledge on history is typically characterized by a genealogic perspective on history, while the teachers represent a traditionally scientific genetic tradition.<sup>48</sup>

### 2.2.3 The relationship between the perspectives

The genetic and the genealogical perspective may seem to be complete opposites of one another which cannot function at the same time, but they do relate to one another. The genealogical construction of history is not made in a vacuum, but in accordance with historically developed and established patterns of culture and power that can be found in a genetic construction of history. Likewise, the genetic history construction does not have its own automatic dynamics, but is a result of genealogically chosen developments and events.<sup>49</sup> Both the genetic and the genealogical perspective can be present when it comes to school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust. As previously mentioned, the dominating history education is based on the genetic perspective of explaining history chronologically and relating it to today's society. History education for students in grade 7-9, when they are between 14 and 16 years old, typically starts from ancient Greece and continues in a chronological order into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the Holocaust is typically taught in grade 9.<sup>50</sup> However, when it comes to Holocaust education, a genealogic perspective which aims to satisfy current needs is present. The notion of teaching about the Holocaust with a genealogic perspective through a comparative framework of socio-psychological concepts such as obedience and conformity which encourages students to understand the mass murder of European Jews as a tragic example of peer pressure and out-grouping instead of explaining it as a result of an accumulative hostility was criticized by the historian Lucy Dawidowicz.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 48

<sup>48</sup> Mellberg, "Det är inte min historia: En studie om historieundervisning i ett multietnisk samhälle" [It is not my history: A study on history education in a multiethnic society], 356. in Karlsson & Zander, *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [The History is Now: An introduction to history didactics].

<sup>49</sup> Karlsson, *Europeiska Möten Med Historien: Historiekulturella Perspektiv På Andra Världskriget* [European Meetings with History: History Cultural Perspectives on the Second World War]., 49

<sup>50</sup> Mellberg, "Det är inte min historia: En studie om historieundervisning i ett multietnisk samhälle" [It is not my history: A study on history education in a multiethnic society]. in Karlsson & Zander, *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [The History is Now: An introduction to history didactics]. 349

<sup>51</sup> Dawidowicz. "How They Teach the Holocaust" in *What is the Use of Jewish History?* ed. Kozody, referenced by Karn, "Towards a Philosophy of Holocaust Education; Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 226

Nevertheless, the genealogic perspective on Holocaust education has been defended by the historian Alexander Karn who argues that it would be madness to teach the history of the Holocaust without engaging emotions and political imaginations in a way which shows the universal in the particular.<sup>52</sup> This argument highlights the problem that the genetic perspective has when it comes to the criteria for what is important.<sup>53</sup>

## 2.3 Theorizing Practice

A unified practice theory does not exist. The theories of practice are a broad family of different theoretical approaches with historical and conceptual similarities.<sup>54</sup> The benefit of using the concept of practice in this work is oftentimes explained as what could be considered its weakness by people who prefer to use firm theories: that it allows for sensitivity and adaptability.<sup>55</sup>

Studying practice means to pay attention to what actors connected to the practice do and say and how the practice is embedded in larger arrangements. People who study practices ask what knowledge is required to carry out the practice and they tend to examine all the techniques and things that are used to produce the practice. Due to the broad scope of practice theory, it can be criticized for how it motivates what is important.<sup>56</sup> This study connects to the debate on learning from history in order to include in order to study how this debate can be understood in connection to the school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust, although there are many more contexts that could be examined (see Limitations of the study 1.4). Moreover, in order to study the practice of these school trips, they cannot be understood as separate from the everyday practices of teaching in classrooms. They can be understood as projects in the sense that they differ from the regular teaching practices, but their start and end dates may not be very clear. Therefore, since the focus is the practice of the trips, we should also try to understand for example how the students are prepared for the trips and what happens after the trips, not just the time that is spent abroad.

Practice studies try to avoid starting off with fixed assumptions about the practice, but the goal is to pay attention to the practice in a way which requires a perspective where you

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<sup>52</sup> Karn, "Towards a Philosophy of Holocaust Education; Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 227

<sup>53</sup> Mellberg, "Det är inte min historia: En studie om historieundervisning i ett multietnisk samhälle" [It is not my history: A study on history education in a multiethnic society]. in *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [The History is Now: An introduction to history didactics .] ed. Karlsson & Zander. 356

<sup>54</sup> Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work and Organization: An Introduction*. 1

<sup>55</sup> Bueger & Gadinger. *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives*. 13

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 3

zoom in and examine the practice, but also zoom out and look at how the practice forms a part of other arrangements. What is common for most practice theorists is a rejection of dichotomies which are oftentimes seen more as a hindrance than a useful tool to better understand the world.<sup>57</sup>

One may argue that the genetic and genealogic perspectives previously presented are a dichotomy that would be more of a hindrance than a help in understanding the practice. However, I find these concepts to be useful for analyzing the understanding of history in the practice. As previously mentioned, they are not to be viewed as opposites of one another, but rather two complementary perspectives. With that being said, it is important to also be open to the fact that concepts that could be seen as opposites, such as the genetic and genealogical perspectives, can exist in the same material. It is therefore important to be open to contrasting views rather than simplifying the empirical material by categorizations. This is something that is particularly important when dealing with interviews<sup>58</sup> and this rejection towards oversimplification in social science is also present in practice theories.<sup>59</sup>

I do realize that there is a need to conceptualize ‘practice’ in order to clarify how it should be understood in this study. I have chosen a definition of ‘practice’ phrased by the sociologist Andreas Reckwitz because I find that it captures its complexity by adopting several aspects of how ‘practice’ is commonly interpreted in practice theory:

“A ‘practice’ (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge”.<sup>60</sup>

So what does this mean? Practices are oftentimes referred to as routinized and social, which means that a practice involves a type of behavior and understanding that can appear a bit different in different places, points in time, and by different people, but can be understood as the same practice by potential observers (at least in the same culture).<sup>61</sup>

‘Bodily activities’ can be understood by the fact that a practice is the product of a certain way of training the body. This could be ways of handling objects, but also intellectual

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Brinkmann, “Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing”, in *Oxford Handbook in Qualitative Research*, edited by Leavy, 288

<sup>59</sup> Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work and Organization: An Introduction*. 215

<sup>60</sup> Reckwitz, “Towards a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing”, 249

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 250



activities such as talking, reading or writing. In this way of thinking, the body is not just an instrument that the person carrying out the practice has to use, but the routinized actions that a practice consists of are bodily activities.<sup>62</sup> Bodily activities will not be elaborated on in this work due to the limitations of the empirical material.

‘Mental activities’ can be explained as the certain routinized ways of seeing the world, of desiring something or knowing how to do something. In a practice perspective, the mental activities are understood as elements of the practice in which the person participates rather than qualities of the individual. ‘Things’ are the objects that are necessary to carry out the practice. Things can include physical places and buildings.<sup>63</sup> In the case of this study, the practice that is studied is revolved around a ‘thing’ which is memorial sites of the Holocaust. I have chosen not to use the terminology ‘thing’ in order to avoid any confusion that the term could bring, but the memorial sites will still be included in the analysis.

‘Knowledge’ includes the ways of understanding, know-how, wanting, and feeling that are linked to each other in a practice. It is a particular way of understanding the world which involves an understanding of objects, humans, and oneself which is mostly implicit and historically-culturally specific.<sup>64</sup>

### **3. Methodological Framework**

#### **3.1. Sampling of Interviews**

In order to investigate the practice of school trips to memorial sites of the Holocaust, seven interviews with eight teachers have been carried out. The interviewees were contacted through email. In the majority of the cases, I emailed the principal and asked if they would forward my message to relevant people in case they had had this type of project. I emailed over fifty schools and ended up getting five interviews this way. Two of the interviews I got by asking interviewees if they knew any teachers in other schools who had organized these trips and two of them did.

In terms of geographical spread, I got interviews with teachers who had worked in 6 different cities, both urban and rural areas, in all three of the lands of Sweden - Norrland,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 251

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 252-253

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 253

Svealand, and Götaland. I am not disclosing the exact regions or cities in order to protect the anonymity of teachers who work in rural areas where there might not be many schools.

The difficulty of finding interviewees was partly due to the fact that there is no centralized system with curricula and guidelines which regulates these Swedish school trips to Holocaust memorial sites. The trips could therefore be understood more like grassroots movements of dedicated teachers,<sup>65</sup> and this is why I had the strategy of contacting schools directly. Furthermore, many trips were canceled due to the recent covid-19 pandemic, which made it even more challenging. Additionally, many Swedish teachers report high workload and psychological strain<sup>66</sup> and I suspect that high workloads also contributed to the difficulty.

In terms of research ethics, all the interviewees who participated were asked to sign a consent form. The consent form stated that the identity of the interviewees and their schools would remain anonymous, that they could refrain from answering questions if they did not want to, that they could decide to no longer be a part of the study and have their interviews removed, and that some quotes translated to English could be published but not the entire transcription of the interview. Apart from their signature, they got to fill in if they allowed the interview to be recorded in order to simplify the transcription process. In the beginning of the interviews, I also informed orally about the research ethics.

It is crucial as a researcher to also reflect on one's own position since the researcher is the instrument through which the interviews and research have been produced.<sup>67</sup> The fact that I have gone on two school trips to Holocaust memorial sites as a student made me have a clearer understanding of physical places that were described in some cases. However, I believe that all the teachers who were interviewed had experiences and approaches that were different from each other and how I remember my own experience. I tried my best to approach the interviewees in accordance with a practice focused approach, i.e. without assumptions and with the goal of learning about the practice through the perspectives of the practitioners.<sup>68</sup>

There are various ways of conducting interviews with different advantages and disadvantages. There is not one way that is the preferred way, but the best alternative is

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<sup>65</sup> Flennegård & Mattsson. "Teaching at Holocaust memorial sites; Swedish teachers' understanding of the educational values of visiting Holocaust memorial sites", 44

<sup>66</sup> See Bäckström, "Psykisk påfrestning och samvetsstress i lärares yrkesliv" ("Psychological strain and stress of conscience in the the professional life of teachers")

<sup>67</sup> Bueger & Gadinger. *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives*. 94

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 3

relative to what the interviewer is interested in doing or learning.<sup>69</sup> The interviews in this work have been semi-structured. The reason why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method for gathering the empirical material is because the flexibility<sup>70</sup> that it allows was considered the best alternative in order to investigate this practice since all the projects that were examined were different from one another. In a semi-structured interview, the phrasing and order of the questions is not set and it allows for follow-up questions.<sup>71</sup> When writing the interview guide and during the interviews, the questions were phrased with the intention of obtaining the interviewees' descriptions of their projects, which was achieved by focusing on open-ended questions.<sup>72</sup>

Out of seven interviews with eight teachers, one was conducted in person with two teachers and six individual interviews were conducted via Zoom. Video interviews are, as in-person interviews, synchronized in time and space, if cyberspace is included in the definition.<sup>73</sup> Videoconferencing has the disadvantage of potentially feeling awkward or stilted.<sup>74</sup> The increased use of videoconferencing during the recent Covid-19 pandemic could in this case have led to the interviewees feeling more comfortable with this type of media. The reason for conducting video interviews is that they allow the interviewer and the interviewee to "meet" despite being in different geographical locations, which makes them more cost-effective and less time-consuming than in-person interviews.<sup>75</sup> Video interviews are considered to be the most similar to in-person interviews, which have the benefit of being the richest source for interviews,<sup>76</sup> but can also increase the possibility of creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere.<sup>77</sup>

The interviews took place between the 6<sup>th</sup> of April and the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 and they were conducted in Swedish. The reason for this is that Swedish is, if not the mother tongue, the working language for all the interviewees. Having the interviews in Swedish was

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<sup>69</sup> Brinkmann, "Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing", in *Oxford Handbook in Qualitative Research*, edited by Leavy, 289

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 289

<sup>71</sup> George, "Semi-Structured Interview: Definition, Guide & Examples"

<sup>72</sup> Brinkmann, "Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing", in *Oxford Handbook in Qualitative Research*, edited by Leavy, 287

<sup>73</sup> Saarijärvi & Bratt, "When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research"

<sup>74</sup> George, "Semi-Structured Interview: Definition, Guide & Examples"

<sup>75</sup> Saarijärvi & Bratt, "When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research"

<sup>76</sup> Brinkmann, "Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing", in *Oxford Handbook in Qualitative Research*, edited by Leavy, 290

<sup>77</sup> Saarijärvi & Bratt, "When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research"

considered important in order for the interviewees to feel comfortable about being able to express themselves in the way that they want, but also to avoid misunderstandings which could happen when you communicate in a different language. In this case, the teachers spoke Swedish with the students during the practice that will be studied which is also a reason for choosing Swedish as the interview language. However, conducting interviews in another language than the language in which the final work will be presented is not a smooth and unproblematic process since the data from the interviews which will be presented has to be translated.<sup>78</sup> The translation has been done with the priority of reproducing the meaning of what was said, which means that the forms of the language had to be changed in order to make sense to an English speaker. Therefore, the goal was to achieve a translation that is not identical, but an equivalent to the original data, while still making it as natural and precise as possible.<sup>79</sup>

### 3.2. Brief Introduction of Interviewees

In order to protect the privacy of the interviewees, I will not give out any detailed information about them. However, I find that a brief introduction is useful in order to better understand the empirical material. The names that are used for the interviewees are completely made up and have nothing to do with their real names. I define a big city as a city with more than 200 000 inhabitants in the municipality and a small city as a city with less than 200 000 inhabitants in the municipality.

- Patrik works in a school for grade 7-9 (students between 14-16 years old.) He works in a big city and teaches what in Sweden is referred to as social orientation subjects (SO), which include history, religion, geography, and social studies. He has been on two school trips in 2020 and 2021.
- Barbara works at the same school as Patrik and was interviewed at the same time. She teaches the SO subjects and has been on one previous trip in 2021.

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<sup>78</sup> Mann, *The Research Interview: Reflective Practice and Reflexivity in Research Processes*. 6

<sup>79</sup> Nida Eugene. & Russel Taber . *La traducción, teoría y práctica [Translation, theory and practice]*, 29-30

- Jan works as a teacher of mathematics in a highschool (students between 17-19 years old). He conducted the majority of his trips when he taught grade 7-9. He works in a small city and has conducted trips with over 1000 students in total since 2002.
- Gustav worked as a guidance counselor for education in a school for grade 7-9 in a big city. He started organizing trips in the 90's and has been on close to 10 of these trips.
- Lisa works as a SO teacher for grade 7-9 in a small city. She has conducted trips every three years from the 90's/early 2000's with the exception of the last few years.
- Tomas works as a SO teacher for grade 7-9 in a small city. He has organized at least seven trips, starting in 2009.
- Cecilia works mainly as a project manager for school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust, but also as a SO teacher for grade 7-9. She works in a small town and has conducted over 10 trips. A few were conducted when she worked only as a teacher, but the majority were conducted in her role as a project manager.
- Emma works as a SO teacher for grade 7-9 in a small town. She has organized four trips between 2002 and 2007 and was planning on going again after taking a course on how to organize these types of trips, but the trip got canceled due to the pandemic and financial reasons.

### 3.3. Thematic Analysis

To conduct a thematic analysis means to analyze the empirical material according to commonalities, differences, and relationships between identified elements.<sup>80</sup> Thematic analysis goes beyond counting words or phrases and focuses instead on describing explicit and implicit ideas within the text, i.e. themes.<sup>81</sup> The reason for choosing thematic analysis is that it is a suitable method for capturing the complexities of meaning in textual material. However, reliability is usually of greater concern with this method than with word-based

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<sup>80</sup> Gibson & Brown, *Working with Qualitative Data*, 127

<sup>81</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 10

methods since it requires more interpretation when it comes to defining and applying codes to the text.<sup>82</sup>

In order to conduct a thematic analysis, I needed to first turn the spoken word into text. The transcription process was made more efficiently with the help of a program which transferred the recorded audio into written words. However, the audio still had to be listened to and the text had to be altered since the automatic transcriptions had multiple errors. The transcriptions were made shortly after the interviews in order to remember and more easily understand what was being said on the recordings. The transcriptions were conducted as intelligent verbatim transcriptions, which excludes fillers and fixes any grammatical issues. An advantage of this is that the interviews can be easier to analyze.<sup>83</sup> Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish and analyzed in a work written in English, the intelligent verbatim transcription was deemed to be the most appropriate since what is considered important is to preserve the meaning rather than including every filler word. Moreover, doing the transcriptions in Swedish was preferable since it would both save time and diminish the risk of things getting lost in translation during the process of analyzing.

Since studying practice means that one should avoid starting off with fixed assumptions (see Theorizing Practice 2.3), an inductive approach is implemented, which means that rather than identifying predetermined themes, I will let the data determine the themes.<sup>84</sup> With that being said, I still had some general ideas about the content of the material from the interview and the transcription processes.

In order to conduct a thematic analysis I had to section the transcriptions in different components called segments, themes, and codes. Segments are components which consist of complete thoughts.<sup>85</sup> The purpose of segments is that they facilitate the exploration of themes and their similarity and dissimilarity. Segmentation has been feared to be misused as a shortcut for analyzing, but good segmentation practices simplify the process of identifying, displaying, and mapping the context and multidimensionality of the material used to answer a research question while still being able to return to the full context of any segment. Defining the boundaries of segmentation can be seen as a somewhat arbitrary process.<sup>86</sup> I chose to divide the transcriptions into paragraphs where each paragraph represents a segment, i.e. a complete thought which can be summarized in a keyword or a concept.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 10-11

<sup>83</sup> George, "Semi-Structured Interview: Definition, Guide & Examples"

<sup>84</sup> Caulfield, "How to Do Thematic Analysis: A Step-by-Step Guide and Examples"

<sup>85</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 52

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 50-51

Codes can be referred to as meaningful components of a theme.<sup>87</sup> Coding means to create a category used to describe a general feature in the material. Coding therefore highlights commonalities within a material.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, with the help of codes, “poor” data that seemed incomprehensive at first could be flagged and reviewed at a later time<sup>89</sup> and information that was thought to be important but could not yet be evaluated to fit the bigger picture could also be flagged.<sup>90</sup> In order to keep track of the codes, I wrote a codebook which included the code and a definition of when it should be used and when it should not be used.<sup>91</sup> I inserted the transcripts into the left side of tables with two columns and wrote the codes on the right side.

Dividing a text into segments, themes, and codes are not distinct processes, but rather a multi-step description. Identifying themes means to notice an instance of meaning in the text, then note its locus by identifying its segment, and after that describe it by coding it.<sup>92</sup> A theme, i.e. a unit of meaning, can include several different codes.<sup>93</sup> Themes can be described as abstract constructs that link expressions together. When you can answer what an expression is an example of, you have found a theme.<sup>94</sup> In order to determine which themes are worth the effort of defining and coding, one must first look back on the objectives with the analysis.<sup>95</sup> As previously mentioned in the chapter Theorizing Practice 2.3, practice theory has difficulties with motivating what is important. In the analysis, I have intended to answer the research questions while also providing a broader practice theory perspective in order to understand the mechanisms behind these types of projects on a deeper level.

In order to identify themes, I looked for repetitions, indigenous categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions, constant comparisons of similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, and data that is silent or missing.<sup>96</sup> Themes were found mainly by identifying repetitions, similarities, and differences throughout the interviews. Defining segments, codes, and themes is an iterative process that requires reading the material multiple times and developing and refining the codebook throughout the process. To make changes is not a sign of doing things the wrong way but rather a part of doing things well.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 50

<sup>88</sup> Gibson & Brown, *Working with Qualitative Data*, 130

<sup>89</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 63

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 68

<sup>91</sup> Gibson & Brown, *Working with Qualitative Data*, 135

<sup>92</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 52

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 55

<sup>94</sup> Ryan & Bernard. “Techniques to identify themes”, 87

<sup>95</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 65

<sup>96</sup> Ryan & Bernard. “Techniques to identify themes”, 89-92

<sup>97</sup> Guest, MacQueen & E. Namey. *Applied Thematic Analysis*, 76

In the presentation of the results of the analysis, I have included quotes from the interviews. Quotes are important since they are the primary form of evidence to support the interpretation of the empirical material because they show the reader that the findings are based on what interviewees have said.<sup>98</sup> When I encountered parts of the primary empirical material that I thought could potentially make good quotes, I tagged them with a “good quote” code. Good quotes clearly illustrate the concept that is being discussed and quotes containing concrete examples of themes are especially effective.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, I have briefly included the contexts or segments from which the quotes were picked in order to get an idea of the circumstances behind them.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Analysis of the interviews**

A challenge of executing the practice which was mentioned in all of the interviews was the funding aspect. In order to collect money for the trips, time outside of the working hours have to be invested, but applying for funding is also something that appears to turn into a more routinized part of the practice for teachers with more experience in it. Furthermore, students are sometimes involved in the process of collecting a part of the budget since some funds only cover a certain percentage of the total budget. Moreover, in some cases accumulating money is seen as not just a necessity for carrying out the practice, but also a prerequisite for a successful trip in the sense that the students feel more engaged in the practice when they play a part in making it happen. This is highlighted by Jan when he speaks about how the practice was organized:

“I told them that we wouldn't travel there the same way as we did before, now they will have to work for it so if they don't do any work or put in any effort, because it was required 50 % [co-financing for a fund] and one year I saw that I got more money than what was needed so they didn't have to work and that year we had the worst trip”

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 264-265

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 267



- Jan<sup>100</sup>

Despite the effort that is oftentimes invested outside of the regular working hours, all of the interviewees were optimistic about the added value of the practice and highlighted several aspects of motivational knowledge when it comes to executing the practice. An aspect of motivational knowledge that was brought up in all of the interviews was to teach the students about history and to give them a deeper understanding of what happened during the Holocaust by allowing them to see traces left of the Holocaust with their own eyes. In all of the executions of the practice, the students were prepared by learning about the Holocaust. In one case, the main focus when it comes to learning history had not just been on learning about the Holocaust, but rather the common history of Sweden and Poland. In this circumstance, the practice was a part of an elective course for students interested in deepening their knowledge about this subject. The content of the history education that is given in connection to the practice can therefore vary depending on the framework in which the practice is being executed. In the quote below, Patrik reflects on how the practice has changed the way he approaches how he teaches history:

“What we have gotten clear proof of on this trip is that in order to reach this kind of connection so that you don’t place yourself up here [raises hand] but sort of lower the gaze and talk about the individual and how they were affected so that you get to follow personal portraits and so on and that you perhaps experience a meeting rather than talking about the society at large and the slightly broader perspective.”

- Patrik<sup>101</sup>

A commonality for the practice is, as illustrated above, the mental activity of focusing on narratives about individuals with the purpose of making the students more engaged in the education by encouraging them to relate to individuals during this time. In all of the interviews, the model of victims, perpetrators and bystanders was in some way included in the education they received before traveling to memorial sites. This model could be used both in terms of learning about history through narratives about individuals who represented these

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<sup>100</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>101</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

roles, and in a current context focused on moral dilemmas which illustrates a genealogic perception of history in the sense of connecting a model used for making sense of a historical event to explain current contexts.

The mental activity with the purpose of giving the students a deeper understanding and making them more engaged when visiting the Holocaust memorial sites is partly executed by introducing the students to personal narratives before going on the trips and later return to these narratives by showing where they took place. In this way of executing the practice, the idea is that the students get to connect the places they visit to the personal narratives they have heard before going on the trip and in doing so, feeling more connected to what happened during the Holocaust. Films were commonly used for educating about the Holocaust and in some instances as a tool to create red threads between the mental activities of teaching and the memorial sites visited. The quote below was told by Tomas when he spoke about how he prepares the students for the trips:

”A cool thing is when you watch *Schindler’s list* and visit Cracow and they get to see the place, for example the stairs where the kid hides the mom, and you can just go there and then they see: but it’s here! Yeah, that’s very cool, it turns out really good!”

- Tomas<sup>102</sup>

As mentioned in the literature review, Todorov criticizes what he sees as an overly focus on the victim perspective and argues that being able to identify with the perpetrators is the key to potentially taming evil.<sup>103</sup> The interviews have shown a focus on personal narratives for teaching about the victims, perpetrators and bystanders. In all interviews the desire to educate the students about the victims came up. Some of the ways that the victim perspective was taught included inviting survivors or relatives of survivors who got to speak, watching films, listening to radio programs, or reading about victims. The victim perspective was also brought up on memorial sites by following up on narratives about people connected to specific places or by encouraging students to find information about people whose names were on stumbling stones or by writing about one’s experiences during the trip to a child who were a victim of the Holocaust.

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<sup>102</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>103</sup> Todorov, “Memory as Remedy for Evil”, 453

Although the perpetrator perspective was not as emphasized as much as that of the victim, the perpetrator role was not completely absent from the interviews. In the quote below, Cecilia shows the same understanding as Todorov when she talks about her aim of changing the perspectives of students in order to make them understand that personal identities are dynamic and multifaceted:

“We [she and her colleagues] believe that, if we take perpetrators as an example, that it’s worrisome to just choose to see them as some kind of monsters that we can’t identify with because, of course there were a few sadists, but here we also have someone who walked home and kissed their children good night in the evening and someone who was someone’s grandfather and so on. And this is, what am I then? And what are the people around me capable of doing if the circumstances turn, well, extreme enough?”

- Cecilia<sup>104</sup>

Although Todorov emphasizes the importance of viewing the perpetrator role in a nuanced manner and being able to identify with it,<sup>105</sup> there is, as Karn points out, a risk that students feel resistance if they are faced with too much moralizing which could make them feel that they get too associated with the role of the perpetrator.<sup>106</sup> In the quote below, which was spoken when Tomas discussed how the practice was organized, it was the visit to Auschwitz that made one student reflect about his own wrongdoings and apologize for them which provoked a chain effect among his peers:

”Perhaps the coolest teacher’s deed I’ve ever done was when I had a discussion down there [Poland.] Because it was like Auschwitz turned into a catalyst where one student kind of starts reflecting on himself, about what he has done and then I had a fantastic moment that ended with everyone walking around. We were sitting in a circle in the dining room of the hotel, and everyone was walking around and apologized.”

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<sup>104</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>105</sup> Todorov, “Memory as Remedy for Evil”, 453

<sup>106</sup> Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 228

- Tomas<sup>107</sup>

In this case the initiative to identify with a perpetrator role in the sense of thinking critically about past wrongdoings came from the students and not from the teacher which illustrates how the connection between learning about what happened in history and holding oneself accountable in current times does not have to explicitly be encouraged by the teacher.

An aspect of motivational knowledge which was a commonality in all of the interviews was the understanding that visiting Holocaust memorial sites makes the students understand and grasp the scope of the Holocaust on a deeper level by seeing with their own eyes what is left, or not left, from this time. This is illustrated by Emma when she speaks about what she thinks that the students gain from the practice:

”The students have always said that it becomes a lot more real when you can kind of touch the barracks or see the things with your own eyes. It’s just like saying that yeah, then you get it.”

- Emma<sup>108</sup>

Karn points out that the overemphasis on historical facts can lead the students to feel indifferent to what they are learning.<sup>109</sup> The practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust is built on the idea that there is an added benefit to paying a visit to a memorial site rather than learning about it in a classroom. A commonality in several interviews was the notion that the students who participate in this practice get a more nuanced understanding of the Holocaust. However, in one case indifference to the experience of visiting a memorial site in the form of denial was brought up when discussing how the visits to concentration camps were processed with the students afterwards:

”One time it was a couple or maybe three students who after the visit to Auschwitz said that it was made up by Poles and that it hadn’t happened and then we said that we must show the next groups something that happened more

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<sup>107</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>108</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>109</sup> Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 228

closer in time so to speak, so that they can understand that it was close in history, that clearly demonstrated that, like Srebrenica for example”

- Jan<sup>110</sup>

In this situation the goal of making the students get a deeper understanding of the Holocaust by visiting a memorial site of the Holocaust was not reached. The reason why the practice was not successful cannot be explained from a quote, but what it can tell is how it was interpreted. The problem is seen as an issue of not being able to relate to the Holocaust due to the amount of time that has passed since it occurred. The solution to this is therefore to visit a memorial site of a genocide that took place closer in time to when the students were born in order to show that genocides are not a thing of the past. The motivational knowledge for embarking on this practice, which is also reflected in the other interviews, cannot be explained as solely a wish to teach the students about the history of the Holocaust, but also to teach them values of tolerance and being democratically involved citizens, which explains why Auschwitz in this case could be replaced by Srebrenica. The Holocaust in this context functions as a foundation to teach these values but could be complemented or replaced with other historical events that can be used for teaching about the mechanisms behind genocides. This corresponds with a genealogic rather than genetic way of looking at history. The genealogic view of history which uses history to serve current needs is also illustrated by Lisa when she spoke about what she wants to achieve with the practice and in her role as a teacher:

“I want them to grow and dare, you know, to discuss with a grandma who’s saying something that’s a bit distasteful. That’s where I want to get. That they become braver and not just sit quietly and clench their fist in their pocket, and that something will change, that’s who I am.”

- Lisa<sup>111</sup>

Although Todorov sees the perpetrator perspective as what should be focused on in order to tame evil,<sup>112</sup> the interviews have demonstrated a stronger emphasis on the bystander

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<sup>110</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>111</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>112</sup> Todorov, “Memory as Remedy for Evil”, 454

perspective in connection to aims of making the students more tolerant and involved democratic citizens. This was not the situation in all of the interviews, but in six of them the connection between the bystander role and the need to react to intolerance was apparent. The bystander is in this perspective interpreted as a person in power of making a change. If the bystander represents someone who is passive or ignorant to atrocities, he or she has the option of becoming active in the sense of actively responding when faced with intolerance. The students are encouraged to have moral courage and be brave, but also an understanding of history, which corresponds with Karn's statement that Holocaust education needs a two-fold commitment – one focused on a basis of understanding the causes of particular events and one which takes the past and projects it forward in order for students to understand the consequences of their choices.<sup>113</sup> The Holocaust is here viewed with a genealogic understanding of history as an example of what can happen when too many people are passive bystanders. The motivation for teaching about the Holocaust is genealogic since it connects knowledge about causes of the Holocaust with an ability of being able to recognize patterns of when intolerance could lead to atrocities in current contexts. However, the cause is in this context explained as the passivity of masses, rather than a focus on what Dawidowicz argues should be seen as a tradition of hostility.

Dawidowicz argues that explaining the Holocaust as merely a result of peer-pressure and out-grouping rather than a culmination of a tradition of hostility sends students down a path of relativism.<sup>114</sup> This is also a question of whether or not it is preferable to teach about the Holocaust in a way which is not an ideological enterprise, which is explained by Karn as attempts to influence the future.<sup>115</sup> In all of the interviews there were motivations to also enable personal development through the practice, which compares to Karn's argument that Holocaust education would be irrelevant without being able to see what is universal in the particular in order to gain something more than just factual knowledge. More than personal development, there is also the encouragement of actively taking a stance against perceived intolerance. This places a personal responsibility on the students when it comes to speaking up when they face intolerance. The answer to avoiding atrocities in current times is therefore equated with people who dare to speak up. One could question whether or not this use of history is beneficial when responsibility is placed on young people to speak up since the consequences of not doing so is implied to lead to detrimental consequences. Here one could

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<sup>113</sup> Karn, "Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 225

<sup>114</sup> Dawidowicz "How they teach the Holocaust", referenced by Karn, "Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 227

<sup>115</sup> Karn, "Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 228

also question whether this should be seen in terms of empowerment to dare to raise your voice or if it could be seen as a perceived responsibility which could lead to feelings of anxiety. Nonetheless, the notion of not turning the education into something “too serious” has been echoed in several interviews. This has also been phrased in connection to the trips in the sense that the students also should have leisure time and that the point cannot be to embark on these trips just to feel bad about what happened during the Holocaust. Lisa shows an understanding of the risk of putting too much responsibility on the students when she talks about how she thinks when she prepares the students for the trips:

“You have to do it kind of, I don’t know, you can’t be too serious, you have to find a balance. It can’t turn into a lecture or something like that, I think you have to do it in a balanced way.”

- Lisa<sup>116</sup>

One could argue that this motivation to encourage the students to speak up when faced with intolerance falls under the mission of schools to produce democratically involved citizens, but since the school education should be politically neutral in terms of party politics, one could also question how to navigate this issue in the practice. The use of history in the practice is, with Karn’s words an ideological enterprise,<sup>117</sup> not in the sense of party politics, but when it comes to its motivation to influence the future which here is seen as an encouragement for students to react, but in order to do this one needs something that sparks a reaction which leads to the issue of how to define what should be reacted upon. This also leads to Dawidowicz’s concerns about relativism<sup>118</sup> in the sense of whether or not it is preferable to connect current events to the escalation of events which led to the Holocaust. If anything that can be connected to intolerance could lead to the Holocaust, has one really understood it? Furthermore, it could lead to the question of where to draw the line when it comes to freedom of expression. In this sense, it is a complex practice to navigate and one should also keep in mind that the students who participate in this practice are quite young and thus require an education that they can absorb, which also explains the focus on personal narratives and the need of finding a balance where the topic of the Holocaust does not get too heavy to deal

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<sup>116</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>117</sup> Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 228

<sup>118</sup> Dawidowicz “How they teach the Holocaust”, referenced by Karn, “Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas”, 227

with. In the quote below, Tomas speaks about how he works to make his teachings interesting for the students, highlighting both a genetic and a genealogic perspective of history and concerns of the current political climate of the country, which is something that has come up in several interviews.

“If I would make a timeline on the whiteboard and write years, everything from the slavery to the triangular trade and Congo, and we can take Cambodia, and we can take Rwanda, and we have the Holocaust. If you write what has happened in history, does that mean that it can’t happen again? No, it’s something that is recurrent and in all of these cases there are people like us, like what you said about the bystander role, and then we must make them understand that we can actually see patterns that are similar in our time, well, we have several xenophobic parties in Sweden.”

- Tomas<sup>119</sup>

A commonality for all of the teachers is the mental activity of talking about current issues or moral dilemmas in connection to the practice. By having these discussions, students can be encouraged to take action when they recognize intolerance which connects to the issue of what should be reacted upon or the use of current events as a type of proof to show that atrocities are not just something of the past. One way to have discussions about this is to show films or videos about situations where one should speak up. The situations that were brought up centered around a person treating another person badly in public spaces as an example of when one should speak up. It could be either made-up scenarios or it could be public experiment types of videos where actors play the parts of abuser or victim in different scenarios in order to see if someone reacts. In this context the value of moral courage and not being a bystander has been brought up.

The discussions about current issues can be about very different events. Some things that have been brought up as examples are the war in Ukraine, the Quran burnings in Sweden, and the black lives matter movement. The Holocaust is in the practice used as a foundation to discuss very different events and situations which risk simplifying the Holocaust like

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<sup>119</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee



Dawidowicz's concerns about equalizing it to an issue of peer-pressure and out-grouping.<sup>120</sup> If everything that could be seen as intolerant can turn into the Holocaust, the Holocaust risks being downplayed and losing its particularity. Furthermore, there could be a risk that seeing the Holocaust as merely a result of intolerance or hatred could lead to a static view of the role of the perpetrator, which is mentioned by Todorov as an education which would be inefficient in affecting the future.<sup>121</sup> This explanation of the Holocaust as an example of what intolerance or hatred could lead to is phrased by Lisa when she talks about the value of visiting a Nazi concentration camp with her students:

"you really get reminded of what can happen if we allow this intolerance, the haters, what can happen when they take over and I'm very passionate about this issue. I think it's really scary that there is so much hatred. With this [visit to a Nazi concentration camp] you get to see what the hatred can lead to for real, I think."

- Lisa<sup>122</sup>

The aim of encouraging students to speak up and become active democratic citizens is also something that in a couple of interviews was said to have had the outcome of some students gaining an interest in politics and joining political parties or political demonstrations and spreading their knowledge to associations or organizations that they were part of. This is part of a response that Cecilia gave when she spoke about how she wished that the students saw the possibility of being an active actor in their own lives when she discussed what she wanted the students to learn from partaking in the practice:

"that is very different because for some it means perhaps a really big commitment and they choose to get involved in politics or some organization, and yes, we've had students who've held passionate speeches in connection to for example the Nazi demonstrations, it has been a huge passion because perhaps you're that type of person."

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<sup>120</sup> Dawidowicz "How they teach the Holocaust", referenced by Karn, "Towards a Philosophy on Holocaust Education: Teaching Values without Imposing Agendas", 227

<sup>121</sup> Todorov "Memory as Remedy for Evil", 453

<sup>122</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

Gensburger and Lefranc argue that people who become deeply affected and choose to get involved in a cause or some type of organization after taking part in memory policies do these things not because they did not possess values of tolerance beforehand, but rather because these values get amplified.<sup>124</sup> This brings questions about the mental activities of the strategies for selecting the students who take part of this practice. From a perspective of wanting to make the participating students more tolerant and prevent intolerance, it would be logical to strive to reach a target group of students who in some way are at risk of being influenced by intolerant movements. However, from a perspective of wanting to encourage students to become actively involved in democratic processes, it would be logical to strive to reach students who already possess strong values of tolerance following Gensburger and Lefranc's arguments.

Regarding which students get to go on these trips, more differences than commonalities have been identified. In some cases students got the opportunity to partake because they are part of a specific division of the school or a class that has a mentor<sup>125</sup> who takes initiative to organize this practice. In some cases all nine graders of a school got the opportunity to go. There are also cases where students had to apply to join the practice. This could be a student's choice course<sup>126</sup> or an ongoing project during school hours. How students are selected when they have to apply for the practice also differs and depends on the number of students who apply and how many students there are resources and motivation to bring. In a few cases, the groups that participated in the practice consisted of students from different schools. In this study, the practice has involved groups of ten to over a hundred students. The selection process was particularly strategic in a case where the practice took place under the framework of the Tolerance Project.<sup>127</sup> The students were in this case chosen with the strategy of creating a group of students with different backgrounds to achieve meetings between students who otherwise might not have met. Some students get encouraged to apply because there might be some worry about the influences around them and some students apply because they are very interested in it. The idea is to create a group of students who do not

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<sup>123</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

<sup>124</sup> Gensburger & Lefranc. *Beyond Memory: Can we really learn from the past*, 11

<sup>125</sup> Someone, usually a teacher, who follows a student's knowledge development and organizes parent/teacher meetings

<sup>126</sup> An elective course that allows students in classes 7-9 to deepen their knowledge about something that they are interested in

<sup>127</sup> See Previous research 1.5.

know each other from before. However, having students applying to take part in the practice without any outside encouragement from school staff does not necessarily equal a homogenous group of students who are already very interested in history and questions of tolerance. Gustav recalls how the popularity of the practice rose as time went by and how this led to a more heterogeneous group of students:

” [the students who applied for this as a student’s choice course] they were typically very interested in the SO-subjects and wanted to deepen their knowledge, then this became very popular and then other target groups that you wanted to reach were reached, like those people that I talked about that had strange ideas about things. So we reached them as well in a way. They were kind of tricked into a type of immersion in history, social studies, and religion and so on, so it wasn’t just, in the beginning it was probably kind of the good students so to speak, but it spread so that it reached those who definitely needed it.”

- Gustav<sup>128</sup>

Intolerance was not an issue for all of the trips, but in most of the interviews intolerance of some sort played a role in the motivational knowledge for wanting to carry out the practice. The intolerance connected to the motivational knowledge of this practice was referred to in two ways. Firstly, it could be manifested as issues in the school environment. These issues were explained as issues of antisemitism among some students or issues of rough jargons when it comes to the use of certain words or expressions, or it could be referred to as fixed ideas of students in connection to politics. Secondly, it could be manifested as intolerance, for example a presence of racist movements, in the local community. The practice can in this context be motivated as a way to work with these issues and prevent the tendencies of intolerance from continuing in the future.

A commonality for several executions of the practice is to in some way include a local and/or national perspective in the history teaching. This was achieved by discussing for example the emergence of Nazism in Sweden, Sweden’s role during the Holocaust, Jews who came to the local community after the Holocaust or murders with racist motives in Sweden and/or the local community. The inclusion of a local and national perspective in this context can be seen as a mental activity aiming to make the mechanisms behind Holocaust, or

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<sup>128</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

atrocities caused by intolerance feel like something that could reappear in a genealogic sense of history, and therefore more relevant for the students to learn about.

The local aspect is also an essential component for understanding the motivational knowledge of the practice. One of the reasons for executing the practice has in a couple of cases been explained as a desire to give the students the experience of being abroad. This could be because the school is located in an area where it is not common to travel abroad, or it could be a place where many people have economic difficulties which could prevent them from ever traveling abroad.

Moreover, the desire to make the students learn about another culture<sup>129</sup> as a way of making them more tolerant was also brought up in a couple of interviews where the practice took place within a framework of exchange projects where Swedish students went to Poland and lived in Polish families and vice versa. This type of execution of the practice could be funded through the EU program currently called Erasmus+, but it is not always the case. The quote below, which was spoken when Gustav recalled the places they used to visit during the trips, illustrates how parents also constitute an important group connected to the practice and that they could also have preconceived notions which could influence the students. Furthermore, it shows how this framework for executing the practice can add another dimension to promoting tolerance. By having one's preconceived notions proven wrong in this manner, one could potentially get more curious when it comes to questioning these beliefs. The desire for the students to be curious about young people in other countries is also something which has been brought up in this context.

“The first time we went there [to Poland] many Swedish parents were really worried because they thought that they would come to some east, you see, where an entire family lives in a one-room apartment, thoughts like that, that they were poor people and so on. But it was almost the opposite, their homes were very nice. They [the Swedish students] lived with the Polish families, of course. When we came back from the first trip, they were like; but now they'll come to us and we only have this small apartment with three rooms, oh my god, how will this turn out, we're embarrassed!”

- Gustav<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> In this context it should be understood as the general ways of life, customs, and beliefs

<sup>130</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

An aspect of motivational knowledge which is a commonality for all of the interviews is the creation or deepening of relationships. Three types of relationships have been identified in connection to the practice. Firstly, there is the relationship formed during the type of exchange project mentioned above between Swedish students and students from another country. This type of relationship is understood as important in terms of building tolerance and has in some instances been told to last even after the end of the practice and into adult years. Secondly, there is the relationship between the Swedish students who participate in the practice together. The practice could either deepen or create new friendships by allowing students to experience something different together or meet students from other classes or schools they would not have met otherwise. Furthermore, the students have also been told to have become more calm and harmonious after having visited former Nazi concentration camps, leading to a more calm school environment some time after the trip. Lastly, there is the deepening of the relationship between students and the teachers in connection to doing something different together. Patrik explains this phenomenon when he talks about how the practice is connected to his role as a teacher:

“You get to learn to socialize with adults in a way that I think is kind of important when you’re about to start high school and I think that they [the students] got a lot from being able to sit down, we had time to sit down and talk to them, not like with a power balance, but that we were able to sit down and have a discussion with them, I think it gives them more than you may think.”

- Patrik<sup>131</sup>

Moreover, a mental activity used in order to create better relationships between the students who partake in the practice is different team building exercises. This could be activities such as baking or trust building activities and games. This is seen as important when it comes to teaching tolerance since it is connected to learning to discuss and accept different opinions as well as listening to one another. The Holocaust is less present in this context, but this mental activity shows that the practice is not just focused on teaching students to recognize and react to intolerance, but also to listen and tolerate that people can think differently about things. The practice is in this context built on both intolerance and tolerance. Students are encouraged to

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<sup>131</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

speak up against intolerance but at the same time they are encouraged to listen to one another and accept different views about things. This means that there are limits in the practice of what should be accepted as differing views and what should not be tolerated and be reacted upon. This is illustrated by Emma when she talks about how she thinks that small groups are better when it comes to building trust between students:

”that they dare to stand up and say: but I think like this! No, but what do you mean? Why do you feel that way? To not shame anyone. There is nothing that is wrong, but to stand up for your views. There are, of course, limits to what you should say, but to dare to stand up for how you think. And okay, maybe we can agree to disagree as well.

- Emma<sup>132</sup>

There are both commonalities and differences regarding the choice of memorial sites. A commonality is that all of the interviewees have taken students to Nazi concentration and extermination camps which were seen as important, or even the most important destinations of the trip with the motivation that they are the sites that are the most emotionally touching and make the education about the Holocaust feel the most real. The country that was mentioned the most frequently was Poland, but Germany, the Czech Republic and Norway were also brought up as destinations of the practice. The camp that was mentioned the most frequently was Auschwitz-Birkenau. Further camps that were mentioned include Majdanek, Stutthof and Treblinka in Poland, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück in Germany, Theresienstadt in the Czech Republic, and Grini in Norway.

However, not just Nazi concentration camps were mentioned as memorial sights. Further memorial sites include the Jewish museum in Stockholm, the former Jewish district of Kraków, the former enamel factory of Oskar Schindler, a recording location for the film Schindler’s list, the former orphanage of Janusz Korczak, a Jewish graveyard, the Rabka police school, stumble stones, and the vacant chairs memorial in Oslo. This brings the question of what is seen as a site appropriate for memorial in this practice. The memorial places that were visited were in most cases museums, places that have turned into museums or monuments commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. However, in one of the interviews

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<sup>132</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

there was a focus on empty spaces as illustrations for the life that could have been. This illustrates a desire to show the consequences of the Holocaust in present time which shows an understanding of a memorial site as any space that can say something about the consequences of the Holocaust. In the quote below, Cecilia talked about what happens after she takes her students to a Catholic graveyard where the graves are very well taken care of:

”then we walk through a small grove and when you stand there a student usually says: oh my God, is that small moss-grown rock a Jewish grave? And then they see the contrast and the consequences that come with a genocide become very clear for them. That all of the graves, or all of the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who should reasonably be taking care of the graves, like one the other side, [the Catholic graveyard] they never got a chance to live, so mass murder affect not just then and there but also the all the future generations.”

- Cecilia<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, places that are connected to current Jewish life such as a Jewish school, a Jewish restaurant, and a synagogue were brought up in three interviews. This was explained as valuable for showing that Jewish life is not a thing of the past, although the majority of the executions of the practice did not include this focus.

Furthermore, there were a few places that were visited that do not have any direct connection to the Holocaust, or to current Jewish life. These places include places of historical value that are not connected to the time period of the Holocaust in particular. In one case, Utøya was visited in order to illustrate how extremism can look today, creating a link between the Holocaust and the 2011 Norway attacks.

Additionally, in one of the interviews an ambiguity about Poland as a destination for the practice was brought up:

“It’s also a bit of a double-edged sword, we go to Poland to learn about tolerance and at the same we spoke to our students about avoiding rainbow-patterned things while being there and one girl was like: but I have a rainbow-patterned suitcase! They have LGBT-free zones there.”

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<sup>133</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee

- Barbara<sup>134</sup>

This is not an issue that was brought up in other interviews, although some of the executions of the practice were carried out at a time when the political situation was different from today. Despite the perceived discrepancy of teaching tolerance by going to a country with a legislation that is not tolerant towards LGBT people, Poland is still one of the most common countries to visit for this purpose.

## 4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be summarized, how the findings compare to previous studies will be discussed and suggestions for further research will be put forward.

### 5.1. Findings

The practice of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust has commonalities, but also many differences given that it is executed by teachers and school staff without one uniform framework for how it should be carried out. The study finds that the practice uses a predominately genealogic view of history which puts the Holocaust as an example of what can happen if people do not dare to speak up when they come in contact with intolerance. The bystander is in this context interpreted as the role that is in power of preventing atrocities by deciding to speak up against intolerance. The ability to recognize intolerance and speak up against it is in the practice an important key when it comes to how the history of the Holocaust is used with the purpose of encouraging students to become more democratically involved citizens. The practice is in this sense aiming to, not just make the students more tolerant, but a lot of emphasis is put on encouraging them to not tolerate intolerance which could be explained by introducing moral dilemmas where someone was mistreating someone else.

The Holocaust is in this context used as a foundation for discussing both moral dilemmas and current issues that students can hear on the news. The purpose of this is to have

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<sup>134</sup> Please note that this name is a pseudonym and not the real name of the interviewee



discussions about when one should speak up and show that the Holocaust is not a thing of the past and that the same mechanisms that were behind the Holocaust could be seen today. The Holocaust is here used as an example of what could happen when too many people are passive bystanders which makes it comparable or replaceable with other genocides. The practice aims to highlight what is universal in the particular, but risks losing the particularity and understanding for what made the Holocaust unique.

The added value of visiting Holocaust memorial sites is explained as making the Holocaust feel more real for students. Personal narratives about victims are used for making the students get a deeper understanding of its consequences by being able to relate to individuals. Another aspect of relating has to do with having discussions with fellow students and for new or stronger relationships. An aspect of teaching tolerance has to do with making the students more tolerant to one another and creating a safe space for discussing ideas. Different team building exercises can for this reason be included in the practice. In some executions of the practice which involve meeting students from the country that is visited, the relationships that are formed between the Swedish students and students from another country are considered to be important components when it comes to forming tolerance.

## **5.2. Contribution to Previous Research**

Regarding the first study, it should be mentioned that Skiple studied a specific initiative called the Tolerance Project which has a specific focus of preventing young people from entering undemocratic organizations.<sup>135</sup> A similarity when it comes to the results is the issue of racism in the local community as a motivation for initiating the practice of learning about the Holocaust and visiting Holocaust memorial sites. This is not something that was an issue in all of the interviews conducted in this work. Skiple calls it generational racism, which is not used in this work since it may not be an appropriate expression in all locations. An additional commonality is the issue of rough jargon in schools as a motivation for executing the practice. Skiple calls it a normalization of racist language, but I phrased it as a rough jargon since it could be racist, but does not have to be in all cases.

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<sup>135</sup> Skiple, "Youth Delinquency or Everyday Racism? Front-line Professionals' Perspectives on Preventing Racism and Intolerance in Sweden"

Regarding the governmental report from 2018<sup>136</sup>, the aspirations of doing something outside of the regular school environment, teaching students about the Holocaust and the existential and moral dimensions of the history subject, and affecting the future by giving the students an opportunity for personal development were all present in this work. However, the executions of the practice have all reflected motivations of teaching students about the Holocaust, working with their personal development and doing something outside of the regular practice of teaching to varying degrees. No interviewee had just one goal with the practice, which would make it difficult to determine if specific trips should be classified as a school trip, history trip, or social-pedagogical trip. Furthermore, the aspiration of wanting to give the students international experience is not brought up in the report, but could possibly be seen as a category in itself.

When it comes to the third work,<sup>137</sup> a similarity is the aim of the practice turning into action by the students and teaching them about the importance of democracy. Mattsson and Flennegård also found human rights to be something that teachers aim to teach. This is not something that has been included in this work since it was just brought up in one interview. Moreover, the causes of the Holocaust are stated to be absent in the education. This study has not found the causes of the Holocaust to be completely absent, but rather oversimplified by focusing especially on the bystander role.

### 5.3. Suggestions on further research

Considering the limitations of the studies on the subject of school trips to the memorial sites of the Holocaust in Sweden, it could benefit from more research. I believe you could study these types of projects with the adoption of the concept of practice in a broader manner which is more in line with the ontology of practice theory. This could be achieved by combining field observations with interviews with teachers, students, parents, and people in organizations who organize these types of trips or educate on how to execute them.

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<sup>136</sup> Flennegård, "Besöksmål Auschwitz: Om svenska resor för elever till Förintelsens minnesplatser". [Destination Auschwitz: Swedish trips for students to the memorial sites of the Holocaust]

<sup>137</sup> Flennegård & Mattsson. "Teaching at Holocaust memorial sites; Swedish teachers' understanding of the educational values of visiting Holocaust memorial sites"

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