

Encountering History: Student Agency in History and Identity
Student Perspectives from the International School Bremen

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

Alexis L. Rossi M.Ed., M.A.

Department of Politics & International Relations

University of Leicester

FEBRUARY 2015

Encountering History: Student Agency in History and Identity
Student Perspectives from the International School Bremen

Alexis L. Rossi

Department of Politics & International Relations

University of Leicester

Abstract:

History education has been seen a tool to transmit a socially accepted historical narrative and related characteristics of national identity across generations, often with the goal to cohesively prepare and integrate citizens into society. By utilizing a relatively privileged sample that simultaneously exists both within and outside of national and international contexts, this research contributes to the existing academic literature by providing qualitative evidence that promotes the questioning of the notion of the simple transmission of values through history education. With evidence drawn from student interviews from an international school in northern Germany as part of a micro-case study design, this thesis shows that students retain and exercise considerable agency in encounters with history and the subsequent processes of interpreting and making sense of those encounters. Students exercise significant agency through the utilization of temporal elements as tools through which they construct and deploy revised historical accounts that are relevant to their personal identities and worldviews. Additionally, social factors significantly influence the form, content and understanding of encounters with history. As such, history education is influenced by salient elements of both students' achieved and ascribed identities in a complex and dynamic manner where students actively formulate their identities and understandings of history. Through characteristics specific to the international school, such as dedicated space for discussion and the perception of an inclusive and supportive community, students further the development and exploration of achieved identity and agency with the result of a stronger sense of self and an expanded worldview. Although the research upholds some elements of the existing debate, this research highlights that student encounters with history are more wide-ranging and complex than previously acknowledged. The level of agency that students retain in fashioning their identity in relation to and through encounters with history is significantly more considerable than previously thought.

Through countless hours and cups of tea, many travels and more than a few tears, I would like to acknowledge the boundless love and support of my family and friends all over the world that kept me going through the years, especially during tough times, of which this process had many. I couldn't have done it without you. I also need to acknowledge my supervisors' guidance, which traversed borders, time zones and continents in the pursuit of transforming a simple email into this thesis.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction & Research Overview	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 History & Identity in Schools	9
1.3 Research Overview	16
1.4 Schools, Migration Status & Violence in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	19
1.5 Research Focus: Germany	27
1.6 The Case Study & Research Structure	30
Chapter 2: Theoretical Background	41
2.1 Introduction	41
2.2 History, Identity & Education in Society	43
2.2.1 The German Case	44
2.2.2 Textbooks	49
2.3 Achieved and Ascribed Identities in Encounters with History	
2.3.1 Overview	56
2.3.2 The Social Construction of Identity through History	63
2.3.3 Teachers	71
2.3.4 Community & Belonging	73
2.3.5 Summary	75
2.4 Agency in the Construction of Identity in Relation to History	76
2.5 Temporality & Agency in Achieved Identity Formation & History	78
2.6 Conclusion	83
Chapter 3: Methodology	81
3.1 Introduction	81
3.2 Research Design	84
3.3 Sampling & Data Collection	86
3.4 Transcription & Data Analysis	90

3.5 Agency & Power	95
3.6 Conclusion	100
Chapter 4: The Case Study Context	102
4.1 Introduction	102
4.1.1 Overview of the International Baccalaureate Programme & the International School Bremen	103
4.1.2 Assessment & Curricula at ISB	105
4.1.3 Student Perspectives on the International School Bremen & German National Schools	110
4.1.5 Summary	125
4.2 History Curriculum at ISB	126
4.2.1 The History Curricula	126
4.2.2 Student Perspectives on the History Curricula at the ISB	130
4.2.3 Summary	139
4.3 Chapter Summary	141
Chapter 5: Achieved Identity & Agency in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	143
5.1 Achieved Identity	
5.1.1 Introduction	143
5.1.2 Achieved Identity: Student Perspectives	144
5.1.3 Summary	150
5.2 Exercising Agency in Identity Construction: Student Use of Temporal Positioning in Encounters with History	
5.2.1 Overview	152
5.2.2 Temporal Positioning in Achieved Identity: Student Perspectives	154
5.2.3 Temporal Positioning in Achieved Identity: The Use of Temporal Ruptures within the Linear Structure of History	163
5.2.4 Summary	166
5.3 Chapter Summary	168
Chapter 6: Social Others in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	173
6.1 Social Aspects of Identity Formation in Encounters with History	173

6.2 Ascribed Identities: The Social Other in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	177
6.2.1 Introduction	177
6.2.2 The Social ‘Other’ in Identity Formation & Encounters with History: Student Perspectives	178
6.2.3 Summary	184
6.3 Teachers as a Mitigating Factor in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	
6.3.1 Introduction	185
6.3.2 The Role of Teachers across Educational Contexts: Student Perspectives	185
6.3.2 Summary	197
6.4 Peers as Mitigating Social Factor in Identity Formation & Encounters with History	
6.4.1 Introduction	201
6.4.2 The Role of Peers across Educational Contexts: Student Perspectives	202
6.4.2 Summary	208
6.5 Generation Gap: Impact of the Family on Identity Formation & Encounters with History	
6.5.1 Introduction	210
6.5.2 All in the Family: Students Perspectives on the Impact of Family in Encounters with History	211
6.5.2 Summary	214
6.6 Chapter Conclusion	216
Chapter 7: Conclusion	219
7.1 Research Overview	219
7.2 Achieved Identity & Agency	223
7.3 The Use of Temporality in Achieved Identity Formation	226
7.4 Social Factors in Identity & Belonging	230
7.5 Encountering History within an International School	235
7.6 Further Research	241
7.3 Conclusion	250

Works Cited	250
Appendices	
Appendix A: Research Letter Informing Participants	261
Appendix B: Consent Form	263
Appendix C: Interview Guide	264

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Overview

‘What is our relationship with the past...which is a heavy burden on our consciousness, and which shadows our historical and social memory? Who are we, as individuals, in relation to this past? Do we have choices in the face of what the past forces upon us? What strategies do we have to face the past? To remember? To forget?’ – Siebert¹

1.1 Introduction

Encounters with history contribute to shaping how individuals see themselves and others, by helping to create a sense of self and collective identity. Both societies and individuals encounter or experience history in a myriad of ways. For example, history is encountered through public memorials and commemorations, popular media, education and symbols, each of which are imbued with meaning and symbolism in their pursuit of upholding a particular conceptualization of history as it stands in the collective consciousness. These encounters serve to reinforce, reinterpret or challenge understandings of history and identity on multiple levels, including at the national, group and individual tiers. This process has implications for society at large by contributing to the creation and transmission of group boundaries and identities whereby in and out groups are established and solidified, with the potential to contribute to stereotypes and intergroup conflict along the fault lines of collective identities based on categories such as national, ethnic and religious characteristics.

This thesis utilizes qualitative interviews to explore the processes by which individual students attending an international school in Germany perceive, reinterpret and understand their identities in relation to encounters with history. By investigating how students

¹ Siebert, R. 1992. Don't Forget: Fragments of a Negative Tradition. In Passerini, L. (Ed.). *Memory and Totalitarianism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. p. 165.

encounter, interpret and understand history, analysis of the interviews provide insights into how these processes inform and transform the identities of the student participants.

As Benedict Anderson has remarked: ‘since the end of the eighteenth century nationalism has undergone a process of modulation and adaptation, according to different eras, political regimes, economies and social structures. The ‘imagined community’ has, as a result, spread out to every conceivable contemporary society.’² This imagined community is imagined because ‘the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ that allows for the conceptualization of the nation as ‘a deep, horizontal comradeship.’³ Anderson remarks that this idea of community that is so ingrained in the minds and identities of people that ‘it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.’⁴ As such, the perceived sense of belonging is a significant factor in not only how people perceive and define themselves and others, but also in how they conduct their lives, behave, make political decisions and engage in society.

Even in a historical era marked by pan-national movements such as the establishment of the European Union or the more recent spread of the “Arab Spring,” the nation-state continues to be an important actor on the political level as well as within the lives of individuals. ‘In the last few decades, there has been an explosion in the growth of scholarly publications on ethnicity and nationalism, particularly in the fields of political science, history, cultural studies, sociology and social anthropology.’⁵ The growth in academic work on ethnicity and

² Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: New York, New York. p. 157

³ Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 6 & 7

⁴ Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 7

⁵ Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 157

nationalism ‘is probably only paralleled by the explosion in studies featuring the terms ‘globalisation’, ‘identity’, and ‘modernity’, which incidentally refer to phenomena closely related to ethnicity and nationalism.’⁶ The interest in these and related topics in the academic and political arenas has ensured the continued popularity and proliferation of research across various fields of interest that seek to answer the questions that changing political structures and daily life have had on perceptions of identity and nationhood.

Despite this increasing proliferation and complexity in discussions regarding the definition of a nation, ‘history, identity and citizenship developed into a strong triad in Europe during the 19th century in the establishment of nation-states.’⁷ History was used as a tool through which the development of the national community could be achieved. ‘Politicians and intellectuals gave history the task of constructing the biography of nations by inventing traditions, ethnogenetic myths and heroes, a biography which had to be traced as far back as possible into the distant past.’⁸ As such, ‘men who share an ethnic area, a historical era, or an economic pursuit are guided by common images of good and evil. Infinitely varied, these images reflect the elusive nature of historical change; yet in the form of contemporary social models, of compelling prototypes of good and evil, they assume decisive concreteness in every individual’s ego development.’⁹ These common images of good and evil easily manifested themselves into a binary “us” verses “them” mentality that lends itself to historical narratives that upheld group boundaries via the telling of the national biography, which ‘served for the citizens to identify themselves as part of a collective body, the nation, to which they belong.’¹⁰ Therefore, ‘identity construction often begets a process of “othering”

⁶ Eriksen. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. 3rd Edition. Anthropological Perspectives. p. 1

⁷ Cajani, L. 2007. Introduction – Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century: the burden of the past, the challenge of the present. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children’s Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA. p. 1

⁸ Cajani. 2007. Introduction – Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century. p. 1

⁹ Erikson, E. 1980. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, New York. p. 17

¹⁰ Cajani. 2007. Introduction – Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century. p. 1

rather than “nesting.” Identities can be sharply conflictual rather than snugly contemporary.¹¹ This holds true even throughout changes in regimes and over time, since ‘all profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives.’¹² Thus, history and identity are intertwined and mutually constituted via ‘the historical prototypes of the day.’¹³

The idea of the ‘imagined community,’ has also been applied to the educational setting. The use of the term imagined community to describe a school holds similar meaning as for the nation or ethnic group by providing a sense of belonging or separation from the group, causing either the development of a social network or possible conflict due to issues of power, legitimacy and segregation. ‘Many of the controversies over education policy in the past half-century have revolved around conflicts over the possible community of a school.’¹⁴ History is full of examples of how schools serve as microcosms of larger societal issues related to notions about who belongs and who doesn’t, such as racial segregation in the United States and the ban on religious headscarves in French schools. Yet it is not just the examples that history informs on, but also these wider notions about identities, citizenship, power and belonging.

Since it is ‘one of the markers that helps a society to (re)define its identity is history,’¹⁵ history education can be used as a tool to redefine the national collective in the face of ‘current concerns over the need for public policy initiatives that preserve some sense of

¹¹ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds.). 2009. *European Identity*. p. 8

¹² Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 204

¹³ Erikson. 1980. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. p. 18.

¹⁴ Shircliffe, B.; Dorn, S. & Cobb-Roberts, D. 2006. Introduction: Schools as Imagined Communities. In Cobb-Roberts, D.; Dorn, S. & Shircliffe, B. (eds.) *Schools as Imagined Communities: The Creation of Identity, Meaning, and Conflict in U.S. History*. Palgrave Macmillan: NY, NY. p. 1

¹⁵ Soltan-Zadeh, M. and Farouk, M. 2010. A Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts in the Social Studies Textbooks of Iran. In Pampanini, G. (ed); Adly, F. and Napier, D. (co-eds). *Interculturalism, Society and Education*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands. p. 45.

national or regional identity as a socially cohesive force.’¹⁶ The construction of differing historical accounts infused with specific meaning and used within a larger narrative framework enables societies, governments and individuals to try to make sense of their place and role in the contemporary world. ‘Therefore the interpretation and illustration of historical events, a concept at the centre of numerous debates on subjectivity and objectivity of scholarship in the field of history, appear as a means of promoting (particular) social, national, and religious identity.’¹⁷ For example, until after the Second World War, ‘the teaching of history aimed to instil in students’ minds not only the love and pride for their fatherlands, but also the willingness to fight in future wars.’¹⁸ As such, encounters with these prototypes and narratives about the past within the educational context impart significant messages in various ways that are significant for identity development by shaping shared community values, perspectives on belonging and even ideas about the ideal citizen.

Schools recreate and transmit ideas about who may or may not belong since ‘exclusive aspects of schools often function to maintain a status quo within society.’¹⁹ Encounters with history within the educational sphere help define the imagined community in terms of who can or cannot be part of the community as well as what it means to belong to that community because ‘as bounded communities, schools have designated insiders and outsiders so we can distinguish between “our” school and “theirs.”’ Therefore, studying how encountering history within the educational context can provide important insight into how various collective identities are formed in relation to the messages about belonging transmitted through both history and education.

¹⁶ Barber, 1996 & Jusdanis. 2001. In Richardson, G. H. 2001. *A border within: The Western Canada Protocol for Social Studies Education and the politics of national identity construction*. Brazil: VIII Congreso AMEC.

¹⁷ Soltan-Zadeh and Farouk. 2010. National and Islamic Concepts. p. 45.

¹⁸ Cajani. 2007. Introduction – Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century. p. 2-3

¹⁹ Shircliffe et al. 2006. Introduction: Schools as Imagined Communities. p. 18

Furthermore, for observers such as Cobb-Roberts, schools are ‘a place that will provide the type of education that prepares them for a life that is deemed successful by the community. So in essence the school becomes an extension of the neighborhood community and its values.’²⁰ Based on the specific values of a particular community, the definition of success may also change depending on the perspective and goals that the community has laid forth. These goals, values and definitions of success are also what drive the construction of social and historical narratives, which in turn are transmitted via schools. Curricula have been shown to reflect the values and exclusivity involved in the creation and dissemination of the imagined communities that are linked to national, ethnic and other group identities.²¹ As such, encounters with history within the school community or context can impact whether or not a student regards him or herself as part of the community or as separate from it. Similarly, these considerations not only occur on the local school level, but also speak to and highlight broader social identities, hierarchies and integration issues because ‘imagined communities are necessarily exclusive.’²² As such, imagined communities can be understood as ‘territorial and socially constructed entities, and we can also understand why internal and external actors and institutions can maintain community identity despite its changing boundaries, internal divisions, and external pressures.’²³ Thus, one must ‘look carefully at the historical definitions of outsiders, whether based on geographical boundaries, role within a school, race, class, religion, or sexual orientation’²⁴ that define the imagined communities of both schools and nations. Additionally, ‘the broader definition of community and who has to been responsible for identifying members and defining the terms of membership’²⁵ must also be

²⁰ Shircliffe et al. 2006. Introduction: Schools as Imagined Communities. p. 5

²¹ Carretero, M. 2011. *Constructing Patriotism: Teaching History and Memories in Global Worlds*. Information Age Publishing, Inc.: Charlotte, NC.

²² Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 17

²³ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 19

²⁴ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 6

²⁵ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 6

considered when discussing who has been accepted or deemed an outsider within national communities and how this is conceptualized and transmitted via schools, as well as how it may be upheld or challenged via student encounters with history. Yet, the official description of community membership may not be accepted or considered as salient to the perceived members. Furthermore, ‘within a given school community further differentiation can occur’ based on social groups created from shared interests.²⁶ Indeed, the academic literature and popular interest have challenged and helped reimaged ideas of nationhood and identity, as well as the purpose of education. This is especially true in relation to the creation and expansion of the European Union.

‘Since the early 1990s and in response to a relaunched European project, a vibrant theoretical literature on questions of European integration and identity has emerged.’²⁷ The new empirical data related to the EU has given rise to modified theories concerning the construction of identity in Europe. ‘Perhaps most intriguing is the argument about its positive-sum nature. That is, one can be French – say – and, at the same time, European; identities, European or national, do not wax or wane at each other’s expense.’²⁸ Thus, the Europeanization of identity ‘is not a story that can be told relying on binary distinctions. The EU does not dominate over its members by steadily wearing down the barriers of the nation-state. And nation-states do not succeed in fending off attacks on their untrammelled sovereignty. Rather, both the EU and the nation-state play crucial roles.’²⁹ Therefore, ‘the reality is quite plain: the ‘end of the era of nationalism,’ so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our

²⁶ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 19

²⁷ Checkel, J. & Katzenstein, P. (eds.). 2009. *European Identity*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA. p. 7

²⁸ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds.). 2009. *European Identity*. p. 9

²⁹ Checkel & Katzenstein (eds.). 2009. *European Identity*. p. 9

time.’³⁰ Instead, rather than replacing national identity, more complex and dynamic identities are developing, even though ‘nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze.’³¹ This research is situated within the framework of history and identity in order to further explore this complexity of identities and how it manifests within the everyday reality of encountering history within the educational realm.

Since a majority of time within an adolescent’s life has been spent as part of compulsory education, the classroom and wider school environment is an important consideration in matters of identity formation. This research considers history a significant factor in identity formation and schools as an important context through and within which identity is formulated. In light of the research on the increasing complexity of identities, an international school has been chosen as the primary investigative setting, positioning this research to contribute to the academic discussion concerning the dynamic nature of both history and identity. By exploring how students at an international school encounter, interpret and make sense of history, this research seeks to better understand the processes by which individual students who have experienced both nationalized and international education environments perceive, reinterpret and understand their identities in relation to history. Since these students are both within and outside of a national, European and international context, if more is understood about how they encounter history and the resulting impact on identities, then this research would lend more insight into theories about the complexity of identities and encounters with history.

³⁰ Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 3

³¹ Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. p. 3

1.2 History and Identity in Schools

The thesis works from the premise that since history is linked to social identification and particular beliefs and values, encounters with history help individuals to construct and make sense of the world and their place in it, while at the same time the world as it is today acts as a context within which history must operate. In turn, the contemporary world is also influenced by the deployment of different histories and their impact on modes of thinking and related behaviours. Due to history's role in identity construction, 'history often provides a forum in which political disputes about a nation's place in the world crystallize.'³² For example, political speeches often reference history, in general or as specific events, in order to lend credibility to the current political ideology, justify political actions or situate the contemporary world within a historical context that makes sense within the framework of the messages the politician or government wishes to propagate.³³ Therefore, the influence and importance of history in the construction of identity on various social levels such as the national or cultural level, as well as on the individual level can be explained by looking at history as a dynamic process undergoing constant construction.

As has been established in the academic literature, history and national identities can be constructed through the use of narrative elements that are inherent within historiography. 'Nation is narration. The stories we tell each other about our national belonging and being constitute the nation.'³⁴ Reflecting this connection between national identity and historical narratives, the European Science Foundation recently funded a five year project exploring

³² Daddow, O. 2006. Euroscepticism and History Education in Britain. *Government and Opposition*. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, UK. p. 78.

³³ For examples, see: Daddow, O. 2011. *New Labour and the European Union: Blair and Brown's logic of history*. Manchester University Press: Manchester, UK.; Gaskarth. 2012. Virtues in International Society, *European Journal of International Relations*, 18;3.; Nabers, D. 2009 Filling the Void of Meaning: Identity Construction in U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 5, 2.

³⁴ Berger, S. 2008. Narrating the Nation: Historiography and Other Genres. In Berger, S.; Eriksonas, L. & Mycock, M. (eds.), *Narrating the nation: representations in history, media and the arts*. European Science Foundation. Berghahn Books: USA. p.1

national historiographies based on ‘the assumption that history has been one of the most important ingredients in the construction of national identities in Europe.’³⁵ The dynamic and complex nature of history is linked to the construction of identities on both the individual and social levels since historiographies and historical narratives are ‘transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual’s level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues, and mentors.’³⁶ While there is a strong social influence, there is also a level of individual agency that exists within the identity formation process via the relationship with history as enacted through encounters with histories and historiographies.

The identity formation process includes the socially constructed element of ascribed identity, i.e. the identity that others give to an individual or group, as well as an achieved identity, i.e. the identity that an individual or group construct for themselves.³⁷ The tension between having a fixed or pinpointed identity ascribed by others, often representing only one portion of an individual’s often complex achieved identity, and a more dynamic achieved identity can have a significant impact one’s overall identity formation. Often, histories are evoked or play an integral role in the creation of these identities and the tension between them. For example, ‘a specific “identity” as an ultimate reality’³⁸ is often invoked by state regimes or socio-political movements in various ways such as ‘fixing the population by censuses, tax measures, etc., and thus hardening the boundaries of communities that used to be much more diffuse and permeable.’³⁹ These constructions of identity can change over time and with

³⁵ Summary. *Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe*. Retrieved on February 9, 2011 from: <http://www.esf.org/activities/research-networking-programmes/humanities-sch/current-esf-research-networking-programmes-in-humanities/representations-of-the-past-the-writing-of-national-histories-in-europe.html>

³⁶ Bruner. 1991. The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 1, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA. p. 4

³⁷ Brisk, M. E., Burgos, A., & Hamerla, S. (2004). *Situational Context of Education: A Window into the World of Bilingual Learners*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

³⁸ Geschiere, P. & Meyer, B. (1998) Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure, Introduction. *Development and Change*, Vol. 29, Institute of Social Studies, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, UK. p 606

³⁹ Ibid p 609

shifts in both external and internal events. A nation can shift its identity or historiography in the same manner that a group or individual can; through a variety of mechanisms such as propaganda, speeches, political decisions and education. There is an element of agency and choice in the creation, alteration and acceptance of certain elements that may change over time and with variances in political ideology, for example with the fall of a regime.⁴⁰

Additionally, revisionist and negationist views of history represent individual agency in the rewriting of history, even to the point of denying facts.⁴¹ Historiographies do not have to be accepted in order to be internalized; contrasting identities can be formed through the rejection of particular aspects of a historical narrative. For example, although Tony Blair and Gordon Brown attempted to convince the British public that Great Britain actually had a European history rather than the preferred nationalist history, for the most part the public rejected this attempt to re-historicize the past in order to create a more Europeanist outlook.⁴² This rejection or acceptance of particular histories and identities represents agency through conscious or unconscious choices made during encounters with history. Additionally the story and focus can be challenged or altered based on external events that are, at least to some extent, outside of any individual's or nation's control such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack. As such, both histories and identities are constantly being encountered, contested and re-negotiated over time and within different contexts, resulting in the creation of various perspectives and constructions of history and identity.

⁴⁰ For an example, see the debate on the rewriting of history and events after the break-up of Yugoslavia: Traynor, I. Bosnia's bloody history rewritten. The Guardian. February 14, 2002 Retrieved from:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/feb/15/warcrimes.iantraynor>;

Ristic, M. EU: Serb President 'rewriting history' on Srebrenica. Balkan Transitional Justice. June 05, 2012 Retrieved from: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-srebrenica-genocide-has-happened>

⁴¹ For example, see the case of David Irving, a Holocaust denier and 'historian' who was jailed in Austria: Traynor, I. February 20, 2006. Irving jailed for denying Holocaust: Three years for British historian who described Auschwitz as a fairytale. The Guardian. News: World News. Retrieved from:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/21/thefarright.highereducation>; for more details on Irving's skewed publications and a related lawsuit, see Evans, R. 2002. *Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*. Verso Books: New York, New York.

⁴² Daddow. 2011. *New Labour and the European Union*.

The multiplicity of histories and identities is significant for history education, especially when placed in the larger educational environment. Not only are history and the related ideas of the nation socially constructed, but ‘social identification, power relations, interpersonal struggles and other apparently non-academic processes also take place during the primary business of schooling’.⁴³ These factors cannot be completely separated from the academic production of history because ‘subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning overlap’ with these non-academic processes and struggles.⁴⁴ Therefore, the subject matter of history itself, already inherently constructed through values, beliefs, group memberships and power struggles, also plays a role in defining, contrasting and formulating students’ own sense of identity on various levels. Furthermore, since, ‘the perception of history is an area of interface where the peculiarities of specific nations and peoples may be seen to influence general processes of group identification, and where processes of group identification may in turn be used to understand and frame what is known as history,’⁴⁵ education is an important area to look at when discussing how identities are formed through encounters with history. When these perceptions differ, especially when the dominant social group imposes a particular perception of history onto minority groups, then ascribed identity, i.e. the identification or label that one is given by others, is impacted. Since ‘the telling of history can be viewed as a prototypical group activity, where different versions of history can be held among different segments of the population’⁴⁶ multiple aspects of ascribed identity come into play through both one’s own group perception of history as well as how other groups within society perceive history and the role of various groups in history.

⁴³ Wortham, S. 2006. *Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA. p. 1

⁴⁴ Wortham. 2006. *Learning Identity*. p. 1.

⁴⁵ Liu, J. H.; Stewart, M.; McClure, J. & Higgins, T. 1999. Social identity and the perception of history: cultural representations of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *European Journal of Social Psychology*. 29. p. 1022.

⁴⁶ Liu et al. 1999. Social identity. p. 1002.

With ascribed identity being intersubjectively constructed and influencing the more individually focused achieved identity, the social aspect of history construction found within education must also be recognized as a driving force of identity construction. Since the theoretical literature regarding historiography and history in general has established that ‘narratives are social practices’⁴⁷ and therefore are ‘always contextual, communal, and relational, and there are always subjects making claims and counter-claims in, through and about the stories told and accounts made,’⁴⁸ the content of the historiographies that are constructed and transferred within history education, as well as that which is left out, is important to the construction of both achieved and ascribed identities. Therefore the encounters that students have with history as part of history education can have a significant impact on the manner in which people view themselves and others.

History can give rise to understanding and knowledge about other cultures, groups, communities and individuals, as well as develop understanding and knowledge about one’s own associations and memberships by providing information, a historical context and insight into cultural practices. Alternatively, since the historiographies that are told and the manner in which they are told ‘change over time and place and are always contested, often violently so,’⁴⁹ history can also create the basis for misunderstanding, inaccurate information, stereotypes and sometimes even hate and violence by using certain constructions of history as a basis for the legitimization of violence, for example ethnic cleansing. For example ethnically based violence can be seen as an ‘ultimate form of identification in order to definitely settle suspicions about one’s neighbour’s “true” identity in the face of increasing

⁴⁷ Stanley, L. & Temple, B. 2008. Narrative methodologies: subjects, silences, re-readings and analyses. *Qualitative Research*. 8 (3) p. 279. Retrieved on December 13, 2010 from: <http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/8/3/275>

⁴⁸ Stanley & Temple. 2008. Narrative methodologies. p. 278.

⁴⁹ Berger. 2008. Narrating the Nation. p.1.

uncertainty.⁵⁰ Within the various existing forms of history and history education, such as memorials, public history, and popular books, conceptualizations of history are bound up in issues related to power. Binary relationships between loss and victory, victimhood and perpetration, citizenship and belonging, discrimination and empowerment, memory and interpretation, fact and fiction, all lead to differing understandings of history based on a perceived level of inclusion or exclusion. As students encounter these different formulations and forms of history, they are also encountering various conceptualizations of citizenship, group belonging and national identity, as well as definitions of victims and perpetrators. As students encounter, interpret and make sense of these histories and the subjective ideologies inherent within them, the manner in which students see themselves and others, as well as their general role and sense of belonging in the world, may be impacted through the internalization or the rejection of the historical content and messages that they encounter and interact with.

In addition, the issue of history negation and revisionism, particularly within educational contexts, adds a further source of tension and conflict to the construction of identities.

Textbooks can be rewritten in order to better portray a particular ideology and create a desired sense of national identity and collective memory. There are ‘several studies discussing how states use textbooks to internalize the values of the current system in the pupils,’⁵¹ often using the ‘representation of historical events in textbooks and similar techniques of promoting national pride and patriotic sentiments through reinventing history.’ For example, Iraqi schoolbooks had been ‘rewritten once in 1973 when Saddam Hussein took power, and once in 2001 when the US and coalition forces took control of the country.’⁵²

⁵⁰ Geschiere & Meyer. 1998. *Globalization and Identity*. p. 618.

⁵¹ Soltan-Zadeh. & Farouk. 2010. *Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts*. p. 48.

⁵² Asquit. 2003. In Soltan-Zadeh. & Farouk. 2010. *Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts*. In the *Social Studies Textbooks of Iran*. In Pampanini, G., Adly, F. and Napier, D. (eds). *Interculturalism, Society and Education*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands. p. 48.

Japanese textbooks have also been criticized for a revisionist approach to Japanese aggression during WWII.⁵³ Thus, ‘history can be used as a unifying device for social identity and it can be used as a divisive lever.’⁵⁴ These constructed understandings of history lead to the creation and reinforcement of certain narratives that tell a particular story that privileges distinct viewpoints.⁵⁵ Even when these interpretations of history are not accurate or are ideologically biased, ‘those versions of the past which can form a sense of belonging and identity are being used as the real history,’⁵⁶ at least to a certain extent in the public and private psyche and endorsed narratives. These narratives become and are ‘presented as unchallengeable givens, common sense matters that everyone knows from their school history books.’⁵⁷ As these views are accepted or rejected, they impact identity formation on the social and individual levels by becoming integrated, transformed or dismissed.

Furthermore, ‘we cannot consider schools as communities without noting that school and school experiences can be significantly romanticized’⁵⁸ in much of the same way that history can be through conceptualizations of collective memory. Similarly to the manner in which nostalgia distorts conceptions of historical events one experienced or childhood memories, ‘the nostalgia for past schools of one’s childhood often provides a social commentary on the present as much as fragmented and selective memories of the past. We tend to become nostalgic for relationships and experiences we see absent today.’⁵⁹ Both the collective histories and notions about education or particular school environments are subjected to the same impact, allowing these conceptualizations to become as much about the present as the

⁵³ For an example, see Oh, I. & Ishizawa-Grbic, D. Forgiving the Culprits: Japanese Historical Revisionism in a post-Cold War context. *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Retrieved from: http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol5_2/oh_grbi.htm

⁵⁴ Liu et al. 1999. Social identity. p 1022.

⁵⁵ Gaskarth. 2012. Virtues in International Society.

⁵⁶ Soltan-Zadeh. & Farouk. 2010. Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts. p. 46.

⁵⁷ Daddow. 2006. Euroscepticism. p. 83.

⁵⁸ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 20

⁵⁹ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 20

past. As such, education can be subjected to the same issues as history and collective memory since the ‘fundamental problem with nostalgia is its potential to distort the historical record by advancing a superficial understanding of the past and contemporary problems.’⁶⁰ As such, memory and nostalgia are not static, rather they dynamically connect the three temporal dimensions of past, present and future through a relationship to social and individual identities.⁶¹ Of interest to this research is how students engage with this process within the context of education.

This thesis will develop these findings by examining the impact that encounters with history have on students by exploring how they perceive, interpret and understand history within the broad context of education and the narrower context of the international school specifically. The influence that social factors such as peers, teachers and family members have on student encounters with history and resulting identities will also be investigated, as will the extent to which students have and exercise ownership or agency over their encounters with history.

1.3 Research Overview

Building upon the existing literature in the areas of education, history, this thesis explores the notion of history ‘as a site where multiple ideological forces and tensions are in play and to forge connections between disciplinary representations of the past and other discourses in the wider social world.’⁶² By acknowledging that historical narratives and identities are created as much through context as any other factor, this thesis focuses on the impact that the experiences and encounters with history of students at an international school had on their

⁶⁰ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 17

⁶¹ Assman, J. & Czaplicka, J. 1995. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* (65). p. 125-133. Retrieved on January 6, 2015 from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488538>

⁶² Finney, P. 2011. *Remembering the Road to World War Two: International history, national identity, collective memory*. Routledge: London. p. 10

identity formation. The use of an international school as a case study, and thus the varied experiences of the students involved in the research, is an important addition to the existing literature because of the focus on the lived experiences of the students as they encounter history in various settings both within and outside of the classroom. By analyzing students' own words as they seek to define themselves, their national identity and their perspectives on history education, the significant impact that encounters with history have on identity formation will come to the forefront. Since the students and the international school itself represent a specific subset of individuals within the German and international society, i.e. situated within both national and international contexts with a global mission and vision, the research seeks to not only better explain the process by which students are impacted by encounters with history but to also identify potential themes that, through future research, may be applied to broader populations and thus help educators, parents and politicians better understand and mediate the impact and make necessary policy decisions for the creation of a more inclusive society via educational contexts.

The theoretical conceptualizations of history, memory and identity are important concepts within this research, and have been extensively covered and debated within the literature. Thus, the distinctiveness of this research focuses on how these conceptualizations and their impact on identity formation manifest themselves within student encounters with history, as well as the factors that mediate this impact. By applying already established theories and definitions that have been debated and accepted within the vast literature that exists, this research attempts to further understand how these theories interact in an everyday educational environment that reflects the changing demographics of a globalizing world. Through the focused investigation into the everyday lived realities of students who have experienced history education in a variety of national and international settings, insight into the experiences of how these students encounter and integrate history into their identities will be

gained. The empirical findings in this thesis will help further develop theoretical insights by allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how history is encountered, interpreted and understood, as well as the impact that this has on identity formation. As such, insight drawn from a small case study on an international school, and the experiences and encounters with history as described and analyzed by students via interviews, is significant in what it can teach us about how encounters with history impact students as well as the wider reaching consequences, both positive and negative, it may have for increasingly diverse nations. It is likely that the processes and factors that impact identity formation via encounters with history, as well as how these encounters are mitigated, made sense of and integrated into consciousness, within an international educational context may hold insight for other environments that are becoming increasingly diverse.

Through the use of semi-structured interviews with students, this research investigates how history impacts upon the formation of identity within the specific context of an international school located in Northern Germany. By taking a step back from the official curriculum and instead focusing on student voices, this research explores the ways that students encounter history, make sense of and integrate these encounters with history into their identities and future plans. By examining how they define and situate themselves and others through these encounters, this research also sheds light on the interaction between socialization and individual agency as well as the factors that mediate the impact of encounters with history on identity formation by answering a series of interrelated research questions. *1) How do students encounter history? 2) To what extent do students exercise agency in the construction of their identities in relation to history? 3) How is this agency exercised? 4) What factors have a significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it relates to encounters with history?*

1.4 Schools, Migration Status and Violence in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

A review of the literature regarding education and minority ethnic groups, including official curricula such as that found in textbooks and current illustrations found in the media across nations, reveals that not only can schools act as microcosms of society, reflecting larger trends and political leanings as well as being the repositories for the transmission of collective memories, but that education also serves as an important mechanism for social mobility, integration and/or exclusion. As part of formal and compulsory education, ‘youth develop academic knowledge and, just as important, form perceptions of where they fit in the social reality and cultural imagination’⁶³ of the larger society and nation. This can occur in supportive or restrictive manners, leading to positive outcomes such as high achievement, social mobility and active citizenship or it can result in feelings of alienation and discrimination, which can spark some students to seek recognition and acceptance through less than ideal means, i.e. gangs, fundamental religious groups, and terrorist organizations. For example, ‘children who are marked as immigrant outsiders soon begin to discern the attitudes, moods, and ambivalences of the host society. The meaning they make of anti-immigrant hostilities as well as their perception of their opportunities will influence their integration.’⁶⁴ The popular myth is that only immigrant youth are prone to seeking out acceptance in negative ways that may lead to violence. In Germany, the term ‘migrationshintergrund’ translated as ‘migration background’ carries a negative connotation; ‘the German public tends to harbor an image of immigrants as people lacking in education and as drains on the social welfare system.’⁶⁵ Additionally, migrants are often characterized

⁶³ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 2-3

⁶⁴ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 29

⁶⁵ Schwartz, R. 12.10.2013. Opinion: Migration background is not a blemish. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/opinion-migration-background-is-not-a-blemish/a-17152542>

as criminals, solely based on their migration status, not on any particular wrongdoing. Yet, the label of ‘migration background’ is often not only erroneous in terms of its connotation and content but also to whom it is applied. An individual may be labeled as an immigrant or as having a migration background simply based on appearance rather than real knowledge of the person’s national background, naturalization or immigration status, number of years living in the country or other demographic indicators that go beyond the surface level of skin or hair colour. For some individuals, this results in a lack of belonging in either the national/majority group or the immigrant group. They become lost in the in-between, a no-man’s land where they are distrusted or discriminated against by the majority group for being too foreign while they are left out of the immigrant/minority groups for being too nationalized. Often searching for a sense of belonging, Westerners targeted for recruitment for membership in terrorist organizations typically have been born and raised in the Western nation, have little to no religious knowledge and are alienated from peers groups or family.

As one news article written by a UK Sociologist claimed, ‘there has been a dramatic shift since September 11, 2001 in the way that the risk of terrorism is perceived in Britain and Western societies.’⁶⁶ A number of the recent terrorist attacks across Europe and the United States have been carried out by either natural born citizens or youth who have lived in the country for a number of years and attended most, if not all, of their formal schooling at national, public schools. The Boston Marathon bombings on 15 April 2013 were carried out by two brothers who had been born in Chechnya but raised in the United States after legally immigrating. The younger brother, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was 19 years old at the time that he survived the manhunt and altercations with law enforcement in the ensuing hours after the attack, was well liked at his schools, including the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth,

⁶⁶ Furedi, F. August 20, 2014. Why James Foley’s murder was a message to Britain. CNN. Retrieved on August 21, 2014 from: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/20/opinion/james-foley-message-britain/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

where he had been attending classes and where four of his friends attempted to cover up his involvement in the bombings by disposing of evidence and lying to law enforcement agents.⁶⁷ The July 7th bombings in central London were also carried out by youth. The four suicide bombers were 18, 19, 24 and 30 years old at the time that they killed 52 people and injured 770 others when they detonated bombs in the London Underground and a bus.⁶⁸ The gruesome and public beheading of American journalist James Foley, who had been held in captivity by ISIS (alternatively known as Islamic State or ISIL) the Sunni militant group that seized large tracts of land in Syria and Iraq throughout the summer of 2014 with the goal to establish an Islamic Caliphate, was carried out by a militant with what many in the media have described as a distinctive London accent. Other propaganda films created by ISIS and distributed on the internet ‘regularly feature British recruits to demonstrate the group’s capacity to influence young Muslims living in Europe.’⁶⁹ Such videos send ‘a direct warning to Britain’ by serving ‘as a reminder that the killing of a young English soldier Lee Rigby on the streets of south London by two home-grown jihadists last year was not an isolated event.’⁷⁰ For example, ‘the U.S. State Department said it knows of “dozens” of U.S. citizens fighting with the Islamic State, the Canadian government claims there are at least 130 and the British government’s most recent headcount is 500.’⁷¹ ‘Terror analysts say those fighters pose the greatest threat...because of their ability to travel freely and blend in.’⁷² Since ‘most Western recruits are teenagers and almost all going to Syria to fight are men,’ questions as to

⁶⁷ Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts. CNN. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/03/us/boston-marathon-terror-attack-fast-facts/>

⁶⁸ 7 July Bombings. BBC. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/what_happened/html/

⁶⁹ Furedi. 2014. Opinion: Why James Foley’s murder was a message to Britain. CNN.

⁷⁰ Furedi. 2014. Opinion: Why James Foley’s murder was a message to Britain. CNN.

⁷¹ Masi, A. September 14, 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners: How the ‘Islamic State’ Goes After Non-Muslims and Recent Converts In The West. International Business Times: US Edition. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from: <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-recruiting-westerners-how-islamic-state-goes-after-non-muslims-recent-converts-west-1680076>

⁷² August 29, 2014. ISIS recruits fighters through powerful online campaign. CBS News. CBS Interactive Inc. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-uses-social-media-to-recruit-western-allies/>

access, recruitment and messaging abound. A former Taliban recruiter shared insight into the recruitment process, highlighting the use of social media as well as how potential recruits were vetted based on specific criteria that would make it easier for the group's hold over the youngsters to remain firm. However, contrary to popular belief, religion was not the most important or only factor and recruits are not all fundamentalist Muslims. In fact, "the vast majority of Westerners joining up with ISIS are extraordinarily ignorant when it comes to religion," said Max Abrams, a Northeastern University professor who studies jihadist groups.⁷³ Schools play an important role in the recruitment process. For example, 'ISIS is also likely recruiting in colleges and high schools under the cover of student groups.'⁷⁴ The need and desire for camaraderie and the importance of peer or mentor relationships is a key element in the recruitment of young teenagers to the folds of fundamentalism groups. The messages of camaraderie and the mediums in which they are spread, appeal to disaffected youth who feel alienated from the Western societies in which they live. In response to fear or to drum up support for military action, governments often construct and enact narratives and rhetoric that may alienate people with diverse backgrounds or viewpoints by claiming that they are unpatriotic or a threat to the national way of life.

Yet, 'unfortunately very little progress has been made in upholding and explaining the values and way of life that are at stake.'⁷⁵ For example, not only did the British government have to abandon plans for a British Day after the July 7th bombings of the London transit system, 'the answer to the question of what it means to be British continues to elude policy makers' even though some politicians have demanded that "Britishness" be taught in schools.⁷⁶ This begs the question of how values that have not been made explicit or agreed upon by the

⁷³ Masi. 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners. International Business Times.

⁷⁴ Masi. 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners. International Business Times.

⁷⁵ Furedi. 2014. Opinion: Why James Foley's murder was a message to Britain. CNN.

⁷⁶ Furedi. 2014. Opinion: Why James Foley's murder was a message to Britain. CNN.

government, much less by the larger society, and integrated into daily public and private lives and collective identity, than how can it be taught in school in a manner that brings people in a diverse nation together rather than repackaging the binary us vs. them mentality? The 2014 Ofsted report on 21 schools in Birmingham that were inspected following claims in an anonymous letter that either ‘hardline Muslims were trying to impose their view’⁷⁷ or ‘alleging a Muslim takeover plot’⁷⁸ resulted in five schools being places on special measures. However, what became known as the “Trojan horse scandal” begs the important question of ‘where does diversity stop and extremism begin?’⁷⁹ Academies and free schools, which ‘don’t have to follow the national curriculum and they operate independently from the local education authority,’ seem to be allowed to only garner faith school status under Christian religions but not Islam.⁸⁰ The same types of activities that would be deemed appropriate in Christian faith-based schools were considered cause for concern when occurring in a school context that was majorly of the Muslim faith,⁸¹ triggering sharp criticism from leadership of the Park View Education Trust, which was cited and placed under special measures. ‘Ofsted inspectors came to our school looking for extremism, looking for segregation, looking for proof that our children have religion forced upon them as part of a religious plot.’⁸² Yet, some ‘head teachers claim there was an organized campaign to impose a “narrow, faith-based ideology” at some schools in Birmingham, Ofsted has said.’⁸³ Although, according to one editor at BBC News, ‘it appears almost that the Muslim ethos of a school is evidence of

⁷⁷ BBC News: Education & Family. June 9, 2014. Ofsted reports on 21 Birmingham schools – full list. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-27765372?print=true>

⁷⁸ June 9, 2014. ‘Trojan Horse’: Campaign to impose ‘faith-based ideology. BBC News: Birmingham & Black Country. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-27762341?print=true>

⁷⁹ Easton, M. June 9, 2014. ‘Trojan horse’ scandal – extreme or diverse? BBC News: UK. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk=27766291?print=true>

⁸⁰ Easton. 2014. ‘Trojan horse’ scandal. BBC News

⁸¹ Easton. 2014. ‘Trojan horse’ scandal. BBC News

⁸² 2014. ‘Trojan Horse’: Campaign to impose ‘faith-based ideology. BBC News

⁸³ 2014. ‘Trojan Horse’: Campaign to impose ‘faith-based ideology. BBC News

“extremism.”⁸⁴ As these stories and strong opinions seen in the newspaper reflect, indeed even how these news and opinion articles are phrased, diversity (whether cause for celebration or concern) is being played out in schools in manners that reflect the general confusion, fear, ignorance, and ambiguity or solid battle lines that characterizes the general society’s struggle with diversity and national identity. Britain is far from the only nation that is struggling with the definition of a national identity in a diverse world and the role of schools in mediating national identity and diverse demographics, particularly regarding religious diversity and Islam. ‘In Germany, the central challenges will remain the integration of Muslims and ensuring that Islam is placed on the same legal footing as other religious communities.’⁸⁵ Many regions of the world have seen conflict regarding how national identity and collective memory should be defined and disseminated via school curriculum, which has impacted both national and international policies as well as relations between nations or between groups within societies. These conflicts reflect the significant impact that history education can have on intra-group relations via the construction of individual, group and national identities in relation to encounters with history.

In post-Communist Romania for example, there have been a number of textbook changes, not all without their share of scandal. ‘After an abortive attempt to simply reintroduce a textbook from the pre-communist period, following minor revisions of the communist textbooks, there were two generations of new textbooks, one in 1992/1993 and one in the late 1990s. In the early 1990s there was only one textbook for each grade; after 1995 there was a shift towards alternative textbooks.’⁸⁶ Within these changes on the national level, ‘social and political

⁸⁴ Easton. 2014. ‘Trojan horse’ scandal. BBC News

⁸⁵ Ozcan, V. & Grimbacher, S. 2007. focus MIGRATION. Germany: Introduction. Federal Agency for Civic Education. Netzwerk Migration in Europa e.V. Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies. Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI). Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Germany.1509.0.html?&L=1>

⁸⁶ Murgescu, M. & Mihalache, C. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children’s Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA. p. 62

pressures on textbook authors and on the syllabi diminished after 1990, but did not disappear.⁸⁷ For example, in 1999 ‘a group of young historians from Cluj published a 12th-grade textbook in which they deconstructed several myths of Romanian history. Their book met with a furious reaction from public opinion, the media, historians and politicians.’⁸⁸ The textbook was banned from schools, even after revisions, and ‘served as a warning for publishers and textbook authors that history education was ideologically sensitive and that it was wiser to comply to the prevailing narrative of national history.’⁸⁹ The public furore, the resulting scandal ‘and the prohibition of the textbook, showed how strong taboos about historical knowledge and especially the teaching of history in school persist in Romanian society.’⁹⁰ As in Romania, in Greece ‘the role that fluctuating ethnic and nationalist ideological tides’ play an important role history teaching and the development of curricula, especially ‘related to the Turks and Ottoman Empire, the role of the Greek Orthodox Church in the formation of the Greek national identity and the relationship of the Greek Civil War with the state’s stance towards the Soviet Union.’⁹¹

This is far from simply a new or post-communist phenomenon. ‘One of the biggest controversies in teaching history in schools is what to include. Will it be the ethnocentric master narrative, in which one’s own people is conceptualized as brave, high-minded, and superior to others? Unfortunately, this is the content of history teaching in most cases.’⁹² For example, in Japan various enactments of public memory regarding WWII ‘and new school

⁸⁷ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 62

⁸⁸ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 62

⁸⁹ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 62-63

⁹⁰ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 63

⁹¹ Papoulia-Tzelepi, P. & Spinthourakis, J. 2007. History teaching and the educated citizen: the case of history teaching in the Greek gymnasium. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children’s Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA. p. 82

⁹² Papoulia-Tzelepi & Spinthourakis. 2007. History teaching and the educated citizen. p. 80

textbooks that intend to further “patriotic” education’ have significantly impacted both national and international politics. ‘Beyond the domestic consequences (e.g. an empowered and increasingly violent reactionary right), these memory issues have been a major cause for Japan’s strained relations with China and South Korea.’⁹³ Japan serves as only one example why ‘while societies continue to prefer to teach only their own version of history in schools, it is inconceivable that the nationalistic pattern will be replaced by a civic and more democratic paradigm.’⁹⁴ Within each of these examples, the history content that makes up history education is a direct reflection of the official stance on national identity. Therefore, the manners in which students encounter, interpret and make sense of these histories may have a significant impact on their identity formation, particularly when related to how they see themselves and others.

If a better understanding of how students encounter history and the ways in which these encounters are interpreted, made sense of and integrated into identity formation processes, then perhaps more can be done to interact with the official historiographies and curricula in a manner that more fully utilizes analytical processes, critical thinking skills, and historical understanding to break down, analyse, interpret and make sense of historical content rather than simply internalize or accept it as given. Since, for example, ‘ethnic hatreds are renewed in each generation by mythologies that are typically modern revisions of older stories with quite different messages,’⁹⁵ a better grasp of how histories are encountered, interpreted, understood and integrated into identities is important to international and group relations and politics. These issues have become increasingly significant as nations struggle to integrate the

⁹³ Langenbacher, E. 2010. Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations. In Langenbacher, E. & Shain, Y. (eds.). *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*. Georgetown University Press: Washington D.C. p. 16

⁹⁴ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 76

⁹⁵ Kaufman, S. 2001. *Modern Hatreds: the symbolic politics of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. p. 11

diversity evident in their society, maintain and create a sense of a national identity and also deal with the fear breed by terrorism, which in some minds seems to be synonymous with difference. Although ‘historians and education scholars know that the content of textbooks is only part of the picture, and that the reactions of teachers and pupils are more important in determining the effectiveness of history education,’⁹⁶ the literature has not often taken the perspectives of the pupils into consideration and has focused more on the messages integrated into official curricula as seen in textbooks for example. As a means of attempting to fill this gap in the literature, this research focuses on the reactions of the students as they discuss various encounters with history that they have experienced throughout their education. The German context is especially relevant to this research since the school under investigation in the case study is located in Northern Germany while also being rooted in the international sphere.

1.5 Research Focus: Germany

As a society, Germany has struggled with and debated the nature of collective memories, responsibility, national guilt, nostalgia, memorialization and education. The debate has not been limited to within the nation, as countless works have been produced that explore the nature of collective memory and identity, as well as explored the historical record. These debates, including those related to the German educational system and content of the curriculum, especially regarding the approach to and focus of Germany history, has carried on with various flare ups, since the end of the Second World War.

⁹⁶ Murgescu & Mihalache. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. p. 64

The educational sector continues to be a major area of concern, especially regarding an increasing diversity within schools. ‘One challenge will be to improve the educational opportunities available to immigrants and their children.’⁹⁷ Germany’s relationship with migration has changed dramatically just within a generation. ‘Germany was mainly a country of emigration in the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Since the 1950’s, however, Germany has become one of the most important European destinations for migrants.’⁹⁸ In a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, Germany was ranked only after the United States in terms of desirability for migrants, jumping from an 8th place ranking in 2009 to 2nd place.⁹⁹ ‘The number of permanent migrants to Germany, defined as those with the right to stay longer than one year, rose by an annual 400,000 or 38 percent in 2012, with migrants from other European countries the main driver, the study showed.’¹⁰⁰

The International Migration Outlook 2013 from the OECD highlights these drastic changes in migration flows, with Spain for example dropping from 920.5 immigrants in 2007 to 416.3 in 2011 while the opposite occurred in Germany, with 574.8 in 2007 and a jump to 841.7 in 2011.¹⁰¹ The number of migrants in Germany has continued to increase, with over one million migrants entering Germany in 2012 alone, bringing the total up to 7.6 million foreigners living in Germany.¹⁰² Although some reports make note that there has also been an increase in the number of migrants entering Germany as skilled workers, 27,000 in 2012

⁹⁷ Ozcan. & Grimbacher. 2007. focus MIGRATION. Germany: Introduction.

⁹⁸ Ozcan. & Grimbacher. 2007. focus MIGRATION. Germany: Introduction.

⁹⁹ Lauer, K. & Nienaber, M. May 20, 2014. Germany becomes world’s top migration spot after U.S.: OECD. Reuters. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/20/us-germany-oecd-migration-idUSBREA4J0QH20140520>

¹⁰⁰ 2014. Germany becomes world’s top migration spot after U.S.: OECD. Reuters.

¹⁰¹ OECD. June 14, 2013. Table A.1 Inflows of foreign population into OECD countries and the Russian Federation. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/>

¹⁰² Bruckner, G. July 3, 2014. Ausländerzahl in Deutschland 2013 auf Rekordniveau. Destatis Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2014/03/PD14_081_12521.html

versus 16,000 in 2009,¹⁰³ there is a marked difference in the levels of unemployment among native Germans versus those born in another country. For example, in 2011, the OECD reported that 5.6 percent of native German males were unemployed while the percentage of unemployed male foreigners was 9.7.¹⁰⁴ The levels of unemployment were even higher for the youth population as a whole, with 13.7 percent of youth aged 20-24 unemployed and not in school with an additional 3.7% of youth aged 15-19 also unemployed and not in school.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, the asylum applications in Germany during 2012 reached their highest rates since 1995, rising 40 percent in 2012 to 64,500, with most coming from one of Serbia, Afghanistan or Syria.¹⁰⁶ In 2013 a jump of 64 percent from the 2012 numbers set another record since the mid-1990's, with 127,023 asylum applications. 'The main countries of origin of asylum seekers were Serbia, Russia, Syria, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq' with the majority of those granted refugee status originating from Syria.¹⁰⁷ The data was released around the same time that a debate 'marked by a defensive fear'¹⁰⁸ was occurring in Germany over 'the rights of new EU migrants to claim low-income and long-term unemployment social welfare benefits known as Hartz IV,'¹⁰⁹ even as some stress that 'Germany, it is estimated, needs up to 1.5 million skilled workers in the coming years because of demographic developments,' such as an aging population.¹¹⁰ These statistics and

¹⁰³ January 15, 2014. Immigration to Germany at its highest rate in nearly two decades. Deutsche Welle: Interior Affairs. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/immigration-to-germany-at-its-highest-rate-in-nearly-two-decades/a-17363452>

¹⁰⁴ OECD (2013), "Country statistical profile: Germany", *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-germany_20752288-table-deu

¹⁰⁵ OECD (2013), "Country statistical profile: Germany", *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*.

¹⁰⁶ 2014. Immigration to Germany at its highest rate in nearly two decades. Deutsche Welle.

¹⁰⁷ January 10, 2014. Asylum applications to Germany reach a 14-year high. Deutsche Welle: Immigration. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/asylum-applications-to-germany-reach-a-14-year-high/a-17354845>

¹⁰⁸ Fraczek, J. January 3, 2014. Germany's fear of job seekers from new EU members. Deutsche Welle: Labor Market. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/germanys-fear-of-job-seekers-from-new-eu-members/a-17338848>

¹⁰⁹ Asylum applications to Germany reach a 14-year high. Deutsche Welle

¹¹⁰ Ulrich, K. January 9, 2014. Migrants needed in Germany to compensate for aging population. Deutsche Welle: Labor Market. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/migrants-needed-in-germany-to-compensate-for-aging-population/a-17350390>

news reports uphold the idea that ‘global conflicts are increasingly being played out in microcosm in Germany itself,’¹¹¹ including within German schools. With 627,995 foreign born students in German general education schools and an additional 206,769 in German vocational schools in 2012-2013,¹¹² it is clear that ‘the education system plays a major role in the debate on integration. The PISA study has shown that first and second-generation immigrant children are less successful in the German education system than their German classmates.’¹¹³ By choosing to focus on an international school located in Germany, insight into how elite students educated within an internationally minded environment may encounter, interpret and integrate history into their identities and related behaviours may prove useful for overcoming some of the inherent inequalities within the German educational system.

1.6 The Case Study & Research Structure

The theoretical foundation for this thesis is laid out in more detail within Chapter 2. By reviewing literature on identity formation and education, the theoretical chapter further explores the notions laid out above, including the potential factors that mitigate identity formation. These factors include the role of teachers, the influence of peers and family members, as well as the educational environment. In order to form a deeper understanding of the educational context(s) within which the students encountered history.

¹¹¹ Knipp, K. August 8, 2014. Opinion: ‘German jihadists should not be indulged.’ Deutsche Welle. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://dw.de/p/1Crpi>

¹¹² Destatis Statistisches Bundesamt. 2014. Schools of general education and vocational schools: foreign pupils by citizenship. Statistisches Bundesamt, Weisbaden. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from: <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/EducationResearchCulture/Schools/Tables/ForeignPupilsCitizenship.html>

¹¹³ Ozcan. & Grimbacher. 2007. focus MIGRATION. Germany.

Using an international school located within Germany was a conscious decision that reflected the theoretical background in such a way that allowed for the exploration of how students encountered history in a variety of ways. Many of the students attending the international school had been educated within public schools that are part of national educational systems, with the majority educated first in German public schools before attending the international school. Some students had additional experience in other national school settings through study abroad years where they attended national public schools in a number of nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Mexico. Others came to the international school from prior schools within their countries of birth. Still others hold more than one passport, citizenship or had parents from different national backgrounds. It was important for this research to focus on the international setting because it allowed for the exploration of how encounters with history may impact students in ways that may be more applicable to an increasingly diverse world. Furthermore, the location of the international school in Germany allowed for the interaction between national and international mind-sets and encounters with history to be explored. Additionally, the approach to history within Germany has been fraught with difficulty and does not reflect the general rule of a strong focus on nationalistic and patriotic narratives where the nation is shown in only a positive light. In fact, as demonstrated above, as a nation Germany's approach to its national identity and collective memory has been characterized as complex and often with a negative self-view.

As will be described in detail, the International School Bremen (ISB) is part of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), which oversees international schools throughout the world under its umbrella. One shared curricula and standardized assessments provides a common foundation across the private international schools that make up the IBO, from which flexibility within the curricular design allows for curricular choice on the school

and even classroom level. Instruction is provided in English and used as the common language which the linguistically and culturally diverse student and teacher population share. The international ethos of the school is not only found in the demographic diversity of the school but also guides the mission and vision of the organization as a whole and is reflected in the curricula. Situated both within and outside of regional, national and international contexts, the international school provides an interesting case within which to explore how student encounters with history impact identity formation.

Although the International School Bremen integrates grades K-12 under one mission and into one school building, the students participating in this study were limited to those in grades 10-12 at the time the research was conducted. The focus on the adolescents was due to the theory that ‘at no time in the lifespan is the urge to define oneself vis-à-vis the society at large as great as during adolescence.’¹¹⁴ As such, the adolescent participants are a natural group from which to study how identity is influenced by the historical narratives present in society that are passed down through history education via official curricula and textbooks. Since the students who were interviewed for this research had various national identities, both self-defined and legally given, as well as experience in both national and international educational settings, they served as a unique and relevant group from which to gain insight regarding the impact that encounters with history in various educational contexts have on identity formation. Including immigrant students into the sample, along with native born Germans who have chosen to study at the international school as well as some who also studied in other countries allows for the exploration of encounters with history across a diverse sample, with the goal that further insight will be gained. Since immigrant ‘experiences, both positive and negative, in our schools and communities can teach us a great deal about our national

¹¹⁴ Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. 2001. *Children of Immigration*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. p. 92

priorities, values, and goals,¹¹⁵ it was important to choose a context within which both international and national students were present. More details regarding the sample of participants, including their grade levels, ages, national identities and educational backgrounds can be found in Chapter 3 on the research methodology, as well as in a chart format located in the Appendix.

Chapter 3 covers the methodological approach and steps taken in the research, moving from the choice of the case study through the data collection phase. Details related to essential elements of sound qualitative research are expounded upon, including steps taken to ensure confidentiality and participation, sampling concerns and the interview process. The chapter also includes details on how the collected data was analyzed, by explaining the application of a tiered coding mechanism based on modified grounded theory. The multiple layers of data analysis inherent within modified grounded theory are explained and examples from the data are provided. Following the methodology chapter, the interview data is presented within the three data analysis chapters, with each chapter focusing on and discussing a specific theme that was found to be present across the sample. Extensive quotes from the interviews are used in order to reflect and stay true to the voices' of the participants. The three data chapters answer the research questions by specifically exploring how the students encounter history as well as the ways in which these encounters are understood and made sense of impact the students' identity formation.

Those students who chose to participate in the study were recommended by the school principal and the one history teacher employed at the school for the upper grade levels. The students were recommended based on the diversity of their experiences and were from three different grade levels. Student participants were interviewed individually in a quiet office

¹¹⁵ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 29

space within the administrative suite. As detailed in the methodology chapter, strict ethical procedures were in place to protect the confidentiality of the student participants throughout the time that the research was taken place and within the analysis and writing periods after. Students were also given the option to opt out of answering questions, having the interviews recorded or participating in the research if they felt uncomfortable or did not wish to answer. Additionally, they were provided with the option to opt out of the research at a later point in time, if they changed their minds about their participation after the interview was conducted and concluded.

The interviews were conducted with the belief that student voices ‘contain a sample of the genesis of nationalistic sentiments and representations, and reveal how a hegemonic social and cultural device – the school – contributes to craft, very early indeed, the cognitive and affective foundations of “imagined communities”’¹¹⁶ whether on the national, regional or transnational level. These voices are often missing from accounts and studies of history in schools, with focus tending to remain on curricula, textbooks, patriotic activities and other related criteria. Although important for the transmission of official historical narratives and national values, both of which are associated with national identity and ideas concerning citizenship, textbooks are not the only way in which students encounter history. Indeed, encounters with history can come from multiple and varied sources, with popular media, movies, news and politics to be a few. The focus on textbooks as the main source of the transmission of national values stems from the idea that they are the official source of national historical narratives and shed light on the identity of the nation from which they come. Although this may be the case, limiting the analysis of student encounters with history

¹¹⁶ Carretero. 2011. *Constructing Patriotism*. p. xxiii

to textbooks vastly narrows the scope of inquiry and much about encounters with history, both within and outside of the classroom, is lost.

More needs to be understood about not only how students encounter history within the classroom, but also how that history is interpreted, understood and mitigated. Students come to the classroom and approach the history they encounter through the official curricula and textbooks with a number of preformed thoughts, assumptions, and biases, as well as personal beliefs and values that make up their individual worldview. These conceptions are not only brought to bear in the classroom but also may influence how official curricula such as textbooks are encountered, interpreted and made sense of, particularly in the field of history. It is by exploring the encounters students have with history, described in their own words, that more insight on the phenomenon of how history impacts identity formation can be revealed. Although the sample is small, the data gathered is rich, detailed and heterogeneous, with a variety of experiences represented. The heterogeneity of the educational experiences students have had help answer the question of: *How do students encounter history?*, by recognizing that history education within the classroom can be influenced by various factors and experiences, both that already exist within the classroom environment and that the students bring into the classroom with them from external contexts. The patterns that emerged from the data can provide interesting insight into how encounters with history may shape students' identities in a variety of ways and answer the research questions: *To what extent do students exercise agency in the construction of their identities in relation to history? How is this agency exercised? What factors have a significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it relates to encounters with history?* The insights gleaned from the interviews not only answer the research questions but also help illuminate existing theories by providing additional details and understanding at what occurs on the individual level when students

encounter history as well as highlight the processes and structures in place at an international school that have positively influenced these encounters and their impact on identity.

Through a series of analyses based on modified grounded theory where a number of coding mechanisms were used, the interviews reveal patterns that may be applicable to other educational environments and contexts in a manner that can help students better navigate encounters with history, resulting in more positive outcomes in interactions with history and consequently, within the formation of identities. A number of contextual, social and personal factors influence identity formation within schools. A perceived sense of community and belonging as well as the explicit teaching and discussion of temporal and causal relationships within history are considered by the students to be significant factors in history education.

When these elements are found to be lacking, students often become disengaged and disenchanted with history, even resulting in lowered academic performance. On the other hand, when these elements exist and there is space dedicated to the development and exploration of identity through the recognition of personal opinions and worldviews, students become more engaged with history. This holds true on both the content level of specific historical events as well as for the subject as a whole. Significantly, the interviews reveal that students exercise considerable agency in their identity formation and encounters with history, particularly through the deployment of temporal tools that are utilized to help filter, revise and restructure the historical account they encounter in a manner that makes it relevant for the salient aspects of their identity. Furthermore, specific social factors such as teachers, peers and family members mitigate the identity formation process and influence the understanding of these encounters with history.

These processes, structures and the related perceptions of them by the students are described in Chapter 4, which explores the International School Bremen (ISB) within the context of the larger, International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Various aspects of the school

environment are included, including important overarching elements such as the mission and vision. Within the chapter, the context of the educational environment, the official curricula and the demographic make-up of the school as the case study are juxtaposed within the worldwide structure of the IBO as well as with student perspectives, so that the interconnections and discrepancies between the different levels can be clearly seen. By providing an overview of international schools and the mandated curriculum, as well as details about the International School Bremen itself, a more complete picture of the school under focus in the case study emerges. This foundation will allow for a fuller understanding of the data within the context of the specific case.

Beyond the social factors that mitigate encounters with history and subsequent identity formation, the interview data also reveals the level of agency that students exercise over their own identities and their encounters with history. Students are not simply empty vessels to be filled with information from others, even though the influence of teachers, peers and family members as well as the educational environment itself and official curricula are significant. Chapter 5 investigates the level of agency that students exercise over their encounters with history and how they shape their own interactions with, perceptions of and understanding of history as well as how this process influences their sense of self. By exploring the construction of the identity achieved by the individual, insights into the tools used in this process of enacting identities through encounters with history are revealed.

Since students learn about society ‘not only from official lessons, tests, and field trips, but also from the “hidden curriculum” related to cultural idioms and codes – lessons often learned with and from peers and friends.’¹¹⁷ Peers are an important element of identity formation because of their involvement both in and outside of the official curriculum and the

¹¹⁷ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 3

school context, but also because there is a strong social element to the identity formation process. ‘Relationships are critical to the process, and it is within schools that immigrant youth forge new friendships, create and solidify social networks, and begin to acquire the academic, linguistic and cultural knowledge that will sustain them throughout their journey.’¹¹⁸ Similarly, relationships and interactions with school personnel such as teachers as well as other school staff will allow students to ‘experiment with new identities and learn to calibrate their ambitions.’¹¹⁹ As a figure of authority, the teacher is an important agent of identity change via the transfer of both official and hidden curriculum and narratives. Thus, the teacher is an important element within the classroom environment that may have a significant impact on how students encounter and make sense of history. Additionally, familial dynamics and relationships may also carry over into the classroom in a variety of ways that impact identity formation, beyond the reproduction of educational attainment and social mobility, with a generational difference in perspective influencing how encounters with history are interpreted and understood.

The roles that the social elements of peers, teachers and families play in identity formation of students via encounters with history will be further explored in the data chapters, specifically Chapter 6. The hypothesis is that there is a social element to identity formation, with peers, teachers and families acting as mediating factors in identity formation through their reactions to and interactions with the encounters with history that the students experience. Since ‘the relationships they establish with peers, teachers, coaches and others will help shape their characters, open new opportunities, and set constraints to future pathways,’¹²⁰ in what way do these social factors mitigate encounters with history? How might the interaction between

¹¹⁸ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 3

¹¹⁹ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 3

¹²⁰ Suarez-Orozco et al. *Learning a New Land*. p. 3

peers, teachers and families in relation to history impact identity formation? How might classroom dynamics and experiences be influenced by these social elements?

The final chapter pulls the results of the data analysis and related discussion together in a summary format, as well as applies the lessons learned with suggestions for future research and relevant interventions, with the hope that ‘an enhanced understanding of the driving forces behind ethnic wars can lead to better ideas about how to avoid or stop them.’¹²¹ By better understanding how students encounter, interpret and make sense of history, as well as the factors that mitigate this process, this research hopes to provide insight that can be used to overcome some of the challenges within diverse societies. Since the case study focuses on a learning environment and educational context that is situated both within and outside of national and international forces, this research contributes to the existing literature by highlighting these processes within a diverse and somewhat elite setting that differs from much of the existing research undertaken in conflict or post-regime environs. Consequently, this research questions the notion that values and identities are simply transmitted through history education. Instead, this research focuses on the extent to which students have a sense of agency in the formation of their identities in relation to encounters with history as well as the processes through which they exercise this agency.

¹²¹ Kaufman. 2001. *Modern Hatreds*. p. 2

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Considerations

“In a word, history, as elsewhere the causes cannot be assumed. They are to be looked for...”

- Bloch¹²²

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is built upon the premise that individual agency is an important consideration in the process of meaning making through encounters with history within the framework of identity formation. The research questions help guide this thesis in a questioning of the theoretical notion that values are simply and wholly transmitted through history education, resulting in the internalization of them in a manner that creates identity change in a passive student audience. By giving voice to the students through qualitative interviews within an exploratory case study design, this research contributes to the existing literature by providing an empirical basis from which to test the theoretical assumption that individuals, particularly students, are passive receptors of socially constructed knowledge and values as handed down through history education.

Research has often focused on certain types of collectives, particularly those within violent or conflict ridden contexts or pasts, with traumatic memories at the forefront.¹²³ This work then begs the question of whether or not, and to what extent, the process of identity formation as theorized is applicable for groups who may also be a national minority in terms of the

¹²² Bloch, M. 1953. *The Historian's Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It*. Vintage Books. Random House: Toronto Canada. p. 197

¹²³ For example, see any of the wide ranging literature associated with collective memory, trauma and remembrance across various approaches, disciplines and geographical contexts, such as but certainly not limited to: Neal, A. 1998. *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century*. M.E. Sharpe, Inc.: NY.; Assmann. 2006. *On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory*.; Bohleber, W. 2007. Remembrance, trauma and collective memory: The battle for memory in psychoanalysis. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 88: 329–352.; Antze, P. & Lambek, M. (eds). 1996. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. Routledge: NY.; Pennebaker, J., Paez, D. & Rim, B. (eds.) 1997. *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: NJ.; Kansteiner, W. 2002. Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies. *History and Theory*, 41: 179–197.

educational context where they study but which may simultaneously be categorized as a more privileged case. The adolescents involved in this study were privileged to the extent that they are not part of a violent context nor are all national, international, ethnic or racial minorities. A significant number of the student population are local German students, yet they also do not fully represent national educational contexts because they are attending a private, international school in an independent state in northern Germany. Those who are immigrants do not fit the commonly held stereotype of belonging to a lower socioeconomic class since there is a significant tuition associated with the international school and they attend the school primarily because their parents made the international move due to a job opportunity. The primary language of instruction at the international school is English and most students have also studied, or are currently, studying in a country other than that of their birth, even if they had been born and raised in the local area. As a sample, though privileged in certain ways, also more accurately reflects the complex identities that are increasingly demonstrated and recognized within the literature on increasingly global societies.¹²⁴ In a related vein, the mission of the school specifically outlines globally inspired goals and related skills are both taught and assessed within the internationally focused environment. Exploring the processes involved in encountering and making meaning from history within an international, privileged and diverse environment that seeks to fulfil cosmopolitan ideals could provide important insight into not only how these processes work and their impact on identity formation within a non-conflict ridden context but also

By more fully understanding the experiences that these students have when encountering history as well as the subsequent impact on identities, improvements in teacher education, curricula, interpersonal interactions and policy could enact positive changes both within and outside of the classroom. Perhaps this understanding could even subvert and prevent some of

¹²⁴ Mazlish, B. 2006. *The New Global History*. Routledge: NY, NY

the violent atrocities that produced the growing literature on collective memory and identity within international relations. Since, ‘memories held by peoples, religious groups, states, aspiring nations and even individuals are always at the heart of the configuration of international affairs and largely inform international behaviour,’ the fields of international relations and history cannot ignore the experiences of the individuals that encounter and make sense of historical and political events, myths and narratives ‘because memories are mobilizing, myth-making tools, how memories are nurtured and preserved is of vital importance in generating and understanding policy.’¹²⁵ If more could be understood about the processes through which history is encountered, interpreted and understood, as well as the resulting impact on group and individual identities, it may also illuminate the variables through which political behaviour and the thought processes behind it is influenced. As an exploratory case study, the data within this research can shed light on the theoretical foundations through empirical means, thus contributing to the discussion with limited in scope but still important and insightful information that has hitherto been mostly ignored.

2.2 History, Identity & Education in Society

Since, ‘often people lack much information, strictly speaking, but they do have preferences and values,’ the type of information, the mode of delivery and the relevance of the content to already existing preferences and values are important aspects to consider because ‘values, bad as well as good, are maintained through social influences.’¹²⁶ Thus, ‘when people agree with majorities, it is often because of the information provided’¹²⁷ to them as well as the values which the information is seen to appeal to and uphold. Hence why the content of the

¹²⁵ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 11

¹²⁶ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 73

¹²⁷ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 31

historical narratives spread through official curricula can be so influential. These narratives are perceived as legitimate via the sense of authority provided to them via the official mode of being part of the sanctioned curricula and transmitted by the teacher as a perceived expert and thus an additional figure of authority. The belief that a nation's people can and should be re-educated and re-indoctrinated through history education is not a new phenomenon, nor is it completely without merit. Indeed, there are a number of examples throughout history where education was pinpointed as a mode of transmitting values and ideologies in line with various regimes.

2.2.1 *The German Case*

In focusing on the context within which the case study school is located, Germany has had its own experiences related to controversy and change in educational curricula, particularly where history is concerned. As a notorious example, the Nazis systematically utilized the Germany's educational system to spread official policies and perspectives via textbooks, curricula, the Hitler Youth and the construction of a historical narrative and the accompanying symbols that was in line with the Nazi party's view of the past and future of the Third Reich. 'Education and socialization in Nazi Germany were fundamental to the shaping and forging of national identity, as well as self-perception and the perception of 'others.''¹²⁸ Through support in academia and revised curricula as a mechanism, the spread of propaganda, misinformation and altered interpretations reflecting a surge in nationalism helped uphold and spread related Nazi ideology.¹²⁹ Although the Nazi regime used a multifaceted approach that involved propaganda in textbooks, youth groups, teacher recruitment and other methods in a very systematic and detailed manner,¹³⁰ the use of

¹²⁸ Pine, L. 2011. *Education in Nazi Germany*. Berg Publishers: UK. p 1.

¹²⁹ Hahn. 1998. *Education and Society in Germany*. p. 71-90

¹³⁰ Pine. 2011. *Education in Nazi Germany*. p 1.

education to influence national identity or political ideology in Germany is not unique to the Nazis.

Following the end of World War II, both the Allies and the Soviet Union were intent on re-educating the German people through revision of the educational curricula in a manner that was more in line with their own ideologies. For example, ‘all three Allied authorities had initial aims to restructure education along the lines of their own educational systems,’ with the shared primary goal ‘to prevent a resurgence of nationalism.’¹³¹ The interplay between education and politics was also of strong significance as ‘the ideological commitment to re-educate the Germans often conflicted with the necessity to maintain a functioning educational system in general.’¹³² With so many teachers and political leaders having been involved with the regime to some extent, it was believed that both the educational and political system would have essentially collapsed without integration of former Nazis.¹³³ As a result, even though the Allies first focused on re-educating the Germans in the hope of preventing further nationalism and violence, the general story told within political and educational circles placed blame squarely on the shoulders of Hitler and Nazi high level leadership in an attempt to quickly and efficiently rebuild Western German society in the face of a perceived threat from the Soviet Union in the east.¹³⁴ Indeed, in light of this new threat of Communism, Allied controlled Western Germany was considered to be of utmost importance as a barrier between Communism and the rest of Western Europe.¹³⁵ The Nuremburg Trials upheld and reflected

¹³¹ Levy, D. & Dierkes, J. 2002. Institutionalising the Past: shifting memories of nationhood in German education and immigration legislation. In Mueller, J.W. (ed.). *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 245

¹³² Levy. & Dierkes. 2002. Institutionalising the Past. p. 247

¹³³ Fulbrook. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. p. 103-142

¹³⁴ Fulbrook. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. p. 48-78

¹³⁵ Fulbrook. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*.

this approach, while various interpretations of history also quickly reflected this change in ideology.¹³⁶

Controversy over Germany history, memory and national identity has had and continues to have a significant impact on public and private debate,¹³⁷ as well as the manner in which educational curricula was structured. The 1968 social debates surrounding student protests sought to bring to light questions concerning the nation's past centred on the Holocaust as well as the public and private debate and acknowledgement that had plagued the generation who had survived the war.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the *Historikerstreit* or historian's debate of the 1980s 'escalated into a major dispute concerning National Socialism, the role of history and national identity, the political agenda of the Helmut Kohl government, and, at its basest level, the political motivation of the contenders.'¹³⁹ The debate was touched off over the establishment of the German Historical Museum, a national history museum in Berlin (as part of Western Germany), Ronald Reagan's planned visit to Bitburg in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of V-E (Victory in Europe) and Jurgen Habermas' (a prominent philosopher in the Federal Republic) critique 'that prestigious German historians were seeking to "relativize" the Final Solution as part of a new nationalist and conservative search for a usable past.'¹⁴⁰ Under consideration as part of the general debate was also disagreement on how future generations should be educated about Germany's past. 'A controversy less about the past itself than about how a nation confronted a brutal and shameful past'¹⁴¹ the *Historikerstreit* explored issues related to how to evaluate and contextualize Germany's recent past, as well as questions of agency and responsibility within the complex relationship

¹³⁶ Fulbrook. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. p. 48-78

¹³⁷ For example, see: Assmann, A. 2006. On the (In) Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory. *German Life and Letters*, 59(2), 187-200.

¹³⁸ Assmann. 2006. *Guilt and Suffering*.

¹³⁹ Maier. 1997. *Unmasterable past*. p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Maier. 1997. *Unmasterable past*. p. 2.

¹⁴¹ Maier. 1997. *Unmasterable past*. p. ix.

between national identity, history, collective memory and contemporary political and social society. The *Historikerstreit* revealed how interconnected the German past, present and future remain.

The importance of history within German society and education continues to be significant within contemporary discussions. For example, during the late 1990s, the heavy political and public discussions and controversy surrounding a project in the German Parliament Building (the Reichstag) highlights how history, migration and societal attitudes combine. During the citizenship law debate, artist Hans Haacke submitted a proposal for the project at the Reichstag ‘echoing the famous inscription on the front of the building – “To the German People” – Haacke called his project “To the Population.”’¹⁴² The project soon became the object of debates regarding German citizenship, identity and belonging as well as being seen within the context of and influenced by historical events and connotations of the word “Volk” or people. Since ‘Germans traditionally defined their nation by race and genealogy...German citizens were part of the Volk – a community that linked blood and citizenship.’¹⁴³ During the Nazi regime, the idea of citizenship and blood was celebrated and used to justify persecution of groups and individuals not seen as part of the German Volk, either because of ethnic background, physical characteristics, religion or political affiliation. The idea of the Volk ‘was further tarnished by the pervasive “Volkspolizei” [secret police] of the East German Communist dictatorship.’¹⁴⁴ As such, the meaning and symbolism infused into the word and its use was significant.

Despite this tarnished history linked to the word “Volk” and a particular idea of national identity and citizenship, Haacke’s proposal to use “Der Bevölkerung” [To the Population]

¹⁴² Facing History and Ourselves. 2008. *Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*. Facing History and Ourselves: Boston, MA. p. 22.

¹⁴³ Facing History and Ourselves. 2008. *Stories of Identity*. p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ Facing History and Ourselves. 2008. *Stories of Identity*. p. 22.

and include the many foreigners and immigrants living in Germany, sparked a controversy that ‘reflects just how sensitive the issue of German identity remains... The suggestion that Germany is a “land of immigration,” a notion strongly supported by the facts, still stirs widespread unease or anger.’¹⁴⁵ Partly because of history and partly due to uncertainty regarding the increasing diversity of the population, German identity remained a contested area. ‘Matthias Mansen, an artist who finds the inscription on the Reichstag disturbing’ suggested that Germans “‘have a rather twisted relationship to our identity, which makes these issues particularly explosive.’”¹⁴⁶ Passed by a 260 to 258 vote,¹⁴⁷ the project moved forward but not without causing yet another in a line of serious discussions over the role that history plays in collective memory and national identity development within German society.

In contemporary German state funded schools, the history curriculum does not support a positivist view or collective memory of history as often found in the public history curricula endorsed in other nations, but rather one that is plagued with a sense of lingering guilt and responsibility for the horrors of the Holocaust.¹⁴⁸ This could have a particular impact on notions of individual and national identity, particularly since ‘the local occasioning of narratives and their small stories (some of which are ethically and politically big stories) has to be seriously reckoned with. And as with social practices generally, such telling are versions, tied to a specific context, articulated to achieve particular purposes, and socially performative in character.’¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, since identity is a complex phenomenon consisting of multiple levels and group allegiances such as race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, gender, religion and social interests, it may pose difficult for students to

¹⁴⁵ Cohen, R. March 31, 2000. Berlin Journal; Poking Fun, Artfully, at a Heady German Word. *The New York Times*. Accessed on October 12, 2010 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/31/world/berlin-journal-poking-fun-artfully-at-a-heady-german-word.html?pagewanted=print>

¹⁴⁶ Cohen. 2000. Berlin Journal.

¹⁴⁷ Haacke, H. 2007. Spatiul Public Bucuresti. Retrieved from: www.spatial-public.ro/eng/Hans_Haacke/Hans_Haacke.html

¹⁴⁸ Fullbrook, M. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. Polity Press: Cambridge, UK.

¹⁴⁹ Stanley & Temple. 2008. Narrative methodologies. p. 279.

negotiate. This may be particularly true for those who might experience conflicting allegiances when encountering competing histories and contemporary realities.

As highlighted, both in historical and contemporary cases, the relationship between education, politics, ideology and identity in Germany remains a significant and highly contested area ‘as a variety of actors compete to generalise their views of national identity.’¹⁵⁰ Through an analysis of the perceptions and conceptualizations of the student participants within the international school under study, this research highlights the complex relationship between identity, history and education that remains significant. Yet, the complexity of this relationship is not confined Germany, as highlighted by controversies surrounding education found across the world, especially related to textbook content.

2.2.2 Textbooks

The case of history textbooks is particularly salient because ‘ever since the emergence of the modern school system and the implementation of compulsory education, textbooks have been seen as privileged media, enjoying more or less blanket coverage in their distribution, and thus ideal instruments of forming collective identities.’¹⁵¹ Thus, ‘history textbooks are usually seen as a key resource for shaping collective memories and fostering social cohesion.’¹⁵² Consequently, ‘in both authoritarian and democratic countries, history textbooks tend, strongly or moderately, to trace specific self-images and images of alleged “others” back into the past and to lend them specific validity, in specific cases to the point of constructing and legitimizing national superiority, collective victimhood, or hostility.’¹⁵³ Furthermore, ‘bearing in mind that school textbooks transport specific cultural, social and political codes aiming to

¹⁵⁰ Levy, & Dierkes. 2002. Institutionalising the Past. p. 247

¹⁵¹ Lassig, S. 2013. Introduction part 1: Post-conflict reconciliation and joint history textbooks projects. In Korostelina, K. & Lassig, S. (eds.). *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects*. Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution. Routledge: NY, NY. p. 1

¹⁵² Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1

¹⁵³ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1

come to terms with the complexity of the world and create a meaningful present and future for a given society, it becomes clear why they are such a relevant and often contested matter.¹⁵⁴ These codes are constructed, selective and may be found across media, political discourse and other mechanisms such as remembrance ceremonies. However, ‘what distinguishes textbooks from many other media and identity-building resources is, besides other aspects, the fact that the knowledge they convey is relatively persistent and moreover highly selective.’¹⁵⁵ However, this recognition must also take into consideration that ‘individuals are influenced by, and also act upon, the products of elites.’¹⁵⁶ As such, the agency of the individual, and the experiences that contribute, in the meaning making process need to be recognized.

Since the selection of material found in textbooks, as well as the manner in which it is conveyed ‘is in most countries authorized by the state and therefore often perceived either as particularly objective, truthful and relevant or, from the perspective of minority or victim groups striving for recognition, for instance, as an issue of fundamental distrust.’¹⁵⁷

Additionally, ‘countries that glorify past atrocities or justify aggression will convey signals that such methods are still permissible options in the present and future, thus contributing to international tensions.’¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, outside of the classroom or school yard, ‘policymakers invoke these tools from precedent to “legitimize their current dispositions and future plans.”’¹⁵⁹ As such, the same narratives, myths and symbols taught within the official school curricula are being distributed and reinforced throughout society in various ways.

Reflecting the importance of textbooks as a factor that contributes to the construction of

¹⁵⁴ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1

¹⁵⁵ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1

¹⁵⁶ Wineburg. 2001. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. p. 250

¹⁵⁷ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1

¹⁵⁸ Langenbacher. 2010. Collective Memory as a Factor. *Power and the Past*. p. 24

¹⁵⁹ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 6

collective memories and identities, ‘various studies have examined the potential of history teaching and textbooks to generated or perpetuate conflicts, as well as their potential to inspire peace and empathy.’¹⁶⁰

As an example of this interest in and the process of the indoctrination of young people via the authority of official school texts and curricula, “the content of Saudi textbooks came under particular scrutiny in the U.S. after 9/11, as part of a broader inquiry into Saudi charities and terror financiers.”¹⁶¹ Michael Posner, who was the director of the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) at the time a study on incitement in Saudi Arabian textbooks was commissioned stated that messages integrated into school curricula via textbooks are “a security interest” because “when you have schools or texts or the combination that are essentially reinforcing the worst stereotypes and promoting this vitriolic approach, you’re actually radicalizing young people for the next generation.”¹⁶² Yet, despite these strong words and political rhetoric in this area, Saudi Arabia was not held accountable when a 2008 deadline for making changes to improve the textbook content was missed, nor was a study exploring any intolerant material remaining in the textbooks or the impact of them ever published, even though a similar Israeli-Palestinian study was conducted and released.¹⁶³ Conjecture regarding the decision not to release the report or to hold the Saudi Arabian government accountable for making changes to the textbooks centers on ‘Saudi Arabia’s substantial leverage over Arab politics and global oil markets.’¹⁶⁴ As such, ‘the Secretary of State’s office faces enormous pressure to elicit Saudi cooperation on the most urgent regional crisis of the day. Often this comes at the expense of paying sufficient

¹⁶⁰ Lassig, 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 2

¹⁶¹ Weinberg, D. 2014. *Textbook Diplomacy: Why the State Department Shelved a Study on Incitement in Saudi Education Materials*. Foundation for Defense of Democracies Press: Washington, D.C. p. 3

¹⁶² Weinberg, 2014. *Textbook Diplomacy*. FDD Press. p. 2

¹⁶³ Weinberg, 2014. *Textbook Diplomacy*. FDD Press.

¹⁶⁴ Weinberg, 2014. *Textbook Diplomacy*. FDD Press. p. 11

attention to long-term problems such as indoctrination.’¹⁶⁵ The Saudi Arabian textbook example highlights the significance of educational environments both on the identity formation of youth through encounters with history as well as the broader impact on international relations.

A dynamic combination of political factors, structural shifts in regional power and the emergence of discourse centred around historical myths, perceptions and beliefs as well as the rising impact of the discourse on policy formation, has also impacted countries in East Asia. For example, the intention to ‘further “patriotic” education’ via school textbooks in Japan has been one of the history induced ‘cause for Japan’s strained relations with China and South Korea.’¹⁶⁶ This and other similar examples have ‘stoked a firestorm of mutual recrimination and antagonism over the past that shows few signs of abating. As a result, territorial and trade disputes that under ordinary circumstances should be manageable are becoming more volatile.’¹⁶⁷ Internal debates can quickly become similarly inflamed due to the power of the same factors. For example, in the United States and Canada, the attempted creation of national education standards and core curricula have resulted in significant national debates within the political and social arenas, with not only political parties becoming involved but interest groups, minority groups and various individuals.¹⁶⁸

These examples spanning the Middle East, East Asia and North America show that the need for educational reform and teaching youth to reject intolerance and violence should not be

¹⁶⁵ Weinberg, 2014. Textbook Diplomacy. FDD Press. p. 11

¹⁶⁶ Langenbacher, E. 2010. Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations. *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*. Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C. USA. p. 16

¹⁶⁷ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 10

¹⁶⁸ For example, see: Nash, G., Crabtree, C. & Dunn, R. 2000. *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*. Vintage Books.; Donald, D.T. 2009. The curricular problem of indigenism: colonial frontier logics, teacher resistances and the acknowledgement of ethical space. In Nahachewsky, J. & Johnston, I. (Eds.) *Beyond ‘Presentism’ Re-Imagining the Historical, Personal, and Social Places of Curriculum*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands.

limited to key locations that are politically motivated and determined but should be extended across the globe. ‘There are ideational-cultural dynamics at play that are causing tensions over history to emerge in exacerbated form,’¹⁶⁹ with significant impacts on diplomatic, political and even economic ties between nations. Indeed, ‘on a global level, there is the emergence of a still-inchoate but nonetheless powerful international discourse pertaining to historical justice issues that legitimize claims for the rectification of past wrongs and issuing challenges to the way other countries represent history in a way that would have been difficult to do in an earlier era.’¹⁷⁰ These and other such cases around the globe highlight the immense and increasing power that the past, including specific interpretations, perceptions and understanding of history, can hold over current societies.

Throughout the debate regarding textbooks and the transmission of values, the focus often remains on the content of the textbooks, including the explicit and implicit messaging. Within these and other examples, an underlying assumption is that ‘textbooks offer more substance for the analysis of collective memories in that they spell out national histories in far greater detail’¹⁷¹ than curricula. Yet, this assumes that textbooks are still the major source of knowledge and teaching tool within the classroom as well as that what is in the textbook is what is actually taught. Furthermore, there is the assumption that students are inactive participants in the construction and interpretation of these collective memories as well as the integration of them into identities. As such, ‘the reluctance with which many students use textbooks and the limited impact such “old media” might actually have on identity formation for today’s adolescents,’¹⁷² as well as the use and impact of new technologies and teaching strategies, should also be taken into consideration when weighing new research avenues.

¹⁶⁹ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 10

¹⁷⁰ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 10

¹⁷¹ Levy & Dierkes. 2002. Institutionalising the Past. p. 246

¹⁷² Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 1-2

Thus, this research takes a step beyond the traditional focus on textbooks to explore the encounters students have with history within educational contexts. By using this broader approach, the variety of manners in which students encounter, interpret and understand history within educational settings can be better scrutinized since there are no limitations or assumptions that students only encounter history through textbooks. Additionally, the focus on students attending a private, international school in Western Europe goes beyond the sometimes patronizing and even dangerous assumption that only students in certain locations need to learn to be less intolerant and taught to look beyond, critically analyse and deconstruct restrictive narratives found throughout encounters with history, whether within the pages of a textbook or via other mechanisms.

Yet, although collective memories, textbooks and manipulation by elites are part of the process of identity formation in relation to encounters with history but do not tell the whole story. ‘Despite the fact that it is difficult to find a country or region where memory and related concerns such as working through a traumatic past and bringing perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice have not come to the fore,’¹⁷³ the everyday experiences and encounters with history, as well as the impact that these encounters have on identities, has not been explored to the same extent, particularly when outside of conflict areas. For example, it can be ‘argued that the traditional, simplified view of international actors (states, elites, governments) has to add other networks of influence that may not map perfectly onto the old models.’¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the multitude of research on the role that textbooks and history education play in perpetuating conflict or reconciliation among nations has demonstrated ‘that reconciliation does not work merely as a diplomatic undertaking and top-down process, but demands bottom-up initiatives as well.’¹⁷⁵ As such, the perspectives and beliefs of those

¹⁷³ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 1

¹⁷⁴ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 2

¹⁷⁵ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 2

at the micro-level such as individual actors are just as important to consider as larger national and transnational political organizations.

In keeping with the breaking of the theoretical and practical limitations that focusing solely on textbooks as the solitary purveyors of history, collective memory can and should also be expanded to be seen as establishing ‘a social framework through which nationally conscious individuals can organize their history.’¹⁷⁶ As such, it is not just about the collective or meta-level of a group or nation, but also the recognition of the agency of individuals over their own histories, even as ‘this type of memory influences, but also sometimes conflicts with, individual memories.’¹⁷⁷ Thus, it is important to solicit information about the everyday lived experiences and encounters that individuals have with history.

Although much work has been done on historical narratives, myths and symbols in textbooks in and across various nations, there is little work on how students, especially in non-conflict stricken settings, encounter, interpret and make sense of those official messages, nor how identities may be impacted. Furthermore, ‘while it has become commonplace to stress the imaginary quality of the nation, tradition, and implicitly, memory, that is their sheer “constructedness,” just *how* these imaginations and constructions come to have real political consequences is far from obvious.’¹⁷⁸ Research in this area must look beyond the confines of conflict or post-conflict areas if a more complete understanding of these mechanisms is to be gained and eventually applied to policy. The experiences of students in relatively elite contexts such as the international schools that already claim to teach skills and perspectives lauded in today’s society, such as cultural competence, international history and intercultural

¹⁷⁶ Mueller, J.W. (ed.). 2002. Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 3

¹⁷⁷ Mueller. 2002. Introduction. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*. p. 3

¹⁷⁸ Mueller. 2002. Introduction. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*. p. 2

communication is an understudied research area. This dissertation seeks to bring the voices, opinions and everyday experiences of students who attend an international school to the forefront of the debate, in order to provide an additional perspective to the current dialogues and expand the discussion outside of conflict ridden contexts in the pursuit of a better understanding of *how* everyday encounters with history impact the identity formation of educated youth, with the idea that this may go some way forward in helping to explain political behaviour and encourage positive political action rather than violence.

2.3 Achieved and Ascribed Identities in Encounters with History

2.3.1 Overview

History does not come to the world pre-composed but rather is created through interpretation of surviving forms of evidence and is ‘necessarily selective because historians must choose the most relevant evidence in order to make sense of some part of the past.’¹⁷⁹ Although history is ‘based on carefully gathered evidence... historians must weave facts into plausible explanations of the human experience.’¹⁸⁰ In order to be plausible, the explanation must be in a format that reflects and makes sense of the experience or encounter because ‘the meaning that experience has for people cannot be understood if people are considered to be isolated individuals. Instead one must study how social, cultural, and relational contexts play a central role in the meaningfulness of experience.’¹⁸¹

This research takes ‘into consideration that narratives, symbols and cultural codes to be found in textbooks are repeatedly challenged and recoded by teachers and their biographical

¹⁷⁹Nash, G., Crabtree, C. & Dunn, R. 2000. *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*. Vintage Books. p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ Nash et al. 2000. *History on Trial*. p. 9.

¹⁸¹ Wortham. 2001. *Narratives in action*. p. xii.

experiences, by family memories, peer groups and by highly diverse influences from society and media.¹⁸² As such, social influences on identity formation and encounters with history are important to consider. ‘Each individual composes a memory which, as Halbwachs has shown, is (a) socially mediated and (b) relates to a group. Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others. These “others,” however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past.’¹⁸³ As such, history and identities ‘are not fixed and static but subject to change through social practices. This means that speakers’ identities can be continually reconstructed and may be redefined through discourse.’¹⁸⁴ Therefore, there is a social element that is inherent within the construction and interpretation of both history and identity.

Ascribed identity is ‘imposed by co-ethnics (you are a member of our group) or by members of the dominant culture (you are a member of that group).’¹⁸⁵ Both aspects of ascribed identity are powerful determinants of not only one’s self-concept but also the ways in which one feels about this self-concept (i.e. affective), how one may behave (i.e. behavioural), and the manner in which one thinks (i.e. cognitive/perceptual). There is a ‘distinction between the “me” that is heard and the “I” that is seen, expressing a distinction between inside (the personal) and outside (related to social, historical, and cultural factors.).’¹⁸⁶ Often these factors are based on constructed categories that especially influence ascribed identities. The manner in which individuals or groups are characterized based on categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status and other demographic factors are socially

¹⁸² Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 4

¹⁸³ Assman, J. & Czaplicka, J. 1995. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* (65). p. 127

¹⁸⁴ Fuller. 2012. *Bilingual Pre-Teens*. p. 7

¹⁸⁵ Suarez-Orozco. 2003. Formulating identity. p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ Johnston & Tupper. 2009. Chronotope of School. p. 20.

constructed and influenced by the narratives that permeate and surround those categories, whether positive or negative.

Hobden & Hobson argue that employing historical sociology to the field of international relations would ‘reveal the present as a malleable construct which is embedded in a historical context, thereby serving to unearth the processes of temporal continuity and discontinuity with previous social practices.’¹⁸⁷ While the temporal continuity reflects the social connection to and influence of it on the construction of historical interpretation, temporal discontinuity reveals the significant role that agency also plays in the process. The important influence that agency has over the construction and interpretation of history holds true both on the level of the historian and for the individual audience member.

Since history can be described as ‘a narrative representation of past reality that specifically recognizes the sequential and temporal relationships that exist in and between ‘the real’, ‘the story’ and ‘its telling’’,¹⁸⁸ narratives are one form of representation and distribution of history, through which an audience then encounters the constructed history, interprets and reimagines it in ways that are relevant to their own experiences and understandings. This definition places the historian in the active role of narrative construction, instilling them with a significant level of agency over the direction, content and form of the narrative. As such, just as historians have existed in most societies in some form, so too has a struggle over the definition of historical knowledge, what information is passed along and its relationship to identity and self-definition.¹⁸⁹ Due to the ideological and methodological approaches that agency affords a historian, the narrative’s impact is felt far beyond simply the resulting historical narrative itself. Groups, even on the meta level of a nation, can restructure the

¹⁸⁷ Hobden & Hobson. *Historical Sociology of International Relations*. p. 7

¹⁸⁸ Munslow, A. 2007. *Narrative and history*. As part of MacRaild, D. (Series Ed.) *Theory and History*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, USA. p. 17.

¹⁸⁹ White. 1973. *Metahistory*.

accepted history and collective memory by mediating memories through public history, documentaries and films, popular history books, museums, memorials and truth commissions. Through these and other constructs, ‘citizens of a nation come together in a communal activity of telling and listening to stories of one another; and through such a process the stories of individuals become transformed into threads of a new national narrative.’¹⁹⁰ Therefore, the stories of individuals cannot be discounted or solely subsumed into the idea of a social group but must also be recognized as playing a significant role in the process of identity and meaning making through encounters with history.

On the intra-personal level where identity is formed through the agency of the individual, achieved identity is defined as ‘the extent to which an individual achieves a sense of belonging’ where one can say, “I am a member of this group.”¹⁹¹ Since identity is fluid and depends on contextual factors such as historical, social and cultural influences, the extent that an individual feels part of a particular group may change over time. Also, the groups that one achieves a sense of belonging to may also change given personal preferences. ‘In this continuous self-fashioning, identities are hard-won standpoints that, however dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. They are possibilities for mediating agency.’¹⁹² Thus, it is important to recognize that individuals can also, to a point, choose which groups that they want to be a part of and where they feel that they belong. However, even if one feels that they belong to a particular group, that group may not perceive the individual as fitting in, which is where ascribed identity becomes significant. Additionally, ‘the interaction between social identity as a perceiver factor implicating different aspects of the self (or different social selves) and social

¹⁹⁰ Andrews, M. 2003. Grand national narratives and the project of truth commissions: a comparative analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks. Vol. 25 p. 45-46.

¹⁹¹ Suarez-Orozco. 2003. Formulating identity. p. 4.

¹⁹² Holland et al. 1998. *Identity and Agency*. p. 4.

contextual factors that either enhance or diminish the meaningfulness of personal as well as social identities' needs to be taken into consideration, which is where ascribed identities are important.¹⁹³

The recognition of this process of the impact that both achieved and ascribed identities have on the meaning gleaned from encounters with history would 'denaturalise the present and reveal that it emerged not in accordance with 'natural' human impulses but rather through processes of power, identity/social exclusion and norms' by revealing that 'the present is constituted by transformative processes that continuously reconstitute present institutions and practices.'¹⁹⁴ As such, not only are identities constructed and dynamic, but so too are not only institutions and practices within which history is encountered. 'In defining our identity, in understanding who we are and in bringing some kind of theory of social action and interaction (a theory about what the world is and how all of its component parts mesh together) it is our perceptions of the past that matter, not the events of the past themselves.'¹⁹⁵ Thus, how history is perceived or wished to be perceived belies specific values that often become a part of nationally controlled history curriculum and favours a particular viewpoint, mode of thought and perspective of reality. Thus, 'knowledge is never "point-of-viewless."¹⁹⁶ It is how this point of view, inherently within the curricula itself, imposed by others and also created through individual agency, which makes history education so important to identity formation. Histories are thus dynamic and continually constructed by historians, politicians, collectives and individuals.

¹⁹³ Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. 2001. Self and Social Identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 53. p. 163.

¹⁹⁴ Hobden & Hobson. *Historical Sociology of International Relations*. p. 7

¹⁹⁵ Daddow. 2011. *New Labour*. p. 164.

¹⁹⁶ Bruner, J. 1991. *Learning Identity*. p.3.

History does not ‘just re-tell stories about the past; it is itself a storied form of knowledge’¹⁹⁷ which allows it to be ‘as malleable as we wish it to be when we historicize it.’¹⁹⁸ This approach allows for a much more flexible view of international institutions, political behaviors, group interactions as well as large scale political actors and organizations. ‘This explains why interpretations of history hold a fundamental place in discourses on the nation: they can be used to support almost any point we wish to make about contemporary political challenges.’¹⁹⁹ In this manner, history is always intertwined with ‘a question of what is important for whom,’²⁰⁰ which is determined by and impacts the audience’s ‘distinctive points of reference, rhetorical conventions, linguistic codes and ways of seeing the world.’²⁰¹ This process not only recognizes the influence of the individual but is also ‘indicative of the constructed nature of political debate, reminding us that politics, economics and history have pasts that need interrogating if one is to understand the origins and development of competing ideologies and modes of accessing and describing world affairs.’²⁰² The ability to ascertain these influences while also recognizing and exercising individual agency would allow one to better understand the various forces at work within the construction of histories, the encounters with them and their resulting impact on identities and political behaviours.

Within the context of history education, this approach permits the understanding that even though textbooks and official curricula are ‘important, privileged and authorized agents of meaning, knowing, however, that learners do not necessarily give priority to textbook interpretations.’²⁰³ Thus, it is important to recognize that ‘neither images of the “enemy” nor empathic perceptions of the “other” emerge and grow only within the state-influenced walls

¹⁹⁷ Munslow. 2007. *Narrative and History*. p. 17.

¹⁹⁸ Daddow. 2011. *New Labour*. p. 191.

¹⁹⁹ Daddow. 2011. *New Labour*. p. 191.

²⁰⁰ Maier, C. 1997. *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, USA p. 13.

²⁰¹ Daddow. 2006. *Euroscepticism*. p. 70.

²⁰² Daddow, O. 2006. *Euroscepticism*. p. 70.

²⁰³ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 4

of the school, or in state-approved, didactically structured media such as the textbook. Rather, they flourish, wilt or become interwoven – each in its own specific manner and with varying levels of force – in almost all areas accommodating “lifeworlds.”²⁰⁴ In this manner, ‘human beings through what they learn are able to think about that reality’²⁰⁵ that is simultaneously constructed and lived. This research builds upon the idea that students learn from and integrate aspects of history into their lives and identities via various encounters beyond the confines of textbooks, curricula or even the confines of the classroom walls. It also takes into consideration that regardless of ‘ethnic, gender, race and class divisions, identities never arrive in persons or in their immediate social milieu already formed.’²⁰⁶ By interviewing students about their encounters with history and exploring the factors that mitigate the perceptions, interpretations and understandings of those encounters, as well as the context within which encounters occur or the content of the encounters themselves, this research elaborates on the premises laid by constructivist and collective memory theorists, as well as textbook and identity research to form a fuller understanding of the processes and contexts through which students encounter history and how these encounters impact identity formation.

Due to the manner in which achieved and ascribed identities influence each other through individual agency and social factors, ‘rather than trying to decide whether the individual self or the collective self is more important...a more fruitful approach is to specify the conditions under which one is likely to take precedence over the other and with what effect.’²⁰⁷ The following sections will look at each ascribed and achieved identities as experienced and constructed through encounters with history, while the research that follows will highlight

²⁰⁴ Lassig. 2013. Introduction part 1. *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*. p. 4

²⁰⁵ Blumer. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 45

²⁰⁶ Holland et al. 1998. *Identity and Agency*. p. vii.

²⁰⁷ Ellemers et al. 2001. *Self and Social Identity*. p. 163

them separately as well as the ways in which they interact and overlap within the context of encountering history in a diverse educational setting. As such, in line with the main focus of this thesis, the sections below lay the foundation for addressing the research questions: *To what extent do students exercise their agency in the construction of their identity in relation to history? How is this agency exercised? What factors have a significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it relates to encounters with history?*

2.3.2 The Social Construction of Identity through History

Although the foundation has already been laid for the study of how the present and past are constructed and reconstructed in relation to identities, much of the literature remains focused on the more traditional macro level of international organizations, ethnic groups, nations and governments, disregarding the impact and significance that these processes may have on individual actors and their subsequent influence over social and political change movements. The exceptions to this rule would be the extensive work done on the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes, particularly related to genocide, ethnic cleansing, inter-ethnic group conflict, persecution of religious minorities, and so forth. As previously stated, much of that research has focused on the creation of collective memory and identity via collective suffering and traumatic events. Often research is still focused on the group level, while some work does investigate the experiences of families, particularly the intergenerational memory of suffering.²⁰⁸ Additionally, there is some work on perpetrators or the children of

²⁰⁸ For example, see: Danieli, Y. 1998. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. The Plenum Series on Stress and Coping. Springer.; Connolly, A. 2011. Healing the wounds of our fathers: intergenerational trauma, memory, symbolization and narrative. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*(56):5. p. 607-626.; Assmann, 2006. On the (In)Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in Germany Memory; Cohen-Pfister, L. & Vienroeder-Skinner, D. 2006. *Victims and Perpetrators: 1933-1945: (Re)Presenting the Past in Post-unification Culture*. Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co: Berlin.

perpetrators, for example the detailed exploration of the children of prominent Nazi leaders.²⁰⁹

Yet, although important for the further understanding of how individuals and groups handle the trauma of violent events, the creation and passing down of collective memories related to those events and the memorialization of the constructed memories via ceremonies of remembrance, the everyday experiences of the majority of people is still a blank spot in the extensive map of literature related to collective memory and national memory, at least within the international relations field. Even within the international education field, a similarly broad approach is also common. Although ‘change in identity categories is itself provoked by and responsive to changes in institutional structure and social practice,’ for example in this research sample reflected by switching from the German school system environment to the international school setting, ‘it is only when institutional changes are accompanied by changing self-perceptions that new institutions begin to create new dynamics of interaction; otherwise new institutions and practices become assimilated within older meanings and oppositions.’²¹⁰ As will be demonstrated in the data chapters, this held true for the students through and due to their educational experiences, even when changing school systems or geographic location, without a change in self-perception, identity was modified only in so far as already established ideas allowed. This shows that regardless of the plethora of theory existing on the macro level of institutions research on the everyday experiences of individuals, even within a small exploratory study, lends additional insight into the discussion through empirically based information that better reflects these experiences and encounters. The use of the international school as a conscious sample choice was based on the

²⁰⁹ Lebert, S. & Lebart, N. 2002. *My Father's Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders: an Intimate History of Damage and Denial*. Back Bay Books: Little, Brown and Company: Boston, MA.

²¹⁰ Todd, J. 2005. Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change. *Theory and Society*: 34. p. 429 & 430. Retrieved on March 17, 2014 from JSTOR

assumption that the international school environment may act as an important element in change found in identity and self-perception, as a result of broader encounters with history, resulting in new dynamics of interacting with peers, teachers and even the world around them through a change in perception and conceptualization of history. This shift in identity and the development of new dynamics of interaction and perception ‘may be key elements in the explanation of change in political and social behavior.’²¹¹ As such, ‘the key political question in such cases is whether and when identity change will follow and how it may be prompted.’²¹² Described in the introductory chapter, the importance of identifying the factors involved in such change and the resulting potential relationship between identity change and political behavior is of utmost importance in a world where educated youth are increasingly acting out political and identity related angst through violent means. This exploratory study seeks to shed light on these factors that exert significant influence over identity formation via encounters with history and thus extend the academic discussion and provide a foundation for future research on a larger scale that can then further investigate the relationship between identity, history and political behaviors.

If the institutional structures through which youth engage with the most are not accepting of nor encourage an inclusive environment and space for identity, they may be set adrift in a sea of loneliness and will search for a place to belong until it is found, even if only on the fringes of society and within a restrictive subculture. Gangs and terrorist groups act similarly in using group polarization and identity to create an environment within which dissent is stifled, internal disagreement is non-existent, available information is restricted and internal solidarity is key.²¹³ Group approval related to identity and belonging are essential to the structure, mindset and related actions of the group. Indeed, ‘terrorist acts themselves are

²¹¹ Todd. 2005. Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change. p. 430

²¹² Todd. 2005. Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change. p. 430

²¹³ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 116

motivated by these forces and incentives' through the imposition of 'psychological pressures to accelerate the movement in extreme directions.'²¹⁴ Beyond gangs and terrorist groups, political and societal movements occur based on similar principles, especially where violence and extreme views are concerned. Often, a link to history plays a role in the construction of these groups and the ideologies relevant to them.

As social identity theory argues, group categorizations are powerful factors in identity and behaviour, which can act as significant indicators of inter-group relations and conflicts,²¹⁵ a concern for and interest of international relations. Indeed, social identity theory hypothesizes that 'merely being labelled as a member of a group should evoke behaviour that favours one's own group members and discriminates against members of other groups, given that persons accept the group categorization.'²¹⁶ As such, both the group identities ascribed to individuals, as well as the agency individuals exercise in developing achieved identities by accepting and internalizing or rejecting the identities ascribed to them, are important elements of identity formation.

Results from experimental studies have unearthed interesting insights into related patterns of identity formation that bear significance for the fields of international relations and history.

For example, it has been shown that certain social scripts and perceived normative social behaviours can have an impact on group identities and self-esteem, particularly for in-groups, those groups that an individual belongs to and identifies with.²¹⁷ When conducting social psychological experiments that test how individuals who are randomly assigned to a group

²¹⁴ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 116

²¹⁵ For example, see: Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. 1979. An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In Austin, W. & Worchel, S. (eds.). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Nelson-Hall Series in Psychology. Burnham Inc. p. 33-47.

²¹⁶ Hertel, G. & Kerr, N. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism: The Impact of Normative Scripts in the Minimal Group Paradigm. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*: 37. Academic Press. p. 316

²¹⁷ For example, see: Turner, J.; Brown, R. & Tajfel, H. 1979. Social comparison and group interest in ingroup favoritism. *European Journal of Social Psychology* (9). p. 187-204.

distribute resources, the influence of group memberships, identities and social scripts can be highlighted.²¹⁸ ‘Priming of *loyalty* produced significantly more in-group favouritism than priming of *equality*. Moreover, the analyses of perceived expectations of in-group members suggests that these priming effect were at least partially mediated by the perceived in-group norms.’²¹⁹ Furthermore group identities and memberships, as well as the social scripts that help solidify them, are emotionally laden.

In the same experiments referenced above, ‘in-group favouritism was associated with enhanced self-esteem in the loyalty priming condition, but with decreased self-esteem when participants were primed with equality.’²²⁰ Additionally, ‘loyalty priming produced higher identification scores than equality priming,’ which is consistent with the theory that ‘expression of in-group identification might be part of a broader behavior script prescribing group-supporting activities.’²²¹ As such, the ‘results indicate that both in-group identification and in-group favouritism might be a consequence of available social norms or scripts.’²²²

When these social norms or scripts are restrictive or imbedded with stereotypes and negative information about other groups, in-group favouritism can be increased and may contribute to a general perception that the in-group is better than the out-groups, leading to potential discrimination and conflict. Even when the available scripts are based off of ideas of equality, the group does not necessarily become more inclusive in its thinking because group loyalty is more closely identified with. These results clearly have implications for history education and encounters with history that are formed, at least in part, through socially constructed

²¹⁸ Mazlish, B. 2006. *The New Global History*. Routledge: NY, NY

²¹⁹ Hertel. & Kerr. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism. p. 321

²²⁰ Hertel. & Kerr. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism. p. 321

²²¹ Hertel. & Kerr. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism. p. 321

²²² Hertel. & Kerr. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism. p. 321

narratives infused with symbols designed to induce loyalty as well as group and social cohesion.

History often reflects these social norms and scripts and thus can impact group memberships and identities, especially when invoking highly emotional content. Within the context of encounters with history, the concepts of loss, trauma, mourning, humiliation, pride, revenge and other emotionally laden ideas, are integrated into the symbols, myths and narratives that nations and groups tell about themselves and others.²²³ This includes the idea of chosen trauma, which is defined as ‘powerful feelings of pride, entitlement, and revenge that are transmitted via culturally mediated forms from one generation to the next.’²²⁴ When these scripts are focused on loyalty of only one specific group to the detriment of other groups such as minorities, the potential for inter-group conflict is thought to increase since the norms found in these scripts invoke in-group favouritism. In this manner, history and ‘memory has power...only when people come together in political life and transform representations of the past into matters of urgent importance in the present.’²²⁵ As such, historical ‘memories can assign to an actor a historical position of villain, victim, or liberator, allowing for the framing of international issues and negotiations.’²²⁶ Thus, history and identities are intertwined, with interactions with these symbols potentially leading to violence as groups attempt to right the perceived wrongs thought to be the cause of current problems through conflict.

This process of group identity formation via history also highlights the power of ascribed identities, or the characteristics assigned to groups or individuals based on perceived groups.

With the plethora of group identities that one person can belong to or be perceived of

²²³ Kaufman. 2001. *Modern Hatreds*.

²²⁴ Robben, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. (eds.). *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*. Publications for the Society of Psychological Anthropology. p.156

²²⁵ Assmann, A. & Shortt, L. (eds.). 2011. *Memory and Political Change*. p. xi

²²⁶ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 11

belonging to, perhaps more useful than attempting to explore and categorize the numerous and diverse group identities, would be to collapse these categories into the concept of ascribed identity. This allows for the exploration of the process of ascription and how encounters with history may influence and inform the process as a whole, rather than pinpointing only one aspect or element of an individuals' group or perceived group identity. For example, the literature features the significant impact that social mirroring, or the images and reactions that people ascribe to others and are seen throughout society and the related stereotype threat or negative impact that stereotypes have on individuals' sense of self, group membership, achievement and performance all via the mechanisms of ascribed identity. 'When these reflections are received in a number of mirrors including the media, the classroom, and the street, the outcome can be psychological devastation' if the expectations and stereotypes are negative.²²⁷ For example, 'most human beings, including many apparent rebels, are strongly influenced by the views and actions of others. Unchecked by dissent, conformity can produce disturbing, harmful, and sometimes astonishing outcomes.'²²⁸ Often driven by stereotypes and group pressures, these harmful outcomes show how 'some group stereotypes are not simply heuristic devices to simplify experience but are destructive forces that historically have evoked punitive and discriminatory responses to ethnic, racial, and religious groups.'²²⁹ These groups, and the stereotypes used to construct them are socially influenced, both in terms of boundaries and ideologies, although not usually recognized as such. 'Groups and institutions have orthodoxies of their own, invisible to their members only because acceptance of those orthodoxies seems so widespread that it is taken for granted.'²³⁰ Schools, as well as even individual classrooms, can be seen as part of these groups and institutions that take for granted certain orthodoxies, or as an institution in and of itself, even

²²⁷ Suarez-Orozco & suarez-Orozco. 2001. *Children of Immigration*. p. 99

²²⁸ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 1

²²⁹ Hurwitz. 1998. *Perception & Prejudice: Race & Politics in the United States*. p. 61

²³⁰ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 7

if within a larger institution or group in a nested fashion. Accordingly, when the mirrors are factors such as teachers and peers within the classroom, the negative impact of stereotypes, or expectations based on ascribed categories or group membership, on academic performance has been noted in minority groups.²³¹

This upholds the notion that ‘social forces are at play that may be hard to see or appreciate, but that nonetheless undermine people’s academic achievement in important ways.’²³² As such, stereotypes influence ‘academic performance, engagement, and self-concept’²³³ in manners which are important to consider when exploring how students encounter history within an educational setting. Through ascribed identity the fluidity and construction of memory within encounters with history remains relevant. ‘Particular memories of one group can be adopted by or imposed on others, or reconfigured to their own needs. The same memories that inform groups identities and their actions may come back to haunt them, or even be used against them, if they deviate from or are accused of compromising their own moral code that sanctifies the memory.’²³⁴ As such, not only are stereotypes found within history powerful factors of ascribed identities on their own, they also interact with and help construct historical memories, which in turn feed back into historical encounters and the formation of identities through the imposition of specific characteristics and memories upon a group or individual. Often this process can result in negative outcomes such as decreased performance, lack of belonging and discrimination

Yet, as has also been shown, not all social norms appeal to the tendency for in-group favouritism. ‘By increasing the applicability and accessibility of the later type of norm,

²³¹ Steele, C. 1997. A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, Vol 52(6), 613-629.

²³² Steele, C. & Aronson, J. 2013. Stereotypes and the Fragility of Academic Competence, Motivation, and Self-Concept. In Elliot, A. & Dweck, C. (eds.). *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*. Guilford Publications. p. 437

²³³ Steele & Aronson. Stereotypes and Fragility. In *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*. p. 437

²³⁴ Langenbacher & Shain. 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past*. p. 11

intergroup interaction need not inevitably result in intergroup discrimination.²³⁵ As such, perhaps increasing the applicability and accessibility of social scripts that teach equality, equity, peace and other values beyond the narrowness of group loyalty, may influence perspectives and corresponding behaviours. Thus, international relations and history should to pay attention to and integrate lessons learned from social psychology, particularly social identity theory, if future group and ethnic conflicts are to be understood and overcome. Additionally, research within contexts that seek to provide expanded social scripts that invoke concepts beyond just equality is of interest. This research focuses on such a context by exploring encounters with history as experienced within an international school environment, taking into consideration significant social factors at work within ascribed and group identities, as identified by the students. These include the impact that peers, family members and teachers can exert by being distributors of ascribed identities and characteristics both within and outside of the classroom.

2.3.3 Teachers

In terms of group and ascribed identities, ‘of course some people have more influence than others. We are especially likely to follow those who are in positions of authority, who have special expertise, who seem most like us, or whom we otherwise trust.’²³⁶ Teachers tend to be perceived as individuals in positions of authority and are trusted by others. For example, they consistently rate at the top of the annual Gallup poll about perceived levels of honesty and ethics across different professions in the United States. In 2014, grade school teachers were ranked at number 3, with 70% of responses ranking teachers as being very high or high on honesty and ethical standards.²³⁷ Teachers actually received the same rate of very high or

²³⁵ Hertel. & Kerr. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism. p. 323

²³⁶ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 9

²³⁷ *Honesty/Ethics in Professions*. Gallup. Retrieved on October 5, 2014 from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1654/honesty-ethics-professions.aspx>

high responses as pharmacists and were actually one percentage point above medical doctors and military officers.²³⁸ The profession deemed to be the most honest and having the highest ethical principles were nurses, with 82%.²³⁹ Additionally, due to the fact that they are teaching others, teachers can often be perceived as content experts or authoritative figures within certain fields, lending perceived legitimacy to what they say.

As such, they can legitimize or delegitimize particular conceptions and perceptions of knowledge, especially in content areas that require critical thinking, interpretation and moral judgment. This is particularly important in the creation of group perceptions because the influence of someone in a position of authority is higher than that of other members of the group, especially in ambiguous or morally significant situations. ‘When the morality of a situation is not entirely clear, most people will be influenced by someone who seems to be an expert, able to weigh the risks involved.’²⁴⁰ Thus, in the history classroom, teachers may be perceived as an influential factor in the interpretation of history for the students.

Due to their position of authority in the shaping of young minds, teachers have been considered to be one of the responsible parties in condoning and spreading acceptance of these negative views. Historical research has explored the impact that teachers had not only on the socialization of students during the Nazi era, but also in the post-war period. Of particular concern was the continuation of those who had been in power during the times in question and retained their positions even after sweeping governmental changes.²⁴¹ Even after reunification, concerns centered around teachers from the formerly Communist East Germany and how this reflected a general perception in Western Germany that racism and anti-Semitism in the former Eastern Germany led to violence and other ills within the

²³⁸ *Honesty/Ethics in Professions*. Gallup.

²³⁹ *Honesty/Ethics in Professions*. Gallup.

²⁴⁰ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 37

²⁴¹ Fulbrook. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*.

society.²⁴² The impact of ‘this “normal racism” is exacerbated by teachers and police left over from East Germany, teachers ill-trained regarding German responsibility for the Holocaust, and some police who share the prejudices of the lawbreakers’ has been perceived to be significantly contributing to social ills in some areas.²⁴³ Coinciding with this view of teachers playing a role in the socialization and acceptance of racism and violence, a public official being interviewed by Laufer explains that in order to change or break the pattern of anti-Semitism, the focus cannot remain honed on the students alone but must also expand to the teachers and other role models in positions of social authority. “‘I’ve talked with a lot of youngsters. I don’t think I can change their minds. It’s really necessary to change the minds of the parents, the teachers, the policemen, so they can say to the youngsters, ‘You have to change. You have to stop this violence.’”²⁴⁴ It is no coincidence that regime changes often also mean the replacement of teachers with those who are friendly or agreeable towards those in power in order to help pass on the newly accepted historical and political narratives that promote particular group and national identities. Thus, in the interest of more fully understanding the identity formation process via student interactions and encounters with history, the role of teachers should be taken into consideration as a significant social actor within educational environments.

2.3.4 Community & Belonging

As discussed in the introductory chapter, imagined communities exist both within and outside of the educational setting, both of which hold significance in the identity formation process. ‘People often identify schools with communities and see schools as types of communities,’²⁴⁵ even as some ‘sociological models of the local community neglect the role of external forces

²⁴² Laufer. 2003. *Exodus to Berlin*.

²⁴³ Laufer. 2003. *Exodus to Berlin*. p. 155

²⁴⁴ Laufer. 2003. *Exodus to Berlin*. p. 157

²⁴⁵ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 11

and internal divisions.²⁴⁶ Despite, or even because of, ‘any notion of a school as a community is exclusive, whether based on residential area or group identity,’²⁴⁷ the study of a school that holds multiple layers of identity and placement on the local, city, national and international levels, and the diverse population to reflect these loyalties, is of particular interest.

As previously described, social groups have a significant role to play in the development of identities and in the manners within which history is encountered, interpreted and understood. Importantly, and as referenced in the previous discussion, family and peer groups must be included in the discussion alongside teachers as significant social factors influencing the identity formation process and encounters with history. ‘It is of great relevance to the young individual’s identity formation that he be responded to, and be giving function and status as a person whose gradual growth and transformation make sense to those who begin to make sense to him.’²⁴⁸ As such, students need to be recognized as unique individuals and not simply subsumed into groups. Furthermore, they seek a sense of belonging within the communities and groups to which they belong.

The need and desire for camaraderie and the importance of peer or mentor relationships is a key element in the recruitment of young teenagers to the folds of fundamental terrorist groups. Often, individuals targeted for recruitment may have troubled relationships with parents or peers. A former recruiter for a terrorist organization highlights this point in a recent article when he claimed that he targeted ‘‘people who were converts, because converts would probably have problems with their parents at home, so they were more likely to stay in our company.’’²⁴⁹ Importantly, ‘throughout the process, the recruiter will keep up the narrative of

²⁴⁶ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 17

²⁴⁷ Cobb-Roberts et al. 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities*. p. 18

²⁴⁸ Erikson. 1994. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. p. 120

²⁴⁹ Masi. 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners. International Business Times.

joining a brotherhood, of finally being among your people.’²⁵⁰ For example, on one recruitment video, a Western jihadist claimed “‘I am your brother in Islam here in Syria. We have safety here for your family and children.’”²⁵¹ To help aid in the spread of the brotherhood narrative to those searching for a sense of belonging, ‘the terror group now has its own multilingual media arm, Al Hayat.’²⁵² The messages of camaraderie and the mediums in which they are spread, such as social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook, appeal to disaffected youth who feel alienated from the Western societies in which they live.

Therefore, if it can be better understood how interactions with peers and family members impact how encounters with history are interpreted, made sense of and integrated into the identity formation process, perhaps interventions can be created that help reduce the risk of alienation within schools. Furthermore, a solid understanding of how and why social identification occurs as part of and interwoven with cognitive learning of specific content could not only provide a better conceptualization of how identity is socially constructed within the history classroom and through encounters with history, but also as a starting point from which individuals can then activate agency.

2.3.4 Summary

With the focus of this research being on an international school that defines and prides itself on the creation of active global citizens through a diverse student body, an international curriculum and is located in a national and regional context, it is important to understand how and to what extent social factors, both within and outside of the school environment, inhibit or support the development of particular historical perspectives. In reference to how education can reduce or contribute to terrorism, one Saudi psychologist remarked: ‘regarding

²⁵⁰ Masi. 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners. International Business Times.

²⁵¹ ISIS recruits fighters through powerful online campaign. CBS News.

²⁵² ISIS recruits fighters through powerful online campaign. CBS News.

the educational system, it is a problem of both the content of the curricula and the teachers. We need to review the content. We also need to focus on the teachers.’²⁵³ With a better understanding of how historical curricula, narratives and general messages are interpreted in light of social constraints and influences, more informed and targeted interventions may be created to counteract the pull of negative social factors on students. Additionally, by highlighting the influence of social factors on encounters with history, a deeper understanding of how identity and history are related can be achieved. Importantly however, social influences are not the only contributing or mitigating factor in this process.

2.4 Agency in the Construction of Identity in Relation to History

This thesis argues that although social elements are important in the construction of identities and histories, of which theories related to collective memory and imagined communities are examples, individuals retain a significant amount of agency in the acceptance or rejection of these socially constructed elements. Since ‘every individual belongs to numerous such groups and therefore entertains numerous collective self-images and memories,’²⁵⁴ there must be a mechanism through which these self-images become more or less relevant and salient to identity formation and interpretations of history. Rather than social elements and ascribed identities driving the identity formation process, individual agency makes use of the social ‘other’ to construct, refine and solidify a personal sense of self, i.e. an achieved identity.

As opposed to ascribed identity, achieved identity represents the agency of the individual and tends to be overlooked in identity research. Within achieved identity, there is room for the acceptance and influence of identities as ascribed by groups while still allowing the individual a sense of control over which of those ascribed identities they ultimately accept

²⁵³ Braude, J. 2014. A Saudi Psychologist on Jihadism, Clerical Elites and Education Reform. Foreign Policy Institute. Retrieved on July 21, 2014 from: <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2014/04/saudi-psychologist-jihadism-clerical-elites-and-education-reform>

²⁵⁴ Assman, J. 1995. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. p. 127

and integrate into their personal sense of self. Like identity, perspectives regarding history are not only influenced by what actually happened in the past, but also one's current context. The context that one finds themselves in impacts the manner in which one views, makes sense of and understands history. Since 'the past is necessarily embedded in the present human condition,'²⁵⁵ history cannot be separated from the present context within which it is being viewed and constructed. As individuals have different contexts to some extent in terms of values, experiences and interactions, both in terms of encounters with history and beyond, 'within their internal conversation with words they create a reality that is uniquely their own...No two people think exactly alike; no two people will see the same reality even if they are taught by the same teacher. Each of us privately interprets the reality that we are shown by others.'²⁵⁶

Consequently, much of learning is guided by how one thinks about what they are learning.²⁵⁷ As individuals experience and interpret daily life 'they craft personal narratives of identity that make meaning of these experiences.'²⁵⁸ As such, encounters with history are not just experienced or impactful on the group level but also on the individual level. Individuals have a certain level of agency in the meaning making process that allows them to interpret and make sense of their world or received information in a way that is salient and relevant to them. 'Thus persons and, to a lesser extent, groups are caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them,'²⁵⁹ especially if these symbols, myths and collective memories do not hold salience or relevance to them in some way. The extent to which this interpretation

²⁵⁵ Nash et al. 2000. *History on Trial*. p. 11.

²⁵⁶ Blumer. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 45

²⁵⁷ Bruner, J. 2006. *In Search of Pedagogy: Vol. 1 The selected works of Jerome S. Bruner*. Routledge: New York.

²⁵⁸ Hammack. 2011. *Narrative and the politics of identity*. p. 13.

²⁵⁹ Holland et al. 1998. *Identity and Agency*. p. 4.

then reflects and internalizes ascribed characteristics via encounters with history remains to be seen. The data culled from this exploratory case study contributes to the general discussion with data based on student perspectives regarding the process and role by which agency is exercised in identity formation through encounters with history and calls into question the notion of the passive audience.

2.5 Temporality & Agency in Achieved Identity Formation & History

History is considered to have a particular structure whereby ‘the foregrounding of interpretation gives history discourse its distinctive character.’²⁶⁰ Although based on strict methodologies, extensive sources and specific skills, histories still hold some level of subjectivity simply by the nature of the field. “Histories (and philosophies of history as well) combine a certain amount of “data,” theoretical concepts for “explaining” these data, and a narrative structure for their presentation as an icon of sets of events presumed to have occurred in times past.’²⁶¹ As such, ‘an event which is simply reported as having happened at a certain time and place is transformed into an inaugurating event by its characterization as such.’²⁶² White details how this structure comes about and why history is inseparable from subjective elements, at least to some extent.

In line with White’s argument, research has found that ‘the textbooks present a sequence of events using material processes and temporal adjuncts’ where ‘the degree of temporal organization varies according to the purpose of the text; whether it is a recount of events, a debate over ideas, or an explanation.’²⁶³ Despite the variety of text types, certain features of historical discourse as identified by linguists shows ‘how a constellation of linguistic features

²⁶⁰ Schlepppegrell, M. 2004. *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistics Perspective*. Routledge: NY, NY. p. 125

²⁶¹ White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. ix

²⁶² White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. 5

²⁶³ Schlepppegrell. 2004. *Language of Schooling*. p. 128

construes the interpretation that pervades history discourse.²⁶⁴ These features include ideational resources, interpersonal resources and textual grammar, which all ‘collaborate in enabling the historian to build interpretation into texts in ways that are often implicit.’²⁶⁵ As such, ‘there are no apodictically certain theoretical grounds on which one can legitimately claim an authority for any one of the modes over the others as being more “realistic”; as a consequence of this, we are indentured to a choice among contending interpretative strategies in any effort to reflect on history-in-general.’²⁶⁶ Therefore, individuals can exercise agency through the active making of these choices as they relate to identity formation processes whereby elements of the historical record can be manipulated in accordance with salient aspects of identity. This exercising of agency refutes the idea that those individuals who receive or encounter history simply internalize it as a whole. Instead, individuals make choices in their modes of interpretation and internalization of aspects of history based upon what is salient and relevant to their various aspects of identity.

Particular tools help in this meaning making process. ‘Since history is about events through time, temporality is a key feature of history texts which can be construed in a variety of ways.’²⁶⁷ As such, temporality plays a role in active decisions related to the construction of histories. ‘Along with the choice of processes and participants that construe historical events, historians also situate these events in time or relate them through cause or other logical relationships. The most frequent logical relationships construed in history texts are temporality and causality.’²⁶⁸ Thus, ‘emplotment is the way in which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind.’²⁶⁹ As White describes, ‘first the elements in the historical field are organized into a chronicle by the

²⁶⁴ Schlepppegrell. 2004. *Language of Schooling*. p. 128

²⁶⁵ Schlepppegrell. 2004. *Language of Schooling*. p. 128

²⁶⁶ White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. xii

²⁶⁷ Schlepppegrell. 2004. *Language of Schooling*. p. 131

²⁶⁸ Schlepppegrell. 2004. *Language of Schooling*. p. 131

²⁶⁹ White, H. *Metahistory*. p. 7

arrangement of the events to be dealt with in the temporal order of their occurrence; then the chronicle is organized into a story by the further arrangement of the events into the components of a “spectacle” or process of happening, which is thought to possess a discernible beginning, middle, and end.²⁷⁰ Therefore, temporal elements are actively utilized by historians and textbook authors to produce historical accounts in a manner that reflects a logical temporal progression.

However, contrarily to the manner implied when White states that ‘when a given set of events has been motifically encoded, the reader has been provided with a story’²⁷¹ by the historian, audience members are not simply passive receptors of the knowledge provided to them by historians or other elites. In much the same way White recognizes the agency of historians in the structure of their craft and thus holds them accountable for the ways in which they structure historical accounts, audience members exercise similar agency over how they interpret and reorganize the history they encounter so that it is made relevant to their identities. In doing so, and as the interview data from this research will show, audience members utilize the same tools that historians do and in much the same manner. For example, temporal positioning and emplotment can be used as tools to pick apart, reject, reorganize and internalize certain aspects of the historical account they encounter so that their conceptualizations of themselves and others make sense and remain relevant in relation to history. For example, it is believed that ‘historical memory is the key to self-identity, to seeing one’s place in the stream of time, and one’s connectedness with all of humankind.’²⁷² As such, the ‘deep level of consciousness on which a historical thinker chooses conceptual strategies by which to explain or represent his data’²⁷³ is not limited solely to historians and

²⁷⁰ White, H. *Metahistory*. p. 5

²⁷¹ White, H. *Metahistory*. p. 6

²⁷² Daddow, 2006. Euroskepticism and the Culture of History. p. 312.

²⁷³ White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. x

other elites. Rather, audience members actively engage in these same processes as a method of interpreting and making sense of history in relation to their existing worldviews and salient identities. Therefore, ‘the best grounds for choosing one perspective on history rather than another are ultimately aesthetic or moral rather than epistemological,’²⁷⁴ and thus based at least in part on individual preference.

Placement on a continuum within the temporal framework creates the perception of belonging by providing a continual relationship between the individual and social groups that stretches from the past, through the present and into the future. Thus, when one is ‘denied knowledge of one’s roots and of one’s place in the great stream of human history, the individual is deprived of the fullest sense of self and of that sense of shared community on which one’s fullest personal development as well as responsible citizenship depends.’²⁷⁵ The link between history and identity formation is believed to be so significant that ‘for these purposes, history and the humanities must occupy an indispensable role in the school curriculum.’²⁷⁶ However, as previously demonstrated, often the curriculum represents ‘just one way of telling the past, one reading of it, one historiographical representation amongst many, though very little of that uncertainty comes through in the historical telling.’²⁷⁷ Not only does history education often not recognize other viewpoints beyond the commonly accepted or endorsed memories, myths and symbols, ‘it sacrifices uncertainty at the altars of continuity and narrative coherence, the need to put everything into a neat story with a beginning, middle and end.’²⁷⁸ By utilizing time in a linear and continuous fashion, conceptualizations of history may produce a certain sense of psychological safety based on

²⁷⁴ White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. xii

²⁷⁵ Daddow. 2006. *Euroscepticism and the Culture of History*. p. 312.

²⁷⁶ *Significance of History for the Educated Citizen*. 2010.

²⁷⁷ Daddow. 2006. *Euroscepticism and the Culture of History*. p. 324.

²⁷⁸ Daddow. 2006. *Euroscepticism and the Culture of History*. p. 324.

the perception of continuity, even as it reduces the possibility of alternative views or a true sense of a complex and multi-layered reality.

This mind-set ‘enables policy-makers who live by the dictum ‘history teaches...’ both to learn from the sense of the past they glean from history books and to educate their publics about the nature of these lessons,’²⁷⁹ in a manner that coincides with the endorsed and politically informed collective memory on what lessons are important to learn, why and for whom. This narrow temporal framework is not always flexible enough to allow for active agency and identity development, perhaps causing those for whom the endorsed identity is not salient to be excluded from the continuum, thus severing potential connections and a place of belonging in relation to other social groups. When there is dissonance between a student’s various identities and perspectives of history, challenges in identity formation and a sense of belonging may occur, especially when there is also a discrepancy between what values and behaviours are taught in the classroom, what is actually occurring or perceived to be occurring in the reality in which the students live and also what is internalized. ‘Thus persons and, to a lesser extent, groups are caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them.’²⁸⁰ Therefore, encounters with history play a particularly significant role in the identity formation process for multiple aspects of identity. It stands to reason that individuals are not only influenced by the endorsed or collective memories, narratives and myths but also retain a certain sense of agency and control over the construction and content of their own individual identities. Thus, this research is timely and relevant in that agency is explored, rather than assuming that group and individual identities are static or solely determined by others.

²⁷⁹ Daddow. 2011. *New Labour*. p. 190.

²⁸⁰ Holland, D.; Lachicotte Jr., W.; Skinner, D. & Cain, C. 1998. *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. p. 4.

2.6 Conclusion

Historical narratives, scripts, symbols and myths are the tools through which groups tell stories about themselves and construct their encounters with history, as well as their interpretations and understandings of those encounters. ‘These encounters and the ways in which they are understood shape perspectives of social reality on various levels, in ever widening circles of group identities, with the smaller groups of peers and families expanding into regional and national groups.’²⁸¹ In each layer of group identity, social factors have a significant influence on the types of historical narratives told, including the heroes and villains, the pertinent symbols and the meanings behind them, the events under focus, the manners in which history is told and constructed. ‘Change the collective, and stories (and identities) change.’²⁸² As such ‘no individual is solely responsible for their own identity and position vis-à-vis others in an interaction; this is something that is jointly constructed.’²⁸³ The recognition of the influence of social factors on identity and encounters with history goes some way towards explaining the role that these encounters and the resulting political behaviours play in how groups make political choices since ‘instead of depending on their general political orientations, they rely on the specific framing of the choice.’²⁸⁴ As such, ‘group polarization is inevitably at work in feuds, ethnic and international strife and war. One of the characteristic features of feuds is that members of feuding groups tend to talk only to one another, or at least to listen only to one another, fuelling and amplifying their outrage and solidifying their impression of the relevant events.’²⁸⁵ Since history and its connection to social identity is often used as a tool to create barriers between different groups, history has a

²⁸¹ Assmann, A. & Shortt, L. (eds.). (2011). *Memory and Political Change*. Palgrave Macmillan. p. ix

²⁸² Assmann, A. & Shortt, L. (eds.). 2011. *Memory and Political Change*. Palgrave Macmillan. p. ix

²⁸³ Fuller. 2012. *Bilingual Pre-Teens*. p. 7

²⁸⁴ Hurwitz. 1998. *Perception & Prejudice: Race & Politics in the United States*. p. 27

²⁸⁵ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 115

role to play in creating and filtering these impressions of relevant events, as well as the choice of which events are deemed to be relevant.

Yet, social factors such as peers, family members and teachers are not the only important elements in identity formation through encounters with history. Indeed, individuals embody and exercise a significant level of agency over choices made within the process of encounter, interpreting and internalizing history in a manner that impacts identity formation. The empirical data that this exploratory case study provides in this area is really the crux of what can be added to the existing literature, by highlighting the role and agency of the learner in the process of encountering, interpreting and making sense of history in relation to identity formation.

In order to better understand this process and teach the increasingly important skills necessary to accurately analyse constructed memories, narratives and myths about history, as well as the related symbols and underlying meanings and emotions, research must explore the how individuals are impacted by encounters with history. Research on individual encounters with history should not be limited to those engaged in or victims of conflict, but should also explore more positive environs. Since history and the related idea of memory are such influential factors in identity formation, adolescent youth are an interesting case to be studied as they are actively involved with and impacted by identity formation at that time of their lives, although identity formation is not limited to adolescence. Furthermore, since much has been done in the study of the role that perceptions and beliefs about history play in conflict, it would be helpful to learn from more privileged environments that are free from war. Since the ideas of international cooperation and cultural competency, as well as the related skills, are touted as important for success in a global world, the study of an international environment where these messages and skills are being taught and integrated into the very

fabric and mission of the school may shed light on modifications that can be made in everyday environments to enact positive change.

Within an exploratory case study design, this thesis investigates how a small number of students within one particular international school encounter, perceive, interpret and make sense of history as well as how this process is mediated by various factors and the resulting significance for the formation of achieved and ascribed identities. The data culled from interviews with high school students attending the International School Bremen in northern Germany highlight the everyday process of encountering and making sense of history within the framework of identity formation. Thus, the structure of the exploratory case study design is important to the overall argument and use of empirical data throughout this research by providing an empirical basis for further research. As such, the methodology, case study design and the use of modified grounded theory for the analysis of the data are described in chapter three in order to provide a solid foundation from which to build the empirical data within the formation of a fuller understanding of how students encounter and make sense of history and the significance this process holds for identity formation. Within the following data chapters, it is made clear that students exercise a significant level of agency in the construction of their identities in relation to and through the utilization of encounters with history. Through this sense of agency, students construct, interpret and reimagine the histories that they come into contact with in a manner that highlights and supports the salient aspects of their identities, particularly through the use of temporal elements and social others as tools.

Through chapter four's provision of a detailed description of the International School Bremen's make-up, environment, curriculum and placement within the wider International Baccalaureate Organization, the complexity of student encounters with history becomes clear. This comprehensive look at the school not only allows insight into the educational context

where many of the encounters with history are taking place, but also explores the factors that influence those encounters through the analysis of student perspectives on the school environment and history curriculum. By juxtaposing the everyday experiences of student at the international school compared to their past experiences within the German national schools, the distinctive international ethos of the case study school and lessons learned are highlighted. These positive aspects that influenced student identities and encounters with history serve as a basis from which to explore the concept of achieved identity, both on its own and as it relates to social factors of identity.

Chapter five ascertains the agency of the individual over encounters with and perspectives on history. Specifically, it shows the significant level of agency that students retain the process of forming identities in relation to encounters with history. The methods and tools that students use to construct their own meanings from their encounters with history, as well as their own identities, are also investigated, with emphasis placed on the role that temporal positioning plays in the active construction of identity. This chapter adds to the discussion in the academic literature by providing empirical data that highlights the extent to which students exercise agency and the manners in which they do so. This data upholds the notion that students are not passive receptors of officially sanctioned knowledge but rather are active authors in the construction of meaning and identity through encounters with history.

Chapter six continues the conversation by delving more specifically into the social factors that mitigate how students encounter, interpret and reimagine history. Additionally, chapter six analyses the nature and significance of those elements within social identity formation via ascribed identities. It also highlights the extent to which students continue to exercise agency through the acceptance and rejection of socially constructed identities that are ascribed on to them. As such, the information held in this chapter does not take away from the revelations that students exercise more agency in identity formation and encounters with history than

previously thought, but rather highlights the interplay between social influences and the agency of the individual during these processes. As such, this chapter further extends the theoretical base by upholding certain components while building upon others.

Consistent throughout the data chapters and across the sample is empirical proof that students retain agency in the construction of their identities in relation to history to a greater extent than previously postulated. Within the process of exercising agency, the influence of social factors remain important but do not ultimately determine how an individual may internalize encounters with history into their identity. Instead, students utilize certain tools that help them construct meaning out of these encounters that hold relevance for the salient aspects of their identity. Consequently, students cannot be considered passive audience members but must be recognized and acknowledged as active authors. Indeed, students actively construct both their identities and their understandings of history in specific ways.

Chapter 3: Methodology

'Interviews are interventions. They affect people. A good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge and experience, not only to the interviewer but also to the interviewee. The process of being taken through a directed, reflective process affects the persons being interviewed and leaves them knowing things about themselves that they didn't know – or at least were not fully aware of – before the interview.' - Quinn Patton²⁸⁶

3.1 Introduction

This research explores the factors at work in identity formation in relation to encounters with history and the various factors that impact this process. Since the nature of qualitative data is to describe and provide understanding, by allowing for a researcher to 'capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words,'²⁸⁷ qualitative analysis is important for uncovering the details of the negotiation and integration process in which students construct perceptions of themselves and others in relation to history. The choice of a qualitative study design was purposeful because 'qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.'²⁸⁸ Due to the complex nature of the inquiry, where multiple factors are being explored, the use of a qualitative micro-case study design was used in order to approach the phenomena under study in a more holistic and detailed manner.

Since 'the case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context,'²⁸⁹ the case study as a research design suits the

²⁸⁶ Quinn Patton, M. 2002. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park: Sage, p. 405.

²⁸⁷ Quinn Patton. 2002. *Qualitative evaluation*. p. 47.

²⁸⁸ Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. 2003. The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. p 13.

²⁸⁹ Yin, R. 1993. *Applications of Case Study Research*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 34. Newbury Park: Sage, p. 3.

nature of the research questions, which explore the role that encounters with history play in identity formation within an educational context. The case study was a valid research design for this research focusing on data developing inductively from semi-structured interviews with students conducted on site at an international school in Bremen, Germany because the intersection of identity, history and education is complex, multivariate, dynamic and full of nuances that would not have been uncovered and explored to the same extent through surveys or other data collection methods. Since the research design is ‘attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them,’²⁹⁰ it is appropriate to focus on the voices of the participants via interviews. The interview questions were designed to provide participants with the ability to control the nature of their answers while the semi-structured aspect of the interview guide provided structure to allow for comparison across the sample. Thus, the case study design furthers understanding of a complex phenomenon due to a small and diverse sample that allows for in-depth analysis of multiple factors. Since the overall goal of this research was not to generate frequencies but rather to ‘expand and generalize (analytic generalization)’ where ‘the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory,’²⁹¹ the case study was a valid research design. The research was not trying to generalize to populations such as all international schools but rather the goal was to identify certain patterns in the case study interviews that could be linked to larger theories regarding the relationship between identity formation and encounters with history. The chapter begins by further describing the research design and justification for the use of a micro case study in Section 3.2.

The chapter then describes the data collection process in Section 3.3 by covering the sampling methods as well as the construction and use of the interview guide. Beginning with

²⁹⁰ Denzin & Lincoln. 2003. *The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research*. p. 5.

²⁹¹ Yin. 2003. *Case Study Research*. p. 10, p. 37

the transcription process and the importance of staying close to the data, Section 3.4 describes the data analysis process in which a modified version of grounded theory was used. An integration of both open and theoretical coding created an organized analysis structure that incorporated both inductive and deductive approaches. Additionally, Section 3.5 details the dynamic nature of the research by highlighting how the research process is shaped by both the researcher and the participants because ‘both subjects and accounts are produced through the research relationship and agenda.’²⁹² Additionally, ‘these productions are further shaped by the researcher’s approach to interviewing and the ways in which individual questions are posed.’²⁹³ Thus both the researcher and the context have a specific and powerful influence over the direction of the research and the interview process, which may have had an impact on the students’ perceptions and constructions of identity. Issues of agency and power need to be recognized and addressed because they ‘matter in epistemological and methodological as well as other ways, for they are crucial to what is (re)presented and how it is read. Therefore, other researchers might read the interviews in slightly different manners and come to varying conclusions based on how they approach the reading of the data.’²⁹⁴ Providing information that is relevant to the manner in which the interviews were conducted, read and evaluated is important for the recognition of potential biases and allows for a better understanding of the research as a whole.

University guidelines for confidential and ethical research were followed. Since interview data ‘requires a high degree of thought and caution regarding the subject’s informed consent,’²⁹⁵ participants were provided with a letter and asked to sign a consent form

²⁹² Harding, J. 2006. Questioning the Subject in Biographical Interviewing. *Sociological Research Online* 11(3), Accessed on March 12, 2011 from: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/3/harding.html>

²⁹³ Harding. 2006. Questioning the Subject.

²⁹⁴ Stanley, L. & Temple, B. 2008. Narrative methodologies: subjects, silences, re-readings and analyses. *Qualitative Research*. 8 (3), p. 278. Retrieved on December 13, 2010 from: <http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/8/3/275>

²⁹⁵ Boyatzis. 1998. *Transforming qualitative information*. p.61.

explaining the research and the interview process, as well as were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Blank copies of the letter and consent form can be found in Appendix A & B respectively. Additionally, the principle of the international school granted permission for the interviews to be conducted at the school. The research does not seek to be comparative in nature nor is it a statistical analysis of data across a large sample, even though implications resulting from this research may be applicable to other settings within the framework of future research.

3.2 Research Design

Since the overarching questions of this research are based on the encounter between history and students, as well as the impact of this encounter on identity formation, the investigation of how students negotiate and integrate history into their identity narratives, as well as why this matters, can be delved into deeper in a small, diverse sample. The development of identity is a complicated process that is influenced by multiple and complex factors, including context, which can change over time. This case study controlled for some of these variables by reducing the number of subjects under study, including the number of participants and the educational context that was under focus. Even when the students referenced other educational environments outside of the international school, the participant sample remained the same, which allowed for comparison across experiences rather than cohorts. Therefore, since ‘a case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points,’²⁹⁶ the case study approach allowed for a more holistic and in-depth exploration of the identity formation process within a specific educational environment. ‘Rather than generalizing to a universe or

²⁹⁶ Yin. 2003. *Case Study Research*. p. 13.

population, case study research should be used to expand our understanding of theoretical propositions and hypotheses in those situations where (a) the context is important and (b) events cannot be manipulated (as in an experiment). The context of the international school was important to this research because of the relatively privileged status that the students held, as well as the specific demographics, curriculum and geographical location all of which cannot be manipulated by a researcher. 'Research provides insight, for example, into how students think and learn, into their cares and concerns, and into the contexts in which their ideas and attitudes have developed.'²⁹⁷ Both the context and the individual are important for this research because it seeks to describe and explore the phenomena found within the micro-case by focusing on how and why based research questions, which is more about explaining processes and phenomenon rather than describing and documenting frequencies or determining specific outcomes. As such, the case study is an appropriate research design for this thesis.

By highlighting three grade levels in one international school, the interviews can be placed within the wider theoretical constructs because it adds heterogeneity and allows for stronger comparison across the sample. When focusing on a diverse sample culled from the same environment, the influence of other factors such as different teachers and curriculum are reduced, allowing for more reliable data related to the specific research questions and population under study. Since 'studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations,' focusing on the processes occurring in one school 'will illuminate the questions under study.'²⁹⁸ The use of the interviews as a focus point also 'benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions' concerning

²⁹⁷ Barton, E. 2001. *Research Methods in Social Studies Education: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives*. Merryfield, M. (Series, Ed.). *Research in Social Education*. Information Age Publishing. Greenwich, CT. p. 1

²⁹⁸ Quinn Patton. 2002. *Qualitative Evaluation*. p. 230.

factors involved in identity formation.²⁹⁹ Consequently, the interview must be understood as part of a process that occurs during but also extends beyond this research ‘as individuals continue to work on making sense of the past and actively create a sense of self in the present through interview.’³⁰⁰ The present, in terms of the time frame within which the interviews were conducted, is what the research is concerned with unravelling and examining in detail. Thus, the case study design provides an in-depth look into the phenomena under study, through the exploration of multiple factors, in order to better understand how identities are constructed in relation to perceptions of and encounters with history.

3.3 Sampling & Data Collection

The official data collection stage was initiated at the International School Bremen in Germany, with the first formal interviews conducted on March 23, 2009. The interviews lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to over an hour and were conducted on site. Within the case study, the participant sample can be categorized as a maximum variety or heterogeneous sample. Based on Quinn Patton’s suggestion of beginning ‘by identifying diverse characteristics or criteria for constructing the sample,’³⁰¹ participants were partly chosen based on nation of origin, year of study, and whether or not they had studied abroad as well as from the principal’s expert knowledge about which students would provide information-rich interviews. The final sample included three or four students from each grade level between the 10-12th grades, with the ages of participants ranging from 15-19 years old. Within each grade level, both genders were represented. Almost all students had some German national background, either from a parent and/or being born and raised in Germany

²⁹⁹ Yin. 2003. *Case Study Research*. p. 13.

³⁰⁰ Harding. 2006. Questioning the subject.

³⁰¹ Quinn Patton. 2002. *Qualitative Evaluation*. p. 235.

although they described their nationalities and ties in a variety of manners, as will be further explored later in this thesis. Only one participant had experience in a bilingual or international school before coming to the International School Bremen, while all participants had experience within national educational institutions either in their home country, Germany or both. At least three participants had explicit experience studying abroad in an exchange program for a year, while some students had experience studying in multiple countries. The length of enrollment in the international school varied considerably across the sample, with participants studying within that specific environment from as little as one school year (with the current year of the interview being their first) up to as long as ten years.

Demographic Chart

Hannah	Lukas	Anna	Ben	Lena	Max	Arman	Emily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 12 • Age: 18 • Female • Nationality: German • Studied abroad: UK (1 year) • National school: Germany • No prior international school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 12 • Age: 19 • Male • Nationality: German • Studied abroad: US (1 year) • National School: Germany • No prior international school • 10 years at ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 12 • Age: 17 • Female • Nationality: Australian, German, grew up in USA, describes self as European • National school: USA (1st-4th grade), Germany (5-10th grade) • No prior international school • Completing 2nd year in ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 12 • Age: 17 • Male • Nationality: USA passport, born & grew up in Germany, summers in USA, describes self as American • No study abroad • National school: Germany (1st-7th grade) • Previous international school: German & English bi-lingual kindergarten • 5 years in ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 11 • Age: 17 • Female • Nationality: German • Studied abroad: Mexico (1 year) • National school: Germany (1st-10th grade) • No prior international school • Completing 1st year at ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 11 • Age: 17 • Male • Nationality: German, Tunisian • No study abroad • National school: Germany (1st-10th grade) • No prior international school • Completing 1st year at ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 11 • Age: 16 • Male • Nationality: German, Iranian, born in Germany • No study abroad • National school: Germany • No prior international school • 3 years at ISB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade: 10 • Age: 16 • Female • Nationality: USA • National school: USA (1st-8th grade) • No prior international school • 2 years at ISB

Concentrating on fewer cases allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the overall environment and questions under investigation due to both the intensity of the case study as well as the heterogeneity of the participant sample. ‘When selecting a small sample of great diversity, the data collection and analysis will yield two kinds of findings: (1) high-quality,

detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniquenesses, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity.’³⁰² Consequently, the interviews provided insight into processes on the individual and school level. This was instrumental in uncovering the significant influence of both individual agency and social factors, as will be more fully explored in the data chapters that follow.

Additionally, the smaller sample allowed for the analysis of each interview to be conducted multiple times with different levels of coding and foci based on the research questions. The sample was not meant to be representative of all international schools or of all educational environments in general. Rather, insight into particular cases such as this one may provide a way to better understand the experiences of students as they negotiate encounters with history. Patterns that emerge from variety may be telling for broader contexts, although that will require further investigation. Thus larger sample designs utilizing similar interview questions may be of interest for future research.

The interview guide is an essential part of any semi-structured interviewing procedure because it provides both a framework and a flexibility that may not otherwise be integrated into the interview process. The framework that the interview guide established allowed the interviewer to ensure that relevant questions and topics were covered. The standardization inherent in a semi-structured interview guide also created a basis for comparison across the sample. Thus, all participants across the sample were asked the same or very similar questions, with room to be flexible or ask additional questions when more information was needed since semi-structured interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to use ‘tell

³⁰² Quinn Patton. 2002. *Qualitative Evaluation*. p. 235.

me about, how, what and when questions [to] yield rich data.’³⁰³ The flexibility of the semi-structured interview also created an opportunity for participants to offer additional information that may be relevant to the topic at hand, without the interviewer having to ask for it specifically. Thus, the flexibility and detail within the interviews allowed for the uncovering of the ‘primacy of individual experiences and understandings while also avoiding the pitfalls of a structuralist view, which offers an over-deterministic account of society and does not allow a space for individual agency.’³⁰⁴ As will be made clear through the data analysis to follow, agency is a significant factor in identity formation and encounters with history. As such, it is important that the research design allowed for the exploration of the research questions on an individual level.

The goal of the interviews was to collect and document the perspectives and experiences of how students construct and negotiate their identities in relation to encounters with history education. This included, but was not limited to, asking students how they define themselves and their nationality, whether or not this had changed over time and what factors have impacted their identity development. Further, the interviews delved into the everyday experiences that students had in various history classrooms when confronted with differing perspectives or notions of the past by asking for examples, information on how they dealt with these occurrences and what may be beneficial or challenging about encountering a variety of beliefs. Additionally, the research hypothesis was based on the idea that identity is both fluid and socially constructed and is therefore, shaped by social, cultural and political influences as well as is modified throughout one’s life. Since the literature identified social setting, education, and interpersonal relationships as important factors in identity formation, interview guide questions focusing on the educational setting, changes in identification over

³⁰³ Charmaz, K. 2003. Grounded Theory. In J.A. Smith (ed.), *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods*. Sage: London. p. 89.

³⁰⁴ Elliott, J. 2005. *Using narrative in social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage. p. 130.

time, as well as socializing agents such as teachers, was included. To gain a more holistic understanding of the overall educational context within which the students were encountering history, on a more general level, the interviews explored adaptation practices, benefits and challenges of an international learning environment, goals of history education, and qualities of a good teacher as well as characteristics teachers need in an international environment. The interview guide can be viewed in Appendix C.

The students had just participated in a full academic year in the international school, were immersed in the context under review and could therefore more genuinely express thoughts and feelings about it without as much hindsight, internal reflection or analysis. This allowed the interviews to gather a more accurate picture of the experiences under investigation. Moreover, Kandiyoti suggests that a possible way to subvert the category of cultural difference is ‘to focus on the particular and work with the concrete, daily realities of individuals. This inevitably highlights similarities as well as differences and restores flux, contradiction and agency to actors previously frozen in their “difference.”’³⁰⁵ Conducting the interviews during an immersion within the context under study helped to not only gain insights that might not have otherwise been available, but also to subvert some categories of difference by exploring them through discussion of the everyday shared experiences at the international school.

3.4 Transcription and Data Analysis

Since ‘transcribed tape recordings of interviews provide details for nuanced views and reviews of the data’³⁰⁶ and ‘written material is easier to review repeatedly than audio taped or

³⁰⁵ Kandiyoti, D. 1996. *Gendering the Middle East: emerging perspectives*. IB Tauris. p. 27.

³⁰⁶ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded theory*. p. 87.

videotaped material,³⁰⁷ transcriptions can be an important resource for data analysis. Thus, each interview recording was personally transcribed by the researcher as a rough transcription, which is close to standard written orthography because verbal data such as pauses, sighs and intonation are not included.³⁰⁸ Given that the actual content of what the participants were saying was more important than how they said it, the rough transcription preserved ‘the most essential information in a clear manner, free from excessive amounts of information that might overload the reader and hinder the analytic process’³⁰⁹

A modified version of grounded theory was used wherein the analysis first identified content that was relevant to the main identified themes and then proceeded through the processes involved in open coding, selective coding and a second analytical layer of thematic coding. Further justification for the use of a modified version of grounded theory is that with this analysis method, one should start ‘with individual cases, incidents, or experiences and progressively create more abstract conceptual categories that explain what these data indicate.’³¹⁰ Using grounded theory for a series of individual interviews within the context of a case study allowed for the synthesis and interpretation of data on an individual basis, while still identifying patterns and relationships across the data sample, thus producing a holistic and nuanced view of the phenomena under study. In line with the main tenets of grounded theory research, codes were created through what was found inductively in the data, i.e. as the data was scrutinized, meanings were defined during the analysis process, not beforehand.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Boyatzis. 1998. *Transforming qualitative information*. p. 43.

³⁰⁸ Ehlich, K. 1993. HIAT: a transcription system for discourse data. In J.A. Edwards & M.D. Lampert (eds.), *Talking data: transcription and coding in discourse research*. Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ. p. 123-148.

³⁰⁹ Reisman. 1993. *Narrative analysis*. p. 40.

³¹⁰ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded theory*. p. 82.

³¹¹ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded theory*. p. 93.

One of the challenges of this process is that ‘coding may take you into unforeseen areas and new research questions.’³¹² Yet, this is also one of the strengths of the research because preconceived notions and codes were not forced upon the data. Rather, the codes emerged from the data even though the themes under investigation initially emerged from a review of literature. Thus this research contains both inductive and deductive elements. Since one of the distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory analysis methods is the ‘delaying of the literature review until after forming the analysis,’³¹³ only part of the literature review was conducted before the analysis, in order to inform the initial deductive theoretical codes. The remaining literature review, as well as extensive modifications, was conducted simultaneously with and after the analysis, in order to more accurately reflect both the relevant literature and emergent data.

Even though the set of guiding interests and themes the researcher had when entering into the research played an active role in the research process, traditionally these concepts are to be used as ‘points of departure to form interview questions, to look at data, to listen to interviewees, and to think analytically about the data,’³¹⁴ and not necessarily to limit or inform the codes used in subsequent analysis. However, there was a need in this case for a strong connection to the literature and the general themes found in the original research questions in order to form a cohesive research narrative while still developing concepts from close inductive analysis of the raw data. In case studies, theory is important for the generalization of the results.³¹⁵ Therefore, as a departure from more traditional grounded theory, where one begins with line by line initial or open coding, this analysis instead started with deductive thematic coding.

³¹² Charmaz. 2003. Grounded theory. p. 93.

³¹³ Charmaz. 2003. Grounded theory. p. 83.

³¹⁴ Charmaz. 2003. Grounded theory. p. 85.

³¹⁵ Yin. 2003. *Case Study Research*. p. 33.

The systematic use of deductive thematic coding as a first step allowed identification of the most relevant components of the interview data and the narrowing of the content used in further analysis through the extended process of open/initial, selective/focused and inductive thematic coding. Once the interviews were transcribed as described above, sections that corresponded to the research questions and could be categorized under the themes of narrative, history, identity or education were identified. This initial stage allowed for a further in-depth reading of the interview material, while also identified only the most relevant content. Using thematic codes deductively drawn from the research questions and literature also allowed the focus within the overall research narrative to not become subsumed by additional but less relevant data. Engaging in this analytical method first, rather than starting with open coding as in the more traditional grounded theory approach, made the material easier to manage and also saved a significant amount of time that would otherwise have been spent on the process of open and selective coding material that would not be used in the final thesis. The deductive thematic coding as a first step in the analysis allowed for identification of aspects that could be comparable across the data set, leading to a more cohesive research and analysis structure as well as a more focused dataset for the open coding analysis.

In the second analysis step the relevant interview elements identified in the first deductive thematic coding analysis were open coded. Chunks of content data made up of sentences, phrases, lines or other elements that contained an idea were summarized in such a way that stayed close to the participants' actual words and usage while also adding a layer of summarization and abstraction. Repetitive, incomplete or otherwise irrelevant elements were discarded at this stage to allow for further concentration on the most relevant content. For example, any "umm" or similar utterances were deleted in this process as irrelevant to the

research. During the open coding, line by line coding was used in order to keep aspects of structure and the cohesion of ideas visible.³¹⁶

Selective coding and inductive thematic coding were the final steps in the interview analysis process. This combined process allowed for continued closeness to the raw data while adding another level of abstraction that could be used to organize and compare across interviews.

These two steps were combined in order to strengthen the connection between the levels of analysis. Selective coding was conducted in the same manner that the initial coding was, with the researcher summarizing the open codes into more abstracted chunks of data. As the selective codes emerged, they were organized and connected to themes that were identified within the data. These thematic codes were thus inductively created through the analytical process of the open and selective coding and more accurately reflect the raw data from the participants. For example, the initial/open coding of *“in class you can recognize different perspectives from others and how they feel about it”* was selectively and thematically coded to: *‘educational setting: different perspectives; change in thinking: recognize differences and feelings; emotional aspect: feelings.’* After the main coding was completed, the data was reorganized under the thematic codes that emerged during the analysis process. A chart was formed that allowed for comparison across the interviews within the data sample, where the selective codes were placed in columns corresponding both to the individual interview and the overarching thematic codes. This final step of data analysis provided another organized way in which to review the codes and also identify patterns across the sample, while keeping the individual participants as a focus and still gaining an overview of the data set as a whole.

³¹⁶ Charmaz. 2003. Grounded Theory.

3.5 Agency and Power

Even with a layered, multi-step analysis process designed to help ensure reliability within the analytical process, for researchers using grounded theory as a method, as well as researchers in general, ‘background assumptions and disciplinary interests alert them to look for certain issues and processes in their data.’³¹⁷ Additionally, ‘a researcher’s disciplinary and theoretical proclivities, relationships and interactions with respondents all shape the collection, content, and analysis of data.’³¹⁸ Even though researchers should remain as objective as possible while relying on strict methods in order to limit subjectivity, they must take into consideration how their ‘epistemological assumptions about the world, disciplinary perspectives, and often an intimate familiarity with the research topic and the pertinent literature’ have on their research design, choices and analysis by shaping ‘their observations and emerging categories.’³¹⁹ Thus, the underlying values uncovered in the data may say as much about the researcher as it does of the interviewee.

Each interview is ‘the product of a particular interview context, a dialogue between a particular teller and listener in a relation of power, at a particular historical moment.’³²⁰

Responses from the participant might have changed based on new experiences, their state of mind, their emotional state and the timing within the semester, thus ‘the present is a crucial reference point for attempts to remember the past and that interview talk and subjects are co-produced by interviewer and interviewee.’³²¹ Since ‘the interview presents an occasion for creating narratives of self – for both interviewee and interviewer – and producing subjectivity,’³²² the interview itself is a socio-historical context that influences and constructs

³¹⁷ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded Theory*. p. 85.

³¹⁸ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded Theory*. p. 85.

³¹⁹ Charmaz. 2003. *Grounded Theory*. p. 87.

³²⁰ Reisman, C. 1993. *Narrative analysis*. Sage: Newbury Park. p. 31.

³²¹ Harding. 2006. *Questioning the subject*.

³²² Harding. 2006. *Questioning the subject*.

identities even while it is underway. Both the interviewee and interviewer play an active role in this construction process. For example, 'it is interactionally impossible for an interviewer to 'do neutrality' (that is, ask non-leading questions, never offer his/her own thoughts, ideas or experiences) as he/she is always active.'³²³ This remains the case whether one or both of the actors are consciously aware of this role or not because 'many research encounters are a site or locus for identity construction and are joint performances in this regard.'³²⁴ Thus the research context, including the place where the interview occurs, the interview questions, the style and tone of the interviewer as well as the background knowledge, beliefs and values of the interviewer, play an important role in the resulting interview data.

Additionally, 'disciplinary perspectives, at play in the research strategy and interview process, create specific subject positions for interviewees to take up, which they in turn variously negotiate, modify and, possibly, refuse.'³²⁵ The 'interviews (particularly if they are semi- or unstructured) become sites of identity production'³²⁶ where the interviewee and interviewer's identities are being challenged and constructed throughout and due to being part of the process. Thus, 'the interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting.'³²⁷

Issues of power further impact this process since the interviewer promotes and guides the interview by setting the initial tone and research direction, deciding when and how to follow-up on participants' comments and prompt further exchanges. Thus, 'the interaction between interviewer and interviewee involves a power relation, in which positions of power can shift

³²³ Harding. 2006. Questioning the subject.

³²⁴ Stanley & Temple. 2008. Narrative methodologies.

³²⁵ Harding. 2006. Questioning the subject.

³²⁶ Conway, D. 2008. Masculinities and Narrating the Past: Experiences of Researching White Men who Refused to Serve in the Apartheid Army, *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), p. 348.

³²⁷ Denzin & Lincoln. 2003. The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. p. 9.

over the course of the conversation but in which the initiative, and hence power, is located more with the interviewer.’ Furthermore, in the interview process, ‘the interviewer speaks first. By opening the conversation the interviewer defines roles and establishes the basis of narrative authority.’³²⁸ As a result, ‘the emancipatory potential of the interview is necessarily mediated by the research relationship and the context (comprising hegemonic relations) in which it is situated.’³²⁹ Therefore, it is important to look at the negotiated positions of the researcher as a significant element within the research as a whole, whereby the researcher’s construction of reality is just as viable and important an element in the overall research and data analysis as the individual participants themselves.

At the time that the interview data was collected, my positioning as a young, single, Caucasian, American female living and working abroad was constructed, highlighted and challenged in different ways during various interviews. Sometimes this process was explicit while other times it occurred in a more inexplicit or even unconscious manner because ‘a degree of “emotional exchange” and “feeling recognized” are crucial to the shaping of the biographical ‘I’ and interview talk.’³³⁰ These aspects do not have to only be positive because negative emotions, as well as not feeling recognized, can also have an impact on the interview and the constructed narration for both the interviewee and the interviewer. There were times when I felt awkward, out of place, or unsure of myself and my role. There were other moments when I experienced the sense of a defensive position, wanting to reject particular claims and attempts by the interviewees to define me in certain ways and terms. Tension increased in moments where I, or a sense of my national identity, was challenged outright. For example, one interviewee referred to the violence and danger he perceived as

³²⁸ Portelli, A. 2004. Oral history as genre. In Chamberlain and Thompson (eds.), *Narrative and Genre*. Psychology Press. p. 28.

³²⁹ Harding. 2006. Questioning the subject.

³³⁰ Harding. 2006. Questioning the subject.

pervasive in American society relatively often in the interview, positioning himself, his mother and me as particular subjects and within certain terms related to his impressions and constructions of what the reality of living in America must be like even though he had never visited or lived there. This was done in order to fit into and make sense of the different forces, such as media, that were constructing that particular perception through encounters with history, such as family members and peers.

Furthermore, interviewees also displayed behaviour that mirrored the above tensions and constructions of identity resulting from a sense of either identification or displacement. The most unsettling situation occurred when after a question concerning German history, an interview participant became hostile and defensive, responding with the pointed and barbed question of “Are you calling me a Nazi?!” This instance highlights the active nature of the roles that the interviewee and interviewer both play in the construction of the interview and simultaneously the formation of identities in relation to history because ‘when we tell stories about our lives we perform our identities.’³³¹ The incident also provides an alternative to the idea that these performed identities are of ‘the preferred self’³³² and might provide insight into a link between history and identity construction, either through a social or individual lens. Furthermore, the interview context might be considered as a public place ‘in which the interviewee may feel summoned to justify and explain his/ her behaviour and decisions.’³³³ In the case of the topics that informed the interviews, participants may also have felt the need to justify or explain the nation and their role, viewpoint and beliefs as they related to history and the interview questions. This could partly be explained in reference to stereotype threat and negative past experiences where, for example, an identity linked to Nazism was ascribed to

³³¹ Conway. 2008. *Masculinities*. p. 350.

³³² Conway. 2008. *Masculinities*. p. 350.

³³³ Harding. 2006. *Questioning the subject*.

the individual participants by others. This becomes a common theme in the data and is further explained in the data chapters that follow.

These feelings and thoughts reflect my own struggle with and construction of the various levels of my personal identity – as an American, as a female, as a cosmopolitan who has lived in various countries, as a doctoral researcher – as well as the construction and perception of me as a person and my role as researcher and interviewer in the participants' eyes and the research as it continued outside of the interview setting. These incidents also prove the point that the researcher has an active role within the interview process that influences the outcome. Being perceived a certain way by the interviewees could have influenced their responses and the manner in which they constructed themselves, either in opposition to, agreement to or in a more neutral positioning to the interviewer. For example, a few interviewees experienced fear before the interview, having misunderstood the purpose of the interview and instead thinking that it was designed to test their knowledge of history rather than for the purpose of exploring their perceptions of history. The time period before the formal aspect of the interview began was used to acknowledge and assuage fears beyond the normal explanation of the interview process. However, it is important to note this misperception of the situation as an example of a potential influence on subsequent responses and behaviours of the participants.

The narrowing down of the research topic and focus is a natural part of the research process, but should be kept in mind as it reflects certain values and choices of the researcher and the research context, thus influencing the manner in which the research is constructed and framed. These elements are too often left out of the discussion and research results taken as fact, when in many instances they remain subjective to some extent as the researcher remains

an absent but authoritative figure.³³⁴ This voice of the researcher is important to recognize as an inherent aspect of research because ‘meaning is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of the life he or she is living and his or her understandings of these aspects. The role of the researcher is then to connect this understanding with some form of conceptual interpretation, which is meaning constructed at another level of analysis.’³³⁵

Therefore, not only does the interview process influence and help construct the identity of the researcher, as well as that of the participants, but also the overall research process in such a way that the agency of the researcher needs to be recognized.

3.6 Conclusion

The heterogeneous sample culled from the case study represents various grade levels, genders, cultural and national backgrounds, educational experiences, ages and opinions. The information-rich cases shed light on the phenomena under study within a controlled environment, at least to the extent that the case study is from one school, with one teacher and curriculum. The variety of educational experiences that the students have had are incorporated into the interviews through their responses and highlight the reality of a diverse educational environment, while the case study design provided a certain amount of standardization. Additionally, the research was conducted according to ethical standards as displayed in the multiple levels of precautions, permissions and the confidential treatment of the data.

To help combat, but not overcome, the potential of the researcher’s voice to overtake those of the participants’ an extensive, detailed methodological and analytical process is needed. As

³³⁴ Conway. 2008. *Masculinities*. p. 353.

³³⁵ McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich. 2001. *The Narrative Study of Lives*. p. xii.

well as full acceptance, awareness and acknowledgement of the agency and role of the researcher. Therefore, throughout the ensuing chapters, the results are presented in a manner that attempts to minimize the agency of the researcher as much as possible by using extensive and multiple quotes directly from the interviews. This allows the participants to speak for themselves within the framework of the targeted theme and subsequent analysis, minimizing the voice of the researcher to some extent. Furthermore, not only are direct quotations often used, but reference is also made to the selective and thematic codes found within the analysis. There may be incidences where this results in the repetition of certain quotes or sections of longer quotes because what the participant said was coded with multiple codes referencing different themes within the research questions. When presenting the quotes care was taken to steer clear of value infused wording such as ‘believed,’ ‘thought’ and so forth. Since the researcher is not the actual participant, only what the interviewee said, not what the participant believed or thought at the time, can be presented. This may mean that there are grammatical and spelling errors within the quotes because the quotes are what was actually said, rather than what would necessarily make the most sense in terms of sentence structure, grammatical rules and correct vocabulary. English, often a second or third language for the participants, was the language that the interview was conducted in and thus some mistakes and inconsistencies may also result from multilingualism. The following chapters present the research data through a focus on the various themes of encounters with history, as well as an exploration of the diverse learning environment that served as context for these processes.

Chapter 4: Case Study Context Chapter

“In partnership with family and community, the International School of Bremen (ISB) seeks a high educational excellence through establishing a varied and dynamic learning environment. It provides an academic, social and physical education in English that promotes the development of responsible, global citizens who are prepared for our ever changing world.” – ISB website³³⁶

4.1 Introduction

Since this research focused on a specific case study, within which students encounter, interpret and make sense of history, it is important to fully understand the context within which those encounters take place. Since the class sizes at the International School Bremen are typically quite small, the number of interviews within each grade level allows for a representation of the student experience within the school setting as a whole. However, due to the detailed richness of the information culled from the interviews, it is the individual students and their particular cases that are highlighted.

By investigating the educational context as a whole and within the particular school under study here, factors that make the context unique and which have an impact on how the students encounter and interpret history will be identified. This will allow for not only a deeper and fuller understanding of how a particular international educational environment impacts encounters with history and subsequent identity formation, but may also enable the application of particular elements to other educational contexts. As such, this chapter will explore the case study within the broader framework of the worldwide International Baccalaureate organization to which it belongs, the national context within which it operates and the specifics of the school itself, as

³³⁶ International School Bremen. (2008). *About the School*. Retrieved on March 29, 2014 from <http://www.isbremen.de/index.php?page=school&>

well as the perspectives of the students regarding each of these factors. Since the international school is located both within and outside of various contexts, the student participants often described the case study through juxtaposition and comparison with previous educational environments, thereby highlighting the similarities and differences among the educational systems and contexts as well as how and why these elements made an impact on them in various ways. Therefore, comparison among the national German school system, as well as other public schools located in national educational systems, may be referenced throughout this chapter in order to highlight the distinctive international ethos of the school setting and the location of the participant sample both within and outside of the aforementioned contexts.

The first section of this chapter will provide a detailed description of the International School Bremen (ISB) as well as the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to which it belongs. The second section discusses general information such as school size and demographics of the ISB, as well as details on curricula and assessment, with a special focus on the history curricula to provide further context and framing in the effort to better understand the students' encounters with history in various forms. Student perspectives will be interspersed through this chapter to highlight the contextual factors that impacted encounters with history and subsequently their identities. This chapter provides contextual information that is important for furthering understanding of the various factors that impact encounters with history.

4.1.1 Overview of the International Baccalaureate Programme & the International School Bremen

The International School Bremen (ISB) is located in Bremen, Germany is an accredited member of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), which 'is a foundation that has developed

and offers three programmes of international education.³³⁷ Founded in 1968, the IB curricula can be found in 3,698 schools in 147 countries,³³⁸ including 54 in Germany that offer the Diploma Programme.³³⁹ The International Baccalaureate Organization clearly lays out its values and goals within an overarching mission statement that encompasses each of the programs, schools and the organization as a whole as well as each of the programs and schools it is composed of. ‘The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.’³⁴⁰ The IBO, and by extension its member schools such as the ISB, share the motivation ‘to create a better world through education’ through the promotion of ‘intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century.’³⁴¹ The IBO’s strategy for fulfilling its mission is linked to ‘working collaboratively with schools and educators...to improve the teaching and learning of a diverse and inclusive community of students and to influence thinking about international education globally.’³⁴²

Classified as an IB World School, the ISB serves students ages three to nineteen and is authorized to offer all three of the IB curricula designs, including the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). Self-described as a ‘private, co-educational, college preparatory, English-speaking school,’ the ISB was

³³⁷ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2011). *Diploma Programme: General Regulations*. Wales: Cardiff. p. 3

³³⁸ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *About the International Baccalaureate*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/general/who.cfm>

³³⁹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Information for Germany*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from www.ibo.org/country/DE/index.cfm

³⁴⁰ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Mission and Strategy*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/mission/>

³⁴¹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Mission and Strategy*.

³⁴² International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Mission and Strategy*.

founded in 1998 with the goal to ‘serve students of the international community of Bremen’ and boasts small class sizes with an average of 18 students per grade level.³⁴³ The school holds membership from the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the International Baccalaureate (IBO). International School Bremen is also recognized by the German State of Bremen and holds Middle States Accreditation.³⁴⁴ The mission statement of the school claims that ‘in partnership with family and community, the International School of Bremen (ISB) maintains a high commitment to educational excellence in both teaching and learning. It provides an academic, social and physical education in English that promotes the development of responsible, ethical citizens in an ever-changing global society.’³⁴⁵ Situating itself as ‘an educational alternative to the German State system,’³⁴⁶ the national backgrounds of students and staff at International School Bremen represent 42 countries from across the globe.³⁴⁷

4.1.2 Assessment & Curricula at ISB

Students at ISB receive the traditional International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) after completing grades 9 and 10 and an exam in May of the 10th grade. ‘Completion and success is not a prerequisite to enter into the IB Diploma Programme but is used as an indicator of achievement and future success.’³⁴⁸ Grades 11 and 12 represent the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, which ‘is a two year pre-university course designed to facilitate the mobility of students and to promote international understanding.’³⁴⁹ At the conclusion of their

³⁴³ International School Bremen. (2008). *About the School*. Retrieved on March 29, 2014 from <http://www.isbremen.de/index.php?page=school&>

³⁴⁴ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁴⁵ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁴⁶ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁴⁷ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁴⁸ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁴⁹ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

studies, students are ‘assessed externally by the IBO and if successful are awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma’³⁵⁰ in one of three tiers that is determined by final grades. According to the IBO, as a whole, ‘these programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.’³⁵¹

Although some of the research participants were in Grade 10 during the course of the interview phase, and thus participating in the IGCSE program, other interviewees were in or about to graduate from the IB Diploma Programme. Specifically, the IB Diploma Programme ‘is an academically challenging and balanced program of education...that prepares students, aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond... Designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students...the programme has gained recognition and respect from the world’s leading universities.’³⁵² The curricula associated with the IB Diploma ‘prepares students for effective participation in a rapidly evolving and increasingly global society.’³⁵³ Students are required to study at least two languages as part of the Language Acquisition component and take six courses from the following subject groups: Language and Literature, Individuals and Societies, Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.³⁵⁴ Furthermore, they are expected to ‘develop the skills and a positive attitude toward learning that will prepare them for higher education...make connections across traditional academic disciplines and explore the nature of knowledge...undertake in-depth research into an area of interest through the lens of one or more academic disciplines...enhance their personal and interpersonal development through

³⁵⁰ International School Bremen. 2008. *About the school*.

³⁵¹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Mission and Strategy*.

³⁵² International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *The IB Diploma Programme*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/>

³⁵³ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *The IB Diploma Programme*.

³⁵⁴ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *The IB Diploma Programme*.

creativity, action and service.’³⁵⁵ The figure below illustrates the organization of the curricula across the IB Diploma Programme.



As seen in the figure above, the six subject areas are encompassed by the idea of international-mindedness and in turn encompass the extended essay, the Theory of Knowledge course as well as a creativity, action and service related project. As part of the Theory of Knowledge course, ‘students reflect on the nature of knowledge and on how we know what we claim to know,’ while the extended essay is ‘an independent, self-directed piece of research.’³⁵⁶ This curriculum reflects the distinctive internationally minded ethos that inspires the mission and vision of the international school.

³⁵⁵ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *The IB Diploma Programme*.

³⁵⁶ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2015). Diploma Programme Curriculum. Retrieved on January 5, 2015 from <http://www.ibo.org/en/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/>

History is not listed as a distinct subject area; it is subsumed under the Individuals and Societies academic area. ‘Students are required to choose one subject from each of the six academic areas,’ with the possibility of choosing a second course from each of the areas except for the arts.³⁵⁷ Thus, students are not required to take history as the course representing the Individuals and Societies component since they can also choose from Business and Management, Economics, Geography, Information Technology in a Global Society, Philosophy, Psychology, Social and Cultural Anthropology or World Religions, as well as a new course in Global Politics.³⁵⁸

No matter the course, it is expected that the philosophy and goals of the IB Diploma Programme are met, including the development of key skills as determined by the IBO. This includes the development of critical thinking and reflective skills, research skills, independent learning skills and the development of intercultural understanding through ‘a broad and balanced, yet academically demanding, programme of study.’³⁵⁹ The inclusion of and focus on intercultural understanding denotes another aspect of the distinctive curricula of the IB. Assessments developed by the IBO claim to measure advanced academic skills such as the ability to analyse and present information, evaluate and construct arguments and creatively solve problems. Also included in assessment measures are basic skills such as retaining knowledge, understanding key concepts and applying standard methods. Beyond academic skills, and in line with the goal of fostering intercultural understanding, ‘Diploma Programme assessment encourages an international outlooks and intercultural skills where appropriate.’³⁶⁰ Additionally, the

³⁵⁷ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Curriculum*. Retrieved on March 30, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/group3/>

³⁵⁸ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Curriculum*.

³⁵⁹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Assessment*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/assessment/>

³⁶⁰ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Assessment*.

assessments are organized around set standards to which students are measured against and are ‘designed to support and encourage good classroom teaching and learning.’³⁶¹ There are two standardized exam sessions per academic year, occurring in both November and May.

Students receive grades in each of the six courses they take, with grades given according to a 7 (highest) and a 1 (lowest) point system. In order to receive an International Baccalaureate diploma, students must earn a minimum of 24 points and have fulfilled the creativity, action and service component. Students can earn additional points based on their participation in the Theory of Knowledge course and their extended essay, resulting in a maximum total of 45 points.

‘Generally, about 80% of Diploma Programme students are awarded the diploma each examination session. Fewer than 1% of students gain 45 points.’³⁶² Grades were not collected for the participants in this research as the interviews occurred during the May examination period and academic performance was not being evaluated within the research questions.

Not only are the students from different national backgrounds and have a diversity of educational experiences but they are also attending a private school located both within and outside of the local and national contexts. With the significance of historical narratives, collective memories, symbols and memorials for national and group identities and conflict, the international and intercultural focus of an international school located in a nation that has struggled to confront and make sense of its past, the ISB was an interesting case for study. The students, the school and the curricula epitomize the grey area between national and international contexts.

³⁶¹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Assessment*.

³⁶² International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *Diploma Programme Assessment*.

4.1.3 Student Perspectives on the International School Bremen & German National Schools

Although the participants have spent varying amounts of time in the German system and international school, some common patterns and topics emerged from the interviews when students compared their previous German education to the international school setting. In this case, some general and foundational differences in the two school systems, as well as the individual classroom environments had a significant impact on the students' decisions to leave the German system and transfer to the international school. The patterns and characteristics mentioned as important for the students coincide with some of the aforementioned values and educational goals of the ISB and the IB Programme in general. It is important to be aware of those areas that coincide as well as those where discrepancies exist, in order to better understand the context within which students are encountering history, as well as the factors that may impact those encounters that may be distinct to the international school setting.

Partly due to the smaller size of the international school compared to the German school she previously attended, Hannah positively described the international school as a close-knit community. *"It's like a whole kind of family and at my other school there were like two thousand people nearly so it was a huge school and that's why the class grows together and you have a class community, it's just not like you do this course and I do this course and we can see each other after school. It's like a whole class community really, that's what's good."* The community atmosphere found within the classroom and the general environment within the international school is a vast difference from the much larger German gymnasium where friends could not necessarily see or interact with each other throughout the school day. Within this community, the diversity at the international school is a contrast from her German school, with the positive result of exposing her to alternative perspectives that in turn widens her own perspective and way of

thinking. *“At my old school it was like it was just like the others and my community and it was just like narrowed down to this one perspective so to say and now everything expanded a lot and also I can think of different things now because of the knowledge I now gained.”* Although she did mention that sometimes the diversity at the international school can cause problems, she described them as being minor and easily rectified. *“Sometimes you can’t understand what they are saying because you don’t know their culture so you have to listen to them and they have to explain it to you but then after a while you kind of get the principal of their culture, religion, whatever.”* Even this potential barrier can lead to deeper understanding and a wider perspective through communication and respect both inside and outside of the classroom. *“In class you can recognize different perspectives from others and how they feel about it or yeah but also like if there’s no class but we talk then you can also see differences but I think where you can recognize it the most is in class where the teacher asks for different opinions and then you can see there’s a lot of them.”* Living up to the international mission and vision of the school, the diverse community is seen as a positive aspect of the school environment, leading to a change and widening of personal perspective through the explicit and active sharing of individual opinions within a space that encourages students to do so.

The manner in which the curriculum is approached by her peers also varies and reflects this diversity and the school community as a dedicated space for the discussion and deployment of individual agency in the creation and expression of personal opinions and worldviews. Hannah sees this as a positive aspect of the international school in comparison to her old German school because

“well first of all you learn a lot more about other cultures, for example in TOK, something you get taught in the IB, as it’s Theory of Knowledge, it’s kind of philosophy like and you have many different perspectives of things and you

analyze everything... But there you can also see, for example we've got one in our class, he's Islamic and you can see that he has a totally different perspective and at my old school we were like all German so everybody was like culturally the same so to say, there were some migrants or however you call them, but yeah it was just like one big opinion and here there are many things that come together as one and your whole perspective widens a lot."

The overall international school environment as a learning community, the IB specific courses like Theory of Knowledge (TOK), and the diversity of opinions and perspectives found in her peers combine to have a direct impact on Hannah's perspective, which she feels she was not exposed to at her German school.

Lukas also enjoyed the community environment of the international school, stating *"I just like this atmosphere, I just like to be around people and I like that the teachers are my friends basically."* Since his mother works at the school, Lukas had been exposed to the community environment from a young age, even though he attended public German schools until after studying abroad. For him, this adds to the feeling of knowing people on a personal level. *"I always knew the people around and the secretary is someone who I know for like 18 years now."*

The personal realm and extracurricular activities also are perceived as benefiting from the diversity found on multiple levels within the international school. Lukas remarks that the most positive aspect about having so much diversity is that *"you get to know people from all over the world. You get to know their cultures, you get to know how they think and you have all this happening in an international school you have all these different events coming up due to this diversity."* The merging of the various cultures is demonstrated through these various events, for example he mentions *"some Christmas dinner where you have people doing belly dance,"* which he describes as *"just fun to see."* For him, the personal relationships are especially important since *"you get to know these people and those are relationships for life and its spread throughout*

the whole world, so it's really nice." This reflects the perception of a welcoming and inclusive school environment where Lukas feels as if he belongs, even among such a diverse group

Additionally, when asked what he liked the most about the international school, Lukas also highlighted the differences in thinking that he was exposed to since arriving at the international school verses what he encountered within the German school system. As previously alluded to in Hannah's discussion on how the diversity within the international school expanded her worldview, when asked about potential difficulties arising from the diversity found within the international school, many participants did not recognize a problem. Alternatively, the students defined those problems that did come up as relatively easy to fix. Even when a challenge was identified, the solution was often to simply talk it out respectfully and then the issue could be resolved and forgotten, which is a reflection of explicit modeling of conflict management skills. Although he does not describe it as a problem, Lukas did reference one incident that highlights some of the factors discussed throughout this research, including generational differences, approaches to history and identity.

"Not really a problem, it's just that we didn't know. For example in Germany we have a tradition that once you're in 11th of 11 and you're in 12th grade you do like a prank on the 11th graders, in the German system. And this was on the memorial day of something in WWII, I don't know, I can't remember and some teachers were upset about it but we didn't know. That's the only problem I ever came across so it was, she felt quite offended but I wouldn't say there was a real problem because we talked about it and it was ok."

Beyond this incident, when asked about any common misunderstandings or miscommunication, he claims that *"there are no real problems; most people just, its fun, see."* The incident described above also shows that history was not relevant for Lukas and his peers in the same manner that it was for the older generation. For the students, everyday, more immediate concerns took

precedence due to a connection to the salient aspects of the students' identities. This difference in the salience of encounters with history between generations will be described more fully in Chapter 6, while the issue of temporality and salience will be further explored in Chapter 5.

Lukas later refers to the same Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course and Middle Eastern population that Hannah highlighted as broadening her perspective from how she was at her German school. In the TOK course, *"of course there religion is a big part and that is where Middle Easterns talk about really open and it's good to see their opinion."* The diversity within the community environment was a key factor for him, just as it was for Hannah. They also categorize others based on identities that are ascribed to others via defined characteristics such as geographic location of national origin and religion.

Anna alighted on the same idea of the community environment as being an important characteristic of the international school as well as a distinction between the international school and the German schools she attended prior. *"Because it is so small everybody tends to know everybody in a good way, because its motivating and that's what I think would be the most special thing like my headmaster doesn't know my name, I mean at a different school but at this school I go every morning and might have a chat with my headmaster or something and that's pretty cool. That's what makes a difference."* Beyond the community atmosphere and the relationships that form around that, the diversity within the international school was also a significant deviation from what she had experienced within the German environment. *"At my old school there was only German people, there was only one dark skinned person until he left to a different school so there was very much the same thing a lot and here, even for people who are just going to kindergarten there's a hundred different of Dutch or I don't even know what else and that's pretty pretty cool, yeah."* She finds the variety within the international school to be

quite positive, because it adds to the overall school environment. *“Because everybody has a different accent and it all mixes together and makes it quite vibrant.”* However, the diversity also forced her to adjust in ways that she did not initially expect. Similarly to the other students, Anna also categorizes others based on specific characteristics linked to national background and race.

Due to cultural differences inherently found within the diversity at the international school, there were some new rules and unexpected reactions of teachers compared to what had previously been normal for her in the German school and which she was surprised by when first attending the international school. *“For example in dress code, that was one of my biggest problems coming here because I tend to dress quite in the way I like to and there were some problems with the teachers who from different cultures who didn’t like that and others who didn’t care.”* Since this had not previously been an issue while attending the German schools, *“I wasn’t used to teachers telling me that I was dressed inappropriately or whatever so the clash of cultures can be difficult sometimes.”* Other, more logistically focused aspects of the international school also differed greatly from the freedom she was used to at the German educational institutions she attended and caused her some discomfort and frustration.

“Also the coming to school and the being on time and we are not allowed to leave campus early, I had to get used to that so much because in Germany, you leave when you want to, when you have a break you are allowed to leave the school and we are in the middle of the city but we are not allowed to go for lunch in the city because, it seems to be more strict, but that would never happen in a German school so those sort of things are quite difficult for us.”

Although Anna said *“there is a clash of cultures obviously a lot”* and mentioned that issues with the dress code have been one of her biggest problems, as well as instances when *“one teacher thinks its right to do this and the other says it differently because one is German and one is I*

don't know South African or something" she claims that *"otherwise not, I don't think there are big problems"* with the diversity at the international school.

In fact, she quite strongly states that focusing too much on diversity and being politically correct can actually be more of a problem than the diversity itself.

"I think that it's a little too upgraded that people have to watch out for the diversity of others because I think this whole discussion about you have to be careful that you don't say anything racist, that is getting worse because people are always trying to footing around saying something wrong and then they might say something and I mean you are always being careful and I think that's much more racist than just saying something, it doesn't matter what skin color somebody is or whatever and therefore I think that international school teachers should not have to look for which race or which skin color someone is from because it doesn't matter because we are one community and I think it should not be a topic at all, it really doesn't matter. For me it really doesn't matter if someone is black or white and it shouldn't matter for the teacher either. That's just what I think, as long of course as they are not racist to somebody but no I don't think that they should watch out for anything."

For Anna, community membership trumps diversity. She focuses more on that which makes people at the international school similar, i.e. belonging to the group, than the diversity that created the group. However, she does not elaborate on what being racist is or how it may be construed or protected against if political correctness is considered to be a product of being too sensitive and focusing on aspects that should not matter. Furthermore, she does not make specific connections between race not being an important factor for her, to the ways in which racism can practically be manifested or erased either within or outside of the international school environment. Through these statements, Anna has also made strong connections between culture, behavior and perception in terms of the teachers being too careful in their behavior and manner of speaking based solely on their perceptions of a student's skin color. Yet, she does not seem to equate cultural background with race (i.e. thinking that a student from a certain country will only

be of one particular race) nor does she explain whether or not race still matters as a decisive identity factor when informed by one's cultural background. She also mentioned that there is not a significant amount of diversity in her class. When talking about how history class may be impacted by diversity, she said *"I think it would add to it, but we don't have it. Cause like I said everybody sort of meets on one basis, there's not a huge difference, I mean we don't have somebody who's lived in Sudan for the entire of his life and has a totally different opinion. We just have a lot of sort of individuals but that sort of somehow still fit together as a class."* For Anna, the perceived senses of community and belonging are the main focus, with the diversity of the community being a secondary factor that is context specific in terms of the type of impact it has on her personally and on the educational environment. Within the community setting, individual agency can be exercised through the sharing of personal opinions while still feeling like part of the class group. The same manner of ascribing and defining group identities to others based on particular characteristics is also noticeable in the above quotes.

Ben has a similar perspective in terms of not seeing the diversity at the international school as a main characteristic that impacts other aspects of the learning environment. Rather than finding diversity a positive characteristic special to the international school compared to the German school, or an aspect that contributed to challenges, Ben did not see much of a difference in terms of diversity between the two environments. *"I've always been in an international environment so it didn't make much of a difference for me because also in German schools, there are also a lot of different, people from different countries, it's just that you don't hear them speak it that much and here you hear them speak it like when you are at a friend's house and they eat something but it's been like that my whole life."* The element of that makes the international school unique for Ben is not the diversity but rather the dedicated space within which students can be themselves

and voice their own opinions. He goes on to explain that *“I think it is positive.”* This could in part be because he is used to diversity since he has come in contact with it throughout his life and even at his German schools, but could also be attributed to the lack of diversity that Anna mentions. Although he remembers having a more culturally or nationally diverse classroom, now his class is mostly made up of Germans. *“I remember when I was not in 11th, 12th grade, we had Chinese people and all of that kind of stuff and so I saw the teachers always not trying to say the wrong thing about a country so not to insult them. At the moment, we are pretty, we are mainly Germans that somehow speak English, I mean we are three half-Americans, half-Germans but most of them are pretty much German so it is not that different.”* For Ben, language and national background are also defining group factors, while lived experience can also be an identity characteristic.

He goes on to explain through the example of his classmates by describing their backgrounds.

“They are mostly German but have lived somewhere, there’s one that has lived in France and Spain and Italy so she has all these languages together and she knows the culture but it doesn’t influence her that much I don’t think because they feel their natural roots are still here.”

Although he doesn’t acknowledge diversity as a main characteristic of his current experience at that the international school, he does admit that the differences in perspective can come up in the classroom. He does cite one example of how the diversity in the class directly impacts discussions. *“We have discussions like if you say the N word, nigger, because I find you just don’t use it but our German teacher says it’s just a word as long as you are not using it as an offensive word but I don’t know, for me you just don’t use that word, it is just a word that you don’t use.”* Ben explains that this is due to cultural differences: *“These discussions sometimes come up, but words you can use, what you can do in a culture and not do.”* He also admits that *“I*

have an advantage because I know other friends of mine who only go to German schools and they don't see it that much, they have more problems understanding other people but otherwise, I don't see much difference" between the German schools he attended and the international school. Beyond the observation that *"most people here like to speak German more than English so they keep on telling us to speak English more,"* Ben does not seem to perceive any difficulties with the international school being diverse.

Max, who was just finishing his first year in the international school at the time of the interview, found the change in language to be one of the most challenging differences between his prior German schools and the international school. For him, as with Ben, language was an important element within the international school. Max considered English as the main language to help the international school manage diversity. When asked if there are any challenges as a result of being surrounded by different cultures, he responded *"no because we all speak English."* However, he did admit *"sometimes it is challenging because some people don't speak as good English as the others and for example the native German speakers often speak German with each other and so they can't talk to each other at the same time."* Various factors helped him adjust and overcome his initial difficulties with English as the language of instruction and general communication. *"Well first of all that my brother and my sister are in an English school and they sometimes speak English and also some friends I am looking up in English because I don't have them in German. Especially when I am in Tunisia, yeah, that's all. And I had a good English teacher."* Despite the difficulty adjusting to English as the main language, this factor and his brother were the main reasons why Max transferred into the international school. *"I was in a gymnasium in Germany and I'm in the international school because my brother is here and he said it is a good school and I want to study in America so I come here."* Inspired by a family connection, Max

exercised agency in choosing the international school to pursue his studies. Since English is the language of instruction in the majority of the American educational system, the initial difficulty was seen as worth it for the end result that would bring him closer to his goal.

Max's perceptions coincide with those of the students who studied abroad, in terms of mentioning that mobbing or bullying based on national or cultural background took place in his prior German schools but he sees more of the openness and acceptance that other interviewees, describe as existing in the international school. *"We have a lot of people from different countries and also sometimes in German schools some people are getting bullied because of their nationality. I didn't, I mean I know that but I didn't experience that, yeah but here it isn't like this because we have so many nationalities and then yeah it wouldn't be manageable."* The perceived inclusivity of the community atmosphere found in the international school is considered to be a major factor in the apparent lack of intercultural conflict occurring there.

The other main differences Max described as existing between the German and international schools centered on the general curriculum and educational expectations in a similar manner as they did for some of the other interviewees. *"We had different stuff in the German school than we did here. For example we did a lot of German history which is not so important here and also in Math we didn't have done much algebra, yeah which is a major part in this school."* Specific differences in the history curriculum found within the two schools will be further explored a later section of this chapter. In terms of the workload and expectations regarding academic performance, *"the German system didn't expect as many as is expected here. Yeah, also the classes are bigger in Germany and there are more classes and here the teachers concentrate on one student more than in the German school."* Although he admits that these are positive aspects of the international school that he likes, he states that it *"also means that you have to work*

more.” The academic assignments given in class reflect this and also posed some difficulty adjusting to at first. For example, the *“essay was different and also always the tests because we are writing essays a lot here and in the German school it was more like what happened in that year and they were more short questions and not essay or personal response.”* However, *“our teacher showed us like plans how to build up an essay and that helped a lot.”* The influential role of the teacher and explicit teaching of particular skills will also be further explored in the Chapter 6 on social factors in identity formation.

Despite the positive influence of her time in Mexico resulting in her being more open to new people, adjusting to the international school still posed some difficulty for Lena. *“I really had to try and see how everything works because I never experienced something like that but I think teachers and students are used to new students coming.”* This is in contrast to her previous German school environments where *“it’s basically when there is a new student everyone is like first of all not talking or not going straight to them and talking to them and involving them.”* In the international school *“it’s different because they are used to getting new students and they involve you...it didn’t take a lot of time to like get involved and make new friends and so on.”* This more open and inclusive community environment found within the international school is a thread woven throughout multiple interviews and has a positive impact on the feeling of belonging and sense of active engagement that the students experienced in the international school and often found the German schools they attended to be lacking in. Lena did not explicitly mention the diversity of the international school beyond her integration of it into her comments regarding the community based environment and people being more open to approaching new students. However, she briefly mentioned this openness to others, regardless of background, as a prerequisite for a good teacher, particularly for an international environment.

As with the other interviewees who transferred due to familial influence, Arman first came to the international school 3 years ago because it was recommended that her sister attend.

“In Germany, if you want to start going to school you have to go to the doctor and the doctor will decide what school fits you best and my sister, who is now nine years old went to the doctor and the doctor said she is pretty intelligent and she recommended this school to my mother so my sister went to this school and I actually but actually wanted to have a look at the school and I liked it so stayed here.”

Beyond his sister, Arman had other reasons for wanting to attend the international school. *“First of all the language, it’s like a very good thing to learn English, that’s like obvious and well the system is different here, the education is different and teachers care about you and the stuff you are doing in school.”* Echoing the other participants, he goes on to explain that what makes the international school special is *“that the teachers care about you, that it is a big community, the IB you have better opportunities for the future, you have English, these are I think the most important things.”* The topics he studies in the international school are different from those he had while attending German schools, due to the foundational differences in the educational degree system that exist between the two schools. *“The IB, which gives you more opportunities in the future and also the subjects are better I think, for example here you have TOK, you have knowledge which you wouldn’t have in a German school. Those kinds of things”* are factors that informed his decision to transfer schools and also to remain in the international school over time. One aspect of the international school was difficult for him to adjust to at first. *“We have school until three o’clock which is different because I had school until one I think, in my old school.”* The extra time spent in class was a challenge at first but he claims that eventually he just got used to it. Additionally, Arman also did not see the diversity within the international school as posing any challenges. Rather, he agreed with other interviewees when he stated that the positive

thing about diversity is that *“you learn about different cultures, you learn about how to respect them.”*

Although Emily did not attend German schools when she moved to Bremen, she also pointed out some differences she perceived between the two environments of the German system verses the international school based on the experiences of her peers. When asked what made the international school special, she claimed *“well it offers students an opportunity of having their education in English. I wouldn’t say that it is that much different in the actual education.”* She goes on to admit *“yeah the school system is different than actual German schools but I don’t think it is necessarily a higher education, so mainly the English part and the international part”* are the characteristics that distinguish the international school from a typical German school. She explains how she sees the German school system as compared to her previous school in the United States and the international school she now attends.

“Well mainly that you either go to a school from Kindergarten to sixth grade and then you are in middle school or like my old school is from Kindergarten to eighth grade but you in those years from sixth grade on you are considered in middle school and then you go to a separate high school where here there is three categories of schools and you have to fit into the levels and if you don’t make it then you can’t go on to anymore school after grade ten, where in the States, it doesn’t matter your like education or anything, you can still be in high school. It doesn’t mean that you will graduate or get your diploma or anything, but you can still go to school.”

Emily’s description highlights the main differences in how the educational systems in the environments are organized. The international school is set up more similarly to the system that her former American school was a part of, which is significantly different from how the German system is organized according to how she perceived her peers’ experiences.

For Emily, her peers that make up the student body in the international school were a change from those she interacted with in her previous private school in the United States because they

have more of an international background, similarly to the diversity that Lena learned from in Mexico. *“There wasn’t really international students in my old school...there was maybe one person not from the States in my old school and that was about it.”* She goes on to state that even in the international school *“there’s not so many international kids in my class because most of them are German, there’s maybe four or five that are truly international.”* However, further into the interview she comes back to the concept of diversity and expands her initial statements. In the international school, *“you are really exposed to a lot more cultures, I have been exposed to a lot more people from different places than I ever would have been in the States.”* The exposure to other cultures at the international school has resulted in *“just opening your eyes to really seeing that there is a place where people come from all around the world.”* She mentions that *“sometimes there is a lot of disagreements because of just the different cultures and lifestyles”* but in general *“I think that people try to respect others’ lives and what they believe.”* Lena’s experience in Utah was limited in some ways *“mainly because there isn’t so many international kids, at least where I come from, like there isn’t as many kids who don’t have the same religion or things like that...it’s not so unusual that it’s just the same race or religion there as it is here cause you have kids coming from everywhere so you need to have more acceptance of international beliefs and stuff than you do there.”* To illustrate her point on how diversity of peers influences the classroom environment and learning, Emily recalls a situation that occurred in 2010, the year before the interviews took place. *“For example there was a girl from Israel here and for some reason she didn’t agree with what a lot of other people in the class were saying but after arguing about it we finally determined that just because we are from different cultures, we have different opinions and we have to settle on that.”* For her, the diversity of the

international school was a new experience that increased the importance of mutual acceptance within the classroom.

4.1.4 Summary

Even with this first look at the interview data, patterns begin to emerge. Students not only perceived the international school to have an inclusive community feel but that this was also one of the defining characteristics of the school environment that made it a positive place. Through discussion, students were actively engaged with each other and had space dedicated to the exploration, development and deployment of their achieved identities. The recognition of them as individuals within a group setting allowed for the students to feel included in the community, even as they identified and defined various groups based on characteristics of the demographic diversity found within the international school, such as language, religion, national background, geographic location and educational experiences. Through a natural comparison of the international school with the German system that many of the participants experienced, the distinctive ethos of the international school becomes more apparent.

These organizational and logistical differences that make up the foundation of the various educational systems had a profound impact on the students and within which they encountered history. Each difference mentioned by the students represents an aspect of change that they had to adapt to, whether the result was positive or not. For some, this was positive as it expanded their perspectives and helped them to develop new skills. For others, the changes caused difficulties that they did not necessarily think were worth it. The foundational differences in the school systems, such as language of instruction and socialization, class size, structure of grade levels, academic assignments and expectations can sometimes be overlooked when focusing

solely on curriculum. However, these differences still directly and indirectly impact the classroom environment, curriculum and learning in various ways that in turn influence the students. For some of the participants, these impacts were in line with and upheld the mission and educational goals of the IB Programme in general and ISB in particular. For example, the mention of an expansion of intercultural perspective gained through interactions with diverse peers and an expanded curricula can be seen as positive advancements that the school set out to achieve. The impact of smaller class sizes and the resulting perceived sense of community within the school environment is also cited by students as a reason to attend the international school and remains in line with the school's goals. Additionally, even some of those elements that the students struggled with and had to adjust to, for example the assessments and learning expectations, were important within the ISB mission and curricula goals.

This section provided an overview of these general differences as perceived and described by the participants in an attempt to place the history curriculum and classroom environment in its broader context, while also recognizing the importance of comparing the various systems the students have encountered and acknowledging the resulting patterns that emerged from the comparison process. Understanding the context of the educational environment within with encounters with history occurred in various forms will further in-depth understanding of the factors and their impact on student perceptions and interpretations of encounters with history.

4.2 History Curriculum at ISB

4.2.1 The History Curricula

In line with the mission and vision of the IBO, as well as the way in which it defines history as a subject, the history course offered through the IB Diploma Programme 'aims to promote an

understanding of history as a discipline, including the nature and diversity of its sources, methods and interpretations.³⁶³ The course is ‘designed to encourage the systematic and critical study of human experience and behavior; physical, economic and social environment; and the history and development of social and cultural institutions.’³⁶⁴ As part of the Individuals and Societies cluster of courses, the history curriculum is designed to ‘enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.’³⁶⁵ The explicit teaching of uncertainty and questioning allows for the creation of a dedicated space through which students can creation and develop agency as well as are exposed to diverse points of view.

Related to this educational aim, the history course should ‘promote an appreciation of the way learning is relevant to both the culture in which the student lives and the culture of other societies; develop an awareness that human attitudes and beliefs are widely diverse and that the study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity.’³⁶⁶ In order to achieve this, and the objective of understanding history as a discipline, students partaking in the history course, ‘develop the capacity to identify, analyse critically and evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society...collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society; test hypotheses; and interpret complex data and source material.’³⁶⁷

History can be taken at either the Standard Level (SL) or Higher Level (HL) of the Diploma curricula and there is a further choice between two content tracks. ‘The route one history course explores the main developments in the history of Europe and the Islamic world from 500 to

³⁶³ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁶⁴ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 1

³⁶⁵ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 1

³⁶⁶ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 1

³⁶⁷ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 1

1570, while the route two history course focuses on 20th century world history.’ The IBO designed the history course curricula with the goal that both tracks provide ‘structure and flexibility, fostering an understanding of major historical events in a global context.’³⁶⁸

Furthermore, both history tracks are supposed to require students ‘to make comparisons between similar and dissimilar solutions to common human situations, whether they be political, economic or social.’³⁶⁹ In the spirit of the intercultural mission, this should invite ‘comparisons between, but not judgments of, different cultures, political systems and national traditions.’³⁷⁰

Additionally, since the IBO claims that history is ‘a discipline that gives people an understanding of themselves and others in relation to the world, both past and present,’ the history course in the IB Diploma Programme ‘also helps students to gain a better understanding of the present through critical reflection upon the past’³⁷¹ regardless of the track or the subject and topics studied. As such, the program has already laid the foundation for recognition of the relationship between history and identity, as well as a specific temporal structure. Students are also ‘further expected to understand historical developments at national, regional and international levels and learn about their own historical identity through the study of the historical experiences of different cultures.’³⁷² This dedicated space through which to explore the manners in which identity is influenced by encounters with history has a significant impact on the nature of the educational environment and the resulting identities, as well as the content and form of the encounters themselves.

³⁶⁸ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁶⁹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁷⁰ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁷¹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁷² International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 1

The classes participating in this research had chosen the second track at the beginning of the year and focused on 20th century world history. In this track, there are three prescribed subjects, of which the class must study one but gets to choose which subject to study. The three prescribed topics are (1) peacemaking, peacekeeping – international relations between 1918-36; (2) the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1945-89; (3) Communism in crisis, 1976-89. Additionally, there are five topics within the 20th century world history track that classes must study two of their choice (1) causes, practices and effects of wars; (2) Democratic states – challenges and responses; (3) origins and development of authoritarian and single-party states; (4) Nationalist and independence movements in Africa, Asia and post-1945 Central and Eastern European states; (5) the Cold War.³⁷³ As the interviews make clear, the focus for many of the classes was the international relations between 1918-36 track, with an emphasis on the causes, practices and effects of wars as well as the origins and development of authoritarian and single-party states or the Cold War, depending on the class.

All courses are assessed based on an internal assessment focusing on the historical investigation of a topic of the student's choice, as well as essay questions given by the IBO. 'The assessments aim to test all students' knowledge and understanding of key concepts through various activities that demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of specified content, such as an ability to recall and select relevant historical knowledge; application and analysis, including the ability to apply historical knowledge as evidence; synthesis and evaluation abilities; and the selection and use of historical skills.'³⁷⁴ Furthermore, students must 'demonstrate an understanding of basic facts and complex concepts related to the historical periods studied.'³⁷⁵ In addition to these skills, the

³⁷³ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014). *History*.

³⁷⁴ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 2

³⁷⁵ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 2

historical investigation study report ‘measures students’ ability to use their own initiative to take on a historical inquiry.’³⁷⁶ In order to demonstrate this ability, ‘students should be able to develop and apply the skills of a historian by selective and analyzing a good range of source material and managing diverse interpretations.’³⁷⁷ As such, ‘the activity demands that students search for, select, evaluate and use evidence to reach a relevant conclusion’³⁷⁸ on a topic of their choice. Within the interviews, some participants mention that they used the historical investigation study report as a chance to further explore topics that they were interested in, didn’t have a chance to cover in class or that they felt was linked to their historical or national identity.

4.2.2 Student Perspectives on the History Curricula at the ISB

The general perceptions of the students’ various educational contexts are important to consider in order to have a better understanding of how these perceptions of structural and logistical differences found between the German and international schools may be reflected in the history classroom and curriculum, as well as what impact this may have on the identity formation of the students. Since identity formation is a longitudinal and complex phenomenon that changes over time and contexts, it is important to look at the various educational contexts that the students have experienced in order to gain insight into how encounters with history within school have enhanced and influenced the identity development of the participants.

The subjective perception of historical accounts that were restricted in their scope by either focusing too much on particular events, time periods or perspectives was significant for multiple participants, especially for those students who were in German schools before attending the

³⁷⁶ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 2

³⁷⁷ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 2

³⁷⁸ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2014.) *IB history higher level subject brief*. p. 2

international school or for those who studied abroad. Many students compared their experiences and the curricula found in the German schools to that of the international school and found the history taught in the German school to be lacking in breadth of scope and variety. For the students coming to the international school from German schools, the history that they were exposed to in the German curriculum was extremely focused on World War II, the Nazis and Hitler, to the point that some students perceived to be expressed strong dislike for and distanced themselves from history as a subject as well as in general. This section will explore the different history curricula students encountered and described within the interviews, as well as impacts that these encounters had.

Hannah found significant differences in the approach to history within the curriculum and choice of topics in the international school as compared to her previous German institution. The more inclusive and international approach to history within the international school curriculum suited her. Furthermore the breadth found within the international school history curriculum compared to the depth of detail in the German history curriculum had a positive impact on Hannah's academic performance and the expansion of her perspective and worldview. In comparing the two approaches, she explains *"in my old school it was all like only about Nazi Germany, everything was really narrowed down to the littlest, smallest detail and here it is just like the main facts, you can understand what happened and you probably know about the rest of all that because you were in a German school first but yeah you just learn the most important facts."* In her eyes, just focusing on the important facts is fine because although in her German school *"actually I learned so many other things, I forgot already because they are so not important anymore."* To her, if the historical content under study is not relevant to her personally, then it is not processed and remembered. *"I used to hate history, I only got really bad grades at my old*

school cause I didn't listen and it was just so uninteresting cause we always talked about Nazi Germany and Hitler and oh it was so boring but now it's more kind of diverse, I mean it was really hard to get into it because there was a huge change from this like constant level just talking about Nazis." When history was not considered to be relevant to the salient aspects of her achieved identity, Hannah became disengaged and her academic performance suffered.

Hannah prefers the approach of the international school where the focus is more on understanding why events happened rather than on the facts and various details about WWII as emphasized in her previous German school. However, it was not easy for Hannah to adapt to the different and expanded approach to history. *"It was really hard to get into it because there was a huge change from this like constant level just talking about Nazis but now jump to Russia, to the USA to Europe and also to look at different perspectives, that is also what we get taught, actually to see how we can evaluate like sources."* For her, the history curriculum at the international school is more diverse and broad than what she experienced in the German school and despite the difficulty she had adapting to the new approach, it had a positive influence on her.

Yet, although her academic performance in history has improved in the international school, when asked if the expanded approach made her enjoy history more, Hannah only answered *"kind of"* and continued to expound on the difficulty and skill development that increased over time. She enjoys history more than before *"but it was really hard to get into it in the beginning but then you actually learn how to do it and then your knowledge and your thinking also alters and you can kind of adapt or adjust to this."* Importantly her academic performance improved and Hannah is now achieving higher grades in history class and has also gained new skills. This

focus on and recognition of historical skill development has had a significant impact on altering her perspective and worldview, even though it has been difficult to adjust at times.

Luka's experience with history in German schools was not as negative as Hannah's, yet he also focused on the issue of the restricted history curriculum in the German system, especially in terms of the development of critical and historical thinking skills. *"Well the Germans have this system, I don't know how to explain it, it's just really straight forward. You just learn something, you learn it by heart, there is no real thinking, personal thinking involved."* This need for personal relevance and active engagement, as well as the lack of it within the German school system, is seen across the sample.

For Anna, the problem with history in German schools was also that there was little diversity in topics. *"The only thing that we did was Nazis, the entire time and we did Bismarck, which I thought was incredibly boring I mean Nazis, we did it in German class, we did it in history class, we did it in English class and the whole Nazi thing, it's a huge thing but it's too huge."* Not only was this extremely focused approach difficult for her to adjust to, it had a negative impact on her learning and academic performance. *"I just didn't learn a lot about history, I just learned about the same thing the entire time because they never did anything else. I didn't know anything about the Cold War or about Communism or about any other countries except for Germany and that's what was difficult to adjust to."* Although she was interested in the time period, the topic in general and any familial connection, since the focus on WWII in her German school was so intense and detailed, she felt that it was overdone and welcomed the broader approach of the international school.

In the same vein as other participants, Ben found the history curriculum to be restricted, narrowed down to just a few events that were then covered repeatedly and became boring as a result.

“I like focusing more on American history and that’s probably because first to seventh grade is pretty much history is only Rome and then I got to eighth grade and then I got here so in the German school system I pretty much only did Rome and in that moment I actually wanted to do the Nazis because in Germany it is a bigger topic and they kept on, older people kept on talking about it but I didn’t know anything about them so I wanted to do Nazi’s and then I came here and we pretty much did Germany, Nazis, then we went to Vietnam, the Korean War and the Cold War and that’s pretty much what I have been only doing at this school and it’s kind of getting boring because I have been here since eighth grade and in eighth, ninth and tenth I’ve done Korean and Vietnam and Cold War and Germany and now that was the IGSC and now it’s the IB diploma and I have to do all of it again. And we had a choice to do a different topic but only three of us did the topic before and the rest of the class wanted to do the Cold War, I think we could do something else, I am not sure.”

Again the pattern manifests itself, where a lack of perceived relevance to a salient identity results in disengagement with the topic. Yet, when there is a relationship or a perceived relevance, then there is active interest and even agency in learning history. For Ben, WWII was the most important event to learn about because it still influences the contemporary world in various ways, including politics, behaviors and attitudes. As seen through aforementioned quotes, Ben also found the curriculum in the international school to be restricted because even though there were more historical events included in the curricula, they were topics that he covered before and in which he had lost interest.

Additionally, the historical narrative presented in class remained too Euro- and German-centric for him. Although the class did cover the Korean and Vietnam Wars, he would have liked to see more of a focus on American history. *“I have not done much, we have never done American history so I am not quite sure what to do, so I am just trying to do it myself, figure out what to learn, so I am just picking up what I can pick up at the moment.”* In order to add this perspective

and related topics into the history curriculum, he had to learn and study on his own. For some independent research components and assignments within the class, he could choose the topics he wanted to study and invariably used these opportunities to delve deeper into what really interested him, i.e. American history. When asked what could be improved about the history curriculum, his answer was *“I just really wish American history, I mean that is pretty much, Martin Luther King, there was in the curriculum that we could write an essay about anything and there was a part, or anything that I have to learn or write an exam about so I did, I picked him so that I was forced to study about him so that I’m, cause actually if I am at home, I wouldn’t go out and study history, I’d go out and play basketball or something so I forced, I picked him on purpose so that I would learn, otherwise the rest of American history I just pick up when I am in the States or from my mom or my granddad or something.”* For Ben, this quote sums up the frustration he had with the restrictions found in the curricula and classroom due to a lack of diversity, as well as how he tried to move beyond it by personally expanding his historical knowledge in various ways.

Lena also reflects the general subjective perceptions interviewees had concerning how history and thus encounters with history were restricted in German schools. *“I think of course the history of your country is important but not only, which is the case, which was the case in my German school basically they taught a lot about German and Germany and German relations and so on and here it’s more European history but also world history and I think that is very important too.”* However, at the same time that she acknowledged that the international school has a broader historical scope, she did point out that it is also still restricted. When asked how history education can be improved, she mentioned that *“maybe more about the whole world, not only the focus on your own country, I think it is the same for German schools but even more so than for*

international schools because they are trying here, they are trying really good but in German schools they are not trying at all.” Again, the lack of a dedicated space to explore diverse viewpoints and deploy agency through the sharing of personal opinions results in a negative impression of the German schools that participants previously attended.

Max is firm in his viewpoint as it relates to the differences in the history curriculum between the international school and the German school he attended before. *“First of all we don’t have the same topics, in Germany we almost study only German history and here it is international history.”* When asked to elaborate about the type of history studied, he provides an example: *“we are studying the League of Nations at the moment or International Relations where we did, in Germany we only did Hitler, which I think is more German than international.”* When asked what history should be taught in school, his certainty wavered a bit as reflected by his statement *“that is a good question, I don’t know, I think we should try to cover everything like from the beginning of humans until today and I think we shouldn’t focus on a certain time.”* He did not elaborate or provide specific examples and information on how this could be accomplished, except when asked how history in German schools could be improved. *“Yeah I think they should change that they, I think they are working over three year about Hitler and I think they should change that and try to be more like the international school. Yeah, they should not talk about Hitler but about the whole situation, about the mistakes that every state did and not focus on Germany just because it is the Abitur.”* Teaching for the high school completion test, the Abitur, and focusing solely on the time period when the Nazis were in power places restrictions on encounters with history, which Max expresses negativity towards and would like to see changed.

Echoing Max’s comments, Emily also pointed out the influence that exams have on which subjects are taught in history class. Beyond this influence, which a few of the other students saw

as directly restricting the history curriculum, she did not refer to restrictions on history in the classroom. She did mention an instance where alternative perspectives based on cultural diversity were brought up in history class and the conclusion of that incident. *“My Russian friend maybe learned something different about the Communists or something and that’s mainly the only time but it wasn’t a huge disagreement, its settled and...well my teacher just determined that her history book in Russia either gave more detailed like description of what we were studying and that each history book kinda has its own different opinion that it is writing, so that could maybe have caused it.”* Within the classroom environment, there is dedicated space to explore differences in personal opinion, as well as explicit recognition of various factors that may contribute to varying perceptions of history. Although situations such as this may bring other historical perspectives and knowledge to the table, Emily only gave this example and made sure to point out that it was the only time an incidence like this occurred.

Along the same lines as those suggested by Emily, Anna explained that the lack of diversity in the classroom led to the restricted account many of the students found in their former history classes. When asked specifically about her experiences in history class and how diversity impacts the environment, she went from talking about the school as a whole to focusing on her classroom, where the situation is different. *“We don’t have a huge diversity in our class, we do, everybody is sort of a half of something or other, or spent a year somewhere else but we don’t have anybody, except for X because he is Lebanese, but everybody is half of something so we all meet together on the German or European and somebody is I don’t know half American or whatever, so I haven’t noticed any big.”* Even though there is a mix of cultures within each person, as she stated, the students all share some aspect of their identity as German or European, which still impacts the content of encounters with history and can narrow it to a certain focus.

She explained that more diversity in terms of perspective would enhance history class and the topics covered but that the class simply does not have it in that manner. In her opinion, more noticeable diversity would bring to the classroom *“different views I guess and um maybe we would start doing, not doing Nazi Germany or something and doing something new or somebody would give us an opinion about European history, a perspective that we don’t know, maybe from a colony, a former colony or something. Something just an interesting input perhaps.”* Nazi Germany remains a strong focal point within the historical account in the curricula that may be influenced with more diversity of perspectives within the class, instead of a more Euro- or German-centric approach. Lena also referred to this when she claimed that other students from around the world do not discuss the previous encounters with history that they had already learned. Thus, the lack of insight from students outside of the German or European zone contributes to the perpetuation of restricted encounter with history, even within the context of the international school.

Arman is also negative towards restricted encounters with history centered on World War II. He would like to see the focus broadened to include countries outside of Europe and Germany specifically, as well as to be more inclusive of other time periods. *“I think more modern history, like what happened in the 80’s and 90’s and I think that a larger diversity would be better, we are just learning about like the from the 19, from First World War, Second World War, and the Cold War and this has been like this for three years I guess and it is getting really boring.”*

Arman reflects the general pattern found in the other interviews in that he becomes disenchanted and disengaged from history when it is perceived to hold no relevance. His suggested improvements were along the same lines as the other students’ ideas. *“Learning about more things than what I just said like war, and maybe yeah I would say that is the most important*

thing, yes and learning about other countries as well like China or, just as an example because we are just talking about European countries like Germany, France.” He mentioned multiple times how boring history is, how it is not interesting to him and how little impact and connection it has to his life. He explains that *“in history you just learn what people did in the past and you can’t apply it in your everyday life”* and that although his German side is *“very represented”* in the curriculum, *“I am from Iran and I think our history teacher has not even mentioned the word Iran once in the last three years.”* This is due to the restricted history curricula that is presented in class, which is very focused on the time period surrounding WWII and is German-centered, even when branching out into WWI and the Cold War. Even within the broader view that he does find in the international school, there is still enough restriction to make this a major focus throughout the interview questions pertaining to history. The narrowness of the curriculum is a reason why he does not see his cultural backgrounds reflected in the curriculum even at the international school.

4.2.3 Summary

Overall the students recognize the importance of different perspectives and a wide view of history but this remains on the surface level since most participants perceived their history curriculum to be restricted to Germany and the WWII time period. Student held ideas on how to expand the variety and content of the history that they encounter revolved around incorporating the perspectives of other countries and learning about events outside of the WWII time period. More modern times are offered as possible alternatives but opinions differed on how ‘modern’ was defined in terms of time period that should be studied and to which aspects of the past actually influence the present enough to for study to be warranted. External factors such as the choice of the majority and the pressure of standardized exams are raised as items that influence

the choice of historical topics for study and the ensuing classroom based discussion or lack thereof. Internal determinants of interest highlighted topics that had a strong, direct connection to the lives of the students.

Whether restricted due to internal or external pressures, students found a narrow perspective of history to be boring, unimportant or irrelevant to themselves and the world today. When not considered to be relevant, history was not perceived to be important, resulting in disenchantment and disengagement with the topic. Their encounters with history seem to be restricted based on repetition and focus on particular events within the curricula, despite the lofty goals of an international perspective and flexible options to choose courses of study. Although they acknowledged that the history curricula in the international school was broader and more inclusive than the curricula they encountered in their previous educational environments, the participants still remarked that it could be improved and expanded to include additional perspectives and historical events. Thus, although in the previous section, the student interviews seem to uphold and coincide with the general educational mission and goals of the international school and the IB degree program in general, the history curricula falls short of reaching the same objectives. Even though the aims of the school and official curricula incorporate intercultural understanding and citizenship, and the history curricula is more inclusive than the students had previously encountered in other educational environments, the history curricula at ISB is not perceived by the students as fully reaching this aim. As such, their encounters with history within the classroom are perceived to still be somewhat limited and restricted in scope and perspective, despite attending an international school.

4.3 Chapter Summary

On the micro-level of the individuals within this case study, the ease with which the students move across borders, both within and outside of the EU, has influenced the manner in which the students define themselves as well as the types of experiences they have had and the contexts within which they move and encounter history. Typical of international schools, some of the students in the case study sample have spent time studying in a country other than their birth, are currently studying abroad, or have been born in one country but have a parent(s) are from another. However, many of the students in the sample were born in Germany and thus do not reflect this more traditional background of students at international schools. This presents an interesting aspect to the sample by highlighting the changing currents of movement and education within Germany itself because the students naturally compared geographic, classroom and other contexts in their discussions regarding learning, identity and encounters with history. This shows that ‘to apply sociohistorical models of identity uncritically, as if they “naturally” have the same form across contexts, would fail to explain how social identification actually happens in context.’³⁷⁹

More information on the students, as well as the factors that have influenced their identity formation will be explored throughout this thesis particularly through the presentation of the rest of the interview results in the following chapters. Within the sample group, spanning grades 12-10, there are six different nationalities present, with a number of different combinations and elements which students use to define themselves. The multicultural classroom is an interesting setting because of the likelihood of competing national historical narratives and identities

³⁷⁹ Wortham. 2005. *Learning Identity*. p. 8

resulting from the variety of cultural backgrounds that are present as well as the diverse experiences resulting from studying in different countries. The explicit focus within the history course, and the IB Diploma Programme in general, on the development and fostering of intercultural understanding, appreciation for diverse perspectives and recognition of a sense of historical identity all lend themselves to the research questions, providing a relevant case study environment.

As this chapter highlights, differences in perceptions of the history curricula can have an impact on the nature of the student encounter with history. Within the interviews, it was clear that the students perceived the curricula in both their previous educational environments and the international school to be restricted in scope, despite the international school's mission of an intercultural educational experience. Although students highlighted distinct differences between their former educational experiences and the history as presented in the international school, the inclusivity and diversity of topics and perspectives was deemed to be lacking. The students expressed frustration that their encounters with history were restricted to particular time periods and events, typically centering on WWII, as well as being from a Eurocentric point of view, particularly Germany and Western Europe. However, student perspectives regarding the community feel and to some extent the diversity of the international school, as well as the higher expectations regarding academic performance, did coincide with the educational mission of the school and the International Baccalaureate Organization as a whole.

Yet, even though students felt that they belonged in the school environment as a result of smaller class sizes and other factors, some still did not see themselves reflected in the curricula, which resulted in a general pattern of disenchantment from history. It is important to recognize these general patterns of perception and overall contextual details in order to better understand how

and with what history students are encountering and thus how their identity is being shaped through these encounters. The next chapter will further investigate how the development and deployment of agency in encounters with history influence the formation of achieved identities.

Chapter 5: Achieved Identity & Agency in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

*'The human act is not a release of an already organized tendency; it is a construction built up by the actor. Instead of a direct translation of the tendency into the act there is an intervening process which is responsible for the form and direction taken by the developing act.'*³⁸⁰ – Bruner

5.1 Achieved Identity

5.1.1 Introduction

Individuals are not simply acted upon or act without reflection, but are actively engaged in the construction of their own identities in relation to and through history. With this focus, this chapter highlights and furthers understanding of the role that individual agency plays by exploring how students construct and make sense of their own identities in relation to and through encounters with history. The chapter analyzes the process through which students both integrate and place encounters with history in direct juxtaposition to their active and dynamic constructions of identity.

Beginning with student perspectives on their own sense of achieved identity, i.e. how they define themselves, this chapter takes a step further from the purely social identity into the realm of agency. As a further exploration of agency, this chapter also explores how agency is exercised within encounters of history as related to identity formation. Through the uncovering of specific tools, as well as the process through which they are applied, further insight is gained into how students interact with and encounter history in a way that impacts identity development. The interview data highlighted within this chapter helps to more fully develop recognition of the role that individuals play in the formation of their own identities and historical understanding by

³⁸⁰ Bruner. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 94

answering the research question: *To what extent do students exercise agency in the development of their identities in relation to history?*

5.1.2 Achieved Identity: Student Perspectives

When discussing how he sees himself or his cultural background reflected in the history curriculum, Lukas states “*well I would say my, our history, German history is heavily involved in the past fifty years, I would say it is taught, at least in United States and Europe, I don’t know about the rest, but it’s an enormous part in history, the whole world changed through because of Germany, in some sort of sense. So it’s a big part of it.*” Within this statement, he acknowledges aspects of both his own personal identity (“my”) and that of the larger group (“our”) when discussing German history. He went on to mention that personal opinion of history plays a role in what people might say or do and that this is where bias comes from, with the curriculum itself not necessarily being an influencing factor. He mentions that this can be the case “*even if they don’t know any actual facts about*” history. This shows that in Lukas’ subjective perspective, agency is more significant a factor in shaping interpretations of history than curricular content.

Born to Australian and German parents and raised in the USA, Anna’s responses to some of the interview questions regarding history and identity had a strong reflective internal positioning based on the various aspects of her identity as well as recognizing the differences in salience of these aspects over time and in different places, including various educational environments and geographical contexts. For Anna, her perspective on history was linked to her identity. The salience and recognition of different aspects of her identity are also tied to emotional and cognitive components, including her awareness of her perspectives and manners of thinking, as well as her actions. She describes her perspective and cultural or national identity as changing over time. She doesn’t think about the Australian perspective as much as she recognizes the

influence that the American historical perspective and educational approach had on her while she was living there, before moving to Germany.

“Maybe the US thing, because they tend to be very patriotic in their history and that sort of thing, maybe that sometimes I can see that I used to be see for instance Communism and think oh this is horrible but then now I am here, I can see different sides of why people might chose Communism or what might happen in a Communist state and that was probably also due to the fact that I used to live in the US and now live in Europe and just or maybe just now go to an international school where they speak more openly or something.”

This shift in perspective on history also parallels a change and questioning of identity as a result of change in geographical and educational contexts. Although her time living in the US was influential, this is not a national identity that she chooses nor which she describes herself as.

When she moved from the USA to Germany and was first placed in the public German schools, Anna describes history class as consisting solely of Bismarck, Nazis and WWII related topics.

Although she found this to be “*incredibly boring*” because “*I just didn’t learn a lot about history, I just learned about the same thing the entire time because they never did anything else.*”

As a result of the limited scope of history that she encountered, Anna became disenchanted and bored with history, which she then distanced herself from as a subject because it was not relevant to her in any salient way at the time. Yet, she also admitted that it caused her to question the German dimension of her identity due to possible familial connections, as will be further explored in the next chapter. Eventually, as a result of attending the international school, Anna became actively interested in history again. “*For me it was more about the interest, I think it is an extremely interesting subject and it just, just as long as it is not as overdone as it is, but it is a really interesting topic and that’s why.*” A change in perspective and an interest in history are linked to identity acceptance and modification over time, place and historical topics. This shows that for Anna, history education is a significant factor in her identity development.

Ben's interest in history is fueled by how he views his national identity. Born and raised in Germany to a German father and American mother, Ben actively exercises agency by strongly defining himself as American. He expressed disappointment that his curriculum now is focused more on German history again when he would have preferred to focus on other topics. *"I would rather have more American history, but that is just because I am American."* When asked to elaborate on what topics in American history he would like to know more about, he responded

"Just basically everything because you know I come from America, so I would like to know more about it. I don't want to feel left out or I don't know, how can you be an American if you don't know American history? Well, that's part of it, for some I wanted to know German history but now I have German history so now I want to know American history so that's why I now base my essays on Martin Luther King and all of those kind of people."

Beyond wanting to know American history to fulfill the American identity dimension that he strongly ascribes to, Ben was also interested in German history because of other personal and identity related factors. As such, the salient aspects of his achieved identity guided his subsequent choices and actions in pursuing particular encounters with history that were perceived to be relevant.

As described in Chapter 4, when entering the international school in 8th grade, he was hoping to cover more German focused topics due to the overall context of being born and raised in Germany, and thus exposed to the older generation people who discussed WWII. The generational connection and environment influences his identity and interest in German history in terms of the topics he wants to learn about in school and through self-study, as will also be referenced in Chapter 6. However, because he identifies as American and felt that he had fulfilled his needed historical knowledge about Germany, Ben longed for historical topics that focused on the United States. His national identification and historical interest are closely connected, even to the point

where topics that are not focused enough on either national perspective, or were more international in scope, bore him and result in disenchantment because it is not considered to be relevant to the salient components of his identity. Although the US and Germany played a major role in some of the topics Ben mentioned being covered in the curriculum, as described in Chapter 4, the focus does not seem to be enough for him and he actively employed agency in a search for ways to explore his achieved identity through history by engaging in personal scholarship outside of the classroom.

Ben also discussed how he wished the history curriculum included more topics that focused on national American history because he feels more American and wants to learn more about this aspect of his identity and heritage because otherwise he felt that something was missing and he also did not want to feel left out. He reasoned that learning more American history would help him be more in touch with his American identity, especially since he felt he already possessed enough historical background knowledge linked to his German identity. Ben professed that the most important aspects of American history to learn are the ones that *“pretty much what changed the US, like Martin Luther King or the Civil War or General Lee or something. I mean everybody pretty much knows how we came to America.”* However, learning more history to be able to better develop that sense of American identity can be challenging. *“I have not done much, we have never done American history so I am not quite sure what to do, so I am just trying to do it myself, figure out what to learn, so I am just picking up what I can pick up at the moment.”* As for German history, the important topics to learn are *“of course the World War One, World War Two, that’s pretty much my main interest because that’s pretty much the main topic which influences the society now and that’s mainly my focus.”* For Ben, as for other participants, the relevance of the curriculum and historical topic to the salient aspects of their achieved identities

is highly significant. If they are not engaged with the material through this connection, then disengagement and boredom set in, resulting in poor academic performance for some.

When asked what he thinks would improve the history curriculum or that he wished was included, Ben described his wish for more American history and gave the example that when he has a choice, he tries to choose a topic in American history to study as a way to further his historical knowledge beyond what his relatives share with him. Although he later admitted that although *“I would like more American history but if people are from other cultures, they would also like others so I don’t think that it has to be improved, it’s just something I personally like.”* By combining his interests, background knowledge gleaned from topics previously covered in the curriculum, the external national German environment and his family, as well as opportunities he may have in the current curriculum to write about what he wishes, Ben uses history as a tool to actively explore and develop both his American and German identities.

Relevance is also important to Lena in that if she does not see a connection between the event and her own achieved identity, then she disassociates from it. Lena actively separates herself and her identity from history, saying *“well if we talk about the world wars or I don’t know what, I don’t really connect myself to what happened because that is what happened in history and I was not involved in that but it was my nation and in some kind but it wasn’t me.”* She uses time to separate the Germany of the past from the nation she identifies with. *“I think I am basically what Germany is today but not what Germany was years before.”* However, as she points out, she does connect herself to the nation that was involved in the historical events. Furthermore, she speaks in phrases such as *“my nation.”* The use of the possessive terminology shows the various levels of identity connection that can exist and which students use to describe themselves. She continued to make similar statements related to the importance of one’s connection to a national

level of identity, in other answers related to history education, with phrases such as “*your own country*.” This shows an underlying recognition of the link between history and identity on some level.

Max also actively exercises agency in developing his achieved identity by separating himself from the national past, while still identifying himself as German. When asked if he saw his culture reflected in the history curriculum at the international school, Max replied “*no, I don’t think that because I think it is history and it is not our fault what we did or did not and we should learn from that mistakes but we shouldn’t identify us with them*.” His achieved sense of identity is actively constructed through rejection of and in relation to history. Yet, even in the phrasing of the statement where he said that he should not be identified with past actions of the nation he is from, he still consistently used the words “we,” “our” and “us,” just as Lena had.

Arman actively further distances himself and his identity from history based on his identification with Iran as a major factor in his identity, stepping back from the German aspect of his identity. When asked if he sees himself and his cultural identity reflected in the history curriculum, he answers “*not at all, because I am from Iran and I think our history teacher has not even mentioned the word Iran once in the last three years*.” Although the German dimension of his identity is also important in terms of him being born in Germany to Iranian parents and feeling both German and Iranian, he rejects any identification to this German dimension of his identity through history. Arman admits that his German side is “*very represented*” in the history curriculum but also claims “*I don’t really identify myself with the Germans with this at all*.” Even though Arman states that he does not identify himself with German history, he did not claiming that he never identifies as German in any capacity, just through or in relation to history.

Therefore the history curriculum and his rejection of it, reinforces his Iranian identity because he distances himself from the German aspect of himself whenever the topic of history is mentioned.

Emily also considers history to be more interesting when it has a direct connection to her ascribed identity. *“It’s more exciting kind of if the history has in a way affected you or affected where you are from.”* Her national identity figures strongly into this phenomenon since *“a lot of the stuff affects me because the United States was a lot involved in a lot, for example just the Vietnam War or the Cuban Missile Crisis or something like that.”* However she is quick to admit that although her national identity figures prominently in her associations with history, she does not want to associate herself with the past actions of her nation that she does not agree with. Emily also uses history as a tool to shape the nature of her national identity by actively accepting it as an important component of who she is as well as distancing herself from history by saying it is just the past. *“I think it depends on the event. If it is something that I don’t really agree with what happened, then I know that was still my country that did that actions but just because I don’t agree with it, I don’t know I guess I try not to associate myself with that.”* In this way, Emily both acknowledges and rejects the influence that history has on her sense of self through an exploration of her beliefs and opinions as well as the role that her nationality plays in her achieved identity.

5.1.3 Summary

For many of the participants, achieved identity is formed in relation to and through history. This is not a passive process, rather, students actively deploy various mechanisms as tools through which history is either accepted, rejected or modified in relation to their achieved identity. Some participants use history as a tool to define and discover more about themselves because they see

history as a way to connect with a particular nationality or group that they identify with. Others reject any influence that history plays on their personal sense of self by actively separating themselves from particular historical time periods and events as well as national and group identities that they do not incorporate into their achieved identity. The participants categorize history as an ‘other’ in their achieved identity formation by rejecting an identity informed by history and creating a personal sense of self that is defined in opposition to historical elements, events and behaviors. For some of the participants this has an emotional element to it, with the rejection of guilt imposed by self and others due to the past being in opposition to the way they feel about their nation today. Sometimes the acceptance or rejection of history as an identity formation element depends on the subject under study within the classroom that day, sometimes it is strongly influenced by the conscious decisions of the student to belong to and associate with a particular group, while in other instances it has a noticeable social element rooted in contexts that will be discussed in the following chapter regarding the use of history in social identity formation via ascribed identities. Many of the participants used temporal positioning as a tool through which they distanced themselves from elements of history that were not relevant to their achieved identity and instead firmly root themselves and sense of self in the contemporary time period. When curricula or a particular historical topic was not perceived as relevant to salient aspects of their achieved identity, participants often became bored or disenchanted with history, either as a whole or in part. As such, perceived relevance and salience of history in relation to achieved identity influenced interest in and engagement with history, as well as academic performance.

5.2 Exercising Agency in Identity Construction: Student Use of Temporal Positioning in Encounters with History

5.2.1 Overview

Temporal positioning can serve as an important tool to help individuals actively organize their perceptions and sense of self, because ‘as individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives, they engage in a dynamic process of claiming identities, selves and constructing lives.’³⁸¹ This dynamic process is reflected in how one perceives and makes sense of encounters with history. Since the students actively used history as an ‘other’ in the construction of their achieved identity, ‘history, therefore, may provide a very specific, information-rich context for understanding how general psychological processes may be conditioned, created, or constrained.’³⁸² The prevalence of students’ utilization of temporal positioning within the interviews can shed light on the process of how students actively construct identity in relation to and through encounters with history. This can also provide insight on how students perceive, interpret and make sense of encounters with history, thus providing insight on how identity formation is impacted through encounters with history. This section focuses on how students exercise their sense of agency by actively utilizing temporal positioning to filter, restructure or reject encounters with history in order to make them relevant to the salient aspects of their achieved identity. As such, the discussion below contributes to answering the research question *To what extent do students exercise agency in the construction of their identities in relation to history?* by answering the related research question *How is this agency exercised?*

³⁸¹ Smith. 2002. Dilemmas of Narrative Identity. p. 261.

³⁸² Liu et al. 1999. Social Identity. p. 1.

Many of the patterns identified in the analysis of the interview data revolve around the active use of temporal positioning in the creation of a relationship between the past and present that is relevant to the ways in which students perceive themselves, thereby placing encounters with history into a context which upholds the salient aspects of their identity. As such, ‘the meaning of the past does not lie in the absolute significance of a single event but how that event is fitted into an appropriate story narrative.’³⁸³ In this manner, the use of temporal elements and relationships provide meaning and relevance to encounters with history, allowing students to create a relationship between the past and the present where one aspect informs and impacts the other. This upholds the notion that ‘history is the representation of change over time, and as a form of narrative it enables temporal creatures like use to create meaning.’³⁸⁴ This section highlights the main patterns related to the use of temporal positioning as a tool through which meaning is constructed from encounters with history, which also subsequently impacts identity. A strong preference for a chronological and continuous historical narrative was found across the interviews. As discussed within the methodology chapter, any patterns that result from analysis of a diverse sample are significant. This general pattern of preferring chronological narratives, found throughout the data sample, provides a strong foundation for the ensuing discussion of how meaning is created through encounters with history, as well as outlying cases related to the use of temporal elements by students. The students exercise their sense of agency by using temporal positioning in various ways that suit their particular understanding of history and identity, even if this disrupts their preference for chronological historical narratives. Thus, as a contradictions and disruptions to this general narrative are also explored. The identification of

³⁸³ Munslow. 2007. *Narrative and History*. p. 38

³⁸⁴ Munslow. 2007. *Narrative and History*. p. 16

these patterns helps provide a foundation for also answering the research questions: *What elements are used to interpret and make sense of encounters with history? How are they used?*

5.2.2 Temporal Positioning in Achieved Identity: Student Perspectives

In response to interview questions such as: ‘What is the goal or purpose of history education?’ and ‘What is most important to learn about history?’ a significant portion of the responses focused on a particular perception that had a similar framework. Students perceived history to contain a continuous and linear structure which stretched from the past, through the present and into the future. Across the sample, selective codes such as ‘history as a continuous narrative,’ ‘chronological narrative element/aspect,’ ‘preference for chronological narrative,’ ‘comparison of the past and present,’ and ‘influence on today’ had a high frequency. These selective codes unearth a preoccupation with the idea of a smooth, connected and chronological line existing throughout time, in a linear fashion. The focus on learning from the past for the future belies a subjective perception that history not only repeats itself but can also be prevented from doing so with the right knowledge, tools and understanding about how the past has shaped current relationships and situations. As such, it gives encounters with history meaning and relevance via the use of temporal positioning in this specific manner by connecting the past to the present. This belief about the past repeating itself is brought up by different students across the sample as an important element of history and the reason that learning history is important. The codes also show a preference for learning in chronological order or focusing on certain time periods as a way in which students employed this linear temporal structure to support their achieved identities by highlighting perceived relevance and causality.

When asked what the most important thing to learn about history was, Hannah stated *“I think most important is that you go in a chronological order because otherwise you jump from one another and you always mix up everything because many things are very similar because of the courses and the causes and everything, but I think what’s really important is to know why it happened, what happened and maybe the consequences, but that’s also what we do so that’s good.”* She is pleased with the focus on the ‘why’ element within the history courses at the international school because it extends beyond the narrower focus on facts within the German schools that she attended before. The explicit teaching of the relationship between events helps further her historical understanding. When Hannah reflected on her time in the German school, she strongly stated that she disliked history while studying there partly because of the focus on what rather than why. *“At my old school it was just facts, facts, facts/you have to know the dates, but I didn’t know why and I didn’t know what happened and then there came questions like why and I didn’t know.”* Understanding the larger context and the relationships between events rather than facts that can be seen as disconnected or unexplained is important to Hannah, as is learning about historical events in a chronological order. Through the use of temporal positioning, Hannah better understands encounters with history by placing them in a specific linear framework that highlights a cause and effect relationship, rather than seeing historical events in isolation. The selective codes of ‘preference for narrative,’ ‘chronological narrative’ and ‘history as a continuous narrative’ were coded throughout her interview responses to the questions concerning history.

Additionally, when asked about the purpose or goal of history education, her response clearly highlights the perception of a continuous linear relationship between the past, present and future, where history is seen to repeat itself. *“I think by history you can learn a lot about the future*

because a lot of situations will occur or have actually occurred twice or even more than that so you can kind of foresee what probably could happen next so that you can understand why it happens.” Thus the goal of history education, as perceived by her, is to prevent certain situations from reoccurring by learning from history and using that knowledge to benefit the future. This creates a sense of relevance for her, by creating a clear link between an obscure past and a salient present as well as a future that holds her interest. The linear relationship across time is one way in which she exercises her agency and sense of historical understanding.

The interview with Lukas exhibited the same general patterns, with selective codes ‘comparison of the past and present’ and ‘continuous narrative’ reflecting these patterns. Lukas finds that *“history is difficult because there’s so much detail about it”* but mentions that the *“overall aspect of history is quite interesting.”* He stated that *“it is interesting what is happening in the past and is likely to happen again, it’s better to learn from it now, to study the history of the past then going into another war or crisis comes upon us.”* When discussing what is most important to learn about history, Lukas said that World War I and II definitely should be learned about *“because it’s something we don’t want to have a third one of.”* According to him, the goal of history education is *“making people understand the past for the future I guess, can see several things happening in the past that will happen again.”* Within this statement, the use of temporal positioning as a tool to create a continuous connection between the past, present and future can be seen. Additionally, agency figures prominently in the idea that people, whether as individuals, groups, governments or societies, have a certain level of agency and power that they can use to effect change. Thus, there is the perception that the repetition can be altered in personal encounters with history by using knowledge and insight gleaned from history education.

As a use of temporal positioning in the perception and understanding of history Anna, Ben and Lena also perceived and accepted the notion of a general linear relationship across time. In line with the thoughts shared by Hannah and Lukas, Anna, Ben and Lena made statements that similarly reflected the idea that the past not only influences the present but that it can also provide insight into a future that can be changed through the application of historical knowledge during encounters with history. Without this knowledge imparted through history education, the students predicted that history would repeat itself. Thus history education is seen as a tool that can help shape the future when one exercises agency by applying historical knowledge and understanding in decision making. This viewpoint influences how students define the goal of history education.

Anna was very detailed in her description of this perceived goal of history as well as the importance of a linear temporal positioning by providing both the viewpoint of herself and her history teacher.

“Our history teacher always says it can teach us something not to do, what not to do in the future but I, I agree on one hand because of course something like Nazi Germany should not happen again, on the other hand I think it is more important just because we should want to learn about what happened previously and what might influence people instead of being ignorant and if we only live in our time then we are ignorant to everything else and I think you should be open to new things, so maybe a mix of both but more so because I think that we need to learn about other people and we can’t be just so self-centered and just learn about our time.”

Although at first glance this quote seems to reveal a discrepancy between the beliefs of the student and teacher, a closer look unveils that the seemingly slightly different stances are actually pieces of the same general perspective. As provided, both the perspective of the teacher and the student display the pattern of a continuous, linear structure where the past exerts a direct influence on the present. Thus, from Anna’s perspective, this explains why it is important to

learn history. In the above quote, the influence that the past has on people is presented by Anna as the opposite of ignorance, with ignorance not only reflecting arrogance but also having potentially dire consequences since history repeats itself. Learning history is presented by Anna as a method to combat arrogance and negative outcomes, thereby eradicating ignorance and freeing the future from becoming locked into a cycle where history continues to repeat itself. The quote also highlights the way in which a linear temporal structure creates relevance for the students. It also reflects the importance of perceived agency, since Anna clearly places the responsibility to learn and change history the shoulders of herself and others through the use of wording such as “we,” “our,” “you” and “I”.

Ben explained that the important thing to learn about history is that which influences the contemporary world. He gave the examples of World War I and II as *“my main interest because that’s pretty much the main topic which influences the society now and that’s mainly my focus, what influences us in our time because the rest is past and it happened but is not that important anymore.”* A clear link exists between the elements of the past that are linearly connected to the present versus those that are not and just don’t hold relevance for him. Ben went on to state *“if you can still see traces of the past now then I think it is more important.”* He does not specify the factors that determine this, nor does he explain exactly how one can tell when a historical event still influences the present. However he does provide other examples within the American context, beyond WWI and WWII, such as the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Again, the chronological and continuous influence of the past on the present was a theme existing throughout his interview. For Ben, these topics still hold significance because they remain relevant to and can be encountered within contemporary society.

Lena also found the connection between the past and the present one of the most interesting aspects of history. *“You have to understand the connection and it’s really cool if you can like at some point I understand that because that was what we made before and that’s what we do now and that’s connected.”* She also mentioned that in order to improve history education, this understanding of the connection between past and present should be better transferred and made clearer to other students who have not yet fully grasped it. The explicit teaching of these relationships and connections is important to her. Although dates and facts are essential, Lena explains that the reasons behind events, including the intentions and behaviors as well as why nations behaved in the manner that they did, are important to understand in order *“to not let bad events happen again.”* Beyond developing good background knowledge, *“to not get stupid,”* Max also agrees that the goal of history education is to *“learn from the past”* and historical mistakes to avoid repetition in the future. As with the interviews with Hannah and Lukas, Ben, Lena and Max reveal a perception of a continuous connection between the past, present and future with the goal to prevent negative events from occurring again through the application of historical knowledge and understanding. Certain aspects of history were perceived by the students to still be relevant and have significance specifically due to contemporary encounters and connections. If this connection was not perceived to exist, then history was no longer perceived as relevant and was simply relegated to the past, with a clear distance created through temporal positioning of certain historical events as completely removed and thus further from today’s world.

Arman expanded this theme when he commented that some aspects *“for example the relationship between countries in the past...explain why countries behave how they do now.”*

Again, the focus on why takes precedence over what within the overall historical account as the

most important aspect to learn within history education. A continuous, linear relationship that stretches from the past through to the present resurfaces as a tool for creating understanding of encounters with history. Just as other participants mentioned, Arman suggested that in order to improve history education, teachers should “*make things very clear, like why things happened in the past.*” Similarly to Hannah, Arman reveals that beyond wanting to know why things happened, he also gets confused about dates and other details related to chronological order, so would like to also know when something happened. Through explicit teaching about the relationship between contemporary situations and the historical record, history holds relevance for Arman in the same way that it did for the others.

This also holds true for Emily. In terms of learning history, she found that “*sometimes it is a little boring,*” although she admitted that “*maybe the history itself isn’t boring, maybe just class is boring.*” She stated that “*I think more exciting is when you can get more involved with learning,*” and that “*it’s more exciting kind of if the history has in a way affected you or effected where you are from.*” Yet again, the connection between the past and the present is found to be the most interesting element within history education and is perceived as worth learning by the student. When the student can establish a direct or close indirect relationship to the past, then history is considered to be more interesting because it involves the student. For Emily, even events that occurred before she was born are perceived to be of interest and have an effect on her because of her connection to her country, the United States of America. Although her interest in and connection to history and her nation vary based on the specific event under study and her personal beliefs regarding the actions taken by her nation, the use of temporal positioning to create a sense of a continuous connection between the past and the present remains a significant factor for Emily’s engagement and interaction with history.

When asked what kind of history should be taught in school, Emily relied on this use of temporal positioning again when she said *“I think most importantly the stuff that happened really not so recently but pretty recent and that it still effects what is going on today.”* Although she went beyond some of the other students when she claimed that most important to history education is *“the stuff that has happened over the past 200-300 years because that can still effect what is going on today,”* the focus remains on the connection between the past and the encounters with history that she has in the present. She even went as far as to give examples based in the contemporary context when she explained *“well like now how the economy, the crisis and everything, so like the Depression and everything that happened then could be important, you know that what is similar to what is going on today.”* Relevance is not only created via the process of linking the past to the present, but also creates a link between her identity through encounters with history. All of this is based on her belief that *“history repeats itself.”* *“So I think if more students were to know what happened then, when they grow up and are maybe the leader of a country then they can use their knowledge of history to determine what they should or shouldn’t do.”* Thus the goal or purpose of history education is to gather knowledge that should be used to inform decisions that will prevent history from repeating itself, thereby ensuring that historical mistakes and negative events do not occur again. This is a reflection of a perceived sense of agency where individuals can and have the responsibility to change the future as a result of learning the past.

The importance of using temporal positioning, especially in a chronological manner, reveals itself as a significant element that influences the participants’ understanding and perceptions of history and history education. ‘This demonstrates why narrative is the essential mode of historical explanation for it is only within a narrative that cause and effect can be grasped, let

alone demonstrated.’³⁸⁵ The use of temporal elements to position the past in relation to the present creates a sense of relevance of the past and provides meaning to the encounter with history due to its placement in relation to a present that the students already understand and can relate to on an individual or social level. The use of temporal elements as tools help construct understanding through the creation of relationships that place encounters with history in relation to the context of the students’ contemporary world. In this manner, temporal elements are tools that students actively use as part of their agency, to not only interpret and understand encounters with history, but also to protect the sense of agency by providing a context for responsibility. The agency of the individual and of the generation comes to the forefront within the belief that one can prevent historical atrocities from recurring in the future by learning from the past.

Participants across the sample stated that the goal of history education should be to learn from the past in order to understand the present and to prevent similar circumstances and events from happening in the future. The focus on learning from the past for the future belies a subjective perception that history not only repeats itself but can also be prevented from doing so by actively applying the right knowledge, tools and understanding about how the past shaped current relationships and situations. The use of temporal elements to create a continuous relationship between the past, present and future also highlights the possibilities that the future holds. Across the sample there was a perception that knowledge of history coupled with the agency of individuals can shape the future in multiple ways and therefore that there was a sense of responsibility to learn history. The students’ comments showed a sense of responsibility to learn from the past and to use their agency in order to make the future better than the past by actively preventing historical atrocities and events from being repeated.

³⁸⁵ Munslow. 2007. *Narrative and History*. p. 39

5.2.3 Temporal Positioning in Achieved Identity: The Use of Temporal Ruptures within the Linear Structure of History

The temporal structure that the students created and used in their perceptions and interpretations of their encounters with history did not always smoothly follow the linear structure they professed to prefer; some showed contradictions and ruptures within the temporal framework. These ruptures in the chronological account of history reflect the use of temporal positioning as a tool that students use in the construction of relevance and meaning from their encounters with history. Although the general perspectives found throughout the sample showed a preference for a chronological and continuous timeline within encounters with history, some participants also claimed that history had no impact on the present and was thus not of interest to them. This is seen in the interviews despite the participants still stating that the general goal is important to learn from to avoid the mistakes in the past being repeated in the future.

For example, Ben claims that beyond the historical topics that *“influence us in our time,” “the past is the past and it happened but it is not important anymore.”* Despite saying that some aspects of the past explain the behaviors and relationships between nations as they stand today, Arman strongly stated that *“I think that it is not interesting learning about what people did in the past, it is not crucial, cause it doesn’t contribute to your future life and yeah for example, physics, just for an example you learn how things work and it is very interesting but in history you just learn what people did in the past and you can’t apply it in your everyday life.”* For Max, the interest depends on the time period, with topics related to the Middle Ages or the 18th and 19th centuries not holding any interest intellectually. These topics are considered to be too far removed from the present and are perceived to hold no relevance to their current context, thus not being salient or holding significance for them or their identities.

Emily has an expanded view compared to other students within the sample, in terms of how far into the past events can still influence the present. Yet, she still states that “*it depends on the event*” and discusses how history class should be organized around past events that hold similarity to the present. Thus, even when taking into consideration the past 200-300 years, as she earlier referenced, the continuous narrative remains restricted in scope, without being extended though out history time. Rather, the importance of learning history is focused only on those areas of history where students see a clear connection between the past, the contemporary situational context and the everyday reality that they find themselves in today. When history is considered by the students to be relevant, then the salience and thus significance of the event increases as they encounter it and then is integrated or rejected into their identity framework through the exercising of agency. As such, students use temporal positioning as a tool through which they construct relevance through a connection with the present, thus ascribing significance to an encounter with history that is meaningful to their sense of how they define themselves and their world today. Therefore the students exercise agency by using temporal positioning as a tool in their construction of meaningful historical narratives that intersect and inform identity narratives. This becomes particularly clear when students discuss certain topics that hold more salience to their identities, such as the discussion of German history and how it relates to their sense of national identity.

For some participants this use of temporal positioning by situating certain historical topics or encounters outside of the previously accepted chronological and linearly constructed narrative, is most prevalent regarding German history and the construction of national identity. A strong distinction between the Germany of the past, which students disconnect from, and the Germany of the present, which students accept as part of their identity, is clearly made across multiple

interviews. This causes a noticeable contradiction within some of the interviews. For example, Lukas has many elements that fall within the continuous linear relationship but he also reveals a different possibility for rupture within this framework. Instead of looking back into the past from the present, he conjectures how one might look at history from the future. *“Maybe in twenty years we will have a totally different opinion about it so can’t really say what to teach in history.”* Although there are multiple factors that threaten the chronological structure, this apparent contradiction does not seem to threaten the overall subjective perception or use of a continuous, linear relationship as a tool. Rather, ruptures seem to be actively used as a separate tool that remains significant for the students even though it is distinct. It is also a cause of frustration when others do not perceive the same distinction. For example, Lukas also stated that many people do not understand that Germany has changed and is no longer the Germany of the WWII time period. He extrapolated on this topic in multiple instances throughout the interview, including when discussing history education in general and his time spent in the United States of America. He very clearly stated *“Germany was a different country at that time,”* and that some people he encountered while abroad *“don’t know better, have no real information about it, they are taught in school but...they can’t really understand how things have changed.”* This ‘ignorance’ was a cause of frustration for many of the participants who had spent time studying abroad. There is a need for recognition of one’s personal achieved identity and the related historical account as relevant to that identity. When this recognition and even empathy towards a constructed and relevant account linked to the salient aspects of one’s achieved identity is not met, it results in frustration.

The disassociation between the past and the present seems to be the most prevalent when participants talk about Germany, in a way that makes the Germany of the past distinct from the

Germany of today. Even when a participant focuses on the changes that Germany has undergone, the framework of a continuous narrative remains present because they connect the Germany of the present with the Germany of the past, even if just for the sake of saying that it is not the same. This highlights the existence of an association made between both Germanys, connecting the past and the present through the process of comparing them and turning the Germany of the past into the ‘other.’ As such, although there is a rupture in the chronological continuum, the relationship between the past and present remains. This is a way in which students exercise agency, by actively deploying temporal positioning in a manner that suits their understanding of history in relation to their achieved identity. For example, when asked what he considered was important to learn about Germany history, Lukas said *“no, it’s not about the German history but it’s the change from the history we have to what it is today and that’s what some of the people don’t get.”* The juxtaposition of the two Germanys is made with acknowledgement of a larger historical context and change over time, rather than comparing the two in the manner of snapshots that attempt to summarize how Germany was then and now. Due to this acknowledgement of the change over time, the connection between the past and the present becomes clearer and can be integrated into the overall use of temporal elements to construct a continuous and chronological relationship between history and identity that helps the students understand and make sense of encounters with history by making it relevant and providing an overall framework and context.

5.2.4 Summary

Although a participant may agree that Germany has played a significant role in recent history and thus impacted the present, the Germany of the past is considered separate and distinct from ‘their’ Germany of today. This clear-cut distinction further reflects the use of temporal

positioning as a tool whereby students construct relevance and meaning within encounters with history. The salience of a topic or historical event is determined by the relationship with identity and daily life. Those encounters or historical topics that are not perceived as relevant to a students' sense of self, the society they live in or their everyday life and interactions with others, are not as salient and thus hold no meaning for them. These topics are then either placed outside of the temporal context or at the distant end of the spectrum. As such, history is used as an 'other' from which identity is actively constructed through the use of temporal positioning as a tool that clearly delineates the elements in encounters with history that are salient to their achieved identity and those that are not. As will be demonstrated, these salient elements can be present in encounters with others such as teachers, peers and family members, exist within the curriculum, be aspects that hold significance for how students define themselves or are perceived to be relevant to their world today. The students are purposely exercising their agency by using temporal elements to position themselves as separate from certain aspects of the past, thereby protecting and further defining particular elements of their achieved identity.

5.3 Chapter Summary

Prior work has explored the essential role that narrative tools play in the construction of history from the perspective of the historian who is writing and reconstructing the past. The same methods used in the construction of official historical narratives are also used in the reception and reconstruction of them by the audience. As the interview data shows, the students use narrative elements as tools in their construction of their identities in tandem with the creation of their personal interpretation and understanding of history. Through various encounters with

history, students exercise a significant level of agency in the choice and integration of history into their identities, especially for their achieved identity.

The agency of the individual is exercised through a process ‘constituted by a flow of self interaction in which the individual indicates various things and objects to himself, defines them, judges them, selects from among them, pieces together his selections, thereby organizes himself.’³⁸⁶ As seen throughout the data presented in this chapter, this process of self-interaction is apparent when students encounter history; it is the process through which encounters with history are perceived, interpreted and re-imagined in such a way that makes sense to the student and fits into their formulation of identity constructs. ‘This intervening process works back on the tendency, sometimes guiding it, sometimes shaping it, sometimes transforming it, sometimes blocking it, and sometimes ruthlessly eliminating it.’³⁸⁷ When applied within the context of encounters with history and the subsequent impact on identity formation, this process remains true to forms in which students can and do exercise agency over the elements that they shape, integrate and eliminate from their overall constructed sense of self and historical understanding. Within the interrelated historical and identity relationship that the students construct, they use particular narrative elements such as temporal positioning within the process and application of agency to create a narrative and sense of identity that they understand, holds significance and ultimately is accepted into their sense of self and historical understanding, as gleaned from and in relation to encounters with history. ‘In this process the actor notes various things, defines and weighs them, makes decisions, and revises his plans as he takes account something new.’³⁸⁸ When encountering history, the students actively, if sometimes subconsciously, engage in this

³⁸⁶ Bruner. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 95

³⁸⁷ Bruner. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 95

³⁸⁸ Bruner. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 95

process. Just as there are ‘several narrative decisions the historian must make to explain what happened in the past as a story and what it means as history,’³⁸⁹ the students must do so in order to construct meaning of that history for themselves and within the context of their world. As such, students go beyond simply being part of the audience and in turn become active authors of their own identities constructed via their agency through encounters with history. This does not negate their position as an audience member, but rather provides the additional and sometimes simultaneous role of author. When students exercise their agency in this manner within the social context, they may act as authors for a particular intended audience, for example their peers, and as such, be both constructing, performing and receiving messages about identity and belonging within a socially induced encounter with history.

In the literature on historiography and narrative theory, temporality is considered to be an essential element of narrative as a discourse as well as within the construction of historical narratives. Particularly, in historical narratives ‘events appear not only to succeed one another in the regular order of the series but also to function as inaugurations, transitions, and the terminations of processes that are meaningful because they manifest the structures of plots.’³⁹⁰ As a result of the importance of time and chronology, ‘historians bear witness to the reality of this level of temporal organization by casting their accounts in the forms of narratives’³⁹¹ situating events within a specific timeframe, context and continuum. Although according to some, ‘historians, by and large, still tend to ignore the question of tense/timing in what they do,’³⁹² temporal elements were highly significant for the students. Meaning, context and placement were all constructed via the use of temporality and related temporal elements such as

³⁸⁹ Munslow. 2007. *Narrative and History*. p. 43

³⁹⁰ White. 1987. *Content of the Form*. p. 177

³⁹¹ White. 1987. *Content of the Form*. p. 177

³⁹² Munslow. *Narrative and History*. p. 51

chronology. Temporality is important not only for the organizational purposes related to how an individual views his/her reality and history, but also for how one views oneself. ‘Situating ourselves in time is a basic human need. Indeed, it is impossible to conceptualize life on the planet without doing so.’³⁹³ The interview results uphold this notion but also expands it by explaining how the students use temporality to make sense of and interpret their encounters with history in such a way that also assists in situating themselves and their sense of identity.

Student participants used temporality to interpret, understand and reconstruct their encounters with history in a manner that impacted the classroom experience and their identity construction. ‘The turning of past events, actions, time periods, objects and descriptions of physical locations into the emplotment of the history, which, as a mediated re-representation, necessitates a re-timing of the past.’³⁹⁴ The students utilized temporality to re-time the past in a manner that allowed them to situate themselves and history in a continuum that made sense to them based on their encounters with history and their sense of self. As such, students employ temporal elements in much the same manner as historians do, in order to interpret and make sense of the history that they are encountering in relation to their own lives and contemporary context. The students seem to prefer the ‘classic realist notion (of contiguity) where we move from event to event, and the narrative replicates this realistic progression’ in their processes of creating understanding from encounters with history. However, it is not always clear if this is a personal preference or one borne of consistent encounters such as the presentation within the curricula, the classroom and through society at large. However, some clues to show that although all of those factors do influence the manner in which the encounter with history is understood due to its presentation,

³⁹³ Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past. Critical Perspectives on the Past*. Temple University Press. p. 6.

³⁹⁴ Munslow. *Narrative and History*. p. 54

there also exists a push for alternative tellings. For example, some students mentioned how curricula in the international school is presented based on national boundaries within one particular theme, for example when covering the topic of the Cold War, they may discuss one nation's stance and the chronology within those events before moving to the coverage of another nation's perspectives and actions, although again presented chronologically. Thus students needed a sense of their chronological positioning in order to understand and evaluate history as well as to shape their own identities and perceptions. Temporal positioning remained important whether or not the students agreed with the chronological assumptions and structures perceived within the curricula or if there were ruptures and disfluencies within the chronological timeframe that was either presented or within that which the students constructed themselves.

An assumption about a linear relationship between the past, present and future not only existed in the minds and perceptions of the students but has also been perceived to exist within history as a discipline. 'By studying the choices and decisions of the past, students can confront today's problems and choices with a deeper awareness of the alternatives before them and the likely consequences of each.'³⁹⁵ Even when a warning about living solely in the past is made, history was widely assumed by the students to have a significant role in shaping the present and future, even if only as a tool or object from which to define and distinguish the present or future.

Therefore, history was used as an 'other' in identity formation, something from which to connect with or distinguish oneself from through the use of temporality and chronology as tools.³⁹⁶ Since the link between past, present and future is an important element of the commonly held beliefs about history, it is likely that this assumption and perception has been persuasively incorporated

³⁹⁵ National Center for History in Schools. Significance of History.

³⁹⁶ For example, see explanation of how New Labour used history to refashion itself as a 'modern' political party, as well as how it envisioned the relationship between the UK and the EU in Daddow. 2011. *New Labour and the European Union*. p. 162-210.

into the historical curriculum presented in schools and thus internalized by the students, even when restructured via ruptures in the chronological organization within the context of their own lives. The use of temporal positioning helped students construct a specific understanding of history while recognizing their place and identity in relation to it, even if they then rejected that positioning and formed a new identity, since those elements were used as tools to construct the self and the other.

Chapter 6: Social Others in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

“The impact of social groups on the way people see themselves and others around them cannot be understood without taking into consideration the broader social context in which they function.” – Ellemers, Spears & Doosje³⁹⁷

6.1 Social Aspects of Identity Formation in Encounters with History

Initial analysis of the interview data has shown that there are distinct social elements that influence encounters with history and the identity formation of the students. Whether student decisions to attend the international school stemmed from familial connections or from the subjective perception that the teachers at the international school were more welcoming, social factors acted as mitigating factors on a number of levels. Social factors influenced the school and classroom environment, encounters with history as well as decisions, perceptions and interpretations of those encounters by the students. ‘The human being sees the world through perspectives, developed socially, reality is social, and what we see “out there” (and within ourselves) is developed in interaction with others.’³⁹⁸ Even an objective reality is filtered through social interactions and gains meaning from one’s social life and reality. For example, studies have shown that it is possible for ‘...the group’s judgments became thoroughly internalized, so that people adhered to them even when reporting on their own judgment a year later, and even when participating in new groups whose members offered different judgments. The initial judgments were also found to have effects across “generations.”’³⁹⁹ Exploration of the ways in which social factors influence encounters with history and related identity formation processes is

³⁹⁷ Ellemers, Spears & Doosje. 2001. *Self and social identity*. p. 164

³⁹⁸ Blumer. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 44

³⁹⁹ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 16

discussed in this chapter by focusing on three main social groups that were identified as having a significant impact: peers, family members and teachers.

Since ‘we interpret the world according to social definitions,’ even if ‘something actually exists; we come to learn what it is through social interaction.’⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, even if there was an objective historical reality, the documentation of that reality has already been filtered through the social reality and perspectives of those individuals and groups who memorialized it for posterity sake (or even simply documented their contemporary reality). Then, the historical documentation that survived is made sense of and constructed into a narrative that is once again filtered through the historian’s perspective and social reality, including the contexts of time, place, academic pressures and other factors. These additional elements include whether or not the constructed narrative is then accepted by a society as a whole as well as the impact on and from other audiences, including individuals and groups. Each of which yet again filter the historical narrative through their own worldview and social perspective. For example, ‘when people identify themselves in ethnic terms, or see themselves as an “us” opposed to some “them,” it is usually because of social influences that might well have gone in the other direction.’⁴⁰¹ As such, the social reality of individuals plays a significant role in how they interpret, understand and make sense of encounters with history.

For the students attending the International School Bremen, clear patterns regarding the impact that certain social groups had on how the students encountered and interpreted encounters with history. Across the sample and at various points throughout the interviews, three main social groups were referenced and referred to in multiple ways. For example, teachers and family

⁴⁰⁰ Blumer. *Symbolic Interactionism*. p. 44

⁴⁰¹ Sunstein, C. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. Harvard University Press: Boston, MA. p. 13

members were discussed as main reasons for attending the international school. Teachers were also mentioned as one of the main influences on the school environment while peers were discussed in terms of the diversity of perspectives brought to the classroom. These three main social factors impacted students both within and outside of the classroom, blurring the lines and contexts within which the students encountered and interpreted history. For example, although family members were obviously not involved in the classroom learning, students still reference them as having a significant impact on encounters with history within the classroom are filtered, interpreted, made sense of and assigned meaning or importance. Each social factor impacted student encounters with history and identity formation in different yet related ways.

As has been explained, ‘who we are, or who we believe ourselves to be, is strongly influenced by our socialization.’⁴⁰² Thus, it is important to identify how students explain the impact of social elements on their viewpoints, identity and understanding of history. Identities are not created in a vacuum but are done so through constant interaction with others. As such, ‘no individual is solely responsible for their own identity and position vis-à-vis others in an interaction; this is something that is jointly constructed.’⁴⁰³ Thus, when exploring how students encounter history and the subsequent impact that these encounters have on identity formation, the social aspects of identities and encounters with history must also be analyzed. Therefore, this chapter explores the notion and impact of particular social factors identified by the students via the interviews as significant for identity development in relation to encounters with history. The significance of ascribed identity, i.e. definitions that others project onto an individual or group, for the formation

⁴⁰² Crotty, W. (ed.). 2005. *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective*. Northeastern Series on Democratization and Political Development. Northeastern University Press: Boston, MA. p. 25

⁴⁰³ Fuller, J. 2012. *Bilingual Pre-Teens: Competing Ideologies and Multiple Identities in the U.S. and Germany*. Routledge Studies in Sociolinguistics.

of identities and perspectives of history will be a focus. Via this ascription of meaning and identity, students' identities and the meaning that encounters of history are constructed and mitigated. As such, this chapter continues to develop a response to the main research question:

How is identity constructed in relation to encounters with history?

Since, 'family, neighborhood and school provide contact and experimental identification with younger and older children, and with young and old adults,'⁴⁰⁴ this social impact should be most significant through the elements of peers, family members and teachers, as identified across the interview sample. Therefore, the impact that each of these groups has on the students' identity formation and interpretation of encounters with history is explored more specifically in relation to the supplemental research question: *What factors have significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it related to encounters with history?* As such, the chapter first looks at ascribed identity in general, then secondly at the role that teachers have played in the students' encounters with history and their subsequent identity formation before discussing the impact of peers in a third step. The chapter then moves into family and generational influences as a fourth focus. The patterns identified across the sample are then summarized at the end of the chapter through a discussion on how ascribed identities in general influenced the students and their encounters with history.

Throughout the chapter, frequent reference to the interviews via the words of the students themselves help bring the theory to life by illustrating the process and impact that social elements have on identity formation via encounters with history. It becomes clear throughout this chapter that the social aspect of identity formation is an important mitigating factor in how

⁴⁰⁴ Erikson. 1994. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. p. 123

students interpret and integrate encounters with history into their worldview, sense of self and definitions of others. In this way, individual identity is not created by that individual alone but developed, at least in part, via social interactions and group memberships. Thus, ascribed identity, in terms of the categories, characteristics and group memberships foisted on individuals by others, play an important role in the creation of individual identities.

6.2 Ascribed Identities: The Social Other in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

6.2.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the ways in which students conceptualized themselves and perceive history related to other people and the characteristics ascribed to them by these other people. For some students, the social “other” refers to various categories, whether society at large, certain groups or particular individuals. However, despite different conceptualizations and definitions of the social other, students recognize and discuss social influence as a mitigating factor in encounters with history and, as will be seen, even in their own identity formation. Thus, the information on ascribed identities in encounters with history ‘involves the information conveyed by the actions and statements of other people...By a large margin, most of what we think comes not from firsthand knowledge but from what we learn from what others do and think.’⁴⁰⁵ Some of the students refer to this idea in the interviews by juxtaposing their subjective perceptions about how others think and how this relates to their own perceptions.

⁴⁰⁵ Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 9

6.2.2 The Social “Other” in Identity Formation & Encounters with History: Student Perspectives

For Hannah, the social realm seems to play a significant role in how she views history. In terms of the historical aspect, she often refers to others when describing the events that she considers important to learn about. She even alludes to politics and German society at large, as well as the more global approach taken by the international school. Using terms such as “they” and “most people,” Hannah often speaks on the societal or global level and separates people into large categories based on nationality and other similar factors. This tendency comes to the forefront when she describes the history classroom setting at the international school. *“Within history classes, it’s always like the Germans know everything about Nazi Germany, the Islamic know everything about their world.”* She sees this as a learning experience with the positive outcome of expanding her perspective and knowledge, since in history class *“everything comes together and you can learn from others, how they (i.e. others) see it or how they are or how they were taught, so expands your knowledge, can see how other people see it or got it taught.”*

Importantly, historical knowledge and perspective are presented as resulting from being part of a specific group, in this case defined by her as along religious and national backgrounds. Here, Hannah is using her agency by defining the boundaries and ascribing certain characteristics to the social factors she is referencing. In this way, she is consciously using social factors and her agency as part of her identity construction and conceptualizations of history, as well as the ways in which she perceives others.

Hannah went on to say that as with historical knowledge and perspective, bias can also be a result of one’s nationality and should be taken into consideration when evaluating sources within history class. *“For example because if he’s American and he talks about this it could be biased because he’s American and his view is different, is included in our history classes.”* She also

mentions other macro level factors that influence an individual's perspective, saying that *"just like with historians there are many different perspectives how you can see an event happening, depends on culture, religion, background, etc. I think."* In Hannah's view, these macro level characteristics of social identity can have a significant impact on interpretations and understandings of history.

In addition to her discussion of how macro level characteristics of social identity such as nationality, culture and religion impact one's historical perspective, knowledge and education, Hannah utilizes these same factors to clearly distance herself from these larger social groups in several instances. When asked what she thought was most important to learn about German history, she separates what she thinks most other people would say and her own thoughts on the matter. *"I think most people would say Hitler, but I don't know if that's my answer, because that is the only big event which happened in Germany which everybody knows, ah Germany, Hitler, so Germany is always linked to Hitler and Nazi Germany, maybe I would also link it very much to politics because otherwise you know about the history but you have no clue about politics although it is kind of really similar and linked together so this connection is also very important I think."* This juxtaposition highlights both her distance from the larger societal level group as well as the significant impact it has on her perspective through her focus on the connection between politics and history. The comment also reflects the use of individual agency to define achieved identity in relation to and through the rejection of social identity factors that she either ascribes to others or which are ascribed to her.

In Lukas' opinion, history is also mitigated through social factors stemming from the nation in which one lives and/or is educated. These national biases inform history and thus how people perceive history, their own reality and how they define others, which may change over time.

Therefore, Lukas suggests that a non-biased and multiple histories are what should inform the history curriculum taught in schools.

“Many kinds of histories. Well it would just be non-biased history, this is my part. Non-biased history from an aspect of just telling what information we have, of course it would be biased by some sort because you are in a country that you are taught in but I don’t know it should be history that just kind of explains it and the factors that were involved and not mislead or anything, like giving out opinions of other countries, I don’t know like the jihad or something. It’s their thing, if they do it then of course it is controversial to America or wherever but I don’t know now if it is good or bad, maybe in twenty years we will have a totally different opinion about it so you can’t really say what to teach in history.”

Lukas provides interesting insight into the ethics of history production and collective memory, as well as their influence on individual identity formation through particular identities ascribed to groups during the history production and educational processes. Using some of the same characteristics as Hannah does in order to define various social groups, such as religion and national background, he touches on how the value judgments ascribed to historical events, nations and groups are subjective because history is socially constructed. The preference for a chronological, linear historical perspective, seen here through his reference to future generations, further informs his subjective perceptions of history and his sense of national identity. More on how Lukas encounters history through ascribed identities, either constructed by others or himself, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Anna’s response to the question on how she sees her identity reflected in the history curriculum is similar to Lukas’ comments, in that the influence of the larger society and nation that she was living in at the time or which she felt was part of her identity had a significant impact on her own perspective and approach to history. *“Well, the Australian perspective to European history would probably be pretty, well I mean they know it but pretty ignorant... because their like, it’s a country sort of far away from everything else, you sort of know about it but you aren’t exactly*

into it, but I don't think that would be my perspective." Here she recognizes the influence that contextual factors such as national and educational environment have on how she views history and even other people's perspectives. In this response, she also makes the same type of value judgments of others based on a certain perspective of history, as others made in the instances pointed out by Lukas. She also goes on to mention that others may also make similar value judgments about her based on history. These value judgments are an example of what Lukas was describing as how ascribed and social identities are informed by history.

For Anna, the identity ascribed to her based on her nationality is something to dispute and that causes an emotional reaction from others. *"I guess that's what influenced me because you feel, because everything focuses on that's Germany, it makes you feel a little like people are being aggressive towards the whole thing."* This sense of ascribed identity influenced Anna's achieved identity by causing her to step away from identifying herself and connecting with German history or the Germany of the past. Ascribed identity influences Anna's sense of who she is as an individual, as an aspect of her achieved identity, because she defines herself by rejecting the particular German identity that others ascribe to her. The use of history as an 'other' in the identity formation process is clearly a pattern identified by some of the participants.

For Ben, the impact of ascribed identity is more indirect, with external factors influencing the topics taught in history class not necessarily being connected, in his mind, to how others view him or characterize him as part of a certain group. These external factors are seen as influencing curricular choices are based on restrictions and guidelines set by the degree programs, such as the German Abitur, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGSCE). For Ben, the ascribed identity is thus seen as being on a more indirect level present in education with a concrete focus, i.e. curricular topics, rather than on an

identity level in terms of his German identity. Where ascribed identity comes into play through the curriculum for Ben is the lack of focus on American related topics and events, which as previously discussed, he counters by choosing his own topics when the opportunity to do so is presented. In this manner, he utilizes agency in an attempt to resist a German identity ascribed to him through historical curriculum by reaffirming his American identity, also through the use of curricular choices related to history. This identity formation process still casts history into the role of the ‘other’ which the student as an active agent uses as a tool to create an achieved identity that is in opposition to the one ascribed to him through history education.

Lena also notices the differences within history education determined by the school environment, mission and identity as seen in comments throughout the interview. As previously pointed out, when asked what type of history should be taught Lena’s response referenced the influence of geographical location, national identity and the type of history taught in school. Yet although she pointed out the strong link between German history and history education in the German schools she attended, she also noted the importance of European and world histories. When asked about her suggestions for improvements in history education, Lena says that history should be “*maybe more about the whole world, not only the focus on your own country.*” The national level has an important role as the ‘other’ to play in the narratives and history that informs her identity, even as she rejects this narrowly ascribed identity in favor of a broader achieved identity.

Max also rejects the idea that being a national of a particular country and that country’s role in history should identity him. As previously mentioned, he does not feel that others should force one to identify with a group, or should identify others, based on the national history associated with one’s national background. He does not see himself within the history curriculum nor does he connect himself to the past based on how others view history or try to group him. The same

holds true for Arman, who minimizes his German identity when history is part of the discussion yet who was born and raised in Germany and attended German schools. He separates himself from the German historical background and instead focuses on his Iranian heritage when any attempts are made to connect him to the German past or history curriculum. Both students are further examples of the pattern many of the participants illustrate of rejecting an ascribed identity based on history and actively using that identity as an ‘other’ in their own achieved identity formation processes in a manner that results in an interpretation and understanding of history that is relevant through links to salient identity categories.

The emotions that Emily experiences and her level of commitment to her national identity can depend on the event that the class is studying, in part due to her own opinions but also taking into consideration the perceived reactions and thoughts of others. At first she says *“I don’t really feel any way because you can’t change what they did, I mean that is what my country did and there are other countries that have done worse or similar things so you can’t change the past you just have to accept that it happened.”* Here she again utilizes temporal positioning as an employment of agency in order to create distance between her achieved identity, identity ascribed to her as a result of her national background and history. Later, she goes on to admit that sometimes her acceptance or rejection of this aspect of identity associated with national background depends on the historical event. *“I guess it depends on the event. Maybe I feel more proud because it was something good but then it still happened.”* Therefore, Emily’s achieved and ascribed identities are both influenced by history itself and historical context as well as her personal emotions and judgments.

6.2.3 Summary

In relation to the supplemental research question, *What factors have a significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it related to encounters with history?* the interviews uphold the notion that ‘individuals are not fixed subjects, but position themselves, and are positioned by others, in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways. Thus power relations between individuals are constantly shifting. We speak of identity in terms of intersubjectivity, recognizing the dialogical aspect of the negotiation of subjectivities.’⁴⁰⁶ Through negotiation and interactions with a social other in relation to and encountered through history, the students’ identities as well as their perspectives regarding history were formed in various ways. Some of the students accepted and internalized what they saw as the perspectives of others, or what was ascribed to them, while in other instances, there was the particular positioning and deployment of agency that allowed the participants to separate themselves from however they defined the social “other,” whether on the societal or personal level. As such, the “other” should be recognized as a viable factor in the how students encounter and make sense of history, as well as how this impacts their identities. In order to better understand how this impact is borne out, it is important to also seek answers regarding the specific social factors that are at work in the identity formation process, which may mitigate the impact of encounters with history. These factors would be those that are most influential in acting as a social other in the ascribed identity cycle and through which the emotions, thoughts and perceptions of the students regarding history and identity are influenced. The factors that students recognized as highly significant in their encounters with history and their identity formation are teachers, peers and the family. The following sections continue to answer the research questions through analysis of the students’

⁴⁰⁶ Fuller. 2012. *Bilingual Pre-Teens*.

perspectives regarding these factors, including why and how they mitigate identity and encounters with history.

6.3 Teachers as a Mitigating Factor in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

6.3.1 Introduction

By exercising authority over curricular content as well as behaviors and comments deemed to be acceptable within the classroom, teachers set the stage by determining what and how history will be presented, as well as the content and tone of any ensuing discussion and interpretations, including the characteristics ascribed to particular groups or actors within historical encounters. ‘The local metapragmatic models that teachers and students use to identify each other can become resources for students learning the curriculum.’⁴⁰⁷ In this manner, ‘students draw on and construct cognitive models that help them make sense of the curricular content.’⁴⁰⁸ Since the teacher acts as and within an authoritative role in identifying and using particular cognitive models and choosing, at least to some extent, the curriculum through the way in which it is framed, teachers play an important part in the construction of not only the encounter with history itself but also how students interact with and make sense of the encounter.

6.3.2 The Role of the Teacher across Educational Systems: Student Perspectives

According to the participants, one of the areas of significant improvement between the international and German schools, were the teachers. The teachers in the international school were described as being fun, helpful, supportive and friendly. By contrast, the teachers in the

⁴⁰⁷ Wortham. 2005. *Learning Identity*. p. 90

⁴⁰⁸ Wortham. 2005. *Learning Identity*. p. 90

German schools were characterized as not caring about the students, distant and determined to move forward in the curriculum whether or not the students understood the material. The main reason for this difference in how teachers act, as subjectively perceived by the students, lies in the lack of individual attention, larger class sizes and curriculum restrictions found in the German schools. In comparison, the smaller classroom and school environment is seen as allowing for the teachers in the international school to pay closer attention to each student. Beyond this, teachers in the international school provide extra help and tutoring free of charge and outside of school hours, something that the participants describe as being rare in the German system due to the level of security through a strong tenure position that the teachers enjoy as German civil servants regardless of effort or effectiveness. Many students mention these and other similar characteristics the teachers at ISB embodied to be main reasons why they chose to attend the international school. Additionally, these distinctions had a positive impact on their academic performance, work ethic, adjustment and sense of belonging, all of which are indicative of student engagement and success, as well as influential for identity.

For example, Hannah explains her perceptions of the reasons behind the vast difference between the teachers in her old German school and the international school she currently attends and also summarizes the ways in which it has impacted her.

“The teachers are a lot different than the teachers that are in the state schools here because on the public schools here in Germany...they have kind of security, they can’t get kicked out of their job, they keep their job, so it’s like it doesn’t matter to them whether they put everything into it, like put a lot of effort into it or not...everything you do basically, they take it in but they don’t look at it, so you never get it back, like the homework and stuff, it never gets corrected or anything and they don’t actually care about you, they just do the syllabus they have to do and whether you understand or not, they just go through with the syllabus and that’s what’s totally different to this school because if you don’t understand, the teacher’s even willing to give you his or her free time and that’s the most important thing in this difference actually.”

The point about feeling cared for is echoed by other participants, who had also previously mentioned the impact that teachers in the international school have had on the school environment. Additionally, the participants appreciate that their teachers in the international school are willing to answer student questions, provide extra help or feedback and generally seem to enjoy their jobs. Hannah found that in the international school students could ask for help from their teachers or even their peers if they need it, where *“at my old school there was just a gap and see how you can cope with it and you have to know it, that’s it.”* These elements contribute to the overall sense of a community within the international school environment that allows the students to feel like they belong.

Lukas described this characteristic of a supportive community as a significant reason for choosing to attend the international school upon his return from a year abroad in the USA where he perceived significant differences between American and German teachers. *“That’s one thing I noticed in the States, the teachers are your friends and in Germany it’s just the teachers, you get taught by them and that’s it and this school is closer to the States, the teachers work with you together with you, to get you somewhere.”* He goes on to highlight one teacher in particular who is described as being a *“really nice teacher and he always helps you and he always goes back over the problems and he always gives you extra lessons if you need them, free. Not taking any, not charging any money. And it’s really helpful.”* This recognition of students as individuals with specific and unique needs allows them to be acknowledged outside of the group, which helps contribute to a sense of community and belonging created within the school environment. These characteristics impact the willingness of the students to participate in classroom discussions, by influencing the level of comfort and safety the students felt within the classroom environment, which enabled them to share personal opinions, beliefs and thoughts during discussions.

Lukas expanded upon this point when he stated that he especially likes the diversity of the people at the international school because *“each person has his individual way of thinking. It then for example, the teachers themselves, in this case they have all their minds how to teach, for example the math teacher, he’s from Burma and it’s totally different comparable to a German math teacher, it’s just a new experience.”* Here, Lukas perceives national background to be a defining factor in the identities and characteristics that he ascribes to the teachers. Additionally, the diversity mentioned by Lukas is not only found in the demographics of the student body and teachers as described in Chapter 4 but also the teaching styles. *“I always had good teachers in history but the issue of diversity and the people involved never came up.”* As discussed previously, he also explained that the teachers are more open, caring and helpful in both the American and international schools that he has attended. This diversity of the teaching styles extends to how the teachers react to different situations as their beliefs and personal experiences inform their behaviors, decisions and perspectives towards the students. Anna discusses the variety she perceives in her teachers. For example, she claims *“our teachers here who are Americans tend to be a bit closer minded, I mean it sounds horrible but it’s true, yeah they seem to be a bit more closed-minded than others and I think this is something that is due to their culture.”* She admits that as *“as senior students we don’t have a lot of different culture teachers, we do but not a big diversity. We have Germans, Holland, those are actually the two but I didn’t even notice that because the difference between an American teacher and a German teacher is so huge.”* Both the American and German teachers are perceived to have both positive and negative characteristics that manifest themselves in various ways. These characteristics and the meanings related to them are actively ascribed to the teachers by Anna in the same manner that Lukas had.

Although Anna concede that she no longer has classroom based interactions with the American teachers at the international school, there remain important differences perceived in how the teachers from various backgrounds interact with the students outside of the classroom. *“Well I actually do not have an American teacher anymore, I did until grade 10 and obviously there are a lot of American teachers that we know because we know everybody but we just don’t have them in class.”* The strongly community environment within the international school allows for everyone to get to know each other and interact, even if they are not within the same grade level or classroom. Thus, Anna actively used her personal experiences to inform her perceptions of the teachers who she has had in a specific classroom in the past as well as those whom she simply interacts with in the general school environment. She describes the American teachers as being more conservative and strict than the German teachers but with more school spirit.

“For instance the dress code again, they tend to be more conservative and you have to be a lot more careful with what you say, it’s not a bad thing necessarily, but it is really obvious they have a lot more school spirit than I would say German teachers do but then they are a lot stricter. But their sense of school spirit is so much better and their a lot more awake, if that makes sense, in school. Not that our German teachers here are not awake, but in a different way.”

She explains the reasons behind these differences as being caused by variations in *“perspective because they obviously see things in a different way and look for different things in students.”*

There is also the mindset of what would happen back in the teachers’ own countries, which may or may not be accurate or appropriate in the new environment, as demonstrated with Anna’s example again concerning the differences between her American and German teachers. *“We are not allowed to do certain what they think this would not happen in the US, but here it’s not a big thing or if we sit outside, sometimes one of us would get in trouble because we are sitting on someone else’s lap even though for us that is in no way a sexual thing or anything but we would get in trouble because that is something that is not appropriate and that is something that in a*

German school we wouldn't get either." These differences in perspective inform various reactions that add to the overall impact that diversity has within the general school environment, of which the classroom is only one aspect. Additionally, student agency is exercised in the process of ascribing identity characteristics to others based on differences in national background and educational environment.

For many of the participants, including Anna, a personal connection with a teacher is a significant element of the sense of community and belonging that the students perceive to exist within the international school environment, especially as compared to the lack of these characteristics in German schools, as described in Chapter 4. When asked what made the international school special, Anna replied *"I think the teacher, teacher-student environment situation because relationship, because we all tend to have really good relationships with our teachers."* She described this as being one of the significant differences between a typical German school teacher and those who teach at the international school. *"I could compare a typical German school teacher to an international school teacher there is a big difference between that."* Although she had a good relationship with her German teachers, despite her poor academic motivation and performance, the connections she has made with her teachers in the international school are stronger. *"Well my experience in a German school was, like I said, really good and even though my motivation left, the teachers still sort of stuck up for me, but not as much as they do here, and they are not so much on your, they're not on your side because it's teachers vs. students."* Even though she had some good teachers, she explains that in her German schools she also *"had the ones that very openly hated you for something that you weren't exactly sure what it was."* She went on to distinguish between the private German school she attended and the public German schools where her friends attended. *"Because I went to a private school, I*

was more privileged probably and most of the teachers taught me but a lot of my friends go to public schools, public German schools and the teachers don't come to lessons...they never teach them anything, they don't go into school...their classes are dismissed all the time." Anna describes this as leading to a result where *"none of the students are motivated, none of the teachers are motivated and they do the same thing year after year after year."* She states that *"I don't think it's a very good system"* but admits *"that's just my experience of other people, not of my German school."* Anna uses her own experiences and the subjective perceptions of the experiences of her peers to help construct and place her experiences and identity into perspective as it relates to these social elements of the teachers and the school environment. As such, she exercises agency in making sense of her experiences and placing them in a broader social construct, highlighting the use of social elements in the identity formation process as well as illustrating how she constructs and ascribes identities to others based on specific characteristics such as national background.

Although her experience with her teachers in the private German school she attended was better than that of her friends' experiences in the public system, the relationships Anna has with her teachers in the international school are still described as being more positive. She goes as far as saying that even the German teachers in the international school are better than those she interacted with in her German schools. *"Our German teacher Mr. X, I think is the exception to the rule of how I would picture a German teacher because he's really, really good and he is not what any of my German teachers at my German school were like."* For Anna, national background and school environment play a role in how she perceives and interacts with her teachers, both on the individual and system levels, as well as the identities that she ascribes to them.

For Ben, it was his mother's impression of the teachers in the German school system that initially drew him to the international school. Besides wanting her son to speak English because she is American, Ben describes his mother's perception of the teachers in the German schools as not being caring enough. *"She doesn't like the teaching of the teachers, she thinks they don't care enough and here they just care more, it is more similar to the American style she thinks."*

When asked about his personal opinion, Ben admitted that he felt similarly and prefers the international school over the German schools he had previously attended. *"I like it here more, I have been here since eighth grade and I mean, ok there are always some teachers that are not that great but just in general the environment of the teachers is, I feel more helped with them here."* These comments are in line with those of the other participants who also mentioned the support from the teachers as a primary element in the creation of a community environment where the students feel cared about. He went on to say that the international school environment is more supportive than in the German schools and again mentioned the teachers as an important element when asked what makes the international school special. *"It's because in the German schools I didn't have a connection with the teachers and here, there I was a bit more scared of the teachers and here I actually talk to the teachers, I actually do stuff with them, like if they need help I help them, so they actually ask me for help if they need carrying or something."* This type of interaction with the teachers has a positive impact on the overall institutional culture of the school. *"It's just more friendly, a friendship based environment"* in the international school as opposed to the German schools he experienced. Ben explains that in the German school he attended, *"teachers scared me more, they tended to scream at me more when I don't do something instead of telling me to do something, I wasn't that great when I was younger. I dunno, since I came here it is a lot easier for me."* He wonders if maybe the fact that they teach

in English is helpful, that perhaps *“teaching wise, I might be able to listen better in English”* but admits that he is not sure if that plays a role or not. For the students, relationships with teachers help characterize the type of educational environment of the school, in either a positive or negative manner.

When asked to describe a good teacher, Ben echoed his earlier comments related to his experiences with teachers at his German school by saying that a good teacher *“shouldn’t scare you, they shouldn’t be screaming at you.”* Instead, they should be *“supportive, funny.”* He goes on to describe his German teacher in the international school as an example of a good teacher. *“He’s just, he’s not trying to be funny, he is just naturally funny so it makes it, you just want to listen and he just designs his lessons to be more interesting.”* He further explains that *“you get some teachers who come in and are just not really prepared or they just keep on doing the same thing over, they don’t think much about their lessons, they just do the same thing that they have done all the time, year after year and then there are teachers who are actually mixing up their lessons and trying new things and stuff.”* The effort to engage students is appreciated and considered as yet another positive aspect of an educational environment that is perceived to have a community atmosphere. Pertaining to history teachers in particular, there are certain characteristics that Ben stated should be possessed in order to be a good teacher. These also reflect the differences he experienced between the German and international environments.

History teachers

“should be more fun, like arguing. Most history teachers are not open, they say this is how it was or they have their own way that they see things so they say this is how it is, you say could it be this way and they say no this is how it is and of course there are always more sides to it so you never quite know how it is and with my history teachers sometimes you have to have exactly what they want to hear in order to get the answer right even though there might be a total different correct answer.”

The effort to actively engage students is consistent with the perception of a good teacher across disciplinary boundaries. For the history teacher, an openness to other perspectives is perceived by Ben to be especially important to have and encourage within international and diverse classroom environments. The concept of a dedicated space through which to explore diverse opinions and perspectives is also linked back to the sense of community to be found in the international school because students are recognized as individuals with opinions, as well as considered active members of an educational community where it is safe to exercise agency by . Furthering this train of thought, Ben states that history teachers at an international school should *“know a lot of cultures because it makes it easier for the teacher to communicate with different children or different countries so I think the more cultures they know, the better and if their talking about a country in history, they should know about it or at least understand.”* Possessing this background knowledge would allow the teachers to connect better with the students through the topics as well as having a deeper depth of history knowledge. The use of this knowledge would inform the relationship between teacher and student, contributing to the community atmosphere within the school environment.

Teachers were also a significant factor in Lena’s decision to attend the international school. Originally, it was her sister’s decision to switch from the German school to the international school because she was not happy with the teachers in the German school she was attending. *“She wasn’t comfortable with the teachers with the way students were treated in my old school.”* Lena goes on to explain this is *“because in my old school there were lots and lots and lots of children and so they couldn’t focus on one single student when someone had problems or so the teacher just had to go on with the stuff and couldn’t concentrate on, on single students.”* In this environment, students were not perceived as being recognized as individuals with specific needs

in the same manner that they are perceived as being in the international school. Lena switched schools “*basically to make it easier for both so then she didn’t have to go alone.*” For her “*it was also a new experience*” although she “*could have stayed in my old school*” since “*there was no main reason or so that I didn’t want to go to my old school.*” However, even though she originally attended the international school as a result of family relationships, Lena admits that she perceived the teachers in a similar manner as her sister had and that her academic performance was positively affected once she transferred to the international school. “*In the German school my grades were ok but not outstanding and now I think I work a lot more.*” She explains that the reason “*I do a lot better*” is “*because teachers are talking to you individually...when you have problem they are saying things and the groups are much smaller so if you get a problem you can just raise your hand and say it out and they will explain it to you and they would have time to explain it.*” This is a significant change from her prior German schools where the “*teachers just have to go on and cannot care for one single person that doesn’t understand the stuff or so.*” Recognition as an individual by receiving attention activated achieved identities and a sense of belonging within the school environment because the students perceive that they are acknowledged and supported.

As she reiterates at various points throughout the interview, Lena explains that the personalized attention from the teachers and the effort to include new students that is a characteristic of the community environment at the international school, helped her adjust to the new educational setting. “*From the beginning the teachers said ok now it’s getting serious you have to get organized, you have to get a plan and do this and that.*” Although “*I think they do quite a lot of pressure*” this has a positive outcome because “*only with this pressure is it possible to really work the whole time.*” She internalized the advice of her teachers. “*If you say ok now I will work*

then you really, really, work because you have this in mind what the teachers say to you.” The reminders from the teachers on how to work in the new academic environment were not just said in passing but were consistent. *“Basically I think it’s once a week and say something like you have to work now, you have to get ready, get organized, get a plan and do this and do this and they remind us all the time and that really helps I think.”* The explicit reminders and information not only helped her adjust but in the end had a positive impact on her educational performance by increasing her grades. She later discusses how a good teacher would not only make sure that every student understands the material, but that the teacher is also accepting of other opinions, views and beliefs that inform a diverse classroom. She mentioned that this was not always the case in her previous school in Utah and explained that teachers there may have been more biased towards the US because there was not much student diversity. A sense of community and belonging, as well as explicit teaching of skills necessary for academic success contribute to positive descriptions of the international school environment, largely as a result of behaviors and characteristics of the teachers.

Max also noticed a difference in the teachers between the German and international schools and noted how the academic expectations in the international school were higher than in his previous German gymnasium. When he was asked what characteristics make a good teacher, Max further described the importance of guidance from the same teacher that Lena had referred to. *“He should try to see where the students are weak at and try to improve his weaknesses and yeah he should also show us how to do something and not just tell us to do it.”* As explained in the section on general differences between his former German school and the international school, recognition of his individual needs as well as explicit advice and instruction helped Max adjust to the new educational environment and expectations.

Arman does not focus on the teachers as much as some of the other participants. However, there are points throughout the interview where he echoes some of the sentiments that his peers expressed more strongly. For example, one of the reasons he chose to attend the international school with his brother is because he perceived the teachers to care about the students and provide individualized attention. He also mentions that there are some characteristics one teacher has, which he would like to learn, even though he does not want to be a teacher himself. “*Mr. X, he is very organized, he expresses himself very clearly, that’s something that I would like to learn.*” Although not described in detail, the teachers in the international school have still influenced Arman’s decisions and motivations based on similar characteristics mentioned by other participants such as explicitness and contributing to an overall sense of community by caring about the students as individuals.

6.3.3 Summary

The perspectives and comments students shared regarding the role of their teachers in the classroom reflect a larger debate within German society about the civil servant status of German public school teachers that has ‘has been a topic of public debate in Germany for some time, particularly since unification, but teachers’ organizations are fighting hard to preserve their privileged position.’⁴⁰⁹ Since civil servants, ‘almost without exception, have to be German nationals, a further exclusivity is ensured and foreign entry to the profession is almost impossible.’⁴¹⁰ Situated both within and outside of the national German and international educational systems, the International School Bremen provided a distinct educational experience compared to the prior education that many of the students had experienced within the national

⁴⁰⁹ Hahn. 1998. *Education and Society in Germany*. p. 170

⁴¹⁰ Hahn. 1998. *Education and Society in Germany*. p. 170

German context or abroad. The diversity in the backgrounds of the teachers in the international school is one of the characteristics highlighted by the participants as a significant difference and is commented on across various categories. For example, the diversity of the teachers in the international school has been pointed out as an influencing factor in teaching style, classroom environment, interactions with students and overall learning. These differences are particularly insightful when the students juxtapose their experiences in national schools and the international school.

Although likely not true of all teachers in Germany, at least in the eyes of the students interviewed in this sample, the distance and coldness that characterized the student-teacher interactions within the German schools they attended was perceived to be partly a result of the system structure, whereby teachers enjoy a secure tenure, regardless of the attention (or lack thereof) that they put towards student learning. Some of these results may be 'indicative of a system still rigidly adhering to antiquated structures and dessicated traditions, such as the domination of a strong state sector, with teachers part of the civil service, often more reluctant to embrace change than those in less bureaucratic systems.'⁴¹¹ The interviews indicate that the students prefer and embrace a warmer and friendlier student-teacher relationship stemming from true concern and interest rather than a sense of duty alone. The students saw these differences between their former German schools and the international school, as well as some schools abroad, as being positive changes and suggested that similar modifications would improve the German school system and engage more students. Student engagement and level of comfort within the classroom environment have a significant impact on whether or not they will share beliefs and opinions, especially those that may differ from the general group consensus. A

⁴¹¹ Hahn. 1998. *Education and Society in Germany*. p. 170

dedicated safe space to explore individual agency is one aspect of the social environment that the teachers are perceived to contribute to by recognizing the students as individuals.

For most of the participants, their teachers have had a significant impact in multiple ways, including a profound role in shaping the general environment, the curriculum and the overall learning within the international school. The role of the teacher is essential to the creation of the welcoming and supportive learning environment that the participants focused on. The individual attention, willingness to provide help and academic support, as well as the manner in which the teachers interact with the students all contribute to the sense the students have that the teachers care about them and creates a sense of community within the school. This feeling was lacking within the German school environment and is often cherished by the students now that they experience the supportive atmosphere in the international school, even if it does come with different rules and regulations that may be a challenge to adapt to at times. When asked if the participants saw their teachers as moral role models, although not all of them replied affirmatively, they all did mention certain characteristics of their current teachers that they like, admire and respect. As such, the teachers serve and are perceived as authority figures who hold a certain level of legitimacy and power. Thus, teachers have a significant impact on the classroom environment and the related interactions that occur within that environment and the school as a community. Therefore, they can influence the perspectives and beliefs of students concerning history, including how students perceive and make sense of encounters with history.

Even if a school may have a supportive and inclusive environment on the systemic or curricular levels, teachers exert immense control over the type of interactions they allow and the type of learning environment they create inside the individual classrooms. Since, as described, history is full of symbols and meaning, the perception of the teacher regarding those symbols and

meanings as well as other perspectives they perceive as legitimate will impact interactions and discussions within the classroom. Additionally, the environment that the teacher creates and the views which are allowed to be shared within that environment will impact how students interact and what opinions, if any, they feel comfortable with or are able to share within the group.

Therefore, it was important to review the role and impact of the teacher within the learning environment and curriculum when looking at how identity formation is impacted by encounters with history.

Thus, the recognition and study of the role that teachers play in the classroom is important to the understanding of factors that mitigate the impact of student encounters with history, and their subsequent identity formation. Throughout the interviews, the students compared, contrasted and described the different types of teachers that they have encountered among different educational contexts and how these differences were linked to changes in the classroom environment and learning and academic performance. For the students, the teacher played an important role in the creation of a classroom environment that was conducive to learning by creating a sense of community where the students felt that they belonged and were recognized as individuals. With the active engagement and support from teachers in the international school and certain places abroad, students more actively engaged with the curricula and their peers, resulting in more positive learning environments and changes in their learning habits and levels of engagement. By actively modeling particular behaviors and attitudes and holding the students accountable, teachers seemed to help students feel safer and more accepted in the international school environment. As a result, they were able to more fully explore and interact with their achieved identities in relation to history, whether in the learning of the curricula or in the expressing of their perceptions and opinions. The thoughts of the students regarding their teachers help identify

how and why teachers can be positive or negative role models within the classroom, and that they impact far more than just the learning of the material. All of these aspects are social in nature and still contribute to achieved identity.

Furthermore, the teachers played a role in how students engaged with history as well as how they said that history should be taught. There was explicit mention by some participants that history should be an interactive subject where various perspectives are expressed, acknowledged and analyzed. This style of teaching promoted active learning and engagement with the material, critical thinking and historical understanding in a manner that many of the students claimed had not been done in previous institutions. Teaching history in this way allowed for the students to encounter, interact with and formulate perspectives that otherwise would have gone unvoiced and perhaps not even thought about. Active engagement with the curricular material is a catalyst through which students learn to express themselves and their interpretations of history while also being exposed to the perspectives of others. The space provided by a welcoming environment as well as explicit and active engagement with the material is where teachers and peers intersect and overlap as mitigating factors within encounters with history and the formation of identities.

6.4 Peers as a Mitigating Social Factor in Identity Formation & Encounters with History

6.4.1 Introduction

Within social interactions, group members are ‘especially likely to be swayed by a confident and consistent group member.’⁴¹² Although, as pointed out in the section above, this group member could be one who is also in a position of authority like a teacher, peers can also serve in the role

⁴¹² Sunstein. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. p. 16

of a confident and consistent member who can sway the opinions and identities of others. For example, ‘knowing where an individual adolescent fits into the peer culture of his or her school tells us a great deal about that student’s orientation toward academics.’⁴¹³ Peer and social groups exert a significant influence on one’s sense of belonging, identity and classroom behaviors, partly through the creation and distribution of social norms and expectations. Thus, the impact of peers on academics, as well as in other areas, can be a positive or negative one depending on the peer pressure and motivations extended by particular groups. As demonstrated via the interviews, the influence of peers is also a mitigating factor in encountering, interpreting and understanding history as well as developing identities. In the section below, the participants reference and explain various examples of how encounters with history were constructed by peers, ascribed to them in different ways (usually negative), and how these ascriptions not only impacted them but also reflected particular group norms and levels of historical knowledge. The focus on peers, as well as the explanations of how peers influenced them in various ways, helps explain how peers act as a social “other” in identity formation and thus influence how, when and the outcome of student encounters with history.

6.4.2 The Role of Peers across Educational Systems: Student Perspectives

Social others also influence the formation of ascribed identity through the use of history in more direct forms than on the broader levels mentioned earlier in this chapter. For example, when living abroad in the UK, Hannah experienced teasing from other youths that centered around her German nationality and events in Germany’s historical past, specifically WWII. These negative and automatic associations that peers made between her German nationality and particular

⁴¹³ Steinberg. 1997. *Beyond the Classroom*. p. 24

historical events, i.e. Hitler and WWII, occurred on different levels. *“Some of the guys I met made Hitler jokes, it was really unnecessary, so they say oh yeah the Germans heil Hitler, it wasn’t very funny.”* Her physical appearance, of being blond with blue eyes, was also mentioned as contributing to the automatic association some people were perceived and characterized through a historical lens. Hannah found these judgments to be an automatic association between Germany and Hitler in the minds of others. *“I don’t know if this is the right word but predetermined, predestinated, something with a pre-, so they have a kind of prejudice, that’s the word, against Germans I think because if you are like me, blue eyes and blond hair, they say oh you are an, oh I don’t know the English word for that but your Aryan, oh Nazis and you are one of the good ones and so I think that’s pretty biased and a lot of prejudices behind that.”* She describes this type of occurrence as being *“pretty biased”* and with *“a lot of prejudices behind,”* the interactions and associations others made about her, not only abroad but also while in Germany. These biases and prejudices that she refers to are based on events and mindsets from the WWII period and thus are informed and colored by history, thus influencing her ascribed identity.

The various educational environments that Ben has been a part of, and the cultural make-up of those environments, have had a significant impact on how Ben views himself and his national identity. Despite having a level of diversity in his German schools that his peers did not experience, *“when I was younger I thought I was more German, well I felt more German, just because my education was in German, it was a German education.”* At the same time, *“I didn’t watch German television shows, I only watched American stuff and I always watched everything in English”* and since *“kids at my age at that time were not studying English at that time”* Ben felt that he *“had a clear advantage over them”* as well as feeling *“a little bit separate from them”*

because I knew a different world than they did. So sometimes they talked about something and I didn't understand them quite because I didn't know what they were talking about." Since attending the international school *"it is sort of equaling out now,"* in terms of sharing common ground with his peers. For Ben, the national background of the peers that surround him has a direct impact on which aspects of his identity become more salient.

While attending an all-male boarding school in the United States, Lukas was also exposed to similarly negative and historically based associations and comments made by peers who would call him names such as 'Nazi.' He connects these experiences back to historical knowledge and education or the lack thereof as well as the adolescent male tendency towards competition.

"Well yes, it's ah, for the Americans it's not really to accept the Germans I would say because of history, the historical background and that kind of things and their not really, I mean their educated about it but if you call them names like Nazis or something, I mean I don't care about it because I know my history but they don't know what they are doing. So. That's the only thing that is different because the integration thing, that takes some time but then... because it was a boarding school where I was, and there were about 300 guys normally, there was this masculine, I've got to be better than you kind of thing, so of course when you do something they don't like or I don't know just for fun, they call you names. And at first it's name calling like Nazi or whatever, I don't care, and they didn't mean it like serious or something but it's, they don't know better, they have no real information about it. They are taught in school but I don't know, that's it."

Lukas goes on to explain that in his view the reason for this lack of historical knowledge, as well as for the distortion of the knowledge that does exist, is the type of history that is taught in school and the prejudices that inform it. *"I studied German history, in America, which was quite interesting"* because *"they've a whole different perception of our Nazi Germany. Because I dunno, they teach about it but teach it more like in America, from like the American perspective like we did everything wrong."* He describes this history as being *"well not that critical"* with the result that *"the children or students don't get the sense it was history, that it was from both sides."* Challenging or changing this understanding is *"not easy I say because Germany was a*

different country at that time.” Some students *“still haven’t made, some haven’t been to Europe or anything so they don’t know how different the world is over here than America, that’s why they don’t have, they can’t really understand how things have changed. And so it’s not enough just telling them that yourself.”* In Lukas’ mind, this held true for most of the people he encountered while studying in the USA. Yet, although he claimed not to have cared or let it affect him, the use of possessive terms such as ‘our’ and ‘we’ when discussing the very historical events he was trying to distance himself from points to an underlying internalized ascribed identity, even when exercising agency in separating his achieved identity from that which is ascribed to him by others by utilizing temporal positioning.

At least in Lukas’ subjective perception, having a personal connection to Germany seemed to have helped some people understand the nuances and differences between history and the Germany of today. *“I had a really good history teacher and he actually had German ancestors, but other students I met, yeah, they don’t really know anything about Germany, they just know Hitler and the autobahn and beer, that’s what they know about Germany.”* This example of a personal connection to Germany and how it influenced perception about Germany and history was also mentioned later in the interview when Lukas described his history teacher as being more interested in and open to his viewpoint because of her personal connection to Germany. There is a perceived sense of relevance in the identity that Lukas ascribes to the history teacher due to ancestral ties.

Overall, the perception and understanding of history are seen to influence people’s viewpoints and behaviors towards Lukas throughout particular experiences he had while living and studying abroad in the United States of America in a similar manner that they had for Hannah. However, whereas Hannah tends to speak more broadly with only a few personal examples, Lukas provides

multiple examples and pulls more from his personal experiences in history classes abroad to inform his perceptions and opinions in relation to his achieved and ascribed identities. Lukas is also similar to Hannah in the manner that he distances himself from what he considers to be uninformed or erroneous ideas about Germany. He claims that the instances he described in the interview *“didn’t bother me. I mean if want to come to my country, our country then they should mention something about it, if not then they can stay in their world.”* Although he claims that these situations do not bother him, he clearly uses creates distance and boundaries between groups based on national background and perceived historical understanding, especially when it is not in line with his own view.

In a more positive note, there were also people who were genuinely interested in Germany and it was with those people that Lukas felt he could connect and communicate with. *“Of course I had people who were interested by history and Germany itself but people I could talk to and who could explain all those things and were really liking those things and I could offer, they wanted to come here and there are those people but there are some who just take it as it is.”* However, when asked what he believes is important to learn about German history, Lukas returns to the idea that most people do not understand the change that has occurred and the differences between a historical Germany and the present reality. He presents examples from his sister’s experiences abroad, which have much in common with the instances that he described earlier and also echo those of Hannah. *“It’s not about the German history but it’s the change from the history we have to what it is today and that’s what some of the people don’t get. For example, my sister used to study abroad and she was asked if we have cars over here or if Hitler’s still alive and all that kind of things. It’s just the, well they have no interest in it, that’s the thing.”* The temporal distance previously discussed is seen here with a focus on the change in Germany over

time and the difference between the past and present as being important to learn, particularly for Lukas.

Later in the interview, Lukas returned to the theme of how others perceived and labeled him based on his nationality when he mentions that although *“there were many from other countries, from the Middle East and everything but I was the only German kid, so my nickname was actually Germany throughout the whole year.”* He goes on to explain *“I didn’t take it as offensive or something. I got used to it and people still call me after that.”* In history class, this played out in a multitude of ways. Despite the nickname and the examples that he described earlier, as explained in previous paragraphs, Lukas also said that others did not look at him differently or ask him questions because he was the only German student. However, *“well they ask me about, well not my opinion, but I always try to put my, from my point of view, from how I believe it was, or about the things and because my teacher, my history teacher had German ancestors, she was always happy to have my input, so it was, and they all talked about it, we were all talking.”* For Lukas, peers were actively engaged in creating and ascribing a particular identity to him based on perceptions and incomplete knowledge of history. These encounters with history constructed by others served to act as a model through which Lukas either accepted or rejected aspects of the identity ascribed to him by his peers and thus acted as a social ‘other’ in his identity formation process. Lukas had to engage with in order to defend his achieved identity in response to perceived social threats in such a way that history and identity were interwoven. Historical knowledge was used to formulate ascribed identities as well as meaning within those identities.

Social environment while abroad also played a role in formulating Lena’s sense of achieved identity. Although she did not mention as many, or as detailed negative responses regarding her

interactions with peers while studying abroad in Mexico, although she does later describe how being surrounded by peers who were of a different national background made her more acutely aware of her own national identity as German. She states that *“I think I felt my identity more in Mexico, because everyone was asking me where are you from and what language and so on so I could talk a lot about Germany so I actually felt a lot more German there because when you live in Germany for your whole life, you don’t really realize because everyone around you is German as well.”* However, she did not specifically mention that her peers ascribed identity characteristics to her based on historical knowledge or attitudes informed by history. Thus the encounters with history as imposed upon her by others may have been limited even though her identity was influenced by the social environment.

6.4.3 Summary of Interview Data Regarding the Influence of Peers

As demonstrated by some of the statements that the students made, there were clear instances where prejudicial ascriptions based on national background were made by and acted upon by peers. Often, these assessments were based on particular historical knowledge, however incomplete. The stereotypes created and perpetuated by other students had an impact on the participants because certain characteristics or assessments were ascribed onto them. The participants then reacted to those stereotypes in certain ways, such as by internalizing the views, acting as a representative of their country in the hopes of educating others, emotional responses or rejecting the ascription altogether. Either choice still acknowledges and integrates the identities ascribed by others into the identity formation process via the use of ascribed identities as a social other from which new identities are created in relation to those ascribed to them. As such, the views of their peers had a profound impact on the students, even when they did not acknowledge or recognize it as such. Additionally, since many of these ascribed identities were

historically informed, they were simultaneously constructed encounters with history from both sides since someone used of historical knowledge or historically informed stereotypes to create an ascribed identity for someone and another person received and reacted to that ascribed identity. Some participants had particularly negative experiences where students teased them based on historical stereotypes, usually associated with their German nationality. Students responded to and explained the negative commentary from their peers in different ways, ranging from ignorance to competitiveness. In this manner, both the students and their peers were active participants in a process through which they simultaneously created and reacted to an encounter with history. Additionally, the students were not always solely on the receiving end of these ascriptions. They also ascribed particular identities and characteristics to others based on categories such as national background, religion, geographical region and ancestral background. As the interview data has shown, these constructed encounters can serve as a significant factor in the formation of identities by determining when and how students encounter history, as well as the content and outcomes of the encounters. Overall, the diversity many students experienced within their peer groups that make up the classroom environments they encountered, exposed them to new manners of thinking and behaviors that influenced their sense of self and how they viewed others.

6.5 Generation Gap: Impact of the Family on Identity Formation & Encounters with History

6.5.1 Introduction

It is said then ‘social life begins with each individual’s beginnings.’⁴¹⁴ As such, those who are around that individual from the beginning will have an impact on the social aspects of their identity. Therefore, when investigating social influences on identity formation and encounters with history, family should be included as an exploratory factor, even though the impact is outside of the classroom environment, the participants still mentioned family as an influential factor. For some this is evident in the decision to attend the international school. Additionally, ‘a child has quite a number of opportunities to identify himself, more or less experimentally, with real or fictitious people of either sex, with habits, traits, occupations, and ideas. Certain crises force him to make radical selections. However, the historical era in which he lives offers only a limited number of socially meaningful models for workable combinations of identification fragments.’⁴¹⁵ For the participants, their placement within the time continuum, alongside as well as opposed to different generations and the family members that represented those generations, was an important element in their identity formation as well as how they encountered, perceived and made sense of history. Although not all of the participants refer to generations, either past or present, in their interviews, enough students mentioned generations in general or specific family members as a factor to warrant it as a mitigating social factor in identity development that is worth further exploring.

⁴¹⁴ Erikson. 1994. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. p. 20

⁴¹⁵ Erikson. 1994. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. p. 25

6.5.2 All in the Family: Student Perspectives on the Impact of Family on Encounters with History

For Lukas, it was not just about how past generations might view history, but rather how future generations may view it. For example in his previously mentioned description of what type of history should be taught, he stated that in twenty years the perception of history may be entirely different. As he spoke about the type of history that should be taught, he acknowledged that history can be contextual and may be biased based on a variety of contextual factors, going beyond the country or location where one lives to include the time period and generation in which one lives as well. When asked about whether he sees any bias in the history curriculum related to Germany, Lukas later elaborated that *“well I’d say there are people who will always believe that because their ancestors were in the war, because it’s not that long time ago, but I don’t see any bias. I don’t see that there’s people who are being biased around here, it’s just that you learn about it. I mean in another twenty years, I guess it will be nobody who has taken a side.”* Again the time period one lives in and the generation that one is a part of seems to hold importance for Lukas as a factor that can influence the way history is both viewed and taught.

Anna also mentions the importance of ancestors and their involvement in historical events as important to how she views the connection between history and her identity on a national and familial or personal level. She discusses the importance of learning about time periods other than your own in order to learn for the future. Yet she also uses the different time periods and generations as a way to separate herself from history and from an identity ascribed to her by others. Anna connects the family factor to history and the temporal factor in the same response when she previously talked about not wanting her family to have had anything to do with the

historical events she was learning about. Furthermore, she also mentioned that this influenced her behavior.

“At the beginning you start to ask your parents, my dad’s German, my mom’s not, I sort of started asking my dad what were my grandparents doing and I asked them and I guess that’s what influenced me because you feel, because everything focuses on that’s Germany, it makes you feel a little like people are being aggressive towards the whole thing and you have something to explain yourself for even though you didn’t even live at that time, maybe that guilt factor, because you don’t want your family to have anything to do with this sort of thing. So that was my immediate reaction to learning all about it.”

The familial factor plays a strong role in influencing the formation of her identity in relation to history. However, she went on to say that being confronted with history or exploring the complexities of her German identity and family history were not the only reasons that she wanted to learn history. As much as she may use the contemporary time period in which she lives as a way to distance herself from certain historical events, as described in Chapter 5, she also recognizes that history influences her family throughout the generations.

Generational differences a direct impact on Ben’s identity development and historical understanding. History also plays a powerful role in influencing his family because of the experiences that Ben’s grandparents had and the ways that those experiences have influenced their perspective, which differ from his own viewpoint and manifestations of encounters with history within the home. The interactions Ben described in the interview also contribute to the interest that he has in certain historical topics. He wants to learn more about the history that he sees a direct and personal connection to through his grandparents. Thus, this personal connection to history influences Ben’s identity and worldview.

“The main thing that I have noticed is that when you talk about Nazis in Germany, my grandpa was an American and he came over here, he was in the war but he sees it more, he doesn’t get all serious and depressed and you can hardly mention war in front of my German grandma, who also lived at the time

and you can just see how, I mean it was a difficult time for both but how much it affects one side more than the other because my grandpa, he was shot but he can still laugh about it, make jokes about it, my grandma doesn't, my German grandma doesn't take any jokes about it so there's a difference where you have to watch what you can say and not say."

He attempts to explain these differences through reasons revolving around historical outcomes as well as generational differences on the societal level, saying that

"maybe because my grandpa won the war and my grandma didn't. Probably because my grandma is ashamed of the Germans which most of them are pretty much and they try to ignore and that's what I can see in the culture here, the older people pretty much try to ignore it and those are the grandparents and then the parents are pretty much they don't like to talk about it but they do talk about it and then my generation, they sort of already start joking about it so it is loosening up again."

Ben's subjective interpretations and perceptions of his grandparents' experiences, as well as their generation as a whole, are used in juxtaposition to his own generation. The experiences of the older generation, even though what they lived through is considered history to those of Ben's generation, are considered to impact the entire family and more broadly, society at large. In this manner, achieved and ascribed identities are impacted in relation to history. Within the interview, he provides examples and further insights on how history influences the behaviors among the different generations.

"When I was a little kid I had two sisters that were younger than I but were like fighting with beanie babies, we were just throwing them at each other and I pretty much stopped because I knew she wouldn't like it and she said what were we doing and my little sister said we're playing war and I could see the terror on her face and everything and she pretty much started shouting at us that you do not play this game. But my granddad in America, he sort of starts the fight and like will start flicking things at us and we would say we play war and he wouldn't do anything with it, so that's one thing. Just the way people drive on the streets, like when teenagers walk by, mostly the older generation would just start shouting at them for not walking on the right path or something like that and that's just, it shows, it a little bit how tight, tightened up they are, they are a lot more aggressive and they don't seem to have much fun in them."

One of the major reasons that Ben is interested in learning about certain historical topics is that it creates relevance because he sees the continued impact on the society he lives in, as well as within his family unit. Ben integrates his grandparents' background, experiences and differing approaches to history and life into his identity development through his exploration of history. Furthermore, he also integrates wider themes and tendencies found on the broader societal level into his personal narrative and identity formation using history as a lens with which he tries to make sense of both the world around him and his own personal identity.

The link between history and generational identity is not as salient for some participants as for others, even if they do use the temporal element in their identity formation in other ways. For example, although Lena does not mention the family generations as a component, she still uses the temporal factor as a way to separate herself from certain historical time periods, as her responses described in the achieved identity section showed. Max also mentioned that generations should learn from each other. Additionally, other participants also saw history as important to learn to prepare for the future because of the potential impact it can have. By learning how to prevent or avoid similar events, as pointed out in reference to Max's comments, history is seen as a tool for preparing for future generations. However, for Arman, history does not connect the past, present and future generations.

6.5.3 Summary

In this section, a further pattern emerged that included past generations as an influential component of identity formation on both a macro and micro level. The micro level of the individual tends to be linked more to familial connections to past generations in a manner that influences the achieved identity of the student whereas on the macro level, personal experiences tend to be interactions with strangers who ascribe to the student an identity based mostly on the

generation they belong to. As such, the interview data upholds the theory that familial forces have a significant impact on education, although not necessarily in the manner intended when looking at educational achievement on a macro level such as nationally. In the everyday lived experience of the individual student, the family continues to exert some influence on identity formation via how encounters with history are shaped and interpreted. The specific examples where participants described situations where they either began to question or were faced with how their parents or grandparents conceptualized and perceived history were powerful. These experiences clearly put family members in the position of a social other in the student's encounter with history. Other family members influenced identity and encounters with history by providing a cognitive or emotional framework for interpreting significance in history that the students either internalized or rejected but which, either way, played a role in both identity and history formation for the student via the process of social othering. Making sense of these encounters and the roles that their family members may or may not have played, either in the present or the past, allow for the family to be considered an influential factor in both encounters with history and identity formation.

Even beyond the direct impact of the generational differences found in the family in terms of perceptions and actions regarding encounters with history and their placement in identities, the idea of generations in general were salient for some of the students. Perhaps based on the direct experiences with family members and social interactions with other adults, as well as other factors such as media, some students also ascribed particular perspectives to whole generations by positioning themselves as separate in a time and historical context. As such, not only were they describing how they believed they were being ascribed particular characteristics, but they were doing so by also ascribing certain beliefs to older generations as a whole. The same process

also occurred when discussing their own generation as a whole. Therefore, the gap between generations in terms of how they constructed, perceived and encountered history also acted as a social other in the process of ascribed identity formation by becoming a tool through which the participants positioned themselves and others, both in the family and generations as whole entities.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

The patterns identified in this chapter have shed further light on how student identities are socially constructed via encounters with history, which are also socially constructed. As has been shown through the examples provided in the interviews, ‘students can be identified using categories from the curriculum or curricular topics can be conceptualized using categories from models of identity. When students and teachers use themselves as a resource for understanding the curriculum, in participant examples and other forms of experience-near teaching, they often blend metapragmatic and cognitive models.’⁴¹⁶ The interview data provided examples where students and teachers exercised agency in the use of tools and resources from which to extrapolate meaning from or to infuse relevance into the curriculum in a dynamic, interactive social process. This process acted as tool for both social identity construction and cognitive understanding. As such, the interview data supports the idea that social identification and academic learning are inseparable parts of more general processes that occur within the classroom environment and through which social identities and academic learning inform and influence each other simultaneously.⁴¹⁷ The history curriculum was the context and the encounter

⁴¹⁶ Wortham. 2005. *Learning Identity*. p. 145

⁴¹⁷ Wortham. 2005. *Learning Identity*.

with it was the catalyst through which this process began and was woven into so that identity formation was integrated into encounters with history as well as the other way around. In this manner, encounters with history, in varying, socially constructed forms, contributed to and characterized social identifications and ascribed identities in multiple ways.

The context in which students encounter history is not limited to the classroom environment. When learning about and encountering history in a manner that impacts identity formation, some of the most influential factors exercised influence outside of the classroom or the curriculum per se, but were then brought into those contexts via the students, both consciously and unconsciously. For example, the interactions with peers occurs inside and outside of the classroom or even school environment, while interactions with family members almost solely occur outside of the classroom or learning environment but can still exert influence over how encounters with history are interpreted and understood in a manner that subsequently impacts identity formation. Even within the classroom environment itself, it was not solely the curriculum itself that was referenced as being a key factor in choosing schools, feeling comfortable in the classroom or being accepted within the larger school environment. Teachers and peers were often discussed as having a significant impact on these and other aspects of social identity and belonging.

As a whole, ascribed identities must still be incorporated into analysis of how students not only encounter history, but also how they perceive and make sense of it, as well as how all of this then influences identity formation. One of the most noticeable patterns seen across the ascribed identity level is the significant role that history plays in the formation of categorizations by others as well as projected onto others by the participants themselves. The qualities and characteristics that people associate with certain nationalities, particularly the German national

identity, seem to be informed by history, both real and socially imagined. Many of the participants pointed out that others often associated being German with historical ideas centered on WWII, resulting in certain stereotypes and an often limited comprehension of Germany as a nation beyond the Nazis. The participants' strong rejection of these characterizations led to the use of history as a social other in their achieved identity formation because they disassociate themselves with the historically informed ascribed identity imposed by others in favor of their own achieved identities, which are often more diverse in scope and characteristics. Thus history links achieved and ascribed identities through active agency and the deployment of temporal tools students utilize to create their own sense of self by consciously and unconsciously choosing the elements they want to be associated with and distancing themselves from the rest. These constructed and ascribed senses of self were influenced by and part of the perceived sense of community within the international school. As such, even when distancing themselves from an ascribed identity, participants still did so in relation to, as a result of and within a social context.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

“Our hope, ultimately, is that by shedding light on how adolescents make sense of the past, we can learn how better to engage their historical beliefs, stretch them, and call them, when necessary, into question.” – Wineburg⁴¹⁸

7.1 Research Overview

As an exploratory micro case study, this thesis utilized qualitative methods in order to collect and analyze data culled from interviews with students attending an international school in Northern Germany. The case study population is distinctive in that based on geographical location in Germany, it is part of the burgeons of literature that have studied and attempted to explain the causes of World War II as well as the particular place that it holds in the contemporary collective consciousness, memory and identity of various groups and nations. Yet, the population under study is also outside the scope of previously studied groups because it is diverse in its demographic make-up, i.e. not representing one national background, and educational experiences due to the different schools and national settings the students have studied in. this diversity in background and experience reflects the increasingly recognized complexity of identity and loyalties within the contemporary world.⁴¹⁹

The choice of the international school for the exploratory case study was purposeful in order to capitalize on and garner further insight into a relatively privileged population that is removed from the specific horrors of international conflict that dominates much of the literature on identity, collective memory and history. Yet, being located within Germany, the existing literature remains relevant in that the horrors of the Holocaust are still echoed both in the

⁴¹⁸ Wineburg. 2001. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. p. 250

⁴¹⁹ Mazlish. 2006. *The New Global History*.

curricula and student encounters with history both within and outside of the classroom.

Therefore, by contributing empirical data to the academic discussion, this case study can serve to question and expand existing theory related to the level of agency students have in encounters with history and their subsequent identity formation in a group that is both within and simultaneously outside of the current focus of the literature.

Furthermore, the case study population is also removed from this setting in that the international school has an ethos that distinguishes it from the public schools within the national German educational system, which some of the participants previously attended, as well as schools in which participants studied abroad. The international school operates based on a mission of international cooperation and the development of the intercultural skills necessary to help achieve that goal. Coinciding with the mission and vision of the school, the population of students and teachers reflects this international ethos with a diverse variety of national and educational backgrounds. The case study population also reflects this diversity, as depicted on the demographic chart previously displayed. Within the sample, some of the students hold German citizenship and were originally educated within the German school system, even locally in Bremen, before attending the international school. Some of these students went straight into the international school from the German educational system, while others went abroad first before deciding to attend the international school. For others, the international school is their first foray into education and life in Germany. Each of these experiences are present in the demographics of the student participant sample utilized in this study and reflect the diversity of educational experiences, both within and outside of Germany and the international school, that the wider school population has experienced. With the International Baccalaureate system and curricula already taking into consideration the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs to some

extent through the mission and vision of developing intercultural skills within an international school setting, the exploratory case study design provides empirical data that could help identify elements that can be applied in other educational settings in pursuit of similar ideals. As such, the empirical data contributes to the already existing knowledge base by testing and expanding theoretical constructs and highlighting key areas for future research.

With the focus on both the individual and social elements of identity, this research upholds ‘the necessity of conceiving collective memory as a shared attitude and thus both a constitutive element of individuals’ belief systems and of a more general political culture and collective identity.’⁴²⁰ Importantly, it also takes into consideration the often neglected ideas of individual agency as well as the complexity and diversity of encounters with history. Often, ‘the common factor in all these discussions is a blurry image of the learner and what the learner brings to instruction.’⁴²¹ By shedding light on the experiences of students as individuals, this research helps move past this barrier. By focusing investigation on a small sample, the exploratory case study model allows for a more holistic review of how everyday encounters with history impact identity formation in all of its complexity. This provides additional empirical insight into the overall academic discussion by recognizing the dynamic and complex relationship between these processes, rather than narrowing the investigation to one element and thus not recognizing the manners in which various factors influence each other.

Working from the hypothesis that students were not passive audience members simply receiving and integrating values and identities straight from and solely via the history curriculum, the research questions sought to explore the level of agency students have, the factors that mitigate

⁴²⁰ Langenbacher, E. & Shain, Y. (eds.). 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*. Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C. USA. p. 3

⁴²¹ Wineburg, 2001. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. p. ix

its impact and the mechanisms through which they employ it. *To what extent do students exercise their agency in the construction of their identity in relation to history? How is this agency exercised? What factors have a significant mitigating impact on identity formation as it relates to encounters with history?* In answering the research questions, this research found that although social factors and ascribed identities played a role in encounters with history and subsequent identity development, that achieved identity was often more significant and salient. As such, students actively exercised agency to achieve their desired identities by recognizing and pursuing encounters with history that were relevant to the salient elements of their identities while rejecting other aspects of history or ascribed identities that did not coincide with their achieved sense of self. As was revealed, students retained a significant amount of agency in both their identity formation and various encounters with history, both within the educational setting and outside of it. Since education is often considered to be a main mode of transmitting these histories to future generations, the examples of international controversies over textbook content are but one example of how history, education and identities are intertwined. As was seen from the interview data, not only did students encounter history in a myriad of ways on both a socially constructed and individually led level, but they also actively filtered, rejected and reconstructed history through their achieved and ascribed identities. These revelations serve to question the notion that values in history are simply transmitted through history education via officially sanctioned sources such as curricula and textbooks. Instead, students need to be considered and recognized as active authors in both the processes of constructing identities and histories.

7.2 Achieved Identity & Agency

As the interview results show, students actively try to make sense of the history they encounter while simultaneously deconstructing and reconstructing it to better suit their identity and worldview. Students were actively involved with the process of interpreting, analyzing and making sense of the history that they encountered, even across the multitude of different mechanisms and manners through which they encountered history. The interviews showed that student participants consciously accepted and rejected elements of the history they encountered that did not fit with their salient identities. For some participants, this meant explaining and focusing on what they perceived to be differences between the society in which they lived in now and the world of the past. Although they recognized the importance of learning from the past in order to better understand current events, they also saw themselves as removed from that past on multiple levels and to varying extents depending on the topic at hand. This distance created a space within which they could construct their own sense of self that was removed from, yet still tied to and, to some extent, informed by the past. Students used this temporal positioning to not only construct space between the past and present but also to construct their own sense of self.

The manners in which students utilized their agency in identity development and encounters with history were also explored through the interviews. Students actively searched for and constructed encounters with history that matched or upheld the salient aspects of their achieved identities.

For example, some students chose to study particular historical events or persons that they perceived to be related to their achieved sense of national identity, even if that was different from the nationality listed on their passport. The subjective components of identity were strongly reflected in the students' encounters with history and their subsequent interpretations and perceptions of those encounters. Rather than acting as passive receptors of historical knowledge,

the students in this sample actively interpreted and reconstructed the history that they encountered in the way that held the most meaning for them. This meaning making process was not only active but also incorporated multiple elements outside of the official curricula. These elements then influenced the perception of the content of these encounters, as well as how they were made sense of, both as part of the official curricula and well outside of its scope.

White has argued that the differing perspectives on history are foundationally aesthetic or moral.⁴²² This points to the notion that history cannot be completely separated from subjectivity. The research data seems to support this point in that the students actively construct their historical understanding in relation to their salient identities. As such, history becomes subjective because unless it holds direct and specific meaning for an individual's achieved identity, then it is rejected and becomes unimportant, at least in the subjective perceptions of the students.

Although identities may overlap on some levels, such as the regional or national level, even shared or ascribed identities seem to need to be perceived as salient by the individual in order to hold meaning for the student. When ascribed particular characteristics, identities and the related histories, students emotionally and cognitively respond by either rejecting or internalizing those elements that are salient for them. The same is true for history and the values inherent within collective memories, official historical narratives and memorializations. If not considered to be relevant to salient identities, then the students became disengaged from the topic and temporally positioned it away from the contemporary context in which they live.

Just as encounters with history can be seen through the lens of identification, identities are also impacted and constructed through encounters with history and how they are interpreted as well

⁴²² White. 1973. *Metahistory*. p. xii.

as how they are juxtaposed alongside a sense of self and belonging. These results are in line with White's treatise on the historiography and philosophy of history in that historians actively construct the historical account in particular ways, including the use of temporality and emplotment as tools through which the story of history is told.⁴²³ Similarly, the students utilized and deployed the same tools in an effort to form a relevant relationship between the history they encounter and the salient aspects of their identities. If not considered to be relevant to salient identities, then the students became disengaged from the topic and temporally positioned it away from the contemporary context in which they live.

As the interviews show, the data confined in this thesis is in line with the theory that memory is reconstructed and 'always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation.'⁴²⁴ Students actively used their positioning in the contemporary world, in both a temporal and an identity salient manner, to reconstruct history in a way that made relevant and made sense to their current identities, perception and understanding of the history that they encountered. Since history is constantly being reconstructed and modified to fit into and made sense of from a contemporary context, history also plays an active role in shaping the present and the future by propagating particular ideologies linked to the time and place in which history is being encountered. This relationship between the past, present and future was perceived by the students to not only exist within encounters with history and their own identities, but was also cited as the major goal of history education. Indeed, the student participants not only claimed that it was important to learn the lessons of the past in order to shape the future, but also extended the

⁴²³ White. 1973. *Metahistory*.

⁴²⁴ Assman. 1995. *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. p. 130

concept of agency to this relationship by ascertaining that individuals had a responsibility to learn history and make informed decisions for future generations.

This upholds the underlying foundational point of Assmann's theory that memory and identity are linked through time. However, the interview results go some way towards questioning the notion that any collective memories or history of eighty to one hundred years from any given present time as claimed. Contrary to Assmann's exposition that history past the temporal marker of eighty to one hundred years would no longer be considered in relation to individual identity, but rather only at the level of collective memory and consciousness,⁴²⁵ students did reference historical events even further back in the time continuum as being important. As seen in the interview data, this proposed cut off point was not necessarily the main factor in whether or not history was perceived to be relevant to identity. Although some students considered only the past seventy or so years to be relevant to the contemporary world and thus important to learn about, other students went as far back as three hundred years. Yet, this was only mentioned in passing and no specific temporal cut-off point was cited as the marker from which events were no longer considered to be relevant. Indeed, temporality was used in a more fluid manner than proposed.

7.2.1 The Use of Temporality in Achieved Identity Formation

Temporality is a key element in the answering of the research question: *What elements are used to interpret and make sense of encounters with history? How are these elements used by the students?* Manipulation of temporal elements was the primary tool utilized by students in pursuit of solidifying their achieved identities even when encountering history in manners that may or may not have challenged or upheld their personal sense of self. The manner in which the students

⁴²⁵ Assman. 1995. *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*.

referred to and created a chronologically organized history with distinctive elements and ruptures clearly separated the past from the present and future, even while recognizing that one influences the other. This allowed the participants to delineate the country and world that they know today from that of the past.

Students actively separated historical events that were deemed to be relevant to their identities from those that were not, regardless of the event's positioning within the time-space continuum. Indeed, the student manipulated the time-space continuum by creating a sense of perceived distance between the contemporary time period and those historical events that they considered to be irrelevant by relegating these events to "the past" while at the same time directly linking the relevant aspects of history to the contemporary time period and creating a sense of closeness, regardless of the actual temporal occurrence and the constraints of chronology. In spite of a strong preference for learning history chronologically, students actively exercised agency by utilizing temporal positioning to manipulate the historical account and encounter in a manner that more closely linked the historical elements that they perceived to be most relevant to their salient identity, at least as it existed at the time of the interview. By using chronological ruptures to push irrelevant historical events to the background and bring relevant historical events to the fore, students actively manipulated the temporal positioning both within and outside of chronology in order to directly link their perception of the contemporary world to their perception of the past. Within the space they create through the use of temporal positioning as a tool, the students were able to mold a niche where they could further construct their identities in relation to and through the past.

This was in spite of the clear preference for learning in chronological order professed by the students. Although they claimed that it was confusing to learn outside of chronological order, it

seemed that relationships and causality were actually the characteristics of history education that most engaged them and helped them further develop their historical knowledge and understanding. Indeed, they pointed out the explicit teaching of causal and temporal relationships between historical events and the contemporary time period as a highly regarded and positive aspect of the history education at the international school as opposed to other schools that they attended, particularly in juxtaposition to the German national schools. Yet, this was still only the case when the historical topics were deemed to be relevant to their identities. When topics were considered to be irrelevant or too repetitious, then the students became disengaged from the subject and implemented temporal distance.

Although they acknowledged the impact of the past and thus justified their perspective on why history is important to learn, this separation of the past and present created the space necessary to create a new identity even within encounters with history. Within this space, the students could situate themselves in a “new” Germany distinct from the Germany of World War II and the Germany that their parents knew. By using temporal elements to create a distinct identity within their broader and varied encounters with history, while also rejecting aspects of the history that is imposed upon them from those encounters, students used chronological elements to modify their achieved identities and positioning in relation to their encounters with history. Temporality, including both linear and ruptured chronologies, and the understanding of one’s own placement within the temporal continuum had a profound impact on the students’ identity formation through their encounters with history, as well as how they interpreted and made sense of those encounters.

The tool of temporal positioning was applied by the students in such a way as to interpret history in a manner that made sense within the framework of their salient identities. However, this is not

at the expense of ascribed or social aspects of identity construction. Indeed, the same patterns are still evident for in the social construction of identity, at least via those aspects of identity that are constructed and understood via encounters with history. As will be demonstrated, students sometimes chose to accept or reject certain elements, or even complete identities that were ascribed to them by others, particularly when these ascriptions incorporate negative aspects of their nation's history. In those instances, students often applied the temporal positioning tool to separate themselves and their own achieved sense of identity from that which was foisted onto them by others. Context and environment also play a role in terms of who the student was interacting with or how the encounter with history came about. Yet, the same principle and process is applied, even as contexts and social actors as well as identities shift over time and place. As such, the process of identity formation via encounters with history remains an active and dynamic process, influenced by various mitigating factors and actors. Yet, as an overarching process, the utilization of agency through the application of temporal positioning as a tool within identity construction is demonstrated both in achieved and ascribed identity formation, as students accepted, rejected and transformed various elements of their encounters with history into their identities.

However, the most significant determining factor in student perceptions of the relevance of history was not related to temporality, as this was an arbitrary notion and easily manipulated, but rather the extent to which a particular historical event was considered relevant for the salient aspects of their identity at any given moment. This would mean that identity and memory do not become as concrete or objective as sometimes considered and that perhaps a total horizon of memory and knowledge as argued by Assmann may not be as immovable as previously believed. Indeed, if replicated via future research that explores the salience of time in history and identity

via additional empirical data and theoretical discussion rather than theoretical construction alone, more data may help in to further refining the use of temporality in the construction of identities, which would allow teachers and learners to make this element more explicit within the classroom. As it stands, the empirical data from this exploratory case study still lends interesting insights into how students encounter, interpret and reimagine history.

7.3 Social Factors in Identity & Belonging

Supporting the argument that encounters with history are complex, diverse and socially formed, were the data results that pinpointed specific social factors that students perceived to influence identity formation and interpretations of encounters with history. Teachers, peers and family were highlighted as major social forces contributing to the content and format in which encounters with history occurred, were interpreted and ultimately impacted identity development. Teachers were cited by the students as a major contributing factor to their encounters with history and thus the manners in which students formed their identities, by influencing the type of environment within which identity exploration took place. However, this was not always limited to the history classroom specifically, but also included the school as a whole. Importantly, the other major social influences identified by students also extended beyond the classroom as students cited multiple encounters history or exchanges that influenced their perceptions of history via their relationships and interactions with family members and peers. This highlights the complexity of the school environment and the learning that occurs in the classroom, since the factors that influence that learning are not confined to the official curricula or the classroom space itself. Rather, students bring various elements into the classroom with them and similarly bring the knowledge with them into other areas, all of which influence each

other during the learning and internalization processes. Students actively encounter, construct and interpret history via social influences such as family, peers and teachers, particularly through ascribed identities. As such, histories and identities remained socially constructed through the use of them both as socially informed others that are used to help the students construct and refine their sense of achieved identity. ‘People are not autonomous, so their agency is always situated against an inherited web of beliefs and practices.’⁴²⁶ Thus, even when individual achieved identities are particularly salient, they still operate within and often as a response to social structures and influences.

Students were confronted with the social element of identity formation through the identities and characteristics ascribed to them by others. Proving the close link between identity and history, those students who rejected the image of German identity and nationality as portrayed within their history textbooks also rejected the ascribed identity that others attempted to define them with. This ascribed identity was also informed by historical knowledge and specific portrayals of German identity in accepted and taught historical narratives. Characteristics of ascribed identity were often associated with historical narratives centering on World War II and a particular idea of German national identity and portrayed in various behaviors by peers, including name calling, questions about Hitler, stereotypes and expectations of certain behaviors. Most of the students vehemently distanced themselves from this portrayal and ascribed identity, instead constructing their own sense of identity based on Germany as the country that they grew up in, not the nation of their grandparents’ generation. However, the students still recognized the Germany of the past through their denial of it, using this notion of Germany as an ‘other’ from which they constructed a distinct sense of self in opposition to; even while rejecting this ascribed identity, some students

⁴²⁶ Bevir, Daddow & Hall. 2012. *Interpreting British Foreign Policy*. p. 167

still commented on how this identity impacted them. The chronological links that they made between the past and present strengthened this sense of self created in relation to a particular notion of Germany. Some participants referenced the process of framing their own identity in opposition to or through personal relationships with others, such as grandparents, whose identities may be more intertwined with historical events and narratives.

The interview data support the idea that social elements and temporality are inseparable from history because temporality, for example, can be used as a tool and format that ‘is adequate to the representation of the experience of historicity in a way that is both literal in what it asserts about specific events and figurative in what it suggests about the meaning of this experience.’⁴²⁷ Since different generations exist in different places both in terms of their temporal relation to an event as well as the meaning that the event held for them, this is also true for perceptions of one’s own positioning and identity. Not only does ‘history have meaning because human actions produce meaning’ but these meanings and the chronological code within which they are created is culturally based.⁴²⁸ Since generational groups have been privy to distinctive cultural codes that have influenced their perspective and understanding of the history, as well as the format of the encounters themselves, the construction of their identity as a generation will be different. Thus ‘differences of group psychology can be noted’ not only as related to the historical topics studied or encountered but also in the approach to history, what is considered important and the meaning generated.⁴²⁹

As a result, ‘each generation must ask itself anew why studying the past is important, and remind itself why history can bring us together rather than-as we have seen most recently-tear us

⁴²⁷ White. 1987. *Content of the Form*. p. 177

⁴²⁸ White. 1987. *Content of the Form*. p. 176 & 179

⁴²⁹ Bloch. 1953. *The Historian’s Craft*. p. 5

apart.’⁴³⁰ These differences between the various generations were not only pointed out and recognized by the students but importantly acted as a factor in their identity formation by influencing the general social, familial and personal identities, as well as the interactions between them. The recognition and use of generational differences as a temporal marker helped anchor the students in a particular time and place within the general historical narratives that they encountered through school curricula as well as within the society at large. It also influenced the content and form of the history that they encountered, as well as the places the encounters occurred. This process highlights a general acceptance of a chronological time continuum from that provides a sense of psychological security and belonging that linked the students to the social elements that they considered to be important, such as family members. Although the preference for chronology could be disrupted when students made choices based on the more salient aspects of their identity, the pull of social belonging still remained.

These encounters with others uphold the notion that social factors influence encounters with history and identity formation. The empirical data from the interviews also expands the theoretical foundation by showing that students still retain a level of agency even within the realm of this social impact by actively rejecting particular identities or characteristics ascribed to them by others. National background, race, religion and geographical location of origin were not only defining characteristics that others used to ascribe identities to the students, but the students also actively used these characteristics to ascribe identities onto others through the creation of perceived group boundaries. Furthermore, the students actively interact with the social factors that influence them in a manner that impacts both their encounters with history and their subsequent interpretations of those encounters and related identity formation. This interaction

⁴³⁰ Wineburg, 2001. *Historical Thinking*. p. 5

has an impact on how the students learn about history as well as how they perceive themselves in relation to those around them. Students referenced both specific and general interactions with peers and family members that caused them to reconsider history in various lights. These could be positive or negative depending on the situation and the end result was the same. When history is perceived by the students to be relevant to an aspect of their social identity, via their relationships with peers or family members for example, then that history became part of an active process of identity formation via the interpretation of that history. When it was not considered to be relevant to their identity, then the students rejected aspects of the encounter or messages received from others in favor of their achieved identity. History was utilized as a tool to help students construct their achieved identity by focusing on learning the history of the country that they felt the most connected to, regardless of whether or not this chosen national identity coincided with an official nationality ascribed to them via their passport or place of birth. However, this does not diminish the impact that social factors have on shaping encounters with history and identity. Rather, the data helps place social elements such as family members and peers in context as one of multiple significant factors that influence students, as well as sheds light on *how* and *to what extent* this impact occurs.

Teachers were considered to be important facilitators in both the processes of learning and identity formation as associated with encounters with history. As authoritative voices within the classroom, teachers directly influence the type of environment and the extent to which students engage with the material. The perception that the teachers in the international school cared about the students and recognized them as individuals with specific needs was a driving force behind the positive perceptions of the international school as a whole and the development of an inclusive community. This had a profound impact on the students in terms of their identity and

encounters with history because it created a sense of shared community and identity through a group mentality and sense of belonging. This sense of an inclusive community to which they were all a part of extended into the classroom and discussions of history, with differences in viewpoints, opinions and knowledge recognized, actively discussed and accepted. Additionally, this perceived sense of belonging to a community within which they could be themselves, struck a chord with the students through the enabling of space and support to further develop their achieved identities.

7.4 Encountering History within an International School

One of the research questions that guided this thesis was: *How do students encounter history?*

Although the results were in line with existing research in that official school curricula still acted as a significant mode of encountering history, the majority of the interview data provided examples that went well beyond the official curricula itself, even when occurring within the classroom or school setting. This data expands the existing literature by acknowledging and indeed highlighting the varied and complex ways in which students encounter and interact with history in manners that come with the student into the classroom and impact their perceptions and understandings of academic history, without limiting those encounters to one mode such as public memorials or textbooks.

The interviews revealed that students encounter history in a variety of forms and places, both within and outside of the classroom. These encounters extend far beyond the official curriculum and incorporate experiences with peers, family members and society in general such as through various forms of media. Yet, popular forms of media such as television, books, movies, etc. were

not referenced by the students as influential over how they saw themselves, nor how they experienced or encountered history. Although conceptualizations of history found in modes of popular culture such as books, magazines, movies, television, political speeches, and the news may have an impact on identities,⁴³¹ these sources did not seem to figure strongly in the minds of the students, at least that they made a point to mention. There were a couple of examples where participants referenced commonly accepted stereotypes based on popular culture, however this was often in reference to nations outside of their own such as the United States. Even then, popular culture and media was not explicitly mentioned to the extent that one may imagine it would for youth.

A variety of reasons could be the cause of this, whether due to the fact that the research was not explicitly measuring popular culture methods of transmitting history, instead focusing on the educational milieu, or because of language barriers for some students that prevented them from accessing German language media and popular culture in the local area. Further research into these mechanisms and regarding accessibility would have to be conducted to better explain the seemingly lack of influence popular culture and media forms had on the students' conceptualizations of and encounters with history in a manner that they perceive to hold significant. However, the students do reference the misconceptions that others hold about their own culture, particularly when related to German history and culture, which may have been gleaned from popular media sources, with some students mentioning that the knowledge of their peers in other nations was limited. Yet, more often than not, the students reference narrow or limited educational curricula as being the culprit of transmitting false or stereotypical

⁴³¹ Buckingham, D. (ed.). 2008. *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. MIT Press: Boston, MA.

information, especially pertaining to German history. This upholds the notion that history education is perceived by the students as having a significant impact on knowledge transfer and the creation of attitudes towards particular groups based on this knowledge, which the students considered to be often skewed based on erroneous or incomplete historical knowledge, without recognition of the underlying reasons for that.

As shown through the interview data, social interactions had a significant impact on the identity formation of the students, particularly in how encounters with history were created, experienced and interpreted. Students actively constructed their identities and worldviews in relation to others, particularly their peers, family members and teachers. Within the sample involved in this research, the students were privileged to experience an environment that was relatively inclusive and supportive, especially in comparison to other educational contexts that the students had previously experienced or the often conflict-ridden examples found in the literature. Within the international school, discussion and exploration was encouraged within the group, even if true dissent was not always perceived to exist due to the lack of representation from some parts of the world. Even so, the perception was that the environment could and would tolerate dissent, as well as even encourage it in some cases.

Indeed, individual agency was found to be highly active in both the achieved and ascribed identities of the students within the sample. Students credited the international school environment and the teachers with creating an inclusive setting within which they were provided space and the means to explore and develop individual identity. Through a demonstration of behaviors that were perceived by the students to be caring, the teachers were instrumental forces in the creation of this supportive environment by encouraging discussion, providing individual attention and generally being available to students by developing rapport and relationships with

them. Further research that compares the types of environments in international schools verses public, nationally regulated schools may provide further insight into how the mission and vision of schools contributes to the school culture. This would help identify specific mechanisms and behaviors that could be adopted in various environments in order to help increase the perception of an inclusive community culture. As demonstrated through the use of the International School Bremen as an exploratory case study, diverse demographics is not always the most influential factor, rather how discussions based on differing views are facilitated and supported is even more significant. Indeed, although the international school was more diverse than the previous school environments that most students experienced, it was still not always perceived to be as diverse as it could be due to the high number of German students and Western educated teachers. It was what happened when differing ideas occurred, and how it was handled by the teachers and students, that seemed to be a more significant factor in upholding the ideal of an inclusive environment.

The curricular design of the school also allowed for space to be dedicated to individual exploration of topics of interest, further aiding in the development of individual agency and identities. For example, some of the students took advantage of having a choice of topic to study in order to more fully explore historical events they perceived to be important to their sense of achieved identity, especially as it related to the national level. The students mentioned that in their prior educational institutions there were no similar opportunities for exploration and development of achieved identity through discussion or curricular assignments. The interview data highlights the positive effect that dedicated space had on the students' sense of self, sense of belonging and the development of a community environment, as well as pointed out that students perceived these related characteristics to be positive aspects of attending the international school.

Indeed, for many of the students the existence of these characteristics were driving forces in their choices to attend the school in the first place.

This shows how a supportive environment that allows for the space to construct individual identity can counteract social pressure to conform to ascribed identities. Not only did students actively seek out the international school based on these characteristics but also suggested that other schools should do more to create similarly inclusive environments and pointed out that the lack of these characteristics led to decreased motivation, engagement and academic performance. With the significant impact that caring teachers, an inclusive environment and dedicated space to develop individual achieved identity formation had in rendering positive changes, at least in the perceptions of the students, initiatives could be designed to enhance these characteristics and infuse the environment with related values.

It must be acknowledged that the students who attend the international school are privileged in the sense that they were able to not only make this choice but then had the social and financial capital necessary to enroll. However, within the framework of an exploratory study, the unveiling of specific characteristics and the related behaviors perceived to be reflective of particular values that make the international school into more than just an educational environment but also into a community can be useful for future research and initiatives that seek to further explore the impact and ways in which to foster these elements within other educational environments. In light of the conflicts and examples cited in the introductory chapter involving educated youth, especially within restrictive environments and prejudiced societies, the answer may lie not in creating a one-size-fits-all concept of the ideal citizen or identity, but in providing youth with the tools needed to critically analyze narrow ascribed identities and create a more authentic self.

Now that specific characteristics have been identified by a privileged group as having a significant positive impact on belonging, identity formation and change in related attitudes, knowledge and skills, these areas can be further tested with larger scale, quantitative studies that explore the impact that the identified characteristics can have on these areas as well as academic performance, future plans and other indicators of success. This type of research could be highly significant as a tool in the development of initiatives and educational environments that help youth seek alternative methods of belonging beyond restrictive ascribed identities. Perhaps even leading to a move away from the need to search out a sense of belonging and group identity through membership in extreme social groups.

Although the majority of these encounters cited by the students as significant are outside of the official curriculum, they still exerted a significant impact on the viewpoints and interpretations the students held of the history presented in the official curriculum. Official curricula, although important, is actually only one way that history can be encountered. For many of the participants, geographical and situational contexts such as their country of residence and their experience studying abroad, as well as being in different schools and educational systems, also had a profound impact on their identities. Both their achieved and ascribed senses of identity were formed and tested through these experiences, culminating in their attendance at the international school and their current identity construction process. Throughout the interviews, the students often compared and contrasted the various educational systems and approaches to history they encountered within these different contexts. Students perceived the international school to teach a more inclusive history than the public German school system and many of the school systems they attended while studying abroad. These alternative educational contexts were perceived to be more focused on the national history of their respective countries and did not necessarily

incorporate a more international perspective. Students credit the approach to history education within the international school, which incorporates more multiple perspectives, as expanding their worldview and broadening their own perspective and critical thinking abilities. These various forms of encountering history significantly influence encounters with official curricula because it influences the perspectives and identities through which the official curricula is experienced. As such, the multiplicity and diversity of encounters with history should be more recognized.

7.5 Further Research

Simple exposure to historical events in the curricula do not go far enough in this process to develop true historical understanding. Neither does demographic diversity simply result in an expansion of worldviews and acceptance of difference in conceptualizations, perceptions and opinions. Instead, dedicated space needs to exist within which students are encouraged to explore their own opinions and further develop their achieved identities while also explicitly being taught to recognize the process through which history becomes relevant, for themselves and others. The influential roles played by teachers, family members and peers are reflected throughout the interviews as mitigating factors which impact student perspectives and understandings of history and self, as means of transmitting both positive and negative narratives embedded with particular myths and symbols. Yet, often the curricula is taught devoid of any connection to the everyday realities of the students, making history irrelevant to them in certain ways. This enables the students, as seen in the interviews, to separate themselves from history or relegate it to a story. Students will need to be taught how to recognize the various potential factors that influence the construction and transmission of historical narratives and ideas surrounding identity and

belonging in order to better understand their positioning and the elements that influence them, including factors that exist outside of the classroom yet still impact perception and contextualization of student encounters with history.

As previously discussed, through the deployment of particular symbols and myths linked to a specific meaning, history plays an essential role in the identity formation process by creating an emotional connection to identity and group membership that is situated in a temporal context that is longitudinal and far reaching. As the interview data highlights, students were more engaged in history when they considered it to be relevant to their own identities, the people around them such as family members or the world in which they lived. Temporal positioning was a strong tool utilized by students in the processes through which they made sense of themselves, their social groups and their world in relation to the past and future. These processes could be made more transparent through explicit teaching within the classroom in a manner that helps students recognize relevant relationships and connections to their own world. For example, Brisk and colleagues suggest that education should do more to provide dedicated space to allow and facilitation to help students make these explicit connections by utilizing the concept of the situational context of education, whereby the students' own personal experiences are incorporated into the learning process.⁴³² By providing dedicated space for the exploration of students' personal views and experiences as they relate to the curricular content, students become more engaged in the material while also learning more about themselves and others around them.⁴³³

⁴³² Brisk et al. 2004. *Situational Context of Education*.

⁴³³ Brisk et al. 2004. *Situational Context of Education*.

This coincides with the interview data in that the agency of the students was stronger and more significantly impacted encounters with history as well as their subsequent impact on identity formation and historical understanding than previously accepted within the academic literature. If history education integrated more discussion of the complexity of and various factors that influence political decision making in a historical context, as well as better explored the relevance and relationship between history and the students' everyday lives, then perhaps the gap between the past and the present could be narrowed in such a way that students no longer feel so removed from history. By exploring agency in historical events in more detail, the complexity of lived experience could be brought to the forefront and applied to similar situations that the students see occurring within their own worlds, thus teaching them to be more thoughtful about political action. By actively creating and protecting space within which students can explore their own opinions, as well as how they came to them, and the views of others, important skills can be developed. 'When young people have a safe space to rigorously explore a topic, rather than merely debate it, they can become more critical and empathetic thinkers. They will question what they are seeing and hearing. They start to appreciate that their narrative may be different from what others experience.'⁴³⁴ The interview data highlighted the importance of this exploration, particularly as it relates to the distinctive ethos of the international school as opposed to other, more homogenous and standardized educational environments that the students experienced, both within and outside of Germany. The students credited the international school with expanding their worldview through the creation and protection of safe space within which to explore their own opinions, as well as listen to those of other people. Education as a whole

⁴³⁴ Murphy, M. December 28, 2014. Learning to Have Difficult Conversations: "Commercial Appeal" Guest Column from Memphis Director. Retrieved on January 6, 2015 from: <https://www.facinghistory.org/get-to-know-us/news/learning-have-difficult-conversations-commercial-appeal-guest-column-memphis#homepage-slider>

should do more to recognize the agency of individuals within society, as well as the responsibility that goes along with it, in a manner that is both humanist and historicist in order help students to better understand how and why certain decisions and actions are created.⁴³⁵

From the premise ‘people make choices, choices make history,’ Facing History and Ourselves has developed insightful curricula, resources and teacher training programs that actively engage students in the discussion and application of the lessons of history by making explicit connections to the world today in a manner that is relevant to the students and their salient identities. Facing History and Ourselves is an organization whose mission and vision is to combat racism and anti-Semitism by using history to teach tolerance in classrooms around the globe. The organization believes that ‘stories matter. The stories we tell have the power to effect history. By sharing stories with students, we help them to see themselves as part of the human story, as individuals who can change the narrative by making positive choices and contributing to their communities and the world.’⁴³⁶ For example, Facing History incorporates memoirs, books, primary material, videos and other resources that ‘engage and challenge us to confront history in all of its complexities.’ By guiding students through the process of connecting historical events to contemporary examples in a detailed and analytical manner, Facing History resources, curricula and workshops help students develop and further their critical thinking skills, sense of identity and understanding of the past in relation to the present.

The results of the interview data from this research are in line with Facing History’s goals and methods in that ‘by tying our own stories to those who have come before us, the past becomes a

⁴³⁵ Bevir, Daddow, & Hall. 2012. Interpreting British Foreign Policy.

⁴³⁶ 8 Memoirs That Matter. October 7, 2014. Facing Today: A Facing History Blog. Facing History and Ourselves. Brookline, MA. Retrieved on January 6, 2015 from: http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/8-memoirs-that-matter/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_campaign=Facing%20Today%20Blog%20Outreach&utm_content=418

useful resource in our everyday life, an endless storehouse of raw materials to be shaped or bent to meet our present needs.⁴³⁷ The interview data proves that this link between the past and present is alive and well in student encounters, perceptions and understandings of history, both on a conscious and unconscious level. The Facing History premise, curricula, resources and teacher training helps students develop the skills necessary to think critically about the ways in which history is dynamically constructed, interpreted and influential within the contemporary context, as well as the significance it holds for identities and choices as a political actor. As such, Facing History curricula help students identify, harness and apply their sense of agency when encountering history. Much could be learned from this approach and more should be done to integrate similar initiatives that help guide students in connecting the past and present. The interviews have shown that students make these connections between themselves and the past in various ways, as well as try to make sense of the present by better understanding and situating themselves in respect to the past. If history education is to transform from the boring, lifeless list of facts that the students complained about in the interviews, into a force that fulfills the ideal of helping students better understand and think critically about history and society today, then more needs to be done to highlight the link between the past and the present, especially as is relevant and salient to the students' lives and identities. This promotes deeper understanding as well as helps achieve the goal of history, as perceived by the students, to not repeat the mistakes of the past by learning from it and making informed choices as active political actors.

Yet, even this innovative and successful curricula program still operates from the premise that a curriculum, solely, can explicitly develop desired values and skills. Although this may be true for some students, it may not hold true for all students, nor is it consistently applied. One of the main

⁴³⁷ Wineburg, 2001. *Historical Thinking*. p. 6.

conclusions drawn from the interview data is that students, at least within the international school, retain a significant amount of agency. As such, the messages inherent in the history curricula are not just accepted but are filtered through pre-existing identities and conceptions to some extent. Furthermore, multiple social factors existing both within and outside of the classroom environment serve to significantly impact the identities and worldviews of the students, even in terms of how history is encountered, interpreted and understood. Thus, history education in terms of the official curricula, should not be blindly accepted as the only or even the main transmission of nationally accepted values and collective memories. Rather, it must be recognized that student agency and social network, as well as life and educational experiences, significantly contribute to and alter the forms and content that students encounter as well as how they make sense of. As a result, individual agency and social factors thus significantly influence how students see themselves and others. Therefore, although the content and messaging inherent within curriculum is important, it is not enough to change student worldviews if it is not perceived as relevant to their salient identities at the time of study.

As a result, rather than simply focusing on changing the content within history education, a wider perspective must be taken that acknowledges not only the complexity of encounters with history but also the variety of forms that these encounters take both within and outside of the classroom, well beyond official curricula and textbooks. This is not to take away from these efforts, as research has shown that the content found in textbooks can be highly incendiary and influential over student mentalities and perspectives. Yet, a broader view of history education that recognizes the complex relationship with identity should be taken. For example, since this research has shown the significance of temporal elements as a tool to interpret and make sense of encounters with history, they should be recognized as important to history education as a whole,

with students explicitly taught about these temporal elements that exist within histories and how to use them as a tool for critical analysis and interpretation. Teaching historical thinking and critical analytic skills, may be more helpful in combating the subjectivity that history can entail than simply pushing to change politically motivated or ideologically skewed content.

Additionally, future research could track changes in perceptions of history and salient identities over time and through various educational contexts, doing more to shed more light on how students encounter, interpret and make sense of history in their daily lives. This may help further identify larger patterns in salient aspects of identities and recognize whether particular identities are more salient at certain points in time or in juxtaposition to curricular content being studied. Particular educational and social interventions, such as the Facing History example could be applied to international and national schools within one area to analyze the any changes in attitudes and knowledge between the cohorts and educational environments. These interventions may help identify more effective ways in which to build inclusion so that achieved identities do not become extreme as a result of exclusion.

In light of the examples of educated youth engaging in violent acts provided in the introductory chapter of this thesis, further research should also explore the link between identity development, student agency, historical understanding and political behavior in the creation of a perceived sense of societal inclusion or exclusion. ‘Terrorism is the act of minorities, excluded from the normal political avenues of representation, repressed in one manner or another, and determined to advance their cause or fight their enemies in the one way they believe effective. Terrorism on any large scale can be an indication of the failures of a country’s efforts or will to be inclusive or

representative of all segments of its society.’⁴³⁸ Further work building on methods to explicitly teach students how to unpack concepts, myths and buzz words, for example learning to recognize the complexity inherent in and yet lack of definition or meaning to the word ‘terrorism,’ would be one way to advance critical thinking and historical understanding in a complex and relevant topic. Conducting research into change in perceptions and knowledge as a result of classroom interventions⁴³⁹ such as those employed and suggested by Helen Dexter and Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet would shed further light on the intersection between history, identity and political agency. Historical understanding may not always be a part of an act of terrorism itself but may in part of the process through which it is constructed, given meaning and relevance, and then integrated into the memory and subsequently identities of both the victims and perpetrators through symbols and negotiated histories. For example, ‘memories of atrocities, defeats, and humiliations help construct future victims.’⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, ‘subjective interpretations of the past are important to understanding political extremism.’⁴⁴¹ As such, history and identities may be considered to be bound together and reflected through political behaviours and choices. Further research into how encounters with history develop perceptions of inclusion and exclusion that may lead educated youth to seek out or succumb to propaganda promoting violent action would indeed be timely and relevant.

In a related vein, historical literature could do more to make the subjective nature of history more explicit by unpacking the situational context of the historian and the documents utilized in the

⁴³⁸ Crotty, 2005. *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism*. p. 7

⁴³⁹ Dexter, H. & Guittet, E. 2012. Teaching Terrorism: Ethical and Methodological Problems, Pedagogical Suggestions. *International Studies Perspectives* (15)4, p. 374-393.

⁴⁴⁰ Barreto, A. 2005. In Crotty, W. (ed.). *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective*. Northeastern Series on Democratization and Political Development. Northeastern University Press: Boston, MA. p. 25

⁴⁴¹ Barreto, A. 2005. *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism*. p. 25

process of constructing the particular narrative. Increasingly, historical research is accepting, modeling and even propagating these ideas, as a foundation from which to develop historical accounts that better encapsulate, explore and analyze history as well as its relationship with contemporary societies in all of its complexity. Patrick Finney's *Remembering the Road to World War Two: International history, national identity, collective memory*, and Mary Fulbrook's *German National Identity after the Holocaust* explicitly explore the dynamic construction of the historical record over time and place while Stuart Kaufman's *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* explores the complex relationship between perceptions of history, symbols, meaning and violence.

Since it was shown through the interviews that students encounter history in a myriad of manners, incorporating into the curriculum historical content and sources that also take the various ways in which history is represented in society into consideration may help students recognize the complexity of how they encounter history in their everyday lives. For example Susan Bordo's *The Creation of Anne Boleyn* explores how historians, playwrights, authors and others have constructed the various narratives about Anne Boleyn and how these constructions are as much, if not more, a representation of their particular ideological leanings and time period in which they wrote rather than on the former Tudor queen as an individual or the environment in which she lived. The book shows how the 'very incompleteness in the historical record has stirred the imaginations of different agendas, different generations, and different cultural moments to lay claim on their "own" Boleyn.'⁴⁴² Furthermore, Bordo is explicit about her positioning as an author and how her beliefs originally colored her initial interest in the topic.

⁴⁴² Bordo, S. 2013. *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston, MA. p. xvii.

Although not a biographical history of the queen, rather a history of the cultural perceptions related to Anne Boleyn, work such as this highlights the construction and reconstruction of historical narratives in a manner that more fully reflects the process and nature of historical narratives, their construction and also their re-imaginings through the eyes of various audiences. It also highlights some of the same fissures that were seen in the interviews, namely the various viewpoints drawn from generational, national and cultural lines.

Resources such as these account not only highlight the relationship between the past and present by tracking and analyzing the factors that influence the creation and modification of historical narratives, but also provide examples on how to develop deeper historical understanding and consciousness from which students can learn and better develop their own skills necessary to achieve them. It is not just the nature of the content that would need to change in order to achieve positive identity change in the pursuit of a more inclusive society but also the manners in which students are taught and allowed to engage with the material.

7.6 Conclusion

Situated within the existing academic literature concerning history, education and identity formation, this thesis contributes to the discussion by questioning the assumption that national values are simply transmitted via history education and subsumed into student perceptions and identities. Indeed, results from the interview data show that students exercise a significant level of agency in both identity formation processes and how encounters with history are perceived, interpreted and understood. Through the deployment of temporal positioning as a tool, students actively create a relationship between the salient aspects of their identities and the related aspects of history that are considered to be relevant to that identity while actively rejecting those aspects

that are considered to be irrelevant. As such, students cannot simply be considered as passive subjects. Instead, they should be recognized as authors of their own identities and histories in their own right.

Through a linear perception of the past accepted and perpetuated by the participants through their encounters with history, these encounters filtered, interpreted and made sense of in relation to identity. As an integral aspect of their construction of self and reality, this perception acted as an important factor in identity formation even when the chronology was not historically accurate due to constructed ruptures used as a tool to help students make sense of their contemporary positioning in relation to the relevant aspects of their encounters with history. It was the perception that history is a continuum that seemed to be the most important element, not necessarily the specifics of cause and effect or truth. As demonstrated with examples in politics and education in the introductory chapter of this thesis, even when a historical account is constructed as propaganda, misrepresented, or otherwise inaccurate, chronology can be used as a tool used to create a sense of validity and legitimacy for the audience by creating the perception of a clear link between the past, present and often the future as well. This is why history education can be so important to international and group relations, because it acts as a defining measure of identity and provides a sense of positioning and belonging through a link with the past that allows one to situate themselves within a particular continuum. Since each audience experiences different elements of and encounters with history as more or less salient, the chronological element will also be influenced by the same factors that determine salience, such as experience, beliefs and values that vary among individuals and groups.⁴⁴³ Since histories are created to be the most salient for the group that is creating them, this explains why differences in

⁴⁴³ Ellemers, Spears & Doosje. 2001. Self and Social Identity.

how different generations and groups encounter, construct and perceive history occurs, as well as provides the basis for explaining how culturally based and individual differences of opinion on history form.

The salient aspects of identity and their impact on perceptions of history are highlighted when exploring achieved and ascribed identity development, especially in terms of changes across space and time. The interview data goes beyond the notion of the reader as simply receiving information, and internalizing values inherent within that information, in that the students are not simply be convinced by, dislike, or have their prejudgements confirmed by encountering or reading history.⁴⁴⁴ The data presented actually expands ‘the extent to which the reader is an elemental part of the refiguring process of meaning creation.’⁴⁴⁵ The students were not simply or passively receiving ‘the truth claims that are built into the representational narrative,’⁴⁴⁶ but were also actively constructing their own representational narrative through their encounters with history by using some of the same tools as historians do. Elements such as emplotment and temporal positioning were used as tools by the students to take the histories that they encountered via the curricula, social interactions and society at large, and re-construct them in such a way that the encounters could hold meaning and relevance for their own identities.

As such, the results from the interviews not only provide insight into how encounters with history influence identity formation but also question the notion that values are simply transmitted in their entirety to students. As the interview results show, students play an active role in their encounters with history by exercising a sense of agency in how they interpret and make sense of history, which allows them to both internalize and reject various aspects of history

⁴⁴⁴ Munslow. *Narrative and History*. p. 54

⁴⁴⁵ Munslow. *Narrative and History*. p. 54

⁴⁴⁶ Munslow. *Narrative and History*. p. 54

based on their achieved identities or personal sense of self and belonging. When a large discrepancy between achieved identity and the identity ascribed by others or found within the history content that they are encountering occurs, disengagement and alienation may result. This may provide an opportunity for groups outside of mainstream society, such as gangs and fundamentalist religious groups, which provide perceived sense of belonging that may otherwise be lacking. This research indicates that encounters with history are vastly complex, with various factors capable of mitigating the impact that encounters and histories can have on the identity formation process.

As supported by this research, the past is powerful. The ways in which people and groups are defined and reimagined can have profound impacts on self-esteem and belonging and academic performance, as well as societal implications such as political behaviors, activism and even violence. As has been seen in multiple contemporary examples described in the introductory chapter, these impacts can have devastating effects, with educated youth as prime targets. This research developed from the premise that if more was understood about how students encounter, interpret and make sense of history, as well as how this process impacts their identity formation, then more could be done to reduce the potentially negative effect of encountering a history that has no place for a particular notion of identity that is salient for an individual student or even a minority group. As has been shown by the interview data analyzed and described throughout this dissertation, encounters with history are perceived, understood and reimagined in various ways that impact how students see themselves and are seen by others. As such, this dissertation sought to bring the voices, opinions and everyday experiences of students who attend an international school to the forefront of the debate, in order to provide an additional perspective to the current dialogues and expand the discussion outside of conflict ridden contexts in the pursuit of a better

understanding of how the complexity of everyday encounters with history can impact the identity formation of educated youth.

Works Cited

- 7 July Bombings. BBC. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/what_happened/html/
- 8 Memoirs That Matter. October 7, 2014. Facing Today: A Facing History Blog. Facing History and Ourselves. Brookline, MA. Retrieved on January 6, 2015 from: http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/8-memoirs-that-matter/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_campaign=Facing%20Today%20Blog%20Outreach&utm_content=418
- Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: New York, New York.
- Andrews, M. 2003. Grand national narratives and the project of truth commissions: a comparative analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks. Vol. 25
- Antze, P. & Lambek, M. (eds). 1996. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. Routledge: NY.
- Asquit. 2003. In Soltan-Zadeh. & Farouk. 2010. Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts in the Social Studies Textbooks of Iran. In Pampanini, G., Adly, F. and Napier, D. (eds). *Interculturalism, Society and Education*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands.
- Assmann, A. 2006. On the (In) Compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory. *German Life and Letters*, 59(2), 187-200.
- Assmann, A. & Shortt, L. (eds.). 2011. *Memory and Political Change*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Assman, J. & Czaplicka, J. 1995. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* (65). p. 125-133
- August 29, 2014. ISIS recruits fighters through powerful online campaign. CBS News. CBS Interactive Inc. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-uses-social-media-to-recruit-western-allies/>
- Barber, 1996 & Jusdanis, 2001. in Richardson, G. H. 2001. *A border within: The Western Canada Protocol for Social Studies Education and the politics of national identity construction*. Brazil: VIII Congreso AMEC.
- Barreto, A. 2005. In Crotty, W. (ed.). *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective*. Northeastern Series on Democratization and Political Development. Northeastern University Press: Boston, MA.

Barton, E. 2001. *Research Methods in Social Studies Education: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives*. Merryfield, M. (Series, Ed.). *Research in Social Education*. Information Age Publishing. Greenwich, CT.

BBC News: Education & Family. June 9, 2014. Ofsted reports on 21 Birmingham schools – full list. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-27765372?print=true>

Berger, S. 2008. Narrating the Nation: Historiography and Other Genres. In Berger, S.; Eriksonas, L. & Mycock, M. (eds.), *Narrating the nation: representations in history, media and the arts*. European Science Foundation. Berghahn Books: USA. Cobb-Roberts, D., Dorn, S., & Shircliffe, B. (eds.). 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities: The Creation of Identity, Meaning, and Conflict in U.S. History*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, NY.

Bevir, M., Daddow, O.J., & Hall, I. 2013. Introduction: Interpreting British Foreign Policy. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*. Special Issue: Interpreting British Foreign Policy, 15(2), 163-174.

Bloch, M. 1953. *The Historian's Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It*. Vintage Books. Random House: Toronto Canada.

Blumer, H. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Bohleber, W. 2007. Remembrance, trauma and collective memory: The battle for memory in psychoanalysis. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 88: 329–352.

Bordo, S. 2013. *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston, MA.

Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts. June 3, 2013. CNN. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/03/us/boston-marathon-terror-attack-fast-facts/>

Boyatzis, R. 1998. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Braude, J. 2014. A Saudi Psychologist on Jihadism, Clerical Elites and Education Reform. Foreign Policy Institute. Retrieved on July 21, 2014 from: <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2014/04/saudi-psychologist-jihadism-clerical-elites-and-education-reform>

Brisk, M. E., Burgos, A., & Hamerla, S. 2004. *Situational Context of Education: A Window into the World of Bilingual Learners*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bruckner, G. July 3, 2014. Ausländerzahl in Deutschland 2013 auf Rekordniveau. Destatis Statistisches Bundesamt, Weisbaden. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from:

https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2014/03/PD14_081_12521.html

Bruner. 1991. The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 1, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

Bruner, J. 2006. *In Search of Pedagogy: Vol. 1 The selected works of Jerome S. Bruner*. Routledge: New York, NY.

Buckingham, D. (ed.). 2008. *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. MIT Press: Boston, MA.

Cajani, L. 2007. Introduction – Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century: the burden of the past, the challenge of the present. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children's Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA.

Carretero, M. 2011. *Constructing Patriotism: Teaching History and Memories in Global Worlds*. Information Age Publishing, Inc.: Charlotte, NC.

Charmaz, K. 2003. Grounded Theory. In J.A. Smith (ed.), *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods*. SAGE: London, UK.

Checkel, J. & Katzenstein, P. (eds.). 2009. *European Identity*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Cobb-Roberts, D., Dorn, S., & Shircliffe, B. (eds.). 2006. *Schools as Imagined Communities: The Creation of Identity, Meaning, and Conflict in U.S. History*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.

Cohen, R. March 31, 2000. Berlin Journal; Poking Fun, Artfully, at a Heady German Word. *The New York Times*. Accessed on October 12, 2010 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/31/world/berlin-journal-poking-fun-artfully-at-a-heady-german-word.html?pagewanted=print>

Cohen-Pfister, L. & Vienroeder-Skinner, D. 2006. *Victims and Perpetrators: 1933-1945: (Re)Presenting the Past in Post-unification Culture*. Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co: Berlin.

Connolly, A. 2011. Healing the wounds of our fathers: intergenerational trauma, memory, symbolization and narrative. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*(56):5. p. 607-626.

Conway, D. 2008. Masculinities and Narrating the Past: Experiences of Researching White Men who Refused to Serve in the Apartheid Army, *Qualitative Research*, 8(3).

Crotty, W. (ed.). 2005. *Democratic Development & Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective*. Northeastern Series on Democratization and Political Development. Northeastern University Press: Boston, MA.

- Daddow, O. 2006. Euroscepticism and History Education in Britain. *Government and Opposition*. 41(1), 64-85.
- Daddow, O. 2006. Euroscepticism and the Culture of the Discipline of History. *Review of International Studies* (32), 309-28.
- Daddow, O. 2011. *New Labour and the European Union: Blair and Brown's logic of history*. Manchester University Press: Manchester, UK.
- Danieli, Y. 1998. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. The Plenum Series on Stress and Coping. Springer.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. 2003. The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Destatis Statistisches Bundesamt. 2014. Schools of general education and vocational schools: foreign pupils by citizenship. Statistisches Bundesamt, Weisbaden. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from:
<https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/EducationResearchCulture/Schools/Tables/ForeignPupilsCitizenship.html>
- Dexter, H. & Guittet, E. 2012. Teaching Terrorism: Ethical and Methodological Problems, Pedagogical Suggestions. *International Studies Perspectives* (15)4. p. 374-393.
- Donald, D.T. 2009. The curricular problem of indigenusness: colonial frontier logics, teacher resistances and the acknowledgement of ethical space. In Nahachewsky, J. & Johnston, I. (Eds.) *Beyond 'Presentism' Re-Imagining the Historical, Personal, and Social Places of Curriculum*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands.
- Easton, M. June 9, 2014. 'Trojan horse' scandal – extreme or diverse? BBC News: UK. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk=27766291?print=true>
- Ehlich, K. 1993. HIAT: a transcription system for discourse data. In J.A. Edwards & M.D. Lampert (eds.), *Talking data: transcription and coding in discourse research*. Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ. p. 123-148.
- Ellemers, N., Spears, R., & Doosje, B. 2001. Self and Social Identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 53.
- Elliott, J. 2005. *Using narrative in social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. SAGE Publications: London, UK.
- Erikson, E. 1980. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, New York.
- Eriksen, T.H. 1993. *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. 3rd Edition. Anthropological Perspectives. PLUTO PRESS: London, UK.

Evans, R. 2002. *Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*. Verso Books: New York, New York.

Facing History and Ourselves. 2008. *Stories of Identity: Religion, Migration, and Belonging in a Changing World*. Facing History and Ourselves: Boston, MA.

Finney, P. (ed.). 1997. *The Origins of the Second World War*. Arnold Readers in History. St. Martin's Press, Inc: New York, NY.

Finney, P. 2011. *Remembering the Road to World War Two: International history, national identity, collective memory*. Routledge: London, UK.

Fraczek, J. January 3, 2014. Germany's fear of job seekers from new EU members. Deutsche Welle: Labor Market. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/germanys-fear-of-job-seekers-from-new-eu-members/a-17338848>

Fulbrook, M. 1999. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. Polity Press: Cambridge, UK.

Fuller, J. 2012. *Bilingual Pre-Teens: Competing Ideologies and Multiple Identities in the U.S. and Germany*. Routledge Studies in Sociolinguistics: New York, NY.

Furedi, F. August 20, 2014. Why James Foley's murder was a message to Britain. CNN. Retrieved on August 21, 2014 from: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/20/opinion/james-foley-message-britain/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

Gaskarth. 2012. Virtues in International Society. In Nabers, D. (ed.). 2009. Filling the Void of Meaning: Identity Construction in U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 5, 2.

Gaskarth, J. 2012. The Virtues in International Society. *European Journal of International Relations*. 18, 3.

Geschiere, P. & Meyer, B. 1998. Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure, Introduction. *Development and Change*, Vol. 29, Institute of Social Studies, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, UK.

Haacke, H. 2007. Spatiul Public Bucuresti. Retrieved from: www.spatial-public.ro/eng/Hans_Haacke/Hans_Haacke.html

Hahn, H.J. 1998. *Education and Society in Germany*. Berg: Oxford, UK.

Hammack, P.L. 2011. *Narrative and the Politics of Identity: The Cultural Psychology of Israeli and Palestinian Youth*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

- Harding, J. 2006. Questioning the Subject in Biographical Interviewing. *Sociological Research Online* 11(3), Accessed on March 12, 2011 from: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/3/harding.html>
- Hertel, G. & Kerr, N. 2001. Priming In-Group Favoritism: The Impact of Normative Scripts in the Minimal Group Paradigm. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*: 37. Academic Press.
- Higgins, A. "Far-Right Fever for a Europe Tied to Russia." The New York Times. May 20, 2014. Retrieved on May 21, 2014 from <http://nyti.ms/1jAdcaP>
- Hobden, S. & Hobson, J. (eds.). 2002. *Historical Sociology of International Relations*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- Holland, D.; Lachicotte Jr., W.; Skinner, D. & Cain, C. 1998. *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Honesty/Ethics in Professions*. Gallup. Retrieved on October 5, 2014 from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1654/honesty-ethics-professions.aspx>
- Hurwitz, J. & Peffley, M. (eds.). 1998. *Perception & Prejudice: Race & Politics in the United States*. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2011. *Diploma Programme: General Regulations*. Wales: Cardiff.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *About the International Baccalaureate*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/general/who.cfm>
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *Diploma Programme Curriculum*. Retrieved on March 30, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/group3/>
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *Diploma Programme Curriculum*. Retrieved on March 30, 2014 from <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/group3/>
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *History*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from: www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/group3/history.cfm
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *IB history higher level subject brief*. Retrieved on January 30, 2014 from: http://www.unis.org/uploaded/02_ACADEMICS/2014-15/Files_PDFs_%28Academics%29/IB_Course_Descriptions/HL_History_Brief_4_pages_cm2.0.pdf
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *Information for Germany*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from: <http://www.ibo.org/country/DE/index.cfm>
- International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *Mission and Strategy*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from: <http://www.ibo.org/mission/>

International Baccalaureate Organization. 2014. *The IB Diploma Programme*. Retrieved on January 29, 2014 from: <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/>

International School Bremen. 2008. *About the School*. Retrieved on March 29, 2014 from: <http://www.isbremen.de/index.php?page=school&>

January 10, 2014. Asylum applications to Germany reach a 14-year high. Deutsche Welle: Immigration. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/asylum-applications-to-germany-reach-a-14-year-high/a-17354845>

January 15, 2014. Immigration to Germany at its highest rate in nearly two decades. Deutsche Welle: Interior Affairs. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/immigration-to-germany-at-its-highest-rate-in-nearly-two-decades/a-17363452>

Johnston, I. & Tupper, J. 2009. Chronotope of School: Students Negotiating Identities in the Social and Cultural Time/Space of an Urban High School. In Nahachewsky, J. & Johnston, I. (Eds.) *Beyond 'Presentism' Re-Imagining the Historical, Personal, and Social Places of Curriculum*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Kandiyoti, D. 1996. *Gendering the Middle East: emerging perspectives*. IB Tauris.

Kansteiner, W. 2002. Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies. *History and Theory*, 41: 179–197

Kaufman, S. 2001. *Modern Hatreds: the symbolic politics of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY.

Knipp, K. August 8, 2014. Opinion: 'German jihadists should not be indulged.' Deutsche Welle. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://dw.de/p/1Crpi>

Langenbacher, E. 2010. Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations. In Langenbacher, E. & Shain, Y. (eds.). *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*. Georgetown University Press: Washington D.C.

Langenbacher, E. & Shain, Y. (eds.). 2010. Introduction: Twenty-first Century Memories. *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*. Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C. USA.

Lassig, S. 2013. Introduction part 1: Post-conflict reconciliation and joint history textbooks projects. In Korostelina, K. & Lassig, S. (eds.). *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects*. Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution. Routledge: New York, NY.

Lauer, K. & Nienaber, M. May 20, 2014. Germany becomes world's top migration spot after U.S.: OECD. Reuters. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/20/us-germany-oecd-migration-idUSBREA4J0QH20140520>

Laufer, P. 2003. *Exodus to Berlin: The Return of the Jews to Germany*. Ivan R. Dee Publisher: Chicago, IL.

Lebert, S. & Lebart, N. 2002. *My Father's Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders: an Intimate History of Damage and Denial*. Back Bay Books: Little, Brown and Company: Boston, MA.

Levy, D. & Dierkes, J. 2002. Institutionalising the Past: shifting memories of nationhood in German education and immigration legislation. In Mueller, J.W. (ed.). *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

Liu, J. H.; Stewart, M.; McClure, J. & Higgins, T. 1999. Social identity and the perception of history: cultural representations of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *European Journal of Social Psychology*. 29.

Maier, C. 1997. *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Masi, A. September 14, 2014. ISIS Recruiting Westerners: How the 'Islamic State' Goes After Non-Muslims and Recent Converts In The West. International Business Times: US Edition. Retrieved on September 14, 2014 from: <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-recruiting-westerners-how-islamic-state-goes-after-non-muslims-recent-converts-west-1680076>

Mazlish, B. 2006. *The New Global History*. Routledge: NY, NY

McAdams, D.; Josselson, R. & Lieblich, A. (eds.). 2001. *Turns in the Road: Narrative Study of Lives in Transition*. American Psychological Association.

Mueller, J.W. (ed.). 2002. Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.

Munslow, A. 2007. *Narrative and History*. As part of MacRaid, D. (Series Ed.) *Theory and History*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, USA.

Murgescu, M. & Mihalache, C. 2007. Citizenship and nationality in history teaching in post-communist Romania. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children's Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA.

Murphy, M. December 28, 2014. Learning to Have Difficult Conversations: "Commercial Appeal" Guest Column from Memphis Director. Retrieved on January 6, 2015 from: <https://www.facinghistory.org/get-to-know-us/news/learning-have-difficult-conversations-commercial-appeal-guest-column-memphis#homepage-slider>

Nabers, D. 2009. Filling the Void of Meaning: Identity Construction in U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. 5, 2.

Nash, G., Crabtree, C. & Dunn, R. 2000. *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*. Vintage Books

Neal, A. 1998. *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century*. M.E. Sharpe, Inc.: NY.

OECD. 2013. "Country statistical profile: Germany", *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-germany_20752288-table-deu

OECD. June 14, 2013. Table A.1 Inflows of foreign population into OECD countries and the Russian Federation. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/>

Oh, I. & Ishizawa-Grbic, D. 2000. Forgiving the Culprits: Japanese Historical Revisionism in a post-Cold War context. *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Retrieved from: http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol5_2/oh_grbi.htm

Ozcan, V. & Grimbacher, S. 2007. focus MIGRATION. Germany: Introduction. Federal Agency for Civic Education. Netzwerk Migration in Europa e.V. Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies. Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI). Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Germany.1509.0.html?&L=1>

Papoulia-Tzelepi, P. & Spinthourakis, J. 2007. History teaching and the educated citizen: the case of history teaching in the Greek gymnasium. In Cajani, L. & Ross, A. (eds.). *History teaching, identities and citizenship*. European Issues in Children's Identity and Citizenship 7. Trentham Books Limited: Sterling, VA.

Pennebaker, J., Paez, D. & Rim, B. (eds.) 1997. *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: NJ.

Pine, L. 2011. *Education in Nazi Germany*. Berg Publishers: UK.

Portelli, A. 2004. Oral history as genre. In Chamberlain and Thompson (eds.), *Narrative and Genre*. Psychology Press.

Quinn Patton, M. 2002. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Reisman, C. 1993. *Narrative analysis*. SAGE: Newbury Park.

Ristic, M. June 05, 2012. EU: Serb President 'rewriting history' on Srebrenica. Balkan Transitional Justice. Retrieved from: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-srebrenica-genocide-has-happened>

Robben, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. (eds.). *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*. Publications for the Society of Psychological Anthropology.

Schleppegrell, M. 2004. *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistics Perspective*. Routledge: New York, NY.

Schwartz, R. 12.10.2013. Opinion: Migration background is not a blemish. Retrieved on August 18, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/opinion-migration-background-is-not-a-blemish/a-17152542>

Siebert, R. 1992. Don't Forget: Fragments of a Negative Tradition. In Passerini, L. (Ed.). *Memory and Totalitarianism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

Soltan-Zadeh, M. and Farouk, M. 2010. A Comparison of National and Islamic Concepts in the Social Studies Textbooks of Iran. In Pampanini, G. (ed); Adly, F. and Napier, D. (co-eds). *Interculturalism, Society and Education*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Stanley, L. & Temple, B. 2008. Narrative methodologies: subjects, silences, re-readings and analyses. *Qualitative Research*. 8 (3). Retrieved on December 13, 2010 from: <http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/8/3/275>

Steele, C. 1997. A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, Vol 52(6), 613-629

Steele, C. & Aronson, J. 2013. Stereotypes and the Fragility of Academic Competence, Motivation, and Self-Concept. In Elliot, A. & Dweck, C. (eds.). *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*. Guilford Publications.

Steinberg, L. 1997. *Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform has Failed and What Parents Need to Do*. Simon & Schuster: New York, NY.

Suarez-Orozco, C., Suarez-Orozco, M. & Todorova, I. 1995. *Learning a New Land: Immigrant Students in American Society*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M. 2001. *Children of Immigration*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Suarez-Orozco, C. 2003. Formulating Identity in a Globalized World. In Marcelo Suárez-Orozco & Desiree Baolin Qin-Hillard (Eds.). *Globalization: Culture & Education in the New Millennium*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Summary. *Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe*. Retrieved on February 9, 2011 from: <http://www.esf.org/activities/research-networking-programmes/humanities-sch/current-esf-research-networking-programmes-in-humanities/representations-of-the-past-the-writing-of-national-histories-in-europe.html>

Sunstein, C. 2003. *Why Societies Need Dissent*. Harvard University Press: Boston, MA.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. 1979. An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In Austin, W. & Worchel, S. (eds.). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Nelson-Hall Series in Psychology. Burnham Inc. p. 33-47.

Todd, J. 2005. Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change. *Theory and Society*: 34. p. 429 & 430.

Traynor, I. February 14, 2002. Bosnia's bloody history rewritten. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/feb/15/warcrimes.iantraynor>;

Traynor, I. February 20, 2006. Irving jailed for denying Holocaust: Three years for British historian who described Auschwitz as a fairytale. The Guardian. News: World News. Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/21/thefarright.highereducation>

'Trojan Horse': Campaign to impose 'faith-based ideology. June 9, 2014. BBC News: Birmingham & Black Country. Retrieved on June 10, 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-27762341?print=true>

Ulrich, K. January 9, 2014. Migrants needed in Germany to compensate for aging population. Deutsche Welle: Labor Market. Retrieved on August 24, 2014 from: <http://www.dw.de/migrants-needed-in-germany-to-compensate-for-aging-population/a-17350390>

Weinberg, D. 2014. Textbook Diplomacy: Why the State Department Shelved a Study on Incitement in Saudi Education Materials. Foundation for Defense of Democracies Press: Washington, D.C.

White, H. 1973. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, USA.

White, H. 1987. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, USA.

Wineburg, S. 2001. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.

Wortham, S. 2001. *Narratives in Action: A Strategy for Research and Analysis*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University: New York, NY.

Wortham, S. 2006. *Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Yin, R. 1993. *Applications of Case Study Research*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 34. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Appendix A - Letter to Research Participants

In this letter, I (Alexis Rossi) would like to invite you to participate in research related to my PhD dissertation. In the following paragraphs, I would like to give you some more information and explain to you in more detail what to expect. After reading the letter if you still have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you!

1. Who am I? What is the study about?

I (Alexis Rossi) am a full-time PhD student in the Politics, History and International Relations department at Loughborough University in the UK, under the supervision of Dr. Oliver Daddow.⁴⁴⁷ Inspired by the interdisciplinary and international nature of my educational background, my own experiences and my interests in identity, history and education, I have decided to further explore how history education might impact one's sense of identity.

2. How long will it take?

It is estimated that each interview will last anywhere between 20-60 minutes, but it depends on your feedback, so there is no precise timing. However, you should take into account that the technical equipment check, the introduction information, and the closure of the interview may take an additional total of 5-10 minutes.

3. How will responses be handled?

Confidentiality

You can be sure that all responses will be handled with absolute confidentiality. Specific personal information that would identify you will not be revealed in any stage of the study. For example your name will not be written or mentioned in the transcribed interviews, in papers or to supervisors.

Recording, processing and storage of the data

All interviews will be tape-recorded and then the digital versions of the interviews will be transferred to a computer. Later each interview will be transcribed and analyzed. Only the researcher will have access to both the original interview and demographic information.

Right to not answer questions or to withdraw from the interview

You have the right to end the interview at any time. If you find any of the questions too personal, you can choose not to answer them or to have the tape-recorder turned off. After the interviews, if you want or your parent/guardian wants you to withdraw from the study, none of the data that you provided will be used. Moreover, you can ask to see your transcribed interview.

Results of the research

⁴⁴⁷ At the time of data collection, I was a student at Loughborough University. I later followed Dr. Daddow to Leicester University in an effort to sustain a continuation of supervision.

Your data will be used only for academic purposes such as the PhD dissertation, publications and presentations. In all cases, your identity will be kept confidential!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions. Thank you!

Alexis Rossi (Alexis.L.Rossi@gmail.com)

Appendix B - Consent Form for Student Participants

I (print full name) _____ hereby give researcher Alexis Rossi permission to use my interview responses for her PhD dissertation and any future publications. I understand that excerpts from my written transcripts and tape-recorded verbal communications with the researcher will be studied and may be quoted.

I grant authorization for the use of the above information with the full understanding that my anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved at all times. I understand that my full name or other identifying information will never be disclosed or referenced in any way in any written or verbal context.

I understand that I have the right to choose not to answer an interview question. I also understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix C – Initial Interview Guide for Students

How would you describe your nationality?

In terms of culture (nationality or ethnic background), how would you describe yourself and why? Has this ever changed over time? Why or why not?

What factors or people have most influenced your cultural identity? Why?

Have you ever studied abroad? Could you tell me a bit more about that? Did anything about history class surprise you or was different from what you expected? Why do you think that is?

What was difficult or challenging for you to get used to while you were studying abroad?

What helped you adapt to the new environment?

Why did you decide to attend the International School?

What makes the international school special?

What is positive about being surrounded by so many different cultures?

What is challenging about being surrounded by so many different cultures?

Do you like history?

How does the diversity within your class influence discussions during history class? Why do you think that is?

What kind of history do you think should be taught in school? How can the history curriculum of schools be improved?

How do you see yourself and your culture reflected in the history curriculum taught here?

What is most important to learn about history? Why? What is important to learn about American/German history? Why?

What should be the goal/purpose of history education?

What makes a good teacher? What skills or qualities might teachers in an international setting need that is different than in a less diverse environment? Why?

What are your plans for after graduation?

What qualities are you looking for in a university/job? Why?