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Declaration

I, Kevin Neher hereby declare that this thesis, entitled revisited: a study of Collective memory and collective identity: A comparative study of German and Japanese students in The Netherlands, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Program Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I declare that the written (printed and bound) and the electronic copy of the submitted MA thesis are identical.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Program Euroculture.

Signed .................................................................

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Preface

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1. Introduction

After the end of the Second World War both German and Japanese national identities were almost completely shattered. This was mainly as a result of a war which was largely based on nationalism and on a belief in the superiority of certain groups. Before and during the war this idealized national identity and its associated pride were pumped up by the propaganda machines in both countries, only to be destroyed following defeat. Subsequently the national identities of both Germany and Japan were left severely wearied and there has been a lasting impact on their respective collective identities. In the seven decades since the war both countries have tried to address their troubled pasts in various ways, from official apologies, reparations, museums and monuments, to name a few, in an attempt to apologize for their war time atrocities and ensure they are not repeated.

These conciliatory actions have sometimes been successful in soothing the pain of those who still remembered or were aware of the atrocities inflicted on others, however, they have also generated controversies within their respective societies. The complexity of commemoration by the former ‘aggressors’ has manifested differently in Germany and Japan. Germany, since the Cold War, and after the Unification, has been trying to address its issues as directly and as clearly as possible through policy changes and diplomatic intercessions with neighboring countries, which have helped to speed up the process of reconciliation in the context of a developing European Union. Japan’s journey has perhaps been a little more reluctant and significantly impacted by post war economic and political complexity. In Germany, a controversial term was coined that hinted at a much-needed collective therapy to deal with the atrocities committed under the National Socialists. The term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (lit. coming to terms with the past), came in to existence in German society. The process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* commenced with the Nuremberg Trials and other key events that began after the de-nazification process in Germany by the occupying allied powers.

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3 Laura Hein and Mark Selden, *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (M.E. Sharpe, 2000).
4 Torben Fischer and Matthias N. Lorenz, *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in Deutschland: Debatten- und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945* (transcript Verlag, 2015), which was at times understood as overcoming the past.
This term did not just address the atrocities that were initiated by the Nazis such as the Holocaust but also how this shameful past was perceived by following generations. In 2015, which coincided with the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in a joint conference with the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, addressed a question about the European and East Asian conflicts and the way Germany has faced its recent past. She stated, “National socialism and the Holocaust are a terrible burden of guilt that we bear. Coming to terms with our own past was thus an essential factor in making reconciliation possible”. She continued “reconciliation always needs two sides. In our case, France, for instance, was willing to extend a hand of friendship to Germany after WWII. Basically, the European Union we have today is the product of this reconciliation.”

Both nations have tried to create histories with context and meaning for the new generations to remember and to understand, and even more importantly to forget certain aspects of their troubled past, in the years that followed the end of WWII. In Japan as well as in Germany it was the left leaning and socialist movements after the War which had the largest influence. In Germany’s case, it was more a bottom-up process as the people, mostly the younger generation known as the 68ers, demanded changes to the way the past was portrayed and perceived. Jeffrey Olick remarks that, this generation did not experience the war’s atrocities firsthand but, were confronted in various forms such as “the Eichmann Trial, The Diary of Anne Frank, and the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials”. According to various studies it has been mentioned that one of the most effective ways to influence how people viewed their recent history has been through the history textbooks. The German education system is recognized for its efforts to present its recent history as accurately as possible, without hiding from the unpleasant truth, and in a way which could be criticized as being biased. For example, the process of writing educational textbooks has been to collaborate with impacted neighboring countries such

8 Judt, Postwar; Keith Crawford and Stuart J. Foster, War, Nation, Memory: International Perspectives on World War II in School History Textbooks (IAP, 2007); Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II; Ian Buruma, Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan (Atlantic Books Ltd, 2015); James H. Williams and Wendy D. Bokhorst-Heng, (Re)Constructing Memory: Textbooks, Identity, Nation, and State (Springer, 2016).
9 Crawford and Foster, War, Nation, Memory, 21.
as Poland and France.\textsuperscript{10} It has also been noted that European textbooks are attempting to promote a common cultural identity that binds Europeans across national borders, thus forming a supranational identity. Falk Pingel mentions “Their textbooks discuss the extent to which Europe is based on common cultural traditions, moral values, and political principles so as to establish a feeling of European belonging.”\textsuperscript{11}

The Japanese response has evolved differently, being a more independent island nation with a far more diverse selection of educational texts and resources. Indeed, in Japan non-governmental and social pressures have been trying to change this.\textsuperscript{12} Yoshiko Nozaki points out the most famous case is the Japanese historian (Ienaga Saburo’s) court cases relating to his ‘New History of Japan’, and the “court challenges to the state textbook screening process have played a central role in the struggle over the national narrative and identity of postwar Japan.”\textsuperscript{13} Compared to Germany, Japan has not been as successful at creating unbiased history books, so the inconsistencies between different narratives have not helped to reconcile, but rather maintain the conflict of opinion which still exists after seven decades.\textsuperscript{14} Having said this, both countries have political groups, even to this day, which are not in favor of these policies, which in their view, stain their national identity. They have had mixed success but have contributed to the national debates.

Collective memory scholars argue that there are individual, social, political and cultural influences on our collective memory. So how do current students from these countries now remember their recent national history and its impact on their national identity? After an extensive review of existing literature, it is apparent that various interventions were promoted to affect the remembrance of war time events in both countries. How have these interventions affected the collective memory of current students from these two countries, and how relevant is this period in history to their national identity? Thomas Berger remarks “it is important to distinguish between the


\textsuperscript{12} Yoshiko Nozaki, \textit{War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo’s Court Challenges} (Routledge, 2008), 152.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

official narrative of the state and the array of memories that exist in the broader population (often referred to as the “collective memory” of the society).”

In the sociology, anthropology and history realm the power of collective memory has been discussed as a tool to understand how these events have been remembered and perceived. As Maurice Halbwachs has famously stated “It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in societies that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories”.

After reviewing extensive literature, it seemed valuable to conduct qualitative research to investigate and compare the collective memory and national identities of students from these two nations. This empirical investigation with interdisciplinary approach (historical, sociological, psychological) has helped to tackle the questions from various angles in order to have an in-depth understanding of which memories have been formed within a new generation, and through which channels, in order to address the research questions. Although, since the end of WWII numerous studies have been conducted in order to examine post-war societies specially Germany. One of the famous studies by Theodor Adorno and his colleagues from the Frankfurt School designed questionnaires known as F-Scale (Fascist scale) and A-Scale (Authoritarian Scale), to delve into the personalities of the post-war (West) Germans. They examined the collective German acceptance or intolerance of ambiguity. In recent years various research projects have been conducted to address progress and track changes in both countries. However, after reviewing previous studies, the value of conducting this research became apparent in order to tap into the both Japanese and German current students’ collective memory.

How have those memories of the past affected the development of German and Japanese national identity? Those various collective memories have been identified and clarified through Aleida Assmann’s works which have contributed to this paper greatly, by helping to explain the various forms of collective memory in relation to Japanese and

15 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, 13.
18 Ted Hopf and Bentley B. Allan, Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database (Oxford University Press, 2016); Buruma, Wages of Guilt; Alexandra Sakaki, Japan and Germany as Regional Actors: Evaluating Change and Continuity After the Cold War (Routledge, 2012); Reiko Tachibana, Narrative as Counter-Memory: A Half-Century of Postwar Writing in Germany and Japan (SUNY Press, 1998); Crawford and Foster, War, Nation, Memory.
German national identity.\textsuperscript{19} This is a study of a generation and their national identity. It is a study to understand the elements that have helped to shape it. Those elements have been acquired by the transmission of stories and information which have become part of an individual or a society, or as Benedict Anderson refers, “imagined communities”.\textsuperscript{20} By studying a generation’s collective memory (in this case millennials’; typically those born between 1984 and 2000), this paper has attempted to shine a light on how a generation remembers their country’s past, and how it has affected their views of their national identity.

Research questions

By employing Aleida Assmann’s formats of collective memory, qualitative focus group interviews were conducted in order to answer the research question:

How different collective memories have helped to shape national identity of the contemporary Japanese and German students studying in the Netherlands?

This study also examines, in what way has this generation’s national identity been affected by the collective memory of their native countries’ recent history?


2. Literature Review

This chapter has been divided into two sections, which will provide a comprehensive selection of work on the subject matter. As the title suggests, this paper is based on study of collective memory, however this phenomenon has its roots in various disciplines. For this, the author has delved into diverse academic works, as well as further secondary data sources. News articles, historical documents and media, to name a few, have been reviewed and discussed. This has been done in order to establish a comprehensive context to the current study. The interdisciplinary nature of this paper is based on four major literatures namely, sociology, sociopsychology, memory studies and history.

The following subchapters highlight the interrelation of collective memory and identity creation, and ultimately their contribution to the formation of national identity. In this chapter, the author has investigated which phenomena have been instrumental in shaping the national identities in Germany and Japan since WWII. Reviewing the existing sources for how national and international historical events are remembered – in both nations – has given a comprehensive insight on what has influenced the collective memory of Japanese and German students.
2.1. Memory

The study of memory, because of its multidisciplinary nature, has been subdivided into subchapters, which are sociology, philosophy, anthropology and psychology. Social science has had a great influence on this paper by highlighting various phenomena regarding individual and societal influences on collective memory.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, memory is “the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information”.

Nonetheless, why do we remember? How do we recall events that we have never participated in, or experienced firsthand? Andy why do we recall something that we have never experienced personally, such as a story that grandparents may have told us about our dad’s childhood, which we will recall as if we had lived through it? In a wider sense, how do we perceive ourselves within the context of the collective society and culture in which we grow up? For example, how do traumatic aspects of our countries past, such as persecution of minority groups, warfare, or slavery impact us in the context of our national identity? For instance, when an American person refers to Selma, they expect their peers - be it, family members, classmates or neighbors - to remember and share the same ‘un-lived’ experience of slavery in the Deep South. But how does a nation remember its past? What influences what we collectively remember, and just as importantly, how it is remembered? Why are some things remembered and others not?

Perhaps we can compare this to a family group: the family as a unit would like its members to remember the good things, the achievements, the things which bring them pleasure and pride. It could be to avoid tensions or arguments, or possibly because good memories bring people together and make them feel proud to belong. There are instances that may lead this ‘unit’ to turmoil, for instance, from finding out a family secret, which did not make it to the collective memory of the living generation because it doesn’t reflect well on the family, such not having fought on the “right” side in the war, or four generations ago the family was involved in slavery. Oscar Wilde famously describes memory as “the diary that we all carry about with us”.

Evidently, in our day and age, there are portals where one can delve into one’s ancestral background. This may lead to the discovery of positive or negative information about one’s familial past. In recent

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22 Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (L. Smithers, 1899), 57.
years there have even been television programs which are dedicated to finding out about individuals’ ancestors and their lives; those stories and memories which didn’t survive familial history. But a massive question may arise. Why do we care about where we come from, our backgrounds, or inheritance? Or what is the force behind this idea? Why do we carry memories of things we didn’t actually experience in person? If there is significant negative connotation, associated perhaps with shame or guilt, how do we deal with this?

Similarly, where citizens have never experienced those key moments and events in its nations’ history, and never lived to experience how their past leaders or heroes acted, how would they be reminded of them? Museums, memorials, commemoration days (including national holidays), state-sponsored movies on particular events or biopics of a national hero come to mind. Interestingly, there are instances where some individuals once regarded as heroes at a point in time and cherished, who may have had streets named after them or statues raised in their honor, but a few decades later as opinion or understanding changes, those streets are renamed, and their statues taken down. It seems like we follow a similar approach, whether familial memory or national memory, we remember in order to increase our sense of belonging and we forget in order to move on. The ‘bad’ past is least likely to be remembered, and we would like to remember those who improve, discover, create and make better the world in which they lived. So, we accept a sort of a temporary amnesia in order not to have to deal with the troubled past of our own, familial, or perhaps even national past, and focus on what we identify with by sharing positive memories as a group.

2.2 Individual Memory or Collective memory

When we think of memory the first thing that comes to our ‘mind’ is our ability of recollection. Ironically, this sentence alone might make us refer back to our recollection of anything we have learned before, to information once acquired regarding this topic. Cognitive revolution, an intellectual movement which stems from 1950s, had enormously facilitated study of mind, and how memories are created, captured and stored through an interdisciplinary approach, namely; philosophy, psychology (post behaviorism), linguistics, anthropology, neuroscience and computer science, and not just
2.2.1 Cognitive View: Individual Memory

Possibly, one would think of the biological aspect of memory and its relationship with our brain. To support such phenomenon as individual memory, it is a simple task of referring to the three chronological processes that memory gets formed in one’s brain, namely, encoding, storage and retrieval. Biologically, hippocampus and other parts of the brain are there to save our experiences, and data that we have received (through sense organs) but it is the encoding (or memory formation) part of the data that makes those lived or learned events stand out, that is to say, “items are stored in memory according to their meaning at the time of encoding.” Evidently, hippocampus, is the part of the brain which is responsible for recalling specific data or the process of consolidation, and has a vital role in connoting emotion and memory.

In the contemporary psychology realm, countless scholars have contributed to the subject matter and offered models which can best explain how memory works. One of the most prominent cognitive models is the Multi-Store model which was coined by Atkinson and Shiffrin. The original three-tier model, which consists of sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory, has been celebrated and at the same time, criticized by various scholars.

Although it appears that Multi-Store model (also known as Atkinson-Shiffrin model) is the base for the next generation of theories, which have been developed subsequently, such as the Information-Processing model. This model (figure 1) which is somewhat a replica of computer’s processing data, “helps to explain how memories and thoughts are ‘encoded’ when the mind receives ‘input’ from the environment.” This

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25 Edwards et al., 204.
28 Edwards et al., *Oxford Psychology Units 3 and 4*, 420.
model highlights how experiences through our senses, assisted by attention and recognition, will be transferred to the working or short-term memory and through elaborative rehearsal finds its way to long-term memory where it is saved for later recollection and reaffirmation. Information-Processing model is one of the well-recognized theories in the pedagogical psychology which has assisted the educators ever since.\textsuperscript{29} It is worth emphasizing that information-processing scholars believe that attention and recognition segment plays a vital role in students learning progression.\textsuperscript{30}

![Figure 1 A Model of Information Processing](image)

Although short-term memory holds limited data at a time, it is through the long-term memory that new data can be associated or possibly modified and finally memorized again. In other words, individuals’ memories are initially formed through sequential procedures, then the brain decides where to store that memory depending on how important that memory is. According to this, under the long-term memory authority memories of firsthand experiences (episodic and events) alias ‘facts’ will be preserved, also known as semantic memory. Episodic and autobiographical memory, which are related to customized memories of various occasions in one’s life play a vital role in organizing our memories.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29} Miller, \textit{Theories of Developmental Psychology}, 265; Gabriel A. Radvansky and Mark H. Ashcraft, \textit{Cognition} (Pearson Education, 2013).


\textsuperscript{31} Jack Snowman and Rick McCown, \textit{Psychology Applied to Teaching} (Cengage Learning, 2014), 266.

\textsuperscript{32} Edwards et al., \textit{Oxford Psychology Units 3 and 4}, 170.
Our individual memory and the process of it is greatly reliant on the environment and the means and occurrences of constant revision and rectification through repetition of previous and firsthand experiences. It can be said that existence of individual memory as an isolated phenomenon is illogical, because of the subjective nature of individual memory. Moreover, it seems impossible to comprehend and analyze memory through field of (cognitive) psychology without sociological aspect of it. Our memories formed through ongoing exposures of external data, be it, learning the same subject in a classroom with our classmates, we may ‘learn’ and recall the same content. While this can be recollected, contested, and altered, later in the same or a different unit. Indeed, here it requires us to examine this phenomenon not just through biology and psychology but also sociology and/or anthropological characteristic of it, in an interdisciplinary approach. Similarly, this has been the subject of the mentioned fields, for example historians who would wanted to delve into the various aspects of a historical event through memories of individuals who witnessed an event, or study of minorities and genders as such, which have not been heard through the main accounts.\footnote{Christian Gudehus, Ariane Eichenberg, and Harald Welzer, *Gedächtnis und Erinnerung: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (Springer-Verlag, 2016).}

Whereas collective memory has been subject to various repudiations between diverse scholars and across disciplines. Whether it exists, and in what shape or form and to what extent? The process and the formation of collective memory have been debated, criticized and disputed. Through this process there have been, and are still, researchers that have been working on various theories which have helped to redefine, revise and modify it. Sociologist, and one of the notable memory studies scholars, Jeffery Olick offers “Memory is the central faculty of our being in time; it is the negotiation of past and present through which we define our individual and collective selves.”\footnote{Jeffrey K. Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Duke University Press, 2003), 15.} This can also be compared, contested and confirmed through the information-processing model which was mentioned earlier.

### 2.2.2 Collective Memory: First Boom

Why do we remember an event that we never experienced? And how do we perceive that? We remember other events by reaching out to the narratives which we have accumulated through other means than our own experience. For example, from those
close people who have articulated stories of their shared past, such as one’s grandparents or perhaps a hometown commemoration of a local legendary achiever. Or even the way we acquired, or as Jeffrey Olick may refer to as “collected”, those memories with our cohorts, be they, a generation, classmates, family, or a nation.\textsuperscript{35} He refers to sociologists who examine the individual and their collected memory, but he refers to those memories that assigned to a group and are beyond the individual memories as “collective memory”. Olick suggests “it is not that we remember as the members of groups but that we constitute those groups and their members simultaneously in the act (thus re-membering).”\textsuperscript{36}

\subsection*{2.2.3 Collective Memory}

Collective memory and its existence as well as its usage and accuracy has been subject to various scholars in different fields from psychology and anthropology to philosophy and sociology. The way that a person remembers and the how it interacts with a group; family, nation, and its usage and accuracy have been debated and at times refuted.\textsuperscript{37} The founder of the concept of collective memory, as has been mentioned by contemporary scholars, is Maurice Halbwachs who boldly states “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in societies that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories”.\textsuperscript{38} He emphasizes that “there are as many collective memories as as there are groups and institutions in a society.”\textsuperscript{39} Although scholars before him have worked on this phenomenon, but it was thorough the work of Halbwachs that the term ‘\textit{memoire collective}’ came into existence in 1925 in his book \textit{Les Cadres sociaux de la memoire} (The Social Framework of Memory).\textsuperscript{40} It is not that this phenomenon has not been studied before, but it was Halbwachs that introduced the term as well as a clear theory.

Renowned scholars before Halbwachs studied this phenomenon of collectivity of memory in various ways and terms. Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of modern sociology as we know it today, has labored on this topic in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. In one his works, he studied the progress of suicide in various parts of Europe in ‘Suicide:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Gudehus1997} Gudehus, Eichenberg, and Welzer, \textit{Gedächtnis und Erinnerung}.
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid, 22.
\end{thebibliography}
\end{footnotesize}
A Study in Sociology’ published in 1887. In a way, ‘a comparative study’ of suicide rates in various nations and its possible connection with revolutions and national occasions, as well as, familial and religious affinities. This study’s contribution to the field of sociology and specially group-level phenomena is outstanding for its time, when modern psychology and study of individualism was the trend. He underlined through his study to go against the individuality which was promoted by the psychological constitution of individual at that time, he stated “it is not realized that there can be no sociology unless societies exist, and that societies cannot exist if there are only individuals.” 41 Durkheim underlined “sociological method as we practice it rests wholly on the basic principle that social facts must be studied as things, that is, as realities external to the individual.” 42

Additionally, Durkheim highlights that through psychology one can only observe individual’s mental states and nothing beyond that. He goes further to emphasize on the importance of the social, political and religious institutions influence on individual’s life, where he famously stated, “the individual is dominated by a moral reality greater than himself: namely, collective reality.” 43 It is worth mentioning that Durkheim in the study of suicide was facing a Europe which was deeply shaken from the French revolution and traumas of various revolutions, on top of the rise and fall of the Second Republic. 44

In 1912 in his book ‘The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life’ Durkheim elaborated on the power of “collective representation” and that how society can give meaning to ideas which will be perceived by the individuals who are part of it. 45 The common language which is one of the first mediums of communication in Durkheim’s notion is the carrier of history and data that has been transmitted and transformed throughout the years. He states, “a new way of explaining man becomes possible as soon as we recognize that above the individual there is society, and that society is a system of active forces – not a nominal being, and not a creation of mind.” 46 In this book he observed the roots of religion and how societies give meaning to something that maybe merely fiction, but it is through the ‘society’ that these meanings become concrete facts and through rituals they may remind part of the individuals ‘consciousness’.

41 Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology (Routledge, 2005), xxxvi.
42 Ibid
43 Ibid, xxxvii.
45 Émile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (Free Press, 1995).
46 Durkheim, 448.
Durkheim’s influence on Halbwachs is easy to trace. Although he was a student of Durkheim, Halbwachs understood the shortcomings of society as a whole. Halbwachs’s introduction of ‘group’ has helped to break down Durkheim’s society theory. He stressed that collective memory can be understood and examined only through the social frameworks (Cadres). He suggests “no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections.”

Through Kantian/Durkheimian theory, this differentiation would highlight the fact that an individual can be part of various groups simultaneously and as the result of that “every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in time and space”.

His work on differentiating between autobiographical memory and historical, this indeed depends on the group that one is part of, and, historical memory that is what has been shaped by the historical events that have transmitted to us through signs, commemorations, symbols, history textbooks, etc. Autobiographical memories are individual’s firsthand experiences but still they will be experienced in group/s that we are part of, like how a child remembers and reminded through his family, i.e. grandparents and how their stories of their shared and experienced past. He emphasizes that in a way, their various spaces, or groups memories and they transfer in different ways, collective memory that is what one built her/his being or identity on, and the other which benefits us to understand our surrounding and not a living entity, as he describes

“History indeed resembles a crowded cemetery, where room must constantly be made for new tombstones. Where the past social milieu to live for us only in these historical notations, and, more generally speaking, where the collective memory composed only of dates, arbitrary definitions, and reminders of events, then it would most assuredly remain external to us.”

Halbwachs reason behind declaring individual memory as its pure form and isolated is that “the individual memory could not function without words and ideas, instruments the individual has not himself invented but appropriated from his milieu.”

He boldly stresses that the only place that individual memory in its pure form exists is when one dreams and that is a pure individual form of memory that only a person experiences. As Wetzel has mentioned before, Halbwachs influence of Henri
Bergson’s work ‘Matter and Memory’ is undeniable, particularly variability of memory. Although throughout his later work there is an apparent pattern that Halbwachs theories were more continuation of Durkheim’s and less of Bergson’s, in another word, more sociology and less psychology. Olick states, “for Halbwachs, memory is framed in the present as in the past, variable rather than constant” he goes further to emphasize on what memory study is, “[it] is a matter not of reflecting philosophically on inherent properties of the subjective mind but of identifying its shifting social frames.” However, this abstractness between groups, family and institutions as such, has been a mutual ground for scholars to criticize and or in a few cases refute. Later on, in this chapter this has been addressed and discussed.

Nonetheless it is Halbwachs approach, who followed Durkheim’s footsteps, stands out, from the other works and also cross disciplinary approach, around the time that it was not a ‘common’ approach. Conceivably, one can say, until this day there are feuds over interdisciplinary approaches in conducting research. Halbwachs theory and its tendencies to Durkheim’s has been criticized because of its shortcomings in tackling various aspects of collective memory such as transference of collective memory and distinguishing them as such. Although he might have been able to advance his work if his life was not tragically cut short.

2.2.4 Collective Memory 2.0: Modernity vs. Postmodernity

Halbwachs theory’s hiatus came back to scholars’ realm in the 1980s which is also known as “memory boom”, or as Olick calls it the “second memory boom”. Postmodern scholars and theorist have weighed on scholars of 19 th century and elaborated on the matter extensively. One of the groundbreaking scholars, Pierre Nora, has dedicated his works which deals with memory and how history has found its way to contemporary France. In his 132 essays, which has ended in assembly of 7 volumes of powerful account, has tried to address the process of foundation of French national

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identity and memory, which he discovers its roots from the Middle Ages. Nora’s *Les Lieux de mémoire* (Realms of Memory) take on memory from a historian point of view and his attempt to marry both realms beyond Halbwachs, he states in the first volume as “a systemic attempt exploration of French symbols, if not a history of France through memory”.

In these books, Nora goes further than what Halbwachs attempted and by delving into the French identity from various aspects is remarkable. In the 7 volumes, Nora challenges Halbwachs *milieux* and he centers his work on the *lieux*, loci, or places of memory and it is the place, that guides us to remember and to recall, he states

If we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate *lieux de mémoire* in its name. Each gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning.

Nora and his team of researchers tackle diverse ranges, from naming of places, literature that was produced to support national myths as such, and school textbooks to support the state narratives, to symbols, images, arts also buildings, museums and monuments; whom needs to be canonized, memorized, and glorified as well as traditions cuisines, religions to name a few. Nora, like his comrade Le Goff, is the third generation of the *Annales* School, and predecessors of Durkheim and Halbwachs introduces a new wave (*Nouvelle histoire*) of historiography which was fused with cultural history. In these books, they address how history have been in the hands of very few historians and those archives were institutionalized and unreachable for other historians. Nora, in a way deconstructs the fabric of the contemporary nation to address the myths and other fictions that have found their way into history of a nation, by highlighting the power of commemorations and mnemonics. Foucault’s influence in his works are obvious and it has been also mentioned by Dosse that Foucault guided his

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focus to the concept of structure of power.⁶¹

*Lieux de mémoire* reviews every aspect of memory of the society, each thread that has been woven over the time that has led to become the fabric of ‘Les Frances’. Nora’s chronological interpretation of development of memories of groups through various epochs shows how relics and events have helped into transforming a nation, from colonialists back to the nation. Aleida Assmann praises that since “Instead of emphasizing continuity and unity, Nora has provided us with a conceptual framework with which to approach the fragmentary, inconclusive, and highly elusive texture of national memory.”⁶² The volumes also touch upon on how leaders throughout the years have led the society by promoting narrative to address themselves by objectifying the ‘other’. How different regions were introduced to their ‘traditions’ which has assisted in becoming local patriotism and nostalgia.⁶³ Also, how those populaces close to the nations limits are different from of those “away from the borders” through fusion of two cultures, religions, agriculture, cuisines, architecture and so on.⁶⁴ Similarly, how symbols and artifacts have become representatives of the groups and that would lead to a shared knowledge of the past. Although they were limited to a few which has transferred those tangible objects or places to become more important because of its rarity, it was for specific groups to decide what is sacred and had the value of becoming canonized in the collective memory of the ‘nation’.

Nora’s work shows how national memory through teaching of history facilitates national identity and that has provided certainty and hegemony. Although this identity has been subject to change every time the nation experienced alterations through revolutions and system change.⁶⁵ Olick and Robbins suggest “Nora's theory remains the most comprehensive empirical effort to confront the contemporary situation of

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⁶⁴ Nora, 409.
2.2.5 Problematizing Collective Memory

Nora’s and other collective memory scholars in various fields have been criticized and at times scorned. Alon Confino, who criticizes Nora’s work for overwhelming the scholar realm with his work on infusing memory and the danger of resulting in perceiving past as pure myth and less fact-based, since it has believed that past is constructed. Confino claims, “the benefit of richness cannot overcome a sense that a term “memory” is depreciated by surplus use, while memory studies lack a clear focus and have become somewhat predictable.”

Dohane Patai article which describes “this post-modernist self-reflexivity” “memory boom” as “nouveau solipsism”. Or Marc Bloch pointing out that Halbwachs’s theory is nothing but a copy of concepts of individual psychology. Similarly, Susan Crane criticizes Nora’s ‘pessimistic approach’ and she believes, in Nora’s view “history plays the role of invader and manipulator, a force from within collective memory that is self-destructive and that produces prosthetic artifacts to replace natural connections to reality”. She confronts Nora and Halbwachs for not including individual in the context of collective memory, she states:

> collective memory ultimately is located not in sites but in individuals. All narratives, all sites, all texts remain objects until they are “read” or referred to by individuals thinking historically […] these individuals may happen to be professional historians, but, more often they may simply be people who are thinking historically […] for any individual, learning about history is a lived experience that becomes part of collective memory.

Moreover, Susan Sontag, in the same line with Reinhard Koselleck, considers that existence of collective memory as such cannot exist and all memories are installed in the

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68 Confino, 1387.


72 Crane, 1381.
individual and will, sooner or later, perish with her/him.\textsuperscript{73} She confirms

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory—part of the same family of spurious notions as collective guilt. But there is collective instruction [...] what is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds.\textsuperscript{74}

These criticisms have in a way helped scholars in the coming years to redefine and/or occasionally, expand the theory of collective memory. Astrid Erll responds to this

what these criticisms overlook [...] is exactly the umbrella quality of these relatively new usages of “memory” helps us see the [...] relationships between such ancient myths, [...] personal recollections of recent experience, which enables disciplines as varied as psychology, history, sociology, and literary studies to engage in a stimulating dialogue.\textsuperscript{75}

Aleida Assmann has empathized with Sontag’s point, but she has replied in an extensive essay on criticisms specifically on the vagueness of collective memory and that has caused misunderstandings.\textsuperscript{76} She believes that the nature of individual memory and the way human beings acquire data under various circumstances, they are translated into and through symbols and signs as such. Nevertheless, through various mnemonics, literature and even vocalization they can be transferred which becomes not only individual’s ‘property’ but collective and this may become a movie or an artifact in the museum, which in this way can be communicated and transmitted to a wider realm. She points out unlike individuals, organizations, churches and nations do not contain memory as such, but they create them through rituals, symbols and monuments etc., which helps them to “construct an identity”.\textsuperscript{77} Ultimately, she suggests

The term collective memory, I would argue, is not necessarily a spurious notion, but it is much too vague to serve as a critical term. It is an umbrella term for different formats of memory that need to be further distinguished, such as family memory, interactive group memory, and social, political, national, and cultural memory.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{74} Susan Sontag, \textit{Regarding the Pain of Others} (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 85.
\textsuperscript{75} Erll and Nünning, \textit{Cultural Memory Studies}, 1.
\textsuperscript{77} Assmann, 55.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
2.2.6 Third Boom: Conceptualization of Collective Memory

More than the works and discussions that were presented earlier, there is an obvious pattern of uncertainty in where collective memory begins and where it ends. Whether it is purely social, cultural or historical memory? Can we address it as individual or is it just related to a collective? For that matter Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory can become helpful. His theory which originates from ‘Durkheim’s social division of labors’ can become beneficial in addressing how individuals occupy (habitus) ‘fields’ and they would carry that with them in every space they would enter.\(^79\) Bourdieu and Wacquant suggest

> In a highly differentiated society, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, i.e. spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields.\(^80\)

This has led the collective memory to extensive works of Jan and Aleida Assmann’s attempts to tackle the deficiencies of theory and help to redefine and conceptualizing.\(^81\)

2.2.7 Four Formats of Collective Memory

The Assmanns’ works on reviving Halbwachs’s and other scholars’ remarks have assisted them to identify those limitations. Aleida Assmann proposes that there is not only one collective memory but, by contrasting it with various ‘wes’ that individuals may inhabit. She suggests that since we are signed up in various spaces, so we encompass their memories too, be it “the family, the neighborhood, the generation, the society, the state, and the culture we live in”.\(^82\) She goes further and suggests people obtain those memories beyond lived experience, they can be “via interacting, communicating, identifying, learning, and participating”.\(^83\) She suggests that these various forms of collective memory have been distinguished base on three principles “extension in space

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\(^82\) Assmann, *Re-Framing Memory*, 40.

\(^83\) Ibid.
and time, size of group, and volatility or stability.”

Four formats or frames of memory are namely; individual memory, social memory, political memory and cultural memory.

### 2.2.7.1 Individual memory

Assmann refers to individual memory to Halbwachs’s theory to confirm that individual’s memory is shaped by the ‘wes’ that one is part of, and it is in constant exchange. Assmann points out “personal memory is the dynamic medium for processing subjective experience and building up a social identity.” It is possible to see it as singular if we point out to the brain but even as was mentioned earlier individual’s memory, understood through cognitive psychology, is in continual cycle of acquiring data from the outside and recalling them later when needed. Although its longevity is limited to the individual, and if it is not transmitted through verbalization or snapshots etc., to another ‘frame’, like becoming familial memory, since they are unstable and subject to distortion. Importantly, Assmann points out that this type of memory cannot live longer than a hundred years or three generations.

### 2.2.7.2 Social memory

Assmann has assigned social memory to one of the three “collective” memory in the sense of the word. She defines social memory as “the past as experienced and communicated (or repressed) within a given society.” Although it is under category of ‘collective’ but like the previous, individual memory, requires transition means, otherwise, since it is not related to any institutions, it may perish with the individuals. It is where Jan Assmann’s ‘communicative memory’, can play the role to as transmitting this to a more long-living frame, such as cultural memory or political memory. Aleida Assmann points out that society does not contain a standardized memory, but a generation can define a society’s memory at a point in time. She proposes that scholars

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84 Ibid.
86 Assmann, Re-Framing Memory, 40.
87 Ibid, 41.
88 Ibid 42.
in the field of social psychologists, like Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott’s research in ‘Generations and Collective Memory’, can weigh in and “(re-) discover” them. ⁹⁰ James Pennebaker suggests that Schuman’s work highlights that “collective memories, then, are often cohort memories.” ⁹¹ He suggests that members of that cohort are the ones who will eventually through various channels will affect the subsequent generations collective memory.

Assmanns have incorporated prior works such as Halbwachs’s and offer a coherent argument that memory is in a way a social factor that e.g., can be assigned to a specific generation that develops parallel memories and comprehends and produces their own understanding of history. This may highlight the reasons behind a generation’s lack of in-depth understanding of past generations or past events and vice versa. She suggests that every generation can last up to thirty years and “the change of generations is paramount for the reconstruction of societal memory and the renewal of cultural creativity.” ⁹² This form of collective memory is the method that has been used in this paper to understand the passage of memory through generations.

2.2.7.3 Political memory

As mentioned earlier unlike individual and social memory which are directly related to individual’s ‘memory’, political memory and cultural memory both do not possess ‘memory’ of their own per se, so they rely on the creation and adaption of memory through and represented in tangible forms such as “symbols and material representations”. Although this has privileged the latter, in the form extension of their longevity. ⁹³ Assmann states,

While the social format of memory is built on inter-generational communication, political and cultural forms of memory are designed for trans-generational communication, involving not only libraries, museums, and monuments, but also providing various modes of education and repeated occasions for participation. ⁹⁴

So, it is up to institutions, be they churches, nations, businesses, to find the suitable memory and through that they would build monuments and places of worship,

⁹¹ James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rim., Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives (Psychology Press, 2013), viii.
⁹² Ibid, 42.
⁹³ Assmann, Re-Framing Memory
⁹⁴ Ibid, 42.
commemoration days, signs etc. Events either experienced first-hand – by individuals, alias, “bottom-up memory”, which are short-lived and indistinct, through remembrance days as such, can become institutionalized “top-down memory”.

This transference will facilitate a cluster for the external object or memory, for insignificant personal, to become ‘our’ memory. Assmann suggests a combination of those aides-mémoires which are instilled in a memory assist “these groups and institutions 'construct' an identity.”95 She recommends that “the bottom-up social memory” has been studied by social psychologists which have addressed the way historical events have been “perceived and remembered by individuals and generations within their own life span.” And “top-down political memory” has been studied by political scientists, which have helped them to address and “discuss the role of memory for the formation of national identities and political action.”96 Assmann confirms that “the first approach focuses on how memories are communicated in private and public space” and the latter on “how memories are constructed, staged, used, and abused for political action and the formation of group identities.”97 98

2.2.7.4 Cultural memory

First for the matter of the subject, one needs rather a definition of culture. Aleida Assmann defines culture “as systematic and highly elaborate strategies against the primary experience of ongoing decay and general oblivion.” 99 Jan Assmann has suggested that cultural memory boils down to factors such as “body of reusable texts, images, and rituals” that are unique to a society at a point of time and by “cultivation” can serve to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”100

95 Ibid, 43.
96 Ibid, 42.
97 Ibid.
98 Assmann suggest three aspects to differentiate political constructions of memory from personal and social memory as following: “[1.] they are not connected to other memories and the memories of others but tend towards homogeneous unity and self-contained closure. [2.] political memory is not fragmentary and diverse but emploted in a narrative that is emotionally charged and conveys a clear and invigorating message. […3.] it is not something volatile and transient, but is anchored in material and visual signs such as sites and monuments as well as in performative action such as commemoration rites, which periodically reactivates individual memories and enhance collective participation.” All the above mentioned will, in a way, stabilize a political memory in order to be transmitted from a generation to next. Aleida Assmann, Re-Framing Memory: Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past, 2010, 42.

99 Assmann, Re-Framing Memory, 43.
100 In. Assmann and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 132.
Cultural memory as was mentioned earlier is preserved by institutions and can be ritualized through cultural products, i.e. national commemoration days, movies, history textbooks to assist, nations or individuals, to recollect, re-imagine and adjust their values concurrently. According to Erll and Nünning, in a nutshell, cultural memory is “the interplay of present and past in sociocultural contexts.”\textsuperscript{101} Aleida Assmann hints that, unlike political memory, which “addresses individual first and foremost as members of a group; cultural memory relates to […] them as individuals.”\textsuperscript{102} Although, she refers to the remembering and forgetting nature of collective memory, but she has proposed that cultural memory has a third dimension, which is a fuzzy in-between of both remembering and forgetting “this third category refers to the cultural function of storing extensive information in libraries, museums, and archives which far exceeds the capacities of human memories.”\textsuperscript{103} However, Assmann has expanded the mechanism of cultural memory concerning remembering and forgetting since then, and proposed an extensive theory of forgetting remembering, namely: canon and archive (figure 2).\textsuperscript{104}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{assmann_cultural_memory.png}
\caption{Assmann’s Cultural Memory, Remembering and Forgetting.\textsuperscript{105}}
\end{figure}

\subsection{2.2.7.4.1 Canon and Archive}

Remembering can be in two forms active or passive. Under active form of remembering there is a powerhouse (canon) of references such as historical texts, artifacts, myths

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{101} Erll and Nünning, \textit{Cultural Memory Studies}, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Aleida Assmann in, Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, \textit{The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis} (Oxford University Press, 2006), 221.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Goodin and Tilly, 220.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Aleida Assmann in, Erll and Nünning, \textit{Cultural Memory Studies}, 98.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Erll and Nünning, 99.
\end{itemize}
available to members of a collective to support their “collective identity”. Material that have been placed in this section have passed various “rigorous processes of selection, which secure for certain artifacts a lasting place in the cultural working memory of a society”, the process of “canonization” or “sanctification” which has been derived from the Christianity ritual of immortalization. The materials in this category are not subject to change under any political or historical changes. Under the same category falls teaching history, Assmann refers to Charles Ingrao and claims,

Nation-states produce narrative versions of their past which are taught, embraced, and referred to as their collective autobiography. National history is taught via history textbooks, which have been appropriately termed “weapons of mass instruction”.

National history is part of everyday life in various forms, be they monuments and national days etc. that was mentioned earlier will fall under canonized remembering. Naturally, there is a danger that, can also become a tool of abuse by those dictatorship regimes revisionist historiographers to structure, who and which events needs to be remembered and to be forgotten.

Nonetheless, there is an ocean of material which has been archived all along and this vastness makes it impossible for an individual to acquire all of it, thus, there are snippets that have been purposefully selected and transmitted through various mediums for the masses, or a specific group, like a nation, and the rest are in “the state of latency” to be communicated, when needed. This is will be in the “archive” part of remembering. On the other hand, forgetting active and passive is, active form which may result in neglect and disregard and anything that is related to a specific memory as such will be forgotten and not transmitted. Forgetting in its active form basically heads to destruction of what is left of that memory. It is existence will be eroded, either physically, or through censorship.

This subchapter delved into the collective memory which highlighted scholars works ever since. This subchapter also pointed out the formats of collective memory and the longevity of those memories according to their formats. Also, to aid this paper main purpose in acquiring primary information and conducting quantitative research, social

106 Ibid, 100.
107 Ibid.
109 Assmann, “Transformations between History and Memory.”
110 Aleida Assmann in. Goodin and Tilly, The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis, 220.
memory as a collective memory format has facilitated this task immensely. The following subchapter has tried to deconstruct the notation of nation and citizenship in order to highlight the interconnectedness of collective memory and national identity.
2.3 Nation and National identity

Nation and nationalism are not very old ideas, but they have been transformed throughout the modern time. There is a debate over when nations and empires in the sense of nationhood but some have agreed that contemporary nations (or nation-states) as we know it today came to existence only in the 17th century, as the result of two peace treaties; The peace of Westphalia (Westfälischer Friede) and Peace of Utrecht which was signed to the end the Thirty-year War and respectively the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, Spain, France, Sweden accepted to respect each other’s territorial integrity. The concept of nation-state was also implemented in Japan during the Meiji period to stay beside its western counterparts and led to Japan’s modernization.

2.3.1 Nation

Nations have been considered spaces and people living within those territories have been supposed to share made-believe-narratives, anything that bonds them together, be they, heritage, myths, cuisines, customs, etc. Thus, Benedict Anderson refers to nations as “imagined communities”, he motivates that by proposing “it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” He refers to historian Seton-Watson to confirm that they are imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”

Nevertheless, these imagined communities and their sense of comradeship, have been reused or even abused by just referring to what had been make believe based on a divisive fiction or non-fiction narration. The result of many of these accounts have not ended in bringing the communities together but resulted in destruction and division throughout history. Although nations are not natural and are based on imagination but the generations after, so to say,18th century have been living with this ‘reality’ and it has, in a way, become ‘the reality’. Although, historian Yuval Harari considers that human

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113 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 6.
114 Ibid.
beings have been living in a “dual reality” since the Cognitive Revolution, he explains “On the one hand, the objective reality of rivers, trees and lions; and on the other hand, the imagined reality of gods, nations and corporations.” He claims with the passage of time, the “imagined reality” has become more prevailing than ever, correspondingly, “the very survival of rivers, trees and lions depends on the grace of imagined entities such as gods, nations and corporations.”

Nevertheless, through those atrocities that had been caused, mainly through nation-states and vicious nationalism, trans-national/intergovernmental organizations came into being like the United Nations. By ratifying and implementing a universal set of laws and human rights, such organizations have been pioneers in preventing atrocities to take place, with a statement “that sovereignty is no longer inviolable.” However, such organizations have not always been successful in conflict preventions, but they have played a major role in, at least, reducing them or giving voice to those who do not have platform in global level.

2.3.2 National Identity

National identity can lead to a kind of self-awareness that makes a person think of her/himself as part of a community that he/she relates to. Scholars like Hobsbawm, Gellner, Smith and Anderson, who have extensively studied nation and nationalism, have affirmed that language is one of the main factors and ingredients to connect and bond people of a group. They point out that mass publications, ‘written manuscripts’ have been a main factor to promote a standard language and through that a nation as whole can become more stabilized and homogenized. Hobsbawm states

So long as people lived in an oral universe there was no necessary link between the spoken and written language of the literate minority. [...] A single national language only became important when ordinary citizens became an important component of the state.

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116 Ibid.
For those governments or nations which are based on ideological bodies it is vital to draw a line and define. Stuart Hall states “‘Difference’ matters because it is essential to meaning; without, meaning could not exist.”

By defining who ‘we’ are, and this can take place only by comparing to the ‘other’, be they, other nation, or folk group, which are ‘different’, it will be transformed into ‘them and us’.

What it means to be ‘British’ or 'Russian' or 'Jamaican' cannot be entirely controlled by the British, Russians or Jamaicans, but is always up for grabs, always being negotiated, in the dialogue between these national cultures and their ‘others’.

Thus, ‘we’ need to protect our identity which is different from the other. Similarly, Michal Krumer-Nevo and Mirit Sidi state that “the oppressive force of otherness comes from the separating line or border created, and from its exclusionary effect” they refer to Hall, “the Others are in effect sent into “symbolic exile.””

Therefore, governments are indeed based on political logics which carry a belief to unite the people, devotees, in other sense, to their own political realm. Hobsbawm states curious but understandable paradox: modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so ‘natural’ as to require no definition other than self-assertion.

In the same line, Hobsbawm has famously declared that tradition as such is a modern invention but it has been promoted to be old. These are rituals and symbols that have been selected and promoted through various institutions which later has become customs as such. This facilitates the idea of homogenization, which would unite the people of a nation, tribe or creed etc. to believe in coming together for the common notion of belonging together and longing for prosperity of it. However, from the sociology perspective, with modernism and the trend of a modern individual and individualism, Hobbs and mainly Smith’s works emphasis was on the individual level, and in psychology Freud is one of the forerunners. Individuality and its uniqueness of its

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121 Ibid, 236.
124 Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1.
own perception and relation to a collection, collectivity is the sum of individuality, or a group, were more outdated formula.\textsuperscript{125}

Although sociologist like Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck regard post/second-modern societies as the result of interconnectedness through globalization, identity has been questioned since values and norms are under scrutiny. This interconnectedness has introduced hybrid spaces that is difficult to have one specific identity. Similarly, the identities that have been developed through local interaction is not local anymore, since “individuals contribute to directly promote social influences and that are global in their consequences and implications.”\textsuperscript{126} Ulrich Beck on the same line suggests modern institutions in ‘second modernity’ are leaving their customs and traditions behind but this however, has led to societies to enter a phase of ‘risky societies’.\textsuperscript{127} This also has led to creation of ‘hybrid identities’ which evokes the indication that through globalization and also people’s movements, and followed by the flow of information in a global level. Individuals have acquired identities which are fusion of various groups and as the result they are not as predefined as they used to be such predictable entity. Moreover, such group identities can no longer be defined with ‘such customs and traditions’ specific to a country. Iyall Smith suggests “hybrid identity includes a local and global identity form, merged to create the hybrid identity.”\textsuperscript{128}

In a survey published by Pew Research Center, 14 countries had to answer one question about their national identity, ‘what it means to be …?’ 13% of the German partakers have mentioned that ‘it is very important’ to be born in the country, but 50% mentioned that it is important to speak the language.\textsuperscript{129} It seems that being able to communicate is the most important factor. On the other hand, 50% of the Japanese participants have mentioned it is very important to be born in the country and strong 70% the ability to speak the language.\textsuperscript{130} In the same line, Hobsbawm suggests that “the

\textsuperscript{125} Lars Udehn, \textit{Methodological Individualism: Background, History and Meaning} (Routledge, 2002).
\textsuperscript{126} Anthony Giddens, \textit{Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age} (Stanford University Press, 1991), 2.
\textsuperscript{127} Anthony Giddens and Simon Griffiths, \textit{Sociology} (Polity, 2006), 119.
\textsuperscript{128} Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy, \textit{Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations} (BRILL, 2008), 4.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
original case for a standard language was entirely democratic, not cultural.”

While communication plays an immense part in understanding each other’s notions, it has equally the potential to divide groups according to their languages.

This subchapter highlighted how identities rely on external factors to make meaning in a way customization which suits a tribe with a unique collective memory to that group since “our identity is always embedded in the stories of the communities from which we construct our identities.” Therefore, through common language and with the help of various media this can become widespread norm throughout a collective, i.e. a nation. The following subchapter has tapped into the ‘stories’, political and social events which might have affected the current students in Japan and Germany in a comparative manner. This has helped this paper to understand the political and social memory as well as their cultural memory, which has facilitated to convey memories of past events to their respective citizens.

131 Hobsbawm in. Barker, Atkinson, and Dworkin, Living As Equals, 88.
2.4 A comparative Study of Germany and Japan

Through a comparative study, in this case of German and Japanese students, this paper will help by highlighting the striking commonalities and differences, as well as the processes of change that have caused shifts in how a sample of students from both countries articulate their national identities today. Durkheim one of the leading advocates of this comparative sociology states “comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology; it is sociology itself.”133 This method has been advised and modified throughout the years, by sociologists like Max Weber. Although Weber believes that epistemological analysis makes it possible to reconcile “complexity and generality by showing that they serve complementary purpose in ideal types”.134 On the other hand, Durkheim believes that the same outcome may occur “an ontological argument about social species that far surpasses simple assertion about the uniformity or diversity of social organization”.135 However, most of Asian countries and specially Japan had been studied and they were perceived in a way that ‘they’ were “exotic” or ‘different’, and sometimes were identified as somewhat ‘primitive’, since civilization had been regarded as being in the hands of very few nations in the western realm.136

Although since globalization and transformation of nations into global actors it is Shmuel Eisenstadt’s revision in Axial Age civilization, which is based on Karl Jaspers’ work *Achsenzeit* (Axial Age), has helped to better understand civilizations from ancient time until today.137 Deprived from prejudice that has been one of the negative characteristics of the western view and interpretations of the ‘orient’, and ‘other’ societies.138 Eisenstadt’s thorough theory of comparative study of civilizations from western societies to Asian counterparts, especially Japanese society and civilization, has helped to connect the dots between variations of modernity, or in his word, multiple modernities.139 This has also been part of the Fukuzawa Yukichi, also similar to Jasper’s

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135 Ibid.
work, highlighting that ‘western civilization’ and culture is not purely western, and asserting that there are instants of Confusion and Asian influence subsisting. Having said that, this chapter is looking at events and societal changes as analyzed by works of scholars regarding Japanese and German society since the war. In addition to that, social norms and values will be discussed in order to get a better understanding of the underlying societal transformations of the two countries.

2.4.1 Imagined Communities: Japanese and German Historical Context

Both Germany and Japan, like many other nations, have a common identity building process, which was once ‘designed’ to give a sense to the people of their respective nation. Although Japan’s geographically predefined boarders have given extra ‘advantage’ in this matter. Germany, as we know it today, came into existence only in 1990, coinciding with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The borders have been altered in various historical events, which are still to this day part of the public and political debate.

The result of Napoleonic war and conquering of Prussia gave birth to scholars of German descent to define a space, that belonged to them. Prior German identity was chiefly associated to Christianity, common language and the regions or Länder/ kleinstaaterei. Johann Gottlieb Fichte addressed the German nation, that did not exist, as a need for the myths of the past and imagined communities like “Teuton”, the “forefather” who fought the Romans and stood up for themselves. He emphasizes on creation of a homeland Heimat that belongs to the people of Germany for the sake of “our oldest common forefathers”. Those series of speeches had only a small impact on the Germans at that time, but it became “their bible after 1918”. Racial cleansing and the idea of a Lebensraum (living space) in an essay on “biogeopolitik”, a homogeneous space, which was coined by Friedrich Fritzel a geographer and zoologist in the late 19th century, with an emphasis on “state being an organic entity.” A compilation of such

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141 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II.
144 Ibid.
ideas gave birth to ideas like *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) which stem from the same national romanticism pioneers like Fichte’s, leading to the heinous crimes of the twentieth century.\(^{147}\)

On the other hand, in Japan’s case, accounts such as *Nihon Shoki* (The Chronicles of Japan), part of *Rikkokushi* or Six National Histories and *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters), which are the oldest evidence (8\(^{th}\) century), they address the ancient people of Japan and provide accounts on legends of the Japanese islands and *Kamis* (Gods).\(^{148}\) The word “*Shinto*” (way of the gods) was derived from *Nihon Shoki*, which later became the state’s religion. It has also been mentioned that Izanami, goddess of birth and death, and Izanagi, had several children, all being diverse deities.\(^{149}\) Amaterasu, the sun goddess, is exceptionally important in the nationalism sentiment derived from Shintoism. The legend confirms that the bloodline of the Japanese emperors is originated from the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, which confirms the divineness of the Emperor (*Tennō*).\(^{150}\) As the result, WWII was also perceived as the ‘holy war’ since it came from a divine source which made the people of Japan superior.\(^{151}\)

Later on, in the Meiji Era, and the prevalence of Japanese *Kokugaku* (lit: the study of our country), the Chronicles of Japan became part of the school curriculum and mythological-religious figures such as Amaterasu, the sun goddess, were instrumentalized, and it was taught in schools in the war time as actual accounts.\(^{152}\)\(^{153}\) This movement was called the ‘theory of Moral of Nation’ (*Kokumin Dotoku Ron*) or ‘the Imperial Rescript on Education’ which was issued in 1890, and based on Confucian virtues and the admiration of the Emperor.\(^{154}\) Thus, mythical superiority, coupled with events in Europe, and associations with the fascist movement, specially the Nazi regime, led to atrocities beyond imagination.\(^{155}\) In a nutshell, some may not agree, but modern


nationalism narratives in Japan could not have developed without signaling to Shinto and the Emperor.\(^{156}\)

Hannah Arendt famously states “Before mass leaders seize the power to fit reality to their lies, their propaganda is marked by its extreme contempt for facts as such, for in their opinion fact depends entirely on the power of man who can fabricate it.”\(^{157}\) These glimpses show either how countries’ national identities rose through the myths of the imagined-community narrative and ended up in destabilizing whole regions and setting spark to the fire of WWII. The next subchapters will critically analyze the processes of facing up to the atrocities of WWII in both countries.

2.4.2 Postwar Japan and Germany

To facilitate our understanding of the stages which both societies have gone through one can utilize Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as an analogy.\(^{158}\) The consequences of the war, and the destruction that came with it, was followed initially by a period which prioritized the provision of “food and shelter”, progressing through various stages, which would in recent years approaching contemporary Germany and Japan, have progressed through to a period of “self-actualizing”, that has allowed both countries to face their troubled past, and find a way to move beyond their scabrous historical wrong doings. The following is a review of those events.

The consequences and social impacts of WWII have been subject to numerous studies in recent years. The rippling after effects of catastrophic atrocities have not left the countries since the war ended. Basic manuscripts of both countries were revoked and replaced. In both cases the constitution was rewritten from scratch, leading to disarmament and a pacifist mentality, although this was altered later on in the German case, but Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is one of the main subjects still to this day.\(^{159}\)

Throughout this time governments and non-government institutions have been trying to mend their relations with their respective neighbors. Predator countries, Japan and Germany, which had similar situations at the end of the war, had the additional

\(^{156}\) Yasua Yasuo in, Tetsurō Watsuji, *Watsuji Tetsuro’s Rinrigaku: Ethics in Japan* (SUNY Press, 1996), 323. He believes that the reason that the Emperor symbol of modern nationalism “seems to be an incident” and “it could be described as irony of history”. Skya, *Japan’s Holy War*, 322.


\(^{159}\) Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2010), 98.
burdens of shame and guilt. Germany on the one hand, following the fall of the Nazi regime, inherited the aftermath of the most heinous crimes in modern history, and faced a difficult future after being battered physically and morally. Japan, on the other hand, the first and only nation to ever be devastated by atomic bombs, faced death, destruction and suffering on a scale not seen before. Although it should be mentioned that this is in no means trying to weigh the relative atrocities or compare the magnitude of destruction, it is purely a comparison of the relative experiences of each country as it went through the Post War stages of recognition and reconciliation.

2.4.3 War Trials

The following subchapter will try to highlight the pivotal moments that have affected the countries’ varying ways of observing their past. After traumatic events, it is evidently unforeseen, as to how a nation will need to address and remember specific events.

Japanese and Germans’ notions of themselves were impaired through their state’s propaganda machines during the war, which were later forced by the allies to face up to the heinous acts of their, once cherished, statesmen. In Germany posters and billboards were placed in the cities reminding the Germans that it was their fault that the massacres of innocent people had taken place. Those billboards were accompanied with gruesome pictures of the victims in Dachau and other crime scenes and were headlined with "Diese Schandtaten: Eure Schuld!" (These atrocities: Your fault!) which was an effort by the allied powers to remind German people of their collective guilt/responsibility.160

In both countries, two unique trials took place that had never taken place before. Two international trials, namely: The Nuremberg Trials (die Nürnberger Prozesse) and Tokyo Trials (or the International Military Tribunal for the Far East) by organized by the allies. The Nuremberg Trial was created to hold the oppressors and Nazi war criminals accountable for their actions. Likewise, the Tokyo Trials for the Japanese war criminals. Although, the legitimacy of those trials is debatable since the purpose of those tribunals was partly to display allied power, as well as holding war criminals accountable. But there is no doubt this was the beginning of a more universal and international justice system, resulting in the United Nations, Interpol and other such transnational institutions.

These two war trials have been heatedly debated and subject to numerous examinations in various fields of study ever since. For instance, controversy reigns over whether all the war criminals and those who had taken part in various atrocious events were executed or should have been, or if the Emperor of Japan should be prosecuted for example. Pike boldly suggests that “without MacArthur’s intervention, [Emperor] Hirohito would almost certainly have been a Class A criminal charged with conspiracy to start and wage war.” Maruyama refers to this as the “system of irresponsibility”, he tried to challenge the Post War Japanese society that the individual can be guilty as the society as a whole. Or Arthur describes observes the Nuremberg Trials as “these trials focused on the charges of war crimes – including mistreatment and executions of prisoners of war – rather than crimes committed outside of the direct context of war, such as many massacres of Jewish civilians.”, although this was coupled with the anguish of the consequences of abducting a leader which had a special place in the Japanese psyche. Similarly, Raful states “the Nuremberg Trials did little by way of influencing a collective memory of Nazi criminality. Other instructional media and propaganda forms were more significant than the courtroom.” Moreover, not all the criminals were appropriately judged, and justice was not served at its purest form, but it was an attempt to keep people accountable to their crimes. Besides one should bear in mind that colonialism was still intact during those immediate post war years and talk of respecting and protecting sovereignty and people by those judges at the time, have been contested since.

As a result, several war criminals were spared, and later on came into the political realm in both countries. The main explanations can be political unrest in both countries, due to destruction, unstable economies, coupled with the Cold War and regional power struggles. Later on, Japan and Germany enjoyed an economic revival during the Cold

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162 Pike, Hirohito’s War, 122.


166 Tanaka, McCormack, and Simpson, Beyond Victor’s Justice?, chap. 2.
War known as ‘economic miracles’ (Wirtschaftswunder) allowed a generation which was not affected by the famine and destruction, to put the trauma in the attic.

2.4.4 Social Movements of the 1960s

As Burger mentions, the years that followed into the 1950s, was a “relative quiescence” and somehow need moral responsibility of those atrocities vanished. Although intellectuals started to study both societies thoroughly. Kyoto School and Frankfurt School were both active in addressing the issues of transformation of both countries into democracy. Habermas and Adorno in Germany and Yamakawa Hitoshi and Maruyama Masao in Japan, addressed their respective countries and the idea of national identity as they moved towards modernity. In both countries student movements in the 1960s shuddered the political classes in a direction that was not known before. There was an accumulation of movements and a shift somehow in the world view. Student movements in both Japan and Germany stemmed from socialist and left leaning movements.

In Japan, the civil rights movement, led by discriminated against minorities: Burakumin (Helmet people, who were segregated and treated unfairly), anti-discrimination movement by Korean residents, to name a few, coupled with anti-American protests in relation to the occupations and wars in Vietnam, and these were stepping stones toward a more open society. The early movements after the occupation and late 60s were highly problematic since the political unrest in those years was very intense. This situation which was related to economic pressures, the Cold War and political stiffness (the early years were subject to suppression of leftist movements by the Americans followed by clamp downs on the political parties’ during the Cold War) which were central to the dismantling of protest and led to various clashes, student dismissals and university shut downs.

Student protests in (West) Germany resulted in a highly praised generation (“the 68ers”) who became, in a way, fore runners of a generation who aspired to face the past head on and hold to account those who were responsible for the atrocities. Assmann

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167 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, 240.
169 Takemasa Ando, Japan’s New Left Movements: Legacies for Civil Society (Routledge, 2013), 51.
170
recounts that the 45ers habit of looking away, which was stemmed from Nazi Germany, left “the following generation with a specific historical project. It consists in addressing the blind spots of the older generation, to uncover what remained hidden, and to transform into knowledge”. As philosopher Herman Lübbe, suggests that communicative silence (Komunikatitives Beschweigen) was not desirable for democracy, and ideas such as Schlußstricht (closure) which was introduced by the politicians, can only take place when “democratic intuitions are well in place” and not suppressed.¹⁷¹ Thus, these events, had an immense effect on the intellectuals and students of that generation to set the tone for an Erinnerungskultur (Culture of Remembrance).¹⁷² The first war trial which was held by the German government, known as Frankfurt Auschwitz trial was a one of its kind event that brought the enormity of Nazi atrocities into the public realm again. The way that this generation were confronted by atrocities done by the Nazis was conveyed by events such as “the Eichmann trial, The Diary of Anne Frank, and the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials”.¹⁷³ Arthur suggests that this “counteracted the exclusive focus on German suffering under Allied bombings and expulsion.”¹⁷⁴ Coupled with an American Mini-series on the Holocaust which was another jab in the forgetfulness of the west German societies, and the younger generation grasped that “the traditions and identities of German mainstream society as inextricably connected to Auschwitz and forged new transnational ties, social movements and identifications in response.”¹⁷⁵

Although it should be mentioned these shifts in the social memory did not take place in the former East Germany, as much as in the west, because of the heavy governmental involvement in any kind of propaganda outside of the soviet’s narrative. Because of this many Nazi members felt safe in the former East as there were no such precessions, and this has been one of the main problems that has eventuated as a major issue since unification.¹⁷⁶

2.4.5 Towards True Sense of Vergangenheitsbewältigung?

¹⁷¹ Siobhan Kattago, Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past (Routledge, 2016), 62.
¹⁷² Assmann and Frevert, Geschichtsvergessenheit - Geschichtsversessenheit, 46.
¹⁷³ Olick, The Sins of the Fathers, 281.
¹⁷⁴ Arthur, Identities in Transition, 130.
¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 131
Coming to terms with the past which was introduced by Jaspers was once again back but this time in practice. Although there were a few main events that had helped Germany’s neighbors to feel and accept the apologies that were made to ask for remorse for the past wrong doings. Willy Brandt’s kneeling in Poland in 1970 is one of its kind and has been respected and mentioned as important in the reconciliation process. This act of redemption at the monument for victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was also criticized inside the German political realm but it did not reduce its importance as a gracious approach. This is completely different from what his forefathers like Adenauer had done when they shied away from doing as part of the pragmatic way of approaching politics or Realpolitik. Olick states “the student movement and the charismatic young chancellor Willy Brandt placed morality over Real-politik.” This was not just by paying reparation and waiting for reconciliation. Aleida Assmann describe these periods in Germany as following:

The norm of German national memory, as established in the 1960s and reconfirmed in 1980s, is the Holocaust, the recognition and working through of German guilt, involving the assumption of historical responsibility for the atrocities of the Nazi-regime. This is the normative framework into which all other memories have to be integrated.

For instance, there were a few controversial events that put German public politics to the test, such as a state visit to the Bitburg cemetery. This visit has been subject to many discussions. Bitburg cemetery, where about 49 members of Waffen-SS (the armed wing of the Nazi Party's SS organization) have been buried, was subject to President Reagan’s visit for the 40th anniversary of the end of the war in 1985. It was symbolically recognized to set an end to the conflict and start the reconciliation process with the American counterpart. This caused a large number of demonstrations which were highly criticized by various organizations and communities. This however led the officials to add a visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to the original itinerary, which originally was

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177 Fischer and Lorenz, *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in Deutschland*.
not part of the plan, but the main point of this event was to leave the past where it belonged and to move on. Although Weizsacker’s speech for the 40th anniversary of WWII was on point with the idea of remembering the troubled past by renaming May 8th as a liberation day rather than capitulation day.

This speech unlike the Bitburg scandal was received positively both in Germany and internationally. The annual apology speeches have been the subject of various studies ever since. In the 70th memorial service for liberation of Auschwitz the German Prime minister, Angela Merkel addressed the nation and said that we must not forget this event and what the Germans had done, and that the Holocaust, was the “collapse of civilization”. Furthermore, a well-known example would be the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin which resides not far from the German parliament or Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) around the country, which have been installed as a block from brass with the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, ‘a block to stumble upon’. Through the formation of intuitions such as the European Union, there has been a facilitation of the European countries to come together and exchange in a wider sense of nationality and regionalism, towards post-national community building. This has also helped the member countries to have intercultural ties and student exchange programs like Erasmus for the European citizens to be able to experience various other cultures and histories first hand. Moreover, the effort to write history textbooks in a European context, has led Germany to work with its neighboring countries, specially Poland and France. The pursuit of this coming together to address the atrocities and any unresolved issues has helped to homogenize historical narratives. This has been done through the authorities and by professional historians from respective countries.

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184 Tanja Schult and Diana I. Popescu, Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era (Springer, 2015), 84.
2.4.6 Historical Consciousness Problem rekishi ninshiki mondai

In 1972, for the first time, the Prime Minister of Japan, Kakuei Tanaka visited Beijing, the first visit of its kind, in order reconcile with China, where he stressed he is aware of the damages that had been done.\(^{188}\) In 1992, for the first time, Emperor Akihito paid a visit to the People’s Republic of China, where he addressed the atrocities that had been done in China which caused suffering to the people of China, which was referred to as ‘unfortunate event’ and the Chinese were upset that there were no talks of reparations to the victims of the War.\(^{189}\) Although this was a huge step since before this no other Emperor had stepped on Chinese soil. The list can go on and Japanese politicians and elites at the time of their service were reluctant to address the atrocities and this has not helped to reconcile.\(^{190}\) Hashimoto states

Japan’s war memory is one of the most crucial issues of the global memory culture on wars and atrocities that has surged since the 1992. There are many volatile, unresolved issues: the territorial disputes with China, Korea and Russia; the treatment of war guilt and war criminals at commemorations (“the Yasukini problem”); and the claims for compensation and apology by wartime forced laborers, forced sex workers (comfort women) and prisoners of war.\(^{191}\)

Although there were prime ministers who have tried to keep this peace-making process alive by sincerely apologizing and making an effort to bring closure to the victims of the Japanese war aggressions. Tomiichi Murayama expressed his “heartfelt apology” in 1995 and mentioned “Japan through its colonial rule and invasion, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations.”\(^{192}\) Although, this was widely accepted and celebrated in various Asian countries which were subject to this tremendous suffering, but in the country not everyone was happy about this approach. Berger mentions that “on the same day that

\(^{190}\) Hoppens, *The China Problem in Postwar Japan*.
Murayama made his apology eight members of his own cabinet visited the Yasukuni Shrine. Nevertheless, Murayama also tried to address the Comfort Women issue by setting up a non-governmental fund. Asian Women's Fund, relying on private funding by Japanese people contributing as an “offer of atonement”, and raising more than 500 million Yen, but it backfired for various reasons, such as it was not coming from the government, and it was just designated for a small portion of the victims, and finally was annulled. Judt indicates “When we ransack the past for political profit—selecting the bits that can serve our purposes and recruiting history to teach opportunistic moral lessons—we get bad morality and bad history.”

In the wake of the 70th anniversary of WWII, eight scholars of Stanford university offered their own version of ‘appropriate speech’ so that would help the nations to come together at last, but unfortunately it was not implemented. Although months later Prime Minister Abe offered “sincere apologies” to the victims of Comfort Women in Korea, followed with a reparation pact for the victims, but he also mentioned he wanted it to “stop future generations from having to repeatedly apologize”. Nevertheless, officials’ visits to the Yasukuni Shrine where high ranked war criminals are cherished, have been part of the problem which has been protested against both inside and outside of Japan. Similarly, the Chiran Museum for the Kamikaze Pilots and Shokeikan Museum for the wounded Soldiers, are some other controversial places of remembrance that remind one the lopsidedness of acknowledgment of the past. Nonetheless, there could also be a small memorial monument for the victims of Japanese aggression. Although there is a Monument to Korean victims and survivors in Hiroshima which has been erected by the Korean communities in Japan. Even recently a statue of a girl (representing the Victims of the Comfort Women) was erected in front of the Japanese

193 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, 183.
195 Judt, “The ‘Problem of Evil’ in Postwar Europe.”
Consulate in Busan, South Korea which became a hot topic for both countries, and it was not received enthusiastically by the Japanese officials.200

On the same line, Japanese school textbooks are not under the government supervision, but produced by private firms. Since the school textbooks, in particular for history, have been under scrutiny, and in the later years it has been a topic of heated debate, since they are not written accurately and have been accused of bias.201 There were historians that were determined to take the matters seriously and have tried to pressure the Ministry of Education to reconsider the taught history. Saburo Ienaga is one of those historians who did not succumb to the demands on rewordings of his proposition of a new history textbook for high school students in Japan. These court challenges to the state textbook screening process” by the Ministry of Education, Yoshiko Nozaki states, those courts “have played a central role in the struggle over the national narrative and identity of postwar Japan.” 202

The history textbooks under the Ministry of Education screenings have been criticized and have caused distress in the region.203 The Ministry’s choices of textbook have identical patterns, they express views about the victims of the Atomic Bombs and the American Occupation and not much is mentioned about the sensitive subjects of the Comfort Women or the Nanjing Massacre which have been widely ignored or paid very little attention.204 For example, since the mid 1990s a politically well-connected and media-savvy group like The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai) have been actively promoting a nationalistic version of history by downplaying the atrocities of the war, and one of the early members and law makers at its early stages has been a prime minister of Japan.205 Correspondingly, over the years there have been scholarly and political debates inside and outside of Japan, and from time to time it has also sparked anti-Japanese rhetoric in neighboring countries. Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel during her visit for the 70th anniversary of WWII in Japan was invited to the one the most respected daily newspapers Asahi Shimbun. She

202 Nozaki, War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 152.
203 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, 176.
205 Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, 181.
stated that “Without these generous gestures of our neighbors this would not have been possible,” and continued by emphasizing “There was, however, also a readiness in Germany to face our history openly and squarely”. Merkel addressed the fact that society played a role in this process and it was not just through politics. She mentioned “It’s difficult for me as a German Chancellor to give you advice for how to deal with your neighborhood. It has to come out of a process in society.”

However, there has been pressure from NGOs, school teachers and historians to face the country’s past in an unbiased way and to promote peace with neighboring countries and an intention that students should comprehend the historical events isolated from nationalistic prejudices. There are various events that could have helped both Japan and neighboring countries such as China and Korea to come together since the 80s but this has not been a successful story. Shin and Sneider state “those official efforts, though useful, are unlikely to produce a common rendition of history”. Similarly, there have been joint Japanese- South Korean groups that have been active since the 1980s and their work has not been progressing.

This chapter’s core was to shed a light on defining collective memory and the process of its formation. And also, historical events that have been studied in-depth and reflected in here. It helped to point out the elements that have affected the contemporary Japanese and German society specially the current generation. It was also highlighted that how various cultural institutions or political parties create their collect memory. Subsequently to the review of the literature on the subject matter it became apparent to conduct this research to answer the paper’s question. The next chapter will address the methodology and in what way primary data has been acquired.

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208 Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel C. Sneider, History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories (Routledge, 2011), 6.
209 Ibid
3. Methodology

In this chapter, the author addresses the appropriate method to acquire information and later how to analyze and present the findings in the results section.

As it was mentioned before through studying previous works on the subject matter and since Aleida Assmann’s description of studying the individuals and generations it was agreed to study the “bottom-up social memory” in order to understand which historical events have been “perceived and remembered by the individuals and generations within their own life span”, which will focus on which memories have been transmitted in private and public space and also find out about the role of memory, particularly political, which relates to formation of national identity.210

In order to obtain this and based on Halbwachs theory that individuals recall in their groups and within their tiers it was decided to conduct a qualitative semi-structured focus group interview in order to acquire thorough information on the subject matter.211 This method had been also used by various scholars notably Adorno and Horkheimer like the study of F-scale.212 F-Scale (Fascist scale) and A-Scale (Authoritarian Scale), were studies which delved into the personalities of the post-war (west) Germans. They examined the collective German acceptance or intolerance of ambiguity. Moreover, those studies highlighted the importance of the environment, be it family (specially interaction with the father), that a person was brought up and the morals that they were brought up, norm of “good behavior”.213 There are other scholar works have been done on the both society in the differ methods and fields.214 They mainly addressed their research question by conducting speech analysis or in more cases quantitative as well as the comparative study of both countries’ history textbooks.215 As it was mentioned in

210 Assmann, Re-Framing Memory, 46.
213 Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality, 384; Adorno, Guilt and Defense, 23.
215 Ted Hopf and Bentley B. Allan, Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database (Oxford University Press, 2016); Buruma, Wages of Guilt; Alexandra Sakaki, Japan and Germany as Regional Actors: Evaluating Change and Continuity After the Cold War (Routledge, 2012); Reiko
the literature review collective Howard Schuman and his colleagues have done impeccable work on studying generations and their collective memory. Their works were the closes to this paper but not in the same manner. This paper has been benefited from their work and other collective memory scholars greatly.

Since this paper is based on comparing two countries and conducting an analysis, comparative case study is the most the appropriate methodology. Comparative case study is appropriate for almost all science including the social sciences which has an interdisciplinary nature. Yin describes case study as “An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a “case”), set within its real-world context—especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. As Lor, has mentioned a qualitative comparative case study seeks to approach the phenomena of the group and findings in an interpretivist manner.

Connaway and Powell have mentioned that face-to-face interviews of a specific group can help the researcher “to explore in depth the feelings and beliefs people hold and to learn how these feelings shape overt behavior” Although again in qualitative research there is chance of generalization, this has been attempted to be minimized in this research. This research could have benefited from a mixed method namely quantitative and qualitative in order to be able to acquire more information, but this requires more time and possibly more researchers, which was not possible on this occasion. Thus, with the focus group interview one can gain access to more in-depth information in a short amount of time. This has helped to obtain groups and individuals perceptions and opinions toward particular subjects, unlike quantitative method, where the observer/moderator cannot always ask for extra information, and misunderstandings may not be minimized.

Since it is a group, the moderator needs to be trained how to avoid any disarray,
so for this, research two pilot focus group sessions took place prior to the final interviews, in order to prepare the moderator for leading a group interview and also to be able to tweak the questions and hopefully improve the outcomes.\textsuperscript{222} It was decided to conduct the sessions in a way that it is less formal allowing the participants to address their own experiences and to be able to openly exchange and confirm their ideas and memories, and ask their own questions as desired.

3.1 Participants

The participants had to be in the same generation. Generation in the Oxford dictionary is defined as “All of the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively.”\textsuperscript{223} This age range can be defined as ‘Millennials/ Generation Y” or is also known in Japan as Yutori Generation, who have been born between 1982 – 2000.\textsuperscript{224} Aleida Assmann refers to generations

As groups of people who are more or less the same age that have witnessed the same incisive historical events, generations share a common frame of beliefs habits, and attitudes. The members of a generation tend to see themselves as different from preceding and succeeding generations.\textsuperscript{225}

The other criteria were that they had to be citizens of the respective countries in order to take part. This group met the criteria although in each group there was one person who was multi-ethnic, as in one in each group had lived and studied in both Germany and Japan. It was decided to conduct to focus group interview on two different occasions; one with 5 German students and the other with 5 Japanese students. Although groups generally can be up to 12 individuals the advantage with smaller groups is that they are more manageable, and one can receive more in depth information and also smaller groups can bond more quickly. However, it has been suggested that “the more homogeneous the groups are in terms of background and role-based perspectives, the smaller the number

\textsuperscript{225} Assmann, *Re-Framing Memory*, 41.
of groups needed.”226 It must be recognized nevertheless that this study only included one discussion group per nationality, which is cautioned against, so there may be a possible bias, based on whether a group was particularly open and communicative or potentially to be overly influenced by dominant individuals, or an inflammatory comment. Time constraints as well as the availability of eligible participants on site, made the challenge of holding more than one focus group per nationality more difficult to overcome. However, it was observed that all the participants in the two sessions made significant contributions to the discussions at hand.

The Japanese students were all current students at the university of Groningen which were selected randomly from a group of 18 email invitations that were sent out by the International Students Office of which 5 accepted the offer to take part. The German group were also students at the Groningen University who were selected by word of mouth, through personal networks and Erasmus Exchange Program. Both groups of accepted participants were emailed and informed in advance about the topic of discussion, and the full details of the discussion. They were fully informed of the topic to be discussed which was about national identity and questions about their country of origin.

For the Japanese group, it was also required to be able to speak English in a way that they can participate in a discussion because of the moderator’s lack of Japanese language skills. Everyone could speak English since the programs they were studying was mostly taught in English. For the German students’ language barrier did not play a role since the moderator speaks German. In the German group, there were 3 males and 2 females with age range from 21 – 29, and in the Japanese group, 4 females and 1 male, age range from 22 – 28 years of age.

3.2 Moderator

The role of the moderator is vital in focus group interviews since s/he is the one who is leading the group, and as Morgan and Krueger mention, it is important to be able to create a warm group atmosphere into which everyone feels welcomed.227 It is advised that it is

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better that the moderator is not involved in the process of the research and holds a neutral position. However, the author took the role of the moderator to conduct the group interview, and to ensure that the participants could share what they wanted to share the author adopted the qualities of a professional moderator which Krueger has mentioned to be a good listener and not focusing on the result, and being unprejudiced towards the participants.\textsuperscript{228} Similarly, with those skills, an interactive dialogue would take place.

Thus, the moderator was there to facilitate the participants involvement in the group discussion, by asking probing questions to help all of the group to share their thoughts, thus leading the group in a neutral way.

3.3 Focus group sessions

The session was held in a comfortable setting which was convenient for the students since it was on the university campus site. Two days before each session, emails were sent out to remind the participants about the details of the research sessions. Whilst it would have been ideal for the sessions to have taken place in Germany and Japan respectively, it was fortunate to be able to find students who were from the respective countries in a similar situation, so it would not weaken the legitimacy of the research.

Moreover, to ensure there were no ethical issues, all participants were checked to ensure that they were comfortable to share their ideas and experiences in a group. In the emails as well as personally, it was mentioned that the group discussion would take up to two hours and that the designated venue was a classroom on the university’s campus site. The setting was set out in a circular seating style where refreshments were also offered. Since the participants may not have known each other, an introduction at the beginning of each session helped the participants to feel comfortable with each other and learn each others’ names and gain a sense of who they were with. In the sessions participants were told by the moderator that the session would be audio recorded. Additionally, the moderator read the protocol of the session (see appendix) to validate the legitimacy of the group discussion and assure the participants that everything that will be shared and discussed in the group would be respected and treated equally. Also, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the partaker was reinforced, and participants were reminded that after the session they should respect each other and not repeat any

\textsuperscript{228} Morgan and Krueger, 47.
statements, however controversial, and discussing the views of others should be avoided at all costs. All the participants in both sessions accepted these terms. Each session started with open-end questions designed to find out about the background and the characteristics of being Japanese/German, and from there on the discussions in the focus groups were able to naturally progress, with little intervention. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes.

For the validity of the interviews, verification that the questions were correctly understood was checked for and if necessary, some questions were reframed, or participants were probed further. All students were addressed by their first names and as was mentioned by Krueger and Morgan eye contact was maintained with all the participants.\(^{229}\) As was mentioned earlier, the moderator tried to ask as few questions as possible in order to let the group exchange their experiences and recollections freely. The moderator only asked probe questions in order to check whether everyone had similar recollections or not, and if not, to encourage them to elaborate. Thus, the group dynamic was encouraged so students would share ideas by themselves organically without being forced.

3.4 Analyzing the Focus Group Data

The content of the interviews was transcribed verbatim and themes were highlighted according to subgroups of collective memory by firsthand experiences. Interpretivism, is a well-known approach in the social science research since “humans behave as they do in part because of their environment […] and] humans are also influenced by the subjective perception of their environment”. Willis and Jost continue an interpretivist can understand one’s subjective perception “by others in one’s “social and cultural context”.\(^{230}\) They follow by mentioning that symbolic interaction is also the same paradigm as interpretivism, which emphasizes that individuals obtain their understanding of identity through their interaction with their peers and others.\(^{231}\) There is a possibility of generalization that must be avoided at any cost. To do this an extensive review of literature has been done to understand various phenomena that might have influence on the participants. Those remarks which were refuted or agreed in the group were

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\(^{229}\) Morgan and Krueger, 47.


\(^{231}\) Ibid, 179.
highlighted accordingly. As remarks Breen “some recorded comments may change in their level of importance, as they may be made by one individual and then refuted by others.”232 Also themes that were mentioned more often were emphasized and coded and highlighted in different colors for each group and according to every theme. Additionally, the unexpected findings were also analyzed and highlighted to be presented in the results and discussion section.

The following chapter is presenting the findings and will show both group focus results in a comparative manner.

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4. Analysis

The following chapter will present the findings of the focus group discussions which were set up in order to address the research questions of comparative perceptions of national identity in Germany and Japan.

4.1 Being German / Japanese

When the Japanese group were asked ‘What does it mean to be Japanese?’ the response was very similar for everyone in the group. The first theme articulated was to do with looks, whether facial features, manner of dress and so on, that is attributes which make one “look Japanese”. The second theme was to do with language spoken and whether you “do or at least can speak Japanese”. As Hobsbawm has mentioned, language makes you understand the social norms that a foreigner would never understand, and the Japanese participants used language to draw the line under what it means to be Japanese. The group agreed that if you do not share a common language you do not really belong to the group, in this case as defined by nationality.

Both German and Japanese students also compared themselves to “other” (as in other nationalities) to address how different their own nationality is. They were aware of the social constructs creating limitations in the way one should behave to be from a certain country. At times this can be very demanding in how it molds people to behave, that is, in a manner which is stereotypical for that place. For example, the German group response was more focused on three aspects: one, the rule of law, two the shared common past and three, recognizing regional variations which might lead to different ways of identifying themselves. But overall their description focused on Germans being direct and “efficient”.

In contrast, the Japanese students believed that not standing out is the main cultural characteristic which defines being from Japan. The Japanese students all mentioned that speaking the language as the chief aspect of being Japanese. One of participants recalled a word “Nemawashi (根回し)” and that is a key element, everyone nodded and agreed with her remark. Another person added that, “if you are a foreigner (Gaijin) you do not understand this concept.” The first participant mentioned that this
comes from the norm that in Japan you are “respecting others and respecting the harmony” by not standing out. They also referred to their experience of studying in the Netherlands and that they had been told to be more critical in course works and class dynamics, and one of the participants mentioned that to me it is “un-Japanese” to do so. One of the participants said, “I believe language effects the way you think” and everyone agreed that when you are Japanese you are supposed to behave in certain ways, highly related to the concept of respect and harmony. Nevertheless, the participants mentioned “the way they look” has affected their lives, not only in Japan but more so living abroad, where they were sometimes greeted in Chinese since people have categorized them as “being from Asia”, China being the most populated Asian country.

Both student groups, but German students in particular, mentioned that they became much more aware of what it is to be German, after they left Germany and were able to compare with another country. This may actually demonstrate a strength of this research, whereby students from both groups, were more sensitized and aware of their national identities as a result of studying or living abroad. The German group talked about the political construction of their country and mentioned a somewhat hybrid identity which can be defined regionally, nationally and geopolitically (e.g. The European Union). One participant mentioned that “I don't see myself as being a citizen of a country but in a bigger sense”. Another participant mentioned “that I always saw it as being the citizen of the country” a third participant responded, “what I like about Germany or being German is that we have a decent social equality and that we have constitutional protection and we have implemented the rule of law (Rechtsstaat), which makes me proud to be part of” The fourth participant agreed and continued

I would say when we talk about Germany I like the fact that we have a solid structure, and to compare to other countries I find its good to live here, and how the country has been built up within these structures, but I guess I am talking about the Country, but I think Germans are very much connected to this structure of the land and their identity too, at least that’s how I see it

Moreover, the fifth person mentioned

When I am in Germany I don't see myself confronted by my identity. To be German to me it becomes a thing when I am in another country, and I see myself in that contrast, that's when I get to think of specific customs. When you are in contact with other nationalities one becomes more self-conscious. And I have been told that I am a typical German because I am precise (korrekt) and punctual.
Other participants agreed to these analogies and one mentioned that “it is not always a positive aspect because there can be a pressure to behave or to act in certain ways, simply because you are from Germany.” And they agreed with this participant that “through all these rules and regulations that were mentioned earlier (legal structures) it makes us feel that we are living in a stable country and I miss this sometimes when I am in another country”.

The students articulated that there are both positive and negative aspects of their national identities.

For example,

it is easier for people to describe let’s say Germans are like this and I guess it is about ‘efficiency. We just refer to them as a group of people, but there is also a negative aspect that sometimes people tell you that you are German, and they bring up “the history”

they all also reminded each other that being direct can be a real positive;

it is good to be German and the directness that comes with it. Compared to other cultures who go around in circles to address something. It’s not about being liked but telling what it is and how you feel.

When they were asked whether they see a difference between the former East Germans and the West, they had a similar recollection which was mainly through social memory and from what they have heard via their relatives. One of the participants stated that

I have heard that people say, ‘do you remember this place, it used to be in the former east like this’ but I have never seen that way because I have never experienced it any other way. In Germany like everywhere else you have regions who have their own customs or cuisine

One of the participants who was born in the former East Germany stated

“I don't see it as a difference, but I have heard that people say ‘in those days east was this and that’ but in general I don't see a difference, but I remember my granddad telling me a story how a West German (Wessi) bought my factory and ruined it. But in my life, since I have never experienced it myself I don't see it that way, like when I see a person from Bavaria I don't see it as ‘west and east thing’, although I should admit that sometimes I have some stereotypes in my head that I judge the person a little bit according to the state they are from”

The others also nodded and experienced similar thoughts. one mentioned: “I heard that more often in Berlin that a person lives in the former east or things like this but generally I don't see it as having differences, like being from another country.”

One of participants mentioned that
my mom is from the former east and my dad from the west and I heard stories from my mom what she experienced but for me personally I don't see it in a way that I am different because my parents are from different places. To me for instance Bavarians are more aware of their identity than a person from Bremen.

Another person added that

I grew up near Bielefeld and in the school, we didn't really learn much about the former east, nor their stereotypes, but my dad who had done research in the former east told me stuff about their customs.

The next person added

I see Bavarians as being more conservative or maybe also patriotic than other places in the country, these are just things I have seen and heard that make me think that they might be different but not much different in the former East Germany

4.2 Sense of pride

Japanese students’ sense of pride was very much connected to the individual and social memory and their sense of pride was somewhat unrelated to their recent history and in fact no-one referred to the war. Familial history had been passed down to one of the participants which highlighted a resentment at being pressured to convert from Buddhism to Shintoism (in his Great Grandfather’s time) which led to a sense of exclusion, and so there was a sense of not being proud of being Japanese as a result, through not having been accepted for the way they actually were, a memory which had been passed down through several generations. Two other participants had similar feelings of exclusion because of having lived abroad and gone to international school so that their manners, style, and characteristics were no longer recognizably Japanese, and they lacked pride for being Japanese because they did not feel they were entirely accepted as being such by their compatriots (one was half Japanese, half American). Another participant mentioned that they were proud of their country’s rich history, and when the group were probed, it was mentioned

one of the reasons I see myself as being proud of my heritage is mostly when I am abroad and in contact with others, otherwise I would not see myself that way in Japan since I know everyone shares the same sentiment and there is no need
for showing my pride, but when I am here in the Netherlands I keep being reminded of being Japanese.

As mentioned two students were “skeptical” when it came to feeling national pride. They both mentioned, since they have been studying their country’s history, they view it differently as to why some Japanese are proud of their nation. This participant also mentioned his family background stems from Buddhism but since the Meiji Restoration the family had been forced to accept the state religion which was Shintoism.

since then my family has been Shinto priests since the 19th century and onwards. Every family has long tradition so is my family but also it was changed by the authorities and by the nationalistic movements

This participant said that “I feel something different” and added “of course Shinto has a long history, but it is based on fiction” He said it is related to loving the Tenno (the Emperor) but the dynamic of my family has been changed ever since”. He mentioned that

my younger brother and my uncle are priests, but this has always been remembered in our family. And that is why I do not see myself that way and I am skeptical towards being proud of a culture that has enforced a religion that is based on fiction

The other participant recalled their memories of growing up in Japan as being “different” by way of being “Hāfu” or half Japanese. She mentioned that

always wanted to become Japanese and it was difficult to become something, a box that I could not fit in, from childhood as we go to school we have to dress similarly, have the same haircut, etc. to be the same and that was really hard, because I still stood out

But this person mentioned that in line with the suppression of her individuality, she has acquired a hybrid identity, which in some ways gives them a privilege of having two identities, but at the same time a feeling of not belonging properly to either: she continues,

as a result of being half American but living almost all my life in Japan it has helped me to see myself in both categories, being somewhat proud of both backgrounds.

Another person agreed with this but said “although I am not half Japanese but because I had lived abroad I was not always referred to as “Jun Japa” or pure Japanese this changed my perception and I still do not see myself fitting in that category because I didn’t always follow the customs.” Through studying abroad (in different Asian countries) this participant mentioned that “I wish we could have the mentality like the European Union to be able to be from a wider region instead of fitting in a box, like the way I grew up.”
But this person added “this doesn't mean that I like Japanese culture less, it is just the memories of growing up and being labeled that was not a nice experience.”

Everyone said it was from the outside that they could see the distinction of being Japanese but not as much while they were living in the country, where it would not have to be thought about. But living in another country meant that they were reminded of their “history, culture and food all the time”. It was mentioned that through this process it has helped three of the participants to become proud of being Japanese., through what they described as “confirmation of foreigners.”

With the German group, when they were asked whether they are proud of being German, the answers were similar and, but it was discussed in a somewhat hesitant way, because it was directly related to the consequences of the war. Patriotism is not seen as a positive characteristic in Germany. Their collective memory of the past was very much aligned in as much as they all observed the sense of national pride in people from other countries which they witnessed with some astonishment. It appears as though the German students have apportioned collective memory of the past in consistent way. It has been suggested that the reason for this is because their particular memories are so confrontational and problematic. These collective memories have been deliberately reinforced through the actions of both the victorious allies in the immediate aftermath and later the government policies of making the atrocities of the past highly evident and not to be forgotten. In some ways this confrontation of a shameful past in collective memories in various forms, from school course works to public discussions, and public monuments has had a dampening effect of their sense of national pride. Moreover, they had learned in the school how the Nazi regime was promoting nationalism and this had a resemblance of that era.

One person said,

I can answer with yes and no (Jein), its nothing that a German would say that ‘yes we are the best and I am proud of it’ and again I see it more when I am abroad that you see people are proud of being from a country and they show their patriotism easily, that their culture is so rich but I don't see it that way.
The other participant also agreed and added “it is not something that I have to show that I am proud of being from Germany like others do”. When probed further by asking ‘why do you think that you shouldn't show it?” the answer was “it is simply the culture we grew up with”. This participant talked about the experience of going to school in Canada for three years “it was very strange to me that we had to sing Canada’s national anthem every day at school and the whole ceremony was for me such a foreign ritual” This participant added “after all these years I can sing the Canadian National Anthem by heart but not the German one” Everyone laughed in disbelief and it was agreed that they do not remember all the words to the German National Anthem. One of them also mentioned this contrast

I had to travel to Ghana and I saw their flag hanging everywhere and that to me is such a foreign thing, to be honest this to me is such a ridiculous idea that showing off your pride is something that I cannot fathom.

This person added that “I don't want to say that the other countries are better or not, but I think in Germany we are conscious about our past mainly WWII and the holocaust and you would not want to provoke sentiments.” Also, another participant added that it’s not easy to say yes, I am proud, or not, maybe it is easier to ask an American or a Brit. For a German it's a difficult question. We differentiate it here, we say ‘yea I find the country great, but proud of being German? No’, seeing flags hanging from the homes when it’s not the World Cup time one would question the householders of being neo-Nazi or the Alternative for Germany (AFD) supporters.

One participant suggested

after all the catastrophic events like the Holocaust and WWII, being proud of the country is not acceptable. It brings back all the bad memories, and it might be associated with being proud of those events.

Another participant also added

it is an interesting question because we all share the same idea but probably in other countries they don't have the same problem as we do, although they might have admitted to doing atrocious stuff but still they are proud of their countries

Another person added “I don't know maybe because Germany has a stronger global presence, I think it is because German history has been reworked and is still being cleared up (aufarbeitet).” Someone else added “maybe it has to do with the fact that Germany
lost the war and how that is perceived from the outside, until now, is still so present.”

Another participant recalled

I remember from my school days that in our German history class, we had to read the literature from that era and we saw how they were promoting the country. All throughout the year it was discussed and through this it was always present, but I think it is good that it has been discussed like this.

Another person mentioned

an example would be like in Turkey (referring to the Armenian genocide) still after all these years they still can’t talk about it, and I can imagine that probably they have never worked on (aufarbeitet) like here

This conversation could highlight that Adorno’s “Aufarbeitung” or “working through”233 Coming to terms to the atrocities of the past is still an active ingredient in the students’ collective memory. It could also highlight that they are actively seeking other nations to address their troubled past.

4.3 Education and State Recollection

When the Japanese students were asked about their national days relating to historical events, participants mentioned the 1-minute silence that takes place on August 15th every year, which is a National Memorial Service for the War Dead, and also the 6th and 8th of August for A-Bomb victims. And also, the Golden Week which compromises of various occasions, such as two Emperors’ birthdays and Constitution Memorial Day, Citizens Holiday and Children’s Day.

The participants mentioned that for the A-Bomb Victims Remembrance Day it is not mandatory to stay silent in some parts (they were referring to a region where she grew up which is closer to Tokyo and not the south). However, one mentioned that they experienced while in Nagasaki that the “sirens went off and everyone stayed silent for that one minute which I had never done before”. All participants recalled “that all the TV channels show documentaries related to the war all day on the Remembrance Days”.

On the other hand, when they were asked about the national holiday or remembrance days, German students replied that the first thing that came to mind was The Day of

233 Adorno, Guilt and Defense, 10.
German Unity and the Fall of the Berlin Wall. They all mentioned that you will see documentary movies on TV. One of the participants mentioned “although the Fall of the Berlin wall is not as featured in the celebrations elsewhere in Germany as it is in Berlin itself, it’s just another holiday”. Also mentioned was that “1st of May was a big day in the former East as I heard from my grandfathers, but I know it's a national holiday too”. One of the participants compared

we don't celebrate The Day of German Unity like other countries with fireworks and stuff, like the United States’ Independence Day, its more about remembering how it was and remember that past and appreciate what we have now.

When the Japanese students were asked whether they attended any class excursions to specific historical places regarding the war, one person mentioned that had been to Hiroshima as a school trip excursion. The rest of the group did not have excursions to the A-bomb sites, although it was mentioned “if you live close by to those cities there is a possibility that you have this kind of excursion”. Nonetheless, two students mentioned that they had special programs that reminded them about the importance of Constitution Memorial Day and why the Article 9 was important for Japan, but the rest of the group could not recollect. Through probe questions it became easier to understand why that is, and two participants mentioned that “we never mentioned it with our classmates,” “it is a topic that no one discusses in public” The other three mentioned that “I never talked about it with my classmates”. One participant stated, “the reason why I don’t remember these days is because it is not really spoken about in public, nor even in schools, the teachers didn't really emphasize it at all.” One of the participants who had only studied at public schools also confirmed “I think it is because for example my teachers did not stimulate these kind of discussions”.

When German students were asked if they had class excursion to historical places regarding the WWII, they all said no they did not have them, although it was mentioned by everyone that they had learned about it in their school days. One of the participants recalled

I remember I was a primary school kid when I heard for the first time about the holocaust. I went home, and I talked to my mom and asked whether she knew that so many people, well back then I didn't even know what six million meant, had been annihilated, I remember I was so ashamed.
Another participant mentioned

it was not just the school, but we saw in the museums, radio programs, and movies, you see it on every channel that you can imagine, that is why it is so present, that is what you grow up with

the participant who grew up in the former East Germany said, “I grew up listening to my grandparents’ stories about the Nazi time but also a lot about how the life was before the wall came down”. But the other two participants recalled course work that they had regarding the 68er generation

I remember that we had to learn about the generation in the 60s that they were ashamed of their parents, and they asked, ‘how could you do that and say nothing?’ I think when a generation does that it would leave traces and suggestions for the next generation which will influence their identity

When the probe question was asked “which class was it exactly?” it was said in the German literature class. Three other participants could remember the theme. It was also mentioned that it was not only in the history classes, that these subjects were discussed, but also religion and literature classes as well.

4.4 Carrying Responsibility

Finally, the moderator referred back to the Constitution Day for the Japanese group and asked whether they thought that this generation should carry the country’s past with them. The participants again recalled social memories passed down by family and there was a sense of reluctance to have to shoulder the responsibility as they had not participated personally in the war, however there was a strong notion mentioned that they should remember the war in order to try and prevent such events ever taking place again.

One person recalled “I remember my granddad telling me stories of how he escaped the bombings and went to hide.” Another participant said that “I feel sorry about the pain that Chinese and Koreans had to go through, like the Comfort Women”, and also mentioned “my granddad might have felt that he is somehow responsible, but not myself. When asked if he could tell more about why he would think grandfather is responsible, the participant remembered the story of “my grandfather was trained in the military at
that time and he was ready to go to war in China, but the war ended, and he didn't go”. Another participant stated

since our generation remembers the stories of our grandparents or close families who experienced it and we can never imagine how tragic and awful it was, because we have never seen it first-hand such tragedies, it seems to us like it was what they had to go through and not us.

It was followed by a participant mentioning “I don't feel responsible for what had happened. We shouldn't have to apologize and feel guilty about it, but in order to pass on to the next generation I have to listen to what Japan has gone through in the history. I have watched documentaries and movies on the internet to find out more about this” the participant concluded that “I feel responsible to talk about it, that there will be no more wars and killings of innocent people”

Another participant mentioned that

I agree with everyone, and I am not feeling responsible. although I didn't know so much about the Japanese militaristic actions in Asia, but when I came to the Netherlands I got to know about the invasion of Indonesia. I guess we don't know much about that, what Japanese military had done to the foreigners, maybe that's why we are in such international relations now.

Another participant followed by asking a question “Can you teach a correct Japanese history to the future generation?” the moderator asked what everyone thinks about this question. Same participant addressed “every country in Asia seems to have such a different history regarding the war, and it has created conflicts” another participant added

as a Japanese person, we need to know what we have done in the past, it's a shame if we don't. I remember in the school it was told that it is ‘Nanjing Incident’ and not massacre. Although Japan had payed reparation [to the Korean victims] but a statue was erected in front the [Japanese] embassy in Korea, and they have said that it is not enough. But I can understand because if you read the stuff that is written in Japanese the Comfort Women have been described as prostitutes but when you read in other languages, which not everybody does, you can understand what happened.

In the end, the participants were asked if this hesitation of being proud of being Japanese was related to the history, four of the participants mentioned that “personally, it is not related to it.” finally one participant mentioned “personally, I grew up without having to experience war myself, or any critical moments like this to make me think that I should feel differently, maybe it has to do with living in peace.”
German students were asked the same question about whether they think that this generation should carry its country’s past with them. The participants all said yes. It was apparent that with their collective memory of the past Germany atrocities they were all very much agreed on this. At the end of the session they mentioned the importance of the passing on of the memory, and it was revealed that there is a fear of not remembering these atrocities may result in further war in the future.

A participant mentioned “I think we grew up with the values and experiences which has been passed on through generations, and there is a piece passed on to our generation”.

Another participant added “we have grown up in a country where the memories have been deliberately passed on in order to address what is obvious, so I would say yes”. Lastly a participant agreed and mentioned “even if you look at it as a regular thing and not political, if you are not aware of your negative deeds you will never be able improve for the better”. And it was confirmed by another participant “I think if we don't address our memories us or the next generation might repeat the same mistake”

This person added

I think that how we don't remember what has happened 500 years ago like we remember WWII and contemporary issues, there is possibility that this might get lost, I hope not but there might be other catastrophic events as such

One last person said,

I find it interesting topic because I remember a friend of mine was in Sarajevo and told me that the war started because some hundred years ago they had a war over this land and this came back in the 90s again. I couldn't believe that, how people would follow this in our day and age that in their memory they carried this all along

One person added that “I can remember what my family and parents heard and what is left physically, but still those loved ones who lived it was always more moving to me”.

To conclude this section this research would conclude that although Japanese student have not received the education as with the German students, they are still aware of their country’s troubled past, but are not as deeply affected or influenced by it. The Japanese student who had acquired their collective memory through the family, was closer to those
who have experienced it for first hand. As was mentioned by the Japanese students and also in the literature reviews the war topics were not studied at school in a way that the students would recall. Moreover, it was also revealed how the students related themselves to their nation, there being a strong sense of collectivity and synchronicity, with social norms which can be at times make them feel a strong sense of identity, or in some cases, have familial memory, or shared nationality or even periods living abroad, which create a sense of not being accepted as a genuine or typical member of their nationality. At the same time, their national identity was not shown to be affected by the war, except one person whose collective memory had lived on since the 19th century.

German students’ collective memory was chiefly based on the education which enhanced the more social and cultural memory. As it was presented, the sense of remembering of the country’s past was strong, coherent and agreed, as well as the reasoning behind it. Their national identity was also connected to their country’s past and any elements of affectation to the country was connected to remembrance of the Nazi regime which was widely undesired. Their sense of responsibility for passing on the memories and learnings of the war seemed heart felt, genuine and convincing.
5. Discussion and Recommendations

This research utilizes bottom-up methodology to focus primarily on the views of the people or the recipients of the national narrative, as opposed to the publishers, transmitters or creators of news, stories and texts. The focus group interviews were designed to examine and compare the effect of collective memory in German and Japanese students (studying in the Netherlands) on their respective national identities. The questions posed were ‘how do German and Japanese students perceive their national identities?’ and ‘what impact has the collective memory of their countries recent history had on the national identity of this generation?’

The focus group interviews were conducted with Gen Y/Millennials, or in actual fact students aged between 21 and 29, with similar backgrounds from Germany and Japan. Both groups must be acknowledged to be small, and a probably atypical sample (being students living outside of their home countries). It was of interest to note that the students themselves commented that their awareness of what it is to be German or Japanese, had been enhanced since they left their home countries. This appears to have happened because they have had the opportunity to compare themselves to other nationalities, and to witness the reaction of others to them, within a multi-national environment. They felt that their awareness of these national differences would not have been as well developed had they not travelled and lived abroad. In an intercultural setting, this might have influenced the way the students addressed themselves. This may not have been an issue if both interviews had taken place in the home countries being analyzed, although as hypothesized, the respondents may not have the comparative experiences to have helped form their impressions as clearly.

With regard to the group size, it is worthy of mention that collective memory is a concept which combines individual memory with social and cultural aspects shared by the members of the group, however Schuman and Corning (year) state “No specification of the size of the group is given or implied by the term, and it can range in principle from just two individuals to a nation, or an even larger collectivity”. Having said that the sample size for this paper was very small and could not be claim to be demonstrably representative of the entire generation.

234 Corning and Schuman, Generations and Collective Memory, 1.
It should also be recognized that a combined quantitative and qualitative approach would have aided the research to have a more diverse and analytical way of collecting information about their views. Quantitative research allows one to conduct a higher volume of research more easily to find out about how events have been influential in the formation of national identity, and how that has been perceived in both countries. It could also provide a stronger basis for the essential contents of discussion and the elements to be explored in the focus group interview.

In this research the moderator was also the researcher, so it was not possible to take notes, and at times an independent moderator, in addition to the researcher, would have been beneficial to have a view from the outside and to help ask further questions or provide follow-ups. For the Japanese focus group, it would have been desirable to have a native speaker to communicate more effectively and to eliminate the potential language and cultural barriers and improve the findings of the research even more.

The advantages of group interviews over individual interviews was the opportunity for the participants to hear the views of their group which both stimulated their own thoughts and helped them to gather their thoughts and articulate their feelings. Once again Maurice Halbwachs offers “It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in societies that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories”. Much of the research that has been reviewed has used individual interviews and questionnaires or relied on analysis of political speeches and other media published in the respective country. This paper dares to suggest that further research on this topic would benefit from taking a group approach due to the observations made by its participants which is endorsed by Halbwachs, the Assmanns, and other collective memory scholars.
6. Conclusion

This research paper was conducted to find out how memories of the recent past in both countries have been passed down to contemporary Japanese and German students. This study demonstrated how collective memory develops according to the works of Aleida and Jan Assmann. Their proposal that there are various forms of collective memory was used to help explore and analyze the impact of collective memory on the sense of national identity in contemporary students. By employing their theory of collective memory, qualitative focus group interviews were conducted in order to investigate how those different collective memories help to shape national identity.

The research findings revealed that the German students were considerably aware of their country’s past and the negative aspects of it, which appears to have stemmed largely from the German education system, according to their accounts. The German students concurred frequently during their discussion groups, demonstrating a broad agreement or shared experience. In contrast, the Japanese students referenced a more social form of collective memory, such as familial experience and a generally more varied source, with relatively little from the formal education system. This may reflect the fact that education in Japan has been less politically influenced. The Japanese students stated that they were less likely to have been introduced to open discussions on the atrocities of the past at school. Their knowledge of their country’s past however was still present, but their collective memory seemed to have been formed more from documentaries, media, social discussion and other unrelated sources, in comparison to the German students.

The German collective memory has been extensively shaped by a coordinated educational syllabus and public memorials, which have created a more homogenized perception. They mentioned these as the most salient events that have been transmitted to them, as well as family memories of the past. In line with the literature review, they mentioned that their history books had been revised with the collaboration of neighboring countries, which they were aware of. However, it became apparent that it was not just in the history classes that they learned about their country’s past. In literature and religious workshops, they had also received information on social movements, for example the ‘68er generation’ and its confrontation of their parent’s generation. In contrast, Japanese students’ collective memory of the past was somehow less coherent and homogenized.
compared to the Germans, and this would be supported by the literature which indicates that the Japanese government in recent years have been much more reluctant to address the country’s past so directly. Two of the Japanese students had experience of living in another country outside of Japan when growing up, so this may have impacted on these findings. It should also be acknowledged that interviewing them in a language that was not their first language may have affected the findings. As discussed, the Japanese students had acquired information through other channels, like social/familial memories, as well as by researching the topics which had been troubling in the eyes of their neighboring countries. Moreover, the Japanese students were aware of the value of the Article 9 through documentaries and national remembrance days, and that this has helped the country to remain a pacifist nation.

Further to this study, a number of crucial events have recently taken place, even during the writing of this paper, which may affect this peaceful process in both regions. From a snap election in Japan, with emphasis on national security, as the region becomes more unstable due to North Korean provocation, which has led to the conservative party in Japan being in favor the revocation of Article 9. Equally, in Germany the rise of Nationalist Parties such as AfD (Alternativ für Deutschland) in the wake of the global migration crisis, have started to promote a Germany for the Germans. This kind of rhetoric is gaining popularity with the people of Germany, and Japan also. It seems more vital to study societies more than ever to examine their collective memories, as George Santayana famously stated, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

As discussed in the literature review, identity can be used as an ideological tool to protect one’s tribe, or nation. This can happen by mobilizing the official or prominent narratives to sway opinion as a whole. This works mainly by contrasting a domestic narrative to ‘other’s’. The primary data supported this, as students referred to their national identity by comparing it to ‘others’, which is a way of helping to self-define. This them versus us way of thinking has caused many destructive wars and annihilation of culture or minority groups and even entire nations. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further long-term research on the emerging domino effect of an identity crisis at a national level. Finally, by shedding light on the impact of collective memory on German and Japanese identity, this research emphasizes the necessity of promoting a

global collective memory which may help to prevent atrocities, which are based on nationalism to reoccur. As Aleida Assmann states “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, in a sense, a Halbwachsian document.”

Bibliography


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Appendix

I. Focus Group Protocol

The participants and the will sit in a circle or around a table for discussion. The moderator will begin the meeting by introducing himself and explaining the purpose of the focus group session.

Informed Consent: Informed consent form will be distributed and collected prior to focus group

**Introduction and Ground Rules**

Hello, I’m Kevin Neher, the moderator of today’s group discussion. Thank you for taking the time to come here to participate in this group discussion.

Today I would like us to talk about our experiences and feelings about German/Japanese national identity and how we remember our country’s past. This discussion is part of my thesis.

This session will last approximately 90 minutes. I might ask questions every now and then but remember this is an informal/open discussion for everyone.

Everything we say in this room and during the discussion will be kept strictly confidential. When the discussion is over, please respect the privacy of every participant and do not repeat comments others made during our discussion to anyone outside of this group.

I will be taping all the valuable information each of us has to share. Does anyone have any objection to this taping?

Only people working on this project will ever hear any of the recordings or read the notes. Your participation is voluntary and confidential, and you may refuse to comment on any question that is asked. Nothing you say will ever be reported in any way that will allow you to be identified.

We want to make sure that everyone has a chance to talk. Also, since the discussion will be recorded, so it would be great to speak only one at a time so that each word will be clearly audible on tape.

(Turn on tape recorder and identify the focus group, location, and date.)

I would like to talk to you about your experiences and feelings about German/Japanese national identity and how past may influence our collective memory/identity.
II. Focus Group Discussion Guide

The following questions will provide the framework for the focus group discussion. While questions that are not listed here may be asked in order to follow up on participant responses, the focus group will center on these main questions.

- Opening
  Let’s start by going around the room and introducing yourself. Please tell us two things about yourself: (1) your first name, and (2) where in Germany/Japan are you originally from?

  Transition Question:
  How long have you been in the Netherlands?
  What are you studying?

B. Questions

National identity
  o What does it mean to be German/ Japanese?
  o Are you of your German/Japanese background? What makes you feel that way?
  o Does that make you feel close to Japan/Germany?

  Transition Question:
  Which remembrance days or other special events that come to your mind that is ‘very’ Japanese/German from your point of view?

Recollections

Top-down memory question
  Bottom-up memory question
  ➢ T – What are the main holidays that are very special to Japanese/German people?
  ➢ T – Which remembrance days or other special events that come to your mind that is ‘very’ Japanese/German from your point of view?
  ➢ T/B Do you think participating in those events makes you feel German/Japanese?
  ➢ T Do you think that every generation carries his/her country’s past?
  ➢ T – Did you have school organized trips or events which was related to your country’s past? Can you name any? And can you recall the activities?
  ➢ T/B – Do you think that school has helped to understand your country’s past better? How about hearing first hand experiences from your loved once/ close relatives?
  ➢ T/B – Do you feel responsible for your country’s past? And that our generation carry’s our country’s past with us?

(Only German Group)
  ➢ T/E – when we talk about Germany do you think of the former East Germany as a new part, or the other Germany?
  ➢ T/E – Do you see a common identity that unites former East and West Germans?

Probe Questions:
Would you explain that further?
Can you give me an example?
Why do you think it stands out?
Is there anything else?

D. Referringconfirmation from other members’ questions
1. Would you agree with ____?
2. Did you experience the same thing?
3. Did you see this event in the same way?
4. Do you have more to add?
5. Can everyone agree with _____?

Ending questions
Finally, is there anything I haven’t asked you that I should have? Or is there any other information you would like to share?

- Closing the session

I would like to thank you for your participation. I also want to restate that what you have shared today is confidential.
If we have any additional questions or need clarification on any of the points that were made today, may I we contact you?

Would you like to receive a copy of the final report?
I you would like more information about the study, or if you would like to discuss any of these issues further, please don’t hesitate to contact Kevin at KSNEHER@AOL.COM

Thank you again. And have a good one.