

What is ‘needed’ to keep remembering? War-specific communication, parental exemplar behaviour and participation in national commemorations

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ABSTRACT. Given the abundance of literature on collective memory practices, there is relatively little empirical research on the socialization processes explaining the transmission of such practices. This article examines to what extent war-specific communication and parental exemplar behaviour function as a link between the collected memories of individuals and society’s collective memory. Utilizing data from an on-line survey conducted in 2014, we focus on participation in the activities organized on Remembrance Day and Liberation Day in the Netherlands in remembrance of the Second World War. We distinguish between public and private practices. Our findings highlight that different forms of socialization substitute for one another. Whereas communication with non-relatives is particularly relevant for those communicating less frequently with parents about past war experiences, parental exemplar behaviour, such as participating in the two-minute silence on Remembrance Day, plays a bigger role amongst those with lower levels of communication with either relatives or non-relatives.

KEYWORDS: collective memory practices, national commemorations, parental participation, socialization, war-specific communication

Introduction

Ample research has focused on the importance of national and world events experienced early in life for attitudes and behaviours in later life (Schuman and Corning 2012; Schuman and Scott 1989; Scott and Zac 1993; Steidl 2013). Much of this research has concentrated on the transmission of shared memories of past events, referred to as collective memory (Halbwachs 1992; Schwartz 1982). Relatively little attention has been paid to the transmission of what Olick and Robbins (1998) label ‘mnemonic’ practices, designed to aid collective memory. Classic manifestations of mnemonic practices are the

commemorative and celebrative observances organized by a nation in remembrance of crucial moments in its history as a nation. National commemorations and celebrations are one of the ways by which nations attempt to maintain a connectedness with the past and strengthen national identities (Gillis 1994; Irwin-Zarecka 1994; Schwartz 1982; Schwartz 2015). Although the exact direction of the relationship between commemoration and national identification remains ambiguous, scholarship seems to agree upon the fact that the two are closely related (Assmann 2008; Elgenius 2011; Etzioni 2000; McCrone and McPherson 2009).¹

Yet empirical research on individual-level processes of socialization explaining the transmission of participation in national commemorations and celebrations across generations is fairly limited. The current contribution examines to what extent various forms of socialization, namely, individuals' war-specific communication and parental commemorative participation, can explain own participation in institutionalized commemorations and celebrations. In doing so, we follow up on Heinrich and Weyland (2016), who provided an important building block for collective memory research by introducing a meso-level explanation. This explanation focuses on the intra-group interactions by which individuals share and negotiate their memories, functioning as a mediator between the (micro-level) collected memories of individuals and society's cultural or collective memory (i.e. the macro-level; see also Assmann 2008; Olick 1999). Whilst the meso-level in Heinrich and Weyland's paper is exemplified by the public discourse within the Web 2.0, we examine communication processes with both relatives and non-relatives.

In addition, we look at interactions between the different forms of socialization. What happens when one form of socialization is less available? Does another take over? To do so, we focus on two commemorative events in the Netherlands: Remembrance Day and Liberation Day. Both days were originally initiated in remembrance of the Second World War. Given the major impact of the war, most countries that experienced the Second World War have introduced some sort of institutionalized form of remembering (Liu et al. 2005; McCrone and McPherson 2009), making Dutch Remembrance Day and Liberation Day excellent examples to study (see Krimp and Reiding 2014 for a comparison of war commemorations across Europe).

Also the current timing is ideal for our study. Communicative memory has a limited time span that normally reaches no further back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations (Assmann 2008). With the Second World War now more than seventy years ago, forms of socialization are changing. People who directly experienced the war are replaced by people familiarized with the war indirectly through stories told by family members. For some, even this is no longer possible. Recent reports suggest that interest and participation in Dutch Remembrance Day and Liberation Day is declining (Verhue and Koenen 2016), highlighting the urge to research what is 'needed' to keep remembering. Considering our interest in the socialization

of mnemonic practices amongst birth cohorts further away from the historical events that define such practices, we concentrate on the commemorative behaviour of those who have not experienced a war themselves.

We consider three forms of socialization that we think are relevant for participation in national commemorations and celebrations: war-specific communication with relatives, war-specific communication with non-relatives and parental exemplar behaviour. The importance of parental exemplar behaviour for commemorative participation was already shown by Lubbers and Meuleman (2016), but they did not consider communicative forms of socialization. Moreover, even though parents are often considered the main agents of socialization, most socialization theories also highlight the role of agents outside the immediate family environment. We argue that communication with extended family members and non-relatives also merits attention. This is particularly relevant for cohorts born further away from a particular historic event. Whilst their parents may have been born after the Second World War, they may have grandparents who experienced this war, or friends, colleagues or acquaintances who experienced a different war.

In sum, the present paper addresses to what extent different forms of socialization interact to explain participation in national commemorations and celebrations. We have to keep in mind that commemoration can take place in many different ways. Where some people may prefer to commemorate in a more private sphere and follow the activities surrounding these events from home, others may consider commemorating a public matter and choose to attend ceremonies or celebrations organized by their community. Distinguishing between public and private activities can be argued to be especially relevant when looking at more distant forms of socialization, such as communication with non-relatives, which may have a stronger influence on public activities than on private ones. As a final contribution, we therefore explore to what extent the distinguished forms of socialization affect public versus private commemorative practices differently.

The Dutch context: Remembrance Day and Liberation Day

Remembrance Day in the Netherlands, held annually on 4 May, was initiated in 1945 to remember and honour the Dutch victims of the Second World War. Since 1961, 4 May is dedicated to all Dutch civilians and soldiers killed or murdered in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or anywhere else in the world in war situations or during peace-keeping operations since the outbreak of the Second World War (for more information on the history of Dutch Remembrance Day and Liberation Day, see Keesom 2012; Van de Reijt 2010; Vermolen 1995). Remembrance Day is centred around two minutes of silence held at 8:00 p.m., in memory of the victims of war. Traditionally, flags are flown at half-staff, and commemoration ceremonies are organized throughout

the country, the main one taking place in the capital and attended by the monarch, members of parliament and cabinet members. There is also plenty of opportunity to follow the organized activities in a more private matter, as the main events are broadcast live on national radio and television.

On Liberation Day, introduced in 1954, the Netherlands celebrates its enduring freedom. Although originally meant as a day to celebrate the liberation of the nation from the Nazi German occupation, nowadays the day is also used to reflect upon current issues, such as the lack of freedom in other countries. Liberation Day starts on 5 May with an address on the fragility of freedom in the Netherlands and abroad, functioning as a link between the commemorations on 4 May and the festivities on 5 May. Flags are flown, and festivals take place in the twelve Dutch provinces and two major cities. Besides musical acts, festival visitors can visit organizations such as Amnesty International and the Red Cross at the 'Freedom Square' and listen to stories told by people who lived or are still living without freedom (for more information on the content of Dutch Liberation festivals, see De Regt and Van der Lippe 2015). The day's festivities conclude with a concert on the river Amstel. Similar to Remembrance Day, many of the activities on Liberation Day are broadcast live so that people can follow the activities via television, radio or online.

Theory

War-specific communication with relatives

Socialization refers to the learning process through which people acquire the norms, values and skills necessary to function in society. An important part of socialization consists of learning what is considered 'appropriate' behaviour. This happens through a variety of mechanisms, both directly through the explicit teaching and reinforcing of behaviours, and more indirectly by observing and imitating behaviours. Most socialization theories have highlighted the family, and in particular the primary caregivers, as the main agents of socialization (Glass, Bengtson, and Dunham 1986; Parsons and Bales 1956). Abundant empirical research has provided support for the influence of parents on their children's attitudes and behaviours throughout the life course, in particular during the period ranging from childhood to early adulthood (Hooghe and Boonen 2015; Jaspers, Lubbers, and De Vries 2008).

One way socialization takes place within the family environment is through communication (Kuhn 2004; Schönplflug 2001). Communicating about a specific issue or event with other family members – whether as a child or an adult – not only actively teaches basic facts about important political, historical or social issues but also heightens the visibility of the values, attitudes and beliefs of family members (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009; Mayer and

Schmidt 2004). As a consequence, people may become more interested in and motivated to participate in events related to the topic discussed, and consciously or unconsciously adapt their own behaviours to match that of their family (Kuhn 2004).

Also in the collective memory literature, communicating about war experiences of relatives is considered an important explanation of the transmission of memories to subsequent generations, providing people with an opportunity to hear first-hand about the personal experiences and emotions involved in a particular event (Halbwachs 1992; Zerubavel 1996). As such, groups can produce memories in individuals of events they never experienced in any direct sense (Olick 1999). The role of communication in memory processes is also discussed by Welzer (2005, 2008). Quoting Welzer (2008: 289): ‘when families get together (...) there is an historical associative space (...). Such social interaction transports history *en passant*, casually, and unnoticed by the speakers’. Communication can thus be considered the mechanism – or as Heinrich and Weyland (2016) call it, the meso-level explanation – through which autobiographical memories are passed on to new generations to form collective memory. It serves as a link connecting history, i.e. the remembered past to which we no longer have an ‘organic’ relation, and collective memory, i.e. the active past that forms our identities (Olick 1999: 335).

Considering that most people in the Netherlands who experienced the Second World War now have grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, this provides an opportunity to not only study socialization from one generation to the next, but focus additionally on multigenerational family relationships. Extended family members such as grandparents may function as important communication channels, being able to not only directly socialize their grandchildren but also indirectly, via their grandchildren’s parents, i.e. their own children. This is also suggested by Heinrich and Weyland (2016: 29), who state that ‘members are convinced of the specific story because it has been told and retold within their group context again and again’. At the same time, having grandparents who experienced a war may be less influential for someone’s own commemorative behaviours than having parents who experienced a war – as the former suggests a longer distance from the historical events that define national commemorations and celebrations. Finding an effect of grandparental communication could thus be considered even stronger evidence for a socialization mechanism. We therefore hypothesize that *people who communicate more often with their parents (H1a) or grandparents (H1b) about the past war experiences of their parents or grandparents respectively participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations.*

War-specific communication with non-relatives

Although less often examined, important socializing agents can be found outside the family. Early studies on socialization already made clear that children are never socialized merely by their family environment (Alwin, Cohen, and

Newcomb 1991; Parsons and Bales 1956). Throughout adolescence and early adulthood, peers – friends at school in particular – have been found to influence a wide variety of attitudes and behaviours (Brechtwald and Prinstein 2011; Dahl and Van Zalk 2014). One of the main mechanisms through which peer influence takes place is communication. For instance, in two studies on political socialization it was found that more frequent discussions of politics with peers stimulated political participation amongst both adolescents (Kuhn 2004) and undergraduate students (Klofstad 2010). Quintelier (2015) revealed political discussions with peers to be even more influential in boosting political participation than discussions with parents.

Research on collective memory has also highlighted the role of non-familial socialization (Halbwachs 1992; Lee and Chan 2013). In a study on the commemoration of the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident in Hong Kong, peers were found to be the most important source of influence for young participants, whilst family was less important in the process of participation (Lee and Chan 2013). Given that non-relatives are often around the same age (e.g. schoolmates, partner), this reduces chances of knowing non-relatives who experienced the Second World War for later birth cohorts. We have to keep in mind, however, that Dutch Remembrance Day and Liberation Day commemorate not only victims of the Second World War but also victims of other war situations or peace-keeping operations. Hence, also communication about more recent wars can be expected to influence commemorative participation. We thus hypothesize that *people who communicate more often with non-relatives about the past war experiences of these non-relatives participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations (H2)*.

In fact, war-specific communication with friends, colleagues or acquaintances may be especially influential for those who perceive less input from their family on this matter, either because there are no family members alive to share their experiences or because they do not wish to communicate about the topic. This is what we call a substitutive relationship: when one form of socialization disappears, another takes over and grows in importance. The first argument (i.e. no communication possible) relates closely to what was earlier discussed as the limited time span of communicative memory (Assmann 2008), and may be particularly true for birth cohorts further away from a particular historical event, in this case the Second World War. We therefore hypothesize that *the positive relationship between war-specific communication with non-relatives and participation in national commemorations and celebrations is stronger for people with lower levels of war-specific communication with parents (H3a) or grandparents (H3b)*.

Parental exemplar behaviour

Even without having the opportunity to communicate with family members about their war experiences, the family – and in particular the parents – can still serve an important role in the socialization process as so-called role models. In addition to communication, attitudes and behaviours are also

learned through observation of parental ‘appropriate’ behaviour. This is often referred to as imitation or role modelling (Glass et al. 1986). Children may for instance watch their parents observe the two-minute silence on Dutch Remembrance Day or listen to the radio broadcast on Liberation Day. By observing their parents’ commemorative behaviour, children learn about ‘the socially appropriate narrative forms for recounting the past as well as the tacit rules of remembrance’ (Zerubavel 2003: 5; see also Lubbers and Meuleman 2016). We therefore hypothesize that *people with parents who participated more often in national commemorations and celebrations will themselves also participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations (H4)*.

Also here we think that the different forms of socialization substitute for one another. For people without any relatives or non-relatives to communicate with about their past war experiences, parental exemplar behaviour may become more of a necessity to draw attention to commemorative practices related to past events. Hence, we formulate the hypothesis that *the positive relationship between parental participation and own participation in national commemorations and celebrations is stronger for those with lower levels of war-specific communication with parents (H5a), grandparents (H5b) and non-relatives (H5c)*.

Private versus public commemorative practices

When examining the role of socialization for national commemorations and celebrations, an important distinction is that between public and private activities. Public activities are those organized by the community, often in public squares, where large crowds gather and the activities involved are ‘shared by and visible to all’ (Etzioni 2000: 51). Private activities, on the other hand, take place in people’s homes and are attended mainly by family members or close friends.

Familial socialization can be expected to affect a wide range of commemorative behaviours, as people observe their family members both in a more private context at home, as well as in more public settings, i.e. when jointly visiting a ceremony or festival. Socialization by friends, colleagues or acquaintances, on the other hand, can be argued to be more restricted to public activities, as private events will be held at home with only someone’s closest friends and family. We therefore expect that whilst *socialization by relatives is positively associated with both public and private commemorations (H6a), socialization by non-relatives is more closely related to public commemorations than to private commemorations (H6b)*.

Data and methods

Data

Data were used from the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social sciences (LISS) panel, collected by CentERdata (Tilburg University, The Netherlands)

as part of the *Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences* project funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. The LISS panel is a representative sample of Dutch individuals (sixteen years and older) who participate in monthly Internet surveys. The panel is based on a true probability sample of households drawn from the population register. The yearly retention rate is about ninety per cent, and refreshment samples are drawn to maintain the representativeness of the panel. Questionnaires are answered online, taking fifteen to thirty minutes in total, and respondents are paid (fifteen euros per hour) for each completed questionnaire. More information on the LISS panel can be found at: www.lissdata.nl.

Data on the main variables of interest were collected in the *Freedom and Liberation Day in the Netherlands* module in April 2014. In total, 7,957 panel members were invited to participate, of whom 6,350 responded (79.8 per cent) and 6,296 filled out the complete questionnaire (79.1 per cent). This sample was merged with data on parental participation in commemorative activities, collected in September 2011 in the *Nationalism and the National Dimension of Cultural Consumption* module. Of the 6,717 panel members invited to participate in this particular module, 4,785 responded (71.2 per cent) and 4,761 filled out the complete questionnaire (70.9 per cent). After merging the two datasets, we were left with 3,517 respondents who filled out both questionnaires.

As we were interested only in respondents who did not experience a war themselves, respondents born before 1946 (i.e. before the end of the Second World War) or who reported they had directly experienced a war were excluded from the analysis ($N = 842$). As a result of this selection, respondents above the age of sixty-five were under-represented compared to the Dutch population, whereas those aged between forty and sixty-five years of age were over-represented (Statistics Netherlands 2015). This is in line with the aim of our research, namely, the examination of socialization processes related to commemorative practices amongst later birth cohorts. Moreover, given our specific focus on the Dutch history related to the Second World War, respondents without a native Dutch background were also excluded ($N = 366$). The final sample consisted of 2,309 respondents within 1,744 households. Respondents were aged between eighteen and sixty-eight, with an average age of forty-nine.

Measures

Dependent variables

To measure *participation in national commemorations and celebrations*, we asked respondents how often in the past five years (i.e. between 2009 and 2014) they had participated in the following activities: (a) visiting a commemoration ceremony on 4 May; (b) following Remembrance Day on television, radio or online; (c) visiting a Liberation festival on 5 May; and (d) following Liberation Day proceedings on television, radio or online. The response

categories ranged from (1) 'never' to (6) 'every year'. After recoding the response categories to range from 0 to 5, a sum score was created by adding the values of the four items.² In addition, we distinguished between *private* variables (item (b) and (d) on media usage), and *public* variables (items (a) and (c) on festival and ceremonial attendance).³

Independent variables

To measure *war-specific communication*, we first asked respondents whether they knew people who personally experienced a war. The response categories were: (a) 'no'; (b) 'yes, myself'; (c) 'yes, grandparents'; (d) 'yes, parents, uncles or aunts'; (e) 'yes, brothers, sisters, nephews or nieces'; (f) 'yes, children or grandchildren'; and (g) 'yes, friends, acquaintances, colleagues'. More than one answer was possible. For each answer given, we then asked respondents: 'How often do you talk with this person about their war experiences?' Response categories ranged from (1) 'never' to (5) 'very often'. Respondents who answered 'I do not know' were recoded to missing. As we are interested mainly in communication with previous generations (i.e. parents or grandparents) or non-relatives, we only took into account answers on these particular categories.⁴ A distinction was made between *communication with parents*, *communication with grandparents* and *communication with non-relatives* (i.e. friends, acquaintances and colleagues). For all three communication variables, respondents who answered not to know anyone who experienced a war were assigned the value zero.⁵ Moreover, three dummy variables were added to distinguish between respondents who did and did not know parents, grandparents or non-relatives with war experiences.

Parental participation in national commemorations was measured using two items. We asked respondents: 'To what extent did your parents perform the following activities when you were around 15 years old?' The two statements that followed were: (a) 'my parents always flew the flag on Liberation Day'; and (b) 'my parents always observed the two-minute silence on 4 May, during the Remembrance of the Dead'. Response categories were: (1) 'not true at all'; (2) 'not true'; (3) 'somewhat true'; and (4) 'entirely true'. Respondents who answered 'I do not know' were recoded to missing. After recoding the response categories to range from 0 to 3, a sum score was created.

Controls

Research on collective memory has found birth cohorts further away from a particular event to less easily recall this event, as well as participate less often in commemorations (Schuman and Corning 2012; Schuman and Scott 1989). These findings suggest that the effects of our socialization measures on commemorative practices may differ across birth cohorts. We therefore included five different *birth cohorts*, ranging from 1946 to 1995, and grouped in ten-year intervals. The earliest birth cohort (i.e. 1946–55) acted as the reference category.

Also formal socialization (i.e. schooling) and religious integration have been found to play a role in the transmission of a wide range of attitudes and behaviours (Hooghe and Boonen 2015; Jaspers et al. 2008), including commemorative participation (Lubbers and Meuleman 2016). We therefore controlled for *level of education*, consisting of six categories: (1) 'primary education'; (2) 'intermediate secondary education'; (3) 'higher secondary education'; (4) 'intermediate vocational education'; (5) 'higher vocational education'; and (6) 'university'. Respondents with primary education acted as the reference group. Also *religious attendance* was included as a control variable, measured with the item: 'Aside from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious gatherings nowadays?' As response categories ranged from (1) 'every day' to (7) 'never', the variable was recoded so that higher values corresponded with a higher frequency of attendance. Considering almost sixty per cent answered 'never', a dummy variable was created for those respondents attending religious gatherings.

Analytical strategy

Analyses were conducted using STATA, version 13. As we are dealing with clustered data (2,309 individuals within 1,744 households), non-independence of observations was taken into account by computing standard errors using the generalized Huber/White/sandwich estimator, which allows for correlations between errors within clusters (Rogers 1993; Williams 2000). Moreover, using the full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) missing data estimation approach, we were able to include also observations with missing values in our analyses. FIML uses all observed variables in the model to estimate the means and covariances of item nonresponse and outperforms listwise deletion and simpler substitution methods (Cheung 2015; Enders and Bandalos 2001).⁶ As FIML is only available in STATA when using structural equation modelling, SEM analyses were conducted. After inspection of the descriptive statistics of our variables, we started with a model including the different forms of socialization, as well as our control variables. In subsequent models, interactions between the different forms of socialization were added. In a final step, we examined the proposed explanations for participation in public and private commemorations separately.⁷

Results

Descriptive findings

Descriptive statistics of the dependent, independent and control variables can be found in Table 1. Respondents participated most frequently in national commemorations and celebrations by following the activities via radio, television or online. The frequency of parental participation in national

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of the variables*

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>Mean / %</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Valid N</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Participation in commemorations | 0 | 20 | 8.33 | 4.58 | 2294 |
| Liberation Day: festival | 0 | 5 | 0.94 | 1.51 | 2293 |
| Liberation Day: media | 0 | 5 | 2.84 | 2.08 | 2293 |
| Remembrance Day: ceremony | 0 | 5 | 0.82 | 1.45 | 2294 |
| Remembrance Day: media | 0 | 5 | 3.73 | 1.81 | 2294 |
| Communication parents | 0 | 5 | 1.53 | 1.68 | 2294 |
| Communication grandparents | 0 | 5 | 0.89 | 1.39 | 2289 |
| Communication non-relatives | 0 | 5 | 0.24 | 0.84 | 2309 |
| Participation parents | 0 | 6 | 3.95 | 1.74 | 2150 |
| No parents with war experiences | 0 | 1 | 0.51 | | 2309 |
| No grandparents with war experiences | 0 | 1 | 0.66 | | 2309 |
| No non-relatives with war experiences | 0 | 1 | 0.92 | | 2309 |
| Birth cohorts | | | | | |
| 1946–55 | 0 | 1 | 0.33 | | 2309 |
| 1956–65 | 0 | 1 | 0.26 | | 2309 |
| 1966–75 | 0 | 1 | 0.18 | | 2309 |
| 1976–85 | 0 | 1 | 0.12 | | 2309 |
| 1986–95 | 0 | 1 | 0.11 | | 2309 |
| Educational level | | | | | |
| Primary education | 0 | 1 | 0.05 | | 2305 |
| Intermediate secondary education | 0 | 1 | 0.23 | | 2305 |
| Higher secondary education | 0 | 1 | 0.11 | | 2305 |
| Intermediate vocational education | 0 | 1 | 0.27 | | 2305 |
| Higher vocational education | 0 | 1 | 0.25 | | 2305 |
| University | 0 | 1 | 0.09 | | 2305 |
| Religious attendance | 0 | 1 | 0.38 | | 2309 |

Source: Freedom and Liberation Day in the Netherlands 2014, LISS panel.

Note: $N = 2,309$.

commemorations when respondents were around the age of fifteen was quite high, whilst the frequency of war-specific communication was rather low. In total, sixty-five per cent reported to know family members who experienced a war, whereas only eight per cent of the respondents reported to know friends, acquaintances or colleagues with past war experiences. Although most respondents who knew relatives or non-relatives who experienced a war reported that this war was the Second World War ($N = 1510$), other wars were also mentioned ($N = 364$). Most often mentioned were the Indonesian War of Independence ($N = 275$), the Yugoslavian Wars ($N = 103$) and the Gulf War ($N = 96$). Other wars mentioned were the war in Afghanistan ($N = 83$), the Korean War ($N = 83$) and the war in Iraq ($N = 80$).

Explanatory findings

Tables 2 and 3 give the results of the structural equation models. In all tables, unstandardized regression coefficients are shown. Where relevant, we have included standardized regression coefficients (β 's) in the text, to simplify comparisons of the various effects. In total, Model 1 (Table 2) explains fifteen per cent of the variance in participation in national commemorations and celebrations, of which ten per cent by our four main explanatory variables. In line with expectations, the frequency of communication about previous war experiences of both parents and grandparents is significantly and positively associated with commemorative participation. These results provide support for Hypothesis 1: people who communicate more often with parents or grandparents about their past war experiences participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations. Although the effect of parental communication ($\beta = 0.145$) is somewhat larger than that of grandparental communication ($\beta = 0.090$), Wald chi-square tests of parameter equalities do not reveal a significant difference. Parental communication does not seem to play a larger role for commemorative participation than grandparental communication.

Model 1 furthermore shows a positive, borderline significant association between the frequency of communication with non-relatives and commemorative participation. This finding supports Hypothesis 2, in which we expected people who communicated more often with non-relatives about their past war experiences to participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations. Although the effect of communication with non-relatives on commemorative participation ($\beta = 0.112$) is less strong than that of parental communication and slightly stronger than that of grandparental communication, Wald tests reveal that none of the differences are significant.

In support of Hypothesis 3a, we find a significant negative interaction between war-specific communication with parents and war-specific communication with non-relatives (Model 2, Table 2). From Model 2, we can infer that for people who do not communicate with their parents at all, a one unit increase in the frequency of communication with non-relatives is related to a 0.984 unit increase in commemorative participation, whilst for someone with the maximum score on parental communication (i.e. 5), a one unit increase in communication with non-relatives is associated with a 0.354 increase in commemorative participation. This finding suggests that war-specific communication with non-relatives plays a bigger role for participation in national commemorations and celebrations amongst those with less frequent communication with parents about their past war experiences.

No significant interaction is found between war-specific communication with grandparents and war-specific communication with non-relatives (Model 3, Table 2), refuting Hypothesis 3b. It thus seems war-specific communication with non-relatives does not play a bigger role for those who communicate less with their grandparents about their past war experiences.

Table 2. *Models for commemorative participation (unstandardized coefficients)*

| | <i>Model 1</i> | | <i>Model 2</i> | | <i>Model 3</i> | |
|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> |
| Constant | 3.853** | 1.261 | 3.522** | 1.315 | 3.841** | 1.344 |
| <i>Main variables</i> | | | | | | |
| Communication parents | 0.394* | 0.156 | 0.450** | 0.150 | 0.394** | 0.150 |
| Communication grandparents | 0.298* | 0.15 | 0.292** | 0.148 | 0.300 [†] | 0.159 |
| Communication non-relatives | 0.614 [†] | 0.346 | 0.984** | 0.364 | 0.623 | 0.398 |
| Participation parents | 0.696*** | 0.058 | 0.694*** | 0.057 | 0.696*** | 0.058 |
| <i>Interactions</i> | | | | | | |
| Comm. non-relatives *comm. parents | | | -0.126* | 0.052 | | |
| Comm. non-relatives *comm. grandparents | | | | | -0.005 | 0.063 |
| Participation parents *comm. parents | | | | | | |
| Participation parents *comm. grandparents | | | | | | |
| Participation parents *comm. non-relatives | | | | | | |
| <i>Control variables</i> | | | | | | |
| No war parents | 1.165* | 0.536 | 1.251* | 0.503 | 1.165* | 0.510 |
| No war grandparents | -0.134 | 0.435 | -0.168 | 0.464 | -0.132 | 0.485 |
| No war non-relatives | 1.225 | 1.073 | 1.485 [†] | 1.029 | 1.234 | 1.176 |
| <i>Birth cohorts</i> ¹ | | | | | | |
| 1956–65 | -1.097*** | 0.265 | -1.107*** | 0.258 | -1.097*** | 0.265 |
| 1966–75 | -1.546*** | 0.297 | -1.560*** | 0.263 | -1.546*** | 0.291 |
| 1976–85 | -2.292*** | 0.375 | -2.309*** | 0.368 | -2.293*** | 0.325 |
| 1986–95 | -1.804*** | 0.387 | -1.833*** | 0.366 | -1.805*** | 0.396 |
| <i>Educational level</i> ² | | | | | | |
| Intermediate secondary | 0.078 | 0.517 | 0.063 | 0.563 | 0.076 | 0.543 |
| Higher secondary | -0.187 | 0.558 | -0.171 | 0.574 | -0.187 | 0.602 |
| Intermediate vocational | -0.404 | 0.494 | -0.408 | 0.558 | -0.404 | 0.537 |
| Higher vocational | -0.148 | 0.471 | -0.162 | 0.569 | -0.148 | 0.514 |
| University | -1.182* | 0.550 | -1.185* | 0.562 | -1.183* | 0.583 |
| Religious attendance | 0.961*** | 0.189 | 0.944*** | 0.186 | 0.962*** | 0.182 |

Source: Freedom and Liberation Day in the Netherlands 2014, LISS panel.

Note: $N = 2,309$.

[†] $p < 0.10$.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$. Two-tailed p -values are reported.

¹Birth cohort 1946–55 as reference category.

²Primary education as reference category.

Table 3. *Models for commemorative participation (unstandardized coefficients)*

| | <i>Model 4</i> | | <i>Model 5</i> | | <i>Model 6</i> | |
|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> |
| Constant | 3.381** | 1.181 | 3.839** | 1.219 | 3.490** | 1.234 |
| <i>Main variables</i> | | | | | | |
| Communication parents | 0.713** | 0.217 | 0.394* | 0.160 | 0.392* | 0.151 |
| Communication grandparents | 0.300 [†] | 0.157 | 0.310 | 0.238 | 0.304 [†] | 0.164 |
| Communication non-relatives | 0.583 [†] | 0.319 | 0.614 [†] | 0.342 | 1.154** | 0.407 |
| Participation parents | 0.805*** | 0.079 | 0.699*** | 0.070 | 0.729*** | 0.061 |
| <i>Interactions</i> | | | | | | |
| Comm. non-relatives *comm. parents | | | | | | |
| Comm. non-relatives *comm. grandparents | | | | | | |
| Participation parents *comm. parents | -0.071* | 0.034 | | | | |
| Participation parents *comm. grandparents | | | -0.003 | 0.040 | | |
| Participation parents *comm. non-relatives | | | | | -0.120* | 0.055 |
| <i>Control variables</i> | | | | | | |
| No war parents | 1.290* | 0.544 | 1.164* | 0.555 | 0.165* | 0.527 |
| No war grandparents | -0.127 | 0.459 | -0.130 | 0.502 | -0.112 | 0.466 |
| No war non-relatives | 1.147 | 1.010 | 1.226 | 1.058 | 1.426 | 1.058 |
| <i>Birth cohorts</i> ¹ | | | | | | |
| 1956–65 | -1.116*** | 0.249 | -1.097*** | 0.261 | -1.102*** | 0.277 |
| 1966–75 | -1.563*** | 0.275 | -1.547*** | 0.287 | -1.549*** | 0.280 |
| 1976–85 | -2.330*** | 0.340 | -2.292*** | 0.376 | -2.285*** | 0.370 |
| 1986–95 | -1.865*** | 0.348 | -1.802*** | 0.377 | -1.804*** | 0.390 |
| <i>Educational level</i> ² | | | | | | |
| Intermediate secondary | 0.099 | 0.506 | 0.079 | 0.530 | 0.096 | 0.546 |
| Higher secondary | -0.178 | 0.564 | -0.187 | 0.580 | -0.180 | 0.598 |
| Intermediate vocational | -0.381 | 0.484 | -0.402 | 0.551 | -0.407 | 0.535 |
| Higher vocational | -0.124 | 0.497 | -0.147 | 0.527 | -0.125 | 0.523 |
| University | -1.162* | 0.531 | -1.181* | 0.588 | -1.168 | 0.612 |
| Religious attendance | 0.960*** | 0.202 | 0.961*** | 0.188 | 0.969*** | 0.184 |

Source: Freedom and Liberation Day in the Netherlands 2014, LISS panel.

Note: $N = 2,309$.

[†] $p < 0.10$.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$. Two-tailed p -values are reported.

¹Birth cohort 1946–55 as reference category.

²Primary education as reference category.

Finally, as can be seen in Model 1 (Table 2), a significant positive association exists between parental commemorative behaviour and respondents' own participation in national commemorations and celebrations. This finding supports Hypothesis 4: people with parents who during their youth more frequently participated in the two-minute silence on Remembrance Day, or flew the flag on Liberation Day, participate more often in national commemorations and celebrations. Of the four socialization mechanisms examined, parental participation at the age of fifteen seems to have the largest effect ($\beta = 0.265$). Wald tests reveal that the difference in effect size with parental participation is significant for grandparental communication and communication with non-relatives, and borderline significant for parental communication. These findings suggest that *watching* others' commemorative behaviour has more effect on someone's own participation than *talking* with others about topics related to the commemorative events.

In line with Hypothesis 5a, a significant negative interaction is present between parental participation and war-specific communication with parents (Model 4, Table 3). From Model 4, we can deduce that the effect of parental commemorative participation on own participation is almost twice as strong for someone who never communicates with their parents on this topic compared to someone with the maximum score on parental communication. This finding indicates that parental exemplar behaviour plays a bigger role for own participation in national commemorations and celebrations amongst those who communicate less frequently about their parents' past war experiences. Also the interaction between parental participation and war-specific communication with non-relatives is significant and negative (Model 6, Table 3), supporting Hypothesis 5c. Here, the difference is even larger: the effect of parental participation on own commemorative behaviour is six times stronger for someone who never communicates on this topic with non-relatives compared to someone who often does. Parental exemplar behaviour thus seems to become more important once other forms of socialization, in this case communication with non-relatives, are less available. Overall, these results demonstrate that the different forms of socialization substitute for one another.

No significant interaction was found between parental participation and war-specific communication with grandparents (Model 5, Table 3), refuting Hypothesis 5b.

As for our control variables, we find that later birth cohorts participate significantly less often (between 0.105 and 0.162 standard deviations) in commemorative events than earlier birth cohorts. No differences are visible in commemorative participation between the different levels of education, with one exception. People with a university degree participate significantly less often in commemorations than people who quitted school after primary education ($\beta = -0.074$). Finally, people attending religious gatherings participate significantly more often in national commemorations and celebrations than those who never attend religious gatherings ($\beta = 0.102$).

Table 4. Models for public and private commemorative participation (unstandardized coefficients)

| | Remembrance Day | | | Liberation Day | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------|
| | Public | | Private | Public | | Private | | |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | | |
| Constant | 0.063 | 0.432 | 2.389*** | 0.449 | -0.357 | 0.374 | 1.642** | 0.568 |
| <i>Main variables</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Communication parents | 0.124** ^a | 0.059 | 0.124** ^a | 0.060 | 0.076 ^a | 0.049 | 0.062 ^a | 0.069 |
| Communication grandparents | 0.069 ^a | 0.060 | 0.011 ^a | 0.062 | 0.145** ^a | 0.060 | 0.073 ^a | 0.076 |
| Communication non-relatives | 0.050 ^a | 0.124 | 0.134 ^a | 0.130 | 0.094 ^a | 0.097 | 0.336 ^{†a} | 0.172 |
| Participation parents | 0.100*** ^a | 0.017 | 0.274*** ^b | 0.025 | 0.105*** ^a | 0.018 | 0.258*** ^b | 0.027 |
| <i>Control variables</i> | | | | | | | | |
| No war parents | 0.418* | 0.185 | 0.361 [†] | 0.216 | 0.316 [†] | 0.170 | 0.055 | 0.231 |
| No war grandparents | 0.190 | 0.161 | -0.481** | 0.183 | 0.322 [†] | 0.169 | -0.154 | 0.233 |
| No war non-relatives | -0.072 | 0.387 | 0.372 | 0.392 | 0.253 | 0.280 | 0.674 | 0.513 |
| <i>Birth cohorts</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 1956-65 | -0.320** | 0.093 | -0.250** | 0.096 | -0.144 [†] | 0.086 | -0.378** | 0.112 |
| 1966-75 | -0.375*** | 0.096 | -0.317** | 0.121 | -0.254* | 0.103 | -0.570*** | 0.131 |
| 1976-85 | -0.530*** | 0.110 | -0.716*** | 0.139 | 0.015 | 0.120 | -1.030*** | 0.160 |
| 1986-95 | -0.356** | 0.130 | -0.949*** | 0.142 | 0.483** | 0.151 | -0.995*** | 0.161 |
| <i>Educational level²</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Intermediate secondary | -0.103 | 0.160 | 0.246 | 0.192 | 0.020 | 0.177 | -0.093 | 0.210 |
| Higher secondary | -0.094 | 0.180 | 0.246 | 0.205 | 0.051 | 0.197 | -0.414 [†] | 0.235 |
| Intermediate vocational | -0.092 | 0.166 | -0.063 | 0.202 | 0.063 | 0.182 | -0.336 | 0.215 |

(Continues)

Table 4. (Continued)

| | Remembrance Day | | | Liberation Day | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| | Public | | Private | Public | | Private |
| | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>se</i> |
| Higher vocational | -0.034 | 0.161 | 0.128 | 0.196 | 0.071 | 0.180 |
| University | 0.026 | 0.180 | -0.183 | 0.207 | -0.125 | 0.179 |
| Religious attendance | 0.383*** | 0.071 | 0.138 [†] | 0.083 | 0.024 | 0.069 |
| | | | | | | 0.396*** |
| | | | | | | 0.220 |
| | | | | | | 0.227 |
| | | | | | | 0.091 |

Source: Freedom and Liberation Day in the Netherlands 2014, LISS panel.

Note: $N = 2,309$.

[†] $p < 0.10$.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$. Two-tailed p -values are reported.

¹Birth cohort 1946–55 as reference category.

²Primary education as reference category.

^{a,b}Coefficients with different superscripts differ significantly from each other according to Wald chi-square tests of parameter equalities (comparisons are per row, p one-sided).

Table 4 shows the results of our analysis in which we distinguished between public and private commemorations. In total, our model predicts thirty per cent of the variation in the four types of commemorative participation, of which nineteen per cent by our main explanatory variables. Levels of explained variance are highest for the private forms of commemorating. War-specific communication with parents is significantly and positively associated with private *and* public commemorative activities, yet on Remembrance Day only ($\beta_{\text{private}} = 0.115$; $\beta_{\text{public}} = 0.144$). Wald chi-square tests of parameter equalities reveal no significant differences in effect size for the four types of commemoration. War-specific communication with grandparents, on the other hand, is significantly and positively associated with attending liberation festivals ($\beta = 0.134$). Again, the effect size does not significantly differ compared to the other types of commemorative participation. Parental participation is positively associated with all types of commemorative activities, both on Remembrance Day ($\beta_{\text{private}} = 0.265$; $\beta_{\text{public}} = 0.121$) and on Liberation Day ($\beta_{\text{private}} = 0.217$; $\beta_{\text{public}} = 0.122$). Here, Wald tests indicate that the effects are significantly stronger for private events. Our findings therefore provide only partial support for Hypothesis 6a, in which we hypothesized socialization by relatives to be positively associated with both public and private commemorations.

Finally, communication with non-relatives is borderline significant and positively related only to media usage on Liberation Day ($\beta = 0.136$). No differences in effect size are found when comparing the four types of commemorating. This finding contradicts our initial expectation, namely, that war-specific communication with non-relatives is more closely related to public commemorations than to private commemorations. Hypothesis 6b therefore had to be refuted.

Discussion

Given the abundance of literature on collective memory practices, there is relatively little empirical research on the individual-level processes of socialization explaining the transmission of these practices over generations. This article examined to what extent different forms of socialization interact to explain participation in national commemorations and celebrations. In doing so, the current study builds on Assmann (2008), as well as Olick (1999), examining the relationship between the collected memories of individuals and society's cultural or collective memory – thereby making considerable progress in collective memory research. Examination of this relationship is first of all relevant considering that collective memory practices are thought to be closely related to processes of national identification (Assmann 2008; Elgenius 2011; Etzioni 2000; McCrone and McPherson 2009).

Second, previous studies have found lower levels of interest and participation in Dutch commemorations amongst later birth cohorts (Verhue and Koenen 2016). The present study examined whether this finding is due to changing modes of socialization, more specifically, a decline in what Assmann (2008) referred to as communicative memory. To do so, we focused on participation in the commemorative activities organized annually in the Netherlands on Remembrance Day and Liberation Day, using an online survey conducted in 2014. We studied four forms of socialization that we believe to play an important role in explaining the variation found in frequencies of participation in national commemorations and celebrations: war-specific communication with parents, grandparents and non-relatives, and parental exemplar behaviour, of which the first three have not been empirically investigated before.

Our findings indicate that amongst those who have not experienced a war themselves, more frequent communication with parents or grandparents about their war experiences is associated with more frequent commemorative participation. These findings support the claim made in collective memory literature that familial communication is an important form of socialization (Halbwachs 1992; Zerubavel 1996) and are in line with studies on the transmission of other types of attitudes and behaviours via communication (Kuhn 2004; Schönplflug 2001). Moreover, the fact that both parental and grandparental communications play a role in someone's commemorative behaviour emphasizes the importance of multigenerational socialization mechanisms. Familial communication can thus be considered what Heinrich and Weyland (2016) label a meso-level explanation, functioning as the link between collected (i.e. micro-level) and collective (i.e. macro-level) memories.

In addition to war-specific communication with relatives, communication with non-relatives is found to stimulate commemorative participation, especially for those who receive less input from their family members on this matter through parental communication. This conclusion is in line with previous studies on commemorative participation highlighting the role of 'horizontal' socialization by for instance peers (Lee and Chan 2013), as well as research on other forms of participation, such as political activities (Kuhn 2004). Moreover, our results indicate that other group members, whether it be relatives or non-relatives, play an important part in the participation process of individuals.

Parental exemplar behaviour seems to be most strongly associated with commemorative behaviours. Citizens who more vividly remember their parents participating in commemorative activities when they were young also participate more frequently in national commemorations and celebrations themselves. These findings support previous research on socialization of a wide range of attitudes and behaviours, arguing that parents serve as important role models (Hooghe and Boonen 2015; Jaspers et al. 2008). Moreover, our results suggest that parental exemplar behaviour plays an especially important role for commemorative behaviour amongst those less frequently communicating about past war experiences of relatives or non-relatives. These results are of

particular relevance to people further away from the historical events that define national commemorations and celebrations and provide an important addition to Assmann's (2008) argument on the limited time span of communicative memory.

When distinguishing between private and public commemorations, we find that only parental exemplar behaviour lives up to our expectations and is associated with both types of commemorating. This is not the case for war-specific communication. A possible explanation lies in the measurement of our private and public activities: whilst our public activities are both active forms of participation, private activities are measured by asking respondents whether they follow the activities via various media channels. Building on the assumption that family is more influential than non-relatives in the socialization process (Glass et al. 1986; Parsons and Bales 1956), distinguishing between more active versus passive forms of participation would lead to the expectation that communication with non-relatives relates more closely to activities that require less 'convincing', i.e. more passive forms of participation, whilst socialization by family impacts more active forms of participation. The difference between parental and grandparental communication, where the former is associated mainly with ceremonial attendance and the latter with visiting a festival, may point at a cohort effect, with later birth cohorts commemorating in different ways than earlier cohorts.

We have to keep in mind, however, that the current results are based on cross-sectional data. Longitudinal data are therefore essential, not only to address potential cohort effects but also issues of reversed causality or feedback loops. War-specific communication may not only lead to more frequent commemorative participation, attending commemorations may also result in more communication on this topic. Whilst cross-sectional data may not show us whether one truly causes the other – in particular given the retrospective aspect of our measure of commemorative participation – it is an important first step, as it enables us to examine the extent to which the two forms of memory are interrelated, something Olick already advocated in 1999.

In the current article, communication was restricted to people who knew family members or non-relatives who personally experienced a war. There are of course many more possibilities for communication to play a role in the socialization of commemorative practices. For one, even though later cohorts have less opportunity to talk with family members who experienced the Second World War, it is still possible to talk about this topic with people who did *not* experience this war. Unfortunately, we were not able to examine this with the data at hand. Moreover, relatively little is known about the persons who experienced the Second World War, and the exact topics of the conversations. Were they resistance fighters or 'merely' living under occupation? Did they only discuss the role of German Nazis or also of Dutch collaborators? And, can we expect stronger effects in countries that actually fought in the war, considering there might be more 'heroic' stories to be told there? All interesting questions to take up in future research.

Finally, collective memory draws not only from commemorative symbols but also from the written word. Previous studies have shown that history transmitted through intergenerational communication is quite different from history told in textbooks (Welzer 2005). Measures of other – potentially even rival – forms of socialization are necessary to be able to draw firmer conclusions on what is ‘needed’ to keep remembering, and the relative importance of communication and parental exemplar behaviour. For instance, what is addressed at school and what is told by the media? Also the role of religious organizations should be examined further, especially seeing that it was of similar importance as some of the forms of socialization currently under investigation.

Our findings highlight that both communication and exemplar behaviour play a key role in the socialization of commemorative practices. Moreover, the different forms of socialization substitute for one another: when a particular form of socialization is less available, another takes over and grows in importance. Whereas communication with non-relatives is particularly relevant for those communicating less frequently with parents about past war experiences, parental exemplar behaviour, such as participating in the two-minute silence on Remembrance Day, plays a bigger role amongst those with lower levels of communication with either relatives or non-relatives. This conclusion is particularly relevant in view of the limited time span of specific types of memory and indicates that different forms of socialization play a role in the process of commemorating for people further away from the historical events that define national commemorations and celebrations.

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Endnotes

1 Although certainly not for everyone, as argued by amongst others Fox (2014), Geisler (2009), and Uzelac (2010). An empirical study by Coopmans, Lubbers, and Meuleman (2015) provides further support for this line of argumentation, showing that both ethnic groups and birth cohorts differ in the extent to which commemorative participation is associated with feelings of national belongingness.

2 We do not think of the examined activities as a scale, but rather as a range of possibilities, where participating in one activity is not necessarily related to participating in another activity.

3 We chose to include only activities that have a very clear public or private focus. Activities like flying a flag or attending the two-minute silence were therefore left out, since these can be argued to

be both public and private events. Unfortunately, for parental participation we only had information on a very limited number of activities. We are therefore not able to distinguish between private and public events, but instead look at overall levels of commemorative participation.

4 Respondents with brothers, sisters, nephews or nieces, or respondents with children or grandchildren who experienced a war comprised only 3.42 per cent and 0.22 per cent of our sample, respectively.

5 Alternative ways of analyzing (e.g. applying the full-information maximum likelihood missing data estimation approach for respondents who reported not to know any family members who experienced the Second World War) resulted in similar findings.

6 Listwise deletion of all missing values ($N = 2,104$) produced comparable results, with slightly increased significance levels.

7 Since our dependent variables were rather skewed once separating them into private and public activities, we initially conducted multinomial logistic analyses, in which we distinguished between 'never participating' (0), 'sometimes participating' (1, 2, 3) and 'often participating' (4, 5). Since these results were however similar to those obtained when using a continuous dependent variable, we decided to give the latter to improve readability.

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