

abstract The study of memory has emerged in the early 21st century as a broad interdisciplinary endeavor across the social and physical sciences. This review critically examines the wide literature and its relevance to the developing sociology of memory. It assesses as well the impact of globalization on mnemonic based practices. The concluding section considers the interplay between individual and collective memory, deeply embedded in memory studies, as it evaluates future directions and challenges.

keywords collective memory ♦ cosmopolitanism ♦ individual memory ♦ intersubjectivity
♦ mnemohistory

Introduction

In a review of Edward Shils' (1981) book *Tradition*, Lewis Coser (1982: 608) reminds us of Shils' lament that the social sciences were preoccupied by an excessive present mindedness, a state of consciousness that has 'kept scholars from recognizing the past roots of the present'. Shils' point was that the Enlightenment birthright of sociology equated tradition with ignorance, leaving little room to assess the impact of the past upon present thought. Shils was prescient in his discontent. The current wave of memory research in sociology, the broader social sciences, the physical sciences and the humanities confirms his intuition. The early 20th-century impulsion in sociology to frame the 'past in the present' began with Maurice Halbwachs' seminal research on collective memory. In the late 20th century, the works of historians Josef Yerushalmi's (1982) *Zakkor* and Pierre Nora's (1984) *Lieux de mémoire* reinvigorated scholarly research in memory as a *topos* in and of itself. Both explored the eclipse of spontaneous as well as selective forms of collective memory in addition to – and as a critique of – conventional history, its methodological techniques, narrative exposition and didactic representations of the past. These historians of memory, like the first sociologist of memory, Maurice Halbwachs, were documenting characteristics of a cultural shift: the opening once again of societal consciousness to the past *as it is remembered* as opposed to the past as an object of historical inquiry (Assmann, 1995). As a modern interdisciplinary inquiry, the study of memory

inspects the social, physical, individual/subjective, cultural, medial, political, collective and increasingly global associations with the past(s), from the multiple vistas of the present, depending on the discipline of origin which bears its impress. This offers an opportunity for a sociology ready to venture beyond its classical boundaries and accompanying theoretical inscriptions to engage themes that necessitate interdisciplinary collaboration. Indeed, memory is now an established area of scholarly interest in philosophy, comparative literature, poststructuralist psychoanalysis, social psychology, psychology, anthropology and architecture. Debates in history have been particularly pertinent in that they deal with methodological and theoretical problems poised at the intersection of collective and individual or personal memory: the substance of sociological inquiry. But, the relation of history to sociology is more profoundly reflexive and dynamic than this alone. Michel Wieviorka (2008) has argued that the point of departure for historical analysis, long associated with the nation-state, is fast becoming a societal form of contemplation, evinced by the reflexivity of new political and cultural actors, without any concessive clause to history as a dedicated expertise about the past. The emergence of a global public, the information revolution and the inflated arena of self-narrating individuals – as witnesses and victims – has reshaped contemporary historiography. Wieviorka (2008: 217) rightly argues, 'It is no longer society that is encased in history, but rather history is

now in society. History is, as never before, a stake within society.'

A particularly rich debate unfolded in journals from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, in *History and Memory*, *History and Anthropology*, *American Historical Review* and the interdisciplinary journal *Representations* (Baker, 1985; Confino, 1997; Crane, 1997; Davis and Starn, 1989; Funkenstein, 1989; Nora, 1989). More recently, we see mnemonic investigations in media and communication studies, museum studies, heritage and architecture, global studies as well as the physical and natural sciences, particularly recent efforts to associate new discoveries in brain science, linking neural physiology to culture and socialization (Markowitch, 2005, 2010). The interdisciplinary study of memory, in this broad sense, covers themes and topics as diverse as cognition to 'myth, monuments, historiography, embodied ritual and its symbolic structure of emotional intensity, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge and neuronal networks' (Erll and Nunning, 2010: 1). A cottage industry of appended nomenclature – difficult to keep up with – has emerged in Weberian ideal-type frames: terms such as 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg, 2004), 'post memory' (Hirsch, 2008), 'public memory' (Philips, 2004), 'cultural memory' (Erll and Nunning, 2010), 'embodied memory' (Connerton, 1989), 'recovered memory' (Sturken, 1997) 'visual memory' (Zelizer, 1992), and so on. Some of these have become theoretical signposts in research programs associated with war memorials, Holocaust memory, the study of generational memory, reputational studies of historic figures and the development of national commemorative practices (Lang and Lang, 1988; Lowenthal, 1985; Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz, 1991; Winter and Sivan, 1999; Young, 1993). Research in the area of memory and globalization is growing (Appadurai, 1996; Bauman, 1998; Beck and Sznaider, 2006; Conway, 2008; Gentz and Kramer, 2006; Hayes and Tombes, 2001; Huyssen, 2003; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010; Philips and Reyes, 2011). Some of this work has been influenced by Ulrich Beck's (2005, 2006) critique of methodological nationalism, the advent of modern cosmopolitanism and the latter's effects upon the mnemonic foundations of the nation-state (see Levy and Sznaider, 2002). New research on the intersection of cosmopolitanism and geography (Harvey, 2009) as well as a postcolonial critique internal to the cosmopolitan approach, which argues that a global nomenclature cannot be solely reserved for the 'privileged location of European thought' (Breckenridge et al., 2002), revealing yet another critical framework for memory studies, located in the conflict-laden past between East and West.

The recent launch of the journal *Memory Studies*, dedicated to an interdisciplinary engagement with the field, as well as numerous edited collections and overviews make available an enigmatic and wide-ranging bibliography, covering diverse theoretical and methodological questions: see, for example, Thelen (1989), Kammen (1995), Assmann (1995), Zerubavel (2003), Olick and Robbins (1998), Erll and Nunning (2010), Kansteiner (2002), Hirst and Echterhoff (2008), Whitehead (2009) and Radstone and Schwartz (2010). Noteworthy is *The Collective Memory Reader* by Olick et al. (2011). The lead editor Jeffrey Olick has been an exemplar in advancing an ambitious theoretical project for reclaiming memory studies to its sociological roots. He and his co-editors perform a canonical task of bringing together classical and contemporary interdisciplinary texts to the topic, while strategically positioning sociology within its expressed concerns. And indeed, as they rightly argue, the study of collective memory, without being referred to as such, was already evident in the seminal insights of 19th- and 20th-century sociological thought, particularly in the *problematique* enunciated in Emile Durkheim's (1974) theory of collective representations. Durkheim, the prima theorist of 'the collective' articulated at least one foundational platform for contemporary memory studies. Durkheim (1974: 23) argued: 'If representations, once they exist, continue to exist in *themselves*, without their existence being perpetually dependent upon the disposition of the neural centers, if they have the power to act directly upon each other, and to combine according to their own laws, they are then realities which, while retaining an intimate relation with their substratum, are to a certain extent independent of it.' Daniele Hervieu-Leger (2000) states that Durkheim's work on religion underscores in no uncertain terms the central role of ecclesiastical memory as a 'social fact', and the very basis for cultural normativity. Hervieu-Leger furthermore argues that the breakdown of traditional religious sentiment opened the proverbial door to rationalization – the entry into early modernity – through the deconstruction of long-held religious beliefs that were until then definatory of human consciousness. Many of these concerns, without the declarative mention of the word 'memory', were already present in Karl Mannheim's (1957) sociology of knowledge, through his investigations of generations and generational units as containers for transmitting social experiences (see Schuman and Scott [1989] on memory transference in Mannheim's work). Clearly, the field of inquiry is wide, precipitating some scholars to express skepticism as to 'terminological confusion' and 'semantic overload' (Kansteiner, 2002;

Klein, 2000). This review is limited in scope and intent, in that it focuses on issues directly pertinent to a more general sociology, and the analytical and empirical problem of memory studies within it. In the 'Future directions' section, I examine the highly socialized construction of collective memory – and challenges to it in the epoch of globalization – through a reinscription of the individual within the collective, and a recognition of the 'mnemonic moment' as a core problem of intersubjectivity.

Overview of theoretical approaches

Theories of memory exist under multiple hats. Movement between these disciplinary vernaculars, while making memory a 'travelling concept' (Bal, 2002: 24), must also come with some cautionary *provisos* in that these wellsprings are constructed with different goals in mind. While variegated sources of origin increase the intellectual weight of the field, they also create theoretical disorder (Olick and Robbins, 1998) by confusing levels of analysis through 'category mistakes' (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994). Aside from the contemporary abundance of memory-based research, another source for the current ascent is that memory has increasingly become a professional curatorial practice in the interests of nation-states, their state museums, Foundations, memorials, Truth and Reconciliation Committees, heritage-based groups and organizations, global movements, human rights forums, even highly aesthetic globalized art forms – more inspired by Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida and the force of the international art market, than Maurice Halbwachs, witnessed by the recent success of the artist Anish Kapoor's *Memory* project (Chakravorty Spivak, 2009; Lustiger Thaler, 2009). In the 'global rush to commemorate' (Williams, 2007) these practices develop through vastly different logics and audiences, than analytical work per se in the social sciences.

How the memory of collectives is sustained over time was posed by Paul Connerton, in his now classic *How Societies Remember* (1989). Connerton argued that societies recall through acts of physical embodiment. Embodiment, as cultural performance, is central to the process of memory in that physically incorporated practices are transmitted *in and as* traditions (see also Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). In a more recent work, entitled *How Modernity Forgets* (2009), Connerton explores the contrary thesis of how changes in modern society affect our ability to socially remember. Memory depends on the stability and sociability of place, as well as clearly defined social relationships, the foundations upon

which we build and share memories. Once again, the dynamics behind this dual process are the presence and/or temporal loss of culturally embodied meanings. The study of memory provides the temporal dimension often undertheorized in sociology (Jedlowski, 2001). The sociology of culture (Spillman and Conway, 2007) has perhaps been the one exception to this tendency. In the interests of theorizing historical continuity, Barry Schwartz (2008) contends that collective memory is integral to culture's meaning-making apparatus and therefore part of a meaning-conferring cultural system embedded in time, place and historical consciousness. This underscores what for Schwartz is the basic impulse for collective memory: the need to transcend and transfigure individual existence.

The closely parsed relation between individual and collective memory was at the center of Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) sociological insight, which remains largely undisputed today. Individual memory always occurs through mediated forms of group membership: or, stated differently, without group membership there is no individual memory. Both Maurice Halbwachs and the less recognized scholar of memory, art historian Aby Warburg (in Gombrich, 1970), addressed similar concerns surrounding social memory in the 1920s. Both were instrumental in detaching memory from the then prevalent phylogenetic framework, by basing it upon socialization and culture (Assmann, 1995). Jeffrey Olick (1999) offers an insightful analysis of the conceptual disorder that exists between different iterations of individual and collective memory. He underlines two distinct yet interrelated cultures of memory analysis: one focused on the aggregation of socially framed individual memories, and the other referring to collective phenomena. Olick identifies a tension in Halbwachs' work wherein separate streams of individual and collective memory are left underrelated. He argues that identifying the individual or collective focus of memory research is critical for both conceptual and methodological clarity: 'This is because two radically different concepts of culture are involved here, one that sees culture as a subjective category of meaning contained in people's minds *versus* one that sees culture as patterns of publically available symbols objectified in society' (1999: 336). These are expressed as 'collected memories' (an aggregate of individual memories) and 'collective memories' (aggregate effects which cannot be reduced to individual memories). Wulf Kansteiner (2002) using these same two categories of collected and collective memory makes the logical extension of this argument. While Halbwachs' insight that individual memory cannot be conceived outside of collective memory, the opposite is not the case.

Collective memories cannot be accessed through individual memory. Collective memory, he argues, is more dependent on the political interest and opportunities of the present. It will, eventually, through the passage of time and generational change become disembodied and reappear as 'low intensity memories' which are composed of widely shared representations and supported by political and cultural interests, till the next process of generational change unfolds and comes to fruition.

An expansion of Halbwachs' concept of collective memory is found in Jan Assmann's (2005) corrective. Assmann develops the concept *mnemohistory* as the study of how the past is remembered as opposed to the past as an object of inquiry as such. *Mnemohistory* examines diachronic and synchronic continuities and discontinuities: referring to narratological changes within the course of time, positioned against *things as they exist within a given period of time*. Assmann theorizes two mnemonic layers within collective memory: cultural memory and communicative memory. Communicative memory – synchronic memory – is distinguished by its temporal horizon. Limited in nature, it lasts around four generations. It is further distinguished by proximity to the everyday. Cultural memory – diachronic memory – functions in a diametrically opposite manner. It is marked by distance from everyday life. It has a capacity to reconstruct the past, through self-objectification, and thereby produce a normative self-image that is reflexive. Cultural memory therefore requires preservation, the archive, the canon as well as a ritualized embodiment of the commemorative act itself. It is therefore part of the way remembering, as a cultural process, is mediated across time and space, as it gathers and engenders meaning. Both comprise the realm of collective memory and thereby broaden Halbwachs' early conceptualization.

Alon Confino (2010) argues that Halbwachs' came to the conclusion that individual memory was composed of a multiplicity of pasts residing within the consciousness of the social actor. Individuals are the carriers of multiple memories based on nation, family and religion. It is group membership, however, that maintains the living link to memory, with individuals as conduits for remembering. Not everyone has such a sanguine view of Halbwachs' legacy (Gedi and Elam, 1996). Halbwachs' approach also remains problematic for critics such as Erll and Nunning (2010). Erll and Nunning (2010: 4) are wary of the residual power of the 'collective' idiom in Halbwachs' work, and prefers the term cultural memory – understood as 'accentuating the connection of memory on the one hand to socio-cultural contexts on the other'. In spite of this broader critique, Halbwachs did articulate in a later work

(1925) a conceptual space for multiplicity, and hence multiple collective memories. At any rate, the above theoretical reformulations represent but a layering of some of the theoretical issues, elicited by an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, which views as its task to explain mnemonic processes. In this next section, I concentrate on two areas of empirical research: (1) the intersection of memory, politics and reputation studies and (2) the nation-state and sites of memory.

Empirical evidence

Scholarly production in the politics of memory explores the compendium of 'available pasts' for individuals, groups, local and global movements, memory choreographers and entrepreneurs as well as national and religious institutions (Conway, 2008; Jansen, 2007). It was again Halbwachs who theorized the departure point for many of these explorations, through his notion of 'presentism' referring to the use of a highly malleable past in the service of the present. Views on presentism vary widely. Barry Schwartz (1982) and Lewis Coser (1992: 26) have indicated that Halbwachs' 'presentist' approach, pushed to its limit, would offer little sense of continuity to history, indicating the need for a more measured position wherein 'historical memory has both cumulative and presentist elements'. Hutton (1993) has argued that Halbwachs' decentering notion of presentism (the power of the present to frame/interpret the past and then redirect it as a representation of the past) anticipated the fragmentation of master narratives, presaging the postmodern turn in the social sciences and humanities. Presentism, in this regard, has been an operational as well as sensitizing concept (Blumer, 1954), for both instrumentalist and constructionist/meaning-making approaches. As Olick and Robbins (1998) argue: 'The former see memory entrepreneurship as a manipulation of the past for particular purposes, where the latter see selective memory as an inevitable consequence in that we interpret the world – including the past – on the basis of our own experience and within cultural frameworks.' The now classic statement of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) on invented tradition, in the service of political expediency and legitimacy after the Great War, is an example of the instrumentalist position (see the research on invented traditions in contemporary Israel; Yael Zerubavel, 1995). The cultural analysis of Spillman and Conway (2007) on the intersection of memory, embodiment and text is an example of the constructionist tendency. Schwartz (1996) in reference to this division stresses that both positions (instrumentalists and cultural constructionists) have more in common

than is apparent, in that they equally accept the premise of the past as a dependent variable, that is to say a product of presentist interests, as opposed to the more productive concern with degrees and variations of malleability. Scholars analyzing the malleability of the past have reframed the discussion of memory as a processual phenomenon, thereby historicizing the question of constraints as well as opportunities (Olick, 1999; Olick and Levy, 1997; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Zelizer, 1992).

Schudson (1989) has argued, in his investigation of the Watergate Affair, that regardless of the reconfiguring power of memory, the past remains durable. The re-representation of history by collective memory does not occur without resistance. History, like remembrance, is a selective process, as well as being an ideological resource for groups in the present. Iconic historical events and personalities in the history of the nation-state are examples of this phenomenon: for example, the history of slavery in the United States, the assassination of President John F Kennedy in American public consciousness, or the *je me souviens* dictum printed on car license plates in the Canadian province of Québec, recalling the loss of French sovereignty to the British, on the Plains of Abraham. Every society performs its cultural recollections in distinctive and diagnostic ways (Terdman, 1993), suggesting an array of diverse political interests, shifts in the temporal meanings of historical figures and events and their incorporation within a variety of present-oriented mnemonic strategies and techniques. These determine the valiance of constraints and opportunities in any given situation, which rely on specific readings of the past. The history of conflicts around memorials, wartime sites of destruction and sites associated with gross human rights violations, such as the Great War, the Second World War, the Holocaust, genocide, the Vietnam War, attest to the value of the processual approach outlined by Olick (1999; Olick and Levy, 1997; Olick and Robbins, 1998) and empirically confirmed in the works of Young (1993) and Lustiger Thaler and Wiedemann (in press). This suggests that historicizing memory provides a temporal *tableau* of knowledge about human agency, or what Assmann has called *mnemohistory* (the study of how the past is remembered as opposed to the past as an object of inquiry as such). It is through an examination of mnemonic discourses and agencies, over time, that we come to understand the intersubjective meanings associated with past mental frameworks, the role of historical figures, events, as well as the mnemonic materiality and cultural lives of artifacts, now the common coin of debate in memorial museums (on conflicts surrounding memorial museums, see Appadurai, 1986; Crane, 2000; Lustiger

Thaler, 2008; Winter, 2006).

The study of historical figures has been a strong focus in memory research, certainly in the United States (see Larson and Lizardo [2007] on Che Guevara). Barry Schwartz (1997), an early and central contributor to the memory literature in sociology, has looked at commemorative symbolism in the African American community through which Lincoln was transformed from a conservative in the Jim Crow era to the personification of racial justice. Commemorative practice has the power to transcend 'the complexities of actual history'. Quoting the philosopher Susanne K Langer (1957: 133), Schwartz states that the commemorative impulse resides in the power of 'formulating experience, and presenting it objectively for contemplation' (1997: 473). He cautions, however, against the reduction of social or collective memory to a politics of memory. Schwartz insists that the temporal essence of memory is associated with how the past is woven into an ongoing process of change. Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) examine the mnemonic associations surrounding the Vietnam War Memorial. They look at processes through which meaning and culture are produced as a backdrop for expressing dissenting views and their validation in public consciousness. The memorial has emerged as a narratological search for the multiple meanings of the war. For Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, efforts to memorialize a difficult history calls into question Durkheim's position that moral unity is the penultimate goal of commemoration. For Marita Sturken (1991) the Vietnam War Memorial is indicative of two contesting ethics in conflict, played out within the memorial itself; one an imperialist masculine representation of the soldier, the other a discourse of remembrance of the veterans and their families. The memorial therefore legitimates two mnemonic narratives, as they 'attempt to conceal and to offer themselves as the primary narrative, while they provide a screen for projections of a multitude of memories and individual interpretations'.

War memorials have been a rich subject of memory research (Evans and Lunn, 1997; Mayo, 1988; Mosse, 1986). Winter (2006) argues that modern warfare has created the conditions wherein the historian or social scientist is no longer the sole actor determining representation. Victims narrate themselves into *mnemohistory*, recounting personal stories at the crossroads of powerful collective representations. These personal recollections are captured in witness genres, through video and audio-based testimony (Holocaust-based testimonies as well as the Latin American tradition of *testimonia* have been exemplars of this) and memoir (Friedlander, 1993; Hartman, 1993; Hirsch, 2008;

Langer, 1991). The cultural historian and critic Andreas Huyssen (2003) argues that much of his own thinking about memory is driven by skepticism as to the overstated role of victim trauma in the memory literature. Huyssen (2003: 8) argues: 'too much of the contemporary memory discourse focuses on the personal – on testimony, memoir, subjectivity, traumatic memory – either in poststructuralist psychoanalytic perspectives or in attempts to shore-up a therapeutic popular sense of the authentic and experiential'. Huyssen, however, ignores how subjective invocations of memory – through the continuity and discontinuity of historical processes, as well as the experiential shaping of the past endemic to generational transformation – create novel contexts for empathy, sympathy, intuition and intentionality, all critical components of an intersubjective world. The work of cartoonist Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* as second-generation Holocaust memory is a case in point, in which antagonists (Nazis) and protagonists (Jews) are imagined as cats and mice, and narrated within a genre from Spiegelman's youth, the golden age of the comic book. Lastly, survivor testimony, now part of the canonical archive, deposits unique individual traces within broad historical and mnemonic processes, and represents in many cases the sole counterpoint to the overt collectivization of events, wherein individual memory becomes subsumed within the politics and identity concerns of collective memory (Lustiger Thaler, 2008, 2009).

In a consideration of the generational transference of mnemonic knowledge within feminism, Luisa Passerini advances the discussion by invoking the othered voice and its relation to memory, through an appeal to an intersubjectivity that is both articulated and fragmented in one and the same moment. She argues for 'sending a message which is neither authoritarian nor authoritative but rather suspended, incomplete – the opposite of the message of the veteran or the survivor. Not: you who have not lived that experience cannot understand – unless you listen to me, but: I cannot understand my experience unless you take it up and propose your meaning for it' (Passerini, 2000; see also Passerini, 2007). This returns us to the centrality of the individual voice as a critical interpreter/interlocutor within an intersubjective/intergenerational field, and not as a mere proxy for the veteran or survivor, nor as a surrogate for a 'therapeutic popular sense of the authentic and experiential', but a separate field of ongoing meaning-making about the past in the present. Androff (2008) has shown how the individual voice within the political sphere of reconciliation, taking place before Truth and Reconciliation Committees (TRCs), stands as a stark reminder of the difficult

memories of the aggrieved, which these Committees cannot fully share, and indeed presage a growing concern about the effectiveness of TRCs up against the predicament of 'pardoning the unpardonable' (Derrida and Wieviorka, 2001).

The conflict-laden process inherent to the transference of memory has been examined by Ducharme and Fine (1995) in an investigation of negative sources for societal cohesion. The authors examine how the commemoration of negative events and disreputable reputations, in this case the treason narrative of Benedict Arnold, contributes to American social solidarity. Schudson's (1989) study of the Watergate Affair in American memory documents multiple versions of the scandal in the public's collective memory. Zelizer (1992) examines the Kennedy assassination in American consciousness, through the lens of the cultural authority of the media as an exemplar of mnemonic management. Vinitzky-Seroussi (2010) examines the fragmented process of commemorating difficult pasts that hold little collective resolution as in the commemorative date of the Yitzak Rabin assassination. The author brings to the Israeli case what Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) and Sturken (1997) have similarly brought to an understanding of the mnemonic navigation of difficult pasts in the USA. A particularly astute critic of memorials, James Young (2000), in his capacity as an appointed member of the *Findungskommission* for the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, has argued whether the then intended site in the *Potsdamer Platz* would not so much mark the memory of the murders, as bury it altogether. For Young, the value of the German national debate around the Memorial brings to the fore the labyrinthine complexity of historical amnesia, regarding the Holocaust, within the context of the current German nation-state.

Memory and the nation-state are closely articulated and represent a baseline for thinking through the problem of collective remembrance. Gillis (1994), in an excellent edited collection on commemoration and the nation-state, brings together writers such as John Bodner, David Lowenthal, Yael Zerubavel, Claudia Koonz and others. In his Introduction, Gillis argues that the development of memory, commemorative practices and mnemonic techniques, across a wide berth of nations, were fundamental to the rebuilding of Western European national identities. One can also argue the accompanying thesis, that the memory boom unleashed in 1989, particularly in *Mittleeuropa* contributed to the complexities of currently unresolved and competing national identities. The problem of memory and the nation-state was perhaps most definitively posed by Pierre Nora (1984) in his magisterial statement on French memory in his *Lieux de mémoire*

series. For Nora, the *milieux de mémoire* – as a form of naturalized collective memory – has become self-consciously externalized as a site, *a lieu*, which has since expired. Memory is now contained in conscious preservationist techniques: national heritage sites, the canonical archive, museum and speeches. Memory as living experience has been overcome by the professionalization of the past, with history as its authoritative voice. Nora has influenced a vast array of comparative international research on sites of memory. His work has been useful in understanding 19th-century identity politics, particularly in Europe and the rise of contemporary ethnic identity claims (see Isnenghi [2010] for the application of the *Lieux de mémoire* for the Italian case; Jacques Le Rider [2010] for the case of *Mittleuropa*; and Hebel [2010] for the American case). For Nora, what dissipates is spontaneous memory – the lived experience of a relationship to the past – crowded out by preservationist representations: recalling Halbwachs' chilling image of history as a crowded cemetery, with room constantly made vacant for new tombstones (quoted in Crane, 1997). In spite of the important critique of history offered by Nora, *Lieux de mémoire* also underlines a self-conscious conservative valorization of a nation-state in crisis. Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* inevitably emerges as a melancholic narrative for French memory and identity. As Pim den Boer (2010: 21) rightly argues, 'Most *Lieux de mémoire* were primarily part of the identity politics of the French nation and functioned to imprint the key notions of national history on the *outillage mental* (set of mental tools) of French citizens'. Indeed, it was the prospect of future European integration that spurred Nora to begin the project of creating a mnemonic inventory. The study of memory, as the empirical research demonstrates, allows us to view the malleability of identities and their possible iterations. Debates in the sociology of memory, its cultural constraints and opportunities, are empirical examples of this broader question. Olick and Levy (1997) have made the case that the memory of the Holocaust constrained and limited political claim-making in the Federal Republic of Germany. While certainly this has been true for a portion of the German postwar political experience, the opposite thesis presents itself as well. Brian Conway (2008), in an examination of the case of Bloody Sunday in Ireland, is more circumspect as to the weight of past constraints in highly politicized contexts. In the Bloody Sunday case, Conway argues that it was the political pragmatism of the times, and its selective drawing upon the past, which trumped constraints of the past and the Republican memories of that terrible day. Other assessments of the German case focus less on strategic constraints within political

society, expressed at the national level, and examine mnemonic divisions on the local and regional levels. These authors (Lustiger Thaler and Wiedemann, in press: 47) focus on the gaming of constraints within German civil society, wherein successful efforts were made by right-wing forces to memorialize 'the names of the fallen or missing German soldiers, women who assisted the German "defence forces", Red Cross workers, victims of Allied air-strikes as well as those who were part of the forced relocation campaign'. Indeed, these amnesiac-like proclivities in German civil society impeded the funding and development of memorials at sites of destruction – associated with former concentration camps – to the victims of the Holocaust.

As mentioned earlier, in reference to Lewis Coser and Barry Schwartz's correctives, memory is a political, cultural and social phenomenon produced by dynamics in the present – political pragmatism – as well as selective memory constructs from the past(s). These carry both constraints *and* enablers, and are deeply tied to processes, unfolding differentially, dependent on time, place and political/cultural context. Memory, in this sense, remains an open inquiry as to which remembrances are being accessed for use in the present, particularly within a global context. Research questions abound. Can there be something like a universalist memory which escapes Western or Eastern reductionism, a global ethical space for successful recognition and forgiveness (Margalit, 2002: 208)? And, if so, which life experiences are being recognized and retrieved? These categories themselves have become reanimated as a result of the differentiated effects of uneven global processes, challenges to both democratic and despotic systems, weaker systems of hegemony, growing multi-polarity, new geographies of trade and a growing public 'social distrust' surrounding weakened sovereign states. From the standpoint of a global perspective, particularly in contemporary post-conflict societies (Africa, Latin America), one can speak of 'too much memory', or alternatively not enough. Certainly, most would agree that we are in the throes of several competing globalizations underscoring highly differentiated spatial, economic, cultural and personal subject positions and locations. The intersection of memory and the cosmopolite heralds a new research field in the conflict-laden globalization of memory (Beck, 2006). This intersection has historical precedents. Karl Jaspers' insights regarding the Axial Age, 800–200 BCE (Armstrong, 2006), characterized by transregional cultural transformation and hybridity, brings our current moment into focus. Eric Voegelin (see Price and Von Lochner, 2000) has similarly called the Axial Age the 'Great Leap of Being' precipitated by a shift from societal to

individual values and freedoms (see also Sheldon Pollack's [2006] discussion of Sanskrit cosmopolitanism and the much later ascent of Latin in Europe, which radically changed local, regional, national and international vernaculars, culture and mnemonic processes). These earlier non-Western indices have a sobering effect on the European problematic of modernity and its 'universal' quality, as we move forward in yet a new era of cosmopolitan globalization(s) between East and West (Dudden, 2008; Gallicchio, 2007; Kwon, 2008; Nederveen Pieterse, 2006; Norindr, 1996; Rozman, 2004). In a critical assessment of cosmopolitanism, Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2007) has argued, 'there is no cosmopolitanism without access to the collective memory of others. A cosmopolitanism that is informed from one part of the world only, that monopolizes the world in a single language such as Human Rights or a single cultural system, is not cosmopolitan but hegemony.'

Future directions: globalization, intersubjectivity and collective memory

It is at precisely this juncture that we see future directions for memory research within a global context. Allan Megill (2007) has identified an interesting conduit linking memory to the increasingly insecure identities of the nation-state and the rise of individualism. Relying on Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of 'imagined communities', he argues the converse of Halbwachs' *dictum* – which intimates that identities create collective memory. Megill's (2007) point is that in a period of an increasing non-fixity of identity, memory emerges as a practice that constitutes identities, rather than being constituted by it. Perhaps more germane, he addresses the tension between history and memory by reframing the relationship of individual to collective memory through the problem of subjectivity. Megill (2007: 196) states, 'far from being history's raw material, memory is an "other" that haunts history. It is thus by definition subjective; it may also be irrational and inconsistent.' Indeed, one can make the argument that what Megill identifies as subjective is more accurately intersubjective, insofar as subjectivity emerges from intersubjective fields, which frame our cultural experiences. Memory as such occupies two distinct horizons: the analytical and the empirical. First, it is an analytical concept, in that it is immersed at the very core of social transformation and the constitution of self, abetted by the cultural capacity to produce new knowledge about differentiation and conflict, as it separates itself from the positivist

problematic of empirical history, and develops intersubjective epistemologies and imaginaries for receiving history as it is remembered. As an empirical concept, the closely parsed relationship of individual subjectivity, intersubjectivity and 'the collective memory' – mediated by power differentials, politics and cultural specificity – underscores innovative research questions pertaining to the mobile meaning(s) of the past in the context of the present.

This begs a broader issue, in terms of the analytical component alluded to above and how it critically addresses the oversocialized understanding of collective memory, and the abstracted personhood it tables. Let us turn for a moment to the insight of the moral philosopher Wilfried Sellars' (1977) and his notion of the 'we-intention'. For Sellars the 'we-intention' underscores a process of historical narration that poses the question: 'who are we, how did we come to be what we are, and what might we become', rather than an answer to the question, 'what rules should dictate my actions' (Sellars, 1989). The 'we-intention' offers a useful critique of Durkheim's notion of solidarity. The latter carries within it the 'we' locution – 'as one of us' – but dramatically understates the 'they' accusation, which defines one as not belonging. The work of Luisa Passerini (2000, 2007) on the recognition of shared or shareable narratives (shared referring to the past and shareable referring to the proleptic character of memory to be future oriented) offers not only a way to think about globalized applications of local or national memories, but also a way forward in the individual/collective dilemma of 'memory as exclusion' posed by Sellars. Shareable narratives reintroduce the 'remembering individual' into a state of tension with the narrative of collective memory, as the dialectic of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are mapped onto cultural and political memory through the transference of generational knowledge. What can be shared, narrated and critically renarrated (shareable) emerges as an empirical question (see Armstrong [2002] on the gay and lesbian movements and their variegated remembrances in differing spatially located communities regarding selfhood). It potentially captures multiple individualized memories of 'the other' in conflict with the collective representation. Passerini gives an example worth briefly mentioning. She cites the work of Shalid Amin (1995) on the Chauri Chaura confrontations between police and peasants in 1922, wherein the peasants resorted to violence in the name of Ghandi, forcing Ghandi to call off the Noncooperation movement in order to restore non-violence. Amin challenges both the colonial version of the event, as well as the commonly held narrative of the Great Freedom Struggle in postcolonial

memory by introducing the internal multiplicity of memory; as it highlights difficult features of conflict (ongoing today with tremendous global and regional impacts and consequences) by internally differentiated memories of collective action among Muslims, as well as the externally differentiated intersubjective relations between Muslim and Hindu.

Most insightfully, Passerini (2000) suggests that individual memories can have different destinies: 'It can become a weapon within a collective identity, or be subjected to a long elaboration, moving towards a re-definition of the terms, individual and collective.' Passerini's intuition exposes the internal contradictions of collective memory particularly in regard to how the socialized 'we' abstracts individual memory in the construction of powerful collective representations. Wilfrid Sellers' point is confirmed by Michel Foucault's admonition that the only alternative to a hyper-socialized society is in making the future formation of a diversified 'we', possible by elaborating the question (Rabinow, 1984: 385). Alain Touraine (2010) makes a similar point, but from the perspective of systems and subjects. Touraine argues that subjects are endowed with universal rights, not systems, highlighting a wellspring for articulating global concerns about values. Individuals, he argues, are 'the ultimate warrants of successful societies, characterized by a high degree of free participation in public life' (2010: 14). Located in the context of memory studies, this culturally embedded sense of self – the quest for freedom and social individuation as intrinsic values – rests on the dynamics and outcomes of multiple intersubjective relations and their concealed/embedded sets of associations within nations-states, societies and collective memories. This layered multiplicity of mnemonic sources requires an immanent critique of the dualism inherent to the individual and collective dichotomy, through the elaboration of a critical third space of mnemonic activity, an intersubjective site for remembering within the cauldron of collective memory (see Ogden's [1997: 30] discussion of an 'intersubjective analytical third' in poststructural psychoanalysis; see also Winnicott [1969] for a discussion of a 'third area of experiencing'). Applied to sociological inquiry, this highlights the complex interplay of the 'individual and collective *qua* individual and collective' in constituting this third space of experiencing (see Ogden, 1997: 30) and mnemonic activity in the face of ongoing intersubjective relations over time, their cultural iterations, identities, issues of power and conflict, for example; between individuals with more or less cohesive ideological leanings within a single generational cohort and highly differentiated subject positions within

that same generational cohort, regarding remembrances and meanings assigned to a shared, if not sharable past. Memory studies, through thick description, expose the deeply rooted pillars of the classic dualistic construct in sociology. In contrast to the latter, is the possibility of thinking through a theory of memory which examines intersubjective mnemonic fault-lines, relations of fixity and non-fixity to an ascribed past, and their local, regional and global forms of containment, within what we today understand as collective memory.

As mentioned earlier, memory studies replay the 19th-century sociological impulse to privilege the collective over the individual, based on the immanent critique of methodological individualism. Two influential theories in the 20th century, reviewed earlier in this article, have similar mnemonic logics: Maurice Halbwachs' transitional category of 'autobiographical memory' and Jan Assmann's similarly transitional notion of 'communicative memory'. They are transitional in the sense that both are destined to be social or cultural artifices. Memory studies begin with the 'I' and very quickly progresses to the normative 'we'. Our current period of globalization makes many of these premises controversial, as we witness a deep transformation of the nation-state and sovereignty, accelerating specificity, reflexivity and particularism, all indicators of clusters of intersubjective relations challenging declining forms of social solidarity and their associated mnemonic representations. Globalization has in this sense decentered individual and collective texts and practices, as memories become ever more exposed and frictional. The sociology of memory, from the legacy of Maurice Halbwachs onwards, may indeed discover its best efforts to be less draped in the opposition between the aggregation of individual mnemonic practices, on the one hand, and reified mnemonic representations on the other, but rather in a critical re-evaluation of the subjective and intersubjective encapsulated in the memory of the collective. A repositioning of the individual and collective dichotomy may prove to be a useful direction for a critical sociology of memory cognizant of the global/local heterogeneity in which we live, and the shifting paradigms within which we labor. As the philosopher Richard Rorty (1989) has elegantly reasoned in an assessment of a Platonic maxim, one that has likely been lost to memory itself: 'what is most important to each of us is what we have in common with others: that the springs of private fulfillment and human solidarity are the same'.

Annotated further reading

- Connerton P (2009) *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
This book explores the concept of forgetting. The main thesis of the book is that forgetting is characteristic of modern capitalist societies. Cities have become so large that they appear unmemorable. In addition, consumerism has been disconnected from the labor process, creating a gap in how we share our life memories.
- Coser L (ed.) (1992) *Maurice Halbwachs: On Collective Memory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Lewis Coser, in a widely distributed and authoritative volume, examines the seminal contributions of Maurice Halbwachs. This was the first comprehensive exposé of Halbwachs' work in the English language. Coser underscores Halbwachs' central thesis, which remains powerful today: that human memory can only function within a collective context and evoked by accounts of significant past events by individuals, groups and collectives.
- Hirst W (ed.) (2008) Collective memory and collective identity. *Social Research* 77(1).
This issue surveys a broad collection of the foremost scholars on the subject of collective memory. Jeffrey Olick examines the problems of cultural transmission in Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* to Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory to Maurice Halbwachs' grappling with collective memory; Aleida Assmann looks at the relationship between autobiographical and collective memory. She makes an important distinction between informal and official memory. Assmann argues that changes have occurred in the memory-based literature in the past years: 'characterized by the move from monumental to self-critical narratives and from isolationist narratives to those that connect to others in a transnational and global perspectives'; William Hirst and Gerald Echteroff examine the social psychological processes of the transference of memory and the convergence of individual memories in relation to the collective expressions of memory. Many other useful contributions are included in the dedicated issue.
- Margalit A (2002) *The Ethics of Memory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Avishai Margalit addresses complex confrontations within memory in terms of ethical and moral memory. He divides human relations in terms of thick (family, country-men and -women, friends) and thin relations (relations we keep with remote others, the rest of humanity). He makes an argument that the proper place of memory is in the 'thin' relations of ethics, not morality. Moral memory is reserved for gross human rights violations such as genocide. Margalit argues that humanity cannot sustain, at present, a community of memory.
- Passerini L (2007) *Memory and Utopia: The Primacy of Inter-subjectivity*. London: Equinox.
Luisa Passerini's book examines the conflicted memory and history of women within the modern European context. Important issues investigated range from the relation of the gendered past to the present; feminist theory and the new social movements; the changing nature of European identity and memory; and the more inclusive environment that has emerged for women since 1968. For Passerini, the emergence of women as subjects is based on the growing intersubjectivity of human relations generally.
- Schwartz B (2008) *Abraham Lincoln in the Post Heroic Era: History and Memory in the Late 20th Century*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Barry Schwartz documents the mnemonic decline of Abraham Lincoln in the post-heroic era. Through gathering an enormous array of sources, Schwartz associates the decline of the memory of heroic figures as concomitant with the cultural changes occurring in America in the decades following the Second World War; the lessening of traditional patriotism associated with the Vietnam War; the recognition of the plight of minorities; and, a general disenchantment with the American state. The cultural diversification of America made it difficult for the broader and more inclusive category of Americans to identify with singular heroic figures.
- Wieviorka M (2008) *Neuf leçons de sociologie*. Paris: Robert Laffond.
This is a general book on modern sociology with an excellent chapter (Ch. 6, 'History, nation and society') on memory and history. Wieviorka argues, that the interpellation between history and society has fundamentally changed. As history becomes more reflexive, it enters a process of separation from its founding theme, the nation-state. History is becoming a practice which is more and more confronted and implicated in the diverse collective and personal identities that the nation-state has repressed. This transformation emerges, through the ascent of memory. Historians are in this regard themselves part of a process of social and cultural fragmentation, and the steady progress of individualism.
- Zerubavel E (2003) *Time Maps*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Eviatar Zerubavel offers an original and innovative cognitive approach to how history takes shape in the annals of collective memory. Zerubavel examines the structure of collective memory by examining cognitive patterns used to organize the past, mental strategies to bring lucidity and logic to narratives of the past, as well investigating the social grammar of memory that mediates conflicting understandings of the past.

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résumé L'étude de la mémoire s'impose au début du XXI^{ème} siècle comme un courant interdisciplinaire entre les sciences sociales et les sciences physiques. Cet essai critique examine l'étendue de la littérature et sa pertinence en rapport avec la sociologie de la mémoire. Il évalue aussi les effets de la globalisation sur les pratiques à caractère mnémonique. La conclusion se penche sur l'interaction entre la mémoire collective et la mémoire individuelle, solidement ancrée dans les études de la mémoire, tout en examinant les perspectives et les défis de l'avenir.

mots-clés inter-subjectivité ♦ mémoire collective ♦ mémoire individuelle ♦ mnémo-histoire ♦ sens cosmopolitek

resumen El estudio de la memoria se ha convertido en el siglo 21 en un esfuerzo interdisciplinario amplio de las ciencias sociales y físicas. En este artículo se analiza críticamente la literatura en esta área y su importancia para el desarrollo de la sociología de la memoria. Se evalúa también el impacto de la globalización sobre las prácticas basadas en los códigos mnemotécnicos basados. La conclusión considera la interacción entre la memoria individual y colectiva, profundamente arraigada en los estudios de la memoria, ya que evalúa las tendencias futuras y los retos.

palabras clave cosmopolitanismo ♦ intersubjetividad ♦ la memoria colectiva ♦ la memoria individual ♦ mnemohistory