Political Influence and German Holocaust Memory: A Historiography

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The way the world remembers the Holocaust has been ever-changing since the end of the Second World War. Throughout Holocaust discourse, the word "memory" takes on many different meanings. From cultural memory to public memory, there are many subcategories that break down the meaning of memory and how it functions as a conceptual lens to understand how societies remember their histories. Memory is used for many different roles including serving the past and the present, and for political interests. With such an all-encompassing topic, its scholarship is certainly brimming with information and ideas amongst scholars of various disciplines. Through their work, they have established endless ways in which memory is utilized and defined for individuals, the public, political actors, for commemoration, and memorialization. This essay analyzes the work of scholars of Holocaust memory in Germany who largely focus on the sites and expressions of memory in Germany's capital city, Berlin. Scholars such as James E. Young, Jeffrey Blustein, Jan Weiner Müller, Mark Callaghan, Aleida Assmann, Siobhan Kattago, and Jennifer Jordon address the connectiveness of German national identity and political involvement. They stress that German collective memory related to the construction of national identity in the postwar era and that the erection of Holocaust memorials in Berlin and throughout the country was an attempt to consolidate and address national guilt. As Germany worked to face Nazi history through memorialization, it becomes abundantly clear that there are many layers of heavy political involvement in shaping German memory on both national and international levels.

This article will discuss the work of sixteen books that examine political involvement in memory work in Germany. It is important to note that the paper has used Pierre Nora's work to define "memory." Nora states:

> Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative.[1]

[1] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* no. 26 (Spring 1989): 9

Nora's definition guides the analysis of memory and political involvement in memory throughout the paper. To organize its broad variety of sources, the paper is divided into five eras of Holocaust memory in Germany. This analysis furthers the conversation amongst scholars in determining appropriate assertions of politics in methods of memorializing the Holocaust in Germany. Debates amongst the scholars occur throughout the themes of this analysis and are addressed as they arise, including contentions about memorial designs, memory in divided Germany, and the effects of German reunification on memory.

The Politics of Memory in Germany

How has politics affected the rise of memory and identity in Germany? This is a prominent theme throughout the work of German memory scholars. Peter Carrier's *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory: Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the V'el' d'Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* examines commemoratory celebrations of the Second World War and the Holocaust throughout Europe and their claims to political authority. Carrier argues that the significance of these politically charged events largely influences and sustains societal memory.[2] Carrier also explains the role of politics in memory by explaining the role of political actors in memory work, noting that "…political strategists continue to delegate monuments and commemorations the moral responsibility to guarantee remembrance."[3] His work examines the role of politics in establishing monuments by investigating various debates about monuments regarding their production and appropriation in the public sphere, and how they interact with historical information, interpretations, and political interests that still face conflict today.[4] Carrier's analysis centres on two widely recognized monuments: the 'Vél d'Hiv in Paris, France and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Germany, the latter of which I will focus on here.[5]

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[2] Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory: Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the V'el' d'Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin*, 1.
[3] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 1.
[4] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 1.
[5] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 2.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has become one of the central points in memorial and memory discussions. Fittingly, Carrier uses the memorial to demonstrate political involvement in memory work. The decision to establish this memorial came with many politically charged questions. Carrier highlights two main questions of the memorial campaign: "What is the most adequate form of monument? And is the monument as a genre… an effective medium of commemoration?"[6] Carrier notes that the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, or the "Holocaust Monument," as he calls it, was elected to be erected on neutral space in Berlin to present its universality, but this led to further political contention about what the monument should look like to encompass as much German representation as possible.[7] By understanding the debates about the memorial prior to its erection, it becomes obvious that there was heavy political involvement from the German government in the creation of the memorial, what it would look like, and what it would represent.

The Memorial Competition

As Holocaust memorials gained more popularity in Germany, their location became increasingly relevant. Carrier traces the efforts beginning in 1989 of the activist-like group, Perspektive Berlin, to create a memorial specifically for murdered Jews.[8] By 1992, the Berlin Senate approved the site for the monument on the former ministerial gardens of the Prussian military, and in between two popular Berlin sites, the Brandenburg Gate and Leipziger Platz.[9] The *Bundestag* (German government) then launched two architectural competitions in 1995 and 1997 to create a memorial for the murdered Jews on those grounds to establish what kind of artistic form would be used.[10] When Chancellor Kohl cancelled the first competition in 1995, claiming there was no true consensus on what design had won, he was faced with accusations of political involvement.[11] For example, artist Richard Serra believed that Kohl had cancelled the competition

[6] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 99.
[7] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 104.
[8] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, 105.
[9] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 105.
[10] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 106.
[11] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 106.

to please the right-wing German Christian Democratic Union (CDU).[12] Carrier notes that the second 1997 competition was also delayed during the September 1998 elections to avoid turning it into a campaign issue, but when the coalition Social Democratic Party and Green Party won the election, political debates over the competition intensified.[13] The individual decisions throughout the competitions saw heavy debating amongst the German political parties, and as a result, Carrier highlights that the ultimate decision of what memorial was to be chosen was left in the hands of the Bundestag in June 1999.[14] The contentious discussions around the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe demonstrate the heavy involvement of politics in memory work. It is these circumstances that transition the analysis to the work of Caroline Wiedmer's research in political involvement in memory and memorials in Germany.

Caroline Alice Wiedmer, in *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France* examines the Berlin memorial competition and political influence on Germany memorials and memory. She adds to Carrier's work by addressing another layer of conflict in the memorial competition: the decision to exclusively memorialize Jews in the case of that memorial.[15] Wiedmer argues the following:

> …the memorial is to mourn the loss of a rich civilization…to mourn the Germans' loss of 'their Jews', not for the sake of the murdered Jews, but for the sake of Germans who had to contend with a fragmented, 'impoverished' postwar culture.[16]

This quote reveals yet another layer of contention surrounding the memorial that political bodies would have to address in the process of erecting the memorial. Exclusively memorializing Jewish people in Berlin despite the multiple marginalized groups including homosexuals and Roma-Sinti also who faced brutal murder during the Holocaust is politically charged in and of itself. This started a new debate about memorialization in Germany: who was to be memorialized and how.

To explain the exclusive memorialization of murdered Jewish people in Berlin, Wiedmer frames the memorial as a type of German reparation.[17] She notes that monetary reparation

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[12] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 106.
[13] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 107.
[14] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments,* 108.
[15] Caroline Alice Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France,* 140.
[16] Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory,* 140.
[17] Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory,* 140.

payments and memorialization cannot be compared as they are two separate factors, the first a foreign policy concern, and the second being an issue for internal memorial politics.[18] She furthers her thoughts on reparations and memorials by separating the two matters into how they create different national and international perceptions of the German government. She argues that reparations are understood as a duty of the German government, whereas the erection of a memorial is perceived as "a public act beyond the call of duty, an act in excess, giving Germany a positive image instead of merely cancelling out a negative one."[19] Wiedmer brings this point to a global stage by emphasizing that Germany's choices in memorializing the Holocaust and paying reparations were monitored globally, putting even more pressure on Germany to erect an appropriate memorial in Berlin. Jennifer Jordon echoes Wiedmer's discussion of the pressures that Germany faced on an international level about finding the appropriate way to address Holocaust memory in Germany in her book, *Structures of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*. Jordon argues that in understanding cities and their histories, one must acknowledge the resonance of a particular site's meaning with a larger, often international public.[20] Wiedmer, with Jordon's support, demonstrates that the different perceptions and the international pressure that arose from German reparations, whether they be monetary or memorial, provides yet another layer of political involvement in German memory of the Holocaust.

Similarly to Carrier, Wiedmer and Jordon, James E. Young, a prominent scholar in German Holocaust memory, looks at the memorial competitions in Berlin and the international pressure that the German government felt. In his book, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning,* Young argues that "memorials and museums constructed to recall the Holocaust remember events according to the hue of national ideals, the cast of political dicta."[21] He notes that memorials are designed at national and local levels in every European country, and throughout every nation's museums and memorials, "a different Holocaust is remembered," often as a result of political influence.[22] Through Young's work, he adds to the work Carrier, Wiedmer and Jordon established that all unpack layers of political influence on German memory of the Holocaust.

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[18] Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory,* 141.
[19] Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory,* 141.
[20] Jennifer A. Jordon, *Strcutures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond,* 1.
[21] James E. Young. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning,* ix.
[22] Young, *The Texture of Memory,* ix.

Young's prominence in German memory of the Holocaust shows. Many authors quote his work to support their own arguments, including Caroline Pearce. Her book, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy: Remembrance, Politics and the Dialectic of Normality* addresses the controversies in shaping Germany national memory in public sites of memory, such as museums, monuments and memorial sites.[23] To frame her analysis of national memory and what she calls 'cultural remembrance,' she notes Young's work to examine how the discourse and activities in memorial work bring the aesthetics of memory to life.[24] Young emphasizes the ever-changing view of the observer and their impact on political matters, both influencing 'collected memories.'[25] Pearce, with Young's assistance, still only scratches the surface of the deep political impact on German memory. Nonetheless, she contributes a valuable lens.

Divided Germany and Holocaust Memory

It is possible to trace the origins of political involvement in German memory of the Holocaust prior to the memorial competition in Berlin. Unlike Carrier and Wiedmer, Jan-Werner Müller's work looks at divided Germany and German Holocaust memory. Her book, *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past,* compiles chapters about various historians and political scientists who study memory matters. Historian Jeffrey Herf argues that the German political interpretation and memory of the Nazi era started in the 1930s and ends in January 1996 with the establishment of a national day of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism.[26] Herf suggests that the Allied power made it possible for anti-Nazi German memories of Nazism to arise after the war as post-war German political culture and the memory of the Holocaust rested on Allied power and multiple generations of "non- and anti-Nazi" German politicians who re-entered political life in 1945.[27] Herf's argument also brings this discussion into

[23] Caroline Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy: Remembrance Politics and the Dialectic of Normality*, 119.
[24] Pearce, *Contemporary Germany,* 119.
[25] Peace, Contemporary Germany, 119-120.
[26] Jeffrey Herf, "The Emergence of Divided Memory: Germany and the Holocaust since 1945," in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past,* 185.
[27] Herf, "The Emergence," 186.

the Cold War era in Germany. By tracing the roots of these debates in the Cold War era, Herf temporally expands upon Carrier and Wiedmer's focus on the memorial competition in Berlin.

Herf's timeline provides a rich background of the history of memory in divided Germany. His assessment on the role of West Germany demonstrates the government's political involvement in Holocaust memory, and how their ideologies had a lasting influence in the years following German reunification that led to the creation of the memorial competition. Herf looks at prominent German politicians of the Cold War Era, noting West German Kurt Schumacher's emphasis on Germans facing the Nazi past and the mass murder of Jews across Europe.[28] Herf also looks at the career of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and argues that he shaped West German policy regarding the Nazi past.[29] Herf's analysis of Schumacher and Adenauer set the stage for Theodor Heuss, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), who strongly advocated for "eloquent memory separated from politically consequential justice."[30] The role of West German politics in shaping unified Germany's memory of the Holocaust becomes increasingly obvious throughout Herf's work, and can also be seen in Carrier and Wiedmer's research. Through Schumacher, Adenauer and Huess, a trend of reparations starts to form just after the Cold War, demonstrating that the beginnings of German Holocaust memory can be tied back to the early postwar years.

Herf is not alone in his findings of West German Holocaust memory. Siobhan Kattago's *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity,* examines the 1980s and 1990s in reunified Germany.[31] To contextualize the significance of unified Germany, Kattago dedicates two chapters to respectively examine both West and East Germany. In her introduction, she notes that her work is not an attempt to establish a singular identity, but rather to analyze the various memories of the past that German intellectuals have linked to German memory.[32] She sets the tone for the different perspectives that a divided Germany took in approaching Holocaust memory, emphasizing that memory in East Germany was very restrictive – the memories of past were influenced by ideology and left room for little public debate, whereas in West Germany, the topic

[28] Herf, "The Emergence," 187.
[29] Herf, "The Emergence," 188.
[30] Herf, "The Emergence," 190.
[31] Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*, 2.
[32] Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory,* 2.

of memory was very public and highly controversial within political culture. [33] Keeping Herf's findings in the encouragement of Holocaust memory amongst West German politicians in mind, Kattago's dedicated West Germany chapter expands upon the political debate about German memory that was taking place in the 1970s and 1980s. Kattago argues that both West German politicians and historians were hesitant to publicly acknowledge the Holocaust as they were concerned about their global and national reputations. Their embracing of Holocaust memory in the 1980s demonstrates a shift away from the feelings of guilt and overall avoidance that had been prevalent in the years following the Second World War.[34] Distancing from Herf's analysis of prominent political actors, Kattago displays the ideological shifts taking place in West Germany that would influence how Germany remembered the Holocaust.

Contextualizing his work under divided Germany, Bill Niven examines how German reunification affected German memory. His book, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich,* argues that German unification in 1990 created the opportunity for a more inclusive perception of the National Socialist past in the public realm. This increased understanding amongst today's Germans of the "true extent and nature of the crimes committed during the 1933-1945 period."[35] With this, Niven agrees with Kattago's earlier findings that this increased awareness and interaction with Nazi history has led Germans to abandon their habits of self-pitying and victimizing themselves and expands upon it, arguing that this notion helped Germans place Jewish suffering over their own.[36] His findings help to further both Herf and Kattago's analyses of West Germany. Through Herf's tracing of the German roots of memory to the 1930s and Kattago's examination of the Cold War era, it becomes clear that German memory has been evolving since the beginning of the Second World War, the collapse of the Nazi regime, the division of Germany, and its reunification, all which are heavily politically charged events. Niven's expansion into present-day Germany contextualizes years of political involvement in shaping German memory.

Through his analysis of modern-day Germany, Niven looks at reparation payments. His findings are similar to Wiedmer and Jordon's, but instead of the keen focus on the influence of

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[33] Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory,* 3.
[34] Kattago, Ambiguous Memoy, 71-72.
[35] Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich*, 227.
[36] Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past,* 227.

reparations on German reputation, Niven notes that getting the government to pay out reparations proved to be quite difficult. By March 2001, German firms had paid out three point six billion marks to the reparation fund managed by "Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future," but that this money was not always provided without contention.[37] Some firms were pushed by the media who threatened to publish names of companies that previously employed forced labourers.[38] Brett Kaplan echoes Niven's re-emergence of Holocaust memory in the early 2000s, arguing that Germans were embracing a different sensibility.[39] Despite occasional contention in paying reparations, Niven argues these payments showed Germany's willingness to take on financial and moral debts to Nationalist Socialist victims in order to return to 'normal' life.[40] In the constant change surrounding reparations and what was "normal" amongst German memory and life, Niven shows Germany's desperation to move away from the past. Fortunately, this does not discourage the German government from acknowledging German responsibility to create a more inclusive world. Niven suggests that reparation payments have been influenced by international conciliation politics, but they are not driven by it.[41] The level of internationality between Niven and Wiedmer may differ, but nonetheless, they both acknowledge the role of politics and international influence both play on shaping German memory of the Holocaust.

Fitting into the ongoing theme of the politics of memory, reparations, and international pressures, Amy Sodaro adds to the discussion amongst Wiedmer, Jordon and Niven. Sodaro's book, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence*, examines the emergence of public apologies, the rise of reparations, and mechanisms that address conflicts and atrocities of the past, such as truth commissions.[42] Sodaro's argument is almost exclusively supported by the work of other scholars, referring to Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's research, that expands upon her acknowledgement of reparations. Sodaro uses their argument that the focus on the Germany's negative past that aided Germans in coming to terms with their history, turning it into a "cosmopolitan memory," that feeds a transcultural and transnational "memory imperative"

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[37] Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past,* 228.
[38] Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past,* 228.
[39] Brett Ashley Kaplan, "Concluding Remarks," in *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, 199.
[40] Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past,* 228.
[41] Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past,* 229.
[42] Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence*, 15.

that shapes how global societies remember their own violent pasts and those in other countries.[43] By incorporating the research of Levy and Sznaider, Sodaro expands upon pressures of German memory on a global stage: the world looks to Germany on how to reconcile their own complicated pasts. This uncovers more pressure on the German government to appropriately address and shape German memory.

Sodaro's book also touches upon Jeffrey Blustein's work. She echoes his discussions about the ethics of memory, human rights abuse and how they guided the recognition of victims in memory and the moral response to them.[44] In his own book, *The Moral Demands of Memory,* Blustein expands upon individual and collective pasts from social, moral, and political branches of philosophy.[45] With his philosophical background, Blustein poses metaphysical questions that evaluate the reality of how the past establishes memory, if skepticism surrounding memory can be ignored, and if memory creates a concept of the past.[46] Sodaro's selection of Blustein's work focuses on his research of political involvement in memory, to which she quotes: "'Remembering the victims of wrongdoing may be an essential part of the process of building and sustaining political structures that safeguard against a return to the wrongs of the past.'"[47] Sodaro's interactions with Blustein's work form an intellectual conversation about framing political involvement and the remembrance of victims in German memory. By casting German memory under this political framework, it reveals another layer of political involvement in guiding what is remembered in the shaping of German memory.

The 1980s Re-Examined

Political involvement in German memory addresses the meaning of German national identity. This concept of identity is political in and of itself. Mark Callaghan's *Empathetic Memorials: The Other Designs for the Berlin Holocaust Memorial,* takes the connection between national memory and political memory head on by examining Berlin in the 1980s in the memorial competition in Berlin that Carrier, Wiedmer and Young also examined. Callaghan reflects upon

[43] Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity,* 15.
[44] Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity*, 16.
[45] Jeffrey Blustein, *The Moral Demands of Memory*, 1.
[46] Blustein, *The Moral Demands,* 1.
[47] Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity,* 16.

Holocaust memorials in political memory directly, using Anna Saunders' research to examine the impact of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews and its central location in Berlin. She says that its location "'implies that the German nation should incorporate shame into its national memorial landscape, rather than constructing a national identity based on positive historical continuities."[48] Saunders' research strengthens Callaghan's argument about political memory and its centrality in Berlin. He also refers to the work of Aledia Assmann. She suggests positive references to the past incorporate ideals of future Germany were embraced, whereas the memories that carried negative connotations were overlooked and forgotten.[49] Callaghan's choice to highlight Assmann's work interestingly also looks at Berlin as a case-like study. As her work shows her nuanced understanding of memory in Berlin, she outshines Callaghan, essentially carrying his argument about political involvement in Germany. It is only appropriate that I examine her work next.

Assmann's book, *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity* introduces a memorial of a light projection of Auschwitz's *Arbeit Macht Frei* gate on the Brandenburg Gate. Horst Hoheisel, who created light projection, chose to use the Brandenburg Gate for significance as a national historical symbol, hoping that it would strengthen his memorialization attempt which is now largely forgotten.[50] Assmann uses Bernhard Giesen's conceptual lens to come to an understanding of why Hoheisel's memorial has been overlooked, in which she paraphrases Giesen's argument.[51] She states that historical experiences are understood in one of two ways: a high point of a collective self, or a shameful, overwhelming embarrassment.[52] Assmann uses this to then contextualize and support her argument that trauma and triumph suppress each another to ensure one is forgotten, despite being strongly entangled in the national memory of Germany.[53] Assmann's concepts of trauma and triumph in national identity demonstrate constructs in memory work and successful memorials in Germany. Using Hoheisel's light projection as a case study analysis, Assmann highlights one of Germany's forgotten memorials that has been ignored for the sake of Germany's self-image. This speaks to the concerns

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[48] Mark Callaghan, *Empathetic Memorials: The Other Designs for the Berlin Holocaust Memorial,* 40.
[49] Callaghan, *Empathetic Memorials,* 40.
[50] Aleida Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity*, 2.
[51] Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma,* 3.
[52] Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma,* 3.
[53] Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma,* 3.

that other authors have shared about constructing German memory for a global stage, including Wiedmer and Kattago.

Berlin and Designing Memorials

Assmann's focus on Hoheisel's memorial in Berlin brings the city back to the forefront of this analysis of the political influence on memory discourse. Irit Dekel, author of *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* also focuses on Berlin. In his introduction, he notes being inspired by Assmann's 2007 work to create a "historical index" of individuals of specific generations and how they experience history. [54] His work focuses on the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, a popular point of discussion throughout this analysis of political memory in Germany and Berlin. Dekel examines the political implications of memory through the memorial itself and how the conversations about Holocaust remembrance in Germany inspire action at the memorial in [55] In viewing the memorial as a tourist-type site, Dekel[56] Under this lens, the memorial demonstrates matters of political influence in shaping German memory. Dekel argues that the construction of a memorial dedicated to European Jewish victims of the Holocaust shows Germany's critical engagement with its past, and Germany's present political maturity and responsibility in acknowledging [57] These findings fit within Dekel's tourist lens, as well as with the findings of other scholars who studied the Berlin memorial and its political implications. Dekel's work continues to uncover and emphasize the multifaceted political interests in shaping both past and present German memory.

Another example of political involvement lies within the design of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Given the level of competition seen to build such a critical memorial, it should come as no surprise that the design would be heavily contested. In Ann Rigney's chapter titled "Scales of Postmemory: Six of Six Million" in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, she examines Peter Eisenman, the architect of the winning memorial in Berlin, and the goals of his design. To ensure inclusivity, Eisenman went against any type of political message or reference.

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[54] Irit Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin*, 9.
[55] Dekel, *Mediation,* 1.
[56] Dekel, *Mediation,* 2.
[57] Dekel, *Mediation,* 19.

Instead, Eisenman created a dynamic space that visitors could explore and interact with, going against the traditional forms of representation with an abstract form of memorial instead of figurative.[58] In fact, Eisenman denied that the memorial was meant to represent anything at all.[59] Eisenman's blatant lack of representation guides political memory in a direction of resistance that asks its visitors to draw their own conclusions from the memorial itself, although Callaghan notes the *Bundestag*'s permission to erect Eisenman's memorial was conditional upon the inclusion of an Information Centre within the memorial to contextualize it.[60] In analyzing Eisenman's intentions with his design, Rigley demonstrates the intention to form individual memory through the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, probing further inquiry to the ways in which memorials are designed.

A brief analysis of public art through Biljana Arandelovic and Caroline Pearce's separate works shows meaningful work in understanding the significance of memorial designs. Arandelovic's book, *Public Art and Urban Memorials in Berlin* naturally analyzes Berlin's memorials as public art.[61] She argues: "Art in a public space has made an increasing impact on German society since the 1980s and primarily reflected the recent Germany history and the social issues resulting from it."[62] Arandelovic believes Berlin is depoliticized, but that the city focuses on sociopolitical actions of citizens, creating security of artistic freedom in memorial designs whilst maintaining cooperation with artists and administration.[63] Applying the lens of public art to Berlin's memorials shows that even the artistic expression in Germany's memorials are political. The memorials still need government approval, which secures the government's political role in shaping German memory.

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[58] Ann Rigley, "Scales of Postmemory: Six of Six Million" in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture,* 290.
[59] Rigley, "Scales of Postmemory," 290.
[60] Callaghan, *Empatheic Memorials,* vii.
[61] Biljana Arandelovic, *Public Art and Urban Memorials in Berlin*, 34,
[62] Arandelovic, *Public Art,* 34.
[63] Arandelovic, *Public Art,* 34.

Conclusion

As conversations developed through memory research, the selected scholars drew upon both German history and German political climates to determine how Holocaust memory has been shaped in the country. Young, Carrier, Wiedmer, Assmann, Blustein, Kattago, and Niven all make contributions to this analysis of the political influence on German memory. Given the unprecedented nature of the Holocaust and the systematic genocide carried out by the Nazi regime, Germany was presented a unique, challenging situation: to face the past or hide from it. Throughout the Second World War, the Cold War, and the reunification of Germany, Germany showed resilience in demonstrating their strength as a nation as the world watched them go to battle with their own history. The German government demonstrated great control over establishing memory narratives on a national and international level as tourists come from around the world to visit Germany's memorials.

Nora's concept of memory set my analysis up to dive into the depths of the significance of German memory, and it only feels appropriate to end with more of his thoughts. His definition shows how memory and history interact with one another and the limits of each. As this paper comes to a close, it is important to note that Nora also suggests that memory is fluid: "It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting…"[64] This perspective opens memory up to the possibilities of forever, ever-shifting as new ideas and meanings of memory come to life in Germany and around the world.

The memorial competition that dominated German politics in the 1990s, the German government's reparation payments, the forgotten memorials, and the celebrated memorials all demonstrate different levels of political influence in the shaping of German memorials and German memory. The construction of various memorials, notably Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe demonstrates permanent, highly visible changes to the cityscape as a dedication to never forgetting the mistakes of the past. By creating the memorial competition, the *Bundestag* controlled what design was selected and what narrative it would present to its visitors. The political monitoring of what is remembered in Germany protects Germany's international reputation, which

[64] Nora, *Between Memory,* 8.

has undergone major reconstruction in light of Germany's struggle to redefine themselves after both the Second World War, the Cold War and German reunification.

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