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Bringing Habermas to Memory Studies

Abstract: In this paper, we attempt to show the fruitfulness of the theory of communicative action for memory studies. Specifically, we intend to demonstrate that concepts characteristic of the discipline, such as "history," "memory," and "dialogue," reflect three types of universal validity claims: "memory" formulates claims to authenticity, "history" formulates claims to truth, and "dialogue" formulates claims to rightness. Thus, it is possible to introduce a seminal Habermasian notion of rationality that rests on validity claims. This notion can serve to integrate, enrich, and identify blind spots in memory studies. Our purpose is to demonstrate the relevance of collective memory to social cohesion (cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization) and the public sphere (its development and atrophy, rationalization, and colonization).

Keywords: memory studies, Habermas, critical theory, new museology, rationality, public sphere, politics of the past, European memory.

In this paper, we propose a theoretical extension (Snow, Morrill, Anderson 2003) of Jürgen Habermas' theory into memory studies as a way of reinvigorating and mainstreaming this "non-paradigmatic, transdisciplinary and centerless field" (Olick and Robbins 1998). Given its breadth and dynamic character, we do not intend to demonstrate the fruitfulness of the theory of communicative action as such. Rather, we focus on its most fundamental concept: the public sphere constituted by rational communication that is free of distortions (see Maślanka 2011: 26).

The context for our theorizing is the process of transition occurring within the remembrance of the Second World War, an event that remains critical to all European societies (see Alexander 2003; for Poland: Kwiatkowski, Nijakowski, Szacka 2010; for Germany: Rüsen 2001). Communicative memory regarding this event, transmitted in face-to-face encounters (see Filipkowski 2010), has been transformed into cultural memory that is embedded in cultural artifacts (Assmann 1992).

Habermas and Memory

Although Habermas has been an active participant, if not an instigator, in most of the important historical debates in Germany and, by extension, in Europe (Habermas

1989a, 1989b, 2001, 2004, 2008, Maier 1988), his theory has not been applied consistently to memory studies. Confining his analyses of memory to polemical interventions (e.g., Habermas 1989a, 1989b, 2001, 2004, 2008) rather than developing self-contained and fully-fledged theoretical contributions, Habermas has not exhausted the full potential of his own perspective. One underlying reason for this neglect might be that from the beginning, he has remained skeptical of the claim that memory, tradition, myth, and culture should be the foundational elements of modern nations.

For instance, inaugurating *Historikerstreit*, Habermas argued against German historians who lamented the loss of history (*Verlust der Geschichte*) but in fact attempted to instill national, if not nationalistic, myths. He associated memories with conventional forms of national identity, which should be subjected to public rational debate and, consequently, replaced with postconventional identity based on "constitutional patriotism," which justifies rational, universalistic principles of morality and democracy (Habermas 1989a, see Maier 1988: 58–60, 161). For Habermas, "the public contestation of the past" takes precedence over memories themselves; he emphasizes "renegotiation in an open public sphere" over a "particular view of the past." Although Habermas recognizes that "bloodless" constitutional patriotism needs "motivational power," which is found not in everyday politics but rather in common memories, he claims that traditions are always double-edged; we must be critical in choosing them to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust will always be central among them (Mueller 2006: 286–287).

It is truly striking that the question of memory finds a place only in Habermas' political commentaries and civic engagement, but remembrance as such is excluded from his theoretical focus. Moreover, the potential value of the theoretical extension of Habermas' theory to memory studies has not yet been recognized by other authors. This omission becomes even more surprising given that the theory of communicative action has been employed in a wide range of areas; in addition to critical theory, philosophy, sociology, and law, it has been applied to theology, gender studies, management, aesthetics, pedagogy, bioethics, and health studies (Johnson 2004; Douglas 2004; Ginev 2003; Hudson 2004; Scambler 2001; Sitton 2003; Spracklen 2009; Fleming 1997; Junker-Kenny 2011).

Rationality, Social Cohesion, and the Public Sphere

One of the most conspicuous features of Habermas' theory is its normativeness. As a successor of the first generation of the Frankfurt School, he developed and redefined critical theory, grounding it not in Marxist economic or political analyses but in the very nature of human communication: "Social theory need no longer ascertain the normative contents of bourgeois culture, of art and of philosophical thought, in an indirect way, that is, by way of a critique of ideology." Instead, social theory refers to "the use of language oriented to reaching understanding" (Habermas 1987: 397). Habermas (1987: 86) relates communication to social cohesion ("Language fulfills functions of reaching understanding, coordinating actions, and socializing individu-

als; it thereby becomes a medium through which cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization take place.") and rationality ("Linguistic communication that aims at mutual understanding—and not merely at reciprocal influence—satisfies the presuppositions for rational utterances or for the rationality of speaking and acting subjects"). In this view, rationality is "a disposition of speaking and acting subjects that is expressed in modes of behavior for which there are good reasons or grounds" (Habermas 1984: 22). Each act of communication entails validity claims, which "could be criticized and defended with reason" and "aim at rationally motivated consensus and point to criticism or grounding" (1987: 31). There are three types of such claims:

(a) claims to propositional truth (reference to the objective world);
(b) claims to rightness (reference to the normative context, or the social world);
(c) claims to authenticity or sincerity (reference to human subjectivity, or the subjective world).

If these claims are realized in a given act of communication, the act of communication is rational. Rational acts of communication, in turn, bring about social cohesion and the emergence of the public sphere. If acts of communication serve strategic, particular goals rather than truth, social norms, and authenticity, trust and, hence, the public sphere erode (Maślanka 2011: 95–104).

The notion of the public sphere is another one of Habermas' signature concepts. Reflecting on his early analysis of *Öffentlichkeit* (from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* 1991 [1962]), Habermas reformulated his early definition in the following way: "The public sphere consists of an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private sectors of the lifeworld and functional systems, on the other hand" (Habermas 1996: 373). As Andreas Koller rightly argues (2010: 263), this notion falls into a neutral notion of the public sphere ("the physical and virtual sphere and institutional setting of communication open to strangers") and the ideal-type notion of the communicative public sphere, conceived as the process of rational communication. The former is a necessary condition of the emergence of the latter because the capacity for rational communication cannot be realized unless there is a free space between the state and the private. In both cases, the public sphere is constituted by the media as well as by face-to-face encounters and organized gatherings (Gerhards and Neidhardt 1991).

Rationality

The lenses of communicative action theory draw our attention to collective memory as communicated through face-to-face interactions, organized gatherings, and the media, including the press, radio, film, television, and the Internet (see also Assmann 2012, Baer 2001, Borso & Gerd 2001, Den Boer 2008, Ebbrecht 2011, Latouche 2009, Le Rider 2008, Winter 2008, Young 2008; Erll 2008; Zierold 2008; Garde-Hansen 2011). From a Habermasian perspective, by analyzing acts of communication articulated through interactions and the media, we can consider the r a t i o n a l i t y of c o l l e c t i v e m e m o r y (see Maślanka 2011: 92). This approach may open a new

vista for memory studies, in which the notion of rationality is not employed despite that memory studies employ the notion of "claims" (Megill 1998, Olick & Levy 1997), "claims to memory" (Reinhard 2008), "memory claims" (see Connerton 1989: 22–23), and "truth claims" (Irwin-Zarecka 2007: 145–160). Yet, even in the latter case, they are not related to the Habermasian framework of communicative rationality. The main reason for this general lack of concern for rationality in memory studies is analogous to a lack of concern for truth: "Among many social scientists today, it is not altogether fashionable to speak of 'truth.' The underlying theme, after all, in so much of inquiry is that of construction—of facts, ideas, images, and values" (Irwin-Zarecka 2007: 145). Nevertheless, if Habermas is right, all acts of communication referring to the past imply validity claims. Indeed, on closer inspection, all three types of validity claims are present in memory studies, though under different names.

Memory. Seen through the lenses of Habermasian theory, the notion of "memory," upon which memory studies are founded (see Nora 1989, Hutton 1993, Ricoeur 2006, Szacka 2006), expresses the claim to sincerity and authenticity. An underlying insight, shared by many scholars since Halbwachs, is that memory—as opposed to "history"—is inextricably bound to a group (see Megill 1998). This meaning can also be addressed by the notion of "myth" (Stråth 2000). Aleida Assmann (1999) articulated this insight by coining the term "functional memory" (*Funktionsgedächtnis*), which is typically selective and oriented toward the future and establishes group identity. In Polish memory studies, the same meaning was addressed by Jerzy Szacki (2011) in his notion of "tradition," understood as the process of the social construction of the past.

History. In memory studies, a counter-concept to "memory," which can also be traced to Halbwachs, is "history" (see Nora 1989, Hutton 1993, Ricoeur 2006, Szacka 2006). From a Habermasian perspective, history represents a claim to the truth and to a description of *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. It is in this context that Truth Committees emerge, providing space for "the healing power of knowing the truth" (Margalit 2009: 5). This idea can also be captured by Aleida Assmann's notion of "storage memory" (*Speichergedächtnis*), which refers to multiple, often contradictory, images of the past (i.e., variants of functional memory) and constitutes what can be called meta-memory, the memory of other memories, as represented by historical sciences (Assmann 1999). In a similar vein, Jerzy Szacki (2011) used the term "heritage" to include all past events and phenomena that can be reconstructed by science.

Normativeness. The bulk of the memory studies scholarship is descriptive, as demonstrated by a growing body of literature on conflicts between memories (Chaumont 1997, Crivello 2006, Dolff-Bonekämper 2008, Roudometof 2002, Petrisch 2010). However, memory scholars also articulate normative insights, claiming, for instance, that memory should be open to negotiation, criticizing "abuses of memory" and coerciveness, or calling for forgiveness (see Assmann 2010, Margalit 2009, Ricoeur 2011). In Habermasian terms, such claims represent the claim to rightness. They are framed by such concepts as museum-agora (Cameron 1972), or "dialogic remembering," which was coined by Aleida Assmann (2010: 19, 17):

Dialogic memory is still more of a project than a reality and is best exemplified by its absence. […] As a rule, national memories are not dialogic but monologic. They are constructed in such

a way that they are identity-enhancing and self-celebrating; their main function is generally to 'enhance and celebrate' a positive collective self-image. National memories are self-serving and therein closely aligned to national myths, which Peter Sloterdijk has appropriately termed modes of 'self-hypnosis.'

The theory of communicative action allows us to integrate and deepen the insights of memory studies and to identify the blind spots.

1. **Integration**. "Memory," "history," and "dialogue" rest on universal validity claims. These concepts imply the notion of rationality simultaneously understood as satisfying claims and being capable of supporting claims with reasons. A Habermasian perspective allows us to integrate these concepts into one framework. Whereas current memory studies focus mostly on distinctions and dichotomies ("history" versus "memory," "functional memory" versus "storage memory," "heritage/science" versus "tradition," "dialogical memory" versus "monological memory"), Habermas considers all three claims at once. Hence, we can replace binary categories with a more refined and dynamic tripartite scheme (truth, sincerity, rightness). From this perspective, the distinctions characteristic of memory studies are specific cases of universal distinctions identified and examined by Habermas. Thus, we are encouraged to focus on the multilayered tensions between truth and sincerity, sincerity and rightness, rightness and truth. Thus, when analyzing acts of communication referring to the past, we should analyze three types of claims. For instance, when considering acts referring to the past, we should focus on the following:

(a) claims to propositional truth (whether images of the past are fictive and arbitrary or claim to be grounded in factual reality);

(b) claims to normative rightness (whether images of the past are meant to observe the normative rules that are operative in a given society);

(c) claims to authenticity or sincerity (whether images of the past claim to reflect the identity of a group rather than being instrumentalized).

According to Habermas, it is only when these three claims are realized (i.e., supported with reasons) that we can speak of rational acts of communication referring to the past.

2. **Enrichment**. The theory of communicative action seems most promising in Habermas' conceptualization of rightness. For Habermas, the only justifiable rational normative stance in modernity—after the fall of the binding power of *sacrum* and state—is the inclusion of the Other (Habermas 1987). The mature morality of the modern world relies on the ability to recognize, listen to, and accept perspectives other than our own. However, this cannot be achieved on the basis of our perceptions of the Other, but only in communication with the Other (Maślanka 2011: 148–153). Drawing on these insights, we can analyze contemporary cultures of remembrance and the politics of history with an eye to their inclusion of the Other. For instance, we can ask whether Germans, Poles, and Russians include the perspective of Jewish victims. What are the differences in the commemoration of this most important Other? How is the Other represented? Do Poles include the German perspective, and do Germans include Polish or Russian perspectives? Who is included in the Russian politics of history? Do Poles, Germans, and Russians recognize the perspective of

their *own* victims, victims of Nazism (West and East Germany) and Communism (Poland, Russia, East Germany)?

3. **Blind spots**. Finally, Habermas' theory may help us to analyze not only collective memory as such but also collective memory studies. For example, it seems that—as Iwona Irwin-Zarecka (2007: 145) has observed—memory studies pay little attention to claims to propositional truth:

Academic reviews and popular media may pay homage to the philosophical doubts as to the status of reality, but in their practices, and especially in their arguments about quality, the premise of knowable truth persists. Collective memory in particular may be increasingly recognized as both an all too selective and mediated version of the past (often when contrasted with findings of historical research), but that does not absolve it from judgments of accuracy.

Avishai Margalit (2009: 91) put it simply: "The issue here is not the truth of the belief but its meaning."

Although scholars may be skeptical about the notion of truth, there is a growing tendency in contemporary societies to prove that constructed images of the past are real and, in doing so, to provide them with scientific sanctions (MacDonald 2002). One way to achieve this is to seek the support of historical sciences. This is best exemplified in the practice of establishing sites of memory together with research institutes, as observed, for example, in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, Buchenwald, the Centre Against Expulsions, the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the European Solidarity Center, or the Documentation Center in Munich. These efforts show how sites of memory strive to satisfy claims to theoretical truth.

Interestingly, despite the focus on subjectivity in memory studies, claims to sincerity have been relatively neglected. Rather than analyzing the sincerity of acts of communication referring to the past, scholars tend to take for granted that collective memory is authentic. Yet, in doing so, they sidestep an interesting, albeit difficult to operationalize, research question. For his part, Habermas provides this question with academic legitimacy and demonstrates its crucial role.

Social Cohesion

Habermas analyzes language in relation to the social world. This analysis provides an opportunity to further relate memory studies to social theory. Scholars representing this field have underscored time and again that community must be based on common memories. Every community is a mnemonic community (Margalit 2004, Keslassy 2007, Stråth 2000). In Habermas' view, speech acts referring to the past should not be scrutinized for their own sake but rather within the context of social cohesion. This perspective contributes to the development of the classical analyses of Jan Assmann (1992/2009: 83–86) on communicative and cultural memory. Assmann limited himself to premodern cultures and indicated the two most important processes that produce social cohesion: religious rites and the interpretation of holy texts. In modern cultures, these processes can no longer guarantee social cohesion; thus, new forms must be

employed. The most important of these processes is communication, which constitutes the public sphere. Habermas (1987: 82) wrote,

To the degree that the basic religious consensus gets dissolved and the power of the state loses its sacred supports the unity of the collectivity can be established and maintained only as the unity of a communication community, that is to say, only by way of a consensus arrived at communicatively in the public sphere (see Buchinger, Gantet and Vogel 2009, Leggewie 2011, Levy and Sznaider 2001, 2002, Müller 2007, Sznaider 2008, Wessler 2008).

Drawing on these insights, let us illustrate this question with an analysis of the post-war Western and Eastern German state. After 1945, claims to sincerity clashed with claims to rightness and truth in German public discourse (see Lübbe 2007, Meier 2010). The Germans could not construct a collective memory that reflected the older, conventional German identity, which was deeply related to Nazism. Employing Habermasian terms, we can say that this conflict brought about a severe identity crisis in three dimensions: (a) cultural reproduction, (b) social integration, and (c) socialization (Habermas 1987: 86). The continuity of cultural reproduction was interrupted. The knowledge of earlier generations, afflicted by national socialism, could no longer be trusted. This situation led to a loss of sense and orientation in the world. Social integration was disrupted as well; German society was not prepared for defeat and for confrontation with the evil it caused. This resulted in anomy. Finally, the experience of Nazism called into question the effects of socialization. Mass murder challenged the responsibility and even the sanity of individual Germans. This situation brought about alienation and conflicts between individual and group identities. As Habermas put it,

Our own life is linked to the life context in which Auschwitz was possible not by contingent circumstances but intrinsically. Our form of life is connected with that of our parents and grandparents through a web of familial, local, political, and intellectual traditions that is difficult to disentangle—that is, through a historical milieu that made us what and who we are today. None of us can escape this milieu because our identities, both as individuals and as Germans, are indissolubly interwoven with it (Habermas 1989: 233).

To overcome this identity crisis, following claims to rightness, it was necessary to develop identification with those who—from a normative point of view—should be identified with (i.e., the victims). Only in this way could social cohesion be restored. This point was underlined by Habermas himself, who, in the course of the *Historikerstreit* (1995a, 1995b, 1995c), demanded that the correct culture of remembrance not only should take into account the perspective of victims but also should take their side, imaging the past from their point of view. In this context, we can point to three strategies that were employed: (a) identification with the opposition against the Nazis or against Communism; (b) identification with the expelled Germans; and (c) identification with an out-group, the Jews. However, the efforts of reconstructing the life-world could not bring about complete success, and one could claim that modern German collective memory encounters two challenges to satisfying claims to sincerity.

First, there are problems related to socialization and a lack of harmony between society and individual biographies. Undeniably, there exists a clear lack of symmetry between personal strategies of dismissing guilt and the responsibility for the Holocaust recognized at the national level (Assmann 2006). Young German generations (we

intentionally omit the question of the Turkish minority) do not identify with the Nazis; they do, however, identify with their grandparents, who—they wish to believe—were not Nazis (Welzer, Moller, Tschuggnall 2005). In this sense, official memory is not related to private memories.

Second, Habermas' opponents in the *Historikerstreit* claimed that identification with victims is insufficient to build social solidarity and cultural continuity. Blaming the Germans and taking the side of the murdered and persecuted distances us from the perpetrators. For instance, Ernst Nolte (1989) directly challenged the German claim to authenticity:

> The talk about 'the guilt of the Germans' all too blithely overlooks the similarity to the talk about 'the guilt of the Jews,' which was a main argument of the National Socialists. All accusations of guilt that come from Germans are dishonest because the accusers fail to include themselves or the group they represent and in essence simply desire to administer the coup de grace to their old enemies.

Thus, it seems that a sincere form of commemoration would be the commemoration of the *German* victims. This is the function performed by commemorating the victims of Nazism and Communism as well as German expellees (most notably, the Center Against Expulsions). However, the latter strategy is problematic because it is difficult to reconcile remembrance of German victims with remembrance of the Jewish victims; therefore, the claim to rightness is hardly fulfilled. Moreover, the claim to sincerity at the Visible Sign seems to conflict with the claims of validity and truth. This conflict of claims leads to a major controversy and a chain of transformations in the way the expelled Germans are to be commemorated.

Public Sphere

For Habermas, there are no transcendental or metaphysical ideas of rightness, truth, and sincerity; they are constantly socially negotiated and re-negotiated. It is not so much conclusions we reach as procedures of argumentation that render communication, with its validity claims, rational. The test of the rationality of claims is found in communication. It is only through communication, through public debate, critical reflection, and discussion, that reasons in support of claims are articulated. Satisfying validity claims requires communication free of distortions (i.e., a communicative public sphere) (Maślanka 2011: 95–104). This insight can deepen previous analyses of the public sphere and the Europeanization of memory (Axer 2010, Blaive 2010, Breakwell 1996, Gensburger 2012, Triandafyllidou et al 2009, Walkowitz 2004). Memory studies scholars can thus analyze speech acts referring to the past and their role in the development or destruction of the public sphere. Ultimately, they can analyze the development or destruction of the E u r o p e a n p u b l i c s p h e r e. Once conditions for rational debate are met, images of the past are verified, modified, or falsified. The d y n a m i c s o f u n d e r s t a n d i n g exceeds local differences, leading through the national to the European and universal level, all of which consider the perspective of all others in the course of constant communication.

In the development of the public sphere (and the European public sphere), sites of memory (SOMs), such as memorials, monuments, and museums, are of crucial importance. Located between the private and the state, they appear to be hybrid settings: (a) venues of face-to-face encounters/gatherings where the past might be debated by the public as well as (b) particular media of memory, constructing and articulating images of the past (Young 2008; Erll 2008; Zierold 2008; Garde-Hansen 2011). To illustrate, let us look from this angle at SOMs in the period after WWII in Poland and Germany (see Łuczewski and Bednarz-Łuczewska 2011, Łuczewski and Wiedmann 2011).

Immediately after 1945, both states made the development of the public sphere impossible, and the spontaneous bottom-up construction of SOMs was met with serious political obstacles. Instead, it was the state, with its repressive, top-down politics of remembrance, that attempted to colonize the public and even private sphere. For example, the most important projects for commemorating the past, Auschwitz (1945), Buchenwald (1958), Sachsenhausen (1961), and Treblinka (1964), served less as the articulation and negotiation of public memory than as the imposition of one official version of history, which could be neither challenged nor rationally justified. These SOMs upheld anti-fascist, statist agendas. At the same time, in democratic West Germany, it seems that the development of the public sphere faced some resistance. Many contemporary commentators point to the initial erosion of the mnemonic public sphere as the past was repressed rather than staged. Consequently, the memory of World War II was initially "communicatively silenced" (Assmann 2006, Lübbe 2007, Meier 2010).

The development of SOMs gained momentum after the collapse of Communism and the reunification of Germany. Arguably, this development climaxed with the construction of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Topography of Terror. This process seems far from complete; the already constructed SOMs are reconstructed, while new ones are in progress (most notably, the Center Against Expulsions). A similar development in the public sphere—with an approximate fifteen-year shift compared with Germany—can now be observed in Poland. Although 1989 triggered a wave of commemoration projects, the majority were started in the early 21st century, the most prominent of which was the Warsaw Uprising Museum (2004). It should be noted that a number of significant projects are either under construction (the European Solidarity Center, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Museum of the Second World War) or about to begin (the Polish History Museum).

If the public sphere is to thrive, SOMs should not serve any purpose other than describing what is, expressing group identity, and strengthening valid social norms. If they fail to do so and instead create images of the past with no bearing on reality, group self-image, or social norms, they destroy the communicative public sphere. The public sphere should be considered a constant process rather than a stable structure. It may develop, but it remains prone to atrophy if rational communication falls prey to politics, the market (when power and profit rather than reaching rational consensus become the goals of communication), or ideology (when participants in the communication refuse to accept the perspective of the Other) (Habermas 1987).

In other words, there is always a threat of the colonization of the public sphere under pressure from the claims of other social systems.

The processes of commercialization and the reduction of memory to a product are certainly occurring (see, for instance, Cole 1999), although the analyzed cases do not support far-reaching hypotheses. It is not easy to distinguish the instrumental motives of erecting SOMs from the non-instrumental motives. However, it is interesting to note, for instance, that one of the motives leading to the construction of the Ghetto Heroes Square in Kraków was to establish the position of the Podgórze district as an attractive part of the city for tourists and to draw on the success of the more popular Kazimierz district. Admittedly, this type of argumentation is not explicitly mentioned for any of the German projects.

The effort to fulfill the claim of propositional truth leads to another process that may alienate memory in the public space. SOMs tend to be influenced by experts and academicians, which may lead to the colonization of social memory by expert and scientific discourse. History, instead of shaping and being shaped by the public sphere, may be left to the historians. The threat is perhaps not very serious; even in the case of the Museum of World War II, where the head is a historian, it has not become a research institute.

Considering the fact that the state is far more potent in the establishment of places of memory than the market or the experts, it seems that political bias is a far more serious threat than commercialization.

However, we should not assume in advance that any intervention of the state will necessarily disintegrate the public sphere. For example, the Kreuzberg Museum in Berlin, established by the district authorities, aims to engage the residents, thus establishing it as public space. A similar approach was adopted by the Warsaw Uprising Museum in Warsaw, established by the late Lech Kaczyński during his term as the President of Warsaw.

A characteristic example for Poland is that the Center for Thought of John Paul II in Warsaw was initiated and established not by civic organizations but by the political authorities. This example is all the more striking because after the death of John Paul II (2005) Poland has experienced an unprecedented surge in social mobilization, comparable perhaps to the times of the first Solidarity (Solidarność 1980–1981). The passing of the Pope united the youth to such an extent that many talked about a "generation of John Paul II." However, the general mobilization of the youth was not institutionalized. The task was taken up by the city council of Warsaw. The resulting situation was a paradox: the JP2 generation did not build institutions commemorating the heritage of the Pope. On the contrary, the institution commemorating his heritage aims to uphold and shape that generation.

A different process is found in projects that begin as bottom-up initiatives but become state-led enterprises. For instance, the Center Against Expulsions, a project initiated by the Federation of Expellees, changed its shape significantly once government funding was involved. The management of the Centre, called the Visible Sign, was entrusted not to the initiators but to a federal foundation: "Plight, Expulsion, Reconciliation." Given the power of the German state, it was accused of not including citizens

and taking over civic initiatives. For this reason, despite pressure and incentives from the government, the Stasi Museum in Berlin, which was founded by the ASTAK association, refused cooperation with the Federal Officer for Stasi Documentation (BStU).

Conclusions

We have attempted to demonstrate the fruitfulness of the theory of communicative action for memory studies. Specifically, we have demonstrated that "history," "memory," and "dialogue" reflect three types of universal validity claims: "memory" formulates claims to authenticity, "history" formulates claims to truth, and "dialogue" formulates claims to rightness. Thus, it is possible to introduce a seminal notion of rationality that rests on validity claims. This notion integrates, enriches, and identifies blind spots in memory studies. Our purpose was to demonstrate the relevance of collective memory to social cohesion (cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization) and the public sphere (its development and atrophy, rationalization, and colonization).

We do not intend to subsume all aspects addressed in memory studies under the theory of communicative action. It is simply not possible to identify an overarching framework for so vast a field. For instance, Habermas' approach is much better suited to analyzing rationality and communication than emotions and conflicts. Furthermore, the extension of the theory of communicative action to memory studies does not necessarily follow Habermas' political preferences. With regard to "the public use of history," if the claim to rightness clashes with other claims, Habermas seems to give precedence to the former over the latter: if claims collide, sincerity and truthfulness should yield to rightness (see Habermas 1989a). During the *Historikerstreit*, Habermas underlined the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the uniqueness of German guilt against those who wished to "historicize" the Holocaust (nominally heeding the claims to truth) and against those who wished to allow the Germans to identify with their own nation and, in so doing, to express their "conventional identity" (and, thus, to realize the claim to sincerity; Habermas 1989a). According to Habermas, allowing either of these tendencies would lead to the dilution of German guilt and, consequently, to a "moral catastrophe." Thus, the claim to rightness should apply "the filter of universal values" (Habermas 1989a) both to German identity ("After Auschwitz we can only derive national awareness from the better parts of our history, accepted not blindly but critically") and public scientific debates (Habermas 1989a, 1989b, 1993). Unlike Habermas, we do not hierarchize validity claims; rather, we analyze their interface and the tensions between them. To show the strength of the theory of communicative action in memory studies, we must sometimes read Habermas against Habermas.

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