Power and the Past
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Introduction: Twenty-first-Century Memories

Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Shain

Collective memories have long influenced domestic politics and especially international affairs—a fact most recently exemplified by the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. The events and the memories resulting from them became powerful motivating forces for Americans almost overnight. At home, an infrastructure of commemoration quickly arose—in films like United 93 (2006); memorials including one unveiled at the Pentagon in September 2008 and the Tribute World Trade Center Visitor Center opened in 2006; and even in political campaign discourse, as at the 2008 Republican National Convention.1 Yet, as with other collective memories worldwide, there is no consensus as to the overall meaning and lessons of September 11 over time. Instead, the continued vehemence of discussions about 9/11 reveals still-unresolved struggles over the construction, content, and power of the memory. What degree of prominence should this memory have in American political culture? What historical narratives are offered as explanations? Most importantly, what values and policy implications—both domestically and abroad—ought to follow?

Understanding the construction and impact of 9/11 is one of the themes that the authors of this collection address.2 Yet as important as 9/11 has become in the United States and abroad, it is only one of many collective memories influencing countries and their international interactions today. Indeed, the last three decades have witnessed a vast and global increase in attention devoted to such concerns by world leaders, international institutions, scholars, and practitioners. These actors have engaged in debates and have initiated policies that reveal the profound influence of collective memory. The international policy impact of collective memory, however, has not received the systematic attention in either the academy or the policy arena that it deserves—despite the fact that it is difficult to find a country or region where memory and related concerns such as working through a traumatic past and bringing perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice have not come to the fore. Examples include post-Soviet republics and their fears of renewed Russian oppression, Russia itself and its efforts to regain past glory, much of the Islamic world and its memory of Western subjugation, South
Africa and its difficult apartheid legacy—as along with Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, South Korea, and many more. Bilateral relations between countries as disparate as Germany and Israel, Turkey and Armenia, Britain and Ireland, and China and Japan all have been greatly influenced by such issues. Clearly, collective memory is empirically important and deserves sustained and in-depth theoretical study.

Although the recent proliferation of studies has advanced concepts and theory, the field of collective memory, though related, is still not in the mainstream of political science—especially in comparison with the concept’s prominence in cultural studies, history, and even sociology. Scholars have been slow to recognize the importance of memory in international affairs and have not yet advanced major theoretical works in the area. Increased rigor in theorizing memory’s impact, in developing a conceptual framework, and in selecting appropriate methods are all needed. Nevertheless, the present is an opportune moment to bring the concerns of memory into the field of international relations, in the face of elective affinities with the burgeoning constructivist paradigm in the field, which emphasizes the role of ideas and identities. Moreover, constructivist scholars and others have argued that the traditional, simplified view of international actors (states, elites, governments) has to add other networks of influence that may not map perfectly onto the old models—transnational ethnic groups, diasporas, refugees, and other migrants. The contributions to this volume also take up this task of furthering the study of collective memory in international affairs both empirically and theoretically by looking at the interactions of states, diasporas, and transnational ethnic groups, and especially at the impact of collective memory on these actor’s identities, values, policy preferences, and behaviors.

Thus, this volume has four main aims. First, it is intended as a serious effort to study the impact of post-9/11 collective memories on international affairs and foreign policies. Second, the book aims for a breadth of empirical coverage by analyzing a variety of cases, including Austria, China, Israel, Japan, Poland, and Switzerland. Along with the United States, the contributions emphasize especially the cases of Germany and the Jewish communities—which is appropriate, given the prominence of collective memories in these cases and the importance of these cases for the broader, conceptual study of memory. Third, the volume intends to make a conceptual and theoretical contribution to the study of collective memory and its impact on international affairs. Like many other scholars, we aim to move beyond a sole focus on Westphalian state actors to look explicitly at the panoply of agents involved in influencing international affairs—international organizations, nonstate actors, and diasporic groups. Fourth and finally, the book seeks to take an interdisciplinary approach. We have included scholars from
a variety of backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences, believing that only such diversity can generate the most fruitful insights into this important topic of the study of collective memory in international affairs.

Eric Langenbacher begins with a review of the burgeoning global interest in collective memory and the more specific academic literature on the topic. In chapter 1 he argues that similar to the study of political culture more generally, there have been numerous shortcomings in the concepts and theories underlying the study of memory. He then identifies the most serious of these challenges and offers some partial solutions. These include the necessity of conceiving collective memory as a shared attitude and thus both a constitutive element of individuals’ belief systems and of a more general political culture and collective identity. Moreover, given the influence over values and hence outcomes that control over memory can confer, there is also a need to foreground dynamics of competition and cultural hegemony. He argues further that the field of international relations with a (growing) number of exceptions has neglected the concerns of memory, but, with the rise of the constructivist paradigm, the field is ready to integrate the concerns of memory. He ends with a brief case study, highlighting the pronounced role of Holocaust iconography in the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and the ongoing salience of this memory in Israeli foreign policy, for example, during the wars against Hezbollah in 2006 and against Hamas in 2009, and during the controversy about former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg’s book *The Holocaust Is Over: We Must Rise from Its Ashes* in 2007 and 2008.

In chapter 2 Bettina Warburg begins a more in-depth examination of the paradigmatic German case. Using numerous interviews with high-level policymakers and cultural leaders, she focuses especially on the continued evolution of memory of the Holocaust. First, she chronicles the rise of Holocaust memory in the postwar Federal Republic, devoting particular attention to the all-important period of the early and mid-1980s when the big battles over interpreting the Nazi period and the relationship of the Holocaust to German national identity took place. She then brings this narrative into the present in numerous ways. For example, she examines the high-profile Jewish Museum in Berlin in conjunction with the ongoing discussions that have been taking place in the country for several decades about immigration, multiculturalism, and a postnational German collective identity. She argues that Holocaust memory is a constant in many of these policy and cultural debates, but that its impact has shifted over the years. Now it is being used to enable and empower a more capacious sense of “Germanness” rather than remaining a “negative” lesson or mere admonition.

The bulk of Warburg’s chapter is devoted to how the evolution of Holocaust memory has changed Germany’s self-conception of its role abroad.
Perhaps as a consequence of the weakening of memory of the Holocaust and other processes commonly referred to as “normalization” (on display during soccer’s 2006 World Cup and 2008 European Cup), Germany is much more frequently and forcefully intervening abroad in places like the Balkans and Afghanistan. But such interventions are almost always characterized by humanitarian motivations—the desire not to let another genocide happen. In this regard, the ongoing battle over what the correct lesson from the Nazi past should be—never again war or never again Auschwitz—clearly has been resolved in favor of the latter.

Eric Langenbacher continues with the German case in chapter 3, but he widens the focus by analyzing the influence of collective memory on German–Polish relations. One of the most important developments in the Berlin republic’s memory regime has been the return of the memory of German suffering based on events from the end and aftermath of World War II. Discourses about the bombing of German cities, the mass rape of German women by members of the Red Army, and, above all, the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of 12 to 14 million Germans from then East Germany and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe have gained massive visibility, especially since 2002. Although the impact of 9/11 is not a proximate cause of these developments, the way that the terrorist attacks may have started to marginalize memory or the Holocaust—or at the least have supplanted the Holocaust from its position of absolute memory dominance—is surely relevant.

The reaction in Poland—whence came the majority of the expelled Germans—has been rather negative. Many Poles fear a relativization of their World War II suffering (as well as of the Holocaust) and an inappropriate rewriting of history in which Germans cease to be the perpetrators, but rather become the victims. This collides with the traditional and entrenched Polish collective memory of victimization. Relations between the two countries have soured markedly in the post-2002 period, strains that were particularly evident in the Kaczynski period (2005–7) but continue into the present. There are few other bilateral relationships today that are so burdened by collective memory.

Continuing the empirical focus on Europe, but highlighting the increasing importance of nonstate actors, in chapter 4 Avi Beker looks at the evolution of Holocaust consciousness and other Holocaust-related issues in an increasingly transnationalized Europe, paying particular attention to collective memories in Switzerland and Austria. First, he develops the context, pointing out how memory of the Holocaust increasingly is institutionalized at a European level—historically as an accepted part of the European legacy, formally
in school curricula, conferences (e.g., in Stockholm in 2000), and commemorations, and culturally in a transnational conception of human rights that governs not only the perceptions and interaction of European states but also their foreign policies.

Beker devotes most of his chapter to the cases of Austria and Switzerland—two countries that had evaded the Nazi past for most of the postwar period by willingly adopting (with the encouragement of many Western governments) myths of being “Hitler’s first victim,” and “stubbornly neutral.” In Austria it was only with the Waldheim Affair in the late 1980s that what has been deemed the benign Sound of Music myth was shattered and Austrians were confronted and soon confronted themselves with the extent of their collaboration and support for the Nazi project. In Switzerland the smoldering issues of unclaimed Holocaust-era insurance policies and bank accounts became international scandals in the 1990s. The Swiss finally recognized that their World War II-era neutrality was not only false but also aided the continuation of the Nazi war and genocide machine—and that the silence over unclaimed assets in the postwar period continued their guilty complicity. The opening of memory in both cases was due largely to the role of international and transnational actors such as the World Jewish Congress, the U.S. government (especially in the person of former undersecretary of state Stuart Eizenstat), other European actors, and the European Union itself. Beker’s contribution not only shows the importance of collective memory in international relations but also provides a detailed case study of the impact that nonstate international actors can have.

Also looking at the interrelationships among, and policy influences from, state, international, and nonstate actors, in chapter 5 Ori Soltes focuses on the question of who speaks on behalf of “Jewish political interests.” He examines collective memory and representation specifically in the American Jewish community, focusing on the multiplicity of voices and priorities within it. He discusses the traditions of dissent and debate that prevent the Jewish community from coming together to create one singular narrative, collective memory, and uniform voice that speaks on behalf of all Jews (in the United States or worldwide). Like the polyphony of rabbinic discourse itself, he claims that pilpul—the engaged debate of the rabbis—continues in present day conversations over social policy, memory valuations, and foreign policy concerns essential to the Jewish community. The term pilpul is an important one that aptly describes the evolution of collective memory and the complexity of understanding political representation in the Jewish community.

Soltes discusses numerous examples and disagreements about memory, identity, and policy preferences within the extremely multifarious Jewish
community worldwide. Contested leadership is a constant in all of these cases—from Elie Wiesel’s influence on the evolution of Holocaust memory and its place within the Jewish and Western canon, to the “interweaving of memory and security” in Israel today, to the often fraught relationship between the Diaspora (especially the United States) and Israel. Particularly thought-provoking are Soltes’s observations about the evolution of leadership within the American Jewish community—including the long-term decline of B’nai B’rith and the rise and fall of various actors like U.S. senator Joseph Lieberman. In the end, Soltes concludes that no one speaks for the Jews, but instead a multitude of voices vie for influence within and beyond Jewish communities—a process that mirrors more general domestic and interstate memory dynamics.

Moving away from the important European and Jewish cases and toward this volume’s other theme regarding memory of 9/11, in chapter 6 Omer Bartov contends that by looking to the past we are more capable of analyzing current conditions and are better prepared for future events. However, he critiques the West’s (Europe and the United States) acceptance of distorted memories of the past to influence current policies. He denounces the tactic of presenting current conflicts “through the prism of the previous century’s wars, genocides, and criminal regimes” in an effort to garner support for certain policy responses. He begins by explaining that as many “end-of-era” books state, it is correct to establish distinct time periods based on events outside of typical chronological boundaries like centuries.

Yet unlike the historian Eric Hobsbawm, Bartov believes that the undercurrents that cause or result from such massive events, not just these events alone, should be considered the bookends of an era. Instead of World War I itself, he points to the events in southeastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, the unification of Italy and Germany, and the race toward colonial empire building as the truly important historical events that began the twentieth century. Likewise, it was not the fall of the Soviet Union (which only served as an intermediate phase), but the 9/11 attacks that marked the end of the century because they caused momentous changes in every facet of foreign policy and significantly altered the relationship between the West and the world. Too often the considerable differences between present and past periods are not recognized, or at least they are not properly considered when conducting foreign policy and establishing initiatives. In fact, despite strong disagreement between views on contemporary issues and future predictions, all those who study these matters utilize terms, images, and symbols from the past to explain the current age. Policymakers invoke these tools from precedent to “legitimize their current dispositions and future plans.”
Bartov also uses 9/11 to explain the possibility of catastrophic downfalls when the present is filtered through the terms of the past. After the fall of the Soviet Union, all the United States’ twentieth-century enemies and threats were vanquished. This resulted in a false sense of security and a drastic underestimation of the fundamentalist enemy, whose outwardly stated goals often included the destruction of their Western adversary. Perhaps, if more time was spent studying historical changes in ideology and the causes of the cardinal events that perverted Western perceptions, the United States could have been better prepared for a terrorist attack. Nevertheless, in the wake of 9/11, the West has still not learned to concentrate on curbing the ideological undercurrents that breed catastrophic events. Instead of trying to understand the enemy, terms such as totalitarianism, used to characterize past rivals, are applied to the detriment of effective policy. It is essential to understand that the same images that awaken memories of righteousness in the West offer credence to opposing ideologies in other parts of the world. The West must clearly and objectively analyze the world as it stands today in order to create effective strategy, rather than watch the rearview mirror as it crashes into the wall.

Although the events of 9/11 have thus far been observed by Americans in a very emotional manner, Michael Kazin shows in chapter 7 that a valid history of the attacks must also integrate the quickly forgotten December 12, 2000, U.S. Supreme Court decision that gave the presidency to George W. Bush. Although Kazin views the elimination of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as a certainty for any administration, he considers the invasion of Iraq to be a direct result of the Court’s “12/12” judgment, which allowed the Bush worldview to take power. This ill-advised abuse of power was allowed to occur because as the collective memory of Americans remained fixated on the personal and individual nature of the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration was formulating a strategy to enact its agenda by exploiting the political capital amassed in the aftermath of 9/11.

Bush’s “historical argument”—which, at least at first, was left unquestioned and reaffirmed by most Americans—considered 9/11 a turning point in world history. It marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new world war. Kazin goes so far as to say that Bush considered any other interpretation of the attacks as either “deeply mistaken or downright immoral.” Although the world saw a moment in history, the Bush administration invoked a “nothing would ever be the same” philosophy: a self-fulfilling proclamation when announced by the world’s superpower. Yet domestically, with the exception of more security forces in specific places, very little actually changed. Nevertheless, both the attacks themselves and the individualistic emotions they encouraged are still prominent in the minds of most Americans, shaping their view of the historical events.
To support his argument about collective memory, Kazin refers to his research of articles included in the 9/11 archive. He concludes that terms like “patriotism,” “Bush,” “bin Laden,” “democracy,” and “freedom” are used sparingly, while “family,” “friends,” and “God” are used more dramatically. Though this may have been expected if the archive submissions were written immediately following the attacks, the fact that many of the articles were written over a year later is indicative of the forces that encouraged Americans to put their experiences down on paper. A politically motivated event and its immediate and ongoing reciprocity were overshadowed by personal emotion.

Furthermore, the power created on 12/12 was shaping the historical filter through which 9/11 would always be remembered, while the nation’s people were largely unwilling to criticize decisions being made. Kazin concludes that social historians are partially responsible for flaws in the historical account of 9/11 because they place too much emphasis on the stories of ordinary people as opposed to governing elites. Specifically, he notes that the interaction between policymakers and those being led must be stressed. He finds that this is true because extraordinary events such as 9/11 or 12/12 need to be presented as opportunities for the “public” in modern societies to unite, shed apathy, and enact social movements capable of altering and limiting the agendas of those in power.

In chapter 8 Jeffrey Herf challenges his academic peers to rise up and challenge their governments, because these institutions continue selectively to invoke historical examples in order to justify failed and failing policies, while simultaneously refusing to admit error. He believes that although it is inevitable that current events will be viewed in relation to what happened before, historians can at least offer a more accurate picture of the past. Left unchecked, the inaccurate images cultivated by ideologically driven media outlets, think tanks, and even historians establish a false foundation from which ineffective and sometimes dangerous policy emerges. He focuses specifically on decisions made by the United States and Germany in the recent past. Interestingly, as each country “cherry-picked” from Europe’s totalitarianism history—that is, selectively and opportunistically used historical examples—it was able to justify vastly different policy initiatives. In Germany’s case, Gerhard Schröder promoted a policy of appeasement, despite its failure to deter Nazi Germany leading up to World War II. More remarkably, while attempting to justify this position, Germany’s leader sometimes would recount the lessons learned from the country’s Nazi history—a fact showing that Schröder had learned significantly different lessons from World War II than the rest of the world. Furthermore, based on this perverted version of history, Schröder declared that he would refuse to consider war with Iraq.
even if it was true that Saddam Hussein was creating weapons of mass destruction, a statement that particularly displeased the United States.

For its part, America’s preoccupation with the more-familiar and better-understood enemies of the past, such as communism, fascism, and Nazism, led to a lack of proper security preparations before 9/11. The experience of the terrorist attacks, along with more “correct” lessons learned from dealings with the Third Reich than contemporary German leaders were able to derive, led to a culture supportive of preemptive action. Nevertheless, in focusing on a fight against an enemy said to bear a likeness to these former opponents, the Bush administration failed to consider the fact that religious terrorists who seek martyrdom would not likely be deterred by preemptive force. But with this policy initiative well under way, the administration still often evoked selective words from Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt to further legitimize its cause. Yet while exploiting memories of these leaders’ effective connection with Americans, Bush did not learn an important lesson that had made them successful originally—the creation of bipartisans, “national unity” governments. Finally, a point that Bush neglected to study while he was encouraging the fearful emotions that result from comparisons with World War II was that, much like Nazi Germany, Iraq would not simply crumble under the military might of the United States. If the military, intelligence, and secret police elements of the Ba’athist regime—along with the hundreds of thousands of casualties suffered during battles with Iran and during the 1990–91 Gulf War—had been considered in relation to Nazi Germany, perhaps the United States would have been more prepared for the endless fighting that has endured long after the initial invasion. For Herf, it is this sort of policy failure that needs to be stopped through a “new era of candor” created from the bottom up in Western nations, starting with academia.

The next two contributions focus on a very different yet important region and cultural context. In chapter 9 Thomas Berger argues that over the past twenty years, the East Asian region has been roiled by repeated bouts of international acrimony over historical issues. These controversies have mainly focused on Japan and the legacy of Japan’s imperial expansion in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. They have also spilled over to affect relations between other powers in the region. The United States, for instance, has been pilloried for its colonial policies in the Philippines, its Cold War policies in Korea, and for the ruthlessness with which it waged war in the Pacific against Japan, as symbolized by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1994, Chinese–Korean relations were briefly disrupted by differing interpretations of the status of the ancient Kingdom of Koguryo—and the list could easily be extended.
Berger asks what accounts for this remarkable reemergence of the past to haunt the present in Asia. Certainly, several different factors play a role, including the types of variable stressed in realist and neoliberal international relations, that is, a nascent geostrategic rivalry between China and Japan and a rise in trade and other socioeconomic frictions resulting from increased regional interdependence. Beyond these sorts of structural variables, however, there are ideational-cultural dynamics at play that are causing tensions over history to emerge in exacerbated form. On a global level, there is the emergence of a still-inchoate but nonetheless powerful international discourse pertaining to historical justice issues that legitimize claims for the rectification of past wrongs and issuing challenges to the way other countries represent history in a way that would have been difficult to do in an earlier era.

At the domestic level, Berger explains, there have emerged “memory regimes” in the different East Asian countries that are deeply rooted in domestic political discourse, and which are sharply at odds with each other in how they envision the past. The combination of these domestic political factors, together with the new global discourse on historical justice, has had an explosive effect on the East Asian region, and has stoked a firestorm of mutual recrimination and antagonism over the past that shows few signs of abating. As a result, territorial and trade disputes that under ordinary circumstances should be manageable are becoming more volatile, while efforts to create institutional frameworks that could contain these tensions flounder. Finally, Berger reflects on the practical policy lessons that might be drawn from this analysis and on the possible applicability of this model to other regions of the world.

In chapter 10 Gerrit Gong focuses more on the Chinese case. On the morning of September 11, 2001, he and the People’s Republic of China’s ambassador to the United States watched on television together in horror as the World Trade Center was struck by two fuel-laden jetliners, burned, and completely collapsed. In the hours that followed, Chinese-U.S. relations were reoriented (as with Russian-U.S. relations) from strategic confrontation to antiterrorism cooperation. Gong argues that these foreign policy changes enabled a return to more fundamental or existential issues for East Asia, all rooted in history. His chapter analyzes structural issues of remembering and forgetting in East Asia, including how they contribute to the interface of memory and foreign policy at the personal, national, and international levels, in four major areas.

Gong concludes by noting that there was a time when elites made foreign policy on the basis of perceived national interests, but that time is largely gone. Mass publics, in democratic (and unfree) systems, now demand that
their countries’ respective foreign policies pursue (and achieve) justice and international prestige based on perceptions of historical and contemporary memory. This is especially true in East Asia, where memories are the longest and where foreign policy reflects new international configurations in the post–9/11 era.

Finally, Yossi Shain concludes the volume first by reviewing the common themes that emerge and then by sharing his own thoughts on the three main foci. He argues that international politics is governed not only by force but also by assigning legitimacy to actors’ choices. Obviously there are rules of engagement in war, enshrined in domestic legislation and in international conventions. In addition to existing rules and regulations, the usage of power, retaliation, preemptive strike, intervention, occupation, assassinations, administrative detentions, and tribunals are all measured along another dimension—the spectrum of memory that each player is bringing to the table. These large pools of memories vary in intensity and recall both national catastrophes and triumphs. Shain notes that the pools of memories never dry up as the present continually evolves into the past and instructs the future. Some of these memories are internationally recognized and continually marked as signposts, others are contested. For example, Armenians carry the memory of the Armenian genocide into any dealings with Turkey and even Azerbaijan; yet in international forums and in dealings with other nations, Armenians constantly have to fight for its salience.

The bank of memories held by peoples, religious groups, states, aspiring nations, and even individuals are always at the heart of the configuration of international affairs and largely inform international behavior as they dictate policies. Particular memories of one group can be adopted by or imposed on others, or reconfigured to their own needs. Because memories are mobilizing, myth-making tools, how memories are nurtured and preserved is of vital importance in generating and understanding policy. The same memories that inform groups’ identities and their actions may come back to haunt them, or even be used against them, if they deviate from or are accused of compromising their own moral code that sanctifies the memory. Memories can assign to an actor a historical position of villain, victim, or liberator, allowing for the framing of international issues and negotiations.

NOTES

1. See the Pentagon Memorial website (www.whs.mil/memorial/) and the Tribute WTC [World Trade Center] Visitor Center website (www.tributewtc.org/index.php). President George W. Bush endorsed Senator John McCain in a video address by stating, “My fellow citizens, we live in a dangerous world. And we need a president who understands the lessons of September 11, 2001: that to protect America, we must stay on the
offense, stop attacks before they happen, and not wait to be hit again. The man we need is John McCain.”; see www.nbcnews.com/home/headlines/27808349.html. McCain did win 46 percent of the popular vote in 2008, and there is clear evidence that his credentials on national security were a major basis of his support.

2. Most of the chapters that follow are based on a series of discussions and symposia held in 2005 at Georgetown University, supported by the Program for Jewish Civilization, the BMW Center for German and European Studies, the Walsh School of Foreign Service, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Washington Office. In particular, we thank Jeffrey J. Anderson and Dieter Dettke.
Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations

Eric Langenbacher

THE CURRENT PROMINENCE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY

For years, observers have identified a so-called memory boom among scholars and in many societies worldwide—a boom that the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks have only intensified. In some countries the memory of traumatic events is still raw, and processes of settling accounts linger in the current political agenda. Elsewhere, where the seminal events on which collective memories rest are further in the past, the issues involve debating and institutionalizing an appropriate culture of memory and collective identity for future generations. Sometimes the individual and collective wounds fester, waiting for necessary healing through political and judicial processes. Other times the wounds have been muted over years but can quickly reopen or explode to dominate public consciousness at home and abroad, given the intimate relationship between domestic and international political arenas.

Perhaps nowhere else do such concerns of memory still weigh as much as with Israel and Jewish communities worldwide. The Hebrew word zahkor (remember) captures one of the most important dimensions of the Jewish tradition—the emphasis on collective memory. As many have argued—including Ori Soltis in chapter 5 of this volume—memory has been the constitutive component par excellence of Jewish identity throughout history, informing Jewish religious practices as well as secular and national variants of Jewish existence. The overriding necessity of remembrance is a crucial part of Jewish scripture and liturgy, and most of the major religious holidays—including Purim, Pesach (Passover), Tisha B’Av (remembering the destruction of the first and second temples), and Chanukah—focus explicitly on remembering collective disasters or miracles. Contemporary commemorations in Israel include newly “secular” holidays, which also have acquired a religious dimension with a specialized liturgy, such as Yom Ha-Shoah (Holocaust memorial day), Yom Hazikaron (for the fallen soldiers and those who
lost their lives in the struggle to establish and consolidate the state), Yom Ha-Hatzmaut (the day of the founding of the state), and Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day, marking the liberation/occupation of the Old City of the Jerusalem in the Six Days’ War of 1967). Among Jewish communities worldwide, these days are observed with varying levels of intensity as holidays of the Jewish people. Diasporas such as the American Jewish community have also developed their own unique commemorative culture, which is epitomized by the annual Days of Remembrance (of the Holocaust).

Memory issues arise almost as frequently in Germany, with high political to seemingly mundane significance. Despite the continued hegemony of what I call Holocaust-centered memory, a discussion about the memory of German suffering in the last phase and aftermath of World War II has dominated public attention in the last few years. As I discuss in detail below, an initiative known as the Zentrum gegen Vertriebungen (Center against Expulsions), designed to commemorate this memory, was denounced by the German government as endangering the European Union’s eastward expansion, as inappropriately revising history by downgrading the suffering of Nazi Germany’s victims, and as empowering the radical Right. In the fall of 2007, controversy erupted when prominent conservative journalist Eva Hermann was fired after generating a media storm over her remarks (among others) that Nazi family policy was not all bad.

In response to this brouhaha, Harald Schmidt and Oliver Pocher unveiled a machine on their television show called the “Nazometer” that beeped in response to overly positive remarks or words associated with Nazis (e.g., autobahn). This became a minor scandal and formal censure or cancellation was discussed. Earlier in 2005, numerous sixtieth-anniversary commemorations—including the liberation of Auschwitz in January, the bombing of Dresden in February, the end of the war on May 8, and the opening of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the symbolic and political heart of Berlin on May 10—kept these issues in the headlines and in public consciousness. Scholars and pundits have come to laud the country’s efforts to work through its past and consider it the paradigmatic “culture of contrition.”

Collective memory is similarly prominent in contemporary Argentina. Despite the severe economic crisis of 2001–3, which led observers to fear for the stability of democracy, or at the least to predict the emergence of a timid and conservative leader with the election of President Nestor Kirchner in 2003, that country began a deep and painful reckoning with its authoritarian legacy. After years of silence and judicial amnesty, perpetrators of the last military dictatorship’s “dirty war” are being brought to trial, facilitated by the nullification of the amnesty laws by the Supreme Court in 2005. These
judicial efforts have been accompanied by a broad discussion of the period in the political and public arenas. Numerous documentation centers and memorials are being built, including several in Buenos Aires: a memorial opened in August 2007 near the site of the Atletico detention center; a Museum of Memory at the Escuela de Suboficiales de Mecánica de la Armada (Navy Petty Officers’ School of Mechanics), where much of the dirty war’s torture took place; and a memorial park overlooking the Rio de la Plata.

Perhaps even more poignant was the graffiti in Buenos Aires’ Plaza de Mayo in 2003, the nation’s central square, capturing the centrality of memory in the process of rebuilding civil society and consolidating democracy. It read “gracias madres,” a tribute to the mothers, sisters, and daughters of the thirty thousand desaparecidos—“the disappeared”—the victims of the dictatorship—who have been demanding truth and accountability since 1977. Decades later, the madres still symbolically protest every week, and they have been instrumental in keeping the memory of Argentina’s past in public consciousness, forcing the necessary reckoning with this legacy and constructing a culture of memory around the invocation “nunca mas” (never again).

Germany, Argentina, and Jewish communities may be limit cases for the impact of collective memory, but it is difficult to find a political community, among entrenched democracies and fledgling ones, among new states and old, where memory does not exert some influence. France, for example, has grappled for years with the dark side of its history, including the collaborator Vichy regime, its colonial history, and its protracted withdrawal from Indochina and Algeria. Japan has been confronted with the dilemma of balancing the memory of the atrocities its citizens committed during World War II—the brutal occupation of Korea and much of East Asia and Southeast Asia, the Rape of Nanjing, and other atrocities in China, along with the use of “comfort women” (forced prostitution) throughout the region—and the suffering of its own civilians, epitomized by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the firebombings of most major cities. (Japan is discussed in detail by Thomas Berger in chapter 9 and Gerrit Gong in chapter 10 of this volume.)

In Japan there have also been intense debates, reaching back decades, over finding acceptable commemorative practices beyond the now-infamous Yasukuni Shrine/Yushukan Museum in Tokyo that commemorates all of the nation’s war dead, including some war criminals, and that presents a very tendentious historical narrative of the modern nation’s wars—debates also rage over how to present acceptable, honest historical accounts of that period in school textbooks. The year 2006 was filled with memory-related issues, including the controversial visit of outgoing Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Yasukuni on the anniversary of the end of World War II in August.
and new school textbooks that intend to further "patriotic" education. A major political figure was forced to resign in late 2008 over controversial historical remarks such as accusing the United States of setting a "trap" that led to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Beyond the domestic consequences (e.g., an empowered and increasingly violent reactionary right), these memory issues have been a major cause for Japan's strained relations with China and South Korea.

Memory has come to the forefront in almost every country that suffered through a dictatorial regime or a societal trauma and that has later reestablished peace and democratic systems. In contexts as diverse as Guatemala, South Africa, Rwanda, Turkey, Chile, Bosnia, and Kosovo, collective memory of traumatic episodes has become a constitutive part of efforts to come to terms with the past, rebuild societal trust, and reestablish the rule of law. Truth-and-reconciliation initiatives, judicial prosecutions of human rights abusers, and numerous commemorative efforts have become central means to construct a democratic political culture and a flourishing civil society. Moreover, collective memory and the communal discursive processes that constitute its construction are central to the healing of individual victims and their relations—as has been demonstrated by Holocaust survivors, individuals in post-apartheid South Africa and postgenocide Rwanda, and, surprisingly, given (reduced but) ongoing domestic violence, contemporary Colombia.

Even in some of the least likely cases, memory is burgeoning. Spain, which had long been considered the model for forgetting—for drawing a "thick line" over the past—and where there has generally been a lack of public discourse about the memory of the civil war and the Franco dictatorship, is also now part of the memory boom. Organizations are being established all over the country whose goals are to uncover the truth behind the traumatic events of the civil war—for example, regarding the fate of the beloved poet Federico García Lorca—and to create public memorials and cultivate a public cultural memory—rather successfully judging from the popularity of films like Pan's Labyrinth (2006). The Socialist government of José Luis Zapatero, aided by the activist magistrate Baltasar Garzón, has pursued a vigorous memory policy—even passing the Historical Memory Law (Ley de Memoria Histórica) in late 2007. The law and other efforts have eliminated all the statues of Franco from around the country; banned public meetings from the "Valley of the Fallen," Franco's monument to those who "fell for God and Spain" (long a right-wing pilgrimage site); and provided for compensation to victims and their descendants. There are even proposals to rename the valley, which also contains Franco's grave, a "monument to democracy."

By 2008 Garzón had almost succeeded in ordering the opening of mass
powers—in a belated effort to uncover the truth of the past and give proper burials to the victims. Such efforts are not uncontested—there has been much pushback from conservatives and religious forces that believe the new memory boom is one-sided in not properly recognizing, for example, ecclesiastical victims of leftists, and in even raising such divisive historical issues in the first place.”

More surprisingly, Communist China still witnessed a massive wave of officially encouraged anti-Japanese protests in the spring of 2005 in response to allegations that the Japanese continue to unapologetically evade their responsibility for wartime atrocities. An infrastructure of memory and commemoration is being (re)constucted, including museums and memorials in Wanping Village (a suburb of Beijing that witnessed the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937 leading to open hostilities between China and Japan) and in Nanjing. There are also nascent stirrings of memory regarding the excesses of Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward and his Cultural Revolution. Even seemingly placid countries like Switzerland and Canada have struggled over the last decade with negative historical legacies and memories. As Avi Beker discusses in chapter 4, Swiss politics was dominated in the 1990s by debates regarding the return of Holocaust-era assets, Nazi gold, and unclaimed insurance policies. For decades, Canada has been trying to come to terms with the systematic ill treatment of its native population, and more recently, with its discriminatory and racist policies toward its Chinese and Chinese Canadian minority. Canada’s Conservative prime minister, Stephen Harper, issued a public apology to this group in June 2006, and he announced compensation payments and funds to commemorate this history of discrimination.

Finally, in the United States, which has long been considered the least memory-obsessed culture (outside of the states composing the former Confederacy, at least) and the most forward-looking country, issues of memory are surfacing. The memory of slavery, and the subsequent century of discrimination against African Americans, has pushed itself into public consciousness at least since the civil rights era—and again with the election of Barack Obama as president in 2008. Lawsuits demanding restitution periodically surface, and this collective memory is a large part of the rationale behind the planned Museum of African American History to be built on Washington’s National Mall, as well as the memorial to Martin Luther King Jr., to be inaugurated in 2016. The “Americanization” of the Holocaust, exemplified by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, and works such as Schindler’s List, has been going on for decades, resulting in an unprecedented level of historical knowledge and heightened sensitivity to state-sponsored violence and genocide, such as the recent murderous actions...
in the Darfur region of Sudan. The emergence of these memories has also led to a reexamination of other chapters of American history, such as the treatment of and policies related to the Native American population and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Finally, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, suddenly created a poignant new traumatic memory, whose contours are still taking shape and whose cultural and policy implications are still being negotiated.

All the collective memories discussed just above are negative—based on mass suffering, death, and trauma. There are good reasons for traumatic memories to predominate in many places, given “that harrowing events . . . generate serious and often catastrophic challenges to communal self-understandings.” Most countries, however, also have positive memories of national or collective strength, success, or triumphs—memories that are key elements of national identity. Britain has long been permeated with its heroic memory of empire, where the “sun never set” and where the advantages of Western culture, economies, and politics were “shared” with other cultures—the “white man’s burden.” The Soviet Union came to rely almost exclusively in its last decades on the legitimizing memory of the “Great Patriotic War.” The United States is beholden to its memory of manifest destiny, a self-image and model of a “city on a hill.” This civilizing, liberating, and democratizing mission has been operative throughout history and is still today. For example, World War II, “the good war,” is one of the seminal memories of American righteousness, a “ patriotic orthodoxy" enshrined in a memorial on the National Mall in 2004. This memory is still explicitly used to justify current policies, for example, when President George W. Bush made the case for war against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in 2002 and 2003, and it has witnessed a marked upsurge and intensification in the post-9/11 period. Other examples abound, from France with its glorified mission civilatrice to Japan’s East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the memory of which many conservatives appear to be attempting to rehabilitate, stressing anti-Western, anticolonialist “Asian power.” Finding a balance between, or at least a place for, both heroic and traumatic memories is one of the biggest dynamics in many of these countries. Indicative is former Prime Minister Tony Blair’s Labour Party government in Britain, which has used memory of empire to justify intervention in Iraq and has also issued a formal apology to the Irish for official culpability in the mid-nineteenth century Potato Famine.

MEMORY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

As evidence for the impact of memory has increased in recent years, scholars have begun to devote considerable attention to collective memory and its
effects. Many countries and groups have been extensively analyzed, and specific memories have been thoroughly studied in the context of domestic politics and culture. Moreover, some conceptual and theoretical advances have provided a better understanding of the dynamics and politics of memory. In fact, several issue areas—the public apology, truth and reconciliation commissions, and more general reconciliatory policies—all have spawned their own distinctive literatures. Despite this increased attention, there is still much room for growth in the literature, especially in the realm of international relations and foreign policy.

There are two sets of reasons why the study of international politics should take the concerns of memory more seriously. On the one hand, the prima facie empirical importance of collective memory in this context should already be clear from the examples discussed above. Even if the focus of debates has been predominantly domestic, international relations scholars have long acknowledged that domestic regime type and political culture affects the regional and international context—the major message of the democratic peace literature. More directly, the concerns of memory in virtually all of these cases also have international or bilateral ramifications, including determining who is responsible for a given historical trauma and allowing for the victims’ healing (China, South Korea, and Japan), deciding who influences domestic debates (diasporas and the home country), forming the identities and values of domestic actors in the international realm (United States, Germany), and developing particular foreign policies pursued to rectify the causes of the traumatic memory (Israel, United States).

Moreover, memory has had a significant impact on international institutions, laws, and norms. In the twentieth century, the League of Nations and the United Nations were set up explicitly as responses to historical upheavals and as means to prevent such traumas from occurring again. More recently, the International Criminal Court and various tribunals associated with it were generated by the lessons of the Holocaust and World War II—and by the Tokyo and Nuremberg Tribunals. Some even consider the burgeoning corpus of international law in itself as constituting a collective memory of past injustice. Various UN resolutions and initiatives are also (partially) a function of memories, for example, the groundbreaking Genocide Convention of 1948 and the recent campaign to ban land mines. Numerous scholars have argued that the entire project to establish a united Europe, surely one of the most innovative political initiatives in recent memory, has been motivated primarily by the collective memory of that continent’s bloody past and the desire to forever avoid a return to and a repetition of that history.

Many have pointed out how important the legal and judicial system has been in fostering collective memory in many countries—attested to by the
proliferation of laws criminalizing Holocaust (and Armenian genocide) denial and numerous attempts to prosecute human rights abusers—from the Nuremberg Trials to the case of Augusto Pinochet in 1998–2000. Nevertheless, domestic and international legalistic solutions can be fraught. A backlash from those who are targeted or their supporters can destabilize the country—for example, in the late 1980s when military officers rebelled against the attempts of the Raúl Alfonsín administration in Argentina to convict members of the last military junta. The mere existence of progressive laws can legitimize more reactionary ones, such as laws criminalizing “insults” to the nation in Turkey and Poland. Or, as Timothy Garton Ash argues, however well-intentioned laws are, they are still forms of censorship and restrictions on free speech and scholarship. Dangerous consequences may result—not the least of which is creating taboos on certain perspectives and hence increasing their popularity among conspiracy-minded, paranoid extremists.24 Even when potentially explosive prosecutions or lustrations (e.g., de-Ba’athification in post–Saddam Hussein Iraq) are abjured, under certain circumstances efforts at reconciliation, including truth commissions and formal apologies, can backfire by creating a domestic backlash.25

There is also a burgeoning transnational institutional infrastructure with a multitude of governmental and nongovernmental organizations and private foundations devoted to sustaining various memories and working to influence attitudes and policy. Again, Jewish memory, particularly memory of the Holocaust, is the most well-developed where organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, and B’nai B’rith have been active in domestic, international, and transnational settings. These organizations were instrumental in opening up the needed discussions in Austria over the wartime past of President Kurt Waldheim in the 1980s and in Germany in the late 1990s over compensation for Nazi-era slave laborers.26 Indicative of the burgeoning institutionalization of memory was the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000. With forty-four countries and many heads of state present, a declaration of principles was drafted stating that “the magnitude of the Holocaust planned and carried out by the Nazis must be forever seared in our collective memory.” These commitments have had numerous policy effects, including the United Kingdom establishing Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001 and the inclusion of Holocaust education in many countries’ school curricula. Memory of the Holocaust with this transnational infrastructure epitomizes these international memory dimensions, what Daniel Levy and Natan Szaider call “cosmopolitan memory.”27

A final international dimension concerns the attitudes and behaviors of diasporas, as well as other groups like exiles, emigrants, and refugees, regarding issues of memory in the homeland.28 Given the lack of other resources
(e.g., homeland, language), collective memory may be especially important for diasporic identities. Examples of the complex yet increasingly influential interrelationships abound—not just between the diaspora and the homeland but also among various diaspora communities. For example, there were tensions between American and European Jews—many of whom advocated a more restrained approach—regarding the issue of unclaimed Swiss bank accounts. The most well-known diasporas are the Cuban, Irish, Salvadoran, and Lithuanian communities in the United States, but also Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, Chinese in Indonesia, and Asians in Britain. Above all, the Armenian diaspora, scattered in many places, most notably France and the United States, was indispensable in maintaining the memory of the genocide that occurred in Turkey during and after World War I, and, after the fall of the Soviet Union (which made this memory impossible for Armenia proper, leading to substantial forgetting) pushed the issue onto the agenda of the newly independent homeland, often against the wishes of many citizens within the kin state. Diasporic Armenian groups have been rather successful in getting various countries (e.g., France, Sweden, Canada, and Argentina) to recognize the genocide as such—and there are several existing (Switzerland) and proposed laws (France) that would criminalize denial of the genocide. There was even talk in 2006 of making Turkish recognition of the genocide a precondition for entry into the European Union. This memory also demonstrates how conflicts are ignited by such raw memories decades, even a century, later.

However, theoretical and conceptual developments in the political science subfield of international relations over recent years have laid the groundwork and created a promising opportunity for integrating the influence of collective memory. In particular, the rise of the constructivist paradigm is of utmost importance, in both negative and positive ways. Negatively, constructivists have engaged in a protracted critique of hegemonic paradigms in the field, most notably realism, and, to a lesser extent, varieties of liberalism. Their main critique is that realists posit ahistorical, overly abstract, and universal behavioral maxims (power maximization; security concerns; primacy of military power) that are supposed to exhaustively explain and predict states’ international behavior but, given the number of disconfirming cases (e.g., postunification Germany), are only partial explanations. Scholars have also attacked the assumption of Hobbesian anarchy as the fundamental nature of the international environment—and have pushed liberals to investigate more fully the dynamics, structures, and reproduction of international institutions.

In contrast, constructivists point out that behavior is always socially constructed, historically determined, and culturally contingent. Positively,
constructivists are creating a paradigm that models the negotiation and construction of national and transnational identities, values, norms, and behaviors, and that highlights contingency and dynamic change. John Hobson outlines the four general principles of constructivism: "(1) the primacy of ideational factors; (2) agents are derived from identity-construction, which is constituted in the course of social interaction; (3) communicative action and moral norms specify 'appropriate' behavior; (4) the importance of historical international change." Another key author, Alexander Wendt, highlights the centrality of identity: "a key link in the mutual constitution of agent and structure . . . [that] lead actors to see situations as calling for taking certain actions and thus for defining interests in certain ways." The emphasis on ideas is another way of saying that culture is crucial. A seminal volume in the field states that "culture and identity are staging a dramatic comeback in social theory and practice," while simultaneously lamenting the continued lack of mainstream attention to such matters.29

One of the major findings from the field of memory studies is that collective memory is a major influence precisely upon these influential identities and values. As Duncan Bell notes, "identity is one of the ur-concepts of the contemporary social sciences and humanities . . . memory plays a central role."30 Collective identities are parts of cultures and allow individuals to orient themselves and to place themselves into a larger, meaning-providing context. Memory allows for a kind of certification or validation of the existence of a self—individual and collective. Healthy individuals and collective identities have a unified conception of time in which past, present, and future are fully integrated and intimately linked. The remembered past helps to explain who people are today and what they stand for, thereby generating emotional bonds, solidarity, and trust. Moreover, Jenny Edkins writes that "memory, and the form of temporality that it generally instantiates and supports, is central to the production and reproduction of the forms of political authority that constitute the modern world."31 This is also why traumatic memories are so prominent in many societies—traumas rip apart and destroy the cohesion of time and identity. They "cannot be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge," and are "distortions of temporality . . . that cannot be predicted or accounted for."32 It is in the limit case of a traumatic episode that some of the major functions of collective identity and memory become visible: the provision of orientation, predictability, and security. Finally, the constructivist and culturalist message is that such memories and identities are not eternal or primordially given but contested by (elite) actors with vested interests and the desire for power. Hence, as with any cultural phenomena, identities are always dynamic and need to be produced and reproduced continually.
Despite the connections between constructivist scholarship and the study of collective memory, many of the seminal constructivist works have neglected the dynamics of memory. One example of this is Peter Katzenstein’s otherwise-brilliant work *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe*. Katzenstein devotes only five pages explicitly to memory, yet he concludes that “European and German effects are intimately connected with history and memory. . . . Germany offers ample testimony for the powerful effects that collective memories have for shaping the interests that determine German and European policies. . . . The memory of Nazi atrocities has become a defining part of the structure of European politics since 1945.” Comparative political studies have integrated the concerns of memory to a larger extent, but such studies are still overly focused on specific cases and are not yet fully part of the disciplinary mainstream.

That said, there is an international relations tradition that has taken memory seriously, a literature that has been growing in recent years. Particularly important are studies that have delved into the use and influence of historical analogies. Thomas Banchoff analyzes the role of historical memory in postwar German foreign policymaking, and he argues that the case for the impact of memory on foreign policy must show (1) that choices exist (memory versus structural considerations), (2) what the memories are, and (3) logical compatibility between the memory and the foreign policy position. Many of these propositions are empirically tested in Ernest May’s classic study “Lessons” of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy and Yuen Foong Khong’s Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965. These two scholars use the historical analogy concept that, in the terminology used here, closely resembles a collective memory. Both authors show that the specific analogy with attendant lessons and implied policies was chosen not for historical verisimilitude but because of the hegemonic power of a given memory and memory regime in the minds of decision makers. For example, Khong shows that the memory of Korea, followed by the 1930s—meaning Munich, not to mention the influence of the memory of Munich previously on policy toward postwar Korea—was the preeminent analogy used by those who made the decisions concerning U.S. foreign policy for Vietnam, especially in the early phases. His study shows convincingly that this was the case in both public and private spheres, and it also substantiates many of the conceptual points discussed above regarding the impact of culture (schemas) on policy and place of memory in that culture. May looks at other examples and shows that World War I was the analogy for policy decisions in World War II (even though an incorrect parallel—a point Khong makes as well). May even writes: “As an explanation of why these erroneous assumptions were so
strong and so persistent, I see no alternative hypothesis that Americans of this period were captives of an unanalyzed faith that the future would be like the recent past. They visualized World War II as parallel to World War I. They expected its aftermath to be in most respects the same. And they defined statesmanship as doing those things which might have been done to prevent World War II from occurring.”

Other scholars have seconded these findings. Banchoff concludes his study of postwar Germany by noting that “in the cases of both Konrad Adenauer and Willy Brandt, historical memory played an important role in the articulation of priorities and the policies that followed from them, Eastern integration and the new Ostpolitik. Views of the German catastrophe of 1933–45 and its legacy shaped the Federal Republic’s evolving role in Europe.” Thomas Berger shows that memories of World War II created “cultures of anti-militarism” in Japan and Germany that even today predominantly affect foreign policy—and which have caused both countries to behave in ways that realist theories did not predict.

Most recently, Jenny Lind has compared the use and effect of reconciliation and apologies in postwar Germany and Japan. She outlines a variety of causal paths whereby collective memories, and the policies derived from them, alter interstate relations. She notes that (genuinely) contrite memory from a previously aggressive country can be construed as a “costly signal” that conveys information about the country’s intentions, value change, and the nature of the domestic regime—honest memory discourses indicate the presence of a free, democratic, and thus pacifistic system. Such policies can foster reconciliation, trust, and thus peace internationally. Similarly, a country’s willingness to pay restitution and reparations is another indication of the seriousness with which past human rights abuses have been repudiated. Contrition can also indicate an unwillingness to mobilize nationalistically for intended aggression.

Conversely, countries that glorify past atrocities or justify aggression will convey signals that such methods are still permissible options in the present and future, thus contributing to international tensions. Withholding recognition of or amends for past abuses will delay healing processes in the victimized country and maintain hostility—in a kind of self-reinforcing vicious circle. Finally, Lind observes that contrite memories can also lead to the “self-taming” of a previously aggressive country through membership in binding (preferably thick and costly) multilateral organizations. Despite a few difficulties in her argument—namely, her contention that sometimes real, “thick” contrition does not pay, exemplified by postwar Japan—her book is a needed contribution to theorizing about the causal connections between memory and international relations.
In sum, international relations scholars, especially constructivists, recently have begun to integrate the dynamics of memory into their theories and empirical studies. Despite these advances, there is still a need for more detailed theorizing about these important connections. For example, the concept of collective memory still is defined ambiguously and the various causal paths whereby memory exerts its often-cited impact on domestic policymakers and international relations are still insufficiently elaborated. I now shift to an examination of the political culture literature and memory’s place within it as a way to provide more detail and rigor to the basic constructivist claim that “culture matters.”

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Despite the previous exhortations that culture should be a key focus of scholarly research, there were good reasons why social scientists did not take up the call. Most authors agreed heartily with the German political scientist Max Kaase’s famous pronouncement that studying culture is like “trying to nail a pudding to a wall.” Such voices asserted that culture is too complex to be rigorously theorized and operationalized, that it is an impenetrable black box utilized as a residual and default category only when the explanatory limits of “real” theories had been reached, or that it simply does not matter compared to universal behavioral precepts. By today strong empirical evidence has accumulated to convince most skeptics that culture matters, and impressive conceptual advances have provided the needed rigor. 40 In fact, culture (sometimes referred to simply as “ideas”), along with interests and institutions, has become one of the major research schools in all subfields of political science.

What previously pertained to the more general social scientific study of culture and despite the promising recent advances discussed above, this situation still applies to the concept of collective memory. In the discussion that follows, I explore some of the current problems with the study of collective memory and then offer some tentative solutions to each. This exercise attempts to integrate insights from sociology, comparative politics, and international relations in order to create a usable social scientific justification and conceptual framework for the study of collective memory in political science and, more specifically, in international relations.

The Relevance of Memory

Collective memory helps to constitute a political culture, and thus it is an ideational factor that influences the thinking of individuals—if culture matters, then memory matters. 41 Inspired by behavioralist research, culture can
be thought of as the inherited sets of beliefs, values, practices, and traditions that provide a given group a sense of identity and subjective antimechanistic "order," and that generate meaningful action. Regarding political culture, a subset of the more general culture, Lucien Pye long ago emphasized the historical dimension and the intersection of private and public: "A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system, and thus is rooted equally in public events and private experiences." Collective memories, defined as intersubjectively shared interpretations of a poignant common past with a high degree of affect, are a vital component of political culture. Moreover, one of the key functions of political culture is to provide a sense of communal identity for a group. Collective memory clearly influences this definition of "who" a group is by providing answers of "where" it came from and why.

Critics often raise a fundamental objection at this point, asserting that there can be no such thing as collective memory. They argue that, by definition, an individual can only have a memory of what she herself personally experienced. Maurice Halbwachs, an early pioneer of the collective memory concept working in the tradition of Emile Durkheim, responded that there is no purely individualistic memory—that all memories are socially constructed. Such a position is extreme, but much cognitive research has shown how intimately related social constructs, such as narratives, frames, tropes, and interpretations, are in constructing an individual's personal memory. That said, distinctions should be made between personal and collective memories or between the personal and collective interpretations of a given historical event. In any case, collective memories are intersubjective in the sense that such interpreted knowledge, or what James Wertsch calls "mediated narratives," is determined publicly—and yet, those same memories are also ultimately subjective, in that they are lodged in an individual's mind. Any objective or public text, narrative, symbol, or memorial is ultimately meaningful only insofar as it becomes relevant in the mental structures of individuals—otherwise Robert Musil's much cited danger of "monumental invisibility" may pertain—even if the public dimension is vital for the valuation of that subjective phenomenon.

A further justification for the relevance of memory to fuller understandings of political culture concerns the neglected dimension of history. Indeed, many have argued that history has been neglected in behavioral political culture approaches and needs to be taken seriously in contemporary theorizing. Hobson, for one, lambastes current international-relations theorizing as being afflicted by "chronofetishist" and "tempocentric" modes of ahistoricism. Collective memory is a predominant way that history comes to life.
to affect the political culture of the present. As (inter)subjective ideational phenomena, memories affect the identities and, most importantly, the values—or "core concepts of the desirable," as Milton Rokeach memorably put it—of individuals. Importantly, memories also constrain by creating taboos (regimes of political correctness) and cutting off certain paths of action. That something is remembered presupposes that something is also forgotten, a point that Ernest Renan emphasized a century ago in his thoughts on collective identity, the nation, and nationalism. As discussed below, though, this observation begs questions as to agency and power.\textsuperscript{59} Of course, as constructivists emphasize, reality is complex and recursive—as many "presentists" argue, current values and concerns affect the construction of collective memories.\textsuperscript{60} Accepting this dynamic relationship, however, most evidence points to the causal influence coming predominantly from memory to the present rather than vice versa. At the least, what the present can make out of a given past is logically limited.

\textbf{Definitional Indeterminacy}

A central problem in the study of collective memory has been definitional indeterminacy and competing concepts. In an aptly titled article—"Collective Memory: What Is It?"—Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam concluded that evidence for the existence of collective memory is often scarce, and that the concept lacks sufficient clarity. They believed that the old-fashioned and rather amorphous notion of myth is sufficient, and they were also skeptical of the more general importance of the concerns of memory. More recently, many social scientists, especially Europeans, have preferred the term "historical consciousness."\textsuperscript{51} Adopting this term is said to be a way to address certain limitations of the collective memory term, such as the assertion that memory can only pertain to personally experienced events. It is also a response to the distinction—proclaimed by Pierre Nora in his seminal essay "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire"—between history (cold, dry facts) and memory (emotionalized, experiential, and accessible).\textsuperscript{52} Today, many authors correctly argue that this distinction is untenable. For this reason, they prefer a more overarching term that recognizes that the recording and writing of history is never value neutral and facts can be contested, and that models the intimate interplay between history and memory. Peter Seixas writes that "historical consciousness . . . [is] . . . the area in which collective memory, the writing of history, and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public mind merge . . . [encompassing] individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future."\textsuperscript{53}
However convincing this logic is, the proposed usage is still unsatisfying. The valence of the consciousness term appears both dry and vague. It cannot capture the emotional dimension that is a central reason for the evocativeness, intensity, and influence that collective memory exerts on political life. Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott characterize the kinds of events on which collective memories are based as those that “rip the larger existential fabric of our being-in-the-world and thus leave an indelible impression.” Others call these experiences of great “rhetorical force” or “the most significant (hottest) part of any society’s past.”

One has a collective memory of the Holocaust or 9/11, but a historical consciousness of the American Revolutionary War or the Meiji Restoration. For these reasons—that the emotive element must be emphasized and that distinctions need to be made between historical events that resonate in different ways—the collective memory term is preferable.

This discussion implies that, rather than being competing concepts, all of the historical ideational phenomena are dynamically related. Conceptually, it is necessary to posit “historical occurrences” and a history that can at least approximate a version of these “facts” while still accounting for authorial bias and narrativity. History, with its “thin” layer of interpretation, needs to be differentiated from memory and its “thick,” emotionalized, heavily mediated interpretation, and from myth, which has an extreme level of interpretation that sometimes borders on the fictional. Highly emotionalized myths can be and often are evocative ideational influences, but given problems of historical connectedness (resting far in the mythologized past) and veracity (thereby limiting its accessibility), this usually does not occur in modern and postmodern societies. Figure 1.1 portrays this discussion.

Collective memory sometimes turns into historical consciousness or, in the other direction, it can turn into myth. Moreover, collective memories usually cannot retain their emotional intensity and political influence forever, although there is ample evidence for the intergenerational transference of trauma and memory (e.g., in Northern Ireland, or in Serbia regarding the Battle of Kosovo in 1389). There are also the path-dependent effects of institutional and behavioral responses engendered by the historical events.
and the memories thereof. For example, the German Bundesbank’s rigid mandate to fight inflation was directly influenced by memory of nazism and the factors (including hyperinflation) purportedly behind its rise. Interestingly, this path dependence has even been forwarded onto the new European Central Bank. Another factor facilitating the longevity and continual re-creation of memory and its influence is the infrastructure dedicated to keep the memory alive—consisting of memorials, museums, documentation, curricula, commemorations, and civil societal organizations—especially potent under current (post)modern circumstances of pervasive medialization.

Even among those who accept the collective memory term, there are multiple usages. James Young abjures the use of the collective memory term, preferring “collected memories,” which is defined as “the many discrete memories that are gathered into common memorial spaces and assigned common meaning. A society’s memory, in this context, might be regarded as an aggregate collection of its members’ many, often competing memories.” Jeffrey Olick makes a distinction between collected and collective memories (and the different ontologies and methodologies underpinning them), with the former denoting the behavioralist aggregation of individual experiences in a society operative at the mass level and the latter a kind of collectivist “general will” produced by elites. Similarly, Wertsch distinguishes between strong memory, which “assumes that some sort of collective mind or consciousness exists above and beyond the minds of the individuals in a collective,” and distributed memory, which is inspired by behavioralist notions. Timothy Snyder modifies Wertsch’s distinction, preferring the concepts of national memory, a qualitative phenomenon produced by the elite, and mass personal memory, which is quantitative. Finally, John Bodnar uses the term “public memory.”

Perhaps the most useful typology is that of Aleida Assmann, who lists communicative, generational, collective, and cultural versions of shared memories, which vary from less to more societal breadth and institutionalized depth (figure 1.2). This typology implies a dynamic and chronological

Figure 1.2. Typology of Shared Memories

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<td>Communicative memory</td>
<td>Generational memory</td>
<td>Collective memory</td>
<td>Cultural memory</td>
<td>Myth</td>
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Low < Degree of generality and acceptance < High
dimension. The most politically evocative memories typically will have more elite validation and societal breadth (i.e., collective and cultural memories, and sometimes myths).

A final definitional problem, even among those who plead for the presumably more accommodating historical consciousness alternative, has to do with a relative lack of differentiation toward memory-related phenomena. There are several elements that deserve an independent conceptual place, yet they still interact with each other in what I call a memory regime. Memory regimes consist of two sets of factors, the first of which is the synchronic dimension, containing first and foremost the dominant collective memories in a country. Second, there are implied, asserted, or connected political values, lessons, and communal identities, which are either prescriptive (positive), concerning what ought to be thought and done, or prescriptive (negative), concerning impermissible values, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as taboos. Third, there are supportive moral and ethical discourses, such as those surrounding the incomparability of the Holocaust or the German nie wieder (never again) mantra that justify both the memories and the value connections. The second set of factors is a diachronic component. Two master historical narratives accompany a memory regime, regarding, on the one hand, the causes of and explanations for the crucial events that generated the memories, and, on the other, the fate of these collective memories following these events, the history of the memory. Often these historical narratives influence the supportive ethical and moral discourse in the present either directly or mediated through the effect of the narratives on an intervening value (table 1.1).

The Dynamics of Memory
The next challenge concerns a lack of conceptual attention to several important dynamics regarding memory, most notably, a deemphasis of the concerns of power, insufficient attention devoted to pluralism and variability,

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<tr>
<th>Synchronic Dimension</th>
<th>Diachronic Dimension</th>
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<td>Collective memories</td>
<td>Master historical narrative of causes of</td>
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<td>generative events</td>
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<td>Lessons/value connections/shared identities</td>
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Supportive ethical and moral discourses
and a neglect of agency. These shortcomings can be rectified by applying insights from recent advances in the study of mass belief systems and political culture. First, too often memories, like other ideational phenomena, are anthropomorphized, even though there are always human agents that represent memories. As with other elements of political culture, these representatives belong overwhelmingly to a society’s elites and are responsible for the majority of visible action and wider influence. Young observes that “if societies remember, it is only insofar as their institutions and rituals organize, shape, even inspire their constituents’ memories. For a society’s memory cannot exist outside of those people who do the remembering—even if such memory happens to be at society’s bidding, in its name.”

The socializing agents and privileged interpreters of memory regimes are politicians, journalists, religious and social leaders, artists, teachers, intellectuals, and so on. There are also different subsets of the more general elite, such as academics, artists, politicians, and civil societal leaders, who operate in more specialized arenas and thus produce more specialized discourses. An especially important group is what Thomas Rochon deems the politically and morally engaged “critical community” of agents and discursive entrepreneurs, which is absolutely central for issues of memory, given the existential gravity of the events on which they are based and the degree of emotion, interpretation, and, if a traumatic memory is involved, therapy associated with them. In fact, memories are the quintessential ground for the kind of morally motivated and engaged vanguard that is characteristic of the critical community term.

However they are composed in a specific case, elite actors hammer out and validate the politically acceptable memory regime, the public transcript of memory. Exactly as in the more general culture, how these leaders interpret, package, and assert meaning, as well as the various lessons that are asserted to flow from and the values and identities connected to the memory, greatly affect average citizens. Conversely, elite interpreters respond to memories from below (collected memories), either from “average” individuals or from particularly aware and interested groups (opinion leaders, lobbies), which elite actors aggregate, interpret, and represent. There may be a disjunction between the public transcript or elite discourse and a private, mass one. As with political culture more generally, such a disjunction is one potential source of change when some members of the elite shift their conceptions to better represent or correspond to popular discourses.

Second is the fundamental fact that pluralism and variability mark any culture, belief system, or set of ideas—what Harry Eckstein calls “orientational variability,” and what Wertsch deems “complementary distributed memory”: “It is assumed that different members of a group have different
perspectives and remember different things, but these exist in a coordinated system of complementary pieces.”61 There are three sets of factors that create pluralism. First, different collective memories and corresponding identities can be based on a variety of demographic factors such as class, ethnicity, or gender, as well as on voluntary group membership, most importantly party and partisan affiliations. Second, the different kinds of memories outlined in Assmann’s typology may circulate. Finally, memories based on different historical events may surface. In this context, Andrei Markovits and Simon Reich talk about a German “memory map,” based on “memory clusters”—the Weimar Republic, the Nazi regime, the Federal Republic, and East Germany.62 Often the various memories that circulate are of positive or negative valence—such as the ongoing struggle between memory of World War II and Vietnam in the United States.63 Such potential pluralism can easily become unwieldy, but the situation is simplified by the operation of a third dynamic.

Recall that the central proposition of any political culture model is that culture affects—sometimes directly and sometimes through the intervening layer of collective identity—political institutions, policies, and behaviors.64 Precisely because of this influence, it matters immensely which values vie to be allocated, how they are framed as alternatives, and which ones emerge to actually influence outcomes. There is an inescapable dimension of power and competition involved in all ideational phenomena. The degree of power achieved depends on the extent to which other members of the political community accept that the values or memories in question are valid and legitimate. In addition to achieving maximal breadth of acceptance (indicating the importance of mass publics), there are incentives to increase and deepen the intensity with which values are held. The ultimate goal is to achieve maximum discursive power and to transform the preferred values or collective identities into a (taken-for-granted) background consensus, common sense, or orthodoxy.65 Power also implies that memory is inescapably instrumentalized for political and partisan purposes.66

The best-known conception that captures these dynamics is Antonio Gramsci’s notion of cultural hegemony, which “means ‘moral and philosophical leadership,’ leadership which is attained through the active consent of major groups in society,” or even more succinctly, “maximally institutionalized norms.”67 But this basic notion insufficiently accommodates gradations of power. Certainly some hegemonic or overarching values, or a social contract, must exist in order to make social and political life possible. Most of the time, however, value agreement does not reach consensus or unanimity because of orientational variability. There is a continuum of hegemonic positions, differentiated by the degree of power, breadth of acceptance, and number of existing values.
Likewise, because memories are part of a society’s culture, their potential influence, power, and competition are central. Paul Connerton writes: “For it is surely the case that control of a society’s memory largely conditions the hierarchy of power; . . . our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order.” Indeed, given the centrality of emotion, trauma, and identity to memories, the competition is even more vigorous. Power stems from the degree of dominance that a memory achieves in a political culture. A memory closer to unanimity on the power continuum can be considered more powerful than others—what Jan Holger Kirsch calls the “dominant majority opinion or orthodoxy,” versus the competing “heterodoxies.”

Again, the essential factors are how many memories circulate, how widely a specific memory is held, and the depth of attachment. As in the previous discussion, the more general elite or better-educated level matters most, but the situation among the mass public is also important, because the mass public determines the success or failure of elite projects. An assessment of power and dominance results from measuring the proportion of the population that accepts different, competing memories, as well as the degree and nature of institutionalization or memorialization.

Not every possible shared memory has the same impact or the same power. In this way the pluralism of potential memories is greatly reduced, resulting in a prioritized hierarchy of memories, some with more power than others. Note also that this competition and prioritization of memory can account for the element of forgetting, which is actually a deprioritized, even repressed, memory—a memory that has lost the struggle for hegemony.

When and Why Do Memories Arise?

Perhaps the biggest conceptual challenge involves explaining why memory has come to the fore in some countries and not in others, and why memory emerges at a specific point in time. There are four interrelated variables that can facilitate the emergence of memory in a given case. The first is the magnitude of the historical event. Traumatic events such as the Holocaust, in which half of world Jewry was murdered; the genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Armenians of Turkey after World War I (10 to 15 percent of the prewar population; approximately 1.5 million deaths); 20 million Soviet citizens who died under Stalin’s hand before World War II; and 40 million Chinese deaths during Mao’s time in power are examples of the importance of a quantitative numerical criteria. This is an indication of the societal breadth necessary for a given memory to achieve the possibility of hegemony. As intimated above and as a comprehensive review of social-psychological studies concludes: “Collective memories are most likely to be formed and maintained about events that represent significant long-term changes to people’s lives.”
Sometimes the magnitude does not have to be as large for a memory to have a large impact. Examples of smaller-scale, yet still influential, memories would be “the disappeared” in Argentina or Chile or the victims of the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The empathy that all citizens of a country feel (“it could have been me”), or the social prominence of the targets/victims can compensate for the lack of scale. Eva Hoffmann asks why some wars or upheavals cause trauma and others do not: “Why does suffering remain at the level of painful but bearable human experience in some circumstances and turn into something more corrosive and psychologically disabling in others?” Clarity and the ability to process and explain a tragedy through a preexisting belief system make it more bearable as tragic suffering, versus the unbearable traumatic alternative. The Holocaust was characterized by impotence, gratuitous violence, sadism, humiliation—and it resulted in greater passivity and deeper violation. In short, the presence or absence of a meaningful structure to explain a trauma is one determinant of magnitude as discussed here.

The second set of factors comes from the vast corpus of psychological and psychoanalytic literature on coming to terms with a past, mourning, or coping. To simplify, successfully working through a traumatic past entails discourse (the Freudian “talking cure”) and recognition beyond the individual by some collective entity such as a family, and even the national group. Such insights are the very motivation behind truth and justice commissions in many countries and part of the logic behind various monetary compensation or reparation agreements (because financial payments are seen as a form of recognition of harm inflicted). Many authors such as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross have looked at the stages of mourning, which begins with a latency stage of silence and repression, that allows the wounds to heal and to regain a state of physical, mental, and even financial normalcy. The process can (but not necessarily) proceed to more public discursive stages of sadness, anger, and finally, resolution. For a long time such psychoanalytic notions dominated the study of traumatic memory and became excessively “stretched.” Rather than replacing these concepts, because they are partially valid, they must be augmented with other factors, especially the concerns of relative power. These other factors intervene to stymie, delay, or even preclude the evolution of this process. Hence, a consideration of all of these factors must complement the (social) psychological insights in order to explain when a given memory will emerge publicly.

Next are consciousness and voice. There must be mechanisms for the memory to be absorbed by a given population and for individuals to construct and disseminate the memory. As Wertsch writes, “Instead of being grounded in direct, immediate experience of events, the sort of collective
memory at issue ... is ... textually mediated, ... based on textual resources provided by others." In a sense, a modicum of literacy and at least a nascent press, civil society, and educational system are preconditions for collective memory to be possible. There must be committed leaders (agency, a critical community) to construct the "textual resources" and share them with others in the community. There must also be some basic freedoms and liberties (press, speech, organization) to make such individuals and their mission possible. This alludes to the importance of regime type, specifically, an approximation of a free, democratic system.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is relative power. Representatives of the traumatized/oppressed, as well as the affected individuals themselves, will not gain a voice or be able to begin the coping process until they feel powerful and safe enough to speak up. At a minimum, the traumatic events or episodes must be over, and the actual perpetrators must have fully concluded their actions (e.g., the deaths of Stalin, Franco, or Mao). There must also be a modicum of openness and freedom in the political system. One of the reasons for the delayed confrontation with Nazi crimes committed against Poles or Japanese atrocities committed against Chinese civilians was that Poland was repressed by communism until 1989, and the firmly entrenched Chinese regime only started partial liberalization after 1979.

Even when the events have ended and the political system has opened up—that is, when democracy reaches a degree of consolidation so that the return of the perpetrators and their regime is widely considered an impossibility—it usually takes years for the affected individuals to feel secure and powerful enough to begin therapeutic discourses. To be blunt, for a truly free discourse to emerge, the perpetrators must be old, dead, or firmly in jail. Victims must feel sufficiently safe from retribution by their previous oppressors, or as Lind writes, threat perceptions must be reduced. These dynamics apply equally to memories confined to a national or subnational arena, as well as to ones that transcend national borders.

Alternately, following the brilliant argument of Anne Sa’adah, most countries after a traumatic episode initially pursue minimalist “institutionalist” coping strategies, aimed at reestablishing “thin” trust-as-reliability and reintegrating perpetrators or the previous regime’s supporters (i.e., the new regime will not be overthrown, the trauma will not begin again). Eventually, a “thicker” trust-as-trustworthiness is necessary, one that requires maximal “culturalist” discursive processes, where memory both emerges and is central to the production of such reconciliatory trust. The point is that achieving the thin version of trust is what helps to increase the relative position of the victims, who are finally empowered to push the thicker, more therapeutic version that they need. One exception to these dynamics would be certain
truth and reconciliation initiatives, where discourses of the oppressed occur almost immediately. However, specific circumstances effectively speed up the process, including the presence of an international “guarantee” of democratic stability (e.g., in the former Yugoslavia; or, in a different context, international anti-apartheid opinion toward South Africa), or of relatively evenly balanced groups of victims and perpetrators (often with reciprocal traumatization).

Hence, the emergence of memory is based on the interaction of these factors, all of which are supported by the explanatory dynamics elucidated by the psychoanalytic tradition: a degree of freedom to enable voice and dissemination, the magnitude of the trauma or event, the degree of relative power. This combination of factors helps to account for many cases of “memory surfacing,” from the well-studied cases of postwar Germany (early repression silence/memory boom later) to the unexpected cases of Spain, confronting its memory twenty-five years after Franco’s death and, most dramatically, Latin American cases such as Chile and especially Argentina, where the current return of memory is largely dependent on the certification of relative power (the democratic regime in Argentina did not collapse during its protracted economic crisis and military officers revealed their lack of will to regain power).

Memory and Regime Type
Hence, memory often emerges as part of the public coping process in the context of a free, pluralist regime that has reached a degree of consolidation and institutionalized stability. Memory flourishes in a democracy because transparency is central to legitimacy and because democracies are, by definition, “nice,” quasi-therapeutic political systems. But what is this connection with democracy? Is there a correlation, a causal relationship, or an “elective affinity”?

Numerous objections have been raised in response to the assertion of the inner connection between memory and democracy. Critics point out the frequent, even typical, use of collective memories by unfree regimes and their dictatorial leaders. Despite all the attention that collective memory has received in the case of Germany, a case where, for instance, most commentators forget that the Nazis also fostered, abused, and also greatly benefited from a strong collective memory—the Dolchstoflegende (legend of the stab in the back) of Germany’s “internal” defeat (by socialists and Jews) in World War I. Similarly, Imperial Japan, the Soviet Union, Castro’s Cuba, authoritarian regimes in the Balkans, and Communist China are all examples of state-constructed memories, obviously and often very effectively supporting the
stability of dictatorial rule. Those who assert the connection between memory and democracy, such critics say, have a biased sample of cases. Some go so far as to say that collective memory is actually more typical in a dictatorship than in a democracy.

There are several responses. First, all of the dynamics of memories and memory regimes discussed above are neutral as to regime type and can be operative in all cases. Certainly, elite agency (here of the state and party) and validation of public transcripts of memory are extreme. There can be extensive competition over acceptable memories, at least within the ruling party-state. Moreover, perhaps it is an unpalatable truth, but even such coercive collective memories can aid citizens in processes of working through and healing. As Hoffman pointed out, the crucial variable is the availability of a meaningful structure with which an individual can explain and thus work through a trauma. All of the examples cited above provided very powerful and accessible meanings, usually some kind of ultranationalism. Indicative are the terms used in these regimes. The Soviet Union always referred to World War II as “the Great Patriotic War.” The Communist regime in China refers to that same war as “the Chinese People’s Anti-Japanese War of Resistance,” “the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance,” “the War of Resistance,” or “the Eight Years’ War of Resistance.” Decades of research on nationalism as a kind of secular or political religion have revealed just how effective and legitimating such doctrines are.22

Second, there are severe limits concerning memory in unfree political systems. On the one hand, such regimes will only foster collective memories that are based on others harming the nation. The “other” here could be an external foe, such as the Germans invading the Soviet Union, the Japanese in China, or the United States in Cuba, or it could be a “vanquished” internal foe, such as a previous regime or a “ruling” minority (e.g., the Chinese in Indonesia). It bears mention that the interpretation of historical events embedded in these kinds of memories is so tendentious that the best descriptive term is not collective memory but myth. On the other hand, such regimes never admit or foster memory of traumas that they themselves have unleashed on their citizens (Mao, Stalin, Castro). Given that all unfree regimes are based to varying degrees on arbitrary coercion and a lack of due process, there are always such internal crimes and secrets.

Hence, the process of working through is always partial or only partially applicable to individuals, and the overall legitimizing function of memory is partial. This also means that the regime must be wary of having too much memory, as it necessarily leads to questions about the regime’s own actions, questions that are likely to go unanswered by those in power. The Chinese Communists have recently learned this lesson. They had facilitated the wave
of anti-Japanese protests that took place in 2004–6, trying to use the unleashed nationalism as a tool for re legitimization (akin to Communist strategies in the last years of the Soviet Union). However, they soon realized that such energies, precedents, and the organizational networks produced could be and were soon turned on the regime itself when many Chinese started to question Communist responsibility for the suffering of the Great Leap Forward or the Cultural Revolution. Since then, official anti-Japanese rhetoric has ceased and several conciliatory efforts have been undertaken. Once unleashed, memory is hard to control and can be a veritable Pandora’s box.\(^7\)

Even though collective memories are operative in both free and unfree political systems, political and discursive dynamics, constraints, and sheer self-interest mean that memory in oppressive systems is extremely tenden-
tious (perhaps better classified as myth) and partial. The public spaces (civil society) and necessary discourses (legal, cultural, therapeutic) simply cannot exist, so processes of working through can never be completed, and traumas linger (sometimes greatly delegitimizing the regime). At a minimum, it is safe to say that although memory can be present in unfree systems, it can never flourish. There is no exclusive connection between memory and democracy, but there is a much higher propensity of its incidence and a correlation with the extent to which memory emerges. Indeed, one might go so far as to say that the conditions of democracy make memory discourses flourish, strengthening the transparency and legitimacy of the regime internally, and helping to establish Kant’s “perpetual” democratic peace in the regional or international system. An honest and contrite confrontation with the past can also help to reduce threat perceptions abroad and build confidence and trust.\(^7\)

I have discussed the importance and impact of memory from the perspective of the political culture as a whole. I have focused primarily on the general and diffuse impact that a memory regime has on the values and shared identities that constitute this culture, and then indirectly on the preferences and behaviors of individuals, especially members of the elite. It also bears repeating that such an influence can be positive, in terms of pointing to or mandating certain values and lessons (e.g., the eternal vigilance of the enemies of Israel), as well as negative, in terms of constraining options (Germany’s and Japan’s postwar revocation of the possession and use of nuclear weapons) and creating taboos (realpolitik arguments cannot be cited in mainstream political circles in Germany). Memory clearly matters for international affairs in both a diffuse sense—in terms of the identities and values that the makers of foreign policy bring with them; and in terms of the specific demands,
valued or preferred policies, and historical analogies used in making a particular decision.

CONCLUSION: HOLOCAUST MEMORY AND CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

I conclude this chapter with a brief but evocative case study of the influence of Holocaust memory in contemporary Israel. In August 2005 Israeli military forces and eight thousand to nine thousand Jewish settlers were removed from the Gaza Strip. This plan—promised by its architect, former prime minister Ariel Sharon, to facilitate peace for Israel—resulted in significant discord throughout Israel and among Jewish communities worldwide. In October 2004 the Knesset voted sixty-seven to forty-five for the withdrawal, with major fissures running through the parties, especially on the right and in the Likud Party. The majority of Israelis supported the plan; in August 2005, 57 percent supported disengagement and 36 percent opposed it.

Nevertheless, the opposing minority—some ultra-Orthodox Jews, ultranationalists, the settler constituency, and Israeli security hawks—was loud and exerted disproportional influence. In the weeks before the planned withdrawal, thousands of religious Jews staged a protest at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, and a larger, more secular ultranationalist demonstration took place, ironically perhaps, on Rabin Square in Tel Aviv. Benjamin Netanyahu, a former (and future) prime minister, resigned as finance minister to protest the withdrawal policy, which he said would placate terrorists rather than achieve lasting peace with the Palestinians—a decision condemned by Sharon as “irresponsible” and “opportunistic,” perhaps even threatening governmental stability. Violent demonstrations and resistance were feared, especially as the population of the affected settlements swelled with the influx of hard-line supporters from the West Bank and elsewhere in Israel—a week before “Withdrawal Day,” there were approximately two thousand more people in the settlements than before the plan was announced.

Accompanying these developments was an ideological and rhetorical war infused with memory. The Zionist “strong Jew” doctrine, which was a response to the memory of Jewish “weakness” in the Diaspora as well as to the culmination of that situation in the Holocaust—as well as related discourses, symbols, and iconography—permeated the debate. Some settlers and their supporters wore orange stars and several stenciled their Israeli identification numbers to their forearms, in response to the Israeli army’s insistence that all who enter the soon-to-be-dismantled settlements provide identification (to stem the influx of radicals from the outside). Some protesters donned Nazi concentration camp uniforms (replete with yellow Stars of David) on the day of withdrawal. Such images dominated the Israeli and
international media. The rhetoric was equally provocative. One settler leader stated, “I can’t find any difference between what is happening to us now and what happened then [i.e., the Holocaust].” Another noted, “this is a way of protesting against our being placed into ghettos.” A hard-line faction of the bitterly divided Likud Party deemed the plan “an order the likes of which were last signed in German” and a member of the Knesset asserted that “maybe we killed [Adolf] Eichmann for no reason, because he was also just following orders.”

An ultranationalist organization, Women in Green, led a vigorous and radical campaign against “the criminal deportation plan of Sharon.” In late 2004, the group’s leader Nadia Matar—who is also one of the activists who successfully entered a Gaza settlement—wrote a letter to Yonatan Bassi, the government official in charge of the policy. In addition to lambasting the plan, she included a letter from the Judenrat in Berlin in 1942 that asked Jews to calmly prepare for their deportation (to concentration camps): “Matar wrote that Bassi is a modern-day version of the Judenrat and is, in fact, much worse; during the Holocaust, the deportation of Jews was forced upon community leaders by the Nazis; . . . ‘you cooperate in this crime without any moral or ethical tribulations.’”

Showing the use of even deeper memories for political purposes in the present, the organization proclaimed in 2005: “Women in Green would like to suggest that all lovers of Israel organize an all-day and all-night vigil outside each Israeli embassy and consulate to protest the cruel, inhuman and immoral action of the Sharon Government. Particularly at this time of Tisha B’Av, when the First and Second Temples were destroyed, is such an action appropriate.”

Matar was widely criticized. In response to her 2004 letter, Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem—which in early 2005 had reopened its upgraded museum and memorial spaces to international acclaim—called these parallels irresponsible, disrespectful, and distorting history. He added more recently that “the plan to wear orange stars perverts the historical facts and damages memory of the Shoah.” Indeed, the use of Holocaust imagery has been attacked from many quarters, including many Holocaust survivors (about 250,000 of whom live in Israel).

Moreover, the international and especially diasporic connections were operative. One columnist in the Boston Globe wrote: “And yet there is no getting around the fact that Israel is about to become the first, modern, Western nation in more than 60 years to forcibly uproot a whole population—men, women, children, babies—solely because they are Jews. There is no getting around the fact that the forthcoming expulsions are rooted in the belief that any future Palestinian state must be Judenrein—emptied of its Jews.”
Other organizations, including the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and the Anti-Defamation League, criticized the use of such parallels and symbols; most of these organizations supported the withdrawal plan, as did the U.S. government. It should also be noted that the settlers’ cause had many supporters outside Israel, such as some of the ultra-Orthodox in New York City, and that Women in Green has chapters in many North American cities.

The actual withdrawal ended up being much more peaceful and orderly than many had feared. Despite monopolizing headlines for weeks, the issue was quickly forgotten afterwards. Moreover, the use of such provocative Holocaust symbols and rhetoric was far from pervasive. Only a minority of the relevant actors utilized them, and the vast majority of Israelis and Jews worldwide were not supportive of such usage, widely considered excessive and in poor taste.88

Nevertheless, the fact that radicals would immediately reach for such iconography as part of their protest, that the media devoted disproportionate coverage to these symbols, and that the country was talking about this appropriation (even to condemn the use) speaks volumes about the resonance Holocaust memory has in Israel today. Many recall the violent criticism of Yitzhak Rabin, including demonstrations where he was depicted in Nazi Gestapo uniform shortly before he was assassinated by an ultranationalist. The war against Hezbollah in 2006 (and then against Hamas in 2009) was permeated with such influences. At the time, the journalist Ben Caspit published a mock speech for then-prime minister Ehud Olmert: “Today I am serving as the voice of six million bombarded Israeli citizens who serve as the voice of six million murdered Jews who were melted down to dust and ashes by savages in Europe. In both cases, those responsible for these evil acts were, and are, barbarians devoid of all humanity, who set themselves one simple goal: to wipe the Jewish race off the face of the Earth, as Adolph Hitler said, or to wipe the State of Israel off the map, as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proclaims.”89

A counterreaction has even set in. During 2007 and 2008 a major scandal erupted over the publication of a book by the former speaker of the Knesset and self-avowed leftist Avraham Burg.90 In 2008 he wrote that “every threat or grievance of major or minor importance is dealt with automatically by raising the biggest argument of them all—the Shoah—and from that moment onward, every discussion is disrupted. . . . Army generals discuss Israeli security doctrine as ‘Shoah-proof.’ The Shoah is woven, to varying degrees, into almost all of Israel’s political arguments; over time we have taken the Shoah from its position of sanctity and turned it into an instrument of common and even trite politics.”91
Burg believes that Israeli foreign policy has been distorted by this overemphasis and surfet of memory: "All is compared to the Shoah, dwarfed by the Shoah and therefore all is allowed." Shocked that 90 percent of Israelis chose the Holocaust as the most important experience in the millennia of Jewish history, he advocated a more expansive historical consciousness and a more universalist conception of the Holocaust that would create a new, humanistic Israeli emphasis on human rights—which would live up to the Zionist promise of the country's founders.

The vehemence of Burg's polemic, as well as the reactions inside and outside of the country, reveal the continued hegemony of a Holocaust-centered memory regime, replete with supportive ethical discourses, connected values and lessons (the strong Jew ethos especially in foreign policy), and sweeping master historical narratives (Jewish weakness, Tisha B'Av). Yet, the Burg scandal also shows that despite this overall hegemony, there is little unanimity regarding the particular valuation of Holocaust memory in Israel—not even to mention dynamics in various diasporic communities. Finally, the important international dimension—how memory of the Holocaust influences international affairs in terms of bilateral relations, diasporas, and transnational organizations—is of utmost importance. Burg and others believe that the marked hawkishness of Israeli foreign (and domestic) policies today flows from and is intimately related to the hegemony of Shoah memory. Moreover, the hawkishness of American culture and foreign policy after 9/11 and during the George W. Bush administration was also part of this environment, reinforcing and interactively influencing the memories and policies in Israel (as elsewhere). Given the importance that publics and governments worldwide afford to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, understanding the impact of memory on the resolution (or not) of the conflict is of the utmost importance.

NOTES


24. Timothy Garton Ash, "The Freedom of Historical Debate Is under Attack by the Memory Police," The Guardian, October 16, 2008. There is even a group of academics, led by the prominent memory scholar Pierre Nora, who have started an online petition contesting such censorship; see www.lph-asso.fr.


27. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," European Journal of Social Theory 5, no. 1 (2002): 86–106. Mention should also be made of the international network of research venues and ongoing conferences, such as "Lessons and Legacies."


30. Bell, Memory, Trauma and World Politics, 5.


32. Ibid., 107.


34. See Art, Politics of the Nazi Past; and Müller, Memory and Power. One should note that many sociologists have integrated collective memory into their theories and studies to a greater extent than have political scientists. Yet largely due to basic challenges of divergent disciplinary vocabularies, preferred methods, and academic networks, there has been even less communication across these disciplines than there has been across the subfields of political science.


39. Note here the connection to Habermasian notions of postnationality or constitutational patriotism.


41. To avoid any misunderstanding at the outset, this approach is not asserting an overly grand theory that memory is the most important or even the only determinant of a political culture or an individual’s belief system—merely that memory is a component or factor. Perhaps it is one that has been underemphasized in conventional theories—though memory is not meant to be a replacement, but rather a needed complement or augmentation of existing views. This posited impact is both a basic theoretical proposition and an orienting hypothesis that must be rigorously and comprehensively tested against empirical reality. Much research on numerous cases, over time and from a multitude of methodological perspectives, is necessary before this assertion can be taken as a generally applicable finding.


46. See Huysseus, *Present Pasts*.

47. Of course, postwar behavioral political science was reacting against the hegemonic historical or historicist approaches of early political science. A dynamic of over-reaching accompanied this paradigm shift.


57. Young, *Texture of Memory*, ix.


62. Markovits and Reich, *German Predicament*, 34–42.

63. See Schuman and Rodgers, "Coherents, Chronology and Collective Memories."


75. Note the parallel to Benedict Anderson and Ernst Gellner’s thoughts on the necessary factors behind the emergence of national consciousness and nationalism.


79. See Lind, *Sorry States*.


82. Hasson, “Settlers.”


86. Shragai, “Yad Vashem Slams Women.”

87. Jacoby, “Nazi Reminders.”

88. The media perhaps seized upon such images, skewing the portrayal of the issue by giving overrepresentation to these individuals—perhaps as a way to sell papers and “create” more controversy than was actually there.


DURING SOCCER'S 2008 EUROPEAN CUP, many German fans waved their flags jubilantly after the national team's victories—continuing a new patriotic tradition that was especially pronounced during the 2006 World Cup of soccer hosted in Germany and in which the national team made it to the semifinals. Both times, it was difficult not to recall a much bleaker version of German nationalism that prevailed in the not-so-distant past. National pride and flag-waving have a dark connotation in German history, bringing to mind images of swastika-brazened banners from the 1936 Olympic Games, and recalling the fate of Europe’s Jews and all Holocaust victims.

Yet Germans themselves are not unaware of the malicious elements of their past. Rather, they have adopted an acute historical sensitivity, making expressions of genuine sorrow and shame longstanding fixtures of German identity. It is an identity dependent on a complex process of remembrance and contrition, both individually and representatively in books of history, in literature, and in the arts—in short, in all ways of cultural self-definition and self-interpretation. 1 Portrayals of the Holocaust and both world wars permeate German television programming, consistently accompanied by in-depth analyses that are available at almost any given hour of the day or night. For example, the network Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen alone aired more than twelve hundred programs on the Nazi past and postwar legacy from 1963 through 1993, and programming focused on Nazi-era Germany has remained a staple throughout contemporary scheduling. 2

The German people, no less than the Jews, have formed a collective and conscious memory of the genocidal events that terminated in 1945 with the
end of World War II. They have absorbed the legacy of the Holocaust into their national identity, an impact, however, that continues to evolve in order to accommodate newer versions of that identity. The soccer tournaments in 2006 and 2008 highlight the evolutionary nature of German self-understanding and the recalibration of German identity abroad. As Roger Cohen observed in the International Herald Tribune about the 2006 World Cup frenzy, Germany emerged victorious not in the tournament but rather “over German reserve and rigidity and reticence and self-doubt and all the other manifestations of a heavy history.” At that time, President Horst Köhler noted, “We are on the right track toward standing up for ourselves and taking pride in what we have achieved since 1945,” he said, adding that it was “terrific that Germans now love and show their flag.” But the merriment and camaraderie of catchy top European Cup–themed radio hits like Revolverhead’s “Helden 2008,” and Oliver Pocher’s “Bringt Ihn Heim,” that can be heard blaring from car windows belie the hard psychological and political work that has gone into removing the Nazi stain from traditionally taboo words like “Stolz” (pride) and “Nationalismus.”

Indeed, by all accounts, since 1945 Germany has undergone a persistent “normalization” of both its national identity and foreign policy, particularly since reunification. The transitions in national identity over time are reflected in small changes such as the lyrical tinkering with the German national anthem. The classic line, “Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles,” in August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s nineteenth-century lyrics was originally intended to prioritize Germany as a democratic whole over its singular feudal principalities. The reappropriation of the lyrics by the Nazis distorted the message into one of German supremacy and world dominance—Germans above everything, and everyone.

The official version used today reflects the concepts of rule of law and unity that Hoffman had wanted to celebrate during the 1848 Revolution. Only the third stanza is sung, and the intended return to the message of German democracy, unity, and freedom is clear. But one can see larger demonstrations of transition, such as in the German demographic makeup and recent economic as well as political action in the world community. Karsten Voigt, the coordinator for German-American cooperation in the German Foreign Office, referred to Germany in most parts of its history as a nation of culture rather than a nation of power. This description highlights the sustained occupations and overall state weakness prevalent across most of German history. But although Germany is a culture-nation, culture itself in Germany is being redefined to include elements of Turkish and other minority identities. The fact that soccer, flag-waving, anthem singing, and
culture have little to do with Holocaust memories at face value is exactly what makes the following questions important.

Comparing Germany today with its image of seventy years ago, how has it gotten to a point of "normalization"? How can its collective act of remembering affect politics, economics, self-perception, and policy both domestically and abroad? Where has its guilt turned to pride, Schuld to Stolz, and even to "Stühnestolz"—a certain pride in being remorseful? Germany is an economic heavyweight, NATO ally, and considerable peacekeeper the world over. Thus, in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the international community can stand to learn from Germany's approaches to memory if it is to secure a more democratic future.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND NATIONALISM

The intense attention Germans have paid to the Holocaust over time brings to mind Aviel Roshwald's recent observation that "the moral and political implications of a people's historical victimization are rarely obvious or straightforward. Nor is a nation's fixation on its experience of humiliation a static phenomenon. It varies in intensity and significance over time, manifesting itself along a spectrum of possibilities." For Germany, the national fixation on the Nazi era has been manifested in numerous ways over time: a societal, moral, and physical crisis; a politically codified rejection of nazism; generational condemnation by the left-leaning descendants of World War II–era Germans, known as '68ers; the German moral debt to Israel; the fiery Historikerstreit (Historians' Debate) in the mid-1980s; and eventually the growth and development of a modern-day tendency toward humanism in the world community.

Although the terminology of collective memory has been used in endless ways, in the context of this discussion, collective memory does not denote the entire history of a society, nor its distinct cultural underpinnings. Rather, collective memory represents those group experiences and recollections whose subsequent interpretation fundamentally drives a nation's identity and interests. Reiterating Roshwald, such identity or interests do not remain static, and they are often transformed over time. As Henri Bergson and others have put it, collective memory can be seen as "an active process of sense-making through time." A similar concept, Eric Langenbacher's "memory regime" framework outlined earlier in this volume, looks at the Holocaust as a dominant memory among several memories in the German past. As he writes, this framework is

based on the contentions that political cultures, values, or mass belief systems are phenomena that affect real political outcomes and that at