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ROLE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY DIMENSIONS WITHIN
INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN
UKRAINE: A GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

MA Thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis analyses the influence of collective memory on individual attitudes to historical events based on the case of Ukraine's collective memory of the Second World War. A generational and family perspective is taken to examine 20 interviews collected with representatives of different generations of seven Ukrainians families. The theoretical framework for the research is based on Aleida Assmann's concepts of social and cultural memory, which allowed to develop the analytical tool of social and cultural memory manifestations. This tool along with thematic analysis allows to trace main factors influencing the shaping of WWII personal attitudes in Ukraine. The thesis argues that while social and cultural memory can have pronounced influence on individual perceptions of WWII, the impact of social memory decreases as more time passes. Therefore, generational trends in collective memory influence become more visible than trends within same families. Based on the data, the thesis also provides a new insight into the way official memory discourses interact with social and cultural memory and affect individual perceptions about the past. The thesis also gives a bottom-up perspective on memory processes in Ukraine against the backdrop of political changes.

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Introduction

This thesis examines the way personal attitudes to historical events are influenced by collective social and cultural memory and studies the importance of generational aspect in this process. The research adopts a bottom-up approach and looks at the case of memory and attitudes to the Second World War (WWII) in Ukraine using qualitative interviewing.

On a broader scale, this thesis focusses on the relation between personal attitudes to historical events and collective memory, seen here as constituted by social and cultural memory as defined by Aleida Assmann. The research has two main aims: to show how personal attitudes to historical events can be influenced by collective memory, and more specifically, to explain the current situation with the WWII memory in Ukraine. The thesis focusses on the generational aspect of sharing in and shaping collective memory landscapes; that is, how different generations of Ukrainians shape their own perceptions about the Second World War, what sources they use and what impacts they undergo.

The main research problem of the thesis comprises the translation of Ukraine's Second World War social memory into cultural memory across generations, set against two planes that collective memory could exist on: the 'vertical' memory plane within same generations, and the 'horizontal' memory plane family members of different generations. Given Ukraine's current acute political and social changes and challenges and the still salient Soviet regime legacies, the revitalisation of the WWII memory in the recent political events seems to have added a new layer to the population's attitudes to this historical event. The interplay of these factors in shaping Ukrainians' individual perceptions about the Second World War presents a complicated phenomenon requiring explanation.

Among the main reasons for choosing this case is the suitable timing for the chosen theoretical concept. According to Aleida Assmann, 80 years (approximately the time that has passed since the Second World War started) marks the lifespan of social memory, after which time it starts under certain circumstances to be replaced with cultural memory. This reason is further strengthened by the importance the Ukrainian society currently attributes to the Second World War. The controversies between several memory discourses in the Ukrainian society, which have been aggravated by the Euromaidan protests, Crimea annexation and Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine with the

revitalised war-time symbolism and rhetoric, have gained significance both among the elites and within the larger society.

Another reason for selecting this case is the lack of bottom-up researches of the Second World War memory in Ukraine. In addition, most studies currently focus on the actions of political elites in this sphere, particularly instrumentalization of collective memory for political purposes. While this thesis will analyse some of these works to provide background, its aim is to address the gap in qualitative memory studies examining individuals' attitudes to the Second World War and to top-down memory activity in this sphere.

The thesis answers the following **research questions**:

- To what extent do personal attitudes to the Second World War in Ukraine become influenced by social and cultural memory?
- In what way does the generational and family factor influence the relations between individual Second World War perceptions and social and cultural memory?
- How do changes to the official WWII collective memory discourse influence individual perceptions about WWII?

Semi-structured interviewing is used to answer the research questions. This method was chosen to allow a deeper insight into the WWII attitudes, as well as for its advantages of focussing on interviewees' perspectives, and flexibility. Twenty interviews were conducted with representatives of three generations of same families, allowing to compare patterns of WWII remembrance and individual perceptions influenced by both family environment and the wider society. The responses were analysed using thematic approach and the chosen theoretical framework. References to social and cultural memory influences were scrutinised.

Chapter 1 provides theoretical background for the research. Chapter 2 provides background information in the WWII memory in Ukraine and analysis of the official WWII discourses. Chapter 3 gives information on the methodology used. Chapter 4 presents data analysis and discussion.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework: Social and Cultural Memory Dimensions Across Generations

This chapter provides the necessary theoretical background for this study. It first focusses on the general concept of collective memory, then introduces social and cultural memory. These two concepts comprise the chief foundation this thesis bases its argumentation on. Next, the generational aspect of collective memory is examined and linked with the social and cultural memory concepts. Finally, the chapter discusses the link between collective memory and personal attitudes to historical events, which is central to the further case study analysis. It also puts forward the main theoretical assumption for this research along with research questions.

1.1. Defining terms

This section introduces terms used throughout this thesis. The concept of memory itself has a vague nature, and different approaches as to memory typology have developed over the history of memory studies. Erll notes that memory scholars face difficulties even when attempting to define their area of studies: memory often appears to be either one subject of study referred to under many names, or a range of different subjects homogenised in the term ‘memory’ (2011:5). This research considers *memory*, after Erll, an ‘umbrella term for all those processes off a biological, medial, or social nature which relate past and present (and future) in sociocultural contexts’ (ibid.:7).

It is vital to first make a distinction between individual and collective memory. *Individual memory*, also referred to as personal, or neuronal, has the most familiar everyday meaning: recollections held by an individual about a certain event she experienced. The term ‘memory’ is used here in its literal sense and the concept is usually the subject of psychological and neurology studies. *Collective memory*, on the other hand, is rarely used in its direct sense. It more often refers to ‘collective commemorative representations and mnemonic traces’ (Olick 1999:336). In other words, these are understandings of the past not supported by direct personal recollections but rather shaped through being a part of a collective with shared historical experience. According to Erll, this is ‘the symbols, media, social institutions, and practices which are used to construct, maintain, and represent versions of a shared past’ (2011:98). It is nowadays common to refer to the scholar Maurice Halbwachs as the one to establish the concept of collective memory as socially-framed individual memory.

The discussion of differences between individual and collective memory has sometimes raised questions about the validity of the latter concept. The main argument often states that it is always individuals who do the remembering regardless of the nature of social context they are in, and memory is therefore always individual. To address this, the thesis will appeal to Erll's viewpoint of collective memory being a metaphor and not direct subject of neurological and psychological studies as individual memory is. Olick maintains that collective memory in a certain sense 'has a life of its own': some memory or commemorative structures that exist in societies are 'stubbornly impervious to the efforts of individuals to escape them' (Olick 2008:156). These are the structures imposed by institutions that favour certain historical discourses and provide necessary conditions for these to develop, stimulating public memory. Collective memory is therefore a concept broader than individual memory and possessing distinct properties and functions allowing to separate it for studying.

The narrower terms used within this thesis are social and cultural memory developed by Aleida and Jan Assmann. In this thesis, the term 'collective memory' will comprise both social and cultural memory to separate the two terms from individual memory. *Social memory* is the dimension of memory established by members of a certain social group through direct communication with one another prompting re-experiencing and re-interpretation of the past. *Cultural memory* represents the memory dimension that has transformed the idea of the past into a set of symbols (texts, images, stories, commemorative places and rituals) mediated through material carriers and institutionalised (Rigney 2016).

The term 'cultural memory' can appear particularly obscure because of the absence of a universally-agreed definition of culture. Erll when conceptualising cultural memory (which in her works is seen as defined by Assmann) refers to anthropological and semiotic theories of culture. She describes culture as a three-dimensional framework which includes 'social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artifacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities)' (Erll 2008:4). In fact, such strict separation of aspects is less helpful in practice than in theory, as the boundaries between the three categories are often porous. It may therefore be unproductive for scholars to try to pigeonhole various cultural attributes according to them. Aleida Assmann mentions the definition of culture offered by Lotman and Uspenskij, describing

it as ‘the memory of a society that is not transmitted genetically’ but through external symbols. Culture is a defining concept for Assmann, as it provides a possibility to overcome temporal limits incumbent upon human lifespan, and link the past, present, and future. It therefore ‘creates a contract between the living, the dead, and the not yet living’ (2008:97). Every person belonging to a culture already has a basis of ideas, stories, and representations created for her by previous generations available for using, reusing and reinterpreting (*ibid.*). The understanding of culture in this thesis will include both definitions.

The last definition to be discussed here is the *politics of memory*. For the purpose of this study, it will be held to mean actions and policies undertaken by memory actors. The terms ‘memory actors’ is used to denote ‘people, interest groups, organizations and institutions which directly and strategically take some actions towards influencing the way [the past is] remembered’ (Yurchuk 2014:18). Top-down memory politics is not directly discussed in this thesis, but these terms are required as the research partly builds upon it.

1.2. Aleida Assmann’s social and cultural memory dimensions

The research objective of the thesis is based on the concepts of social and cultural memory as two out of four dimensions of memory introduced by Jan and Aleida Assmann (Assman et Czaplicka 1995; Assmann A. 2008a). Assmanns’ concept of social and cultural memory has been chosen for it best demonstrates the functions and dynamics of different modes of collective memory depending on the environment they are most active in (family or society), and the type of influence they can have on personal attitudes to historical events.

The origin of these concepts can be traced back to Maurice Halbwachs, unanimously recognised as the first scholar to start shaping the concept of collective memory. Apart from inventing the term itself, he was one of the first to introduce the idea of the influence of social structures and communication on individual memory, and to propose studying memory as a function of the social life (Erl1 2011:5; Assman J. 2008:109). He also studied forms of memory within the family, thus laying groundwork for future studies of intergenerational memory (Halbwachs 1992; Erl1 2010). At the same time, Halbwachs’ idea of collective memory included certain aspects that are not consistent with cultural memory. For instance, his idea of ‘each memory [being] a viewpoint on the collective

memory' (1980:48) implies the remembering of the past is done by individuals. Therefore, it is their personal memories, though socially framed, that constitute a specific collective memory landscape. This notion of collective memory in Halbwachs' works is combined, although not explicitly, with 'a fundamentally different one', where collective memory is seen as 'the creation of shared versions of the past, which results through interaction, communication, media, and institutions within small social groups as well as large cultural communities' (Erl 2011:15). While the latter one is close to what the Assmanns' concept of collective (social and cultural) memory, the former one implies the need for those sharing this memory to have participated of the events this memory concerns.

Aleida Assmann separated three dimensions of memory: neural (or individual), social, and cultural. Other dimensions she discusses are political and national memory characterised by their more top-down nature. *Social* memory is established by members of a certain social group exchanging and re-actualising their version of an event they all experienced or interacted with someone who had experienced it. It is in a way 'a coordination of individual memories brought about through collective life [and] conversation'; its lifespan is therefore limited to 80-100 years (Assmann A. 2016:20-36). The *cultural* memory environment relies rather on material artefacts and rituals institutionalised within a certain culture and is therefore able to exist well beyond human lifespan (ibid.). In other words, memories within families usually go on for three generations of people able to directly communicate with each other, while memories within cultures, nations, or religious communities are more durable (Assmann A. 2016:10). The environment of social memory is constituted by individuals who communicate their recollections to one another. The environment of cultural memory is a group creating its identity using cultural artefacts, symbols, media, rituals and institutions. Aleida Assmann also notes that this group is constantly 'engaged in changing, renewing, and revitalizing this cultural pool', maintaining the idea of cultural memory as a process rather than a product (2016:20). Cultural memory, therefore, still possesses more stability and duration than social memory, the latter tending to 'unfold in time as a dynamic process of negotiation and engagement' (ibid.:19).

The transference of cultural memory onto the broader levels of society is made possible through symbolic media performing the role of carriers. The experiences

contained in cultural memory are ‘externalized and objectivized’, given an embodied form to make them accessible to those who did not participate in a particular historical episode (Assmann A. 2016:21). This naturally means that these experiences can also be carried through in time, providing means for following generations to appropriate them and share in the cultural memory beyond their lifespan. The institutional stability of memory and its mediated material presence is in this case more important than the length of a human life; at the same time, they must be ‘brought together with living memories and appropriated by these memories’ to contribute to person’s shaping their cultural identity (ibid.).

One of the differences between social and cultural memory lies in the people who carry the memories. Social memory depends on living carriers, that is, on those who have participated in the remembered past or are involved in communication about it. It wanes with the people who keep it, therefore its limited lifespan. As cultural memory does not have this constraint due to its transfer onto material media and its institutionalised character, it is ‘stabilized over generational threshold’ and ‘is temporarily limitless’, allowing those generations who have no personal link to the past to ‘grow into a collective memory’ (Assmann A. 2016:21). A certain amount of medial preservation is naturally present in the case of social memory, mostly through photos, diaries and letters kept in families throughout generations. However, it is hardly able to overcome the time limits of social memory, as it is personal communication and interaction that brings it to life.

The main differences between Aleida Assmann’s social and cultural memory are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Comparative table of Aleida Assmann’s social and cultural memory (Assmann A. 2016).

Social memory	Cultural memory
Biological carrier	Material carrier
Limited timespan (80-100 years)	Unlimited timespan
Intergenerational	Transgenerational
Based on communication	Based on symbols and signs
‘Conversational remembering’	Monuments, anniversaries, rituals, texts, images

The notion of cultural memory is also a central one in Jan Assmann's memory typology, where he differentiates among 'material memory based on objects, mimetic memory based on imitation, *communicative memory* based on oral discussion, and *cultural memory* based on written and visual carriers of information' (Assmann J. 1999). The term 'communicative memory' is particularly useful in the context of this research, as it embodies many characteristics of Aleida Assmann's social memory and represents the varieties of collective memory based exclusively on everyday communication (Assmann J. 1995). Comparing communicative and cultural memory, Jan Assmann notes the latter's 'disembodied form' and therefore the constant need of reemodiment and preservation (Assmann J. 2008:111). Communicative memory, unlike cultural, is non-institutional and does not need any institutional representation to exist, nor does it require material realisation; it does not rely on specialists for its preservation and 'is not summoned or celebrated on special occasion' (ibid.). It is because of these characteristics, and the fact that it is supported largely through everyday personal communication, that communicative memory enjoys a relatively short time span. Further institutionalisation is required for remembrance to go on, which according to Meyer can potentially generate tensions in memory traditions, especially in case of increasingly pluralistic societies (2008:178).

Despite the scholarly interest in the way that social memory becomes replaced by the cultural one, it is not a process easily described and analysed. The two types of memory are not always clearly distinguishable between one another in practice. There is hardly a clear point where 'one memory formation stops and another one begins', as they tend to be 'intermingles and superimposed' within one individual (Assmann 2016:11). Another difficulty might arise because collective memory is not monolithic, and it would be incorrect to refer to the collective memory of an entire society. Olick posits that one society can have more than one version of collective memory, and controversies and conflicts among the versions are hardly rare. In addition, different contexts or discourse fields within which collective memory is invoked (politics, academic history, education) might mean different versions or angles (2008:159). Like many memory scholars Olick cautions against treating collective memory as a thing rather than as process; according to him, it is 'a faculty rather than a place' (ibid.; see also Wulf 2016). With memory being

fluid and compound at each separately taken level, the process of its transfer from one level to another appears obscure.

There are certain weaknesses to overcome regarding the applicability of this collective memory theory in this research. One of the generally raised weak points of cultural memory is the fact that it can be such an encompassing term that almost any aspect of social life can be appropriated as an expression of cultural memory. The actual practical use of the concept can thus be problematic because of lack of clarity. However, Erll, recognising this criticism and admitting that the umbrella quality of the term can ‘blur the fine gradations’ between such concepts as tradition, monument, commemorative rituals, neuronal networks and others, underlines instead cultural memory’s integrative power. She sees the broad understanding of cultural memory a strength, as it allows a scholar to see and employ links between apparently unrelated phenomena and thus ‘open up a space for interdisciplinary perspectives in a way none other concepts can’ (2011:99). Therefore, the proposed two categories of social and cultural memory are useful in terms of conceptualisation, but they might be difficult to apply when analysing actual recollections of individuals. The methodological approach taken within this study was designed so as to address this weakness.

To sum up, social and cultural memory are two dimensions of collective memory, both having distinctive features and ways of developing. Using them to analyse particular cases of current perceptions of past events can provide useful insights, especially when a case involves the transformation of social memory into cultural, that is, after approximately 80 years (or three generations) since a historical event described.

1.3. Political memory as a type of top-down collective memory

The top-down approach to collective memory is usually related to memory politics, although it can include other aspects of collective memory as well. The association between memory and politics is referred to in many works on collective memory, especially those dealing with nation-building, where top-down politics of memory is regarded as one of the construction elements of national identities. While this thesis takes the bottom-up approach to collective memory, parts of it will necessarily build on the works studying top-down memory activities. The further discussion of influence of collective memory on individual attitudes to historical events is incomplete without considering its top-down aspects. This subsection will briefly address those elements of

political memory salient for this research, including the political memory of Aleida Assmann (as a counterpart to social and cultural memory), and other concepts.

The term political, or national, memory was introduced by Aleida Assmann along with the individual, social, and cultural memory, and is seen by her as exactly the process of putting history ‘to the service of identity formation’; in her view, however, it is not exclusively politicians’ domain (Assmann 2016). Rephrased by Wulf, political memories are the institutionalised top-down representations that are originally taken from bottom-up individual or social memories (2016:16); the institutions in this case being state bodies deliberately working in the field of collective memory. Assmann notes that memory introduced and supported through political institutions must be appropriated by citizens in order to effectively contribute to identity building (2016:23).

On the other hand, collective and individual memories can in their turn influence the political sphere of a country, both in terms of foreign and domestic policy-making (Müller 2002:25). For example, a special role of memory is discussed by Müller when he refers to ‘redress claims’ of minorities and newly emerging nation states; mentioning in particular to Central and Eastern Europe. Speaking about memory as a political power resource, he underlines the fact that it is considered to be grievance and justification for demanding due recognition of those versions of historical events representations that belong to previously oppressed national groups (2002:17). In a broader sense, references to collective memory can be effectively used to legitimate state policies.

The potential of collective memory, especially in combination with (national) identity, to instigate political and social upheavals has also been noted by scholars, especially when these collective memories undergo top-down changes in their narratives in response to new political situation (see, for example, Lehti and Jokisipilä 2013). This reiterates once again the memory-identity connection. Tamm (2013) underlines coherence in a nation’s past as one of the key elements in national identity, where collective memory provides the stories and images that secure such a coherence. Tamm quotes Aleida Assmann to stress the role of ‘repetition and consistency’ in establishing and maintaining a nation’s historical consciousness (Assmann A. 1993 in Tamm 2013), where the narrative nature of collective memory becomes an indispensable characteristic, with ‘discrete events [...] interlinked into a meaningful history’, and separate historical events constitute part of a general continuous past (Tamm 2013:119).

Many scholars of the top-down collective memory recognise the need for it to be supported by a bottom-up approach, if not to have origins within a society (Winter 2010:64; Assmann A. 2016). According to Meyer, the transformation of social memory into cultural memory, with its potential to provoke conflicts, is itself a cue for political decision-making (2008:178). Thus, the analysis of reactions to top-down memory acts by politicians or state institutions can provide valuable insights regarding the nature of social and cultural memory within a society.

To sum up, political memory is another dimension of memory, which is characterised by its distinct top-down nature. Reactions to political memory can contribute to the shaping of individual perceptions about the past as well as to other dimensions of collective memory.

1.4. Generational aspects of social and cultural memory

It is now commonly accepted that each generation is ‘unique and unmistakable’ due to the shared experiences they had during their formative years (Reulecke 2010:123). Furthermore, Hastings and Baumeister reiterate after Schuman and Scott (1989) that the age at which a person experiences certain historical events influences the strength of impact these events will have on the person. They claim, in particular, that major historical episodes that occurred during people’s youth or early adulthood will be ‘more predictive’ of their future behaviour and opinions, compared with events that occurred during other periods of their lives (Hastings and Baumeister 1997:278). Karl Mannheim more specifically determined the age between twelve and twenty-five as the most formative for a person’s worldview (1952).

Such importance of generational belonging is in part caused by the fact that generation is one of the social groups that a person cannot choose to participate in, and only be born into. Aleida Assmann justly argues that every generation has its own way of making sense from the past, as there is no possibility for it to be given from the previous generation(s) (2016:14). However, although such experiences cannot be passed directly, certain aspects of these memories translate generationally through later ‘selection, attribution, interpretation’ (Reulecke 2010:123). The close connection that the concept of generation has with both social and cultural memory made it an appropriate lens to choose for this research. The processes of translating, reinterpreting, rejecting, and ignoring elements of

collective memory is inherent to the transformation of social memory into cultural memory. These are also the processes best observed across several generations.

It is hard to ignore the deliberate memory impacts in the form of institutions, commemorative spaces and texts, including works of art, intentionally transferred stories and ideas that exist to cement memories, opinions and behaviours of the previous generation. Reulecke notes though that the acceptance of these things is not guaranteed, and the next generation is free to accept, reject, or ignore them, consciously or not (2010:124). Assmann similarly states they get often ‘challenged, questioned and refuted’ by the next generation (2016a:26). The cases of erasing traces of the previous generation’s memory can also occur, as Reulecke puts it, ‘rather casually, without particular activity or controversy, in times of upheaval and new beginnings, or with pathos, with demagogic arrogance, with great pleasure and, in the extreme case, with massive force’ (2010:124). This demonstrates how generational memories constitute an important aspect of studying individual and collective memories.

According to Aleida Assmann, generational memory provides an unavoidable impact on individual memory as it informs the way individual experiences are processed. She argues that key historical events experienced by individuals leave them with ‘convictions, attitudes, world perspectives, social values, and interpretative models’ in common with their generation peers (2016:14). With such an impact on individual memory, collective memory is likely to similarly undergo shifts as generations change. Assmann notes such shifts occur every thirty years and argues ‘the cultural cross-section of memories’ undergoes a visible change as well (ibid.:15).

Regarding generational memory, it is important for this research to keep in mind the two intersecting planes on which collective memory appropriations and interactions can happen. The first one encompasses collective memory-related exchanges that occur among members of the same generation (vertical), whereas the second one refers to people belonging to different generations within one family (horizontal); this horizontal

plane is in fact a communicational framework where members of different generations overlap.

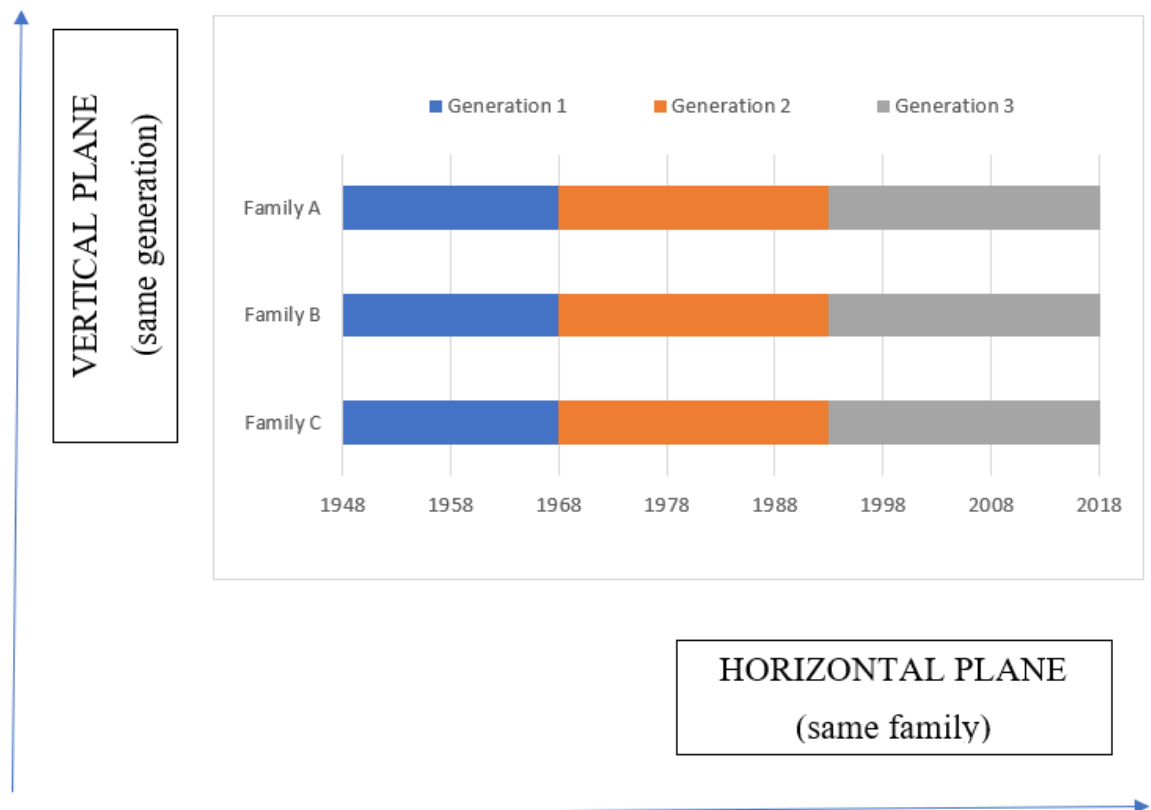


Figure 1. Vertical and horizontal planes of generational memory (Compiled by the author). The intervals marked by different colours indicate the years when representatives of different generations were born.

In addition to unique characteristics of generation as a social group, the family similarly has certain features that influence the formation of attitudes to the past within its bounds. To Aleida Assmann, one of the most important ones is the fact that family membership does not end with the death of an individual, as their life is expanded by the remaining family members beyond their lifespan (2016:10). The actual generational overlap is, according to Assmann, nevertheless more limited and usually allows to spread family memory across three generations of people – the family memory is in this case a social memory as these are the three generations that can directly communicate. Cultural memory, which is based on more long-standing concepts, allows an individual to also exist within a broader temporal horizon and incorporate elements of it, together with elements of social memory, into his or her personal opinions about the past (ibid.). The

duration of images and stories that constitute cultural memory is not constrained by any number of generations they are being passed on, but by their appropriateness in the society, that is, ‘whether or not they correspond to the desired self-image of the groups and its goals’ (ibid.:26). The physical dying out of the generation(s) during which the historical event was happening is not a reason for the cultural memory to wane; its perceived function in society allows it to exist further.

Given the abovementioned, this thesis will adopt the idea that both individual and collective attitudes to the past are always developed by each generation; they are not transmitted wholly from the previous generations. The nature of changes that occur in collective memory as generations shift can range from acceptance to rejection, which along with the significance of generational belonging in the life of a person offers a relevant subject for memory research. The way collective memory forms within separate generations will correspond to the vertical plane in methodological terms adopted for this research (See Figure 1, p.18).

1.5. Significance of collective memory in shaping individual perceptions about the past

The significance of memory, collective as much as individual, is not much doubted nowadays, albeit the ways and mechanisms of its impact can be argued about. Confino describes memory as *the* leading term in cultural history as in the mid-1990s, the popularity of which contributed to the development of historical knowledge (2010:79). But it is also influential in terms of identity-building and shaping individual understanding of the surrounding world. Collective memory constitutes an important identity marker for groups of people. Indeed, a common past is often a prerequisite for group identity; a memory of a shared past can play out more influentially than the actual existence of a shared past. In addition to its contribution to identity-building, collective memory can also be regarded as an important building block within an ethnicity, nation, or culture in terms of their content. It can also be used to define political agendas and influence both individual perceptions about and personal recollections of the past.

1.4.1. Levels of collective memory influence

To better examine how exactly the importance of collective memory takes effect, this subsection looks at this question from two points of view: the way partaking in a shared set of memories influences an individual, and the way the existence of a collective memory impacts the community in which it is present.

On *individual level*, collective memory of events that happened before the individual's lifetime are usually shaped through personal communications and culture-related influences like school, public narratives, literature etc. At the same time, collective memory of events of which this individual does have personal recollection can be likewise changed through the media of cultural memory prevalent in society. According to Erll, this allows individuals to accept schemata of historical episodes as they are portrayed by different media (especially fiction) and adjust their autobiographical memories accordingly (2008:397). In such a way, a person who, for example, collaborated with the communist regime in an Eastern European country, might choose to alter their memories of this time to a more suitable image once the regime has fallen and the collaboration has become to be considered immoral. At the same time, although collective memory is not held to mean simply a collection of individual memories, it is nevertheless informed by them and treats them as basic elements at the first stages of its development.

An individual's connection with a certain collective memory plays a salient part in the development of her identity as much as individual, 'regular' memory does. 'As questionable as our memories may be,' writes Aleida Assmann, 'the ability to remember nonetheless constitutes what it is to be a human being. We could not construct a self without memory, nor could we communicate with others as individual people' (2016:12). The fact that individuals' memories can be questionable is something worth capitalizing upon: the truthfulness or correctness of this memory (that is, if the events have actually happened in the way they are remembered) is not that important for identity-shaping. More salient is accepting or pretending to accept a particular individual or collective memory as the truth and acting upon it. An episode in history that lacks credibility but enjoys a strong emotional drive for the individual, will be considered by her as constituting historical truth (Yurchuk 2014:20).

On *collective level*, collective memory can be used to define political agendas, establish official historical discourses, and impact interior and exterior policy-making.

This type of memory allows members of one nation ‘place events into a national narrative, which functions as a matrix of meaning’ (Müller 2002:21). It brings emotional and normative underpinning to the nation, together with a ‘common language and set of understandings about how the world functions and how it ought to function’ (Berger 2002). Thus, collective memory is one of the most powerful tools of shaping (national) identity, through establishing official discourses and myths.

Erll calls the idea of a close connection between memory and identity on the individual level ‘a commonplace’ referring as far back as to John Locke, who ‘maintained [...] that identities have to be constructed and reconstructed by acts of memory, by remembering who one was and by setting its past Self in relation to the present Self’ (2008:6). In her work on social forgetting, Esposito claims that preserving episodes of history is not the first function of memory. Comparing it to a computing device rather than a storage system, she shows memory as working to select those aspects of the past that are ‘remarkable’ and labelling them under a familiar category to allow for future reference to them. By doing this, memory ‘eliminates time from the events’, which enables these events to be recollected, analysed, compared, and reconstructed with new and different outcomes every time the memory accesses them (Esposito 2008:185). Here again, memory is considered to be a system providing a vast background made up from combined and processed recollections of past events. This function of the collective memory of receiving or rejecting a certain past, rather than how exactly it is remembered, is reiterated by Confino to be its contribution to the ‘exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group’ (2010:81). For the way in which a society, being composed of individuals with different interests and points of view, chooses a certain version of the past over another one, can lead scholars to ‘draw conclusions about historical mentality’ (ibid.).

1.4.2. The making-up of individual perceptions about the past

The dynamics between personal attitudes to historical discourses and collective memories encompassing those discourses tends to be a two-way street, and the influence of the two concepts is mutual. For example, Erll writes about the continuous interaction between individual and collective memory that enables the existence of both; she posits there is no ‘pre-cultural individual memory’, but collective memory cannot be detached

from individuals and exist only in media and institutions (2011:98). Individual attitudes to the past and collective memories can also be together instrumental in shaping certain societal discourses: writing about the Second World War memory, Müller describes how ‘raw individual’ perceptions of the hardest experiences during the war become overlaid with collective memories – ‘or myths’ – to contribute to the establishment of the post-war political order (2002:4). The two concepts are therefore closely linked and in constant interaction, informing and affecting one another.

It is indeed recognised that individual memory and individual perception of the past is crucial in shaping collective memories. Given that, as shown in section 1.3, stories and images that are remembered cannot be considered accurate historical representations, individual human memory is affected by subsequent perceptions and influences from outside, and these misrepresentations can naturally be translated into collective memory (Manier and Hirst 2008:254). Similarly, Aleida Assmann maintains it is ‘only through individual perception appraisal, and appropriation’ that symbols, texts, and stories become incorporated into a cultural memory, as well as through medial and institutional representations (Assmann A. 2016:40). At the same time, she notes it is impossible to immediately transfer from individual to collective memory, rather, individual memory must be taken through all the memory levels that correspond to different levels of different groups individuals belong to: social groups, political collectives, and cultures (ibid.:42-43). One of the reasons could obviously be the relative weight of individual and collective perceptions on the societal scale (See Figure 2).

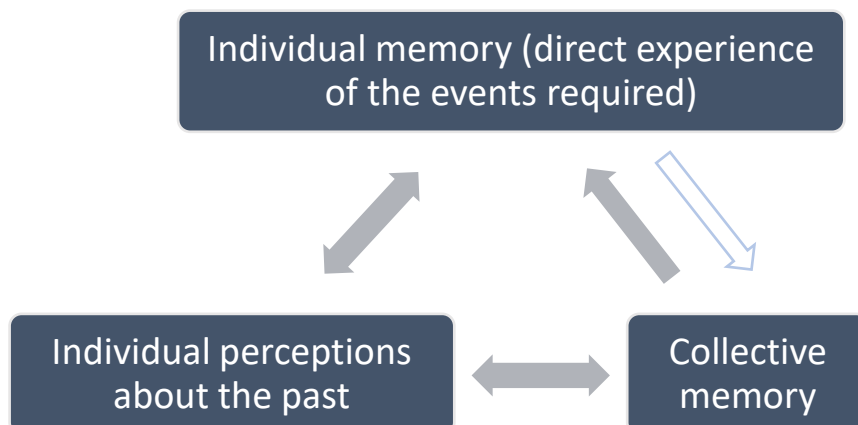


Figure 2. Interactions between individual memory, collective memory, and individual perceptions about the past (Compiled by the author).

In relation to this, Snyder speaks about another difference that should be made between collective memory (he refers to national memory in this case) and individual memory. He maintains that national memory poses a qualitative problem, because to challenge a certain nationally shared idea of the past, it is required that the new claims be 'justified in terms of the larger interest of the nation'. In case of individual memory, the problem is quantitative: personal memories can be outvoted if they oppose the common understanding of the past (Snyder in Müller 2002:22). Individual perceptions in this case become subject to pressure from collective memories, which can be taken as far as to unconsciously or deliberately suppress those individual memories or perceptions about the past that do not correspond to the accepted ones in the society: this process can be imagined both in terms of social and cultural memory.

On the other hand, having common collective memories can be influential towards personal attitudes to the past in other, non-aggressive ways. On the level of social memory, through participation in and communication within a group, its members broaden the scope of their own personal memories (Assmann A. 2016:13). On the level of cultural memory with its mediated nature, the representations of the past in media provide the necessary 'schemata and scripts' for individuals to build their idea of the common past for themselves (Erl 2008:397).

This thesis accepts the possibilities of collective memory to influence the way individuals perceive the past, as well as its potential to contribute to identity-building and be instrumental in setting social or political agenda in a society. As several collective memories can exist in one society, their influence can be rather complex and sometimes lead to controversies. Alongside the possible social and cultural memory influence, political collective memory can often take the form of an official discourse regarding a historical event.

To sum up this subsection, Figure 3 (p.24) shows the mechanics of impact of different types of collective memory on individual perceptions of historical events by representatives of different generations, and the role of official discourse in this. It demonstrates that social memory, shaped through personal communication, is transmitted across generations as a single body of opinions and ideas. At the same time, each successive generation faces a different societal environment, which means that it can

share in a different version of the cultural memory, which cannot be directly received from the previous generation.

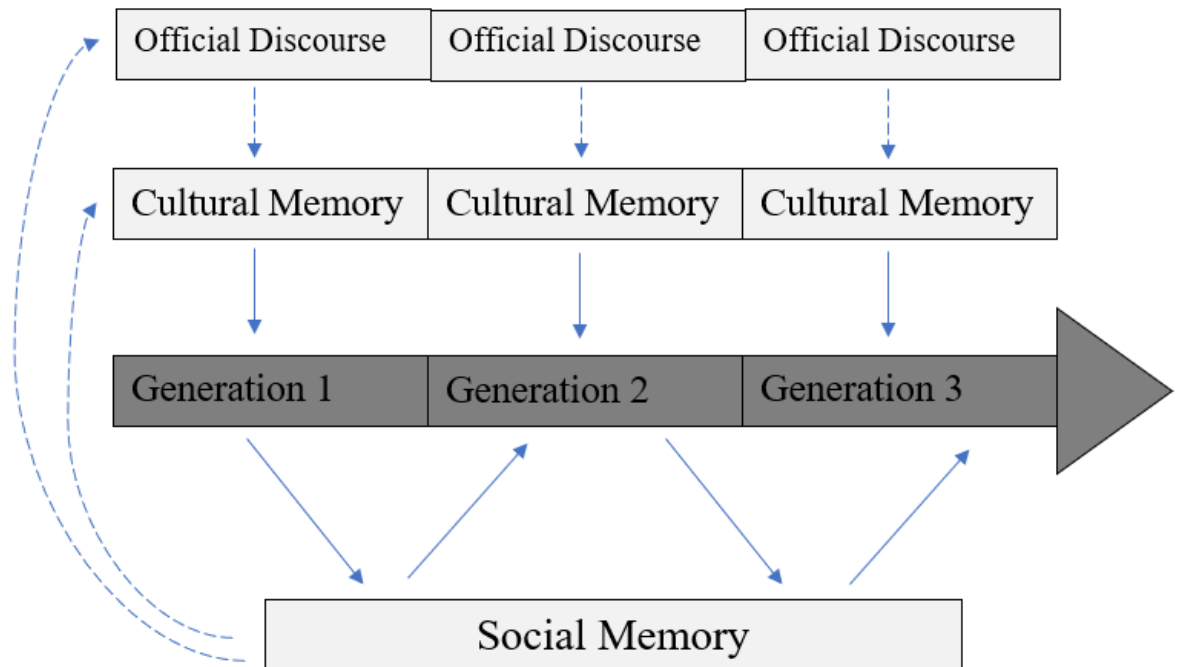


Figure 3. Influence of different types of collective memory on personal attitudes to historical events (Compiled by the author).

Cultural and social memory influence individual perceptions directly (whether it's acceptance or rejection thereof), but official discourse has a mediated influence. It can only shape or guide the way cultural memory is perceived. This point reiterates the fact that top-down collective memory needs to be supported on a bottom-up level or originate in the society in order not to be rejected. This requirement is shown on Figure 3 as a dashed line leading from Social Memory to Official Discourse.

1.6. Theoretical assumption and research questions

Given the theoretical discussion above, the aim of this thesis was to thoroughly examine the following **theoretical assumption**: the influence of social and cultural memory on individual perceptions about historical events can be rather visible and significant, as collective memory importantly contributes to the sense of collective identity. At the same time, the representations caused by social memory, more

pronounced among those who directly participated in historical events in question or discussed them with such participants, become less influential with the shift of generations. It is the mediated and institutionalised attributes of cultural memory that come in place of communication-based social memory as the time passes, and in many cases collective memory of previous generations loses its significance in society, being reinterpreted, rejected, or destroyed, unless it has been successfully appropriated into cultural memory. This process of transformation of social memory into cultural, or else the waning of social memory if such transformation has not happened, was examined based using a case study of Ukraine's Second World War memory.

To check the theoretical assumption, the following **research questions** were answered:

- To what extent do personal attitudes to the Second World War in Ukraine become influenced by social and cultural memory?
- In what way does the generational and family factor influence the relations between individual Second World War perceptions and social and cultural memory?
- How do changes to the official WWII collective memory discourse influence individual perceptions about WWII?

Chapter 2. Ukrainian WWII Discourses: Development and Current State

This chapter provides the necessary background information about the WWII collective memory in Ukraine. It first gives an overview of Ukraine's history of WWII collective memory starting with the Great Patriotic War (GPW) discourse of the Soviet period and following throughout the independence years. Next, it looks at the 2015 changes to the official WWII narrative in Ukraine and the controversial elements in them. Finally, the chapter summarises the information and distils the main characteristics of the current WWII discourses in Ukraine. This summary provides a set of reference points for analysing interviews further in the thesis.

2.1. Overview of WWII collective memory in Ukraine

This section provides a description of how Ukraine's WWII collective memory developed. This is to identify some of the characteristics that the main current WWII memory discourses have and be able to pinpoint them in the interviewees' responses later in the thesis.

It is commonly agreed that Ukraine's official memory discourses were replacing one another since the collapse of the Soviet Union, developing a set of characteristic narratives, stories and heroes each. This development now allows memory discourses to serve as markers of political and cultural affiliation for both political parties and ordinary citizens. At the same time, it would be a simplification to speak about clear-cut division on the grassroots level. Although many Ukrainians support one or another memory discourse regarding the Second World War and display corresponding opinions and preferences, many still refrain from such views in favour of a more moderate, abnegating, or reconciliatory position. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a working set of elements inherent to the main memory discourses to be able to see where the interviewees' opinions would coincide with or differ from them.

2.1.1. Pre-independence collective memory

Ukraine's dealing with its past and looking for a proper way to shape its collective memory has been difficult given its Soviet experience. Narvselius states the Second World War is still 'an unburied past' in Ukraine characterised by 'contradictory historical memories' and 'blank spots' and lacks a single clear narrative regarding the events (2012:470). Ukraine's history continues to influence its people's identity-building.

Finding a solution to the country's different cultural and historical legacies in different regions is often considered a prerequisite to building a united Ukraine.

Throughout the Soviet period, the officially approved WWII memory discourse was the only one allowed in the public sphere. In many cases it was prevailing in the private or family environment as well. The heroic narrative of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) was constructed to become one of the uniting myths for all the constituent republics and establish a single Soviet identity (Jilge 2006:50; Serbyn 2007:108; Finney 2011:40). It also served the purpose of legitimising the Soviet regime (Zhurchenko 2016:171) and was used to 'to whip up national pride and allegiance' (Lehti et al 2013:25). Finney notes the unique importance of the war in the consciousness of Soviet citizens, much more pronounced than in most other combatant countries, explaining it by the immense and all-encompassing traumatic effect of the war as well as the need for political legitimisation (2011:40).

The crucial role of the Great Patriotic War was first emphasised in 1965, when Victory Day (9 May) was added to the list of Soviet Union's most significant public holidays (Finney 2011). Before that, the war was hardly addressed in the public discourse, except for two years immediately following its end. The need to rebuild the country after the destructive events (especially in Belarus and Ukraine) were often cited as a reason for official calls to leave the painful experiences behind. The mistakes of commanders that had led to unjustifiably high casualties motivated the authorities not to capitalise upon the victims and tune down any 'unsupervised recollections of the horrors of war' (Serbyn 2007:114). Markwick states that immediately after the war, 'the state's monopoly of the media meant that only the heroic depiction of the war, divorced from private memory, reached the public domain' (2014:696). Therefore, the official representations excluded 'the shocking routs and surrenders, the mass deaths of soldiers and prisoners, the trauma of the wounded, the starvation of the besieged in Leningrad, the deprivation on the home front, the terror of occupation, the shame and discrimination against those suspected of collaboration, and the fate of the invalids' (ibid.). Any commemorative activities, like talks or lectures, were since then heavily supervised through the workplace or educational establishment environment (Serbyn 2007:114). For example, the veterans who were invited to schools or universities to give talks about war were sharing 'sanitised' accounts

of their experiences; meanwhile, the published documents about the war were censored (ibid.:115).

The grandeur of the WWII victory commemorations in the 1960s was introduced by the state and also accepted by the war veterans and their families (Markwick 2014:693). The Soviet dominant narrative was supported through various means, including history teaching at school as one of the most important ones (Serbyn 2007:118). This allowed to shape the attitudes to the war from the very young age, at the same time disengaging individual perceptions about it from the personal family environment represented by parents and grandparents' stories and moving it into the public and more general memory landscape. The penetration of the WWII narratives was expansive, including monuments and place names, special emphasis in schools and youth organisations. There was a custom for newlyweds to visit a local WWII memorial after their wedding ceremony (Finney 2011:48). Despite the sense of honour and respect for those who fought in the Second World War cultivated in Soviet citizens, people were not encouraged to share those personal experiences that did not correspond with the appropriated public narrative of the glorious struggle.

The role of individual republics and/or nationalities in the Soviet Union was downplayed and sacrificed to the idea of a single united Soviet country. Anti-Soviet wartime movements were naturally condemned or silenced (Yurchuk 2014:4). It also failed to include the experiences of Holocaust victims into the official narrative, being subsumed under the category of civilian casualties (Markwick 2014:698). In the term 'Great Patriotic War' (or, literary, the Great Fatherland War, *Velyka Vitchyzniana Viyna*), 'Fatherland' is an ambiguous concept, which could both mean the Soviet Union and Ukraine. It was therefore instrumental in blending the identities of Soviet Ukrainians (Serbyn 2007:118). The role of separate nationalities was also decreased due to the post-war dominant role of the Russian nation in the Soviet Union. De facto serving as a basis for the one Soviet nation, it necessitated the histories of individual republics to be written in such a way that they emphasized their links to Russia (Yurchuk 2014:61).

Given the abovementioned, the nature of the Soviet WWII social memory was heavily influenced by an institutionalised official discourse, to the extent that sharing war experience among close friends and family would be done in correspondence with the official viewpoint on the war. Communications describing those sides of the war life not

approved by the official discourse were seldom shared through social memory environment, relying heavily on the cultural memory environment.

2.1.2. WWII Collective Memory in Independent Ukraine

With the start of democratisation process in the late 1980s, the leaders of Ukrainian liberalisation movement used the war memory to stimulate the nation-building (Yurchuk 2014). Gorbachev's *perestroika* allowed for new sources of information about the Second World War and new opportunities to discuss it. Therefore, it paved the way to allowing new WWII attitudes into the public space, although not yet on the official level. The topics previously silenced were now appearing in mass media and in published accounts of the events, inviting public and professional discussions regarding certain blank spots of the WWII history (Markwick 2014:705). The disclosure of information on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was one of the most influential at that time, leading together with other things to a 'de-sacralisation' of many Soviet power attributes (ibid.:707). The ability to speak out appeared for many social groups who were previously denied voice, such as victims of Stalinist repressions, Holocaust survivors or former deportees. The already established groups (Red army veterans or prisoners of Nazi concentration camps) were able to discuss new topics within their experiences that had not been spoken about publicly before (Zhurchenko 2016:170). This process allowed for creating a new layer of collective memory regarding events that happened more than 40 years before, part of which was the social memory shared by some of participants.

It was now possible for leaders of the liberalisation movement to refer to wartime insurgent fighters, especially members of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, established 1929) and of its military unit Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA, established 1942). The faction of the OUN headed by Stepan Bandera was conducting an underground struggle against the Soviet army and was at the origins of many anti-Soviet symbols, attitudes and commemoration practices surviving in western Ukraine throughout the 20th century (Jilge and Troebst 2006). These groups, branded as Nazi collaborators and 'nationalist traitors' in Soviet historiography, were now presented in many cases as heroes who fought against both Nazi and Soviet regimes for the independence of the Ukrainian state.

This nationalising war narrative was not created from scratch. It was rather adopted from the ones that have for a long time existed in the émigré community, introduced by

members of the OUN and UPA who had moved to the West to escape the Soviet regime (Yurchuk 2014; Rudling 2011). In western Ukraine, this discourse was preserved mostly in family-shared recollections, as no public mentioning of it in positive light was allowed during the Soviet period. In many cases, the recollections were not even shared to younger generations for fear of persecution. In other words, collective memory of the OUN and UPA belonged to the social memory domain in western Ukraine, while in other regions it was almost non-existent.

To sum up, after gaining its independence in 1991, Ukraine was left with the previously existing Soviet WWII discourse on the official and mostly on the grassroots level. It was not strongly damaged by the new information and freedom of speech brought by *perestroika*; however, it was being critically re-evaluated. At the same time, Ukrainians saw more opportunities to publicly discuss the nationalising WWII discourse celebrating the wartime independence fighters.

The entrance of the new WWII discourse into the public sphere paved the way to controversies and political manipulation. Liubarets notes the absence of consistency in establishing Ukraine's official memory narratives regarding the Soviet past throughout Ukraine's independence (2016:198). Indeed, the nature of history discourses presented on the public level usually depended on current governing forces.

Leonid Kuchma's presidency (1994-2005) saw many Soviet-related features preserved in official public commemorations and the general emphasis on the glorious victory rather than on victims of the war. Kuchma's WWII commemorative speeches referred to the 'unchangeable truths' immune to 'fleeting winds and political whims' (Serbyn 2007:109), emphasised Ukraine's shared experience of the Great Patriotic War with other post-Soviet countries, and the heroism of the Soviet soldier (Klymenko 2015). At the same time, Ukrainian history in general started to be represented in an ethnocentric manner to address the status of Ukrainians as 'titular nation' (Kasianov 2016: 195).

The heavy emphasis on Soviet experiences drew criticism from part of the population demanding that the OUN/UPA members were granted the same war veteran status as the Soviet army veterans (Serbyn 2007:110). Kuchma's commemorative speeches showed his attempts to satisfy all Ukrainians and were consistent with his multi-vectoral foreign policy (Klymenko 2015:394). In the last years of his presidency, Kuchma spoke of the need for reconciliation between the Soviet and UPA fighters; this tendency started several

years before the 60th anniversary of the WWII end in 2005. Commemorative ceremonies and sites were then informed by ‘a mixture of national and Soviet rituals, discourses and practices’ (Kasianov 2016:195). At the same time, the concept of Victory Day or GPW was still at the core of the WWII official collective memory, as well as in school history textbooks. This leads to conclude that reconciliation was unlikely at that time.

The OUN and UPA found their steady positive representation in an official discourse during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010). He became president following the Orange Revolution protests against forged presidential election results in 2004. The protesters referred to the wartime symbolism, although to a lesser extent than in the 2013-2014 Euromaidan protests. Yushchenko’s memory politics was more systematic and consistent than Kuchma’s, with emphasis on the heroism and suffering of the Ukrainian people through its history (Kasianov 2016:197). The overall discourse proposed during Yushchenko’s presidency regarding the Soviet period had strong marks of a victimisation narrative. The previously prevailing status of a Soviet republic emerging victorious from the Great Patriotic War and constituting part of a world power was refused. The wartime Ukrainian state was now presented as a victim of two totalitarian regimes (Zhurchenko 2016:171). In Yushchenko’s WWII commemorative speeches, Ukraine’s shared war experience with Europe was in focus. This represented the foreign policy directions at that time, as Ukraine’s EU and NATO aspirations were among the declared priorities (Klymenko 2015).

Given the long history of portraying wartime nationalist organisations as criminals in official rhetoric, the move was not universally popular in the society. A way to make the OUN/UPA narrative more acceptable was to present their activities as fight against the Nazi Germany and struggle for Ukrainian independence. The attacks against the Polish and Jewish population of the western Ukraine carried out during the war time were downplayed (Portnov 2013:237; Yurchuk 2014:77). The new contents of school history textbooks proved to be an especially controversial issue. Organisations of Soviet war veterans and the opposition Party of Regions were opposing the favourable description of the OUN and UPA in textbooks as well as replacing the term ‘Great Patriotic War’ with ‘Second World War’ (Kasianov 2016:197).

The Great Patriotic War narrative was not altogether abandoned; in his WWII commemorative speeches Yushchenko underlined the importance of unity among

Ukrainians and was attempting to reconcile Ukrainians who fought in opposing military units (Klymenko 2015). Indeed, some scholars considered Yushchenko's approach to dealing with the past events as an 'integration-oriented narrative', attempting to provide a combined UPA and Soviet narrative (for example, Portnov cited in Yurchuk 2014:127). The president's move to provide the same status for the Soviet Army and the UPA veterans could be regarded as a reconciliation attempt, which nevertheless contributed to numerous public debates (Khromeychuk 2012:455).

The development of the new official discourse reached its peak when Viktor Yushchenko awarded posthumous titles of Heroes of Ukraine to the controversial nationalist leaders Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera (Narvselius 2012:475). The awards were condemned internationally as many members of the nationalist organisations had been involved in the Holocaust and murders of Polish and Ukrainian civilians. However, in Ukraine the reason for controversy was somewhat different. It was mainly the OUN and UPA's struggle against the Soviet army and aggression against those who supported the communist ideology that fed and is still feeding antipathy of the Soviet discourse proponents. OUN and UPA's implications in Holocaust appear to them less grave of a crime, largely because during the Soviet period the Jewish victims were regarded as civilian casualties together with other Soviet citizens and did not constitute a separate category of victims (Shevel 2014a:157). Looking at the common perceptions of Yushchenko's move, Shevel analyses the results of a poll by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation conducted in December 2007. The question posed before the respondents was whether they supported the idea of giving the UPA fighter the status of participants in the national-liberation struggle. The results demonstrated the often-mentioned divide between the western and south-eastern regions in the matters of history; for example, 77 per cent of residents of the western regions favoured the status, while 13 per cent supported it in the Donetsk region and Crimea. The central regions were divided, with 38 per cent standing against and 38 per cent for the move (fully or partly) (Ukrains'ka Pravda 2008 in Shevel 2014:162).

Several months after his winning the presidential elections, Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014) suspended Yushchenko's awards to the nationalist leaders, thus keeping one of his electoral campaign promises. Narvselius states the main reason was to normalise relations with Russia, where the general attitude towards Stepan Bandera is negative

(2012:477). However, Kasianov notes Yanukovich's 'ambivalent' memory politics: it preserved ethnosymbolism for the sake of legitimization and used 'elements of Soviet nostalgia' to appeal to that part of the population who supported such a discourse (2016:203). In his WWII commemorative speeches, Yanukovich was again referring to the Great Patriotic War discourse, at the same time capitalising on its importance in establishing the Ukrainian nation-state. Klymenko notes the way Yanukovich's commemorative rhetoric was mirroring his foreign policy, combining the movement towards the Association Agreement with the EU and impact from Russia's political and economic pressure (2015:398). At the same time, Yanukovich's actions in memory politics were clearer than Kuchma's in showing the unacceptability of nationalist reading of the Second World War in Ukraine or indeed treating it in a way contrary to Russia's official narrative. The changes made (once more) to school history textbooks took care to decrease the number of mentions of the wartime nationalist movement and remove positive connotations from their description, while making emphasis on the GPW narrative (Osipian and Osipian 2012).

Given the abovementioned, throughout 1991-2013, attitudes to the Second World War gradually developed to be a marker for political affiliations. It was possible due to the lack of transfer of academic expertise to the public sphere (Narvselius 2012:470) and due to an almost sacred importance of WWII for many voters. As during this period most of the programmes of political parties were similar, employing differences in historical narratives was one of the easiest ways to make a political force recognisable and attract a predictable share of votes. The emphasis on these differences during political campaigns was therefore instrumental in deepening the divide (Portnov 2013:248). The simplified dichotomous attitude to the war period was readily followed by elites for easier political advantages: a clear-cut narrative with a defined 'enemy' is likely to create a strong emotional response from voters. At the same time, reiteration of these narratives in the public sphere during speeches or political campaign solidifies them and makes them more familiar and accepted by the population, contributing to the establishment of different versions of cultural memory.

2.2. Post-Euromaidan Second World War Memory: Changes in Official Discourse

This research builds on the fact that a major change in Ukraine's official attitude to the Second World War occurred in 2015-2016. Discussion of this change and its effect on respondents' WWII perceptions constituted a large part of each conducted interview. This section will provide background information about the alterations to the WWII official attitude necessary to contextualise interviewees' replies and the subsequent analysis. It starts with describing how the Second World War symbolism was used during the Euromaidan protests and events connected with the Russian aggression, as it was foregrounded and endowed with new importance. It proceeds with showing the increased attention from officials to the Second World War resulting from its recognised symbolical significance, and the legal changes to the way it should be commemorated.

2.2.1. Second World War symbolism in Euromaidan protests and Russian aggression

As part of the considerable impact on Ukrainian society, the Euromaidan revolution and the subsequent Russian aggression have introduced changes to the country's WWII collective memory. The desire of protesters and the post-Euromaidan authorities to distance the society from the Soviet practices and, later, from the Russian ones became manifest in memory-related actions, statements and policies. In addition, elements of the Second World War or the Great Patriotic War can be found in the symbolism of both sides of the Euromaidan protests and of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

First, broad historical narratives and symbolism surfaced during the 2013-2014 Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine. For example, the names that the self-defence groups at Euromaidan styled for themselves and certain practices were appropriated from the Ukrainian Cossack culture and the UPA fighters. The term *sotnia* was used to refer to a separate organisational unit within the protesters' camp, originating from the name of a Cossack unit of hundred fighters (Kasianov 2016:206). In terms of the WWII discourses, many Euromaidan protesters chose to use symbols and slogans of the wartime insurgent groups, although their actual meaning is argued to carry connotations different from those of the 1940s (Yurchuk 2014:239; Kasianov 2016:206). This was one of the factors deepening the alienation between supporters of the two main discourses because it's attached political meaning was too vivid. This arguably led to the merging of the WWII

discourses and the political agenda of that time: some Ukrainians would associate the UPA fighters with the Euromaidan protesters, and supporters of the Great Patriotic War narrative – with Yanukovich supporters. At the same time, those opposing the Euromaidan, and later the pro-Russian separatist groups in Ukraine's east, often referred to the Soviet-styled Great Patriotic War symbols and rhetoric. The St. George's Ribbon, an old Russian imperial and Soviet military symbol more recently associated with the Great Patriotic War, was adopted by Euromaidan opponents to oppose the protesters' use of nationalist movement symbolism. It was later also adopted by insurgent groups in eastern Ukraine, where it was counteracting the Ukrainian flag.

The use of Soviet discourse coincided with the increasing cult of Victory Day in Russia (Khrebtan-Hörhager 2016), as well as the annexation of Crimea and the start of its military involvement in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian army was called 'fascist' in official Russian and insurgent media; therefore, the need for defending the eastern regions from the 'fascism' threat seemed logical, not least because the Great Patriotic War rhetoric was clearly traceable in this discourse. With the Great Patriotic War as the fight against 'fascists occupants' being one of the key building elements of the Soviet society, the WWII history proved to be an influential part of populations' identity.

The contemporary Russia became gradually associated with the Soviet Union, one of the reasons being its domestic and foreign policy including attacks on personal freedoms, censorship, persecutions, search for external and internal enemies. This also made the Great Patriotic War as official Russia interpreted it unacceptable for some Ukrainians and contributed to alienating from it. The so-called de-communisation became one of the forms of this. Liubarets sees the de-communisation processes as associated with 'reducing Ukraine's cultural dependence on Russia' (2016:205). He argues that removing Soviet cultural legacy after the start of the Russian aggression became possible, because Russia occupies a 'firm position as the successor of the Soviet Union in the minds of many Ukrainians' (ibid.). Therefore, Russia's aggressive actions were in part associated with the Soviet Union and required making symbolical distance between the current Ukraine and the Soviet cultural legacy.

The difficulty with removing the Soviet cultural associations from the WWII attitudes was that many Ukrainians have spent a large share of their life embedded in the institutionalised GPW cultural memory. Many were in their formative age when it was

present in history textbooks, books and movies, official commemoration rituals, and supported by social memory elements such as family chats. It followed into the period of independent Ukraine, receiving approval and confirmation on the official level for most of the time. Therefore, for these generations, the Great Patriotic War is one of the collective memory elements that can only in exceptional cases be subject to change because of any political events, and cultural distancing from the Soviet Union does not happen.

2.2.2. De-communisation laws and controversies

The increased symbolical importance of the Second World War both in Ukraine and in Russia prompted the Ukrainian authorities to attend to the way the war is remembered and commemorated in the country, as it once again proved to be a salient part of the Ukrainian identity. The official discourse in the WWII memory was marked, *inter alia*, by new legislation. A set of laws often referred to as de-communisation laws was adopted on 9 April 2015, marking a new official mode of publicly speaking and remembering the Second World War and the Soviet period. The adoption of some of these laws was accompanied by a heated discussion among politicians, intellectuals and historians, and was criticised by European international organisations.

According to the Law on the Legal Status and Commemoration of Fighters for Independence of Ukraine in 20th Century (No.314-VIII, Law A), former members of OUN and UPA have received the legal status of independence fighters, along with members of some other groups and organisations. They have been given rights to receive state and municipal social benefits and become protected by law in case their status is publicly denied.

The Law on Immortalising Victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939-1945 (No.315-VIII, Law B) introduces the term Second World War on the official level. According to it, both the Nazi and the Communist totalitarian regimes committed numerous crimes against humanity, war crimes and acts of genocide in the territory of Ukraine in the wartime. Together with the Victory Day, the Law introduces the Day of Memory and Reconciliation to be marked on 8 May.

The Law on Access to Archives of the Repressive Bodies of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917-1991 (No.316-VIII, Law C) provides a list of all institutions considered ‘repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime’, including all

institutions of the judicial branch of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR, security, military, and law enforcement agencies, prisons and labour camp system (including the KGB).

Finally, the Law on the Condemnation of the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and the Ban of Propaganda of Their Symbols (No.317-VIII, Law D) prohibits public denial, including through mass media, of the criminal nature of the mentioned regimes. It bans spreading information aimed to justify their criminal nature and the production, distribution, or public use of goods with their symbols. The items on this list that have drawn most discussion and controversy (including in interviews collected for this research) refer to pictures, or monuments dedicated to top officials of the Soviet communist party as well as to those who contributed to the establishment of the Soviet rule in Ukraine or were involved in persecutions against independence fighters. Names of places that were given after persons or events related to the communist regime are also considered communist symbols, therefore, renaming was required. This ban did not apply to those monuments, plaques or place names commemorating struggle against the Nazi Germany or dedicated to the development of Ukrainian science and culture during the Soviet period.

The de-communisation laws were actively discussed and criticised long before they were adopted. The main argument against it was that the laws were violating the principle of freedom of speech and ignored the fact that nationalist organisations participated in ethnic cleansings against Poles and in anti-Jewish pogroms. The law banning communist regime propaganda was also criticised as it demanded renaming cities, villages, streets, and other places requiring significant expenses (Luhn 2015).

Preference for the Second World War rather than the Great Patriotic War is one of the most disputed decisions in terms of generational attitudes. The symbolical meaning of this move was that it now placed Ukraine into the pan-European commemorative space rather than pan-Soviet. With Russia's dominant role in the latter, marking a crucial historical event in the same way as before would be unacceptable in the light of its recent acts of aggression. However, the main argument for replacing the name of the war in official discourse was historical accuracy. The Great Patriotic War officially started on 22 June 1941 when the Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union. However, given the fact that Ukraine's western regions were part of Poland at the time the Second World War

started in 1939, their population experienced the war even before 1941, not only by the Nazi German intervention but also by the Soviet troops attacks starting 17 September 1939. Khrebtan-Hörhager states that despite the historical accuracy of this term, the generation of those who have personal recollections of experiencing the Great Patriotic War, as it was known at that time and for many years after, are forced to sacrifice these recollections ‘for the sake of Ukrainian nation building’ (2016:298). She believes that generation is not the only one in this regard, with at least one younger generation feeling that their collective memory is denied recognition.

The controversies around the de-communisation laws remind those of Viktor Yushchenko’s presidency. According to Khromeychuk, the problem with the conflict of discourses then was the lack of ‘open and critical approach to the collective national memory’, as the officials ‘replace[d] one set of interpretations of national memory with another’ (2012:466). This aggravated the already present conflicts regarding the WWII perceptions and hardly provided a solution acceptable for everyone. Shevel arrives to a similar conclusion writing about the postrevolutionary changes in official attitudes to the past, stating the removal of Soviet symbols is being conducted with Soviet-style tools (2016a). The narratives still retain the presence of a defined enemy figure and an implied idea that only one correct interpretation of the events is possible. In the current official WWII attitudes, memories presenting the Soviet army in the positive light may be found inappropriate or illegal and denied public recognition, just like the pro-nationalist discourse was denied it during the Soviet period. The extent to which the opposing discourse becomes silenced is different in these two cases. However, the shared principle is the failure to recognise the personal and collective memory background of people who might have had different allegiances during the Second World War.

2.3. Summary of Ukraine’s Dominant WWII Discourses

This section provides a summary of the two main discourses of the Second World War in Ukraine. Within this research, it allows to pinpoint elements of these discourses in interviewees’ replies and compare them with other interviews. The thesis argues that these two discourses do not necessarily appear in interviewees’ responses in their pure forms as defined here. The dichotomous picture of Ukraine’s collective memory is more applicable to describing the top-down activities. As has been shown by Shevel (2014), the population is more various in their perceptions about the Second World War. Whereas

many are passionate supporters of one or the other narrative, many Ukrainians are undecided, keep a middle stance between the two narratives, or remain uninvolved in the WWII memory.

Although the divide is not clear-cut, many authors agree it roughly follows a geographical pattern (Jilge 2006; Marples, 2012; Shevel 2014). It is common therefore in Ukrainian media to refer to the discourses as the ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ ones, although this is a simplistic way to put it. According to Klymenko, the main marker distinguishing the nature of WWII rhetoric is how the war is referred to: the Great Patriotic War or the Second World War (2015). Kasianov (2016) distinguishes Soviet nostalgic and national discourses, while Serbyn defines the two sides as ‘pro-European national-democrats’ and ‘pro-Eurasian Russophiles’ (2007:110). This thesis uses the terms ‘**pro-Soviet**’ and ‘**pro-nationalist**’ to refer to the two main discourses. There are certain controversies in using the term ‘pro-European’ as Serbyn does: the desire to position Ukraine within the European WWII commemorative space is evident, but favouring nationalist organisations involved in criminal activities during the war hardly complies with European values. This is even more evident in the case of April 2015 de-communisation laws.

Table 2 (p.40) summarises the second chapter mentioning the main statements corresponding to either of the two main WWII discourses. Its purpose is to provide a system of reference points for a more structured analysis of interviews. The statements in the table can be attributable to landscapes of both social and cultural memory depending on the origin of a statement in an interviewee’s personal framework of attitudes.

Table 2. Main elements of the pro-Soviet and pro-nationalist Second World War discourses in Ukraine (Compiled by the author).

No.	Pro-Soviet Discourse	Pro-nationalist Discourse
1	The Great Patriotic War is the name of Ukraine's most devastating war of the 20th century.	The Second World War is the name of Ukraine's most devastating war of the 20th century. The term Great Patriotic War excludes wartime experience of some Ukrainians.
2	The war was fought by the joint effort of the Soviet people, with a great contribution from Ukrainians as its part.	Ukrainian people had a unique experience in the war, very distinct from that of other peoples of the Soviet Union.
3	The chief war experience worth remembering is the glorious victory of the Soviet Union following the people's heroic struggle.	The chief war experience worth remembering is the unprecedented number of victims as Ukraine found itself torn between two totalitarian regimes.
4	Members of wartime nationalist organisations such as the OUN and UPA are traitors who collaborated with the Nazi Germany and slaughtered civilians.	Members of wartime nationalist organisations such as the OUN and UPA are heroes fighting for Ukraine's independence as they opposed both the Nazi and the Soviet regimes.
5	The Soviet army liberated Ukraine's western regions from the Nazi occupation.	The Soviet army occupied Ukraine's western regions which belonged to Poland at the beginning of the war.
6	St. George's Ribbon and the standard of the Soviet Army are sacrosanct symbols of the war.	The old symbols should not be used anymore. Red poppies, Ukrainian flag and memorial candles are the new symbols, occasionally – symbols of Ukrainian wartime nationalist organisations.

The both discourses omit certain historical details that might present them in negative light. The most visible omission from the both discourses is mentions of the Holocaust. As described above, the Soviet official war narrative did not distinguish Jewish victims as a separate category; this has influenced perceptions about the Holocaust of the current supporters of the pro-Soviet WWII discourse. As for the pro-nationalist discourse, any mentioning of the Holocaust might draw criticism as the nationalist groups were

implicated in it. Some other omissions include, on the side of the pro-Soviet discourse, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and USSR's military cooperation with the Nazi Germany after 1939, the Soviet-Finish war, Soviet Union's repressions against its citizens (Klymenko 2012:392). The pro-nationalist discourse omits, inter alia, killings of Polish and Ukrainian civilians in western Ukraine and persecutions of people with communist views. These omissions are important part of discourses and make it possible to speak about them in terms of collective memory. Collective forgetting is part of collective memory, especially in terms of cultural memory with its possibilities of removing historical details from the body of an institutionalised discourse.

One of the arguments of this thesis is that the attitudes to the Second World War are merged in minds of many Ukrainians with their attitudes to current political or social events. A strong attachment to one of the discussed historical discourses often goes hand in hand with certain recognisable opinions regarding the Soviet Union, the Euromaidan protests, Russian aggression, or international relations. These two sets of attitudes can therefore in some cases be used as flags regarding each other.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1. Semi-structured interviewing: reasons for choosing

This thesis employs semi-structured interviewing to accomplish the main research objective. The research puzzle and theoretical design of the thesis required such data that would allow to detect markers of certain WWII attitudes across several generations, that can also be attributed to manifestations of either social or cultural memory. Such markers can be best identified through long personal responses from the target group – Ukrainians of different ages. To consider the generational factor on vertical and horizontal level, responses from members of same families were found best suited for the research. To tailor the responses so that aspects of social and cultural WWII memory are discussed, guiding questions were used. Therefore, **semi-structured interviewing** was chosen as a method most appropriate for this research.

The advantages of interviewing include a deeper insight into the WWII attitudes, focus on interviewees' perspectives, flexibility, and possibilities to pick up new themes during individual interviews (Bryman 2016:466-467). Interviews allowed for extended personal responses and were well-suited for the bottom-up approach of this thesis. It was more appropriate than, for example, surveys, because it allowed to register feelings and emotions the interviewees had during the conversation. The interviewer could react with new questions and ask for clarifications. Another advantage of using semi-structured interviewing referred to the vagueness of memory studies. As mentioned above in Chapter 1, aspects of social and cultural memory are not often expressly manifested in people's actions or thoughts. Semi-structured interviewing allowed for finding implied signs of a present social or cultural memory about WWII in people's everyday practices, thoughts and beliefs, or special rituals they participate in.

3.2. Selection of respondents and interviewing process

The data used in this research is 20 interviews with permanent residents of Kyiv. The geographical limit was imposed for several reasons. First, this reduced the need to consider interviewee's place of residence as one of the factors influencing their responses. Chapter 2 shows that geography can play a role in the opinions people hold about historical events. Focusing on Kyiv, which is situated in the central part of the country, minimised this factor. Second, being a capital city, Kyiv includes people with various

backgrounds and opinions, who also have freer environment to voice them than if they lived in an area where a certain discourse about WWII prevailed in the community.

The **family** was chosen as a core element of further interview analysis to examine the generational aspect of social and cultural memory. The interviews were conducted with representatives of three (and in one case two) generations within individual families, thus allowing to compare patterns of WWII remembrance and perception as influenced by both family environment and the wider society. None of the interviewees had direct experience of the Second World War. Each interviewee roughly fell into one of the three age cohorts (or 'Generations'): 'G1' – 56+ years old, 'G2' – 36-55 years old, and 'G3' – 18-35 years old. The breaking up of interviewees into generations allowed to draw comparison of responses vertically (across people belonging to the same generation age-wise) and horizontally (people who belong to the same family).

Interviewees were recruited mostly through online announcement. In two cases snowballing method was used, when one of the interviewees suggested a family they knew who would agree to being interviewed. The process of recruiting in most cases occurred through the younger members of the family. After the interviewer had contacted them and conditionally secured their participation, they approached their family members with a request that the interviewer approached them and discussed their participation.

The main requirement for participants was that the family members must reside in Kyiv permanently and consider themselves ethnic Ukrainians. There was a requirement that three members of the family of three different generations were willing to participate; however, in one case only two of the family members ended up giving interviews. The data they provided was useful for the research, and the analysis of the interplay of WWII attitudes between two generations still contributed to the analysis.

There were no requirements as to occupation or gender of interviewees, and there was no specific selection process aimed at representing diverse backgrounds and identities. This resulted in three out of seven Generation 1 respondents having military background. Otherwise, the sample included people with various backgrounds and ages, and has an approximately even gender distribution. It also managed to attract respondents with various WWII attitudes in terms of following the above-mentioned discourses and various intergenerational relations. Such circumstances were appropriate to the design of the research, as it did not aim to be representative of the whole population of Kyiv.

Apart from age, gender, and occupation, interviews provided data regarding the respondents' interest in and knowledge of history and WWII in particular. Information on education level was also provided; however, it was received conversationally during the interviews. Creating detailed profiles of the interviewees and their family history was not required by this research, as the relations and interplay of WWII opinions between different generations in families was in focus. In other words, it was the mechanics of how social and cultural memory transitioned across generations that interested this thesis, and this process can happen in family of any background. This once again emphasises the deliberate non-representativeness of the sampling. The methodology allowed to explain some of the complexity evident in Ukraine's collective memory and focus on causes and processes at work in the specific cases of the interviewees.

Table 3 (p.45) presents the interviewees who participated in the research. The interviewees were anonymised, and each person was given a code as follows:

- Number 1 to 3: generation ID (1 – the eldest member of the family, 3 – the youngest member);
- Capital letters from A to G: family ID;
- Double-digit number: age;
- Small letters 'm' or 'f': gender.

The table has been arranged to visualise the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' types of data analysis. The vertical analysis grouped respondents according to their belonging to one of the generations, and horizontal one – according to their belonging to the same family.

Table 3. Respondents participating in the research.

	Generation 1	Generation 2	Generation 3
Family A	1A74m	2A49m	3A24f
	Pensioner (former military officer)	Top manager (Electronics)	Student (Media)
Family B	1B71m	2B50m	3B23f
	Pensioner (former military officer)	Engineer	PR manager
Family C	1C62f	2C44f	3C19m
	Pensioner (former servicewoman)	Medical worker	Student (Physics)
Family D	1D59f	2D38f	3D21f
	Pensioner (former schoolteacher)	Private entrepreneur (Sales)	Student (Medicine)
Family E		2E52m	3E32f
		Private entrepreneur (Construction)	News editor
Family F	1F65m	2F44f	3F26m
	Farmer	Housewife	Human rights activist
Family G	1G82f	2G54m	3G30m
	Pensioner (former engineer)	University professor (Computer Studies)	Content manager (Game Developing)

Interviewees were provided with an Information Sheet about the research and the interviewing process, and asked to sign a Consent Form, specifying that the interviewer could record the interview. The interviewer additionally requested to make an audio recording in person before each interview. Interviewees were assured that it would not be possible to identify them from the portions of interviews quoted in the thesis. The interviews were conducted separately with each family member, as WWII remains both heated and delicate topic in the Ukrainian society, and more sincere and full replies were expected in this manner.

The interviews were taken over three sessions: the first one during July-August 2017, the second one during February 2018, and the third one during April 2018. The interviews took from 20 to 45 minutes and were conducted over Skype. They were conducted in

Russian or Ukrainian (based on the choice of the respondent). Russian-language interviews were prevalent. The issue of which language the respondents chose was not in focus for this research. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then analysed in the language they were conducted. Sections of interviews cited in this research were translated by the researcher.

3.3. Interview questions

The questions in the interviewer's guide concerned respondents' general knowledge about WWII, its perceived importance, the usual commemoration practices they follow if any, sources of information on WWII, and attitude towards the change of official course in the war remembering. As mentioned above, the interviews were designed to be semi-structured, and many clarifications and additional questions were asked by the interviewer. Overall, a thematic approach was taken, with interviewees encouraged to voice their opinions and perceptions.

One of the main aims during the interviewees was to receive as much information as possible about participants' reasons and motivation for thinking as they did, and note the figures, social and cultural phenomena and institutes they referred to when talking about WWII. Participants were asked additional questions to elaborate on certain topics. The interviewees were also encouraged to raise other topics they found important during the conversation, which they very often did.

The questions were designed in such a manner that the interviewees would not feel uncomfortable because of their possible lack of knowledge about the topic. It was their opinion that mattered and why they thought so, not if the facts they operated were historically correct. The questions focussed on perceptions and attitudes and mentioned only the concepts considered common knowledge to prevent interviewees feeling uncomfortable when discussing a topic important for them. Still, as discussed below, some of the younger interviewees did cite their perceived lack of knowledge when they refrained from answering a question. Guiding questions are provided in Annex 1.

3.4. Data analysis

Given the main theoretical arguments used in this thesis, the data analysis consisted of three stages.

Stage I

Stage I determined which (if any) discourses the respondents were supporting. It used discourse statements provided in Table 2 (p.40) to sketch respondents' attitudes towards the Second World War and opinions on the current official discourse.

The statements located in the responses were not strictly indicative of the support for a discourse overall. Some of the statements were counteracted by interviewees' other utterances making their position moderate or ambiguous/absent. These two positions were not accurately falling into either of the main discourses. Moderate position is conscious of not supporting any of the two discourses in their pure form and trying to shape the WWII attitude through the lens of humanism or personal attitude. Ambiguous or absent position is not conscious of not supporting any of the two discourses. They either lack information to formulate their attitude, or deliberately refuse to formulate an attitude.

In addition to the above-mentioned positions, combinations of positions have been distinguished at Stage I, such as, for example, 'Moderate, pro-nationalist'. This meant that the person generally adhered to the moderate position but in some questions would display pro-nationalist attachments. Given the complicated scheme of possible attitudes to the Second World War, this way of attribution positions to interviewees was the most appropriate. Its seeming complexity did not hinder the research: it was not done for statistical purposes but for tracing attitudes across families and generations of the sample.

The main difficulty with this stage was to avoid pigeonholing interviewees into one or another discourse and make this as useful as possible to simplify work with social and cultural memory manifestations.

Stage II

Stage II used thematic analyses to scan the interviews for the presence of social and cultural manifestations accounting for collective memory influence on individual WWII attitudes. The presence of these manifestations was examined through the lens of generational memory, identifying tendencies in shaping attitudes to WWII across generations.

Social memory manifestations are distinguishable facts, opinions, ideas, and actions that are expressed by respondents in a way showing they have been shaped under the

influence of social memory. Social memory manifestations have been transmitted in the family and close circle, such as retelling of war stories.

Cultural memory manifestations are distinguishable facts, opinions, ideas, and actions that are expressed by respondents in a way showing they have been shaped under the influence of cultural memory. These have been reiterated through school, working place, official rituals of commemoration, monuments, works of art.

The questions answered at this stage were as follows:

- How are social and cultural memory manifestations visible in the themes discussed during interviews?
- How do supporters of different discourses react to the themes?
- How do representatives of different generations react to the themes?
- Is it possible to distinguish which generation is more prone to be influenced by social or cultural memory?
- Do reactions to the themes differ within same families? In what ways does social and cultural memory play out in this?

The themes, ideas, and cases selected from interviewees' responses were picked in order to not only show their own attitudes to WWI but also to find connections with social and cultural memory manifestations as well as the ways in which their personal attitudes related to those of their generation peers.

The themes used throughout the analysis were as follows:

- Personal importance of WWII and personal ways of commemoration (if any);
- The proper term for the war (WWII or the Great Patriotic War);
- Sources of information about the war;
- Perceptions about the role of Ukraine in WWII as opposed to the role of the USSR;
- Official changes made to WWII commemorative discourse and April 2015 laws.

Stage III

The main aim of Stage III was to similarly find relations in respondents' WWII attitudes on the horizontal plane, that is members of the same family represented by three generations. This stage analysed determined existing trends in WWII attitudes within families and offered explanation to them.

3.5. Some observations regarding the interview process: respondents' interest in and knowledge about WWII

During the interviews, the Second World War appeared to be a pervasive topic that was close to everyone. However, it was not a topic that Ukrainians, especially the younger ones, would discuss with their friends or family informally. Therefore, many of younger respondents would let the interviewer know beforehand that they might not have enough knowledge to discuss some historical details. The lack of knowledge was often explained by the lack of interest or relevance of the topic to their current life. In this case, the interviewed additionally reminded that it was the perceptions about WWII rather than historical facts that was the subject of the thesis; the described lack of knowledge or interest was equally valuable to the research. Some of the younger interviewees would refrain from answering a question citing their lack of interest or familiarity with the topic and being reluctant to give a random answer not backed by firm arguments.

The older interviewees tended to display opposite behaviour. Not only were many of them very knowledgeable about the military events during the Second World War, but some were also eager to share their knowledge of the facts with the interviewer, even when these facts were not used to prove some point of their responses.

An exception to the common knowledge principle mentioned above were the questions regarding the April 2015 laws. These were not considered common knowledge for the purpose of the interviewing process. Therefore, respondents were asked if they needed additional information provided about the laws before the interview as well as during the interview. The question was asked in such a manner so that not to make them feel compelled to answer it if they were not willing or prepared. The interviewer realised the danger of influencing the opinions of interviewees by selecting the information to be provided to them about the laws, so this information was compiled in as objective a manner as possible. In the end, none of the respondents refused to answer this question or indeed say they needed additional information. All of them claimed they have at least heard about them and were ready to give their general opinion. Many of them asked the interviewer clarifying questions to establish whether their knowledge about the laws was correct.

3.6. Limitations

Non-representative sampling

The results of the research are non-representative as to the whole population of Ukraine or indeed to other Ukrainians outside the interviewed sampling. This research does not allow for any major generalisations to be drawn from its results, as it examines attitudes of the interviewees only. By abandoning claims to be representative for the whole country, the research instead focusses on qualitative, in-depth analysis, and tries to determine the causality of the possible changes in Second World War attitudes, as well as to determine the key themes that emerge during interviews. It aims to demonstrate how WWII opinions evolve or stay unchanged across several generations within same families of the sampling.

Difficulties distinguishing social and cultural memory manifestations

Another limitation is the difficulty in analysing interviewees' responses as to social and cultural memory as separate concepts. As the research is showing how these two types of memory interact and translate into one another, it seems to be implied that they each possess a separate set of markers that enables a researcher to identify exactly which part of interviewee's recollections corresponds to social, and which to cultural memory. However, since collective memory is a complex concept, an accurate clear-cut separation of this kind is not always possible. Therefore, a more delicate analysis was conducted, focussing on the way interviewees refer to sources of or reasons for their attitudes.

Gender factor not considered

The sample has approximately equal number of male and female respondents. However, the research does not consider the gender factor during data analysis. These considerations have been noted if they came up in interviewees' responses, but the research does not make a focussed and comprehensive point regarding gender discourses of WWII. In terms of methodology, there was no distinction made between responses by male and female interviewees.

Interviewer's role

Respondents might have preconceived opinions about the interviewer's own attitude to WWII, which can make them more careful in their responses, if they think they ran contrary to hers.

Chapter 4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Stage I. Allocation of WWII positions

As mentioned above, the existence of distinguishable WWII discourses in Ukraine's society does not imply a strict divide within its population, because some Ukrainians adopt a moderate position or no position. Stage I of data analysis showed that interviewees held four distinct positions: pro-Soviet, pro-nationalist, moderate, and ambiguous/absent. Pro-Soviet and pro-nationalist positions coincided with the respective discourses outlined in Chapter 2. At the same time, some interviewees displayed in their responses adherence to several of these positions; that is, they were not mutually exclusive. Examples of quotes used to identify respondent's WWII positions are given in Annex 2.

Table 4 below shows how support is distributed in this sample across families and generations. It will also be used to differentiate between vertical and horizontal plane of analysis in the subsections below.

Table 4. Distribution of WWII attitudes in the interviewed sampling (Compiled by the author).

	Generation 1	Generation 2	Generation 3
Family A	Pro-Soviet (1A74m)	Moderate (2A49m)	Moderate, Pro-nationalist (3A24f)
Family B	Pro-Soviet (1B71m)	Pro-Soviet (2B50m)	Ambiguous (3B23f)
Family C	Pro-nationalist, (1C62f)	Pro-nationalist (2C44f)	Pro-nationalist, Moderate (3C19m)
Family D	Pro-Soviet, ambiguous (1D59f)	Pro-nationalist, ambiguous (2D38f)	Ambiguous (3D21f)
Family E		Pro-nationalist (2E52m)	Ambiguous (3E32f)
Family F	Moderate (1F65m)	Ambiguous (2F44f)	Moderate (3F26m)
Family G	Pro-Soviet (1G82f)	Pro-nationalist (2G54m)	Moderate (3G30m)

Four people from the sampling were clearly adhering to the **pro-Soviet** discourse, while one person was displaying both elements of pro-Soviet discourse and of an ambiguous attitude towards the WWII. In addition to the statements, this group also had common characteristics in responses, such as using set words and phrases – quotes from Soviet patriotic songs or war slogans (*'For Motherland, for Stalin!'*, *'[Victory Day] is happiness with tears in our eyes'*).

Three people from the sampling demonstrated support for the **pro-nationalist** discourse, while other four were combining statements from this discourse with moderate or ambiguous position. Most of G1 and G2 representatives following this discourse mentioned they had not supported it throughout their whole life but changed their opinion at some point, usually after learning more about WWII.

Interviewees adhering to the **moderate** position tried to accommodate both discourses in their responses. They deliberately avoided making extreme statements and followed facts rather than ideology. They recognised faults in each of the discourses and recognised that other people may have other opinions about the war. There were four interviewees displaying moderate position, while three others combined it with mild support for the pro-nationalist discourse.

Respondents adhering to the **ambiguous/absent** position either refused from declaring a position citing lack of knowledge or admit their confusion before the abundance of points of view and information about WWII circulating in the media. They tended to give self-contradicting answers. There were more representatives of this position among G3, and somewhat fewer among G2 respondents. Four interviewees displayed ambiguous position, while two more combined it with mild support of one of the discourses.

These two last groups differ in that **moderate** respondents display confidence in their position, while the **ambiguous** respondents usually don't.

To sum up, it was possible to distinguish which position a person follows through key statements in their interviews. Adherence to a pure discourse was not always the case. Perceptions were usually more complex and could include statements from different discourses. Cases of ambiguous or absent position were found mostly within Generation 3 respondents. A common line for these interviewees was their lack of knowledge or interest to acquire some. This can be explained by the fact that Generation 3 respondents had in general less exposure to collective memory manifestations (both social and cultural) than their older relatives.

4.2. Stage II. Thematic analysis of social and cultural memory and personal attitudes

4.2.1 Locating social and cultural memory manifestations

All interviews were scanned for statements corresponding to either social or cultural memory manifestations as defined above. Below are some examples of social and cultural memory manifestations.

'I grew up in an environment where there were many war movies, [...] and we – children – watched these movies one after another, and we played at war all the time, and of course it was the Second World War' (2A9m/23). This accounts for a **social memory manifestation**, as the perception about the war was perpetuated by social activities with the peers and communicating ideas and opinions about the war in the format of a game.

'We learnt more about the war from school, my dad [who was a war veteran] didn't tell me much, my mom shared her memories, she had been 14, they had been in the occupied territory; but more came from school' (1D64f/8). The respondent is assessing her sources of knowledge and attitude towards the war. The perceived strong influence of **Soviet cultural memory** is evident (the school), while **social memory** (family stories) is less present.

'We were taught that if he's a traitor, then he's a traitor, that's what history says. And now they're all suddenly heroes. All streets are named after [leaders of wartime Ukrainian nationalist organisations] Bandera and Shukhevych' (2B59m/71). This respondent refers to the official Soviet representations of UPA members as traitors, expressed in such elements of **cultural memory** as school, textbooks, literature, exclusion from commemoration rituals. The dogmatic nature of the Soviet education system contributes to the longevity of ideas received through it.

'I think [the laws] are a good thing because we are getting rid of these pompous parades, hooray to veterans, thanks for the victory grandpa ['Spasibo dedu za pobedu' – a Russian Victory Day slogan] and so on. It's good we're acquiring a mode of marking this date to commemorate people who died during the war' (3G30m/p4). This quote shows the **rejection of cultural memory manifestations** as a way to shape a personal WWII attitude.

This stage mostly used vertical plane of analysis, determining how discourses act within one generation. It looked for indications in the interviews of what kind of social and cultural memory manifestations could be attributed to all representatives of the same generation within the sampling.

4.2.2. Social and cultural memory influence on personal WWII attitudes in interviews

Based on the sampling interviewed for this study, it was possible to identify **four types of collective memory influence** on personal attitudes of respondents regarding WWII:

1) *Social memory influence.* Social memory mostly influences representatives of Generations 1 and 2. This included stories from relatives or friends who participated in the war. The difficulty to trace this influence was caused by the fact that some family stories had been silenced to represent the war in a way it was institutionalised in the Soviet times. Many accounts not matching the narrative of the ‘glorious victory’ were not included into the transmitted social memory. Respondents mostly influenced by this kind of social memory usually showed neutral or negative attitude to the official discourse changes. Some G2 respondents who showed in their interviews more social memory influence than Soviet cultural memory influence reported changes in their personal attitudes to WWII when more information about the war became available in late 1980s-90s.

2) *Soviet cultural memory influence.* Interviewees appearing mostly influenced by this type of collective memory were often representatives of G1 and G2. This influence included going to Soviet school and universities, attending official commemoration ceremonies and victory parades, visiting organised talks with war veterans, witnessing the abundance of monuments to war personalities. Respondents mostly influenced by Soviet cultural memory usually demonstrated negative attitude to the recent changes to Ukraine’s official WWII discourse.

3) *Current cultural memory influence.* Respondents mostly influenced by this type of collective memory were representatives of G2 and G3. This influence included school and university education during Ukraine’s independence, introduction of a new official WWII discourse (including April 2015 laws), followed by a new manner of conducting commemoration ceremonies, bringing out a new official set of wartime heroes, and

rejecting the previous discourse. Respondents mostly influenced by this type of collective memory displayed approval of these changes, and, in case of G2, noted re-evaluation of their personal attitude to WWII after the collapse of the USSR.

4) *Minimised social and cultural memory influence.* Respondents who did not appear as being greatly influenced by collective memory mostly belonged to Generation 3 in the sampling. They reported their attention to facts rather than ideological narratives, influence of non-fiction books and documentaries. In many cases, their attitude to war veterans was more as to persons who experienced sufferings rather than carriers of social memory. This group displayed neutral or sceptical attitude to the laws.

Personal importance of the war

All respondents recognised the importance of the Second World War, although among the sample analysed there were clear generational differences in terms of why they found it important.

All but one G1 interviewee stated the war was important for them for personal reasons: their parents or other relatives participated in the fighting, were caring about their families in the difficult wartime conditions or working multiple shifts for military production. The victory was therefore considered a heroic and hard-won achievement.

‘... The memory of the war, of my father, my relatives, it’s in fact sacred for me, and my attitude to the war is filled with a sense of great pain and great respect for those people who accomplished this deed, the victory...’ (1A74m).

For G2 representatives, the appeal to relatives who suffered from the war was strong as well, demonstrating a high level of social memory manifestations visibility. Illustrating war’s impact on their lives, some G1 and G2 respondents mentioned they would not be alive now if the war hadn’t been won.

Many of G3 responses recognised that WWII had defined the course of the 20th century. They mentioned the huge number of casualties and economic burden the war had put on Ukraine but made fewer references to their family history:

*‘There are many **historical consequences** now in Ukraine and in the world caused by WWII. [...] My answer is that any historical event, including WWII, is hugely important for everyone, and will remain so for a very long time in the future’* (3D21f).

The **social memory influence** displayed by interviewees had a clear generational distribution. G3, as the generation most chronologically removed from WWII and having

less direct communication with its participants, reported less personal importance of this event. The G1 and most of G2 respondents had experienced more immediate accounts and discussions from their families, the people whose opinions they trusted and were able to relate to more eagerly. Some of the G3 respondents recognised the **minimised social memory influence**:

'You know, I think if my grandfather were alive to tell me stories, I would have a different attitude now. Because now all I know about WWII comes from books. This is just a historical date for me' (3F26m).

The **Soviet cultural memory influence** was also found in many cases among G1 and G2 respondents. The natural explanation is the compulsive cult of the Great Victory intrinsic to the Soviet official war discourse. These respondents, having participated in the many school-, workplace-related and social activities in their life, which had involved reiteration of the importance of the victory, were following it still. In addition, the significance of WWII is not a controversial point, unlike e.g. the 2015 memory laws. Respondents with ambiguous or moderate position do not run into risk of countering the current official discourse when they capitalise on WWII victory's importance following a Soviet cultural memory habit.

The complicated ways in which the social and cultural memory can interact was demonstrated in the case of Family C. The only G1 respondent who denied personal importance of the war (1C62f) explained that none of her relatives participated in the fighting but they had been all forcibly taken to Germany to work there. Her daughter (2C44f) reiterated this:

*'When there were Victory Day celebrations in the Soviet time, our mom always said that [our family] didn't have anything to celebrate. Our grandfathers were on the opposite side. That is, they were taken into force labour to Germany. **That's why our family didn't have anyone participating in the Great Victory, so we didn't have any victory**'* (2C44f).

At the same time, this G2 respondent considered WWII to be an exceptionally important historical event and part of the making of the independent Ukraine, a concept very significant to her. She said WWII commemoration ceremonies sometimes made her cry and reminded her of the current fighting in the eastern part of Ukraine. This is a point

often heavily implied in current media and official speeches, where Russia and Russian-backed forces are presented as occupant party.

On the one hand, this case showed a perceived lack of personal family involvement in WWII perpetuated from mother to daughter, combined with the absent retelling of war stories from older relatives in family circle, unlike other families. Until recently, having been taken into forced labour to the Nazi Germany was considered a shameful experience, sometimes equalled to treachery, and seldom talked about even in close circle. That's why, even having experienced pain and trauma, this family was not able to partake in the general Soviet and early post-Soviet attitude to WWII and the Great Victory, locked in their social memory circle of outsiders. At the same time, even the perceived absence of personal involvement allowed both respondents to appreciate the importance of the war due to the institutionalised manifestations of cultural memory, such as school and commemoration ceremonies. State efforts to draw parallels between WWII and the current military conflict in eastern Ukraine played out in the case of this family due to their support of pro-nationalist discourse. G3 respondent from this family noted the importance of WWII as a historical event but omitted any personal significance.

To sum up, among Generations 1 and 2 social memory manifestations were prevalent in the form of retellings of personal war experiences in family circles. G3 respondents showed lesser influence of collective memory altogether, recognising the significance of the event on the global but not personal scale.

The proper term for the war (WWII or the Great Patriotic War)

The terms Great Patriotic War and Second World War are referring to two separate historical events. However, in Ukrainian case, the two terms might bear political connotations and mark support for a particular discourse. Only some respondents were using both terms emphasising their different historical meanings, where WWII is the common term used worldwide, while the GPW is the 1941-1945 war fought by the Soviet Union. Such position demonstrated the **minimised influence of collective memory**. In the rest of the interviewed sampling, it was possible to distinguish between:

- Those who use the term WWII naturally and fluently;
- Those who use WWII because 'we are now supposed to':

‘That is, I still look back at the Great Patriotic War, I mean, the Second World War, as they now put it correctly’ (2C45f);

- Those who use GPW naturally and fluently;
- Those who use GPW and underline that this is the name they are most comfortable with:

‘We are part of this [Great Patriotic] War, and the term Great Patriotic War is closer to me’ (1A74m).

The groups determined above were correspondent to discourses the interviewees supported. Respondents using the term GPW were in most cases holding the pro-Soviet position, while those choosing the term WWII were supporting pro-nationalist or moderate position.

G2 respondents presented the most scattered results. Many were comfortable using the term WWII. At the same time G2 was the cohort that included most people who were correcting themselves in front of the interviewer when saying GPW. G1 respondents with pro-Soviet position were the most adamant in using the term GPW, and seldom acts of self-correction were usually accompanied with sarcastic intonation. The influence of **social** and **Soviet cultural memory** these two cohorts had been subjected throughout their life was clashing with the current institutionalised norm of referring to WWII. However, some of the G2 respondents who were in their formative age during the *perestroika* period seemed more accepting towards the term WWII.

The **current cultural memory influence** was also noticeable among G3 respondents. Almost all of them tended to use the term WWII, while one person was using GPW and correcting herself (3B23f, pro-Soviet and moderate discourse. In her case, both of her older interviewed relatives were vehemently adhering to the pro-Soviet discourse and were using the term GPW). One of the reasons for their choice of the term, as supported by interview responses, is the influence of school history lessons. Most of these respondents have received their education during the independence times, where history textbooks and lessons were more focussed on WWII than GPW. As many of these respondents underlined that the major part of their knowledge about this event came from school rather than family stories, their more confident use of the term WWII was natural.

This demonstrates how the institutionalised cultural memory manifestations influence their personal reading of WWII.

Sources of information about the war

Information and perceptions about WWII are received and shaped through many sources. Many of these sources can be classified as social or cultural memory manifestations.

Within the interviewed sampling, G1 and G2 respondents usually got their information about the war through family, the Soviet education system and official information, visiting war veterans as children or communicating with other veterans they know. At the same time, G2 interviewees were more eager to adopt new information available following *perestroika*. G3 respondents declared less influence from family members when learning about the war, mentioning information from schools or universities as more present. They also often referred to documentaries, movies, and visiting veterans as sources of information.

Social memory therefore provided the most differing influence across the generations. This can be explained by different level of involvement into family discussions and retellings of war experiences as time passes. In addition, information conveyed on personal level in a trusted circle holds most effect on individual opinions, and older generation had more chance to experience this. Finally, the number of other sources about the war has been different over the years, and for the older respondents, social memory was the first and most memorable exposure to WWII. The social memory influence therefore gets weaker with each successive generation in this theme.

The next major sources of WWII information were school and university systems, different for each generation. They accounted for most of the **Soviet** and **current cultural memory influence**. The difference proves the theoretical point that cultural memory elements do not get passed on but are acquired by every generation by themselves.

Generation 3 respondents gave more detailed accounts of their school or university history lessons without prompts from the interviewer. Unlike the Soviet uniform educational system, ways of teaching history were quite different: while some teachers took care that students read several sources and documents, others were projecting their personal opinions into the classroom:

'I remember [school history textbooks]. And then we had a history course at the university, where we were required to read primary sources, and you read and understand that things are not exactly the way they are described in textbooks' (3G30m).

'I call this war 'Great Patriotic War' because I had a pro-Soviet teacher at school, she was telling us about the heroic deeds of the Soviet leadership' (3E32f).

Their older relatives tended to mention this more abstractly. *'We were taught like this'* is a common phrase used in their responses, and they did not consider more explanation was needed about how the lessons were conducted.

Minimised social and cultural memory influence in this theme was represented by respondents using professional literature or independent documentaries as their main sources of information about the war.

Social and cultural memory interacted in a complicated way in the case of attitudes to visiting war veterans as a school activity. Almost all G3 respondents mentioned visiting veterans and noted the profound impact it had on them at the time. However, more often these visits were not considered as sources of recollections (as it would be in case of social memory) rather than emotions and empathy towards the people who survived a cruel experience (in line with the current cultural memory focus on the victims rather than the victory).

*'[Inviting war veterans to give talks at schools could be done] not to celebrate an anniversary but to take them out together and remember. This should be not only done to thank them for the victory, 'thank you for giving us our future!'. But more as **some sort of psychological help, to show that people remember what their generation has gone through and realise what conditions they were forced to live in and to fight; to listen to their stories, to share these stories, to let this memory live on'*** (3A24f).

This account of a visit by war veterans has a different focus from this one below from a G1 respondent from another family:

*'I remember when my classmate's parent came to our school, both his father and mother were military pilots. [...] It was very interesting: **you can see these people with your own eyes, the people who gave you peace'*** (1D64f).

The attitude to war veterans in this case is that of a gratitude and almost reverent respect to heroic deeds, while in the previous quote it is that of an awareness of experienced sufferings and empathy. The time that has passed since the WWII seems to

play a role in this, as G3 respondents know war veterans as elderly traumatised people, often living in unsatisfactory economic conditions and experiencing decreasing attention from the state and society.

Perceptions about the role of Ukraine in WWII as opposed to the role of the USSR

Three distinct opinions were voiced by interviewees of the sampling:

1) Ukraine deserves a special attitude because it was directly impacted by fighting, occupation, and forced labour. Economic losses suffered by Ukraine are higher than those of other Soviet republics.

*'If a [deceased] person was registered in the Ukrainian SSR, this means, **the Ukrainian SSR has suffered a loss, that is, a share of its human capital**' (3A24f).*

2) There was no Ukraine at the time of WWII, and the war was a common challenge for the whole Soviet Union. To separate the two roles now based on political reasons is unacceptable.

*'To calculate whose losses were bigger or smaller... I think, it was **our common tragedy**' (1D64f).*

*'To show that we were the best, better than others, everybody else is worse... I don't understand. **We were all equal**' (2B50m).*

*'It remains in my memory, the Soviet Union. I cannot switch to this modern chronology, whatever the people who are far from politics and history say. That's why I don't differentiate [Ukraine and the Soviet Union as a whole]. It was the Soviet Union. **And my father was attacking in the name of Stalin, the Motherland. Not in the name of Ukraine.** Although my father studied at a Ukrainian school, as did I' (1B71m)*

Based on the first two quotes from this group, the respondents perceive the idea of Ukraine's separate role in WWII in the sense that it had a more important or more tragic role than the rest of the republics, rather than just a different kind of experience. As evident from their responses, they have spent a large share of their lives in the Soviet Union and consider that life to be much better than in the current Ukraine. That's why assigning Ukraine a separate role in WWII means to them belittling the overall role of the USSR. The **Soviet cultural memory influence**, based on the projected superiority of the Soviet way of life, is preventing them from accepting this point of view.

The third quote shows a strong **social memory** manifestation: the story of what the respondent's father was fighting for had been told him by the father himself, although its wording repeated a famous propaganda slogan.

3) Ukraine did have a separate role in the war through insurgent and pro-independence groups, and the damage it suffered was higher than of some other Soviet republics. Still, it was part of the Soviet Union and most of Ukrainians considered themselves Soviet citizens.

'If the war was against the USSR, then Ukraine was a separate part of it. [...] Still if people were dying for the Soviet Union, this was their choice and we must respect it' (3E32f).

*'I think it's **a shared role**. Most war movies and books were made in the USSR, and they are more general. But since recently, after Maidan, everyone now tries to separate this Ukrainian role'* (3D21f).

Overall, both cultural and social memory manifestations are present in responses. For G1 and G2 interviewees, who went to Soviet school and university, Soviet cultural memory was prevalent. In case their positions regarding WWII were not pro-Soviet, they usually referred to a change in attitudes they had experienced when new information became available. Two such respondent referred to Euromaidan and Russian aggression as a prompt to change their opinion. G3 respondents, who had not experienced Soviet education, were more eager to recognise a separate role of Ukraine in WWII. A cultural memory manifestation at work was school programmes presenting WWII history, including that of western regions which before 1941 didn't belong to the Ukrainian SSR.

Official changes made to WWII commemorative discourse and April 2015 laws

The interviewees displayed one of the following three attitudes towards the changes:

1) Approval. The positive attitude to the changes and April 2015 laws was accompanied by such words and phrases: *well-deserved recognition [of UPA members], reconciliation, uniting the population, remembrance, rightfully condemning [the Communist Party]*. Those approving the changes were supporting pro-nationalist or moderate position, or a combination of both.

2) Approval of the idea in general, but strong criticism against the way the laws have been done in Ukrainian case. These respondents were in favour of leaving behind the previous WWII discourse, but they believed that Ukrainian officials had done a poor job

with the April 2015 laws. The four laws had different level of support among the interviewees: the one allowing access to Soviet archives (Law C) was almost unanimously considered a success, while the one requiring renaming streets and cities (Law D) was controversial. Respondents in this category used words and phrases such as: *undemocratic, corruption, political gains, freedom of speech, double standards*. They were mostly supporters of pro-nationalist, moderate, or ambiguous positions.

3) Disapproval. These interviewees were against the idea of changing the official WWII discourse in principle. Respondents in this category used words and phrases such as: *waste of time and money, extremity, nationalism and fascism*. The point raised by the previous group regarding corruption connected with renaming geographical object was present in this group as well, but rather as an additional concern. Many of this group closely associated changes in the official WWII discourse with the current political events in Ukraine. This group was mostly supporting pro-Soviet, moderate, or ambiguous position.

This theme showed no pronounced cases of **social memory influence**, as it was the most current one and had little relation to personal communication.

The **impact of Soviet cultural** memory was most visible in the pro-Soviet group (mainly G1 and one G2 respondents). They recognised the fact that they were part of it for the most part of their life, and a legal requirement to discard this embeddedness left them betrayed and offended. Therefore, their personal attitudes to the war not only remained unchanged but made them even more loyal to the Soviet cultural memory as it was perceived to be under attack:

'With these laws, they want to steal from me and from those like me a part of my history, of my life. How is that possible, to remove a part of my life with a law? This is unheard of' (1B71m).

The obligatory nature of the Soviet-time WWII discourse explains the adamant feeling of these respondents that the current official discourse misunderstood history and imposed a factually wrong point of view. The belief in the correctness of the Soviet discourse was demonstrated by a respondent concerned about attacks on freedom of speech:

'So now it appears, if you think differently from our leaders, then you're a traitor, a separatist. Why is that suddenly? Where's democracy then?' (2B50m).

His feeling was repeating that of the Soviet-time dissidents who were denied public recognition of their opinions. However, the time spent under the Soviet cultural memory impact did not allow to accept the current unfavourable position of his WWII attitude. It also showed the importance endowed to the official status of a memory discourse not visible in case of younger respondents, who were more eager to treat different discourses as alternative opinions.

Elevated Victory Day ceremonies appeared to represent some of the Soviet cultural memory practices in responses. A G2 interviewee believed that *'victory is always something to be proud of, the same as in sports'* (2B50m), and Victory Day was worth celebrating on a large scale, while three G1 interviewees shared this opinion.

The **current cultural memory influence** was most visible in G3 and some of G2 responses, usually those in favour of the laws. WWII opinions of these interviewees have been formed through the lens of the independent Ukraine, as they had not directly experienced the Soviet period. Moreover, official references to Ukraine as a separate country in the WWII context started long before the 2015 laws and are therefore less controversial:

'I don't understand why [de-communisation] hadn't been done earlier! I don't understand why I had streets named after [Soviet statesman Felix] Dzerzhinsky, all these chaps who had no direct relation to Ukrainian independence or to Ukraine as a country, to put it mildly. [...] So I think it's a completely normal thing to do' (3C19m).

Overall, most of G2 and G3 representatives supported the change of the tone of commemoration from celebrating victorious efforts of the army to expressing sorrow for the victims. In one case, an interviewee referred to WWII commemoration in the same key as the commemoration of Holodomor¹ victims, an important cultural memory manifestation.

Many responses with a wary attitude to the changes illustrated cases of **minimised social and cultural memory influence**. Their personal attitudes to them were more shaped by pragmatic concerns about freedom of speech and corruption involved as well as fears that the laws would divide the society even more (especially across generational

¹ The massive artificial famine in the Ukrainian rural regions in 1932-33, presented in the official Ukrainian history as a clearly Ukrainian national tragedy.

lines). One of the most common opinions was that the laws were done not to change the memory landscape but for political gains:

*'It's good we're acquiring a mode of marking this date to commemorate people who died during the war. On the other hand, this idea about Ukraine's role in WWII is promoted not to raise awareness about our history but **to score political points** by attracting nationalists' (2F44f).*

4.3. Stage III. Family vs Generation

This stage used horizontal plane of analysis, looking at how discourses travel within one family. Each family was taken separately as a unit where similar background can influence their WWII attitudes determined at Stage I. This stage looked for indications in the interviews of how family social memory manifestations are interacting in their WWII attitudes.

Figure 4 presents the distribution of WWII position across families and generations. A generational factor is more visible here than the family one, namely, the movement from a predominantly Soviet discourse (G1) through very dispersed opinions (G2) towards a more moderate attitude (G3) Among the 20 interviewees, there were only two cases when two family members held the same position on WWII, and cases of opposite positions in two adjacent generation family members were also present. At the same time, some arguments and opinions did repeat within same families and originate within families.

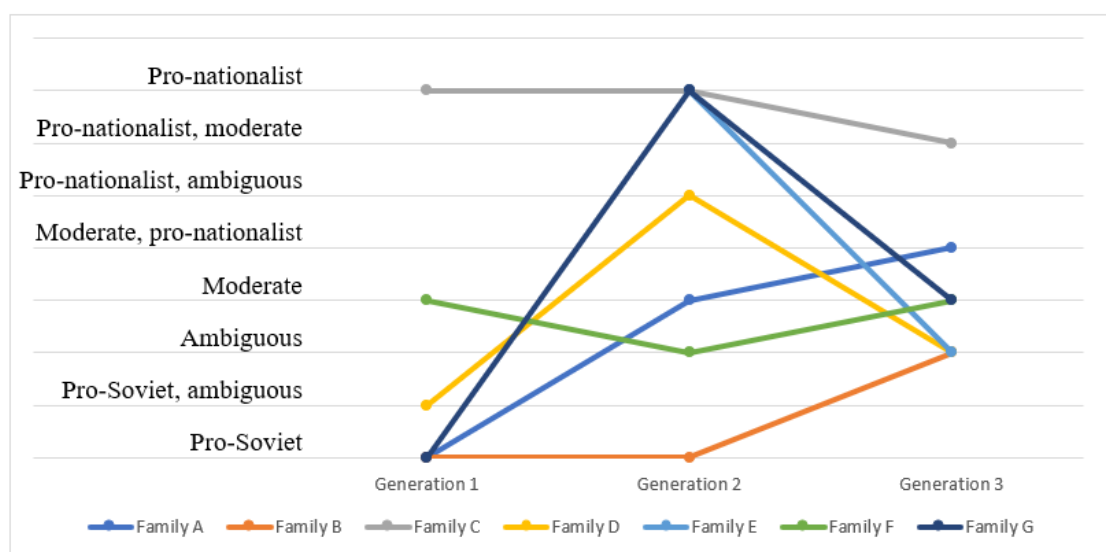


Figure 4. Distribution of WWII attitudes in the interviewed sampling (Compiled by the author).

Based on the way WWII positions are distributed within separate families, three groups were determined:

Group 1. Gradual movement from pro-Soviet to ambiguous, moderate or mild pro-nationalist position (Families A, B)

The gradual progress of position in these two families was contributed by the fact that two members of adjacent generations had same or very similar WWII positions. In case of Family A, these were 2A49m and 3A24f, who were both history amateurs and often discussed WWII. In case of Family B, these were 1B71m and 2B50m, who were both considerably influenced by their older relatives' stories and eager to share them. In both cases, communication between family members and reiteration of similar opinions contributed to the similarity of their positions.

Group 2. Movement from pro-Soviet to ambiguous or moderate position through a pro-nationalist G2 representative (Families D, E, G)

These families, although falling into the general trend of moving towards a moderate or ambiguous position of G3 respondents, had an outlying G2 representative favouring pro-nationalist attitudes. The tendency of younger respondents to show less interest in WWII in these cases can have several explanations. First, as with other groups of families, the event itself was more removed in time than for other family members. In addition, because their G1 and G2 relatives held opposite positions there was no tradition of family communication about WWII. Indeed, both 2E52m and 2G54m said they had arguments or short sarcastic exchanges with their pro-Soviet parents regarding WWII. They reported sometimes avoiding the topic at all in order not to argue. The lack of communication or non-heated discussion within families could contribute to the G3 respondents' absence of interest in the topic or confusion as to which discourse was more correct. If they are interested in WWII, they need to only rely on their surroundings to adopt a position (including cultural memory elements) or take side of one of their relatives.

In the case of Family E, the delicate nature of the topic of WWII was also exacerbated by the fact that 2E52m was adhering to pro-Soviet position before the *perestroika*. He reported keeping a family archive and being proud of his grandfather's participation in the military actions of the Soviet army, but at the same time he was strongly against the pro-Soviet discourse over the last years. Such contrasting attitudes

were following the different types of collective memory influences. The feelings regarding his grandfather's fighting was carried by personal communications (social memory) through several generations. The shift to the pro-nationalist discourse was prompted by institutionalised external factors (cultural memory). The collective memory influence was thus happening at two different planes and could exist simultaneously.

Group 3. Consistent positions (Family C – consistent pro-nationalist and mild pro-nationalist position, Family F – consistent moderate or ambiguous position)

The current consistency of positions in these families was mainly since their G1 representatives have consciously changed their WWII attitudes following the Euromaidan events and the Russian aggression. They admitted following the pro-Soviet discourse before but noted that the quality of their life in the Soviet period was objectively worse than in the independent Ukraine. This accounted for an external influence on attitudes to historical events, allowing them to more easily reject the Soviet discourse.

In case of 1C62f this change was more drastic ideologically, as she did not have any positive associations with wartime nationalist organisations before, although she supported Ukraine's independence. However, her case was characterised with a very low embeddedness into WWII social memory, because her male relatives had not participated in military actions and she had not lost any relatives to the war (See 4.2.2). 1F65m's social memory involvement was higher, which might account for his moderate position rather than pro-nationalist, and acceptance of some pro-Soviet statements.

The role of social memory was also shown by another common feature displayed by these families: the reported strong connection and frequent communications between G1 and G3 representatives. In addition, both 1C62f and 1F65m said the opinions of their grandchildren (both interviewed and not) had contributed to their distancing from the pro-Soviet position. 1C62f was especially proud telling about her granddaughter, whose opinion she appeared to value, protesting at the Maidan Square in 2013. Although not a social memory manifestation as defined by this thesis, this showed a significant impact that family communication can have on making cultural memory influence more easily accepted. A similar process worked for 2F44f, who noted listening and valuing her son's opinion (3F26m), although she held ambiguous position due to lack of interest in WWII.

Another impact of personal family communication was demonstrated by the fact that all Family C members were discussing the current situation in eastern Ukraine in the

same context with WWII. Since 2C44f's husband, 3C19m's father (not interviewed), was a Ukrainian serviceman and had done a rotation in eastern Ukraine, they had an immediate experience of conflicting discourses translated into military actions.

4.4. Patterns of social and cultural memory influences on WWII personal attitudes

Based on the **vertical plane of analysis**, the following conclusions were made regarding collective memory influence on personal attitudes to WWII:

Generation 1. The older generations in the sample was in majority more prone to be influenced by social memory manifestations and by the institutionalised Soviet cultural memory manifestations active at the time they were in their formative years. The current official activities in institutionalising the WWII collective memory caused rejection if they were running contrary to their existing perceptions about the WWII. A smaller number of G1 representatives in the sample accepted these current official activities, mostly affected by some external events leading to a new type of institutionalised collective memory of WWII (*perestroika*, the Orange revolution, Euromaidan, the Russian aggression).

Generation 2. The middle generation in the sample was the most diverse in displaying possible social and cultural memory influences on their WWII attitudes. This can be explained by numerous shifts of social and cultural memory influences they had experienced throughout their lives, abundance of narratives and external political and social changes. The fact that most of the changes happened during their formative years (like *perestroika*, Ukraine's gaining of independence, the Orange Revolution) explains the fact that they became more stirred by it than some of their G1 relatives, who had their opinions formed by that time through the entrenched cultural memory. Among the interviewed families, only one G2 respondent kept his pro-Soviet position formed through social and Soviet cultural memory, while other interviewees displayed a certain change in WWII attitudes, ranging from ambiguous to pro-nationalist. *Perestroika* and the new available information about the war at that time were recognised by many respondents as the most influential cause for altering their attitude. For some of them, this required a conscious decision to make about their position regarding WWII during their formative years.

Generation 3. The younger generation in the sample was less prone to be influenced by both social and cultural memory manifestations in shaping their attitudes to WWII.

They were less ready to recognise the importance of the WWII for them personally, beyond the fact that it had been a tragical historical event. Social memory influence they can still experience, such as talking to war veterans they knew, was playing out differently in this sample than in the case of the interviewed G1 and G2 individuals. Respondents who mentioned talking to war veterans emphasised their personal life story rather than their role in WWII. These respondents referred to war movies and books as much as to their relatives who lived in wartime.

Based on the **horizontal plane of analysis**, the following conclusions were made regarding collective memory influence on personal attitudes to WWII:

Sampling families differed in terms of how much social and cultural manifestations are influencing their personal attitudes to the war. Attitudes to WWII did not necessarily coincide in same families. At the same time, two adjacent generations in one family had a higher chance of displaying similar opinions. Although not necessarily a social memory influence, this observation showed the importance of family communication in shaping WWII attitudes. Within separate families, *cultural memory* tended to influence each person's own perceptions about the WWII and not translate throughout generations in the sample as a rule (See Figure 3, p.24). *Social memory* expressed in personal communication and sharing recollections was most impactful when conveyed by a direct participant of events. Therefore, families where there was larger age difference between representatives of generations might not be able to fully share in social memory. The nature of war experiences similarly played a role. Stories of relatives who had been victims of Soviet repressions or taken into forced labour to the Nazi Germany were shared less eagerly than those of heroic deeds in the army. Such falling out of social memory, and therefore of the commonly accepted Soviet heroic narrative, might prompt to readily adopt the opposite pro-nationalist discourse in the role of cultural memory.

4.5. Discussion

The influence of social and cultural memory on the personal attitudes to the Second World War in Ukraine

The theoretical assumption of this thesis has been proven through data analysis. The interaction of social and cultural memory with personal attitudes towards WWII among Ukrainians is visible and significant. The impact of social memory becomes less pronounced with time, as per Aleida Assmann's theory (2016), as almost 80 years have

passed since WWII start. All interview themes discussed in this chapter show considerable social memory influence on the generations chronologically closer to WWII. They also show how collective memory of previous generations loses its significance due to reinterpretation or rejection.

Cultural memory starts to play a more pronounced role in shaping personal attitudes about WWII for each successive generation. However, this thesis shows it does not directly translate into an individual attitude but serves to provide ‘schemata and scripts’ (Erl 2008:397) to be used by individuals as building bricks for their own understanding of the war. In the case of Ukrainian WWII memory, two main versions of cultural memory exist, which both get heavily instrumentalised in the country’s uneasy political situation, undermining trust in them. In this case, collective memory in general can have a minimised influence on individual WWII attitudes, as shown by some interviews. For a society as pluralistic as Ukraine’s, the intensity of cultural memory impact may generate tensions on societal or interpersonal level. Therefore, personal attitudes to the war are shaped considering not only their preferred version of cultural memory but also the existence of the opposing one(s), as was demonstrated by the analysis.

The diversity of attitudes to WWII has likely contributed to the many modes and themes where social and cultural manifestations can be referenced. The research has shown that many respondents can differentiate between WWII as a historical event, an event causing certain emotional response, an event having personal importance, an event making part of their current identity etc. Social memory has great influence on those remembering their relatives who suffered during WWII and carries a personal importance (as in case of many G1 respondents). However, emotional reaction to a war story seen in a documentary or heard at a school lesson has to do with cultural memory (as in case with some of G3 interviewees). In addition, the interviewees drawing parallels between WWII and the current military actions in Ukraine perceiving it as a reference point in their current identity, fusing their attitudes to both events together.

The role of forgetting as an element of social and cultural memory has also been shown by interviews, in line with Esposito’s idea of collective memory working like a computing device selecting which memories to preserve and which to discard (2008). Moreover, as the thesis shows, forgetting similarly plays an important part in shaping personal attitudes to a historical event, a point worth further studying. In other words,

forgetting does not only occur in already formed memory discourses but in individual understanding of history as well. In case of Ukraine's pro-nationalist discourse, such elements as the fight against the Soviet army or excessive victimisation of the country can be removed from the individual WWII position, even if in all other instances this person follows the discourse.

The influence of the generational and family factors on the relations between individual Second World War perceptions and social and cultural memory

The thesis shows that for the sampling analysed, belonging to the same family has less influence on the WWII attitude than belonging to the same generation. Communication within families is one of social memory manifestations and translates into similar attitudes to WWII within family. At the same time, cultural memory manifestations depend more on the environment a person is living in, and cultural memory doesn't get directly transmitted from one generation to another. Therefore, as cultural memory becomes more significant for shaping WWII attitudes, they become more differentiated within separate families, each successive generation of which is subject to different social, political, and cultural surroundings. The generational shifts in WWII attitudes shown in the thesis in general confirm Assmann's idea that the 'cultural cross-section of memories' undergoes a significant change every thirty years (2016:16). At the same time, generational effects do not provide completely new memory discourses, as Hastings and Baumeister note (1997:280). The data analysis shows that if attitudes to historical events do repeat within the same family, the reasons, sources and arguments are usually similar too (as was the case with Family C and their absence from the Great Victory discourse).

The case of Ukraine has shown the considerable weight of the formative years factor (as in Mannheim 1952; Hastings and Baumeister 1997; Reulecke 2010). The environment in which individuals have spent their formative years (including time of school, university, early employment) and the cultural memory they have been subjected to during that time (if any) affect not only the WWII position they hold now, but also the level of their loyalty to the position. For example, the high amount of pro-Soviet discourse supporters within G1 cohort can be explained, *inter alia*, by their experience of the Soviet cultural memory during their youth. None of the G1 sample met with positive representations of the opposite discourse at that time (the Soviet one was exclusive and

obligatory), and they have spent a large share of their life in the USSR after that period, strengthening the cultural memory. Now, the feeling of Soviet nostalgia and disappointment with the independent Ukrainian state feed into their strong allegiance to that discourse.

The influence of the changes to the official WWII collective memory discourse on the individual perceptions about WWII

The thesis has provided a fresh important insight into the way cultural memory is functioning in a society undergoing political changes that involve collective memory. Ukrainian collective memory about WWII is an illustration of a statement of Olick: different or even conflicting versions of collective memory can exist in one society (2008:159). The cultural memory favouring the pro-nationalist discourse was not created by the 2015 memory laws; it has existed on par with the Soviet cultural memory, although a comparatively tiny number of Ukrainians were participating in it. However, the data analysis has shown: when a previously unpopular cultural memory discourse gets a boost from the authorities, it does not necessarily receive enough influence to convert the population's personal attitudes to the historical event. This generally refers to the G3 representatives of the sampling, whose formative years were and are subjected to the politically strengthened cultural memory celebrating the pro-nationalist discourse. The interviews of this group show a tendency toward a moderate or ambiguous position regarding WWII, equalling to removed, confused, or indifferent attitude towards the conflict of the two main discourses.

The case of the independent Ukraine's collective memory is additionally complicated by the relatively frequent switches between the preferred versions of WWII cultural memory. This resulted in changes to such elements of cultural memory as education programmes, official commemorations, art, and literature. Individual attitudes in this case, unless already fully shaped, are moving to a more moderate stance, generally avoiding an extreme position. One of the factors at work was WWII's remoteness in time for the G3 respondents, meaning both less social memory influence and less actual socio-economic, demographic and other consequences felt by them personally. Moreover, the inconsistency of the official discourse experienced during their formative years contributed to their reported remoteness from any official commemoration rituals. In

other words, its unsteadiness leads to the lack of trust and interest in any kind of participation in the institutionalised WWII collective memory.

Individual attitudes of G1 present an opposite case: the uniform and obligatory nature of the Soviet cultural memory imposed on the population through official means made it a very persistent one. Other versions of collective memory fostered by Ukraine officials are unlikely to be accepted into the personal attitudes unless they have already been (at least partially) accepted after the Soviet state dissolved. This group has also had the closest experience of the WWII results and strongest embeddedness into its social memory which raises its personal importance for them. Therefore, any political activities in the sphere of collective memory gets a strong reaction from G1 members.

Individual attitudes of G2 respondents have experienced the most diverse range of official memory discourses and, unless they had not rejected the Soviet cultural memory after the USSR collapsed, the influence of official discourse changes follows very individual patterns.

Referring to Figure 3 (p.24), each successive generation are shown to experience a different societal environment. Therefore, interviewees of different generations are sharing in different versions of the cultural memory, which cannot be directly received from the previous generation. In addition, the influence of cultural and social memory on individual perceptions has been proven to be a direct one, whereas the impact of official discourse is mediated through cultural memory. This point corresponds to that of many memory scholars, positing that top-down collective memory needs to be supported on a bottom-up level or originate in the society in order not to be rejected by individuals (Winter 2010:64; Assmann A. 2016). In Ukraine's case, the influence of the official discourse can also depend on the individual's attitude to the current government. The interviews were especially illustrative of this in the case of G1 population, drawing close parallels between WWII memory and the Ukrainian politics.

Conclusions

This thesis examined the influence of social and cultural memory on personal attitudes to historical events based on the case of Ukraine's collective memory of the Second World War. Family and generation were chosen as the main lenses for this analysis.

First, the concepts of social and cultural memory were defined as two dimensions of collective memory characterised by different ways of existing: the former through retelling of the past within close social groups, and the latter through institutionalised and mediated modes of remembering. Social memory was noted to have a limited lifespan of 80-100 years, after which it starts to wane unless transformed into cultural memory. The choice of case study allowed to base argumentation along these lines and examine in detail the nascent process of waning of WWII social memory in Ukraine. The thesis examined theoretical aspects of collective memory influence on personal attitudes to historical events, along with the approaches to generational memory.

Next, the overview of the development and current state of Ukrainian WWII discourses was done. It mostly followed a top-down approach to compliment and contextualise the further bottom-up data analysis. Ukrainian collective memory was used in political campaigning and over the years of independence became a marker of political identity due to the development of two distinct opposing discourses: pro-Soviet and pro-nationalist. The thesis developed a set of statements attributable to each discourse as an analytical tool for data analysis.

The thesis argued that while social and cultural memory can have pronounced influence on individual perceptions of WWII, the impact of social memory decreases as more time passes. Therefore, generational trends in collective memory influence were more visible than trends within same families. The use of social and cultural memory manifestations combined with thematic analysis allowed to trace four main factors influencing the shaping of WWII personal attitudes: social memory, Soviet cultural memory, current cultural memory, and lack of collective memory exposure. In the analysed sampling, the older generation proved to display more social memory and Soviet cultural memory manifestations, while the younger generation showed minimised collective memory influence altogether with elements of current cultural memory influence. The middle generation showed scattered map of influences. The analysis thus demonstrated the importance of events experienced during individual's formative years,

communication within families, and awareness of other discourses in the society. Finally, it demonstrated a new understanding of relations between collective memory and official historical discourse. Cultural and social memory were shown to have direct impact on WWII perceptions, while official discourse influences them as mediated through cultural memory. At the same time, both cultural memory and official discourse need to originate or be informed by social memory to be viable in the society.

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Annex 1. Interview Guide

Guiding questions examining interviewee's attitude towards the Second World War:

- Do you think WWII is important to you?
- Do you think Ukraine's role in WWII was different from that of the Soviet Union?
- Does it trouble you to think these two roles are sometimes interchangeable in war narratives?
- Has your perception of the WWII changed over the last couple of years? If yes, what exactly do you think has influenced this?
- How do you commemorate WWII if at all?

Guiding questions examining interviewee's attitude towards the WWII official viewpoint and changes to top-down collective memory discourse:

- Do you know about the April 2015 so-called decommunisation laws? If yes, what do you think of them? Do you think the changes to the official commemorative practices are justified?
- What do you think the authorities try to achieve by introducing the changes to the official war narrative and commemorative practices? (Why do you think they use the WWII memory for this purpose?)
- In your opinion, what should WWII commemoration events look like?
- Do you think having an official narrative imposed by the authorities is something Ukrainians should have?

Annex 2. Examples of interview quotes showing discourse support

“I think that victory is always something to be proud of, the same as in sports. You’ve won. Or do you feel empathy for somebody who lost to you in, say, swimming? Oh well, I’m sorry, bad luck, I won. But I’m proud that I have won. I’ve got gold, why shouldn’t I be proud then? If we won the war, why shouldn’t we be proud then? [...] Any war is sport, bloody sport perhaps. But it’s a struggle for leadership all the same” (2B50m) – Pro-Soviet Statement 3 (See Table 2, p.40).

‘Ukrainian SSR will never understand the western regions, this ‘struggle for independence’ of theirs and their stabbing in the back during the fight against fascism. There’s no getting away from facts: they were fascist collaborators’ (1A74m) – Pro-Soviet Statement 4 (See Table 2, p.40).

‘The Soviet Union was then just a name. All military actions were happening mostly on the Ukrainian territory. We can say that Ukraine was the main core of the war between the Nazi Germany and the USSR. [...] Eighty per cent of the contribution was done by Ukraine’ (3F26m). Pro-nationalist Statement 2 (See Table 2, p.40).

‘Let [communist supporters] have their gatherings, but this must not become propaganda of the communist regime’ (2E52m). Pro-nationalist Statement 6 (See Table 2, p.40).

‘I think we shouldn’t adhere to any of the extremities. We should understand that there are many viewpoints regarding many events and they should all be considered. We can’t say here’s white and here’s black’ (3B23f). Moderate position statement.

‘History should be presented as it is, no decorations added, no tailoring it to certain tone or template, and people will choose what they think is right. I don’t like many things but understand that they have the right to exist. It could or could not have existed, it could have been made up. And it’s the meaning of life for some’ (3F26m). Moderate position statement.

‘I’ll be honest, I don’t in fact have enough knowledge and ideas to formulate my opinion regarding WWII’ (3D21f). Ambiguous position Statement.

‘ - I agree with the [law against communist propaganda...]. I agree that fascism and communism are the same thing.

' - [...] So what is more important – to foster freedom of speech or to prevent communist propaganda?

' – Well, right now freedom of speech is more important' (2D38f). Ambiguous position Statement.

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