'The Tourist Soldier': Veterans Remember the American Occupation of Germany, 1950-1955

2015

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by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, FL

Spring Term
2015
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ABSTRACT

Studies of postwar Germany, from 1945-1955, have concentrated on the American influence as a military occupier, the development of German reconstruction and national identity, and memory of this period from the German perspective. Within the memory analyses, firsthand accounts have been analyzed to understand the perspectives of Germans living through the postwar period. Absent from this historiography is an account of American memories and firsthand perspectives of the occupation, particularly during the 1950-1955 period. This thesis employs oral histories of American veterans stationed in postwar Germany, American propaganda and popular cultural mediums during the early 1950s, and modern historiographical trends to provide an understanding of how Americans remember the German postwar decade. American veterans remembered this period, and their encounters with local Germans, as a positive experience. These positive memories were mediated by 1950s Cold War rhetoric and propaganda and were subsequently predicated upon the men’s perspective as occupying soldiers. Their recollections align with American popular memory delineating the military occupation as ending in 1949 upon the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany, therefore overshadowing the 1950-1955 period of occupation. The ways in which Americans remember the postwar occupation in Germany, particularly from 1950-1955, inform broader memory and historical narrative trends of this era.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the support of my colleagues, friends, and family. In particular, I would like to thank my mentor and advisor Dr. Anne Lindsay. She introduced me to the notion of examining memory as an avenue of historical analysis, a methodology that has changed the way I view the world around me. Personally and professionally, you always pushed me to make an argument and to trust my instincts, and for that I am grateful. My committee members Dr. Rosalind Beiler and Dr. Amelia Lyons also provided helpful feedback and guidance during this process. Thank you for the unique perspectives you offered and for encouraging me to push my own limits as a scholar.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my graduate colleagues. The support, guidance, and comradery I experienced with each of you encouraged me to keep pushing for the goal. In particular, I would like to thank Kendra Hazen, Kris Steele, Drew Fedorka, Kevin Mercer, Autumn Reisz, and Ian Marsh for taking the time to read drafts, provide feedback, and for listening to me work through the process. I am extremely grateful for our friendships.

The completion of this research would not be possible without the support of the staff and archivists in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Thank you for gathering and digitizing countless oral histories, and for your excitement to assist me with this research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for your never-ending support and love. In particular, I would like to thank Shelley Marquez, Den Culwell, Michelle Johnson, Jim Barnebee, and Caitlin Barnebee. Our countless hours of conversation and your unwavering support have enabled me to complete this project and to fight for my dreams. I would not be here without you.
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<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Allied Control Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Columbia Broadcasting System</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Displaced Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HICOG</td>
<td>High Commission for Occupied Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS 1067</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff, Foreign Policy Directive 1067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMGUS</td>
<td>Office of Military Government, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>Universal Pictures Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USEUCOM</td>
<td>United States European Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USO</td>
<td>United Service Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Servicemen who served in the American military during the early 1950s helped the United States assist nations recovering from World War II and protected them from a possible Communist invasion. Their contemporary memories of this period frame the scope and aim of this study. Oral histories conducted through the Library of Congress in the early 2000s are analyzed to uncover the ways in which those who experienced life in West Germany from 1950-1955 remember this period. An analysis of veteran memory necessitates an understanding of the political, economic, and social conditions that the veterans encountered in West Germany during the 1950s.

In February 1945, the Allied Control Council (ACC) planned a quadripartite control of defeated Germany, designating four zones of postwar occupation to secure the nation from potential uprisings and to punish those responsible for leading and supporting Nazi war efforts.\(^1\) The Soviet Union gained control of the eastern portion of Germany, Britain occupied the northern section, France obtained a small region along its western border, and the United States controlled central and southern Germany (see Figure 1).

The American zone, governed by The Office of Military Government United States (OMGUS), included major cities such as Nuremberg, Frankfurt, and Munich. The region had a population of approximately 19 million people prior to the postwar onslaught of Displaced Persons to the region.\(^2\) OMGUS managed operations through an American occupation policy,

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\(^1\) Fraser Harbutt, *Yalta 1945: Europe and America at the Crossroads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 206.

Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) policy 1067. Its threefold purpose in Germany aimed “to strengthen and assist the democratic elements in Germany, to provide security, and to punish the active Nazis and militarists.”

In his historic 1946 Stuttgart speech, Secretary of State James Byrnes stated that Germany should be left with a sustainable economy and the ability to produce enough industry to

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pay reparations.\(^5\) This policy shift was concretized when, in March 1947, President Truman announced a new foreign policy directive that provided assistance to democratic nations under the threat of authoritarian rule, a policy that fueled Cold War tensions.\(^6\)

The ACC passed control of German domestic affairs to the Federal Republic of Germany on September 21, 1949, days after the election of Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.\(^7\) Despite this milestone, developing Cold War tensions and the absence of a German military necessitated the continued American military occupation of West Germany.\(^8\) During the first years of the Federal Republic, the Allied High Commission (HICOG), consisting primarily of American soldiers, maintained authority and monitored all political and economic developments in West Germany. American forces continued to serve throughout West Germany as a military and constabulary presence.\(^9\) The United States occupation of West Germany concluded on May 5, 1955 when the Federal Republic of Germany was admitted into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), became a sovereign state, and obtained the ability to rearm military forces.\(^10\)

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\(^6\) In addition to the Truman Doctrine, the creation of the U.S.-British *Bizon* and later the U.S., British, and French *Trizon* was rejected by the Soviet Union and caused political and economic between the nations. Earl F. Ziemke, “The Formulation and Initial Implementation of U.S. Occupational Policy in Germany,” in *U.S. Occupation in Europe After World War II*, ed. Hans A. Schmitt (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), 38. For more information on the Truman Doctrine and its affect on the Cold War, see Denise M. Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

\(^7\) Ibid., 42.

\(^8\) The German Democratic Republic (GDR) was established within a month of the creation of West Germany. East Germany was founded on October 7, 1949, causing an increased demand for a West German military presence. For more information on the relationship and development of East and West Germany, see Lawrence Whetten, *Germany East and West: Conflicts, Collaboration, and Confrontation* (New York: New York University Press, 1980).


Shortly after the American occupation in Germany began in 1945, scholars began examining American activity in Germany for its successes, failures, and importance to American foreign policy. A common trend among scholarly literature in the 1940s and 1950s was the assertion that policies of occupation were to be considered a failure, although reasons varied. For example, journalist Russell Hill and political scientists John H. Herz and William E. Griffith considered the failures of denazification policies to be the result of a lack of American understanding and support for German reconstruction.\textsuperscript{11} At times, these failures were seen as a result of inefficient planning, the inability to carry out planned policies, or the lack of stability in Germany. During this period, the policies themselves were the focus of examination and therefore were used as the supporting evidence for evaluations of the occupation. Upon admittance of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO in 1955, and the opening of federal documents regarding occupational policy, historians began to study the period for the motivations and consequences of occupation. Where the general concept of failure in Germany exists throughout the scholarly work presented on occupation since 1945, the manner in which it is examined has changed over time.

The 1960s and early 1970s presented the first of three significant methodological shifts in American occupation historiography. Historians began using case studies of individual German towns as a gauge of the success or failure of the occupation. Rather than studying policy alone in a top-down methodology historians were beginning to incorporate the experiences of Americans and Germans alike in their analyses to explain the complexities of occupation. Historian John

Gimbel studied the impact of occupation in Marburg, Germany in his 1961 work *A German Community under American Occupation: Marburg, 1945-1952*. This work argued that the occupation created anti-American sentiment among local Germans. Additionally, historian Edward N. Peterson argued that occupational policies were too harsh, unrealistic, and did not fulfill American goals in his 1977 study *The American Occupation of Germany: Retreat to Victory*. These studies produced more in-depth investigations that later became the basis for future scholars examining the occupation in greater detail.

The second significant shift in the study of American occupation came during the 1980s in response to heightened Cold War tensions. Building upon the more detailed studies of the 1970s, historians began a new trend of examining particular points of American occupation rather than studying the event as a singular point of analysis. Historian James F. Tent published a seminal study of occupation policies in his 1982 work *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American Occupied Germany*. By examining American efforts to educate German children on the values of democracy, Tent demonstrated that OMGUS reeducation policies employed American education practices and were not flexible enough to adapt to German educational traditions. Additionally, Frank M. Buscher examined the war crimes trials for the success of occupational policy in his 1989 work *The U.S. War Crimes Trial Program in Germany, 1946-1965*. Buscher asserted that through the process of creating political alliances in occupied Germany the United States failed to punish war criminals and democratize Germans by

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15 Ibid., 35.
convicting some Germans and employing others who presumably were guilty of the same crimes. A third, most recent shift occurred after 2000. In tandem with the rise of German memory studies after the reunification of Germany in 1990, historians began exploring the German perspective of occupation in more depth. In 2002, Maria Höhn examined the relationship between American servicemen and German civilians in her study GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany. Höhn argued that American racial and sexual practices were important components of the changing social and political situation in postwar Germany. Recently, studies have focused on the brutality of American forces and likewise the victimization of the German people during occupation. For example, historians Konrad H. Jarausch, Keith Lowe, and Giles MacDonogh have all concentrated their postwar German examinations on the continuation of wartime violence during the postwar reconstruction of Europe. These recent studies, concentrating on the relationship between American soldiers and German civilians, inform the latest occupational studies and engage with scholars examining German postwar memory studies.

18 Ibid.
The boom of memory studies that began in the mid-1980s primarily addressed the legacies and mechanisms of traumatic memory, particularly concentrating on how the Holocaust and World War II are remembered. Historian Charles S. Maier’s 1988 study *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* engaged in the debate regarding Holocaust exceptionalism to assert that the ways in which Germany engages with its past dictates its current identity, thus shaping the future of Holocaust remembrance.20 Studies addressing German identity and memory also examine memorials and engagement with public space. James Young asserted that engagement with physical space, particularly the monuments and memorials of the past, shape and reflect national identity in his 1993 work *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*.21 Furthermore, German memory studies regarding the postwar period generally fall within parameters of coping with past German atrocities, the formation of a new national identity, and studying the German postwar experience. Robert Moeller’s 2001 study *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past* examined the perceptions of average Germans to assert that victimization narratives allowed Germans to reject concepts of collective guilt and frame a postwar identity.22 Finally, combining the study of history, politics, and mass media, historian Wulf Kansteiner demonstrated in his 2006 work *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* that memory is a reflection of current political and media representations and is always changing as each generation remembers the past based upon current affairs.23 These examples of German memory studies are not exhaustive.

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of the field, and yet demonstrate that memory discourse, with regard to postwar Germany, includes examinations surrounding identity in the creation of a postwar history.

The discourse regarding identity among German memory historians informs this study on the American occupation of Germany by presenting a framework from which to understand how memory is developed, shapes national identity, and is influenced by the presence of the American military in the postwar decade. Absent from both the historiography of American occupation in Germany and German memory studies are examinations of the development of American memory of this period. This analysis seeks to present an examination of American memory of the postwar period from 1950-1955 to contribute to the ongoing historical dialog regarding the occupation and postwar development of West Germany.

At the core of this examination is an inquiry regarding the ways in which Americans engage in and remember the past. What role did American propaganda play in the development of contemporary recollections of time spent abroad during the 1950s? How do veterans who served in West Germany between 1950 and 1955 remember German civilians? Finally, how does academic scholarship on the occupation shape the ways that the American public engages with and remembers this period? These questions are explored through the engagement of sociological frameworks of memory analysis to contextualize veteran memories within historical scholarship on the period. Oral histories conducted through the Library of Congress in the early 2000s are explored to demonstrate the manner in which veteran memories reflect public reports presented by the American government and media during the 1950s. Additionally, academic scholarship on this period is closely examined to show the extent to which veteran memories
reflect historical narratives and how scholarship contributes to and frames public engagement of the past.

The positive relationship forged between the United States and West Germany in the early postwar period had a major impact on the ways that veterans remember the occupation. In the 1950s, the American media introduced the notion of the ‘tourist soldier’, a concept that depicted American soldiers in West Germany as enjoying a relaxed tour of duty filled with vacations and leisure. Veterans remembering their service fifty years later mimic this concept by recalling their time abroad as a positive and relaxed experience while also minimalizing the impact of their presence onto local Germans and within the Cold War. Collectively, memory of this period is representative of the historical narratives produced by Cold War propaganda and modern academic scholarship. This is in part influenced by the democratization of West Germany, the stabilization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany, and the continued American military presence in Germany.

Chapter one examines the relationship between memories of American occupation veterans and the televised and print media propaganda represented in the United States during the early 1950s. The political rhetoric of democratic partnership with West Germany during the rise of the Cold War heavily influenced the ways that veterans both perceived their role in Germany and their lasting memories of their experience abroad. This analysis contends that veterans’ collective memory of the postwar occupation was mediated by Cold War propaganda, thus influencing the ways in which they remembered the period of occupation in the 1950s as a pleasant experience. Cold War rhetoric during the 1950s is reflected in the veterans’ memories through recollections that portray their time abroad as an enjoyable mission to spread democracy.
Chapter two of this study contends that American veterans maintain a memory of German civilians during the 1950s that is complicated by the realities of devastation that existed during this period of rebuilding. Predicated upon their political, economic, and social status as occupying soldiers, their recollections reflect the remnants of war and perpetuate the patriarchal position of the United States. Veterans recalled their encounters with Germans in complex ways, presenting memories that range from sympathetic and positive to apathetic and demeaning. Absent among these collected memories is an acknowledgement of the social, economic, and political changes that Germans experienced and their impact upon those conditions. Scholarship on German identity and social analyses of American-German interactions informs the context from which veterans remember their positive and negative perceptions of the relationships between American GIs and Germans.

Chapter three studies the role of academic scholarship, published since 1990, in shaping contemporary discourse on the American occupation during the early 1950s. Examining academic literature concentrating on the occupation, I contend that scholarship of the early occupation period often ends in 1949, creating a historical silence of the continued American military presence in West Germany until rearmament in 1955. The 1950s are primarily studied through analyses of German political and social developments, presenting a vacancy in the ways this period is remembered from an American perspective. The boundaries and frameworks of academic scholarship are evident in the overshadowing of the 1950-1955 period by the 1945-1949 years and by the post-1950 German perspective and memory scholarship overshadowing the American experience of the occupation. This silence directly influences the ways in which
the American public engages with historical narratives and therefore shapes collective memory of this past.

Absent from the broadly positive American veteran collective memory of the occupation are the narratives of occupied German civilians. Their experiences and memories of the occupation period were wrought with poverty, physical and emotional reconstruction, and the existence of occupying military forces. The muting of German narratives from American occupation scholarship and Cold War propaganda informs how and why modern collective memory maintains a positive perception of this past. This is demonstrated through an analysis of American veteran oral histories, American media representations of the German occupation, and an in depth study of the historiographical boundaries set upon the period of occupation.
CHAPTER ONE: REMEMBERING RHETORIC: VETERAN MEMORIES OF THE
POSTWAR OCCUPATION THROUGH THE PRISM OF PROPAGANDA

American propaganda campaigns during the 1940s engaged and informed the American public of the national war effort to defeat the Axis powers during World War II. After the end of the war, Germany shifted from an enemy of the United States to an ally during the late 1940s. The rhetoric of propaganda in the United States shifted to reflect this changing relationship. In the 1950s, among other domestic and foreign developments, propaganda served as a tool to inform the American public on the military mission in West Germany, explaining the experience of the American GI abroad, and the successful efforts to contain Communism. In addition to the ways that propaganda affected American popular opinions, the reports had a direct effect on the ways in which veterans recalled their overall experience in West Germany. Veterans recalling their experiences in the early 2000s remembered their time in West Germany as a successful mission based upon their role as a military protector of Germany. Their memories contrast with scholarly analysis of the occupation that depicted the military occupation as a policy failure. Veterans recalled their experiences positively, reflecting upon their military service in West Germany as a relaxed environment. These positive recollections minimize the role of the military as an occupier and the experiences of Germans living under American supervision.

Cold War rhetoric displayed on American television and in print broadcasts depicted postwar Germany as the center of democratic success in the struggle against communism.\(^1\) For American servicemen, these reports had a direct impact on the ways they remembered their experiences abroad. Americans who served in the Armed Forces of the German occupation in the

1950s share a unique experience of Germany. Their involvement in postwar Germany was distinct from soldiers that served in World War II or the Korean War during the same period. Their tours in Germany occurred during a peacetime military occupation that did not involve armed conflict. Veterans of the 1950s German occupation comprise a collective group from which to understand how the occupation is remembered.

Sociological theories of collective memory frame the scope of examining veteran memories of the American occupation in Germany. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is considered to be the founder of collective memory studies. He asserted that at the core of collective memory is the idea that a group participating in remembering, or categorized as a collective, maintains a consistent recollection of events that do not change over time. Individual memories exist, but they do so within a shared sphere. Shared areas of memory are the recollections that are easiest to recall. Those that are more difficult to remember often are the most personal and therefore not a part of a collective. In his 1941 work The Collective Memory, Halbwachs stated, “The events of our life most immediate to ourselves are also engraved in the memory of those groups closest to us. Hence, facts and conceptions we possess with least effort are recalled to us from a common domain. These remembrances are ‘everybody’s’ to this extent.” According to Halbwachs, collective memory is not comprised of unique experiences or personal memories; it instead focuses on the shared memories or common themes of a larger group of people. Collective memory, therefore, is not a gathering of individual memories, but a representation of the commonalities among them. Collective memory stands apart from the notion of history because it is not self-critical but rather is celebratory in nature. Through the act

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of not criticizing the past, collective memory allows groups or societies to maintain a shared experience over time, one in which identity becomes inherently interconnected.³

The role of the individual in collective memory has been an important debate among sociologists and historians examining the ways that people remember the past.⁴ In 2002, historian Wulf Kansteiner criticized historical analysis of memory in his article, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies.” He asserted that historians developed concepts such as “social memory” and “cultural memory” as a way of relabeling collective memory to accommodate the perspective of the individual.⁵ Accordingly, the mislabeling or misuse of sociological theory weakens historical remarks on memory. In tandem with this critique, sociologist James Wertsch examined the role of individuals in collective memory in his 2002 work *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Wertsch outlined a method of understanding the different roles of individual memory within collective memory without detracting from a broader memory investigation. Wertsch explained that different individual memories still contribute to a collective in the same ways that anti-individualistic perceptions can. In what he calls a “complimentary distributed version of collective memory,” Wertsch detailed that it is assumed that everyone will bring a different viewpoint to a shared experience or memory.⁶ Collective memory is therefore “distributed” through varying representations of the past that “compliment” one another to portray a cohesive understanding of shared experiences.

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Rather than individual memory distracting from collective memory, different perspectives can exist in coordination with one another to create a fuller picture of the past. This is particularly true, Wertsch argued, when large groups of people are generally not in contact with one another.\(^7\) Without varying viewpoints, a composite of the collective cannot be fully understood.

James Wertsch’s analysis of collective memory elaborated upon the development of individual memory within a context of collective representation. He contended that individuals “share a representation of the past because they share textual resources.”\(^8\) Textual resources, or what Wertsch refers to as “textual mediation,” represent all of the mediums that influence the development or continuity of personal memory.\(^9\) These mediums can take the form of historical narratives, visual or audible representations, or other processes of historical memory that influence personal memory development. According to Wertsch, collective memory “is a form of mediated action” that is “distributed between active agents” and employed through cultural tools, or textual resources.\(^10\) This analysis of veteran memories of postwar Germany is understood through the process of textual mediation. Mediums such as televised broadcasts, newspaper reports, and films provided a form of mediation or influence upon the development and continuation of individual veteran memory. These memories also represent a distributed version of collective memory by allowing varying individual memories to compliment one another to represent a cohesive understanding of this specified collective group.

\(^7\) Ibid., 24. The veterans being examined here served in different areas throughout the American zone of Germany, often traveling as a result of their duty assignments. There is little evidence among these interviews to suggest that they had contact with one another. See Appendix B for maps of veteran’s service locations in Germany, 1945-1955.
\(^9\) Ibid., 27.
\(^10\) Ibid., 172.
Kansteiner’s criticism regarding historical use of individual perspectives is negotiated by implementing Wertsch’s theory of complimentary distributed collective memory and through the process of analyzing personal memories as a textually mediated representation of the past. Wertsch’s framework of contextualizing individual acts of remembrance addresses the methodological problem of weakening collective memory assertions by deconstructing the body of analyses. It does so by placing each memory within relation to one another rather than separating personal memory from the collective memory to define difference. Similarities and differences among veterans remembering occupation serve here as multiple, yet unifying, perspectives contributing to a more inclusive collective memory. Therefore, this examination of veteran interviews will be founded on sociological principles of collective memory, rather than employing historical frameworks of cultural memory or social memory, as a means of interpreting broader acts of remembrance of the postwar decade in Germany.

Beginning in 2000, American veterans began participating in an ongoing Veterans History Project, hosted by Library of Congress. Within the nationwide oral history project, 114 U.S. military veteran oral histories were examined, where veterans served in the American occupation of Germany between 1945 and 1955. Veteran service dates were selected based upon the general period of American military occupation in Germany. These interviews were

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12 See Appendix A for a full accounting of veteran interviews examined.
13 The American occupation of Germany was officially considered to end in 1949 upon the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and the transfer of authority from OMGUS to HICOG. However, a large garrison of troops remained as the military force of Germany until the nation was able to rearm upon being accepted into NATO in 1955. For more information on the end of American occupation, see Michael L. Hughes, *Shouldering the Burdens of Defeat: West Germany and the Reconstruction of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
chosen specifically for duty stations in Germany during this time period.\textsuperscript{14} 69 of the veterans were drafted into service and 45 volunteered. Approximately 19\% (21 of 114) of the subject veterans began their service during World War II between 1940 and 1945 and 70\% (80 of 114) began their service during the Korean conflict between 1950 and 1955.\textsuperscript{15} Of the interviews 114 analyzed, 113 veterans were men. Four veterans were African-American and the remaining 109 were white.\textsuperscript{16} The majority of the interviewed veterans, 95 of 114, served in the Army. Second to the Army, 15 of the interviewees served in the Air Force.\textsuperscript{17} With the exception of 4 soldiers who served in the British and French zones, all of the veterans served within the American zone of occupied Germany.\textsuperscript{18} Although their duty positions and locations throughout Germany varied, together they represent a collective body from which to understand how those who served in Germany remembered the occupation.

At the core of a collective memory analysis are the common perspectives, memories or shared experiences that bind a group together. Where veterans who served in World War II generally have similar memories based upon wartime propaganda, perspectives, and goals, the soldiers who served during the postwar occupation did not experience the same wartime unity. Germany experienced turbulent political, economic, and social changes between 1945 and 1955. The result of these changes influenced the manner in which Americans at home viewed Germany.
and the ways in which soldiers viewed Germans and their experience of occupation while stationed in Germany. Approximately 70% of the interviews examined in this study are of veterans who served in Germany between 1950 and 1955, creating a cohesive collective memory representation of the political situation after the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Despite the political changes occurring between 1945 and 1950, the veterans that served during the 1950s share similar memories of the occupation itself as an event. Veteran oral history interviews are analyzed for common topics, comments and themes that appear throughout the group. Discrepancies among the veteran memories demonstrate the ways in which differing viewpoints can still support the collective memory of an event. However, the concentration of this examination rests with the whole body of interviews, broader ideas of remembrance, and the ways in which televised and print mediums shaped the development of veteran memory.

Soon after the end of World War II, Frank Capra’s popular wartime television series, *This is Germany* featured a special episode, “Your Job in Germany,” for American soldiers preparing to occupy defeated Nazi Germany. According to the episode, the mistake of the United States after World War I was the belief that the German people were actually just average innocent civilians. It argued that military occupation could have prevented World War II, so the mission of the American military was to prevent a third World War by destroying all remnants of Nazism. The episode clearly explained that the role of the U.S. military was not to educate Germans on

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19 Each interview cited throughout this study will be referenced by the interviewee’s last name and year of interview. Due to the manner in which these oral histories were conducted (across various years, in different locations, and by different interviewers), all biographic information for each interviewee can be found in Appendix A. In occurrences when multiple interviewees have the same last name, letter ordering following the interview year is included for clarity.

their past mistakes. They needed to prove that they had been “cured of their disease.”

Soldiers were encouraged to follow local laws and respect traditions but fraternization with locals was strictly prohibited. It warned, “Every German is a potential source of trouble.” GIs were to prepare themselves for a stern military occupation of a dangerous people. In addition to this training video, pocket-sized books and reports from superior officers provided basic cultural information that the servicemen would need when arriving in the American occupation zone of Germany. Training videos, pamphlets, and reports prepared the American soldier for his arrival in defeated Germany. The 1945 wartime distrust of the German people quickly disintegrated as Americans and Germans began working together to stabilize the defeated nation. By 1950, American soldiers were traveling to Germany to serve as military protectors of German civilians against the threat of a Communist invasion. Their role in Germany was significantly reduced compared to the 1945 invasion, so much that by 1955 a television broadcaster referred to the American GI in Germany as the ‘tourist soldier.’

Television programs such as This is Germany served as an effective tool for the United States government to communicate foreign affairs to the American public and servicemen traveling abroad. Televised rhetoric of the mid to late 1940s swiftly transitioned from “Germany as enemy” to “Germany as ally” as Cold War tensions heightened during the 1948 Berlin Airlift. By 1950 Cold War rhetoric was a part of everyday life; newsprints, magazines, and weekly television news reports commonly portrayed anti-communist sentiments. Historian Nancy

21 Ibid. 9:38.
22 Ibid. 8:26.
Bernhard asserted in her 1999 study *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960* that a counterintuitive relationship existed between corporate television networks and the American government. She explained that despite the broadcasting networks insistence on the capitalistic foundation of the free press, they actually functioned within a government-managed bureaucracy. Bernhard stated, “In joining forces to sell the Cold War to the American people, government and industry professionals clearly knew they violated precepts of a free and independent press, but they justified it to themselves as a necessary patriotic duty in a fearsome age.”

One consequence of the government-media relationship was a homogenized narrative regarding the occupation of Germany. American GIs being sent to Germany were consumers of this pre-packaged rhetoric. Where the 1945 message in *This is Germany* was of distrust, by 1950 the tone had changed to a depiction of German normativity amid growing Cold War tensions in television series such as *The Big Picture*. In the mid-1950s many drafted servicemen were returning home, engaging with the “Germany as ally” narrative being promoted through news broadcasts and printed reports. This Cold War rhetoric influenced the ways in which veterans contextualized their personal experiences in Germany, therefore affecting the development of their memories and perceptions of the state of Germany.

During the postwar decade from 1945-1955, the development of the Cold War was visible in daily American newspaper and television reports. Prior to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, newspapers reported regularly on the capture of former Nazis in Germany. The television broadcast of the 1946 Nuremberg Trials demonstrated to Americans at

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home and abroad that Nazis were being punished and that German reconstruction could begin.\(^{26}\) Popular among these reports were the arrests of Nazi wives, concretizing the ideology that all German men and women who were active participants in Nazi atrocities were being held accountable.\(^ {27}\) Through 1948, American soldiers who remained in Germany as a conquering force became defenders of Germany when the Berlin Airlift began. General Lucius Clay, commanding officer for the Military Government from 1945-1949, recalled the difficulties of transitioning the occupation from wartime activity to peacetime occupation. He stated, “Nobody had had any experience in this kind of a job. [...] I can remember saying to General Eisenhower when he first went over there, ‘You're not going to have any success out of this until you get the Germans in.’”\(^ {28}\) In Germany, General Clay understood the necessity of shifting perspectives and welcoming German involvement in the occupation. This came in the form of creating local governments, changing policies regarding fraternization, and other political shifts that enabled a working partnership between the American military and German people. Historian James Diehl argued in 1993 that occupying powers became increasingly dependent upon Germans to overcome the postwar chaos in defeated Germany, where a “dialogue emerged between the victors and the vanquished.”\(^ {29}\) Clay’s understanding of the need to include German participation

\(^{26}\) For more information about changing perceptions of America’s transition from punisher to educator, see Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007).


influenced the policies driving occupational management and the ways in which the propaganda then reflected these developments.

In contrast to General Clay’s memory of encouraging German participation, scholars later criticized the ways in which the American government implemented these policies. Historian John Gimbel presented an influential study on the occupation in his 1968 work *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and Military, 1945-1949*. Gimbel argued that the problem of the occupation was the failure of American leaders to adapt to the strategic needs in Germany. He asserted that American military governors faced many local and global interests that dictated policy shifts. In addition to military directives regarding the German people, American leaders “wanted to frustrate socialism, to spare American taxpayers’ money, and to contain the Soviet Union in Central Europe” thus creating a situation in which all goals could not be met. Historian Edward N. Peterson elaborated on these varying interests in his 1977 study *The American Occupation of Germany: Retreat to Victory*. Peterson argued that the problem with American policy was that it was too inconsistent. Constantly changing policies and goals to accommodate the growth of German influence allowed the United States to consider “the American victory in the occupation [to be] a retreat from policies based on interference which would not work to other policies based on noninterference.” Scholarly criticisms of occupational policies generally focus on the 1945-1949 period of occupation. However, the political and social complications of occupation policies during the late 1940s and early 1950s

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31 Ibid.
are not present in the ways that American propaganda displayed the relationship or in the ways that veterans remember the period.

According to General Clay, the public opinion shift from a wartime occupation to a peacetime partnership necessitated his retirement. He asserted, “I think it would have been a great mistake to have kept the man who was responsible for the occupation there as a representative of the country which was restoring sovereignty.” Amid the occupation policy changes, Clay recognized the need to visibly transition the American control over Germany to align with developing democratically based policies. The United States government continued propaganda platforms as a tool to shift American perceptions of occupation from a negative view of Germans toward a unified fight against the spread of communism. One example of this was a television broadcast presenting the 1949 year-end review of foreign affairs. The Universal Newsreel reflected upon Germany’s, “Pledge to oppose communism” and to take “its place in a community of free nations.” No longer were the messages about Germany filled with worry and doubt; they were now seen as a democratically minded people in an emerging nation of peace.

In 1999, Historian Philip M. Taylor asserted that once Nazi Germany was defeated, the shift of wartime propaganda to a postwar battle for the ‘Free World’ against the ‘Slave World’ came as an easy transition for the American government. By 1950 the immediate postwar rhetoric that presented defeated Germany as an enemy had transformed to a friendlier message depicting the Federal Republic of Germany as a peaceful ally against communism.

33 Lucius Clay, 49.
35 For example, see: “Germany: A Good European,” Time Magazine, December 5, 1949.
In contrast to televised and printed support of democratized Germany during the 1950s, scholars at the time criticized the occupation as a policy failure. Many historians and political scientists during this period had military experience, presenting a unique firsthand insight that historians, decades later, did not possess. Political scientist John H. Herz argued in his 1948 article, “The Fiasco of Denazification in Germany,” that the failure of the program was the lack of German inclusion into the American policy to remove Nazi ideology from Germany.37 In spite of this criticism, by 1948 the planning of the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany was already underway, a process that was directly influenced by German politicians. During his service to the Office of Military Government United States (OMGUS), historian William E. Griffith presented his analysis of the policies in a 1950 article “Denazification in the United States Zone of Germany.” Griffith considered the occupation to be a “revolution by decree,” where the German people were forced to transition their government and ideologies to align with American goals.38 Additionally, historian John Montgomery also presented the sentiment of a forced revolution in his 1957 analysis Forced to be Free: The Artificial Revolution in German and Japan. Examining the American military control in Germany and Japan, Montgomery argued that the long term implications of forced revolutions can only be understood when Americans release non-interventionist views of foreign policy.39 These scholarly analyses became available to academic and public audiences during the same period that American propaganda campaigns promoted the success of the first phase of military occupation. Despite their vocal criticism of the “forced revolution” and failed policies the American propaganda

campaigns continued to present a successful mission in Germany. The contrast between scholarly contentions and American public engagement with German occupation can be clearly understood through the memories of veterans that experienced the occupation firsthand.

Changing perspectives of “Germany as enemy” to “Germany as ally” are reflected in the memory of the veterans that served during the early period of occupation. Of the oral histories examined, soldiers serving in the first half of occupation from 1945-1949 often viewed the occupation and their station in Germany as a positive event. These veterans recalled the dedication of the German people to rebuild their homes and industry. For example, James Carr served in Germany from 1947-1953. He recalled that his opinion of Germans changed over time. He remembered his initial view of the state of destruction by explaining, “It was bad, but they brought it on themselves.” But as he learned the German language and was able to talk to them, his opinion graduated to respect their rebuilding efforts. In addition to their perspectives changing based upon personal experiences, memories that reflected a positive depiction of the German people during such a period of transition are also a reflection of the rhetoric being propagated at home upon their arrival rather than the tone presented during their stay in Germany in the mid-1940s. Cold War propaganda mediated the development of World War II veteran memories by promoting the success of American democratic efforts in defeated Germany. Soldiers serving in the first years of occupation came home to news reports of a peaceful relationship with Germany.

42 Carr-2005, 3:15.
43 Carr-2005.
However, not all veterans recalled such a broadly positive viewpoint of Germans during this time. Approximately one-third of the veterans serving during the “enemy” phase of occupation remembered the Germans negatively.44 One demonstration of this engagement with the “enemy” narrative while returning home during the “ally” period was the way that Kenneth Badke recalled his perception of Germany. Serving in Germany through the war until 1949, Badke remembered Germany by explaining, “I like to say to people that was back when we owned Germany.”45 Badke maintained his negative views of Germans despite the changing rhetoric and political relationship with West Germany. These soldiers served during the war and therefore engaged more directly with wartime rhetoric rather than the relationship with Germany upon the end of their service. Despite contrasting perceptions of Germans during the first five years of occupation, most recalled their overall experience as a positive event. For many, their service contributed to the nation’s political goals and was remembered in accordance with televised propaganda that depicted the occupation as a successful mission to democratize Germany.

By the time the draft was reinstated in 1950, the relationship between the United States and Germany had settled into one of protection and partnership. Political scientist Daniel Nelson refers to the second half of the occupation period as Germany’s “semi-sovereignty” where the threat of communism drove the decision to rebuild American troop numbers in West Germany.46 The number of American soldiers stationed in the United States European Command (USEUCOM) steadily decreased between 1945 and 1950. However, heightened Cold War

45 Badke-Undated, 7.
tensions in Korea brought an influx of troops to Europe in 1951. Protecting Germany against communism became a focal point of news media in America. Furthermore, the prominence of Cold War rhetoric, as it related to the protection of Germany, was common among the memories of the soldiers who served in the American zone of Germany.

The connection between American government agencies and public broadcasters to enlist the support and participation of the American public in the war on communism resulted in a direct influence on the ways in which veterans remembered postwar occupation and the Cold War. Historian Ross F. Collins asserted in 2011 that the campaign to spread information during the 1950s could be read as both propaganda and persuasion. He defined propaganda as instructive and one-sided where persuasion necessitated audience engagement. According to Collins, the United States government participated in both platforms. Television news broadcasts that reported on the state of foreign affairs can be seen as propaganda, in that they were primarily instructional. Conversely, government sponsored programs such as Your Job in Germany can be interpreted as persuasion because they requested the active engagement of the soldier. In both instances, the United States government projected a calculated message to the American people explaining the motivations and beliefs needed to support democratic efforts in the Cold War. Particularly during the shift from “Germany as enemy” to “Germany as ally” the propaganda served as a mechanism to instruct and persuade the American public to change their perceptions of defeated Germany. As soldiers were returning home from Germany they were

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47 Between 1945 and 1950, the troops in the U.S. European Command had been reduced from 2.6 million to 80,000. By 1951, the total number of soldiers had increased again to over 120,000 men. Truman Strobridge, “Total Number of Assigned Military Personnel in U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) by Year, 1945-1955,” Armed Forces (Stuttgart, Germany: U.S. European Command Headquarters, 1982): 98-107, quoted in Daniel J. Nelson, A History of U.S. Military Forces in Germany (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 45.
able to personally connect with the broadcasted messages better than their civilian families and friends because they had a first-hand perspective of the state of the Cold War in West Germany. Veterans had the ability to contextualize the images on the television based upon the destruction and rebuilding efforts in Germany that they witnessed. The televised propagandist tone of American occupational success, democratization, and German stability influenced the ways in which veterans remembered their personal experiences with Germans and the realities of reconstruction. Decades later, veterans remembered their experiences in Germany in the same tone as the propaganda and Cold War rhetoric visible during the 1950s.

News outlets in the early 1950s received their information about foreign affairs directly from United States military commanders, rather than from political leaders. Lester Markel, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations in 1949, asserted the authority of the military on matters of public opinion. He claimed that their pragmatic viewpoint was essential for guiding public opinion because the military was responsible for the physical security of America.\(^{49}\) Returning commanders often appeared on evening news broadcasts, provided interviews to newspapers, and delivered information in propaganda films to report on the developments of the Cold War globally. Generals and other ranking military officials appeared in uniform and explained the progress of the occupation in Germany, the Cold War, and other foreign affairs around the globe. The presence of military commanders on television became a source of authority, consistency, and reliability for American audiences. Viewers were able to recognize the basis of authority in these programs through the visibility of decorated military uniforms.

In a 1952 CBS interview, news anchor Donald Rogers asked General William H. Wilbur about the status of German rebuilding. The General reported, “Germany’s recovery is a miracle [...] that is one of the remarkable things in Germany. The vitality, the optimism, the enthusiasm of which they’re going about their job.” Fifty years later the same sentiment, almost verbatim, is present when veterans remember their interactions with German rebuilding. When asked about their impressions upon arriving in Germany, many veterans commented on the destruction they witnessed. However, observations about the ruins were promptly followed by recollections of how they assisted Germans in the rebuilding effort. Veterans explained how proud they were to watch the Germans take on the task of reconstruction, recalling the memories with fondness. For example, Robert Smolik, stationed in Stuttgart, recalled that Americans were wasteful in comparison to Germans because, “they reused everything [...] they even cleaned the forest.” Sentiments of pride and responsibility for German recovery are just as active in the memory of veterans as it was displayed on the evening news during occupation. Veterans attributed this pride to the strength of the Marshall Plan in its allocation of funds to Germany for the purposes of stabilizing the economy and to the willingness of Germans to rebuild and become a partner with the United States.

Government sponsored programs that detailed the latest news from abroad were wider reaching than periodic news interviews. These propaganda films were aired on American television stations at home and screened on American military bases in Germany. The rhetoric

contained within these films can still be read in the memories of veterans recalling events
decades later. In 2002, Historian Shawn J. Parry-Giles examined President Truman’s “Campaign
of Truth” and asserted that a militaristic paradigm of psychological warfare came to replace
journalistic efforts to neutrally document current affairs as early as 1947.  

This idea described by Parry-Giles is evident in one government sponsored weekly television broadcast. From 1951-1971, the Army Pictorial series, *The Big Picture*, aired weekly on over 350 television stations nationwide, reporting to the nation on a variety of topics regarding foreign affairs and served as a tool to recruit enlistments. In what historian Lisa Mundey refers to as the era of American militarism, *The Big Picture* represented, “the official Army self-image.” Among the many global issues covered, this television series provided the American public with insight into the role of the United States military in the German occupation. Soldiers returning from Germany were able to see the portrayal of their experiences on television weekly. The depictions on screen did not always match the ways veterans recalled their daily lives abroad, but it provided veterans a way to relate their experiences to their families. Additionally, the rhetoric of *The Big Picture* provides a framework from which the veteran memories, fifty years later, can be understood. In most cases, veterans recalled their experiences in almost identical fashion to the depictions in these propaganda films and television broadcasts. This television series influenced and mediated the ways that veterans made sense of their own experiences, placing themselves within the broader Cold War rhetoric and American culture at the same time.

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One episode of *The Big Picture* in 1955, “Division in Europe,” is indicative of how the military promoted occupation in Germany, thus influencing veteran memory development. “Division in Europe” explained the state of German recovery, developments in the Cold War, and most importantly, the daily lives of soldiers stationed in the American zone of Germany.\(^{58}\) One component of this episode was an explanation of the everyday duties of occupation soldiers, particularly the extensive field maneuver exercises and war games training for the preparation of a Soviet invasion. Approximately two-thirds of the veterans interviewed about their experiences in Germany mentioned the constant maneuvers and war games. Half of those men remember the maneuvers as a negative part of their time spent in Germany. Reporting that the situation was often tense and monotonous, they disliked the routine drills.\(^{59}\) Donald Higgins served in Mainz and remembered that they spent weeks in tents with gasoline heaters and that the situation was unbearable.\(^{60}\) David Allen served in Nuremberg and saw the constant war games as a way for the officers to harass lower ranking soldiers.\(^{61}\) Conversely, half of the veterans remarked that it was just a part of the job, and did not state any detailed opinions about the training itself. Location in Germany and assigned duties accounted for the divide between positive and negative memories of the field maneuvers. The number and length of field maneuvers and war games varied based upon where the soldier was located and his daily job responsibilities. Many of the men working in clerical or administration positions rarely participated in the games, where as men assigned


\(^{60}\) Higgins-2010.

\(^{61}\) Allen-Undated.
specifically for infantry duties often spent weeks at a time out in the field. The memories of the veterans depict this aspect of serving in Germany differently, but generally as the most uncomfortable aspect of daily life. In this instance the memories of the veterans match the propaganda in so far as remembering as a daily event. Unlike the “Division in Europe” episode, they did not communicate a willingness or pleasure in participating in the war games. The importance of the maneuvers themselves were understood and accepted by all of the veterans that recalled it. The veterans reflected the necessity of field training for a possible attack in the same manner as the televised episode of “The Big Picture.”

The majority of veterans interviewed, approximately 88%, viewed their time in Germany as a positive experience. The rhetoric of their recollections portrayed the same tone and depiction of those that were broadcasted by *The Big Picture* when they returned home. Veterans reflected that their mission in Germany was to grow democracy and protect Germans against communism. For example, Gumesindo Reyes served in Germany from 1947-1950. He recalled, “Had we left the Germans there, [the Soviet Union] would have done the job for us.” According to Reyes, it was the responsibility of the United States to protect Germany from the Soviet Union. David Begin, stationed in Baumholder from 1951-1953, understood a dual mission of the military occupation and serving for NATO to “repel the Russians.” Begin asserted that the Pentagon informed the troops that Korea was a diversion for the Soviet Union to strike

64 Reyes-Undated, 12.
65 Begin-2004, 5.
Germany. Many of the men recalled feeling proud of their efforts to stabilize Germany while protecting it from Communism. Their tone was reflective of Cold War ideologies and an inherent sense of patriotism. Where scholars from the 1950s considered occupation policies to be a failure, veterans considered their mission in Germany to be a successfully completed goal to democratize and protect West Germany.

In addition to the importance of German protection and field maneuvers, the “Division in Europe” episode featured all of the vacation inspired activities enjoyed by the American soldiers in Germany. Portrayed as an extended holiday, troops were marrying local women, playing baseball, fishing, and sharing music at dances. “For the tourist soldier, there are magnificent cathedrals of Cologne and Ulm […] Here, perhaps the American servicemen on duty with the Seventh Army can best reflect upon and appreciate why he serves where he does.” In addition to reporting on the state of foreign policy abroad, this news report trivialized the role of the American soldier in Europe by presenting the leisure and travel available to soldiers in a peacetime occupation. By explaining that the soldier can “appreciate why he serves where he does,” narrator Sergeant Stuart Queen demonstrated the elevated value of being stationed in Germany, as opposed to other locations such as Korea. Additionally, the notion of the ‘tourist soldier’ implies that the role of the GI was more of leisure than the occupation or defense of Germany. Veterans broadly remembered their experiences in Germany with the same tenor as the news broadcasts. Their memories reflect and reinforce this concept by placing an emphasis on the amount of free time they had as American occupiers in Germany.

66 Ibid.
67 The Big Picture, “Division in Europe,” 9:35.
With few exceptions, all veterans interviewed recalled their free time while in Germany. The highlight of being stationed in Germany, for many, was the prospect of traveling throughout Europe when off duty. When referring to free time during a normal week they would often cite German bars, military base service clubs, and baseball games as their preferred method of relaxation. George Gemberling remembered that while he was stationed in Frankfurt he frequently attended dances, visited nightclubs and bingo halls, and even saw Danny Kay perform at a USO show. In addition to men referring to the ways that they spent their personal free time, they also remembered how they encountered local Germans during this leisure time. The “Division in Europe” episode depicted American men and German women enjoying music together. Explaining the shared love of music between Americans and Germans, Queen narrated, “The scores of Germany’s great composers are played by service musicians wherever Americans are on duty, fostering international goodwill through common interests.” Four of the veterans interviewed were stationed in Germany for the specific purpose of playing in touring musical ensembles. Carl McDaniel remembered that practicing for concerts and touring was his sole duty while in Germany. He played with a regimental band that played for both the troops and German civilians. Other soldiers remembered playing sports more than any service related responsibilities. Samuel Orlando, while stationed in Marburg, recalled that the best part of

69 Gemberling-Undated.
70 For more information on the exchange between Americans and Germans and the influence of music and American culture, see Uta POiger, Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
71 Ibid. 11:53.
72 Batic-2006, Finken-2011, Hatcher-2006, and McDaniel-2005. In addition to these 4 veterans, others stated that playing music was a portion of their duty, but not their sole duty on base.
73 McDaniel-2005.
74 The broadcast discusses baseball as the “imported American sport”, The Big Picture, “Division in Europe,”12:10. However, many of the veterans recalled playing more basketball and football rather than baseball.
being in the Army was touring Europe in basketball tournaments. Reminiscent of the propaganda series presented on American television, veterans remembered their free time as a means of explaining why being stationed in Germany was such as positive experience.

The majority of the veterans interviewed were drafted during the rise of the Korean War. *The Big Picture* informed the American public of the militaristic reasons for the reinstated draft. Episode 288, “Time to Go” depicted a conversation between two new draftees discussing the positive and negative aspects of being chosen for selective service. The overall message demonstrated that serving in the military may be an inconvenience to some, but it supported the freedom and democracy of America and was therefore worthwhile. Contrary to *The Big Picture* portrayal, many veterans who served in Germany did not enjoy the process of being drafted. When discussing the draft, many veterans cited being able to avoid the conflict in Korea as the top reason for being appreciative of serving in Germany. Of the 45 veterans who volunteered, almost all recalled that they volunteered to avoid the draft. Some did so in an effort to stay with their friends, others volunteered for the opportunity to choose their duty station. In some instances, veterans were in basic training preparing to go to Korea, and then were unexpectedly transferred to Germany.

The relief of avoiding war was often complicated by their guilt for not having served in Korea. All soldiers stationed in Germany for more than 30 days, between May 1945 and May 1955, were eligible to receive the Occupation Service Medal for serving as a part of the German

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75 Orlando-2004.
77 Abzezetian-2005, Bradley-Undated, Fabian-2006, Green-Undated, and Sharp-2002 are among many that commented on being happy to avoid Korea.
occupation. When asked about the medal, many veterans stated that they did not receive the medal or they did not want it because they felt that they did not contribute to wartime activities. Perceptions of not contributing to war-based military goals reflects the veterans minimalizing the importance of American soldiers in Germany and the potential guilt they felt for not serving in battle. These veterans serving in the occupation of Germany came home to a propagated message about the Cold War and Germany, but did so during the same time that their fellow soldiers were returning from Korea. When being asked about their service, interviewees often had to repeatedly clarify that they did not serve in the Korean War when answering the standard introductory question, “In what war or conflict did you serve?” With few exceptions, all of the veterans interviewed justified their presence in Germany as either a result of the draft or as serving in support of the Cold War. But they had to specify that while they were drafted either before or during the Korean War, they did not serve there. Instead, they served in Germany to accomplish the mission of preventing a Soviet invasion into Germany. Through the act of justifying their presence in Germany, veterans reflected the “Time to Go” message of serving for the purpose of defending democratic ideologies. Additionally, they recalled their tour in Germany as less serious or important than those veterans that served in Korea, thus fueling the notion of the ‘tourist soldier.’

In contrast to scholarly examinations during the same period, veteran memories and government-sponsored propaganda campaigns depicted the occupation of Germany as a

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79 Eligibility for the Occupation Medal in Berlin was separate than the American zone in central Germany. Berlin soldiers were eligible between May 1945 and October 1990. “Army of Occupation Medal WWII,” United States Army Veterans, http://veteranmedals.army.mil (accessed October 22, 2014).
81 The Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project provides a standardized list of interview questions to be used as a guideline for conducting an oral history with a veteran. After answering a brief series of biographical questions, this question serves as the transition to discussing military duty. For a complete list of these questions, see http://www.loc.gov/vets/conducttheinterview.html.
successful mission. Nazi Germany was destroyed and a democratically based Federal Republic of Germany rose in its stead. Four years after Germany joined NATO in 1955, The Big Picture aired a special episode reflecting on American success in, “Germany Today.” The 1959 pictorial examined the ten-year history of American occupation in Germany by displaying the state of German destruction in 1945 and reflecting back upon the growth and prosperity that existed at the time of filming. Army personnel interviewed Germans for their perspective on the state of Germany and its partnership with the United States. In staged and possibly scripted interviews, Germans espoused their gratitude for the continued presence of American forces. A German woman was asked to provide her opinion on the idea of democratic freedom in West Berlin. She stated, “I think all Berliners share my opinion and we’re all united and determined to retain this freedom no matter what the price. We’ve been suppressed before and we know what it means to live under suppression.” By the airing of this program in 1959, German conceptions of victimization narratives were a prominent method of coping with the Nazi past. The American Army, through the act of including this remark in the broadcast of The Big Picture, reinforced this idea to the American public. This interview depicted the need to protect Germany through the demonstration of German victimization and the interviewee’s support of the partnership between the United States and Germany. Contrary to the 1945 German who needed to prove he had been “cured of his disease,” the 1959 German is depicted as a victim of Nazism

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83 Ibid. 25:32.
84 Scholars examining the postwar period have explored notions of German victimization at length. For example, see Robert Moeller, War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
worried about the threat of Communism. America served as the guarantor of peace and stability for the new republic as the film depicted the Germans’ gratitude.

Where *Your Job in Germany* specifically instructs American GIs to not enter German homes, “Germany Today” shows American soldiers eating in a German home, stating that they are “regarded as a welcome guest”. This setting is visibly staged, where GIs are happily eating at a table while German citizens stand uncomfortably on the side of the room, staring at the cameras. Contrary to the narrated dialog expounding upon the welcomed engagement between Germans and Americans, the Germans presented on camera appear uncomfortable with the filming. The placement of the German family on the side of the room quietly shows the reality of the presence of American soldiers invading upon local Germans private space. What is clear is the filmmaker’s subordination of the German unease in the room while placing an emphasis on the happy Americans. Any tensions between the American military and local Germans that may be visible in the “Germany Today” footage is not verbally discussed in the film, nor is it remembered by veterans. Many of the interviewed veterans actively spoke about their positive relationships with locals rather than discussing any problems that may have existed in daily interactions. Overall, veterans recalled the same rhetoric displayed in “Germany Today,” one of personal pride of the efforts by the German people to rebuild and the appreciative feelings that Germans held toward the presence of American troops. Veterans recalling this period fifty years later remember the notion of the cordial partnership between Americans and Germans presented in “Germany Today”.

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85 Theodore Geisel, “Your Job in Germany,” 8:26; Ibid. 2:10.
86 *The Big Picture*, “Germany Today,” 12:27.
Veterans broadly remembered the state of German democratization as a successful mission to rebuild the defeated nation and to prevent a communist invasion. The “Germany Today” episode states, “We are an army helping a fallen nation regain her dignity, her place in the free world. […] There is no magic formula for the rehabilitation of a country. There is only the realism of sincere effort, a helping hand, and people determined to find their way back.”  

This message of peace and friendliness toward the German people was televised in 1959, less than five years after the return of many 1950 draftee veterans. The affect that Cold War propaganda had on veterans that experienced German occupation can still be seen in the ways that it is remembered a half century later. Collectively, veterans remember their time in Germany as an experience based upon the good will toward Germans and their defense of the newly developing nation against Communist aggression. The celebratory nature of the early Cold War efforts through government and news broadcasting propaganda campaigns mobilized the nation to rally behind the democratic battle cry and the rehabilitation of defeated Germany. Veterans recalled the intricacies of their service based upon their personal understandings of Cold War rhetoric in the 1950s and their engagement with published propaganda upon their return home. Rather than focusing on their individual perceptions, which conceivably differed from the nationalistic messages being depicted for mass consumption, they brought with them into the present the memory of an era gone by. The Cold War propaganda of the 1950s mediated the rhetoric of veteran memories, representing a collective image of a celebratory period in which America successfully protected the German people from communism and the soldier enjoyed a casual tour of duty filled with vacations and leisure.

87 *The Big Picture*, “Germany Today,” 13:34.
88 This date is implicit of the veteran interviews examined in this study. With the exception of a few soldiers that remained in service for full career duty of 20 years, most of the veterans interviewed returned to the United States by 1955.
American Cold War propaganda provided occupation veterans a mechanism to collectively place themselves among the World War II generation of soldiers while reconciling their lack of participation in the Korean War. Television programs during the 1950s demonstrated to the American public and returning servicemen the mission to protect German civilians and the leisurely life the American GI experienced. Viewing televised programs after they returned home provided veterans a way of verbalizing and contextualizing their experience for friends and family. The men were able to place themselves within the occupation of Germany, the Cold War, and among a generation of postwar servicemen. The 1950s propaganda was a mode for veterans to relive the positive aspects of serving abroad, while eliminating any negative experiences of serving the military in a war-devastated nation. The government-sponsored television shows eliminated negative components of the occupation by minimalizing the German realities of the postwar experience. Propaganda campaigns concentrated upon the success of the American military above the poverty and struggles in Germany. The result of this calculated message marginalized the German struggle for the American public and veterans engaging with this rhetoric upon their return home. Remembering their time abroad casually, through the notion of the ‘tourist soldier,’ veterans recalled that they were lucky to have served in Germany. They remembered attending USO shows, traveling throughout Europe, and playing sports above their responsibilities as soldiers or their influence upon the German people as occupiers. Postwar American GIs in Germany were able to take pride in their role as the creators of German democracy while enjoying a relaxed tour of duty abroad. Therefore, 1950s Cold War propaganda served as the prism for veterans to remember an event underrepresented in postwar collective memory.
CHAPTER TWO: DAILY LIFE ABROAD: AMERICAN VETERANS REMEMBER GERMANS DURING THE 1950S

Servicemen in the American zone of occupied Germany interacted with Germans amid the postwar realities of physical reconstruction, economic stabilization, and political realignment. Veterans who served in West Germany during the early 1950s remembered their encounters with Germans within this context. This analysis of veteran memory engages with prominent themes found among their recollections, as they pertain to their interactions with local Germans during this period. Common among veteran memories were aspects of interactions with local Germans that affected the daily life of American GIs. Living quarters were recalled, particularly when residing in German homes or vacated German military barracks. Veterans remembered how the use of German labor affected their daily lives while stationed in Germany. They also described daily interactions with German women and the impact these relationships had on their perceptions of Germany. The black market was remembered, particularly the use of cigarettes as a form of currency, as an important component of the relationship between American servicemen and local Germans. Finally, American veterans reflected upon their overall perceptions of Germans and their broader opinions about the state of Germany during the 1950s. Veterans recalled some postwar realities, such as the black market and the prominence of prostitution, that are presented in scholarly literature on postwar Germany. Absent from their recollections are the acknowledgement of the personal hardships or the complexities of rebuilding faced by the German people.

American veteran’s interactions with local West Germans ranged from positive and cordial to belittling and demeaning. Where most veterans recalled an amicable interaction with local Germans, soldiers also remembered treating Germans unkindly and portrayed these
interactions as a source of amusement. Absent from these recollections are a sense of regret for any poor treatment of local Germans. Their complex and at times contradictory recollections of personal interactions with locals throughout Germany were framed within the political, economic, and social developments of postwar West Germany. The occupation status of the United States within West Germany created a platform from which veterans were able to frame their personal interactions and therefore their memories of these relationships. From the vantage point of being an occupying soldier, American GIs often had the ability to choose the manner in which they engaged local Germans. Silenced within these complex narratives are the engagement with German reconstruction and the continued hardships faced by West Germans on a daily basis during the 1950s. Veteran oral histories, concentrating upon the role of individual memories within a collected memory analysis, are examined to demonstrate that veterans were able to engage with local Germans in both sympathetic and demeaning ways because of their political, economic, and social status as American soldiers.

An examination of how veterans remembered their interactions with Germans during the postwar period necessitates a close study of individual memories. Historian Susan A. Crane compared the role of the individual in collective memory theories in her 1997 article “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory.”¹ In her analysis of theories posited by influential scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nova, Crane contended that individual memory is central to understanding historical memory and collective memory.² She argued for the need to concentrate on “the individual who disappeared in the occlusion of personal historical

² Crane distinguished historical memory, often represented as a historical narrative, as a specific form of collective memory rather than being a result of the interpretation of collective memory.
consciousness by the culture of preservation.”3 Where historical memory and collective memory focus on a body of memories, the individual serves as an artifact of collective memory, by the act of remembrance, and as an artifact of historical memory, through the act of interpreting the past.4 A concentration on the role of the individual within a memory analysis lies at the core of this study of American veterans remembering their personal encounters with occupied Germans. Veteran memories serve as an artifact of collective memory through their acts of remembrance. Additionally, they act as an artifact of historical memory through the veteran’s personal engagement with the past and the process of this study utilizing veteran memories as a source of understanding of the American-German encounter during postwar occupation.

This examination of veteran memories is a collected memory analysis, through the process of concentrating upon the role of the individual. Sociologists, historians, and other memory scholars have highlighted the differences between the study of collective memory and that of collected individual memory. Historian Wulf Kansteiner explained, “Collected memory is an aggregate of individual memories.”5 Where collective memory focuses on the acts of remembrance by a group or society, collected memory relies upon the role of personal remembrance to obtain an understanding of a specified group’s memory. Collective memory has traditionally focused on an entire group or society and is therefore connected to cultural identity.6

3 Ibid., 1383.
4 Ibid.
Conversely, collected memory allows for an understanding of a group’s recollection without cultural or political implications by concentrating on individual memory.

Sociologist Jeffrey Olick asserted that collected memory assumes cultural neutrality, presuming that a subset of individuals do not necessarily represent collectivity. Americans servicemen stationed in 1950s Germany experienced the occupation in ways unique from the American public. Therefore, their personal experiences and memories of occupied Germans must be understood distinctly from American collective memory of the postwar occupation. It cannot be considered to reflect an American collective memory of the occupation in Germany because it is reliant upon the personal experiences and memories of veterans who personally experienced postwar Germany. Furthermore, articulations about American GIs behavior and treatment of local Germans is restricted here to the specified body of oral histories examined for this study. Assumptions about American popular cultural memory and subsequent political identity are avoided by placing the role of the individual memory above the cultural components of collective memory. Engaging with Susan Crane’s assertion on the role of the individual, veteran oral histories serve here as an artifact of collected memory and as an artifact of historical memory through their engagement with the past. As an artifact of historical memory, veteran memories illuminate the collected memory silences of postwar German hardships and national developments. These silences appear due to the nature of the oral histories conducted through the Library of Congress and through the veterans’ recollections that project what they considered to be positive aspects of their service in West Germany.

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7 Jeffrey K. Olick, “Collective Memory: The Two Cultures,” Sociological Theory 17, no. 3 (November, 1999), 338.
With the exception of four African-American veterans and one female, all of the oral history interviews analyzed for this study are comprised of veterans that are white males. Due to this sample of veteran recollections, the perspectives and memories demonstrated here reference the experiences and memories of white men, removing the possibility to explore the dynamics of African-American perspectives of postwar Germany and their influence upon white veteran memories. Veteran interviewees do not address race in recollections of their interactions with Germans nor do they address their relationships with fellow African-American soldiers because they are focusing upon their own personal experiences in the interviews. However, the relationships between African-American and white GIs with West Germans influenced the social and cultural experiences remembered by all veterans. Recent scholarship exploring the relationships between African-American GIs and Germans has complicated understandings of the political and social developments during the postwar years in East and West Germany. The importation of Jim Crow segregation practices and African-American culture, the dynamics of African-American and German personal relationships, and changing perceptions of race in Germany all influenced the ways in which postwar Germany engaged with the United States politically and socially. Scholars have shed light on the dichotomies of racial relations in postwar Germany, demonstrating that postwar political and cultural developments were directly influenced by the presence of African-American GIs.\(^8\) The absence of African-American

perspectives in this study limits the ability to complicate white American GI memory within racial social and cultural exchanges.

American soldiers stationed throughout Germany during the 1950s remembered their interactions with local Germans based upon their personal experiences with individuals and groups in different regions of the nation. For example, Richard Fabian recalled feeling bad for the state of poverty that the Germans experienced during his time in Germany from 1952-1954. After conducting training maneuvers during the day in Baumholder, Fabian toured the country in the evening and on weekends playing music for fellow soldiers and Germans. When asked about his experience with Germans, he noted that two children often followed him around. The soldier gave the children candy and ice cream regularly because he felt bad for them.\(^9\) Leo Barooshian maintained a positive view of Germans despite his experiences with anti-American sentiment among young Germans. During his service in Hanau from 1952-1954, he remembered protestors holding signs that read, “Yankees go home, you’re not wanted here.”\(^10\) Despite encountering protestors, Barooshian maintained an optimistic memory of local Germans. He remembered, “I really liked the German people. I thought they were very nice. They were dependable people and hard workers.”\(^11\) The protestors did not diminish Barooshian’s overall experience in Germany. These recollections of interactions with Germans by Corporal Fabian and Private Barooshian demonstrate the differences among American veteran experiences with local Germans.

\(^9\) Fabian-2006, 23. Biographical and interview data for each veteran oral history interview cited here can be found in Appendix A. When quoted, pagination of transcripts or audio markers within audio or video recordings will be indicated. Additionally, visual representations of the veteran service locations within Germany can be found in Appendix B.


\(^11\) Ibid., 13:53.
throughout 1950s postwar Germany, interacting with locals in varying contexts of postwar reconstruction and occupation.

Veteran narratives of the postwar German occupation concerned personal interactions with Germans and their recollections of daily life in postwar Germany. Amid the growing number of American military installations throughout West Germany during the 1950s, many veterans recalled living in requisitioned German property and former Nazi military barracks. American servicemen were often stationed in German homes, hotels, military barracks, and public buildings.12 Historian Theodor Scharnholz argued in a 2013 article “German-American Relations at the Local Level: Heidelberg, 1948-1955,” that the requisitioning of property in Heidelberg served as a major source of contention among local Germans.13 However, many local residents did not actively protest the occupation of this property. Scharnholz argued that, “economic conditions compelled cooperation because the occupation forces held the key to recovery in the garrison cities.”14 While living in garrison cities, servicemen employed local citizens, bought German goods, and helped local economies. Despite Scharnholz’s assertion that the presence of American troops in German homes served as a point of contention, the veterans recalled this aspect of daily life without incident. To the soldiers, living in German property was just another facet of being stationed in Germany. This perspective is reliant upon their status as occupiers, as they would not have been living in German homes otherwise.

12 Although this facet of daily life occurred throughout Germany, it was most prevalent in developing military installations in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of West Germany. See Maria Höhn, GIS and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
13 Scharnholz references the Heidelberg Amtsanzeiger as reporting in October 1949 that approximately 450 residential buildings, 1100 personal dwellings, 40 hotels, and 42 public buildings were already requisitioned by the American military. Theodor Scharnholz, “German-American Relations at the Local Level: Heidelberg, 1948-1955,” in GIs in Germany: The Social, Economic, Cultural, and Political History of the American Military Presence, eds. Thomas M. Maulucci, Jr. and Detlef Junker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 145.
14 Ibid., 148.
Many veterans remember being stationed in German military barracks and recalled this as a common part of the occupation. Donald Higgins, stationed in Mainz from 1953-1955, noted that he lived in German officer buildings and the view from his room consisted of destroyed buildings, including portions of the barrack complex he stayed in. Unlike Scharnholz’s account of Americans assisting the local economies, Higgins reported that only 10% of men stationed on his military post were allowed to receive passes to go outside of the base at any given time. Although Higgins did not reflect upon why this restriction was in place, his narrative would imply that the ability to impact the local economy would have been significantly lower than projected by Scharnholz. This limitation was not present throughout all German towns. Jack Abel was stationed in Berlin during his decade-long service in the 1950s, and recalled that the McNair barracks were “very beautiful and luxurious.” Serving as a supply clerk in a General’s office, Abel remarked that life in the barracks was so boring that men would often leave and spend time in restaurants and bars. When mentioning the barracks, veterans often referred to the buildings as “old Nazi barracks,” creating a distinction between the Germans during World War II and the Germans they encountered during the 1950s.

Veterans who specifically recalled their perceptions of German citizens distinguished between Nazis and German civilians, delineating between the Germans who participated in the war and those who lived through it. One soldier recalled that his job was to “round up Nazis” after the war; but he very much enjoyed having a professional German chef at his barracks and

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16 Higgins-2010.
17 Ibid.
18 Abel-Undated, 10:19
19 Ibid.
trading food with local Germans. Creating a distinction between Nazis and civilians was common among all of the veterans who were interviewed and was a distinction that already existed within German political and social culture. Notions of German victimhood became a prominent mechanism of separating wartime Nazi atrocities from postwar German reconstruction. Scholars continue to debate the visible representations and cultural manifestations of victimization in postwar Germany. Where historian James Diehl asserted that the war-disabled and returning POWs represented the clearest example of victimization, historian Elizabeth Heinemann argued, “The large number of women left single by the war was evidence of German victimhood.” Victimhood provided a social platform from which American GIs continued to place Germans in a position of inferiority. This is evident by the 1950s occupational mission of protecting Germany against a Communist invasion and the continued feminization of Germany by the United States. Through the 1950s, veterans generally remembered treating local Germans as civilians and not as a defeated enemy. Whatever tensions took place while they were stationed in Germany, soldiers balanced the changing relationship with Germans by compartmentalizing their memory into relationships with Nazis versus relationships with civilians.

20 Wuensche-2012.
23 For more information on the gendered relationship between the United States and West Germany, see: Petra Goedde, GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Uta Poiger, Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
In addition to living in abandoned German military barracks, American servicemen often lived in requisitioned homes, apartments, and hotels; remarking upon this facet of daily life as commonplace. Historian John Willoughby examined lives of American soldiers in Germany during the early postwar period in his 2001 work *Remaking the Conquering Heroes: The Social and Geopolitical Impact of the Post-War American Occupation of Germany*. Although Willoughby ends his study in 1948, the situations he presented persisted into the 1950s. For example, he argued that as a result of local pressure, American leaders began returning property to local Germans in the late 1940s.²⁴ Contrary to Willoughby’s assertion that property was returned, as the number of U.S. soldiers increased in the early 1950s, many accompanied by their families, the requisitioning of property continued. For example, James Anderson lived with his wife and five children in “a nice German home” while in Munich from 1955-1964.²⁵ He recalled that the home was in a good neighborhood and that he had friendly neighbors. However, he did not mention the impact that his living situation may have had on Germans that were no longer living in that home. Other soldiers remembered living in German apartment buildings where they shared bedrooms, usually with two or three men per room.²⁶ The buildings were also requisitioned German buildings. When remembering sharing the bedrooms, the veterans remarked that it was more comfortable than cramped military barracks. Remarkable about the quality of living conditions, Horace Vincent Apgar joked that “it was an awful life” because he lived in a mansion. During his stay in Stuttgart, Apgar humorously recalled that they were destitute because they did not receive wine from the maids at breakfast, only during lunch and

²⁵ Anderson-2007, 15:54.
²⁶ For example, see: Kreitz-2012, Shank-2008, Worth-2010, and Zelinski-2012.
dinner. The jovial nature of Apgar’s recollection is common among many veterans remembering their experiences abroad, particularly with regard to their perception of German labor. Veterans commonly spoke of the maids and ease of their living conditions. For example, Vernon Grabowski lived in a German home with a maid in Frankfurt from 1953-1955. Aptly summarizing the quality of life and the living quarters for soldiers, Grabowski remarked that an American man “lived like a king over there.” The status of the American GI allowed the men to enjoy their living situations without regard to the displacement or hardships of Germans affected by property requisitioning. Similar to the veterans who lived in German barracks, veterans living in occupied German homes often saw these arrangements as commonplace.

Absent from veteran narratives regarding living in requisitioned homes are their views of the impact of their presence onto local housing conditions and German perceptions of this facet of occupation. Historian Maria Höhn, in her 2002 study *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* described the displacement of Germans from private residences at the same time that she explained how local Germans often were able to rent their homes to soldiers for a significant profit. On the one hand, homeowners were forcibly removed from their homes as the United States built military communities and commandeered property. On the other hand, Germans, desperate for income, rented out portions of their homes to GIs to compensate for the lack of employment opportunities. Furthermore, historian Elizabeth Heineman explained that despite the creation of three million housing units in West

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27 Apgar-2011.
30 Ibid.
Germany from 1951-1956, housing shortages for single and married women persisted.\textsuperscript{31} American soldiers were able to acquire or rent German homes because of their political and economic ability to afford the housing away from the military base. However, the narratives do not reflect an acknowledgement of how this living situation impacted the local populations. The nature of an oral history that concentrates upon the veterans personal experiences provides a framework for understanding why this issue is not addressed in detail. However, the fact that American GIs had the ability to live in German homes, and remember the event without mention of the German perspective, demonstrates that the local impact of this situation was not as important to the veterans as the recollections of the conveniences of staying in nice homes with maids.

In addition to living in German homes, veterans remembered utilizing German labor as a way of easing their personal workload. Local employment, whether through the service of displaced persons (DPs) or local Germans, was commonly used for manual labor on the military base and in private quarters. Displaced persons, refugees, and expellees consisted of Holocaust survivors, Eastern Europeans fleeing from the Soviet Union, Germans removed from occupied territories in Poland, and other groups of individuals dislocated in the wake of World War II.\textsuperscript{32} DPs travelled to the American zone of Germany during the early years of the postwar occupation and continued to grow the population of West Germany through the 1950s when German POWs were returning from the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{33} Historian R.M. Douglas explored the lives of refugees


\textsuperscript{32} For more information on the influx of displaced persons into West Germany, see Gerard Daniel Cohen, \textit{In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

\textsuperscript{33} James Diehl, \textit{Thanks to the Fatherland: German Veterans After the Second World War} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 54.
and expellees during the immediate postwar period in his 2012 study *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War*. Douglas demonstrated the violent and inhumane treatment of displaced people throughout Europe in the early postwar years.  

Explaining their difficulties finding employment, Douglas asserted, “Where expellees could find work at all, it tended to be lowly paid if not positively exploitative.” Economic and political poverty among expellees and refugees in occupied Germany continued through the 1950s, became a political issue for Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and served as a public representation of victimization in postwar Germany.  

American servicemen engaged with displaced persons through interactions that ranged from registration at border patrols to employment on military bases.  

Although refugees and displaced persons travelled throughout Europe to arrive in Germany, the veterans generally grouped all civilians into references of “locals” or “Germans.”

Remembering hiring local employees as a positive experience, veterans saw the ability to have locals cleaning kitchens and wash their personal laundry was a way of lightening their personal workload and helping local economies. However, through the process of enjoying the hired labor, veterans denied or ignored the extent to which they were exploiting the local population for their own personal comfort. For example, Raymond Sleep was stationed in the small town of Kronswestheim, near Stuttgart, in 1952. He explained that they did not have a cafeteria within their living quarters, so they hired local Germans to cook for them. The chefs

35 Ibid., 312.
36 Ibid., 318.
made the soldiers meals individually, according to each man’s preference. Additionally, the veterans viewed the use of German labor as way of helping the local economies. Samuel Orlando, stationed in Marburg from 1948-1952, positively remembered that most servicemen donated one American dollar per week toward a fund to pay DPs to clean their kitchens. Conversely, James Caruso remembered the requested donation for German labor as a forced tax of two dollars per week. During his two-year stay in Munich from 1953-1955, Caruso remembered that he enjoyed having Germans clean his barracks and wash dishes, but he felt that he was forced to pay for this service. Caruso enjoyed the luxury despite the fact that he was obliged to pay for it. Whether the men recalled this component of daily life positively or negatively, they generally appreciated the free time it afforded them. At a minimum, they were appreciative to be free of the chores. Their ability to have the income to afford the employment of DPs and Germans provided the veterans with a mechanism to remember their use of local labor positively. The expendable income, provided by their American salaries in U.S. dollars, created an environment in which servicemen could afford the luxuries of not cleaning or cooking, thereby relieving the veterans of daily chores. The relief of this work allowed the soldiers to have more free time, often used to visit local bars and travel throughout Europe. Maintaining a positive memory of this facet of daily life rested upon that economic security.

In addition to remembering the free time and the ability to help the local economies, veterans reminisced that Germans were happy to have the work. These perceptions are predicated upon their personal views of the local populations without an appreciation or recognition of German economic hardships. Arthur Blankemeier served in Augsburg from 1950-

39 Sleep-2005.
41 Caruso-2008.
1952. During his stay he hired a German woman to wash his laundry each week, recalling that “she was tickled to death” to have the work. Absent from this memory is an acknowledgement of why the woman was so appreciative of the employment. Her social or economic status is not mentioned in Blanemeier’s statements, but it is likely that she was dependent upon this income. Clarence Hatcher played with a band in Kissinger, providing entertainment for fellow soldiers and locals across Germany. He recalled that during his stay from 1949-1952; he hired a cook and a tailor. According to Hatcher, the men enjoyed working for him because they got to enjoy his music while they worked. Hatcher was among many men who employed multiple locals at the same time. Jack Giles recalled that he employed thirty German civilians, 29 men and 1 woman, to wash dishes, cook, and clean for his company. The retelling of these experiences places the local employees in a position of inferiority. Whether the men thought that the workers were happy to have the work or they enjoyed the benefit of listening to music while working, veteran recollections of hiring local labor reinforce their economic and social status above the German population as occupying troops.

The High Commission for Occupied Germany (HICOG) conducted public opinion surveys through the course of the postwar decade to gauge German support for Western political programs. In May 1950, the survey reported that approximately 68% of West Germans polled remarked that the United States helped reconstruction because they provided economic assistance. Whether or not Germans were happy to have the work remains debatable.

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42 Blankemeier-2003, 8:12.
43 Hatcher-2006.
44 For example, see: Harris-2005, Higgins-2010, and Worth-2010.
45 Giles-2011.
American soldiers believed they were able to provide this economic assistance through their ability to employ Germans from their own salaries. With few exceptions, most veterans remarked that they personally paid for the labor. The economic security provided by American salaries afforded the men the ability to have enough money for such conveniences. Furthermore, the value of the American dollar above German currency created a situation where soldier’s income was worth more in West Germany and was therefore more expendable. Their perception that Germans were happy to have the work is founded upon their vantage point as American occupying soldiers with money to spend.

An important part of daily life for American soldiers was their interactions with local German women. Given the higher ratio of women to men in postwar Germany, many scholars have examined the role of women in the postwar period. Historian Robert Moeller explored the political role of women in postwar Germany in his 1993 study *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany*. He described the notion of the ‘women of the rubble’ and the ‘rubble of families’ as a prominent aspect of postwar political and social developments.48 Scholars have extensively examined the abundance of widowed, divorced, and single women, each presenting a different method of interpreting the role of women in the reconstruction of postwar Germany.49 Scholars such as Robert Moeller, Elizabeth Heinemann,

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Petra Goedde, and Maria Höhn have explored the ways that women, particularly those without husbands, navigated the postwar period. Although their methodologies differ, scholars have demonstrated that women faced hardships unique to this environment; losing the financial stability, political rights, and social standing that existed prior to 1945. Among the variety of ways to earn a living, women provided for their families through working on American military bases, engaging in prostitution, and developing personal relationships with American men for potential financial security. In her 2000 study *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, historian Uta Poiger argued that the representations of these relationships in the United States were desexualized to make German women appear respectable, while Germans associated all women who engaged with American men as prostitutes, referring to them as a ‘Veronika’. The daily struggles that German women faced directly influenced the ways that American GIs encountered and engaged with local women.

The abundance of women surrounding American military communities directly impacted the ways in which American GIs remembered their interactions with women. Historian Maria Höhn explained the prominence of women near military communities. She argued that women travelled to these communities with the hopes of earning money from “the never-ending dollar supply of the American GI.” Despite government warnings to GIs about the risks of venereal

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51 Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 128. The fraternization ban began collapsing within six months of American occupation in 1945. By the end of 1946, the U.S. Army began permitting marriages between GIs and German women. However, the rise of prostitution continued to complicate the government oversight of relations between American men and German women through the 1950s. See also: John Willoughby, *Remaking the Conquering Heroes: The Social and Geopolitical Impact of the Post-War American Occupation of Germany* (New
disease and German social discontent, American servicemen continued to develop relationships with German women.\textsuperscript{52} Uta Poiger asserted that for West Germans, “female ‘fraternizers’ came to stand in for what they experienced as an emasculation and victimization” of the American occupation.\textsuperscript{53} One the one hand, images of women aligning with Americans reinforced occupation. On the other hand, alignment with America represented a countering image to the alternative superpower, the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{54}

In conjunction to the German cultural responses to these relationships, veterans remembered their encounters with German women based upon their relationships in distinct ways. When recalling the presence of prostitutes or women working in bars and restaurants, veterans belittled the economic and social status of German women. Conversely, when veterans had personal relationships with German women, some of whom led to marriage, the memories are more sober and sympathetic. Through their recollections, veterans do not directly acknowledge or discuss the economic frameworks that necessitated prostitution or the development of personal relationships. When veterans do remember the poverty in West Germany, they engage with it based upon their personal encounters, depicting it apathetically or sympathetically.

Veteran’s daily interactions with German women varied from encounters in restaurants and dance clubs to employing local women as maids and chefs. When recalling interactions with local women, some veterans portray the experience with little sympathy or acknowledgement of

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\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 129, 131.
\textsuperscript{53} Uta Poiger, \textit{Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 36.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
the hardships women faced. Johnnie Adams served in Munich and remembered seeing women relaxing at dance clubs, stating that, “they tried to latch on to the GIs.”55 This recollection implies that all women were either prostitutes or were attempting to take advantage of American GIs. Many veterans recalled dating German women, or knew fellow soldiers who had engaged with local prostitutes.56 Recollections of prostitutes and the treatment of these women were not kindhearted and were remembered in a belittling or humorous nature. For example, Sheldon Moore humorously described a situation in Berlin in which a prostitute filed a formal complaint with the U.S. military because she was not paid for her services.57 Veterans also recalled the women in a demeaning way, laughing about giving the women venereal diseases and nicknaming the prostitutes “Tin-Tin Easy.”58 Aptly summarizing the American experience with German women in bars and clubs, Thomas Kinzey described the situation in Munich by remembering, “Party life was great, let’s put it that way.”59 Veterans remembering prostitutes generally saw this as a jovial part of daily life. They were able to engage with and dismiss the relationships with prostitutes because of their financial ability to pay for such services. Additionally, their status as occupying American men placed the veterans in a status of social authority above German women. Where the veterans were dismissive of German women that frequented bars or worked as prostitutes, the tenor of the veteran’s memories changed greatly when remembering women that were in committed relationships with American soldiers or those that did not participate in intimate relationships at all.

55 Adams-2011, 28:05.
57 Moore-Undated.
58 For example, see: Baird-2010, Caruso-2008, and Harris-2005.
59 Kinzey-Undated, 8:47.
When remembering women in serious relationships with American men, or those whom solely worked for them without personal relationships, veterans portrayed a more serious view of this interaction. For example, David Allen was stationed in Nuremberg from 1954-1956. He recalled his entire stay in Germany as a negative experience, with the exception of his marriage to a German woman. He considered his marriage to be the only positive and also the most memorable moment of his stay abroad.\textsuperscript{60} Dal Albert Ballenger married a Czechoslovakian woman while in Nuremberg in 1949 and requested a transfer to the United States to secure her citizenship. He also saw his marriage as the best part of his service in the military.\textsuperscript{61} Applying for a marriage license sometimes came with repercussions from commanding officers. For example, Winston Hooker was stationed in Faßberg in the mid-1950s working with classified radio interceptions. When he applied to marry a German woman in 1957, his security clearance was revoked and he was reassigned to work in the mailroom.\textsuperscript{62} Although Hooker was upset about being reassigned, he did not mind because he was permitted to marry his fiancé. When asked to describe how the military commanders felt about enlisted men having relationships with local women, Clayton Cole responded, “That’s stuff you don’t talk about.”\textsuperscript{63} Veterans who married local women remember this aspect of service as the most positive experience while abroad. The men were not only happy to have fallen in love and had the ability to marry, but they also recalled being pleased at the ability to provide American citizenship to their wives.

Veterans also remember the abundance of German women surrounding military communities sympathetically. Bessie Campbell served as a medical assistant in Munich from

\textsuperscript{60} Allen-Undated.  
\textsuperscript{61} Ballenger-2004.  
\textsuperscript{62} Hooker-Undated.  
\textsuperscript{63} Cole-Undated, 10:28.
1950-1953 and remembered feeling badly for the women. She stated that they were all very poor and starving, doing desperate things to provide for their families.\(^{64}\) James Carr served in various locations throughout Germany until 1953. He recalled that Germans were struggling to regain their former lives, remarking that they were starving with no way to make a living.\(^{65}\) Samuel Orlando worked in Marburg until 1952 where he supervised one hundred German women who processed incoming American goods to be distributed throughout Europe. Orlando remembered feeling badly for the women and often gave them cash when possible.\(^{66}\) When recalling German women sympathetically, veterans often mentioned that the women worked hard to provide for themselves and their families. American veterans were stationed in Germany as an occupying military force. Despite the political circumstances, some veterans recalled that they sympathized with the destruction and poverty that was visible throughout Germany. The position as an occupying soldier allowed veterans to engage with women in both social and professional settings. When referring to their social contacts, particularly in bars and through prostitution, the veterans belittled the encounters and demeaned the women. When remembering their intimate or professional encounters, the veterans were more sympathetic and serious in their recollections.

In addition to paying for German labor and engaging with German women, veterans also noted the black market as an important part of their daily lives. Scholars have examined the role of the black market extensively during the first period of occupation from 1945-1949.\(^{67}\) Giles MacDonogh explained in his 2007 study *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied*

\(^{64}\) Campbell-2013.
\(^{65}\) Carr-2013.
\(^{66}\) Orlando-2004.
Occupation that due to the prevalence of the black market during the war, currency reforms and other efforts to stop the problem did little to replace the German need for goods. Keith Lowe examined the connection between the black market and violence in his 2012 work Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II. Lowe argued that the black market was so common in the late 1940s that making illegal purchases was hardly regarded as a crime. These descriptions that portrayed the black market as commonplace during the late 1940s are similar to the ways that veterans remember this part of life during the 1950s. Veterans during the 1950s remembered the black market, particularly the trading of goods for cigarettes, as a daily occurrence. Some of the soldiers recalled using the demand for cigarettes as a way to mock local Germans. Conversely, others held more respect for the black market as a legitimate means of helping locals and obtaining desired goods. Whether the men dismissed the plight of German poverty or attempted to help, their personal security afforded the men the ability to choose how to engage with the black market.

For some veterans, cigarettes and the black market was a way for the men to entertain themselves and pay for services and items not available in American commissaries. For example, Oscar Mechaelson and James Carr remarked that GIs threw cigarette butts out of their moving vehicles just to watch Germans chase after the discarded filters. To the men, this was a source of pure entertainment. They thought that watching people run after the filters was funny. Men also used the cigarettes to pay for liquor, cosmetics, and other goods not easily obtainable

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69 Keith Lowe, Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II (New York: Picador, 2012), 47.
70 Carr-2005 and Mechaelsen-2006.
through the military commissary. Robert Baird remembered during his tour in Berlin that he sold the cigarettes for profit. Remarking that cigarettes were “the coin of the realm,” Baird stated that he sold cartons for two-thousand marks, which he stated was the equivalent of two hundred dollars. The only problem with this transaction was that he could not exchange the money back into U.S. dollars, so he kept it as spending cash. Other men recalled that they used the cigarettes as a fair trade for services. For example, while stationed in rural area near the Berchtesgaden National Park, Robert Kuhn used cigarettes to pay a local farmer for the opportunity to ride his horses. He stated that once a week he drove to the same farm to ride, but the farmer had no use for American money. John Elmer Bendel remembered that his vehicle broke down on his way back to Mannheim. He stated that the men in the car pooled their resources and paid local men ten cartons of cigarettes to repair the vehicle. Paying the repairmen relieved the soldiers from having to tow the vehicle while at the same time provided a wage to local men who needed the work. In contrast to the men using cigarette butts to mock Germans, Kuhn and Bendel used the cigarettes as a fair means of trade.

On the one hand, the black market was a source of entertainment for American GIs. Making a personal profit from the trade and watching Germans chase cigarette filters was a way for the men to display their status as occupying soldiers. On the other hand, veterans also understood the German need for trade. Paying for merchandise and services with cigarettes was a means of helping local people in a way that was effective. American GIs in the 1950s were not in a financial situation to necessitate the use of the black market. It was a way for them to obtain

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72 Baird-2010.
73 Kuhn-2010.
74 Bendel-2009.
goods that could be considered luxury items, such as liquor or the opportunity to go horseback riding. However, their willingness to honestly engage in trade demonstrates their understanding of the state of German poverty during the 1950s.

When asked about their opinion of Germans during their time abroad, veterans remembered their overall experience positively. Through their personal interactions with locals, veterans were able to either humorously remember mocking the state of local poverty and desperation or to recall their sympathy toward this situation. However, some of the men experienced difficulty adapting to their new environment. For example, Lawrence Baltimore stated that he felt a culture shock when he arrived and saw cobblestone streets and horse-drawn carriages. Other men recalled that they were not permitted to eat German food because of the use of human fertilizers and poor sanitation. Veterans also recalled protests, but maintained a positive view of the German people. Charles Bradley recalled that while in Heilbronn, locals held up signs that read “Yankee Go Home.” Historian Michael Ermath argued that the use of the word “Yankee” in occupation protests were a representation of the invading American culture and depicted strictly anti-American sentiment rather than a broader anti-Westernization protest. Bradley maintained a positive view of his time in Germany, stating that he “couldn’t ask for a better experience.” Similar to Leo Barooshian, Charles Bradley and other veterans maintained a positive memory of Germans despite the protests. Frank Kuehl lived in Koblenz, Germany and recalled that Germans “were just doing what they had to do” during the war and

75 Baltimore-2004.
76 For example, see: Abbott-2006, Giardina-Undated, Griffith-Undated, and Hassler-Undated.
77 For example, see: Barooshian-2004, Giardina-Undated, Hamm-2003, and MacDonoald-2010.
80 Bradley-Undated, 15:10.
that he felt bad for them because they lost the war.\(^81\) When remembering the German people, veterans distinguished Germans between those who fought during the war against those who survived it. For many of the soldiers, they perceived the Germans they encountered as those who experienced the war without participating in it. Neil Abbott summarized this point by stating, “You didn’t talk to them about wartime, but you knew that the people around you weren’t the ones shooting at your family during the war.”\(^82\)

Among the complex memories of personal interactions with Germans, most of the men remained positive about their overall experiences in West Germany during the 1950s. Many veterans recalled a sense of pride when remembering their time abroad, recalling that they were happy and proud that they helped the German people rebuild.\(^83\) When recalling their overall impressions of the German people, veterans often noted that they were very friendly and that they appreciated the presence of the American soldiers.\(^84\) The American veterans recognized the struggle most Germans were dealing with, particularly the poor economy, and reminisced that they were happy to be able to help Germany rebuild. These fond memories represent only one perspective of their experience, but it was the lasting impression that many men held. These overall positive memories are framed within the positive and negative interactions that veterans had with locals. Veterans that recalled amicable interactions remembered the Germans positively for their efforts to reconstruction the war-devastated nation. Those that remembered belittling treatment of locals did not lead to the veterans to remember their experiences negatively. Instead,

\(^81\) Kuehl-Undated, 8:38.
\(^82\) Abbott-2006, 5:17. See also: Cutler-Undated, Drabot-2012, Hatcher-2006,
this framework of placing Germany in a position of inferiority allowed the veterans to see their mission as successful, despite their behavior.

American veterans stationed in 1950s Germany witnessed the reconstruction of a defeated nation. These men openly acknowledged that their mission abroad was the military occupation and defense of West Germany. While their overall impressions and lasting memories of the German people are overwhelmingly positive and sympathetic, their recollections were complicated by the daily realities of postwar reconstruction. Through the vantage point of being American occupying soldiers, the men held a level of economic and political security that afforded them the ability to be flippant about some of their experiences. Living in German homes, participating in the black market, and hiring prostitutes were among many avenues in which the veterans recalled the luxuries of being stationed in Germany. The men were able to recall such components of daily life with ease because their political standing as Americans elevated the men above the nationwide poverty.

Veterans remembered their experiences in Germany through their circumstances as Americans. As occupying troops, they enjoyed the ability to live in German homes, drink in German bars, and travel to other countries during their free time. Enjoying the luxuries that manual labor afforded them, veterans embodied the notion of the ‘tourist soldier’ by enjoying their service in Germany. The financial and political security afforded to them as Americans made these aspects of daily life possible. Their memories are positive because they did not personally experience poverty or national reconstruction. Despite the demeaning behavior of some veterans, many veterans engaged with the Germans sympathetically. They gave children candy, paid for services in cigarettes because it held value, and used their personal earnings to
employ locals. However, they were able to view Germany sympathetically because they were American occupying soldiers. The hardships faced by Germans struggling to rebuild persisted through the 1950s, as a continuation of the immediate postwar occupation situation of poverty and defeat. Scholars who focused upon the devastation and poverty in the late 1940s reported on a political and social situation that continued beyond the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949.
CHAPTER THREE: THE POWER OF SILENCE IN POSTWAR OCCUPATION: SCHOLARSHIP AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Academic scholarship, by virtue of its specificity, focuses on particular events or time periods intentionally categorized or framed by the research goals of the author. Historical information or narratives that lay outside of scholarly analysis create the framework from which scholars engage one another and at the same time create boundaries in the ways that the past is explored. The frameworks of scholarship and their limitations, or areas of examination that remain outside the scope of scholarly inquiry, is the focus of this study. Scholarly discourse of postwar Germany is commonly separated between the 1945-1949 period of militarized government by OMGUS and the post 1949 period after the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany. Given the political changes that occurred between the United States and West Germany in 1949, this demarcation serves as an appropriate and convenient frame of analysis. However, a vacancy exists in the ways that these two periods are analyzed together. Prevalent within studies that concentrate on the pre-1949 era are examinations that include the American and German perspectives and engagement with political and social developments. After 1949, many studies focus upon the political, economic, and social developments of the Federal Republic while excluding or limiting the perspectives of the continued American presence in West Germany. Demarcations of academic scholarship create an arranged platform that can be seen through the ways that the public engages with the past, and is counter to the ways veterans remember this time period.

This study analyzes the scope of limitations to historical narratives and the effect of those boundaries on American collective memory. Historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot examined the dynamics of power and silences in historical analyses in his seminal 1995 work *Silencing the*
Past: Power and the Production of History. Trouillot asserted that in “any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences.”¹ These silences are the pieces of information, such as events or people, not included in the telling of a historical narrative. Whether information is omitted intentionally or unintentionally, the result is a suppression of a portion of the past in the process of telling a specified history. The decision to restrict or confine scholarship on a particular point in the past creates a power discourse represented through academic literature, providing authority to the producers of history over those who consume it. However, Trouillot also contended that the power dynamics of narrative history telling continues beyond academic scholarship. The public contributes to history by adding their own interpretation, thus fueling narratives that include some information while omitting others.² In this study, public engagement with scholarly historical narratives provides the basis from which American collective memory is assessed. An analysis of educational resources and online representations of the German postwar period demonstrates the framework from which the American public engages with the past. The power discourse that exists within academic scholarship on the postwar German occupation is visible through the limitations, or silences, of examinations and is visible in the ways that the public engages with those silences.

The rise of mass media and the Internet has influenced the development of American collective memory of the past. The American public engages with history on a regular basis in a variety of ways, continuously developing and changing the nature of their memories of the past through interactions with historical narratives. Cultural historian Alison Landsberg examined American collective memory and the rise of mass media in her 2004 work Prosthetic Memory:

¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 27.
² Ibid., 25.
The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture. She argued that a new form of public memory developed as a result of modern technological advancements. A “prosthetic memory” is the result of individuals placing themselves within a historical narrative that they did not experience.3 The process of developing a prosthetic memory includes a personal and emotional connection to the learned experience, and therefore has the ability to shape a person’s perspectives and identity.4 A prominent example of this in the United States is the memorialization of the Holocaust. The public discourse on American efforts to liberate concentration camps, defeat the Nazis, and remember past atrocities provide the American public an emotionally based prosthetic memory that is inherently connected to cultural and political identity. An understanding that the public shapes and internalizes a learned historical narrative provides the basis for the interpretation of public memory in this study. An analysis of scholarly narratives on the postwar occupation of Germany, specifically literature published after the end of the Cold War in 1990, provides the framework from which to interpret how the public engages with historical silences and then internalizes that information, thereby shaping American collective memory.

Scholarly boundaries of postwar Germany lie within a continued historical narrative of political and social developments, where the United States remained an active agent in the development of the Federal Republic of Germany. Upon the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, American, British, and French military governors transferred their powers to

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4 Ibid.
the Allied High Commission. Until September 1951, the Commission oversaw all legislative actions of the newly formed government through an Occupation Statute, enacted within the creation of the Basic Law. Within the mandated statute, the Federal Republic was directly supervised on a range of matters including legislative activities, foreign relations, and domestic issues, such as managing the influx of displaced persons, food rationing, and industry development. Occupational policies, such as denazification and military tribunals against war criminals, were slowly turned over to German state governments as the Federal Republic of Germany stabilized within the confines of Allied regulation. Allied military forces, particularly from the United States, continued to serve in occupational and constabulary roles until May 1955. The American military presence in West Germany continued to grow after 1950 as a result of heightened Cold War tensions. By virtue of their presence, American soldiers played a significant role in the foreign and domestic developments of the evolving nation.

Two primary bodies of occupation literature address the American sphere of influence in postwar occupation after 1945. The first treats the occupation period as ending in 1949 when the Federal Republic of Germany was established. These scholarly inquires primarily conclude when the Office of Military Government United States (OMGUS) officially ended its control of the U.S. zone of Germany in May 1949. This time period serves as a convenient and logical ending point of occupational analyses due to the creation of the Basic Law and the Federal Republic of Germany was established in September 1949. M.E. Bathurst, “Legislation in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1952): 42.


7 Ibid., 26. In May 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany was admitted into NATO and was permitted to rearm, removing the necessity of foreign troops to maintain a military defense in West Germany. See also: John Reed, *Germany and NATO* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1987).

Germany. For many scholars, this demarcation in 1949 permits more in-depth discussions of the state of occupation that was unique to the American military control prior to the creation of the Federal Republic. Heavy garrisons of American military troops were stationed throughout West Germany until German rearmament was permitted in 1955. Scholarships that ends analysis in 1949 omits examination of political, military, or social interactions between American troops and German civilians during the continued military presence into the mid-1950s. Consequently, these examinations are silent about how the situation in the late 1940s continued, changed, or ended when military governors transferred their powers to the Allied High Commission and the Federal Republic of Germany. This includes the continued impact of the American military onto German politics, culture, and economic developments and the perceptions of Americans during this period.

Scholarly inquiries that provide one example of potential silences are those focusing upon the state of postwar violence until 1949. The consequence of ending these studies just four years after the end of World War II is the omission of violence that potentially continued into the 1950s. Historian Giles MacDonogh criticized both Allied policies and the behavior of Germans for the cause of postwar violence. His 2007 work, *After the Reich: The Brutal History of Allied Occupation*, addressed the 1945-1949 period of occupation and revealed the brutalities of daily life within the occupied zones of Germany. He argued that an equal burden of responsibility fell onto the Allies and the Germans for the developments of the occupation and the rise of the Cold War.

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War. The Allied forces helped Germany “‘throw the baby out with the bathwater’ in what was an often misguided desire to dig out the roots of evil” by both alienating their own history and the communist influences that attempted to rise in the wake of wartime destruction.\textsuperscript{10} According to MacDonogh, the rise of the Cold War was the result of both the self-guided aims of the Germans and reactionary American policies. Examining the occupational brutality in the early postwar years, MacDonogh ends his study when the Cold War began in 1949. While the author intentionally sought to explore occupational brutality as a cause of the Cold War, this historical narrative does not include discussions of violence beyond the establishment of East and West Germany in 1949. The scholar created a distinction for the reader of the notion that violence served as an instigator of the Cold War versus the notion that violence possibly prevailed during the Cold War through the process of ending the study in 1949.

Another scholar who ended his study in 1949 was historian Keith Lowe, who examined the state of violence in postwar Europe in his 2012 study \textit{Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II}. In his broad analysis of postwar Europe between 1945 and 1949, Lowe described a continent that continued violent wartime activities after the defeat of Germany. He placed the Allied attempts at postwar rebuilding within “a continent that had descended into chaos and lawlessness.”\textsuperscript{11} According to Lowe, the people of Europe, and not the actions of Allied troops, explain the problems of stabilization and democratization after the World War II. Concluding with an ominous postwar discussion of national hatred toward others, Lowe contended that the rise of the Cold War only saw a perpetuation of pre-existing cultural


\textsuperscript{11} Keith Lowe, \textit{Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II} (New York: Picador, 2012), 70.
memories of discontent. Absent from this examination is a discussion of postwar stabilization, or how potential violence continued into the 1950s. Both Lowe and MacDonogh end their investigation of violence and brutality in 1949. Ending their analyses during the period of the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany removes the possibility of understanding the longevity and consequences of their claims. These chronologically limited brutality studies provide understandings of the violence that lingered past the end of World War II, yet ended upon the rise of the Cold War and the establishment of West Germany. These delineations asserted by the authors control over the narrative restrict the ability of the reader to extend the notion of violence beyond the boundaries that the authors provided. Studies that examine notions of violence provide a framework for scholars to engage with narratives of German victimization. While narratives of violence and brutality introduce a new way of examining the early occupation period, they also construct a boundary of a postwar phenomenon that is not exclusive to Western Europe or exhaustive of postwar violence in general.

During the same years that scholars examined the postwar landscape to understand the state of violence during the Allied occupation, other scholars used social analyses to explain the development of American policies and changes in the German-American relationship. In 2001, historian John Willoughby connected the American political and cultural concerns of Germany with the social situations that the Army faced while carrying out U.S. policy in *Remaking the Conquering Heroes: The Postwar American Occupation of Germany*. Ending his study in 1948, Willoughby asserted that the daily interactions between African-American and white GIs with German civilians altered pre-existing assumptions about the German people that resulted in

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12 Ibid. 376.
policy changes and rapprochement. This work demonstrated how policies changed to foster cooperation between the two countries. By ending the examination in 1948, discussions about how these new perceptions were concretized during the formative years of the Federal Republic are absent. The limit of this study, while intentionally specific, reinforces modern perceptions that the occupation ended upon the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Willoughby asserted an authority over the timeframe in which he considers the Army to have changed its perceptions of Germans. This power over historical narrative both reflects public engagement with the occupation period as having ended in 1949 and fuels this notion by ending the analysis in 1948. Additionally, explanations of rapprochement potentially fuel the perception that after 1949 a seamless partnership existed without the conflicts described during the early period of occupation. The silence created within this narrative are the continued difficulties among African-American and white GIs that persisted through the 1950s. The social interactions that were present during this early period persisted beyond the scope of this study. Through the act of demarcating an end point of this discussion, the author demonstrates the power discourse present in academic scholarship by limiting the scope of analysis to the 1945-1948 period.

German historian Petra Goedde’s 2003 work on the relationship between American GIs and German civilians is another study that limits a social analysis to the period ending in 1949. In GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949, Goedde bridged the traditionally separate bodies of political and economic historiographies by demonstrating both the American and German social experiences that influenced the political changes during the early postwar years. Utilizing gendered analyses as a tool of explaining cultural and social

interactions, Goedde asserted that the American cultural feminization of Germany facilitated political rapprochement by 1949.\textsuperscript{14} Describing the influence of American troops in occupied Germany, Goedde demonstrated the dynamics of the political and social interaction, particularly within the frameworks of race and gender. Her assertions heavily influenced more recent social histories of West Germany, providing a framework for other authors to elaborate upon gendered constructs during this period through the 1950s. Although she briefly discussed the Berlin Airlift and the beginning of Cold War tensions, absent from this study is an analysis of possible gendered normativity in West Germany when the United States relinquished control of the occupied state. The inherent silence within this study is the lack of discussion or remarks regarding the gendered perceptions of Germany through the 1950s or how this idea changed over time. Therefore, academic and public audiences inherently engage with this open-ended notion and are left to draw their own conclusions about the continuation of this gendered relationship.

Directly challenging the portrayals of race and gender that Goedde presents, historian Timothy Schroer argued in \textit{Recasting Race after World War II: Germans and African Americans in American-Occupied Germany} that race and gender were not “Americanized” in postwar Germany but rather went through a period of realignment. His 2007 study contended that instead of being influenced by American GIs during the 1945-1949 period, Germans shifted their pre-existing notions of race from being German versus non-German to white versus black.\textsuperscript{15} Additionally, concepts of race and sexual morality were inherently connected, influencing


changing social perceptions during the postwar era.\textsuperscript{16} The presence of American troops and the realities of defeat provide the basis for this analysis of racial realignment. However, the focus of changing social interactions and perceptions in this study do not incorporate a dialog about the political repercussions of these changes. Schroer framed notions of German racial realignment in this study only within the parameters of the immediate postwar period, inherently structuring reader engagement with these boundaries. Further exploration of this realignment could include an analysis on how Americans, in Germany or at home, were influenced by the changing German perception of race.

Many other academic studies that analyze early postwar developments in occupied Germany end their examinations in 1949.\textsuperscript{17} These historical narratives reflect the historical social and political shifts in American foreign policy and method of governance in occupied Germany. However, they omit elaborations on the continuation of the early postwar realities beyond 1949, particularly the ramifications of extended military control of the German people into the 1950s. The silences within these narratives leave vacant the potential to engage with or decipher the ramifications of their purposed theses about the state of occupied Germany. The structures created by scholars that concentrate on the developments from 1945-1949 provide a framework for other scholars to engage and perpetuate a power discourse over the period. By limiting the occupation to 1949, authors define the boundaries of the American influence in Germany and the transnational exchanges that occurred within the occupation. In contrast to this first body of

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 84.

postwar literature, a second body of scholarly analysis presents the political and social changes that occurred during the 1950s while broadly omitting the 1945-1949 period.

The second body of occupation literature engages with the developments of Germany during the 1950s, continuing the postwar occupation dialog beyond 1949. Generally, these scholarly works concentrate on the post-1950 period, and exclude in depth discussions of the pre-1949 developments. Cold War historians examine the political developments that dramatically shifted when the Federal Republic of Germany was created and the Allied High Commission reformed its method of governance over occupied Germany. Additionally, German historians address the postwar decade in terms of national identity, memory, and wartime experiences. Occupational scholarship focusing on the 1950s often concentrate on the interactions between Germans and Americans to explain political, social, and cultural developments. Falling within the confines of Cold War rhetoric, they omit the American military or political control of the German people and their government beyond the 1949 demarcation. Additionally, these studies depict the relationship between West Germany and the United States as a peaceful, democratic partnership; omitting the continuity of German suffering in the postwar period.

A common trend among historians studying 1950s Germany is to frame their political analyses within the developments of the Cold War. In 2005, Historian Deborah Kisatsky examined the role of American hegemony in her work *The United States and the European Right, 1945-1955*. She asserted that shifts in American policy during occupation focused on communist

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containment because it posed “the most visible counterhegemonic threat to American power in the world.” In her political analysis of the state of U.S.-German relations in the postwar period, the occupation is placed within the larger context of American political actions that fueled the Western-based partnership in order to expand American influence in Europe. German political evaluations are aptly placed within the American spheres of influence, particularly in the early stages of the Federal Republic’s development. Kisatsky relegated the control of Cold War developments to U.S. motivations and abilities to work with rightist governments across Europe, resulting in an occupation examination that extended beyond the previously established 1949 boundary. However, the concentration on global political developments limits this Cold War analysis. Not included in this political examination is the role of American foreign policy upon local German governments, nor how the Germans managed this political influence. Kisatsky placed the influence of the United States as the central power driving Western Cold War developments, thereby minimalizing the role and impact of German political developments within this complex global realignment.

Similar to Kisatsky, political scientist James McAllister’s 2002 work examined the postwar occupation through 1955 through the lens of international political relationships. In No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943-1954, McAllister asserted the management of Germany during the postwar period was vital, and problematic, to the political stabilization in Europe. Through all of the policy decisions of the occupation period through 1955, he contended that the core foreign policy issue always focused on appeasement and containment of the Soviet

20 Ibid. 107.
Union.\textsuperscript{21} Due to the confinement of his analysis to political theory and discourse, this work does not discuss the German perspective of political developments. Kisatsky and McAllister are among many Cold War scholars who address the occupation of Germany, particularly from 1950-1955, as a manifestation of the disputes between the United States and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{22} Largely unobserved in these studies are the social policies and militaristic actions that occurred inside of Germany and affected German civilians and political leaders. These two scholars frame a power discourse in the Cold War as relegated to a dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union, thereby minimalizing or eliminating the potential political influence of Germany or other nations aligning within the democratic-communist ideological struggle. Collectively, these studies portray this period as a broadly enjoyable and mutually cooperative experience for both Germans and Americans abroad. This notion is evident among scholarship on the 1950s, modern American veteran oral histories that demonstrate the relaxed partnership between the two countries, and 1950s American Cold War propaganda that displayed the alliance against communism.

In addition to Cold War historians, German historians examined the 1950s political and social developments amid the occupation and Cold War tensions. These historians, concentrating on the German experience of the occupation after 1945, depict a nation struggling to reconstruct and stabilize its political and cultural developments in the midst of American influence and Cold War tensions. Alongside the rise of German scholarship that concentrated on memory and


identity, political historians examined the ways that the West German government developed and managed its defeated past. Jeffrey Herf, in his 1997 work *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys*, examined the political developments of both East and West Germany from the end of the Second World War through the 1960s. He argued that the rising political leaders navigated “multiple restorations,” the balancing of memories and realities of the past with the perceptions and goals of the present.23 Concentrating more upon the balance of memory and political stabilization, the presence of American forces in Germany is incorporated into this study primarily during the 1945-1949 period of political development. After 1950, the focus of the text shifts to the role of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his political navigations. The presence of American military troops during the 1950s is absent in the political discussions in this text. This silence quiets the manner that the domestic and foreign political developments undertook while managing their presence. Through the process of diminishing the role of the United States in 1950s political developments, Herf presented an account of postwar Germany that propagates a narrative whereby the United States played little to no role in German internal politics after 1949.

Conversely, German historian Norbert Frei concentrated on the early years of political development in West Germany in his 2002 study *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*. Following the political developments of West Germany from 1949-1953, Frei examined how West Germany leaders were able to politically and culturally navigate the influence of the Allied occupation while also managing a “policy of the past”.24 These policies required the integration of reformed Nazis into society and an amnesty for

both individuals and ideals to maintain a progressive and democratic government. This particular study of German political development closely links the realities of German culture and politics within the Allied denazification programs and their continued influence in the new West German government. Intentionally concentrating on political history, this examination does not incorporate prominent trends of social developments into its narrative. Cold War and political historians who concentrate on Germany’s postwar period do so within the frameworks of the Cold War and responses to America’s foreign policies toward the Soviet Union. By ending this analysis in 1953, Frei does not address the social upheavals that followed this process of political amnesty and cultural integration of former Nazis into German society. The early years of the West German “economic miracle” are only examined to the ends by which Frei delineates in his political analysis. By doing so, the economic, social, and cultural changes impacted by American influence remain vacant in this analysis.

Prominent within 1950s German occupation literature are social investigations that examine the relationship between American GIs and German civilians. Exploring 1950s consumerism in East and West Germany, Uta Poiger’s influential work in 2000, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* investigated the influence of American culture onto the gendered, racial, and cultural developments of East and West Germany. Demonstrating how the influence of American culture served as an antagonism in both nations, Poiger asserted that it “played an important role in the complicated process of reconstructing Germanness in the aftermath of National Socialism and in the face of the Cold War.”25 This reconstruction included the social and political changes that responded to American

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influences of gender, music, race and politics on German culture and political identity. Her work also defines gendered and racial constructs that fellow historians have engaged with to formulate more specific studies on the changing roles of race and gender in 1950s West Germany. Poiger’s examination depicted a broad analysis beyond 1950s Germany that examines both social and political developments. However, the broad nature of this analysis, and the intentionally focused study upon German identity, ensures that it does not examine the ways in which the American military responded to these cultural and political changes.

The body of scholarly literature focusing on the early 1950s in Germany generally presents either Cold War historiographies or explores the development of German society, national identity, and politics. These studies often depict the occupation differently from scholars who study only the American perspective, or stop in 1949. Daily life in the American zone of Germany was not always the ideal democratic partnership as had been depicted through some scholarship. It was wrought with racial stereotypes, political turbulence, and dynamic gender roles. The presence of American military garrisons inherently made an impact on the social, economic, and political developments throughout West Germany. Furthermore, the state of these relationships had an inherent affect on the Americans who participated in these relationships. Occupation narratives tend to concentrate on one or more of these postwar spheres. However, the nature of academic scholarship limits the topics and periods that can be analyzed within one text. Michel-Rolph Trouillot considers this limitation to be a demonstration of a power discourse, where the historian chooses what information gets included or excluded from a particular study. Both historiographies, those that conclude examinations up to 1949 and those that continue into the 1950s, have intrinsic limits in scope. Often, these silences and limitations are consequences.

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of the nature of the study. Political studies cannot always incorporate social dichotomies, and vice versa. Their studies provide a clearer perception of the formative years of West Germany under American occupation. However, the absences present in these studies are apparent in the lack of discourse surrounding the direct role of the United States military and their perceptions of the continued occupation during the 1950s. Silences among German scholarship frames and minimalizes the perceptions and impact of the United States presence in Germany during the postwar period.

Few scholars address the 1950s West German relationship to American occupation and the ways that it is remembered within the same analysis. One significant exception to historical scholarship that explores both the German and American experiences during the 1950s is German historian Maria Höhn’s 2002 study *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany*. She explored the relationship between Germans and American GIs in the Kaiserlauten and Baumholder communities of the West German Rhineland-Palatinate region.27 This work stands remarkably in contrast to other scholarly works on the interactions between American GIs and German civilians because she intentionally engaged with oral histories of Germans and Americans from both the 1950s and 1990s. She observed that the German interviewees in the 1990s “no longer recalled the sense of panic that many felt in 1950.”28 Combining her oral history research with archival research on government documents, Höhn demonstrated the disparity that exists in the way that the 1950s occupation was received and how it was remembered. Höhn concluded, “Those who in the past had occasionally complained about the hardships entailed in living with such a large and foreign military presence

28 Ibid., 8.
now insist nostalgically that the Americans really never were such a burden.” This ease in perception over time is also a prevailing theme in collective memory in the United States and within academic scholarship that depicts this era as a peaceful partnership between the two nations. As the partnership between the United States and Germany stabilized during the Cold War, the realities of occupation have been overshadowed in recollections of mutual cooperation. Although Höhn only focuses upon the 1950s, she balanced the historical developments in Germany with memories and artifacts of German and American perspectives.

American veterans of the 1950s West German occupation remembered the relationship with Germans with the same relaxed perception that Maria Höhn described in her analysis of the period. Martin Abezetian, stationed in Heidelberg from 1952-1954 remembered, “They loved us – they loved our money, the nightclubs loved us – Germany was like a party for everybody.”

This memory, reminiscent of the 1950s notion of being a ‘tourist soldier’ is common among many veterans that recalled their experience while in West Germany. His recollection is indicative of scholarship and public discourse that portrays 1950s Germany as a peaceful time period, particularly for Americans in Germany. Arthur Russo, stationed in Berlin in 1953, remembered that they were stationed in Berlin to provide moral support to the Germans. In his daily patrols he wanted the Germans to know “we’re not going to desert you,” stating that he was there to protect them from a Soviet invasion. Veterans saw themselves as both providers and protectors of Germany. Their memories of the tensions in 1950s West Germany are reflective of the absence of American scholarship on the period and the historical narratives that portrayed

29 Ibid., 223.
30 Abezetian-2005, 7.
32 Russo-Undated, 7:25.
Germany as a new nation undergoing a peaceful modernization toward American democratic values. Rather than providing an account of their actual duties in Germany, veterans remembered their role as protectors during a peacetime deployment.

Veteran’s personal memories of the occupation, particularly with regard to how long the occupation lasted, coincide with the official dates designated by the American Armed Forces. The Army of Occupation Medal, established by the War Department in 1946, is available to soldiers who served in Germany within three criteria. Soldiers were eligible if they served in Germany, excluding Berlin, for 30 consecutive days between May 1945 and May 1955. These designated criteria clarify that the military occupation continued beyond the 1949 demarcation presented in scholarly analyses and are present in American veteran memories. When interviewed about their experiences in Germany, occupation veterans often recalled their eligibility for the Occupation Medal. Despite being drafted into service as a result of the Korean War, the veterans recalled both the military occupation and the Cold War as their mission in West Germany. By explaining that the occupation and the Cold War were the primary missions of the 1950s occupation, veterans counter bodies of scholarship that separate the two events during the 1950s. Veteran recollections of 1950s West Germany provide firsthand

33 Although the medal is referred to as the “Army of Occupation,” the award is available to service members from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

34 In Berlin, eligibility was based upon service between May 1945 and October 1990. Additionally, the Berlin Airlift Device could be attached to the Occupation Medal if 90 consecutive days of service were conducted between June 1948 and September 1949. The Institute of Heraldry, “Army of Occupation Medals,” The Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil (accessed November 29, 2014).


insights to the ways that the American public remembers the postwar occupation. However, these perspectives represent a small group of people who personally witnessed the developments in Germany. Broader American memory or engagement with the postwar occupation is limited by the power discourse created by scholarly examinations of the period that depict the occupation as ending in 1949 and the friendly partnership, absent of military influence, during the 1950s.

Understanding the ways that the American public engages with this history, particularly those who did not experience it firsthand, is paramount to interpreting the silences in academic literature on the topic. In the age of modern technology, the public engages with this past through textbooks, online websites, and other mass media representations. Alison Landsberg described these modes of memory transmission as the “technologies of memory,” tools that “enable the production of prosthetic memory in those people who did not live through the event.”37 Just as museums, television broadcasts, and movies educate an audience about the past, digital mediums such as online official histories and amateur websites present a specific telling of the past that influences the ways the public remembers and develops a prosthetic memory.

One of the first encounters that the public has with history is through primary school education. Textbooks are written and compiled by a scholarly body, incorporating historical narratives already published into a synthesized medium for educational purposes. As scholarship on the postwar period is framed within categorized and temporally based narratives of postwar history, the public consumes this history within the same boundaries. The silences within academic scholarship’s production of history and the misunderstanding of the scope of American

37 Alison Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory, 113.
occupation can easily be seen in American history textbooks. In a 2011 high school textbook, *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, the American influence in postwar Germany after World War II is placed solely within the context of Communist containment. Muddling the delineation between Allied zones of occupation and the creation of the West Germany, the text explains:

> In June 1948, the Americans, French, and British agreed to fuse their German zones, including their three sectors of Berlin. They sought to integrate West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany) into the western European economy, complete with a reformed Germany currency. [...] By the summer of 1949, Truman and his advisers were basking in the success of their foreign policy. Containment was working splendidly, they and many outside observers had concluded. West Germany was on the road to recovery.38

In this example, both the date of the establishment of West Germany and the conclusion of occupation are implied to have occurred in 1948. This brief passage bypasses explanation of the Allied zones, their spheres of influence, or the manner in which they turn over authority to West Germany. The entirety of the occupation period is relegated to a single page in this textbook. While it is not possible to include all of the pertinent information into an educational summary, particularly a text that focuses on American history, the vague nature of this text allows for a student to easily understand the end of the occupation and the creation of West Germany to have occurred in 1948.

In addition to formal educational texts, the public often relies upon popular Internet sites for codified information about the past. A simple online search for information about postwar Germany provides websites that also misrepresent the conclusion of the occupation. In a Google

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search of “Postwar Germany,” a *Wikipedia* article “History of Germany (1945-90)” appears first in the search results.\(^ {39}\) The initial article summary explains, “The Cold War divided Germany between the Allies in the west and Soviets in the east. Germans had little voice in government until 1949 when two states emerged.”\(^ {40}\) Although the article later explains the Allied zones and development of the Federal Republic of Germany, this summary, placed at the top of website, is the prominent information that users are likely to read. This passage does not explain that West Germany was governed beyond 1949. It also is worded in such a way that one could presume that East Germany and West Germany unified in 1949, or that East and West Germany functioned as two states within a single nation. The second search result was an amateur blog “Postwar Germany” that covered the history and daily life of Germany between 1945-1949.\(^ {41}\) Anika Scott, a self-proclaimed amateur historian, detailed that the postwar period ended when the Federal Republic was created. Both the textbook, published by scholars, and the amateur websites convey different narratives regarding the first postwar decade in Germany. Amateur websites receive their information from multiple sources, including scholarly and amateur publications. In the case of Anika Scott, she cited many academic works within the occupation historiography discussed here as her source of information, engaging with scholarly articles, books, and other academic publications. The misrepresentations of these amateur sites produce the same silences as represented in scholarly historical narratives. Common among them is Cold War rhetoric and a perception that the task of German reconstruction had been completed by 1949. Scholarly analyses that reflect this limited construction of the past fuel these publicly engaged misrepresentations of the occupation period. Although a synthesis of all events is not

\(^ {39}\) This search was conducted on January 9, 2015.
possible, inclusion of the second half of the postwar period into public rhetoric and scholarly analyses has the power to combat the overshadowing of the Cold War above the second half of American occupation in Germany from 1950-1955.

In addition to amateur websites, the public can also engage with historical narratives of the postwar German occupation through government published histories. The United States Department of State presents online profiles for nations around the globe; providing historical, demographic, economic, and political backgrounds for each country.42 Viewing digitally archived German profiles presented by the Department of State’s official website across the last decade, the portrayal of the occupation period changed over time but continuously minimized the role of American involvement. According to the 2004 profile narrative, the military occupation end in 1949. After a three-paragraph explanation of the creation of the Federal Republic, the profile stated that Allied powers retained occupational powers in Berlin and determined West Germany’s eastern border. This information omits a time period during which this responsibility took place, nor does it include that occupational powers remained throughout West Germany.43 The scope or mission of American troops in Germany after 1949 is not explained. Rather, the role of the French military and their troop movements are given more attention and explanation.44 The archived 2012 narrative highlighted more information about the historical developments in

42 In addition to the online profiles, the U.S. Department of State has extensive official histories of the Foreign Relations of the United States that detail the specific interactions with each nation. The use of the online profiles here is used to demonstrate the ways in which the public interacts with government-based narratives of other countries. For more information about the official Foreign Relations histories, see http://history.state.gov/.
44 The 2004 profile of Germany provides lengthy descriptions of the inter-German relationships, the role of French military forces, and political developments of West Germany. However, the “History” section is relegated to two paragraphs. This lack of detail stands in stark contrast to future profiles.
Germany and credited the nation for its ownership of the nations’ “dark history.”

Compared to the 2004 profile, the length of explanation provided to describe the occupation was severely limited and continued to exclude any discussion of military presence in Germany after 1949.

What stands in the place of historical narratives regarding the occupation are detailed descriptions of modern German stability and its political and economic developments. The promotion of German democratic success fuels the underlying notion of American success during the occupation while also minimizing the role that the United States played in that transition.

Common among these online descriptions is the minute role that the United States played in the creation of the new republic and the demarcation of occupation in 1949. The 2014 online profile presented a new format that moved historical narratives to websites for other government agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency and formal statements made by the Secretary of State.

When viewing the Department of State’s current profile, only a map and demographic information are presented. Within the last decade, none of the profiles presented by the Department of State addressed the manner in which Germany was protected or militarily governed by the United States from 1949 until NATO granted rearmament in 1955. Additionally, all of the online profiles highlight the democratic diplomatic partnership between the two nations.

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45 Unlike the 2004 version, the 2012 profile acknowledges the Holocaust and refers to the Federal Republic’s “ongoing commitment to deal with its historic responsibility.” Where the 2004 history of Germany is relegated to two paragraphs, the 2012 profile provides lengthy descriptions of the national history dating back to the Roman Empire leading up to the Allied occupation. See “Germany,” United States Department of State: Diplomacy in Action (March 2012), http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/germany/186108.htm (accessed November 15, 2014).

46 Despite the limited discussion regarding occupation, the verbiage regarding the role of NATO remains identical to its 2004 version.

The Department of State, representing an official historical narrative, provides the public with a cursory overview of German history. These short summaries reinforce the limitations apparent in scholarly examinations of the period. Although the American public may not frequently review the Department of State narratives, it does represent an official narrative of the postwar period in Germany. The ways in which the information regarding the postwar period continues to be eliminated in this narrative is present in the continued categorization of historical boundaries by academic scholars and the American public.

The appearance of these misrepresentations regarding the occupation and development of postwar Germany in textbooks and online queries reinforce the limitations and problems of the academic scholarly analyses that stop in 1949. The lingering controls of American occupation in West Germany into the 1950s remain minimalized in these academic studies and online representations of the past. Whether the studies examine brutality, political rapprochement, or social dynamics in the American zone of occupation, they imply normativity and ignore the continuation of postwar reconstruction into the 1950s. Additionally, they do not address the American perception of this time period. The collective perception that occupation ended completely upon the establishment of West Germany is just one consequence of amateur and academic analyses ending in 1949. Engaging a narrative of the continued occupation of Germany into the 1950s can open a public discourse on the long-term ramifications of occupation; the ways that the American public was affected by this continuation; how it affected the development of the Cold War through the 1950s, as well as the ways that it is remembered today.

This silencing of the second half of the occupation is present in oral histories conducted with American veterans who served in Germany during the 1950s. When interviewing from a
standardized question sheet from the Library of Congress, the interviewer often misunderstood that the veteran being interviewed did not serve in a war by associating service during the 1950s as being connected to the conflict in Korea. Veterans being interviewed constantly reiterated that they never saw war or combat and that they instead served in the occupation of West Germany. Prior to being able to describe their experiences, veteran oral histories often began with the interviewee validating his service by explaining why he was stationed in Germany.48 This misunderstanding is indicative of how the continued separation between the 1945-1949 occupation from the 1950s occupation is prevalent in American public discourse. Continued scholarship and amateur publications that end the occupation in 1949 both minimize the role of American forces during the 1950s and quiet the American soldier and German civilian experiences during the early Cold War years. American and German postwar memories are overshadowed by the interviewer’s misunderstanding of the political and military situation in early 1950s postwar Germany.

American historical narratives of and public engagement with the occupation are depicted as ending in 1949, when the Federal Republic of Germany was created. U.S. involvement in the region ceased to exist outside of Cold War posturing, and the people of West Germany created a peaceful, democratically modernized nation, theoretically free from external influence. While this narrative is true in its basic representations, the history of this period is more complex than the histories being represented in scholarly discourse and public representation of the past.

Largely silenced from scholarly and amateur narratives are the ways in which the American military remained a vital source of control and influence in West Germany through the

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48 Approximately two-thirds of veterans interviewed had to justify or reiterate the scope of their service, outside of a war or conflict. See Appendix A for full list of these veterans.
mid-1950s. Veteran oral histories, and to some extent, scholarly discourse elaborates upon the role of American troops in Germany during the 1950s. However, that control and influence was not always peaceful, nor was it purely driven by the desire to block the growth of Communism. The collective memory of postwar German occupation is much more complex than the recollections of military veterans and longer lasting than the limited scope of academic scholarship. The consequences of academic historical silences and a power discourse among scholars include the misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the role of American Armed Forced in West Germany after 1950. The early period, from 1945-1949, subsequently overshadows the latter five years. Therefore, American collective memory of the occupation in Germany, from 1945-1955, is limited through the mechanisms of scholarly engagement and the diminishing memories of veterans and other Americans that experienced it firsthand.
CONCLUSION

Examining memory has become a popular methodology of understanding the past, how it is engaged, and the ways that historical events occurred. Memory analysis serves as a tool to help historians and other scholars to contextualize historical events. Alon Confino analyzed the state of memory studies, demonstrating that historians must be conscious about the ways that memory theories are employed in historical analysis. According to Confino, notions of memory can serve as an effective tool for examining how people engage with the past, but only when contextualized with historically based research goals.1 If historical inquiry is not the driving force of memory studies, the conclusions may not accurately represent the nature in which memories are represented.2 This study sought to demonstrate how and why American soldiers remember the postwar occupation in Germany. Incorporated into the examinations of oral histories was a study of the social and political contexts from which veterans remembered their experiences. For American veterans that served during the 1950s phase of German occupation, their social and political status as Americans drove their memory creation and reflection.

The Cold War influenced American soldiers viewpoints, experiences, and memories of their time in postwar Germany. Televised propaganda broadcasted upon their return to the United States during the early 1950s influenced the manner that they engaged with democratic narratives and the ways in which veterans recalled their time in Germany as a positive event. Veteran’s memories were textually mediated by the promotion of Cold War ideologies, supporting narratives of positive strides in protecting West Germany and staving off the threat of

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1 Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 171.
2 Ibid.
Communism in the rebuilding nation. Despite scholarly critiques of American occupational policies, veterans remember the occupation as a successful event. Where scholars and public officials have openly regarded the occupation as a failure to obtain goals established in 1945, American soldiers during the 1950s considered their mission as protectors as a continuation of the early occupation as a successful event. Ultimately, West Germany did not fall to Communism; an American notion propagated by the conversion of China to Communism in 1950.³

When recalling their interactions and perspectives of the German people while stationed in West Germany, veteran’s memories reflected the elevated social and political status of the GIs. Living among the reconstruction of a defeated nation, the veterans witnessed German hardship and instability. The soldiers recalled their experiences in complex ways based upon their position as American occupiers. On the one hand, many veterans recalled their sympathy to the plight of German struggles. Through efforts to engage the German public on a personal level, some GIs were able to emotionally connect to the hardships that locals managed. On the other hand, American veterans were able to use the German economic and political poverty as a means of remaining politically and socially superior to Germans. Their belittling behaviors reflect this status through their disregard for the daily struggles that locals faced. Veteran memories as occupiers are contextualized through a clear understanding of their status as occupiers; the social, economic, and political realities of German construction; and the development of the Cold War.

³ Many scholars have explored the American struggle against Communism through notions of successful attempts to protect nations versus the concept of a failure when nations converted to Communism during the Cold War. For example, see: T. Christopher Jespersen, American Images of China, 1931-1949 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) and Chen Jian, China’s Road to the Korean War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
An examination of veteran oral histories, and of a collective memory of the postwar occupation cannot be understood without an appreciation of the state of academic scholarship on the period. The ways in which veterans incorporate their service into spheres as tourists and protectors of Germany mimics the frameworks of scholarship that demarcates the occupation as ending in 1949. Bodies of scholarly work are delineated between occupationally based studies ending in 1949 against those that examine cultural interactions during the 1950s. The inevitable historical silences cumulatively represented in academic scholarship portray a larger narrative that depicts the militarized occupation as abruptly ending in 1949 when OMGUS transformed into HICOG. While the manner of the occupation changed to assist the emerging structure of the Federal Republic of Germany, HICOG maintained its authority over German political, social, and economic developments. This less invasive manner of supervisory administration is relegated to a cursory point of occupational studies that concentrate on the 1950s. Rather than a focus on the ways that the United States and HICOG managed the direct political and economic developments of this period, many studies focus on the cultural and social interactions between Americans and Germans. Veterans remember their experiences in West Germany in similar fashion. Their recollections concentrate around the social and leisurely components of the occupation, rather than the direct influence that the American military had upon West Germany.

As veterans recalled their experiences, they propagated the 1950s televised notion of the ‘tourist soldier’ by depicting their service in West Germany as trivial in comparison to other draftees globally. They openly acknowledged that their tours in Germany were superficial comparative to the soldiers that served in the battlefields of Korea. Additionally, they recalled their daily lives as being filled with tourist-like behaviors, ranging from travelling across Europe...
to spending time in local bars, and engaging with local bands and prostitutes. The trivialization of the role of the American GI in occupied Germany fuels notions and memories that the impact of the United States in 1950s West Germany was less important or less impactful than missions in other parts of the globe. However, according to the ample studies in German postwar studies, this period of reconstruction has shown that the United States had a great impact on the development of postwar Germany beyond the 1949 creation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

This analysis of American memory of the postwar period in Germany, from 1950-1955, relied upon the availability of veteran oral histories conducted after 2000. The veteran interviews studied here were of those servicemen who served in Germany primarily during the 1950-1955 period. A clearer understanding of veteran memories could also have incorporated the experiences of veterans who served during the 1945-1949 period of military occupation. However, World War II rhetoric and perspectives posed potential complications to the understanding of the manner in which the postwar period is understood. Servicemen who remained in Germany during the OMGUS administration experienced the military occupation through the turbulent political changes occurring during this early period. Notions of German collective guilt and their status as a defeated nation would have inherently altered the ability to examine veteran memories of the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany. Therefore, this study concentrated on the analysis of veteran collected memory during a period of relative stability in the Federal Republic of Germany’s creation, comparative to the first five-year period of occupation.

The use of veteran oral histories conducted from 2000-2012 also restricts this analysis to be temporally framed in the early 2000s. An examination of veteran memories prior to the
establishment of the Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project could provide a new avenue of exploring their collective remembrance of this period, particularly to demonstrate whether these memories changed over time and how modern political developments affected their perspectives. The absence of a widespread veteran oral history project prior to 2000 limits the ability for scholars to understand, through oral histories, how these memories have possibly changed over time. Possibilities of extending this research prior to 2000 may include an examination of other source materials, such as diaries, letters and other personal histories. Further research is also needed to explore the ways in which postwar veterans viewed themselves within the broader Korean conflict and the Cold War. An examination into how these servicemen saw themselves as military veterans compared to fellow draftees serving in the Korean conflict or Japanese occupation during the same period can provide a comparative analysis of American veteran memory or occupational behaviors. Additionally, broader analysis concentrating on the role and behavior of American occupation soldiers within postwar Germany is also possible. This includes studying the ways that African-American soldiers viewed themselves within the occupation and how they perceived the changing racial perceptions in Germany. A deeper comparative study of servicemen that were stationed in Korea, Japan, and Germany between 1950-1955 can shed light on the mentality of occupying troops, their mechanisms of placing themselves within a broader Cold War dialog, and the ways in which the state of occupation shaped their memories. A deeper exploration of earlier remembrances of their integration back into American culture after their service abroad would provide greater insights on the establishment of their collective memory.
Due to the finite and reducing possibilities to acquire veteran oral histories from the postwar German period, the extent to which conclusions can be drawn on American veteran collective memory of the postwar period in Germany are dwindling. However, veterans only represent one portion of a larger American collective memory of this period. A true collective memory examination of the postwar period must include the perspectives of individuals who did not personally experience Germany during the 1945-1955 decade. The possibility for a broader study is more accessible through a greater availability to sources, yet can become increasingly problematic. Temporal, cultural, and demographic limitations inherently restrict the ability to assess, in any broad nature, the state of American collective memory of the postwar period. All historical narratives and representations of historical memory, collective memory, and collected memory have their inherent limits and silences. However, any further research conducted on the development and continuation of American collective memory of postwar Germany can only help to inform scholarly discourse on this period.
APPENDIX A: VETERAN ORAL HISTORY INFORMATION
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APPENDIX B: VETERAN SERVICE LOCATIONS IN OCCUPIED GERMANY
The following four maps demonstrate the service locations of American veterans, as detailed in Appendix A, during their deployment in Germany between 1945-1955.

Figure 2. Veteran service locations in Germany, 1945-1955.
Figure 3. Veteran service locations in the American zone of occupation, 1945-1955.
Figure 4. Veteran service locations in Germany, by service periods.
Figure 5. Veteran service locations in the American zone of occupation, by service periods.
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