

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY STUDIES

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Abstract. While some scholars have argued that the research related to “Collective Memory” could be traced back to the 18th century or even earlier, it was not until the 1920s that Halbwachs systematically proposed characteristics of collective memory from a sociological perspective. From his works, the study of memory began to develop, and led to a boom in the 1970s, and the launching of the academic journal *Memory Study* in 2008. Collective memory has now become an interdisciplinary field gaining contributions from different professional perspectives such as literary criticism, psychology, sociology, historiography, cultural studies, and communication studies.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Communal Identity, Collective Representation.

1. Introduction

Memory studies is an academic field that pays attention to all aspects of memory. Inspired by the theory of Collective Memory, which was systemically proposed by Halbwachs, many researchers focus on this fertile ground. After its “boom” in the late 1970's, memory studies were recognized as an arguably emerging field. In 2008, the journal “*Memory Studies*” was launched, which marked a cornerstone for its development, too. This is an interdisciplinary discipline including a very wide range of different fields: historiography, cultural studies, psychology, literary studies, natural science, etc. With this diversity, there are no absolute and specific methodologies as well as theories devoted to this field. Instead, it opens an ability to apply various methods in order to understand and answer some crucial questions related to the following issues: What types of memories would be preserved? Who has authority in designating whom to memorialize a given communally significant event?

Memory Studies focuses on both personal and collective scales. It is an umbrella term covering every dimension of memory. Accordingly, collective memory is a subfield that focuses on the sociological aspect of mnemonic recollection. Actually, this division is just theoretical, not practical because the study of collective memory is based on and tightly related to other disciplines. Therefore, it tends to be an “open-endedness applicable” [1; p.1387]. In this paper, I am going to pay attention to the theory of collective memory with its various facets: the origin of the term, the relationship of the concept of collective memory to other terms, and the characteristics of this notion.

2. Content

2.1. The Notion of Collective Memory

The term “Collective Memory” was first generated by Halbwachs in the first half of the twentieth century. Although in his books, Halbwachs did not define directly and specifically the important term “Collective Memory”, he allocated it in sociological perspective from which we can understand that collectively retained memories are conscious and social activities. They have shared experiences and accumulative recollections contributed by many people in a given group. Thus, there are many kinds of collective memories, which are preserved, circulated as well as passed on by a given community. As Halbwachs writes: “What we call the collective framework of memory would then be only the result or sum, or combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society. This framework might then serve to better classify them after the fact, to situate the recollections of some in relation to those of others” [2; p.39].

When valuing the role of groups in making collective memories, Halbwachs establishes a social framework for it. In his opinion, no collectively retained memories can exist outside of a given community. They need a social environment to be transferred and kept. Halbwachs did not mention the role of society vaguely, however. Instead, he emphasizes the important contribution of small groups in which each individual life and is active. In his book, they are limited to groups of families, religions, and social classes. All of them have their own characteristics that help shape the features of collective memories shared by their members. This means that shared remembrance can be preserved in people's minds, but it never is their own property. On the contrary, what they bring out will always reflect practical needs as well as the interests of a given community to which it belongs. That is to say, reminiscence should be usually acknowledged as a perception. Communities to which an individual belongs play a role as not only background facilitating what one thinks, how he/she behaves and the way he/she remembers and forgets, but also shaping memories that the person does not even have a chance to experience in his/her real life. Nevertheless, focusing on this point, Halbwachs does not forget to assure readers that there is no clear boundary among these communities because a given person would participate in many different groups. Therefore, their retrospection might be the sum of many different collective recalls. By this understanding, Halbwachs seems to place collective memory in the realm of consciousness instead of totally pushing it into the sphere of unconsciousness like in Freud's theory. Moreover, for him, collective memories are by no means those stored in human beings' minds as accumulated experiences. Instead, they are products of symbols and concepts preserved and circulated in a given community.

Inheriting this understanding, Olick Jeffrey clarifies it with his own explanation: “Collective memory has been used to refer to aggregate individual recollections, to official commemorations, to collective representations, and to disembodied constitutive features of shared identities; it is said to be located in dreamy reminiscence, personal testimony, oral history, tradition, myth, style, language art, popular culture, and the built world. What is to be gained, and what is to be lost, by calling all of these 'collective memory'.” [3; p.336]. With this clarification, Olick goes further in connecting the concept with his understanding of a relevant term: “Culture”.

For him, “Culture” is deployed in two different ways related to distinct methodologies. The first one is Culture as a system of social values and symbols that are externalized through various objects publicly available in our daily lives. Accordingly, culture is a valuable product accumulated by many different generations which each individual will be expected to accept, obey and practice as long as one belongs to a given society. With this understanding, the concept “community” tends to be perceived as a fixed, defined, and unchangeable unit with its own institutive organizations. Thus, its members will be inheritors, remainers, and preservers of what is often defaulted as its own cultural, social, and historical uniqueness. On the contrary, “culture” could be comprehended as meanings existing inside people's minds. What one thinks of as good or bad, valuable or useless, central or periphery are always interactive, relative and arguable. What we call “value” are not traditional treasures or experiences that are passed down from generation to generation in a community, but “a nurturant environment” [3; p.337] through which our minds are shaped and convinced to believe in some ideas. In other words, what is labeled as “culture” is only a political strategy or institution aimed at establishing communal identities serving what Antonio Gramsci calls “hegemony” [4]. Olick names this form of culture “political culture” and defines it as “the symbolic structuring of political discourse, and the analysis of political culture is the attempt to understand the patterns and logic of that discourse” [3; p.337]. Accordingly, the community is constructed, and culture is what we are received as politically made-up values. From this foundation, collective memory should be seen as possibilities whose value is a “designator” that is “public discourses about the past as wholes or to narratives and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities” [3; p.345]. Of course, Olick's opinion centers on the relationship between collective memory and political issues. He tends to analyze what is communally recalled in a certain society as an expression, voluntary acceptance, or imposition of power-oriented strategies. Hence, Olick places collective memory in the middle of social tension.

2.2. Relevant concepts

Based on Halbwachs notion of collective memory, there are alternative terms coined by other memory study's scholars. They complement and clarify many different facets of this field. I can list here some crucially contributive proposes such as Cultural Memory, Communicative Memory, Mediated prospective memory, Collective retrospective memory, Collective prospective memory, and Public memory, to name just a few.

2.2.1. Cultural Memory and Communicative Memory

The concepts of Cultural Memory and Communicative Memory were coined by Jan Assmann in the 1980s based on the notion of Collective Memory generated by Halbwachs [5]. Accordingly, these terms both belong to Collective Memory but at different levels.

Communicative memories are communal ones that are recalled in everyday conversations in secular places such as waiting rooms, train stations... They might be part of past events or of behavior practiced temporarily in particular circumstances. Thus, communicative memory lacks stability, organization, and structure. Instead, it

tends to be changeable, spontaneous, and personal because collective recollection would be verbalized from the points of view of individuals in their conversation. When the role of speakers and listeners is constantly changed, what they recall will be very unpredictable and fragmented. In short, communicative memory could be seen as a reaffirmation, reenactment, and actualization of collective memory in temporary circumstances in which a conversation is taking place.

Cultural Memory includes what people learn, inherit, and absorb from the process of repeated interactions with the other in the given community. This is a kind of memory that contains cultural codes sedimented over time and its function is to guide people in their social and moral behavior. To do that, cultural memory needs communal formations such as texts, rituals and monuments that would help such knowledge to be systematic, organized and long-lasting. In her article, Assmann also presents cultural memory's characteristics such as preserving the identity of a given group, and the reconstruction, formation, organization, obligation, and reflexivity of that community as well. In general, then, cultural memory plays an important role in clarifying what differentiations or particularities of a given community are from which all individuals in that group could be clearly identified and unified in the sense of belonging. This is a broadly used notion in research related to collective memory. For example, in the introduction to a collection of essays entitled "Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook," Astrid Erll explains why the book's essayists use the concept "cultural memory" instead of using Halbwachs's term "collective memory." She provides readers with a very clear definition: Cultural memory could be understood as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" [6; p.2]. In her opinion, although Halbwachs's notion focuses on a social framework in recalling communal recollection, it simplifies the dimension of memory when narrowing it solely to a group's sphere. Amending this limit, the essayists use the phrase "cultural memory" to cover a wider range of remembered phenomena including how individuals recollect what occurred to remind them of their groups and even national activities in evoking a given communally significant event. Additionally, "cultural memory" gives us an appropriate explanation of how people make sense of their past by intentionally reconstructing narratives about what already happened. It also analyzes ignored functions of objects such as personal letters, films, urban constructions which were created without any intentions of making social. In short, cultural memory is active on two levels: individual and collective [6; p.4] with three dimensions: material, social and mental [6; p.3].

2.2.2. Mediated prospective memory, Collective retrospective memory and Collective prospective memory

Employing the concept "collective memory", which was proposed by Halbwachs, in studying a particular case, "The news media related to world-wide kidnapping and captivity" [7], Keren Tenenboim-Weinblat suggests that the previous studies regarding memory are contributive to Collective Memory Study but not enough to cover every facet of this field. She shows the limit of past research in merely emphasizing recollection of what happened in the past from the standpoint of the present. In his opinion, remembering something is not only to recall what already occurred but also to

remind people of unfinished tasks that should be completed in the future. Collective memory, accordingly, encompasses two subgroups: collective retrospective memory and collective prospective memory that cover two additionally important characteristics of memories: remediation and premeditation. Mentioning publicly significant events includes looking back to the past and looking forward to the future from a present time perspective. At this point, the author values the crucial role of the news media which were “Public Agendas” in broadcasting broadly perceived issues in communities in which they are circulated. Accordingly, a particular form of media, in this case, the newspaper plays an undeniable role in providing the masses with past information. It also predicts questions as well as posit notices of what has not been completed yet in the minds of both the people and political activists and then establishes requirements resolving these issues negotiated with various flexible strategies. With this function, Karen claims “the news media can serve not only as attention-focusers but as reminders of collective commitments, promises and intentions” [7; p.100]. From this undeniable journalistic authority, the author also proposes the phrase “mediated prospective memory” in dealing with future-orientation strategies of the news media in evoking what happened in the past. Although in this article the author does not clarify whom the media would serve, Keren clearly implies the tight relationship between media and politics, between past event recollection and political interference no matter from which point of view a given story would be seen. In addition, with this proposal, the author bridges the gap among past, present and future in order to complement the scholarly understanding of Collective Memory. That is a combination of what we look back at and what we should have looked forward to.

2.2.3 Public Memory

The notion “public memory” was proposed in the collection *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space* [8]. This term is very close to Maurice Halbwach's phrase of “Collective memory”. The authors of this collection use “public Memory” to analyze how slavery has been memorialized in the public spaces in many countries. This traumatic history is not only personally memorized but also was given many collective forms that are easily accessible and available for mass consumption such as via museums, memorials, monuments. In her introduction of the book, Araujo names this process as “Memorialization” and “Heritagization” [8; p.1]. The most important contribution of this collection is that its author places the theory of collective memory in a particular social framework. That is approaching the topic from the perspective of subaltern or descendants of victims of slavery. This choice aims at clearly showing that the resurgence of these unforgettable memories in public space has become an undeniably intentional phenomenon. The presence of a wide range of public memorizing projects aims at officially recognizing the subaltern’s past, as well as raising a fight for social, political and economic equalities. Clearly, besides preserving the continuity of a given community, public memory plays a crucial role in realizing the practical needs of human life. On the theoretical level, this analysis accords with the idea of previous scholars very well when the authors find the enactment of collective memory is always departed from the present life's purposes.

2.3. Characteristics of Collective Memory

2.3.1. Collective Memory and Continuity of a given Community

Situating collective memories in relation to particular small groups also suggests that Halbwachs was aware of the role of social circumstances in interfering with the fate of what are collectively recollected. They are surely not pure memories but tend to be reshaped, distorted, adapted or even re-created in the time and space in which they are reviewed. This means, memories, in Halbwachs's opinion, could be seen as bridges that connect past and present in order to assure continuity on the timelines. Memories are not necessarily correspondent, however, with historical events because these remembrances are products of social interactions and conflicts. As Halbwachs argues: "We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, as by a continually reproduced, through them, as by a continual relationship. A sense of our identity is perpetuated. But precisely because these memories are repetitions because they are successively engaged in very different systems of notions, at different periods of our lives, they have lost the form and the appearance they once had" [2; p.47]. Clearly, at this point, what is remembered as happening in the past might not be an exact truth, but the summary of many externally social, cultural, political and religious elements accumulated over time, and in given circumstances. In short, the past always has a tendency of being reconstructed and consciously recalled by people in accordance with their practical needs.

Barash also emphasizes the role of collective memory in sustaining the continuity of a given community. In his opinion, this characteristic should not be understood simply as the constant flow of time by which all things replace each other by order of "before" and "after". Instead, the continuity would be socially perpetuated through sedimentation and stratification of the past. These processes are recalled by the need of the present but should always be oriented by the vision of the future. Barash suggests that depending on the purpose of each moment in the present, which he names "temporal articulations", a given shared experience in the past can be memorized and revived. That helps members of the communities to feel that they could preserve and live along with what happened in distant times [9].

2.3.2. Selectiveness of Collective Memory

When discussing collective memory, Halbwachs claims that not everything that happened in the past would be memorialized in the present time. Recollecting tends to be a selective action that aims to serve certain needs. Agreeing with this point, Barash goes further in questioning the legitimacy of any application of the concept of "memory" in the public sphere [9]. In his book, Barash uses the phrase "experience as if" to describe this issue. What we think is real turns out to be what we are compelled to memorize under the skillful, large-scale involvement and interference of those who have the power to legitimate things in the social regime. This also implies that collective memories are not only "figments" of imaginations but also productive instruments in order to establish social hegemony. As Barash argues in his book: "The abyss between memory and political reality is too readily filled by fictional representations of public identity, which, in the guise of political myths, have become an all-too-familiar facet of

our contemporary political world [9; p.70]. At this point, public recollections have a crucial function of being “a primary vehicle for political identification”.

Admitting the selectiveness of collective memory, Paul Connerton, in addition, clearly shows its dual feature, “organized remembering” and “organized forgetting”, especially in establishing social hegemony and state authority. For him, these two faces always exist in parallel, and this duality could be seen as a strategy aimed at mentally enslaving people through state apparatuses. When some events are memorized in public space, the others will be “taken away” [10; p.14] or become muted voices, perhaps, for good. These intentionally excised memories, in Connerton's analysis, mainly are caused by power from above and enacted through a system of propagandization. At this point, Connerton unveils how these two realms reflect a social conflict leading to hegemony. As he suggests: “the struggle of citizens against state power is the struggle of their memory against forced forgetting”, he wrote [10; p.15]. That is to say making given events memorized or re-memorized, especially traumatic memories, could be actions aimed at achieving social equality.

2.3.3. Collective Memory and History

For a long time, the relationship of collective memory and history has been examined in an absolutely extreme approach which separates them into two totally different categories. Accordingly, history is a “discipline built on evidence” while memory is “a malleable guide to the past” [11; p.10]. Thus, what is evoked from memories normally is untrustworthy. It is considered distortion or just a partial reflection of what really occurred in the past.

The study of memory reaffirms, re-identifies and replaces the role as well as the function of memory in relation to history. It distinguishes them academically but not in real-world practice. In other words, they both have significant contributions in dealing with past events. This opinion plays a decisive role in revealing the problematic meaning of the term “truth”. A sharp boundary between the field of memory and history thus tends to be erased, and researchers of collective memory, as Scott argues, “recognize such distinction as part of an ongoing struggle to legitimize certain perceptions and delegitimize others” [11; p.17].

On one hand, memory scholars admit that distortion is inevitable in both historiography and memory study. Halbwachs claims that history is a type of memory whose organic form will never be recalled. When people remember something, they always stand at the point of the present therefore past events tend to be reshaped, distorted, or even recreated by the practical needs of the time when those events were recollected. In differentiation to the official narrative, he places collective memory in the same category as oral history. At this point, Halbwachs clarifies that collective memories and histories are both social facts, but unlike history, which is no longer active in the present life, collective memory is still present and alive in a given community. He situates these concepts in the axis of past and present in order to emphasize the role of communal recollections. The mutual feature of history and collective memory is that members of a community might not be able to experience these events that occurred in the past. Coming to agree with what Halbwahchs proposes, Barash also adds that there is an “unbridgeable gap” between what really happened and

what was largely memorialized in communities. This leads to the fact that when we recall the past's occurrences, they are just interpretations of historical events. Thus, collective memories are little more than the “figment” of those interpreted versions. He also names communal remembrances as “interpretative acts” that are created under the pressure of many different social and political factors. Barash even goes further by considering public memories, somehow, are symbols that need to be deciphered if one wishes to understand the multiple layers embedded in them [9].

Even historians are not capable, however, of interpreting what exactly happened in the past. The evidence on which their research is based is as vague as what is recalled from memories because these material proofs cannot speak for themselves. Their meanings depend on historians' understanding, knowledge, skills and even points of view. This also means historians become spokesmen of the past. The information which they extract from available evidence is just one of the various possibilities regarding what happened in the past. In other words, “history” by no means can be seen as an exact manifestation of past events. Instead of handing historians an absolutely decisive authority in providing successive generations with historical awareness or imaginations of the past, we should admit that the credibility and doubtfulness of what was written in history books are equal with what is communally remembered. Thus, besides the orthodox, officially historical voices, muted or marginalized stories of non-historians need to be heard. This is also associated with the matter pointed out by Confino: “the crucial issue in the history of memory is not how a past is presented but why it was received or rejected.” [1; p.1390] At this point, we will again have to come back to the question of legitimacy in using the past to make sense of the present world with a future orientation. Being aware of this issue, many scholars of collective memory study have tried to enhance the role of collective memories.

In the introduction of her collection of essays that focus on how past events were constructed in Vietnamese contemporary life, Hue-Tam Ho Tai offers thoughtful opinions related to memory in the sphere of publicity. Accordingly, memory plays an important role in making sense of a given event by situating it in a broadly communal background in which memory can be used as an explanation of given community initiation. However, she also emphasizes that memory should be seen as a form of progress that would be shaped and reshaped by both “historical conjunctures” and “particular social contexts”. The author claims that the tension between public memory and official history cannot be denied but at the same time, that they present in parallel in order to create what is called a “national narrative”. Clearly, Hue Tam Ho Tai situates public memory in the flow of political issues and nation-building. This also means that there are no authentic memories and history which are normally understood as what truly happened in the past. Thus, recalling something would be considered a political gesture [12].

Although agreeing with Hue Tam Ho Tai, Alon Confino seems to go further when differentiating the functions and duties of Historiography and Collective Memory Study. In his opinion, history can be learned as grand narratives that focus on numbers, times, places and heroes. Accordingly, history will be a study of “ideas” while memory

will be “a study of collective mentality” because memory study tries to “outline the mental horizon of society as a whole” [1; p.1389].

Even, Nora suggests that a history is a form of memory. This claim erases every boundary between history and memory and transforms the latter into an umbrella term that covers every relevant issue. Accordingly, history is nothing other than a narrative that retells stories about the past. Although written under a given set of principles and methods, history should be considered a version of what happened instead of a faithful record of the true past. Historians, on this point, can merely be narrators who collect some relics to recover, and to re-configure the past from their point of view in contemporary life. From this perspective, the authoritative claim of historians tends to be refuted. History is no longer to be “truth” but instead “traces” of what truly occurred. In his article, analyzing the relationship between memory and history, Nora seems to have a contrasting opinion when suggesting that memory is even more trustworthy than history. He argues: “Memory is life... it remains in permanent evolution...History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon...history is a representation of the past. Memory insofar as it is effective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it... History... calls for analysis and criticism ...memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one; whence its claim to universal authority...Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative” [13, p.8-9]. He also differentiates “true memory” and “memory transformed by its passage through history”. Accordingly, the former is not presented vividly but always embodied in every daily life including “gestures and habits, in skilled passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories.” On the contrary, the latter tends to be manipulated by historical narratives that aim at convincing people to believe in them, accept them voluntarily, and normally perpetuate them as duties. If the former is spontaneous, the transformed memory always has its own structures.

2.3.4. Collective Memory and Media

Media plays an undeniable role in producing collective memories from two opposing dimensions: below and above. This is a contested terrace of social and political voices on which the fight for making sense of the world is waged.

First of all, orthodox media has been used as a productive tool in the navigation of social thought through various subtle strategies that merely focus on guiding people on what and how they should remember past events. The programs on social media are normally single stories that are typically manipulated and censored by state authorities. As a result, there are not official programs existing without any lack of ideological orientation. This means that the claim of just being neutral or entertaining of any programs, from movies to live shows to news is fallacious. Targeted to the media's audiences, there is always a message that might be disguised in the clothing of entertainment.

More importantly, the possibility of shaping and reconstructing memories in communities can be very fruitful because they have their own golden timetable for

special programs such as broadcast during lunch or dinner time that attract a huge number of viewers. Thus, each program can be seen as a “ritual schedule.” It is not only a vehicle to transmit recollection but also a mnemonic commemoration. Consuming these products, viewers would be enriched by being reminded of their communal recollections regarding moral values, social standards, gender roles. In turn, these people would actualize what they naturally memorized in their daily lives. Collective memories, thus, would always be in the process of continuous reconstruction. Also, the media are able to convert memorization from the realm of space to that of time. This means a given event, for example, that used to be recalled in its small community, nowadays, thanks to technology and the network of media devices, would be known by those who are outsiders and have never had actual experiences related to that event in reality [14; P.181]. From another angle, for global mnemonic events, media are capable of connecting local, national and cosmopolitan voices that dramatically contribute to hegemonic and variable development of these memorizations themselves.

With these activities, the media can create a specific version of the past, in other words, an ideology-oriented reality related to what occurred already. This version may not need to fit perfectly past events but functions in achieving political and social purposes of the present time in the light of building up a social order in the future. Andrew names this type of memory “New Memory” [15; p/14]. Emphasizing the role of media in shaping our memories, Van Dijck uses the phrase “Culture of Connectivity” with its connotation as an “platform [that make it possible to] (...) construct and exploit rather than merely enable connections between users, but also, the more profoundly, to the way their automatized operations seem to force certain memories upon us” [15; p.16].

However, in modern society with its outstanding feature that is the rapid development of technology as well as electronic devices, social media becomes a productive channel through which common, non-elite people can amplify their voices and express their opinions, attitudes and emotions toward what is happening or what occurred in the past. Such platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WeChat (in China) can create a surprisingly informative interaction that takes place constantly and tends to compete with how mainstream media are trying to convince their audiences. Recollection, thus, becomes multi-voiced and includes both memories and counter-memories. This complexity fuels marginalized groups in their confrontation with the power for the right of speaking up. As a result, each individual could be an active member in making, shaping, constructing and reconstructing collective memories instead of just passively perceiving and consuming what is provided by program producers. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that nowadays social media create what is called “Digital ecology” [15; p.173] in which events themselves tend to lose their roles. Instead, the importance belongs to the way people evoke the meaning of what happened from their own contemporary experience.

2.3.5. Collective Memory and Memorial Landscapes:

“Memorial landscape” refers to a system of material objects constructed in order to recall what was supposed to occur in the past of a given community. We could count here local/ national heroes’ statues, memorials, temples/ shrines, and especially martyrs’

cemeteries. They normally are situated in a large, accessible space to make sure that many people can see them in their daily lives.

Memorial sites not only play a role as physical externalizations of communal recollection but also function as reminders of what was supposed to happen in the past of a given community. Occupying a certain place in the living space of a group, the memorial objects can have a direct, constant, public effect on local inhabitants' minds, emotions and attitudes as well as lifestyles. These objects are not merely silent, material and man-made products but are built up, and presented as symbols or multi-voiced narratives regarding the matter of what was already communally forgotten and what are perpetually remembered. Reuben, Dereck and Maoz argue that “the past is a selective social and geographic construction... What memories are ultimately made visible (or invisible) on the landscape do not simply emerge out of the air. Rather, they result directly from people’s commemoration decisions and actions as embedded within and constrained by particular socio-spatial conditions... Establish places of memory has also taken on great meaning and value for social actors and groups and indeed, entire nations- as they seek to establish the legitimacy of their public identities and histories particularly in the time of political change and conflict” [16; p.161-162].

More particularly, many scholars have paid attention to *Urban memory* (Boyer 1994 [17], Huyssen 2003 [18], Jordan 2006 [19] ...). Accordingly, the city becomes a dual-functional place. It is not only a place to live but also a symbol of both hegemonic control and resistance. If media could be seen as providing temporal narratives, the memorial landscape would be a “spatial narrative” [s] [16; p.162]. Looking at the system of statues, memorials, and so on we can recognize many different stories related to hegemonic manipulation that have been told in the realm of space. We can prove this point by examining replacements or removals of many famous figures’ statues all over the world when new political forces triumph over the old ones.

3. Conclusion

In general, the term “Collective memory” refers to the way members of a given community memorialize communally significant historical, cultural, and political events. This is a conscious activity aimed at two different but related purposes: identifying differences of communities in order to distinguish one from the other and creating a sense of belonging for members of a given group. These kinds of memories pertain to what occurred in the past but are always selected and remembered from the point of view of people in the present time. Thus, collective memory is a constantly constructive and reconstructive process with sedimentation, stratification, fragmentation and distortion rather than a permanently completed occurrence. In this sense, collective memory is capable of simultaneously generating continuity and discontinuity between the past and the present.

As two faces of a coin, remembering and forgetting always exist simultaneously when collectively significant recollections are being made. When a given community recalls events that serve present needs and interests, other aspects or events are necessarily forgotten. Hence, collective memory tends to be connected to politically oriented manipulations which are deployed to make sense of the world, to

remove opposing cultural, social and political forces. In different circumstances, of course, collective memory might serve to create a counter-recollection of “the other” aimed at resisting oppressive or dominant narratives. In other words, collective memory has a tight relation to social hegemony and state authority. At this point, collective memory should be considered a productive, necessary complement for official history in order to draw a relatively coherent picture of a community.

Collective memory is often externalized by a system of memorial constructions in public spaces and amplified today by media devices, especially social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. These activities are systematically enacted in order to naturalize and traditionalize political strategies which convince people to believe that what they are following is as true and reasonable as life is.

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