

Foundation



Remembrance  
Responsibility  
Future

# MEMO

Multidimensional  
Remembrance Monitor  
**STUDY V | 2022**

# The most important events in German history – Part 1:

Presented as a word cloud are the content-related responses of the participants to the open question of what event from German history they think future generations in Germany should remember most likely. The larger an event is shown, the more frequently it was named by respondents. The illustration includes the open responses from the contexts “National Socialism,” “Reunification,” “The two World Wars” and “World War I” (see p. 10). The content-related responses that cannot be clearly assigned to any of these contexts are shown in a separate word cloud on the last inner page.



## MEMO V 2022

Michael Papendick, Jonas Rees, Maren Scholz & Andreas Zick  
Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG)  
Bielefeld University

July 2022

# Content

<b>1</b>	The Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor.....	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	Methodology of the study.....	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	Description of the survey sample.....	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	Presentation of key findings.....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Important historical events.....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.2</b>	Remembering World War II within the European context.....	<b>13</b>
<b>4.3</b>	Dealing with and knowledge about the history of National Socialism.....	<b>20</b>
<b>4.4</b>	Remembering Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism.....	<b>25</b>
<b>4.5</b>	Attitudes towards culture of remembrance and sociopolitical topics over time.....	<b>28</b>
<b>4.6</b>	Historical revisionism and patriotism.....	<b>32</b>
<b>5</b>	Authors' summary.....	<b>35</b>
<b>6</b>	Retrospect and outlook.....	<b>38</b>
	Epilogue.....	<b>42</b>
	Annex – Complete presentation of the descriptive findings.....	<b>48</b>
	Imprint.....	<b>60</b>

# 1 The Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor

Since 2017, studies within the framework of the “Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor” (MEMO) have made use of representative surveys to examine the respective current state as well as developments of the culture of remembrance regarding the National Socialist era in Germany. This fifth edition of the MEMO study represents the preliminary conclusion of the annual telephone surveys of the general population. MEMO asks which events people in Germany perceive as historically significant, what attitudes respondents have towards German culture of remembrance, which role different ways of dealing with history play, and what consequences result from this critical examination. In terms of content, the focus of the studies is on the memory of persecution, displacement, and extermination of people and groups of people during the time of National Socialism and on the various facets of the culture of remembrance in relation to this historical context. The MEMO studies are intended to make an empirical contribution to the recurring debates relating to the state of “German culture of remembrance” and to provide systematic, representative studies as a basis for a professional and social discourse.

The MEMO studies are based on a definition of the concept of the culture of remembrance, which was developed in August 2017 in a working session together with experts in this topic area. This concept is characterized by the central dimensions of *what* is historically remembered, *how* it is remembered (ways of remembrance) and critical examination takes place, of *why* one remembers or ought to remember, *which consequences* result from dealing with the past, and *what the relationship* is between facets of the culture of remembrance and current sociopolitical attitudes and sociodemographic factors. For critical reflection, experts in the research and practice relating to the culture of remembrance were involved in the development and interpretation of each of the MEMO studies. In the meantime, more than 80 experts have participated in the studies and rendered important contributions to the content and design. The MEMO studies do not claim to explain the culture of remembrance in terms of a singular phenomenon. Further they can reflect the diversity of relevant issues and perspectives in the context of the German culture of remembrance only to a limited degree, due to the methodological basis of representative telephone surveys.

The results of previous MEMO studies were each made available to the public in the form of reports (available via the [website of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future](#)). The present study, MEMO V, was carried out in December and January 2021/22, before the start of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine. The Russian invasion, which continues up to the present time, represents a caesura and a turning point, also in terms of the German and European culture of remembrance, the extent of which cannot yet be assessed at the present time. The results of MEMO V should therefore be interpreted with reservations, and it can be assumed that respondents would have answered some of the questions differently against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. The war will be one of the main topics of the MEMO Youth Study, which will be published in early 2023. MEMO V has two objectives: First, MEMO V, like the previous studies, sets key topics which have not previously been examined or only marginally. The study specifically asks about the societal remembrance of the Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism and of World War II within a European context. Second, a number of questions from the four previous studies were asked again in MEMO V. On the one hand, this allows for observation and discussion of initial development trends in the data so far, and on the other hand it ensures that comparative data is available for central aspects of the culture of remembrance relating to National Socialism in case MEMO or comparable representative surveys are carried out again in the future. The questions and results from MEMO Studies I–V represent an empirical base to which future studies can refer. The current report presents selected development trajectories across the previous surveys. As social developments in areas such as cultures of remembrance take place slowly and successively, differences in relation to the period presented here can only be interpreted as tendencies.

The current report first provides an overview of the survey’s design; it then summarizes key findings from this year’s survey and presents both a retrospective view and an outlook. In a concluding epilogue, Dr. Ralf Possekel and Corinna Jentzsch (Foundation EVZ) discuss key findings of the MEMO studies and their relation to the Foundation’s agenda. Not all questions collected in MEMO V are addressed in the report, but the annex contains the full questionnaire used, as well as the full descriptive analysis of the data.

## 2 Methodology of the study

On behalf of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (Institut für interdisziplinäre Konflikt und Gewaltforschung, IKG) at Bielefeld University, the survey institute Ipsos conducted a telephone survey (CATI) between December 2021 and January 2022 interviewing 1,000 randomly selected respondents from all German federal states. In the standardized telephone survey, respondents answered questions both in open format without specified answer options (e.g. “What event from German history do you think future generations in Germany should remember most likely?”) and in closed formats, where statements were given and respondents could indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement on rating scales (such as “I don’t understand why, today, I am still supposed to deal with Germany’s history in the time of National Socialism.” – “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither/nor”, “agree”, “strongly agree”). Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. There was always the option not to answer a question (“don’t know” or “prefer not to answer”) or to end the participation in the survey. The MEMO concept is designed in such a way that the study can be repeated as a whole or in excerpts, and thus be expanded into a long-term observation. The trends presented in the report are the results of repeated cross-sectional surveys in which different representative samples of people were asked identical questions in different years. All trends shown are based on MEMO studies II–V.<sup>1</sup>

The following presentation of the data includes calculations of percentages and mean values (M). Mean values describe the calculated arithmetic mean, or the average of the answers provided by all respondents. In some cases, results are reported for a selected share of the respondents; e.g., those who answered a previous question in the same way or distinguished by the participants’ age. The fact that the answer values do not always add up to 100% is due to some respondents’ “don’t know” answers or missing answers. Furthermore, since for some questions more than one answer was possible, response values can add up to more than 100%. The report also includes information on *systematic* correlations and differences. These were examined using corresponding statistical methods (correlation, distribution, and variance analyses). Results are considered systematic if a statistically significant correlation or difference exists on the basis of the data, i.e., if there is a high probability that the results are not coincidental (with a probability of error of  $p = 5\%$  at the most). The analysis of correlations does not provide any conclusion concerning the causal direction of these correlations. The present report does not provide further statistical characteristics in order to improve readability.

<sup>1</sup> The data collection for MEMO I/2018 was undertaken by a different survey institute than the subsequent studies MEMO II to V. Although representative samples were surveyed in each case, we cannot exclude the possibility that differences in the response distributions could also be due to differences in the methodological approach of the respective survey institute. In order to exclude this methodological influencing factor and to guarantee a cautious („conservative“) interpretation of potential developments, data from the first MEMO study is not included in the developments presented.

## 3 Description of the survey sample

MEMO V surveyed a total of 1,000 participants. Respondents were 16 to 93 years old ( $M = 49.3$ ). Around half of the respondents were male (49.3%) while the other half were female (50.7%)<sup>2</sup>. The distribution among the 16 German federal states is shown on the right. For simplification purposes, respondents can be divided into five groups based on their age and the size of their residence, and into four groups based on their highest level of formal education<sup>3</sup>. Other demographic indicators have not been included in the analyses reported below so far.

Distribution of the five age categories, in %	
Age group	%
16–30 years old	19.7
31–45 years old	22.5
46–60 years old	27.5
61–75 years old	22.2
76 years and older	8.1

Distribution of the five sizes of respondents’ residences, in %	
Residents	%
< 5,000	3.0
5,000–< 20,000	7.7
20,000–< 100,000	22.2
100,000–< 500,000	29.9
≥ 500,000	37.3

<sup>2</sup> Here, respondents had the option to indicate a „diverse“ gender identity as well as not to answer the question. None of the respondents made use of these options.

<sup>3</sup> Since it is not possible to clearly determine whether the 0.5% of respondents who state „No High School Diploma“ are school students, the information provided by these respondents was not included in analyses relating to differences depending on the highest level of formal education.

### Distribution of respondents by federal state, in %

Federal state	%
Baden-Württemberg	13.2
Bavaria	15.8
Berlin	4.3
Brandenburg	3.0
Bremen	0.8
Hamburg	2.2
Hesse	7.5
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	2.1
Lower Saxony	9.6
North Rhine-Westphalia	21.6
Rhineland-Palatinate	4.9
Saarland	1.2
Saxony	5.0
Saxony-Anhalt	2.8
Schleswig-Holstein	3.6
Thuringia	2.6

### Distribution of the four education categories, in %

Cat.	includes	%	% Cat.
	No High School Diploma		0.5
1	High School Diploma („Volksschulabschluss“)		20.8
2	Completed 10th Grade of Vocational School (before 1965: 8th Grade)	2.9	46.4
	High school diploma („Realschulabschluss“, „mittlere Reife“)	43.5	
3	Secondary school („Allgemeine“ or „fachgebundene Hochschulreife“, „Abitur“)		19.7
4	Completed degree at a university or technical college		12.2

## 4 Presentation of key findings

### 4.1 Important historical events

As in previous studies, the participants in MEMO V were asked about their fundamental interest in German history and which events from German history they personally feel it is important to remember. A general interest in German history was reported by more than half of the respondents (53.9%), while 12.7% said they were “not at all” or “rather not” interested.

#### What would you say: to what extent are you interested in German history?

Not at all	Rather not	Neither/nor	Rather a lot	A lot
0.6 %	12.1 %	33.5 %	32.0 %	21.9 %

When asked openly what event from German history you think future generations in Germany should remember most likely, respondents most frequently mention events from the context of National Socialism (54.4%). One-third of all respondents (33.0%) refer specifically to World War II (“World War II,” occasionally “the end of World War II”), while 21.4% referred explicitly to National Socialism. The content-based references vary and relate in some cases more generally to “the time of National Socialism” or “the Holocaust”, in some instances to more specific aspects such as “the seizure of power by the National Socialists” or “the pogroms on November 9”. Approximately a quarter of all respondents (25.3%) named events from the context of reunification in response to the question about events that people in Germany should remember in the future. The focus of the references varies from “the building of the Wall” to “the fall of the Wall,” “the turning point,” “reunification” and “German unity”. Approximately one in ten respondents (10.5%) mention historical events that cannot be clearly assigned to any of the listed contexts, but can be regarded as distinct. Fundamental references in terms of content and time to the above-mentioned contexts are not excluded. In addition to less specific replies such as “the post-war period,” “other responses” also include statements such as “the founding of the Federal Republic” as well as more distant historical events or contexts such as “the time of Martin Luther,” “the founding of the German Reich in 1871,” or “the German Revolution of 1848.” Events from recent history, such as “the September 11 attacks” or “the coronavirus pandemic” are each mentioned only once. If the age and residence of the respondents are included in the analyses, it becomes evident that the youngest age group (16–30 year-olds) refers explicitly to National Socialism in their answers more frequently than other age groups (34.6%) and less frequently considers both World War II (22.2%) and German reunification (19.0%) as central historical contexts of German history. Differences in the perceived importance of historical events are also evident depending on the respondents’ residence: Respondents in Eastern Germany refer to reunification more frequently (35.2%) than respondents from Western Germany (22.8%).



**What event from German history you think future generations in Germany should remember most likely?**

Event/Context	Percentage of responses
Events from the context of National Socialism	54.4 %
Explicit reference to World War II	33.0 %
Explicit reference to National Socialism	21.4 %
Events from the context of reunification	25.3 %
The two World Wars	6.4 %
World War I	1.6 %
Other	10.5 %
No comment	1.8 %

**It should be noted that World War II is still perceived as a “normal war,” i.e. as a sequence of military actions and operations. But on the Eastern Front (against Poland, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union) in particular it had the character of a war of extermination. This made it an integral element of National Socialism: One cannot separate the two phenomena. Extreme anti-Bolshevism, antisemitism and the principle of “Lebensraum”-policy culminated in the war against the Soviet Union in 1941–1945. This includes the fact that the majority of Jews murdered in the Holocaust were Polish and Soviet citizens.<sup>4</sup>**

Dr. Katja Makhotina – Institute of Historical Studies, University of Bonn

Comparing the results with the answers from respondents in MEMO II/2019, it can be seen that events from the context of National Socialism were named more frequently overall in MEMO V/2022 (54.4%) than in MEMO II/2019 (42.7%). The more frequent references to events from the context of reunification in the 2018/2019 survey could be related to the increased societal salience of the topic on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2019.

<sup>4</sup> This report includes statements from experts at various points. These contributions were provided in the course of a critical reflection process in spring 2022 and offer potential ways for the classification and interpretation of the results. The content of the quotes reflects the opinions of the respective experts.

**Comparative data from MEMO II/2019**

Event/Context	Percentage of responses
Events from the context of National Socialism	42.7 %
Explicit reference to World War II	28.8 %
Explicit reference to National Socialism	12.7 %
Events from the context of reunification	35.4 %
The two World Wars	7.9 %
World War I	0.9 %
Other	9.6 %
No comment	3.5 %

In order to record respondents' interest in history in a more differentiated way, MEMO V gave them the opportunity to name another historical event which they thought future generations in Germany should remember. In the second answer, the majority of respondents referred to the previously unmentioned of the two central historical contexts – i.e., so again to the time of National Socialism or German reunification. More than one in ten respondents (13.1 %) did not name a second event as historically important to remember. A relatively large percentage of respondents (17.8%) answered the second question with historical events which could not be assigned to any of the listed contexts. In addition to more distant events such as “the National Assembly of 1848,” other events and contexts from history were also mentioned more frequently. These include multiple mentions of contexts such as “the introduction of women’s suffrage,” “the introduction of the Basic Law,” “the establishment of the European Union,” “Angela Merkel’s chancellorship,” “the admission of refugees in 2015,” as well as “the coronavirus pandemic.” “The colonial period” and “the history of racism” were each mentioned just once.

**Do you think there is another historical event that future generations in Germany should remember?**

Event/Context	Percentage of responses
Events from the context of National Socialism	27.6 %
Explicit reference to World War II	16.6 %
Explicit reference to National Socialism	11.0 %
Events from the context of reunification	33.8 %
The two World Wars	3.6 %
World War I	4.1 %
Other	17.3 %
No comment	13.1 %

*The answers reveal the existing gaps in German cultures of remembrance. For example, official recognition by the German government of the genocide against the Herero and Nama was barely six months before the time of the MEMO survey. The colonial period was mentioned just once in the survey as a relevant historical event in German history. This clearly shows that it is not possible to speak of a critical examination of the colonial legacy at the level of society as a whole. In the German post-migration society, the topic of a culture of remembrance is to be understood as a topic of diversity and variety. There is not the one culture of remembrance; we must speak of cultures of remembrance in the plural. The social representation of marginalized groups vis-à-vis the dominant society must be guaranteed.*

Magdalena Lovrić – EVZ Foundation

When asked specifically to what extent they consider the historical significance of the coronavirus pandemic to be comparable to other key contexts and events from German history, a clear attitude emerges among respondents: The majority of the respondents (82.6%) do not consider the significance of the coronavirus pandemic to be comparable to historical events such as World War II or German reunification.

**A comparison can be made between the historical significance of the coronavirus pandemic and the historical significance of World War II or the German reunification.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
57.7 %	24.9 %	8.1 %	5.0 %	3.4 %

**4.2 Remembering World War II within the European context**

In MEMO V, participants were also asked in greater detail about the remembrance of World War II in a European context and about the extent to which, in their view, certain topics should be the focus of a common European culture of remembrance. The essential finding was that the majority of respondents identify themselves with Europe: 71.4% of participants said that being European is an important part of their identity – just 13.3% disagreed with this statement. Comparing these responses with results from previous MEMO studies suggests that European identification is of greater importance to respondents than national identification with Germany: In MEMO IV/2021, only 48.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Being German is an important part of my identity.” Identification with Europe is systematically dependent on the age of respondents – for older respondents it is more significant to be European than for younger respondents.

**Being European is an important part of my identity.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
6.5 %	6.8 %	15.0 %	23.0 %	48.4 %

In the further course of the study, participants were asked to name the countries in Europe which, apart from Germany, they personally associate most with World War II. Respondents openly named up to three countries which first came to mind in the context of World War II. Summarizing the responses, MEMO V respondents most strongly associate World War II with France (74.9%), followed by Poland (60.3%), Great Britain (41.3%), Russia (36.3%), Italy (24.2%), and Austria (13.4%). Less than one in ten respondents mentioned the Soviet Union (8.1%). The complete analysis of the question is presented in the annex to the study.



**Apart from Germany, which three European countries do you associate most with World War II personally?**

other mentions:

Soviet Union 8.1 %

USA 1.2 %

Yugoslavia 0.5 %

Israel 0.1 %

Japan 0.1 %

Unspecific answers 0.1 %



*It is significant that the memory of World War II is centered on Western Europe. The war in the East is still a big blank, since there is no knowledge about the violence during the German occupation. This lack of knowledge stands in stark contrast to the memory in the affected societies of Eastern Europe: War of plunder and food, exploitation as work slaves, abuse, and murder.*

*Why is it so? I see various reasons: Anti-communist sentiments in the post-war Federal Republic, the judicial failure to deal with crimes in the East and family memories in Germany as a black box into which one dare not look. Few are willing to deal with the perpetrators in the own families; on the individual level, the memory of the “clean Wehrmacht” is far more comfortable. Ignorance about the crimes of the Wehrmacht is directly related to not knowing about the German violence in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe.*

Dr. Katja Makhotina – Institute of Historical Studies, University of Bonn



If we differentiate the first responses to this question according to the respondents' residence, systematic regional differences are apparent: Respondents living in Western Germany systematically associate World War II more often with France (references by respondents in Western Germany: 33.6%; in Eastern Germany: 16.2%) whilst respondents living in Eastern Germany regularly mention Russia more frequently as their first association (references in Western Germany: 11.9%; in Eastern Germany: 25.0%). Poland, on the other hand, is equally often associated with World War II, irrespective of the respondent's residence (references by respondents in Western Germany: 24.8%; in Eastern Germany: 26.6%). With regard to the age of the respondents, there are no systematic differences in the answers to this question.



*The percentage differences in the naming of France and Russia as the countries most strongly associated with World War II in Western Germany and in Eastern Germany reflect long-term effects of the German-German division and different policies of remembrance in Western and Eastern Germany. While reconciliation with France became an important component of remembrance policy in the old Federal Republic with the Élysée Treaty of 1963, a broad political and social critical examination of the National Socialist war of extermination against the Soviet Union and a debate about the associated historical responsibility was absent until the Wehrmacht exhibition in the mid-1990s. In the GDR, anti-fascism and fraternization with the Soviet Union were part of the reason of state but the relationship to the Soviet occupying power remained a matter of ambivalence among the population. In the more than three decades since 1989, Germany has not yet succeeded sufficiently in aligning the remembrance practices of Western and Eastern Germany. This is also due to the fact that there is still too little willingness among West Germans to deal with historical experiences and memories of people in Eastern Germany. The legacy of communism and the crimes of the socialist dictatorship are still underrepresented in the general historical consciousness. This also applies to the discussion about the experiences of communist dictatorship in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. To put it quite simply, the “Wall” in people's minds has not been fully overcome to this day. And this, in turn, has consequences for the political and social handling of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.*

Gabriele Woideko – Head of the History and Politics Department of the Körber Foundation



**Have you ever visited places of remembrance of World War II located outside of Germany intentionally?**

Yes	No
41.5 %	58.5 %

Various respondents (41.5%) say they have already visited places of remembrance of World War II outside of Germany intentionally. All respondents who answered this question in the affirmative were asked to state which place or places they had visited. The open answers were then systematized, and the percentages below refer to the proportion of participants who answered the above question in the affirmative (41.5%).

These respondents most frequently report having visited places of remembrance in France (40.5%) and in Poland (31.2%). These references are followed by places of remembrance of World War II in the Czech Republic (9.9%), Russia (6.6%), Great Britain (5.3%), Israel (4.3%), Italy (4.3%), Austria (4.1%) and the Netherlands (4.1%). Specifically, in France, respondents most often refer to the warfare and the war graves in Normandy, naming such things as “Omaha Beach,” “the Atlantic Wall,” or “the landing beaches.” Memorial sites to the Natzweiler concentration camp complex in Alsace are also mentioned many times. Several respondents referred to visits to memorial sites in and around Verdun, and thus possibly in part to places of remembrance relating to events during World War I. The vast majority of visits to memorial sites in Poland relate to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp memorial site; though in individual cases they relate to memorial sites in Warsaw as well as the “Wolf’s Lair” in the Polish Voivodeship of Warmia-Masuria. Other places repeatedly mentioned in the open responses include the Theresienstadt concentration camp memorial site in the Czech Republic, the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel, as well as the Anne Frank House museum in the Netherlands.

**Apart from Germany, which European countries do you associate most with World War II personally? (Listed here are the mentioned countries that were visited)**

other mentions:

- Israel 4.3 %
- USA 1.4 %
- Philippines 0.2 %
- Tunisia 0.2 %
- Hawaii 0.2 %
- Japan 0.1 %



To the extent possible based on the information provided, respondents' answers were also systematized according to whether they represent places of remembrance of wartime events during World War II (e.g., military cemeteries, bunkers) or places of remembrance relating to victims of systematic persecution and murder by the National Socialists (e.g., concentration camp memorial sites). It can be seen that the places reported more often represent a commemoration of war events (40.8%) than a commemoration of those persecuted and murdered during the time of National Socialism (34.2%).

**||** *After the death of the last survivors, the historical sites of National Socialist persecution and extermination gained renewed importance as physical testimonies to what happened – also in the context of multiperspectivity: The history of the “forgotten places of the Holocaust” is indispensable for understanding the National Socialist policy of extermination; without it, the picture of the exclusion, deprivation of rights and murder of European Jews, Sinti and Roma, forced laborers and prisoners of war, partisans and resistance fighters, but also of the (Slavic) civilian population in the territory of the former Soviet Union and its present successor states remains incomplete. These places symbolize the German war of extermination in the East, but at the same time they provide the possibility of breaking open traditional narratives of (unresisting) extermination and expanding them to include the narratives of resistance and survival.*

Saskia Herklotz – EVZ Foundation



Beyond the specific context of World War II, the participants in MEMO V were asked which topics they thought should be the focus of a common European culture of remembrance. In the process, respondents were presented with a series of topics and they each indicated how much they felt they should be remembered on a pan-European basis. It can be seen that the most important cultural remembrance concern in the European context for respondents is the remembrance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (86.1%), followed by the remembrance of the systematic persecution and murder of people during World War II (83.3%) as well as the remembrance of the liberation of Europe from National Socialism (77.4%). Respondents consider topics such as remembering the history of migration (67.5%), remembering soldiers killed during World War II (66.0%), and remembering European colonial history (56.7%) to be less of a focus, but also predominantly important. Older respondents rate both the remembrance of the establishment of the European Union and of the soldiers killed during World War II and the European values as systematically more important than younger respondents. For all response options, the more intensively respondents have dealt with the history of National Socialism, the more strongly they agree.

**In your opinion, how much should the following topics be the focus of a common European culture of remembrance?**

	Not at all	Not very much	Neither/nor	Rather a lot	A lot
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (M = 4.50)	0.3 %	1.6 %	11.7 %	20.6 %	65.5 %
The systematic persecution and murder of people during World War II. (M = 4.31)	1.6 %	3.2 %	11.7 %	30.2 %	53.1 %
The Liberation of Europe from National Socialism. (M = 4.21)	0.8 %	3.0 %	18.5 %	30.2 %	47.2 %
The European values. (M = 4.09)	1.5 %	6.4 %	18.1 %	29.8 %	43.7 %
The establishment of the European Union. (M = 4.01)	1.9 %	5.8 %	21.6 %	31.8 %	38.1 %
The history of migration. (M = 3.93)	1.4 %	4.9 %	25.6 %	36.3 %	31.2 %
The soldiers killed during World War II. (M = 3.90)	0.9 %	6.4 %	26.1 %	35.8 %	30.2 %
The history of European colonialism. (M = 3.76)	1.6 %	10.9 %	28.8 %	30.2 %	26.5 %

**||** *Respondents in Germany locate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the systematic persecution and murder of people during World War II as the important elements of a common European culture of remembrance. In this way, they clearly share the goals of historical-political education in dealing with remembrance of National Socialism; more specifically, memorial education and Holocaust education.*

*However, the quite high percentage of respondents who do not agree gives cause for concern. How does this dismissive attitude towards central cornerstones of European history come about?*

Corinna Jentzsch – EVZ Foundation



### 4.3 Dealing with and knowledge about the history of National Socialism

The next part of the survey referred specifically to the time of National Socialism in Germany, the respondents' previous involvement with this period as well as their knowledge of the history of National Socialism. Two-thirds of the respondents in MEMO V say they have "rather intensively" or "very intensively" dealt with the history of National Socialism so far (67.0%). The replies to the question are independent of the age of the respondents – there are no systematic differences between the older and younger participants.

And how intensively have you dealt with the history of National Socialism on your own?				
Not at all	Rather not	Neither/nor	Rather intensively	Very intensively
2.6 %	12.5 %	17,9 %	33,7 %	23,3 %

In terms of content, the larger percentage of respondents feel well-informed about the time of National Socialism – 58.8% assess their knowledge of the history of National Socialism as "rather good" or "very good". The assessment of this knowledge is thereby independent of the actual reported process of dealing with the history of National Socialism through various ways. Less than half the respondents (39.7%) are interested in learning more about the National Socialist era, and those who have dealt with the topic less intensively are especially less interested.

How would you assess your own knowledge regarding the time of National Socialism?				
Not good at all	Not very good	Neither/nor	Rather good	Very good
4.3 %	10.4 %	26.1 %	43.4 %	15.4 %

How much interest do you have in learning more about the National Socialist era?				
Not interested at all	Rather not interested	Neither/nor	Rather interested	Very interested
7.1 %	17.5 %	35.7 %	20.7 %	19.0 %

As in previous studies, the participants in MEMO V were asked about the ways they had previously dealt with the topic of National Socialist history. The list of possible ways of dealing with the issue was further expanded and the respondents indicated in each case how often they had adopted the various approaches so far to deal with the topic of National Socialism. As in previous studies, respondents in MEMO V report having most frequently dealt critically with the subject of National Socialism through feature films and documentaries (92.8% at least "once"). Respondents are least likely to say they have ever played a mobile phone or computer game to address the subject (87.4% "never"). Slightly more than one in five respondents reported that they had "never" visited a memorial site (22.6%).

How often have you done the following things to deal critically with the subject of National Socialism?					
	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times or more often
Watched a documentary or feature film. (M = 4.37)	7.2 %	4.3 %	6.5 %	8.5 %	73.5 %
Talked to friends. (M = 4.15)	12.5 %	4.9 %	7.4 %	4.6 %	70.1 %
Talked to family members. (M = 4.13)	13.1 %	3.5 %	8.4 %	6.8 %	67.7 %
Read a non-fiction book or novel. (M = 3.47)	23.0 %	9.1 %	11.0 %	11.8 %	45.0 %
Read texts or watched videos on the Internet. (M = 3.19)	36.6 %	5.1 %	5.9 %	6.7 %	45.5 %
Visited a memorial site. (M = 2.98)	22.6 %	21.6 %	18.2 %	10.5 %	27.0 %
Visited an exhibition or attended a lecture. (M = 2.87)	33.2 %	15.0 %	12.1 %	11.4 %	28.3 %
Used social media. (M = 2.69)	50.5 %	5.6 %	3.5 %	5.3 %	35.0 %
Met a contemporary witness. (M = 1.80)	64.7 %	12.7 %	9.0 %	4.5 %	9.0 %
Listening to a podcast. (M = 1.64)	78.2 %	3.1 %	5.7 %	1.8 %	11.1 %
Speaking with so-called digital contemporary witnesses. (M = 1.59)	81.0 %	3.4 %	2.2 %	2.7 %	10.6 %
Making a virtual visit to a concentration camp memorial site, e.g., using a computer. (M = 1.52)	79.5 %	5.9 %	4.3 %	3.2 %	7.0 %
Participation in an international exchange or international trip to a memorial site. (M = 1.47)	75.4 %	13.1 %	5.5 %	1.4 %	4.6 %
Playing a mobile phone or computer game set in the time of National Socialism. (M = 1.39)	87.4 %	2.0 %	1.6 %	1.1 %	7.6 %

When analyzing the data, it becomes clear that the uses of certain ways of dealing with the National Socialist era are systematically related. This means respondents who have adopted a specific way of dealing critically with the past were more likely to have used specific other ways of dealing with the topic more frequently. Summarizing these, four groups of dealing with the subject of National Socialism can be distinguished based on the data:

**Group 1:** Respondents who watched feature films or documentaries about National Socialism were also more likely to have read non-fiction books or novels and to have talked about National Socialist history with family members or friends. Summarizing these ways of dealing with the subject of National Socialism, we find that their use is not systematically related to the age of the respondents, although it is related to



their educational background.<sup>5</sup> Respondents with higher educational qualifications adopt these methods of dealing critically with National Socialist history more frequently than respondents with a lower level of formal education.

**Group 2:** Respondents who have visited memorial sites are also more likely to have visited exhibitions, attended lectures, or met contemporary witnesses or participated in an international event such as an exchange or a trip to a memorial site. Summarizing these ways of dealing with the subject of National Socialism, we find that their use is not related to the age of the respondents, although it is clearly related to their educational background. Respondents with a higher level of formal education use them systematically more frequently than respondents with a lower educational level. It is also evident that the respondents from Eastern Germany report these ways of dealing critically with the subject of National Socialism more frequently than respondents from Western Germany.

**Group 3:** Respondents who researched the topic of National Socialism on the internet were more likely to have also made use of social media or a virtual facility for a memorial site. These ways of dealing critically with the topic are systematically related to the respondents' age and are used significantly more often by younger respondents than by older respondents, whilst educational differences play a minor role.

**Group 4:** The use of computer or mobile phone games to deal critically with National Socialism is not systematically related to other means of access, and instead constitutes a "type" of its own. Respondents who use computer or mobile phone games to deal critically with the subject of National Socialism have, overall, dealt with it less intensively than other respondents. The use of this access is not related to the respondents' educational background, although it is clearly related to their age: As expected, younger respondents use computer and mobile phone games more frequently than older respondents. Systematic differences in attitude are also evident for this type of use compared to the other three types. For example, respondents who play computer and mobile phone games related to the National Socialist era do not distance themselves so clearly from revisionist statements and, for example, agree significantly more often with the statement "I doubt that all the reports about the extent of the persecution of the Jews are true."

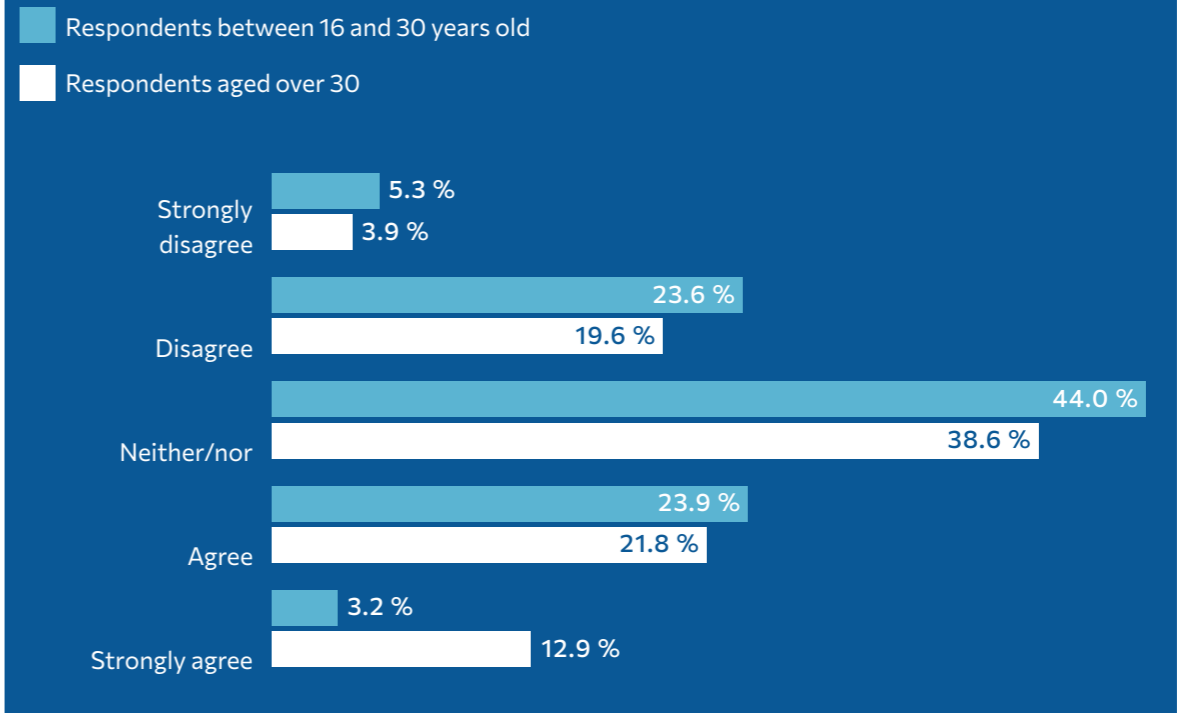
With regard to the perspectives represented in the German culture of remembrance, the respondents' answers show a divided opinion: About a quarter of the participants in MEMO V (24.6%) believe that representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism have not yet been sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance. While 39.6% of respondents do not take a clear position on this statement, one third (33.2%) believe that the perspectives of today's representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance. Younger respondents express a clearer position: They are systematically less likely than older respondents to take the view that the perspectives of those affected are already sufficiently represented in German culture of remembrance.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding all the reported differences depending on respondents' formal educational level, it is important to bear in mind that the possible underlying causes for these differences are diverse and cannot be clearly determined on the basis of the available data. It is not possible to draw a conclusion, for example, about a fundamentally lower level of interest among respondents with a lower level of formal education because the level of education is systematically related to other indicators, for example net disposable household income. Differences in educational background therefore always reflect factors such as differences in financial resources and other aspects of educational and social inequality.

**The perspectives of today's representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.2 %	20.4 %	39.6 %	22.2 %	11.0 %

**The perspectives of today's representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance.**



**Figure 1. Percentages of respondents agreeing and disagreeing with the statement, distinguished by the respondents' age.**

With regard to content knowledge about various aspects of National Socialism, the results of previous MEMO studies are confirmed. In this section of the interview, respondents stated how much they personally knew about a series of aspects of the National Socialist era. The respondents in MEMO V report that they know the most about the systematic murder of the Jews during the time of National Socialism. They feel least well-informed about coming to terms with the National Socialist crimes after the end of World War II and about attitudes of the German population at the time towards National Socialism. While all aspects mentioned are systematically related to respondents' educational backgrounds – respondents with a higher level of formal education consistently report being better informed – an age difference is shown selectively for certain aspects of knowledge. Compared to older respondents, younger respondents state more frequently that they know little about the exploitation of forced laborers during the time of National Socialism, coming to terms with the National Socialist crimes after the end of World War II, and the general public's attitude towards National Socialism.

**And how much do you yourself know about the following aspects of National Socialism?**

	Not at all	Not very much	Neither/nor	Rather a lot	Very much
The systematic murder of the Jews of Europe. (M = 3.87)	0.7 %	6.6 %	23.8 %	42.9 %	25.9 %
The ideology of National Socialism. (M = 3.54)	2.8 %	11.2 %	30.9 %	39.3 %	15.8 %
The persecution of various victim groups in Germany. (M = 3.51)	1.6 %	11.3 %	37.4 %	32.8 %	16.4 %
The political and societal conditions and the sequence of events as the National Socialists seized power. (M = 3.47)	2.0 %	14.8 %	31.9 %	36.5 %	14.6 %
The exploitation of forced laborers during the time of National Socialism. (M = 3.46)	1.6 %	14.4 %	34.6 %	34.0 %	14.8 %
Coming to terms with the National Socialist crimes after the end of World War II. (M = 3.25)	2.8 %	19.3 %	36.6 %	32.0 %	9.1 %
Everyday life in National Socialist Germany and the general public's attitude towards National Socialism. (M = 3.22)	3.4 %	18.0 %	41.7 %	26.8 %	10.1 %

**W** *As in the case of similarly designed studies, the MEMO study runs the risk of interrogating the official facts, values, and memory discourses of German society learned by the participants in school and other institutions, without the answers thereby generated providing information about what lessons and passions respondents really associate with this learned content. This is another reason why it is important to give younger people in particular the opportunity to describe their memory horizon inductively without being confronted with a strong morally charged expectation. This is the only way to determine whether and to what extent the memory of World War II, the Holocaust and National Socialism is losing relevance in everyday culture or perhaps more recent events in contemporary history are being used to interpret and cope with the current crises. Knowledge alone does not indicate learning. There is a difference between factual knowledge and moral-ethical conclusions drawn from a critical examination of history.*

Prof Dr. Wulf Kansteiner – School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University



**4.4 Remembering Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism**

The remembrance of the Sinti and Roma who were persecuted and murdered during the time of National Socialism has only been addressed indirectly in previous MEMO studies. In MEMO IV/2021, participants were asked to name all victim groups of National Socialism known to them. It turned out that less than half the respondents (44.5%) named Sinti and/or Roma as a victim group of National Socialism when asked openly. In MEMO V, more than half the respondents (52.3%) state that they have already dealt with the topic of the persecution and murder of the group of Sinti and Roma during the time of National Socialism in a specific way. However, subsequent inquiries revealed that more than two thirds of the participants (69.9%) were unable to name any place dedicated to the memory of these victims of National Socialism.

<b>Have you ever specifically dealt with the topic of the persecution and murder of the group of Sinti and Roma during the time of National Socialism?</b>	
Yes	No
52.3%	47.7%

<b>Do you know any place dedicated to Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism?</b>	
Yes	No
30.1%	69.9%

While the larger percentage of the respondents in MEMO V (59.0%) agree with the statement that the German government has a special moral responsibility regarding the group of Sinti and Roma as a result of the crimes committed during the time of National Socialism, 40.0% of the respondents do not share this view. Approximately two thirds of the participants in MEMO V (64.3%) believe that it is the responsibility of all people in Germany to ensure the remembrance of the Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism, while over one third (34.7%) disagree with this statement. Similarly, while most respondents (62.0%) share the view that the genocide of the Sinti and Roma should play a greater role in German school education, more than a third of all respondents (36.4%) also disagree with this statement.

<b>The German government has a special moral responsibility regarding the group of Sinti and Roma as a result of the crimes committed during the time of National Socialism.</b>				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.0 %	8.1 %	27.9 %	35.8 %	23.2 %



**It is the responsibility of all people in Germany to ensure the remembrance of the Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.0 %	10.2 %	20.5 %	35.4 %	28.9 %

**The persecution and murder of Sinti and Roma during National Socialism should play a greater role in German school education.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
3.3 %	8.0 %	25.1 %	38.8 %	23.2 %

**||** When interviewing people on the subject of National Socialism and its victims, it can be assumed that many people will not reveal to an unknown person on the telephone that their own personal critical dealing with the events between 1933 and 1945 is inadequate. Social desirability refers to the tendency of respondents to give a predominantly positive description of themselves and to conform to what interviewers or the other participants expect. Particularly with regard to a “concrete” dealing with the suffering of Sinti and Roma, the present answers appear questionable and excessively positive. Just over half of the respondents say they have dealt with the persecution and murder of the group “in a specific way”. Here, we do not elaborate on what “in a specific way” means to the respondents. Knowledge of the victim groups of National Socialism and their classification as such may well be subjectively perceived as “specific” without further well-founded background knowledge.

The reported knowledge of a place “dedicated to Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism” also seems to be inflated. Which location is familiar to just under a third of respondents? For example, the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, which was only inaugurated 10 years ago? Or is it associated with general crime scenes like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and others? Overall, an enormous discrepancy is revealed between the responses in the study and the empirical values of Roma self-organizations. Further differentiated questioning is needed to map the “specific” knowledge of respondents and to unmask social desirability.

Radoslav Ganev – Political scientist, founder of RomAnity e.V.

When asked about continuities of discrimination and marginalization of Sinti and Roma after the end of World War II, the positioning of the respondents in MEMO V is even less clear. Less than one in five respondents (17.4% “strongly agree”) take a clear position on the fact that for a long time, the German government did not recognize the systematic marginalization and murder of Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist era. Less than half of the respondents (40.0%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the view that the systematic marginalization of and discrimination against Sinti and Roma persisted beyond the time of National Socialism. More than half of all respondents (55.2%) do not clearly agree or disagree with this statement.

**For a long time, the German government did not recognize the systematic marginalization and murder of Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist era.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1 %	5.6 %	31.8 %	30.2 %	17.4 %

**Within German society, the systematic marginalization of and discrimination against Sinti and Roma persisted beyond the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
6.3 %	14.0 %	34.9 %	29.4 %	10.6 %

**||** The failure of the state to recognize the National Socialist genocide of Sinti and Roma for decades, the failure to punish the perpetrators and the reversal of guilt practiced by them in public discourse and in compensation proceedings have often been highlighted in recent years as a particular burden of the past, most recently also in the report by the Independent Antigypsyism Commission appointed by the German Bundestag. It is all the more striking that these facts are not known or accepted by the majority. This shows that the systematic discrimination and social exclusion that existed after 1945, even in the democratic Federal Republic, with their grave consequences for the survivors and subsequent generations, are not seen. However, this also means that there is no specific awareness of the antigypsyism or racist practices that are still active today in society and especially in institutions such as authorities and schools. This reveals a high need for reflection and education.

Dr. Karola Fings – Antiziganism Research Unit, Heidelberg University

Systematic correlations with other attitudes asked in the study emerge across the individual questions: Respondents who say it is time to “draw a line” under Germany’s National Socialist history also position themselves more clearly against the specific memory of the Sinti and Roma murdered during the National Socialist era. In contrast, respondents who have dealt critically with the National Socialist past more intensively so far speak out more systematically in favor of remembering the groups of Sinti and Roma; they are also more often aware of their persistent discrimination within German society. The lack of recognition of the crimes against the Sinti and Roma by the German government is known to the respondents, who have dealt intensively with the history of National Socialism, but just as rarely as those respondents who have not dealt intensively with the past.

**II** The focus on the memory of the crimes against the Sinti and Roma included in the fifth MEMO study raises important questions concerning the quality of the memory discourses represented in Germany that cannot be definitively answered in a representative survey. The focus on the memory of the Jewish victims of the National Socialist perpetrators, which is so important and understandable, has not allowed other victim groups to come to the fore and could even have contributed unintentionally to the perpetuation of classical prejudices. A self-critical remembrance of forced laborers and Sinti and Roma, for example, is clearly expandable and probably well suited to expand the essential appreciation of social, cultural, and ethnic diversity in a post-migrant society.

Prof Dr. Wulf Kansteiner – School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University

#### 4.5 Attitudes towards culture of remembrance and sociopolitical topics throughout time

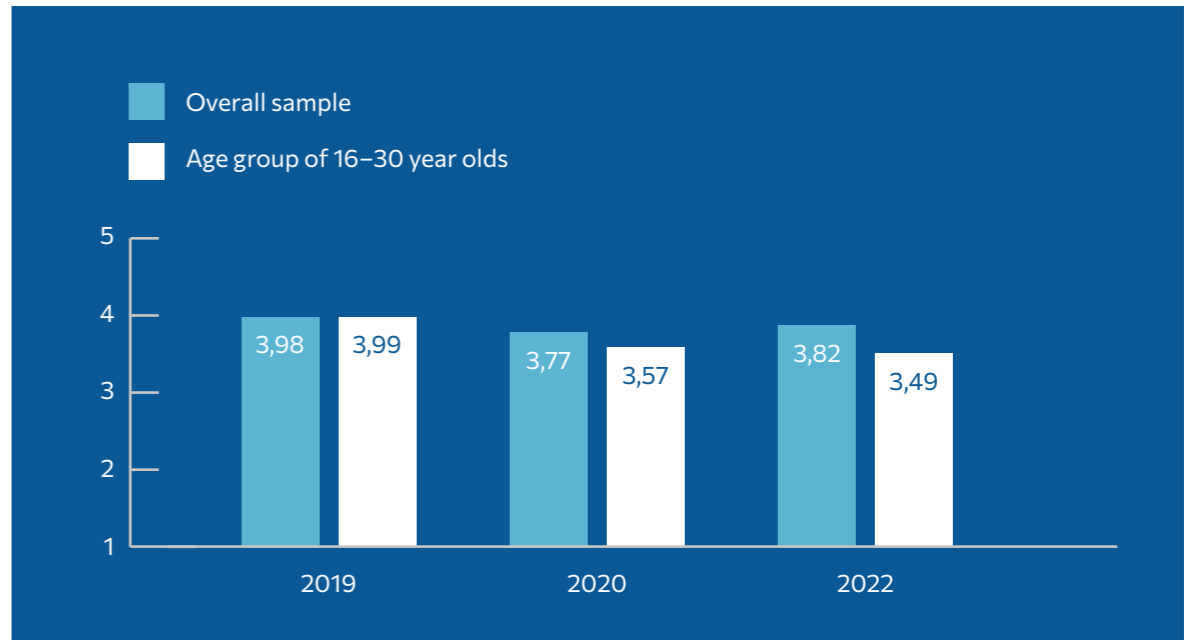
In the five MEMO studies conducted to date, participants answered a variety of attitude-related questions about German culture of remembrance and current sociopolitical topics. For some of these questions, MEMO V provides historical data, i.e. the same questions were asked in various representative surveys and the results can now be compared. Some selected questions and their development trajectories to date are shown below.<sup>6</sup> Since social developments in areas such as cultures of remembrance take place slowly and successively, differences relating to the period presented here can only be interpreted as tendencies.

In MEMO V, almost two-thirds of the respondents (65.9%) agree with the statement that the era of National Socialism is part of the German identity; 15.4% of respondents disagree with this statement. The surveys carried out to date do not initially indicate any development trend for this question. However, if the age of the participants is included in the analyses, a slight trend emerges in the age group of 16–30 years old: Younger respondents increasingly view the era of National Socialism less clearly as part of a “German identity”.

<sup>6</sup> Due to the limited time frame of the telephone surveys in each case, not all the questions presented were asked in all of the MEMO studies so far. The historical data therefore refers in part to three and in some cases to four different measurement time points that are shown in the progression.

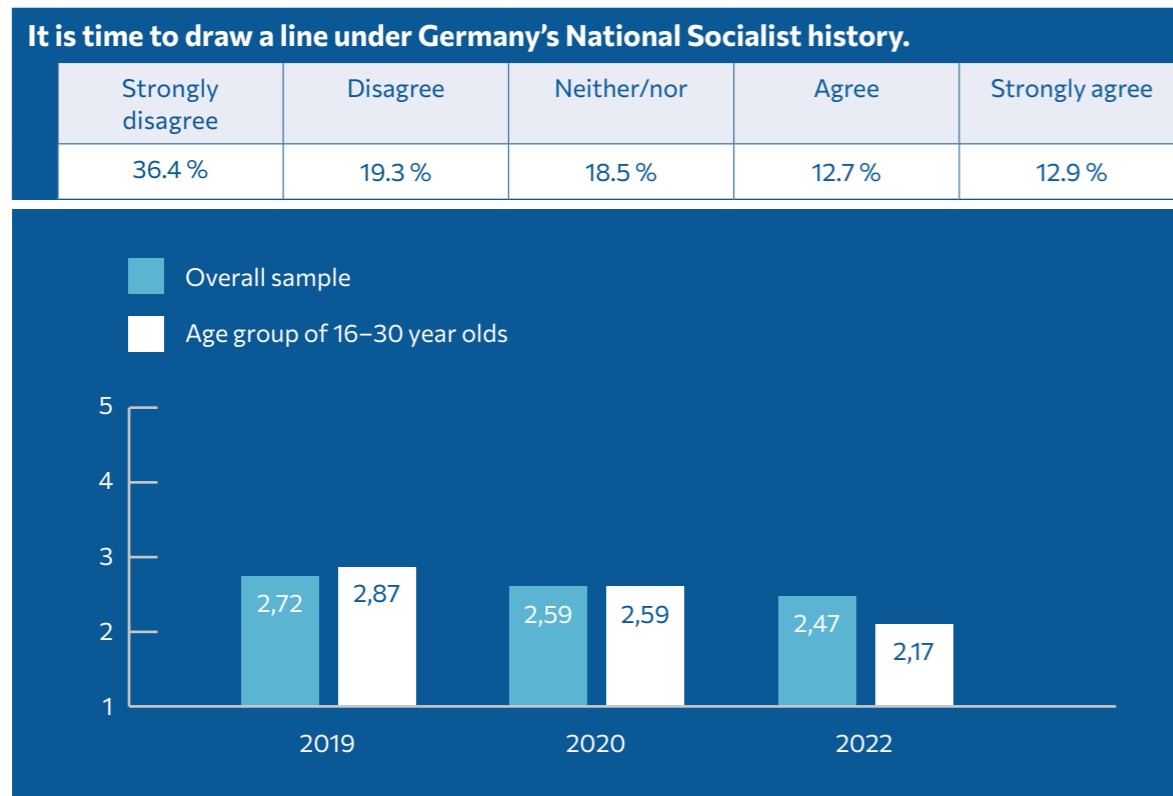
**The era of National Socialism is part of the German identity.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
5.7 %	9.7 %	18.1 %	30.7 %	35.2 %



**Figure 2. Average answers of respondents throughout time and in the respective comparison between the overall sample and the partial sample of 16–30 year-olds surveyed. The questions were answered using a five-tier scale from “1 – strongly disagree” to “5 – strongly agree.”**

Approximately one in four respondents (25.6%) in MEMO V agree with the statement that it is time to “draw a line” under Germany’s National Socialist history; more than half the participants (55.7%) strongly disagree. Looking at the historical data, there is a trend for this question across the previous surveys: Increasingly fewer respondents agree with the statement – in other words, an increasing number of respondents believe that society should continue to deal critically with the National Socialist era. If the age of the respondents is included in the analyses, the above-mentioned trend is especially clear for the youngest age group of 16–30 year-olds. For young people in Germany in particular, the perceived relevance of society’s willingness to deal critically with the history of National Socialism has increased in recent years.

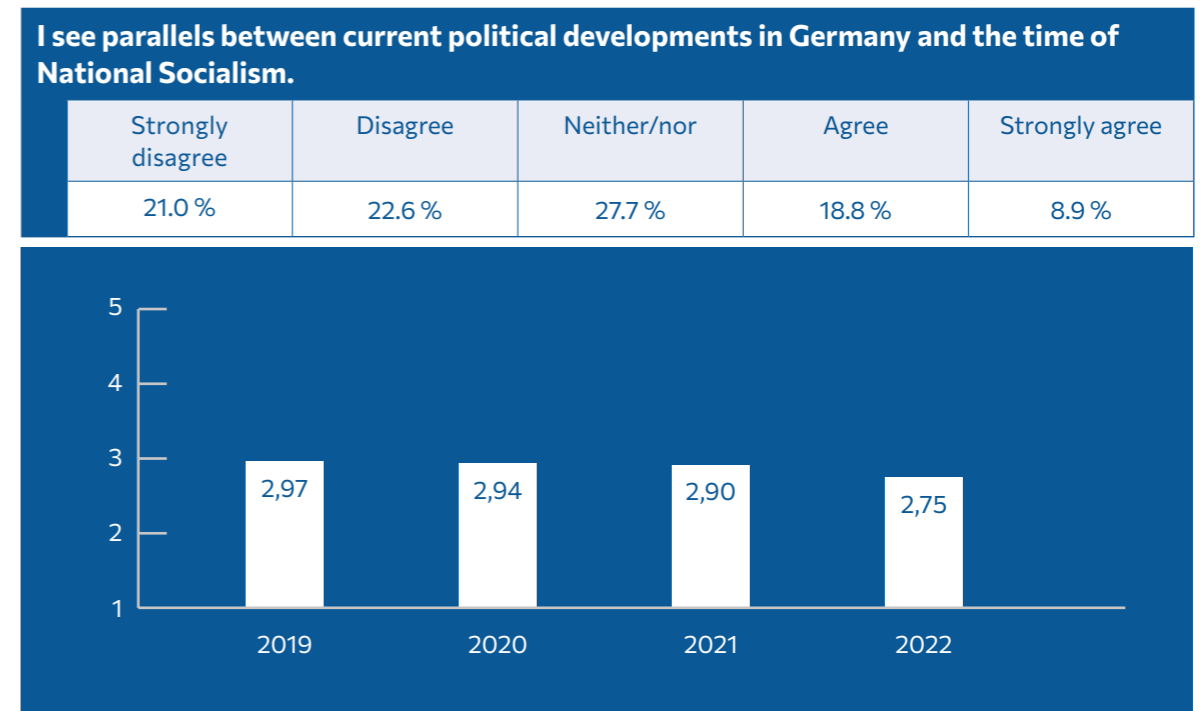


**Figure 3. Average answers of respondents throughout time and in the respective comparison between the overall sample and the partial sample of 16–30 year-olds surveyed. The questions were answered using a five-tier scale from “1 – strongly disagree” to “5 – strongly agree.”**

*At first, it seems like a contradiction that young people on the one hand see the need to deal with the history of National Socialism, but on the other hand do not see it as part of “German identity”. This illustrates the increasing distance in time and the more distanced view that Generation Z has in relation to the National Socialist era. This is associated with the need to learn about history differently today when family narratives are less relevant. The figures show the potential for critical and reflective debate.*

Merle Schmidt – EVZ Foundation

A comparable tendency emerges concerning the question of “parallels” between current political developments in Germany and the time of National Socialism. In MEMO V, 27.7% of respondents agreed with the corresponding statement, while 43.6% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”. Across the surveys, slightly fewer respondents increasingly agree with the statement that there are parallels between current political developments in Germany and the time of National Socialism. The descriptive differences between the individual surveys are minor. There are no differences with regard to the age of respondents.

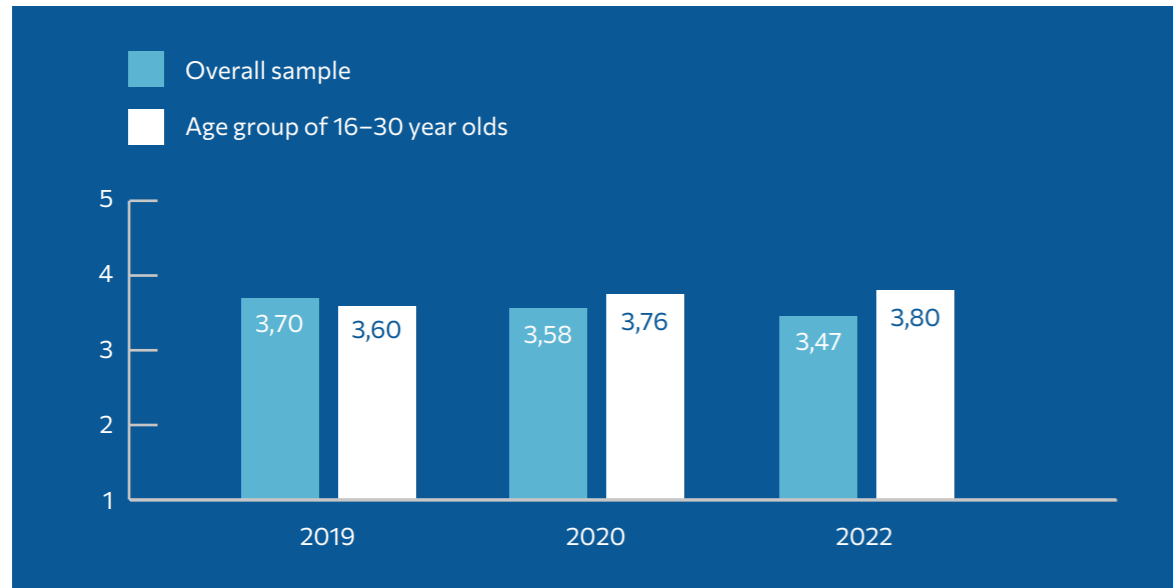


**Figure 4. Average answers of respondents throughout time. The questions were answered using a five-tier scale from “1 – strongly disagree” to “5 – strongly agree.”**

Also for the question whether participants think people today would be capable of acts similar to those of the time of National Socialism, a tendency is indicated in the course so far: In MEMO V, just over half of the respondents (53.3%) agreed with the corresponding statement. Across the surveys, the agreement is decreasing – i.e., increasingly fewer respondents think that people today would be capable of acts similar to those of National Socialism. If the age of the respondents is also included in the analyses here, systematic differences between the age groups become apparent: The decreasing agreement relating to this question are due to the older respondents in the samples. If we look at the trend selectively for the youngest age group of 16–30 year-olds, we can see a less optimistic outlook among them. They consider people more likely to be capable of repeating crimes like those committed during the time of National Socialism.

**I think people today would be capable of acts similar to those of the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
9.5 %	10.7 %	26.4 %	29.9 %	23.4 %



**Figure 5. Average answers of respondents throughout time and in the respective comparison between the overall sample and the partial sample of 16–30 year-olds surveyed. The questions were answered using a five-tier scale from “1 – strongly disagree” to “5 – strongly agree.”**

**4.6 Historical revisionism and patriotism**

Since the first MEMO study, the results have shown signs of gaps in historical knowledge, transfigurations and distortions, but also of clearly revisionist perspectives on Germany’s National Socialist past and the process of dealing critically with this history. Whether and to what extent respondents hold such perspectives depends on several factors. In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, historical revisionism and public-instrumentalization of National Socialist history often went and still go hand in hand with a belief in conspiracy narratives. MEMO IV/2021 contrasted participant’s responses based on their attitudes towards conspiracy ideology statements, and it found that respondents who agreed with conspiracy narratives were less likely to deal intensively with National Socialist history and were more likely to hold revisionist views. For example, they were more likely to equate the suffering of the German population at the time with the suffering of the victims of National Socialism. These comparisons are presented in greater detail in MEMO IV/2021. Among the respondents in MEMO V, too, there is a percentage which agrees with revisionist perspectives or fails to clearly distance itself from them. Thus, just over one in ten respondents (11.3%) in the current study felt that comparisons between the adversity faced by the German population during the coronavirus pandemic with the suffering of people during the time of National Socialism were legitimate or did not reject them. Over a third of respondents (34.5%) did not clearly distance themselves from “doubts” about the reports about the extent of persecution of Jews during the time of National Socialism. 16.0% of all respondents at least partially agree with the statement that Jews have too much influence in Germany today. The

known statistical correlations can be shown for the three statements listed: The more strongly respondents agree with conspiracy ideological statements (e.g. “There are secret organizations that exercise a great deal of influence on political decision-making.”), the more strongly they also hold revisionist and antisemitic perspectives. The more intensively respondents have previously dealt with the National Socialist era, the more likely they are to distance themselves from such statements.

**I find it reasonable to compare the adversity faced by the German population during the coronavirus pandemic with the suffering of people during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
74.5 %	13.7 %	5.7 %	2.1 %	3.5 %

**I doubt that all the reports about the extent of the persecution of the Jews are true.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
46.5 %	17.3 %	15.2 %	9.2 %	10.1 %

**Jews have too much influence in Germany.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
56.4 %	25.4 %	12.8 %	2.2 %	1.0 %

However, in addition to these connections with conspiracy ideological beliefs, the MEMO studies reveal other factors that have a systematic influence on the attitudes respondents have towards cultures of remembrance and sociopolitical topics. One of these factors is the need for patriotism. In MEMO V, just over half of all the respondents (51.1%) agreed with the statement, “People should finally be able to be proud of being German again.” Agreement with this statement is related to both the age and the educational background of the respondents: Older respondents and those with a lower level of formal education are more likely to express a need for a “new patriotism.” However, the overall high level of agreement clearly states that the need is represented in a large percentage of the surveyed sample.

**People should finally be able to be proud of being German again.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
8.1 %	9.6 %	29.6 %	22.5 %	28.6 %

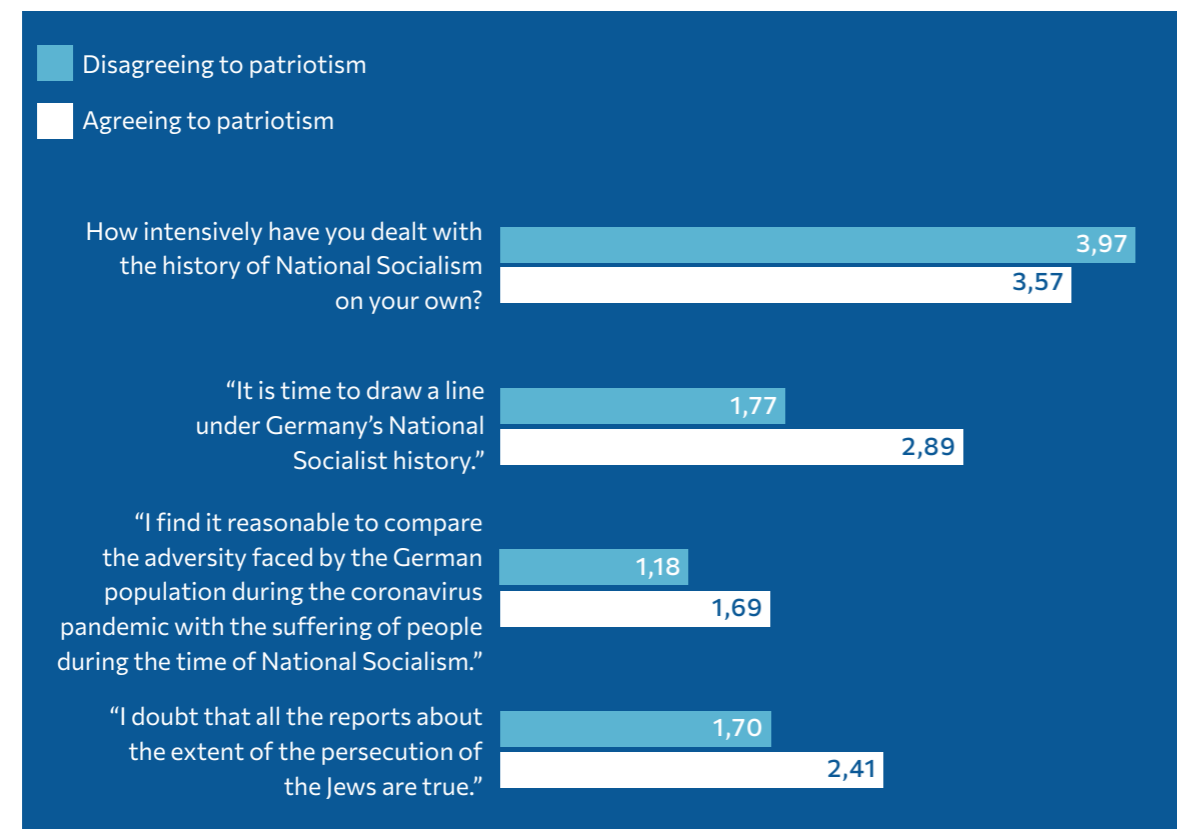
## 5 Authors' summary

The analyses show that respondents with a stronger desire for a “new patriotism” answer numerous other questions in the survey in a systematically different way to respondents for whom being proud of one’s own national identity is less significant. These differences do not relate only to sociopolitical issues; they include attitudes towards Germany’s National Socialist past. In the following comparison, the answers from those respondents who reject the need for patriotism (17.7%) are contrasted with the answers of respondents who support a new German patriotism (51.1%).<sup>7</sup>

A comparison shows that those respondents who express a clear need for patriotism have dealt less intensively with the National Socialist era. They are also more likely to agree that there should be “drawn a line” under Germany’s National Socialist history and an end to society’s critical examination of that period. With regard to content-related questions, systematic differences also emerge depending on whether respondents have a need for German patriotism: These respondents are more likely to think comparisons between the coronavirus pandemic and the time of National Socialism are reasonable, and they are more likely to express doubt that all the reports about the extent of the persecution of the Jews are true.

The fifth edition of the MEMO Studies marks the preliminary conclusion of the annual representative telephone surveys on the societal remembrance of and the process of dealing critically with the time of National Socialism in Germany. In the course of the fifth MEMO study, as well as new thematic priorities, initial trends and developments relating to the culture of remembrance of National Socialism were also examined. The findings highlight the realization that this culture of remembrance is not a static or “closed” concept, but is subject to constant change and interacts with demographic and sociopolitical developments. It is important to reflect actively on these interactions in order to prevent ritualization, to address existing gaps in knowledge and education, and to meet self-imposed demands for society to come to terms with and deal critically with National Socialist history.

Fundamentally, the relevance of the time of National Socialism continues to be evident with regard to **events that respondents consider historically significant and worth remembering**. In addition to the context of the German reunification, the National Socialist era represents the central historical reference point of German history for the respondents. However, the differentiation in terms of content shows that within this context respondents refer more frequently to “World War II” than they do explicitly to “National Socialism” or “National Socialist crimes.” It can be assumed part of the respondents refer more to general war events and the importance of World War II for world politics and history than to aspects such as National Socialist crimes or Germany’s specific national responsibility. Further differentiation of the available responses in terms of content also clearly states that a relevant proportion of respondents define the German culture of remembrance more broadly, albeit shaped by two central contexts, and perceive a variety of historical events, including those of more recent history, as worthy of remembrance. It appears remarkable that despite media and social discourses in recent years, contexts such as German colonial history and the history of racism are hardly present in the perception of the general population.



**Figure 6. Average responses of the two partial samples under comparison to the questions listed. The questions were answered using a five-tier scale from “1 – Not intensively at all” to “5 – Very intensively” (question 1) or “1 – strongly disagree” to “5 – strongly agree” (questions 2–4).**

<sup>7</sup> There is a significant statistical relationship between the need for patriotism and agreement with conspiracy narratives. Respondents who are more strongly in favor of German patriotism also agree more strongly with conspiracy ideology statements. Reported mean differences are statistically significant, even when a control is applied to take account of the proportion of variance attributable to differences in agreement with conspiracy ideology statements.

With regard to **the remembrance of World War II in a European context**, it is clear that many respondents in MEMO V identify strongly with Europe, and that in many cases the history of National Socialism and World War II is also critically examined outside of Germany. For the respondents, the historical context is closely linked above all with France, Poland and Great Britain, and for respondents from Eastern Germany also with Russia. The warfare and graves in Normandy (France), and the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp memorial site stand out as formative places of European remembrance of World War II. However, the “map” of European remembrance of World War II is marked by many more sites; this illustrates the fact that respondents actively seek out international memorial sites to engage with the subject of the war and the National Socialist crimes. At the same time, there are indications that “blind spots” exist, especially in relation to the crimes, occupations, and wars of extermination in Eastern Europe. Finally, the fundamental importance of the historical context is also reflected in the fact that respondents consider the remembrance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, National Socialist crimes and the liberation of Europe from National Socialism to be central cornerstones of a common European culture of remembrance. The survey of MEMO V took place before the historical caesura of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine – the consequences of this war for the German and European cultures of memory cannot be foreseen at this point in time.

The **access to the topic of National Socialism** shows that “new” ways and digital offers still play a subordinate role compared to already established ways such as films, books and visits to memorial sites. Differences in the adoption of certain approaches to the topic are especially evident depending on the age and educational backgrounds of respondents. This also indicates that relevant parts of the German population are hardly reached or not reached at all by existing educational services. According to initial analyses, computer and mobile phone games represent a particular challenge as a means of accessing the topic of National Socialism, since their users are not just particularly young. They are also less clearly distanced from revisionist perspectives on Germany’s National Socialist history and therefore more receptive to right-wing extremist ideas.

With regard to **content-related knowledge about Germany’s National Socialist past**, the findings from previous studies are confirmed: Respondents in MEMO V feel less informed in particular about the attitudes of the German population at the time towards National Socialism and about coming to terms with National Socialist crimes after World War II. At around one-third, a comparatively large percentage of respondents in MEMO V think that the perspectives of today’s representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance. Younger respondents, however, are critical of this statement and are in favor of including representatives of formerly persecuted groups in the German culture of remembrance in a higher extent.

In the questions of remembrance of the **Sinti and Roma persecuted and murdered during the time of National Socialism**, a pattern emerges which can be transferred to other victim groups of National Socialist crimes: While respondents generally emphasize a “special moral responsibility” regarding Sinti and Roma against the background of National Socialist history, they position themselves less clearly when it comes to specific issues of discrimination and marginalization. This relates to both the awareness of the lack of recognition of the crimes against the Sinti and Roma after the end of World War II and their persistent marginalization after 1945 and up to the present time. Across the MEMO studies to date, there are indications that the mere recognition of victimhood during National Socialism does not indicate an awareness of the continuities of marginalization into the present.

MEMO V provides the first data on **development tendencies in the culture of remembrance in relation to National Socialism**. The results illustrate the importance of examining developments in the context of the culture of remembrance over time and in a demographically differentiated way. It can be seen that changes in attitudes over the past few years are more pronounced among younger respondents, and in some cases run counter to the trends in society as a whole. It is not possible to assess the extent to which the observed developments reflect direct reactions to current sociopolitical events on the basis of the available data.

The data shows that younger respondents in particular have become increasingly clear over the past few years in their opposition to “drawing a line” under society’s process of dealing critically with Germany’s National Socialist past. At the same time, younger respondents in particular are increasingly less likely to perceive the National Socialist era as part of a “German identity”. Concrete conclusions cannot yet be drawn from the developments to date, but they do indicate that existing assumptions in the context of Germany’s culture of remembrance in relation to National Socialism are becoming increasingly distant from the realities of life and identity for young people in Germany. Observations of such developments over a longer period of time can help to counter them in political as well as political-educational action.

**Historical revisionist and antisemitic attitudes** are considered in a concluding section of this study. During the coronavirus pandemic and public protests against the protective measures, instrumentalization of Germany’s National Socialist past, relativizations and historical revisionist reinterpretations of the suffering of Victims of National Socialism have become just as present as the right-wing extremist, antisemitic and conspiracy-theoretical ideologies that underlay them. It turned out that these ideologies are accompanied not only by denial of facts in the present, but also by attacks on history and its victims. Discussions about these incidents and criminal prosecution of them are very relevant, and they can contribute to a greater social awareness of ideologically motivated attacks on the writing of history. However, mechanisms of reinterpretation, relativization, and selective suppression in relation to Germany’s National Socialist past are more diverse and also socially more widespread. A relevant and sociopsychologically obvious motive emerges in MEMO V as the **respondents’ need for a “new German patriotism.”** As the results make clear, approximately half of the respondents in MEMO V believe that people should “finally be able to be proud of being German again”. This need is accompanied by comparable tendencies towards historically distorting perspectives, such as the belief in conspiracy narratives (cf. MEMO IV/2021); but it is much more widespread within German society. Narrowing the discourse to conspiracy ideology and right-wing extremist motivated historical revisionism entails the danger of perpetuating “blind spots” in society’s process of coming to terms with National Socialist crimes and their continuities into the present.



# 6 Retrospect and outlook

## Which topics are covered by MEMO Studies I–V?

Previous MEMO studies have addressed numerous aspects of German culture of remembrance and, in particular, the societal remembrance of and process of dealing critically with the time and crimes of National Socialism. In this form, the MEMO studies represent the most quantitatively-empirically differentiated perspective on German culture of remembrance in relation to National Socialism. In addition to the descriptive findings of the five representative telephone surveys, the studies each contain more in-depth analyses, for example on correlations with demographic factors such as the respondents' age and educational background. Interpretations by experts from historical studies, historical-political education, as well as other institutions involved in the culture of remembrance provide guidance in many areas. With their expertise, various experts have played a decisive role in shaping the content of the MEMO project – and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them once again. The key findings of the five studies are presented in the respective result reports and cannot be reproduced in full here. However, as a guide, the specific topics that were addressed in the studies and elaborated on in terms of content are presented below. Some of the issues were addressed in a number of the studies, each looking at specific aspects. On the [MEMO website of the EVZ Foundation](#) you will find not only the five result reports, but also graphical presentations of key findings from the individual studies, English translations of the reports as well as additional sources in the context of the MEMO project.

Topic	MEMO study/studies
Important historical events and interest in German history	I, II, III, V
The importance of various curricular subjects in history lessons in school	I
The interpretation of 1945	III
Remembering World War II within the European context	V
Topics that should be the focus of a common European culture of remembrance	V
Intensity and ways of dealing with National Socialism	I, II, III, IV, V
The importance of memorial sites as places of dealing with the time of National Socialism	I, II
Important films for dealing critically with the time of National Socialism	III
The significance of a local culture of remembrance in the context of the National Socialist era	III, IV
Interest in “new ways” of critically examining the National Socialist era	IV
Subjective “impact” of remembering the time of National Socialism	IV
Knowledge about specific aspects of National Socialism	III, V
Knowledge about forced labor during National Socialism	IV
Knowledge about the involvement of German companies during the National Socialist era	IV
Knowledge about and the remembrance-cultural representation of victim groups of National Socialism	II, IV
Remembering Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism	V
Family narratives and the knowledge about the involvement of the own ancestors in the period of National Socialism	I, II, III
Perception of continuities of National Socialism after 1945	II, III, IV
Assessments of involvement and behavior of the Germans during the time of National Socialism	II, III, IV
Assessments of own societal responsibility and civic courage	II, IV
Perpetrators, victims, and helpers in comparison of family, societal, and individual perspectives.	IV
Self-assessments and perception of present-day conditions	III, IV
Assessments of “protective mechanisms” in society today	IV
Belief in conspiracy myths and historical revisionism	IV
Historical revisionism and patriotism	V
On the significance of calls to “draw a line”	III
On the significance of migration biographies	I, IV
Attitudes towards culture of remembrance and sociopolitical topics throughout time	V

In addition to these topics, the five studies include further individual questions on aspects relating to the German culture of remembrance and the society's process of coming to terms with National Socialism, emotions in relation to the National Socialist era, national and European identities, antisemitic, xenophobic, conspiracy ideology, revisionist issues, as well as current sociopolitical issues. The annexes to each study include the questionnaire used in each case as well as the full report of the descriptive findings.

### **How can the results of the MEMO studies be used in the future?**

The results of the MEMO studies have been received, cited and used in educational contexts by scholars and by the media in recent years. The potential of comprehensive data collection is to be further used in the future. All questions and descriptive findings of MEMO I–V are freely accessible, and various fields of application are conceivable. The studies may accompany social, medial and academic discourses and serve to reflect on the design of historical-political educational work. Ultimately, the questions and representative results of the MEMO studies can themselves be used as educational materials and also as starting points for reflective and participatory learning processes. The IKG (Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence) and the EVZ Foundation support research, transfer and application projects based on the MEMO studies as far as possible.

### **How will the MEMO project continue?**

Currently, the MEMO project is continuing in the form of an online panel survey among young adults between the ages of 16 and 25. In the process, 3,485 representatively selected young people were questioned in a first wave of the survey in late summer 2021. Some of the participants will be surveyed again in the late summer of 2022 to empirically map points of contact with the culture of remembrance in relation to National Socialism over a period of twelve months and any changes in attitude that may accompany this. In terms of content, the study ties in with the MEMO representative telephone surveys but it focuses on adolescents and young adults as the central target group of historical-political educational work. Unlike the previous telephone surveys, the online survey includes various open-ended questions that acquire more differentiated information about young people's interest in and understanding of history in Germany, their attitudes and expectations in relation to the culture of remembrance and also about central didactic approaches and open questions in the context of National Socialist history. The MEMO youth study is intended to provide information about the concerns and needs of the age group surveyed and to provide an in-depth orientation for the design of historical-political educational work in Germany. Publication of the full study results is scheduled for spring 2023. Some preliminary results from the first survey can already be downloaded from [the EVZ Foundation website](#). As part of the second survey in late summer 2022, the MEMO Youth Survey will also include questions on perceptions and assessments of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine. It is conceivable that new representative surveys will be carried out in the future, following on from the previous MEMO studies, in order to empirically map longer-term developments in the context of German culture of remembrance and to be able to adapt educational offerings to the prevailing ideas and levels of knowledge in society.

While the studies in the MEMO project are able to render an important empirical contribution to the analysis and reflection of the German culture of remembrance, the methodology of the studies also has limitations that could be addressed in content-related projects with a wider methodological range. Quantitatively designed representative social science surveys show the mood in the so-called general population. Based on the data collected, it is possible to differentiate and elaborate specific perspectives within this general population only to a limited degree. Especially in the context of a "German culture of remembrance" and the process in society of dealing critically with the National Socialist era, the diversity of perspectives and their representation is of great importance. Furthermore, as in the case of the MEMO studies, telephone interviews are exclusionary for part of the population due to language barriers, that they are unable to fully reflect the diversity in German society. A second methodological limitation is the type of questions that can be asked in telephone surveys. While the MEMO surveys also include open-ended question formats, the bulk of the questionnaire consists of closed-ended formats in which respondents can state their agreement or disagreement with predetermined questions and attitudes. In the elaboration of these questions and statements, a reduction of complex facts and concepts to specific aspects and concrete formulations is inevitable. Accordingly, respondents' answers are always related to their individual interpretation of the terms used. Finally, a third limitation is the phenomenon of social desirability. In empirical studies, social desirability refers to the problem that respondents' answers do not only reflect their individual attitudes – their response behavior is also influenced by other factors, e.g. the presence of another person (interviewer on the telephone) or by perceived social norms or expectations relating to the subject of the study. In the context of the societal remembrance of the National Socialist era, such normative influences can be assumed, for which reason the answers given by respondents will always reflect what they have "learned to answer" to such questions. The above limitations do not detract from the added value of the MEMO studies. However, it is important to consider them in the interpretation of the data and the development of possible follow-up studies. Against this background, qualitative and more participatory projects appear to make sense in which questions can be discussed in greater detail and on the basis of which specific perspectives can be mapped in a more differentiated way. In our opinion, the comprehensive questions and results of the MEMO studies represent a suitable starting point and an important empirical basis for such investigations.

# Epilogue

by Corinna Jentsch and Ralf Possekel, EVZ Foundation

In spring 2018, the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) and the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) presented the initial results of a representative survey relating to the culture of remembrance in Germany – the Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor (MEMO). For the first time, a representative survey systematically asked Germany's general population about how, what, why and in what ways they remember – and thereby shape the German culture of remembrance.

Representative telephone surveys were designed to produce reliable data to facilitate an evidence-based assessment of the status and development of the culture of remembrance in connection with the history of National Socialism. Since then, further surveys have been carried out annually – this cycle ends with the current fifth study. The chosen approach to research has brought to light important findings which have attracted a great deal of public interest as well as substantiating them empirically; it has highlighted gaps in knowledge and remembrance, and has also pointed out ways to a living memory that is relevant for the present time. Since remembrance changes and is also fed by the present, some questions naturally remained open, whilst some new ones were added.

## What did the EVZ Foundation want to know? – research interests

The approach underlying all MEMO studies has been developed and continuously discussed since an initial workshop in the fall of 2017 together with more than 80 scientists and experts on the culture of remembrance relating to the history of National Socialism. **It reflects primarily key interests of historical-political educators in five dimensions:**

1. What aspects of the history of National Socialism do people in Germany remember and know? Which phenomena are remembered less or not at all?
2. In which ways do people deal critically with the history of National Socialism? What does this mean for the development of educational offerings?
3. Why do people remember this history, and what motivates them?
4. What conclusions do people draw from the remembrance of this history?
5. How do they connect this knowledge with current societal phenomena, events, and conflicts?

In view of these five questions, MEMO is a “multidimensional” remembrance monitor. The EVZ Foundation, the IKG as well as participating experts shared a common guiding question: to what extent does the culture of remembrance as we encounter it strengthen the democratic constitution of our society? How does the personal confrontation with the history of National Socialism strengthen the commitment against today's forms of discrimination, debates about drawing a line under Germany's National Socialist history, conspiracy theories or antisemitic attitudes? The empirical findings of the five surveys were discussed with the experts in ten workshop discussions. Conclusion: they can be interpreted – depending on the reading and perspective – in very different ways. They invite us to think about impetus, approaches, and potentials for contemporary historical-political education in Germany.

## What have we found across studies? – 8 key findings from the EVZ Foundation's perspective

**1. A good half of all respondents (approx. 54%) have an interest in German history** and are therefore directly amenable to historical argumentation and narratives in terms of their sociopolitical positioning. Historical-political education therefore falls a long way short of reaching the population as a whole. However, since another third (33%) expresses ambivalence (“neither/nor” interested), there is considerable potential that could be reached by addressing them in a suitable way.

How this can be done effectively is a substantial challenge for future historical-political education. With its Agenda for the Future which was adopted in 2021, the EVZ Foundation is moving into new spaces to address people where they move: cultural spaces, digital spaces, the professional world – be in companies, administration, the police or the armed forces.

**2. A good half of all respondents (54%) ascribe vital importance to the historical context of National Socialism**, while around 25% mentioned events from the context of German division or reunification as primary points of reference. Over the past five years these values have only fluctuated to a minor degree; in 2019/20 – thirty years after the German reunification – these figures were a little higher, but then they fell again. Since just 35% of the respondents from Eastern Germany put reunification first, this weighting in principle should not be seen as an extension of personal experiential backgrounds; but rather as the result of a national discourse in German society as a whole. There are similar distributions among younger respondents, too. They even place greater weight on National Socialism than older respondents. It is therefore quite possible to convince younger generations of the importance of National Socialist history, even though it is a period of history which lies further back in time from their point of view. In other words, there is no specific educational problem when it comes to young people. Instead, people with discursive “prerogative of interpretation” in their communities are central to address in all the generations: activists and peers, managers at the place of work, content creators in social media, artists in public spaces, etc.

### 3. Memory deceives

A major finding in the MEMO studies is the divergence between historical fact and recalled memory. Subsequent generations remember their grandparents and great-grandparents disproportionately as perpetrators, bystanders, or profiteers who carried out or supported the deprivation of rights and persecution of people under National Socialism or at just allowed it to happen. However, they remember their ancestors as victims and helpers to a disproportionate degree. This discrepancy can be explained by socialpsychological and psychological effects. For descendants of the persecuted people and of victims, however, this is a painful finding: in the family memories of the majority of society the remembrance of perpetration remains suppressed or distorted despite all the efforts in the culture of remembrance.

It is clear that special methodologies and paradigms are required to enable people to deal critically with traditional family histories and to specifically search for non-traditional histories.

Digital forms of production of knowledge and ways of making it available provide a special potential for this: Just as the Stolpersteine [stumbling stones] project rendered the Holocaust visible and discussable in the neighborhood of every German family for the first time, digital mapping formats, for example, are able to show clearly that forced labor was indeed happening “everywhere,” that deportations of Jews, Sinti and Roma did not happen in the dead of night, but that there are photographs of them which need to be talked about. Therefore, in the Education in digital learning spaces cluster, the Foundation supports the development and application of lifeworld-based educational resources which can be used to critically contextualize family memories and collective narratives in a targeted way.

### 4. Distorted self-assessment?

Asked how the respondents themselves “would have acted at the time” the majority assessed that they would have helped potential victims of National Socialist persecution. At first glance, this may appear to be a success of educational work. However, skepticism is still appropriate because the findings initially demonstrate only that people tend to identify with helpers and victims rather than with perpetrators and bystanders or profiteers. If, as has been shown, the remembrance of the perpetrators, the circumstances of the crime and their motivations is relatively poor, we can reasonably assume that this self-assessment may be an overestimation that would not stand up in a real-life emergency situation. In terms of political education, this means that declarations of moral courage as an educational objective are just easy and convenient if they do not seriously address social dynamics of looking away or complicity. Occupation-specific educational approaches, such as those that have been pursued for some time by the House of the Wannsee Conference (an educational and memorial site) or the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, are a promising way forward. The “Transfer” funding priority within the framework of the NS Injustice Education Agenda of the Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the EVZ Foundation strives to adopt the approach and scale it for new target groups.

### 5. Two poles, a lot of ambivalence

The studies mark two opposing and entrenched positions and mindsets: On the one hand, people who respond with restraint in matters of patriotism, who are usually well-informed about historical contexts, and who advocate in favor of a culture of remembrance that is sensitive to victims, critical of discrimination, conspiracy, and antisemitism, and that opposes the option of drawing a line under Germany’s National Socialist history. On the other hand, people with a desire for patriotism, who advocate the idea of drawing a line under Germany’s National Socialist history, approve of conspiracy narratives and relativize the issue of responsibility. There is also a large third group that alternates in the position concerning these issues and does not hold a coherent position. How can historical-political education reach this substantial ambivalent group? For example, the EVZ Foundation works with content creators, supports educational projects and the confrontation with hate and agitation in the sphere of social media or promotes the targeted approach of gamers.

### 6. History of National Socialism primarily on four “channels”

Critical examination of National Socialist history takes place with films (75%), family/friends (70%), with novels or non-fiction books (45%), in texts/videos on the internet (45%), and at memorial sites (27%). Special digital approaches such as digital contemporary witnesses, computer games or blended learning offerings, on the other hand, are not yet strongly represented (10% or less). However, as expected, their use is increasing among younger respondents. Memorial sites are faced with a major challenge: as authentic places of human rights violations and crimes, they adopt their “aur” and learning object from the non-digital world, while at the same time they have to establish themselves in digital learning spaces. In its YOUNG PEOPLE remember programs and the “Education in digital learning spaces” funding priority of the EVZ funding project “NS Injustice Education Agenda”, the Foundation promotes mixed reality approaches and is active in its digital collective memory network in order to multiply best practices.

### 7. Decreasing factual knowledge: Respondents overestimate their knowledge of survivors of National Socialist injustices.

Just over 50% of the respondents assessed their knowledge as “rather good” or “very good.” When asked specific questions about groups of victim groups of National Socialism or about how many forced laborers were made to work in the German Reich, the answers differ considerably from the facts. For example, a little less than half of the respondents are aware of Sinti and Roma as victims of National Socialist persecution. This demonstrates that conveying basic knowledge about

National Socialism and its effects remains an important educational task. All the practical experience indicates that knowledge transfer is only successful if it is embedded in contexts of participatory, creative or artistic forms of appropriation whilst at the same time being conceived as an “educational goal” in its own right. This combined approach is further profiled in all the EVZ Foundation’s programs.

### **8. White spots in the German culture of remembrance: Ukraine and Belarus**

The surveys for the fifth MEMO study were carried out in December 2021 and January 2022, well before the “turning point” triggered by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The answers show that in the Germans’ remembrance, the European dimensions are associated less with the National Socialist crimes in World War II and more with “classic” war events. Respondents associate France (75%) and Poland (60%) most strongly with World War II. In this context, Russia (36%) is almost exclusively remembered as the successor state of the Soviet Union; Ukraine (1%) or Belarus (0.1%), on the other hand, hardly played a role in the Germans’ remembrance at the time of the survey. This is all the more remarkable since both countries were completely occupied, genocidal crimes were committed against the civilian population in the course of a policy of colonization, and millions of people from these two countries had to carry out forced labor in Germany. The omission of these two countries from the German culture of remembrance is especially in need of an explanation and also requires a visual counterpoint.

### **What else we would like to know: Further questions**

**Remembering in Europe: Are there similar patterns in other European countries and what are the quantitative manifestations there, how do “perpetrator” and “victim” societies differ from each other?** We need a European comparison to address this question.

Can educational work change the findings, or are other societal factors decisive? What role do political mobilizations or campaigns, social crises or drastic events play in relation to remembrance, e.g. concerning the war in Ukraine? We need concepts that explain the dynamics of cultures of remembrance and that can be the basis for further quantitative or qualitative studies.

**Double dictatorship experience: Connections between the remembrance of National Socialism and the second German dictatorship remain unexplored.** The chosen approach treats the remembrance of German division and reunification as a context, but not as an integrative element of a “German culture of remembrance”. In this way, the research approach reflects a situation of two cultures of remembrance in Germany that exist side by side rather than being interwoven. More integrative approaches are needed for the future.

**(Post)migrant culture of remembrance: The chosen methodology does not facilitate a differentiated analysis of the remembrance of people with a migration background.**

The concept of a migration background is not analytical incisive; and furthermore, it is politically controversial. The analytic category chosen as a substitute, “people without a family biographical reference to National Socialism,” was only partially suitable for the purposes of the study. Future study designs will be concerned with operationalizing concepts (e.g. multidirectional remembrance) in such a way that we are able to analyze the culture of remembrance of the German migration society in its diversity of perspectives and experience.

**The EVZ Foundation is in exchange with experts concerning these questions and** will continue to support targeted studies in the future. The MEMO youth study is scheduled for publication in early 2023. It examines what and how the generation of young people and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 remembers today. By questioning them in 2021 and 2022, we also expect to acquire insights into the issue of whether and how the war in Ukraine has changed the interest in the history of National Socialism.

**All data from the five MEMO studies are available on the EVZ Foundation website at [www.stiftung-evz.de/memo](http://www.stiftung-evz.de/memo) in German, English, and Russian.**

### **Acknowledgement**

**We would like to thank Professor Andreas Zick, Dr. Jonas Rees and Michael Papendick as well as the whole IKG team for the very positive and stimulating cooperation.** We also thank all the experts involved who opened our eyes and allowed the data to speak.

# Annex – Complete presentation of the descriptive findings

What event from German history you think future generations in Germany should remember most likely?	
Event/Context	Percentage of responses
Events from the context of National Socialism	54.4 %
Explicit reference to World War II	33.0 %
Explicit reference to National Socialism	21.4 %
Events from the context of reunification	25.3 %
The two World Wars	6.4 %
World War I	1.6 %
Other	10.5 %
No comment	1.8 %

Do you think there is another historical event that future generations in Germany should remember?	
Event/Context	Percentage of responses
Events from the context of National Socialism	27.6 %
Explicit reference to World War II	16.6 %
Explicit reference to National Socialism	11.0 %
Events from the context of reunification	33.8 %
The two World Wars	3.6 %
World War I	4.1 %
Other	17.3 %
No comment	13.1 %

What would you say: to what extent are you interested in German history?				
Not at all	Rather not	Neither/nor	Rather a lot	A lot
0.6 %	12,1 %	33,5 %	32,0 %	21,9 %

And how intensively have you dealt with the history of National Socialism on your own?				
Not intensively at all	Rather not intensively	Neither/nor	Rather intensively	Very intensively
2.6 %	12.5 %	17,9 %	33,7 %	23,3 %

How much interest do you have in learning more about the National Socialist era?				
Not interested at all	Rather not interested	Neither/nor	Rather interested	Very interested
7.1 %	17.5 %	35.7 %	20.7 %	19.0 %

How would you assess your own knowledge regarding the time of National Socialism?				
Not good at all	Not very good	Neither/nor	Rather good	Very good
4.3 %	10.4 %	26.1 %	43.4 %	15.4 %



**And how much do you yourself know about the following aspects of National Socialism?**

	Nothing at all	Not very much	Neither/nor	Rather a lot	Very much
The systematic murder of the Jews of Europe. (M = 3.87)	0.7 %	6.6 %	23.8 %	42.9 %	25.9 %
The ideology of National Socialism. (M = 3.54)	2.8 %	11.2 %	30.9 %	39.3 %	15.8 %
The persecution of various victim groups in Germany. (M = 3.51)	1.6 %	11.3 %	37.4 %	32.8 %	16.4 %
The political and societal conditions and the sequence of events as the National Socialists seized power. (M = 3.47)	2.0 %	14.8 %	31.9 %	36.5 %	14.6 %
The exploitation of forced laborers during the time of National Socialism. (M = 3.46)	1.6 %	14.4 %	34.6 %	34.0 %	14.8 %
Coming to terms with the National Socialist crimes after the end of World War II. (M = 3.25)	2.8 %	19.3 %	36.6 %	32.0 %	9.1 %
Everyday life in National Socialist Germany and the general public's attitude towards National Socialism. (M = 3.22)	3.4 %	18.0 %	41.7 %	26.8 %	10.1 %

**Have you ever dealt with the topic of forced labor during the time of National Socialism in a specific way?**

Yes	No
55.9 %	44.1 %

**And have you ever dealt with the topic of the persecution and murder of the group of Sinti and Roma during the time of National Socialism in a specific way?**

Yes	No
52.3 %	47.7 %

**Do you know any place dedicated to Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism?**

Yes	No
30.1 %	69.9 %

**How often have you done the following things to deal critically with the subject of National Socialism?**

	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times or more often
Watched a documentary or feature film. (M = 4.37)	7.2 %	4.3 %	6.5 %	8.5 %	73.5 %
Talked to friends. (M = 4.15)	12.5 %	4.9 %	7.4 %	4.6 %	70.1 %
Talked to family members. (M = 4.13)	13.1 %	3.5 %	8.4 %	6.8 %	67.7 %
Read a non-fiction book or novel. (M = 3.47)	23.0 %	9.1 %	11.0 %	11.8 %	45.0 %
Read texts or watched videos on the Internet. (M = 3.19)	36.6 %	5.1 %	5.9 %	6.7 %	45.5 %
Visited a memorial site. (M = 2.98)	22.6 %	21.6 %	18.2 %	10.5 %	27.0 %
Visited an exhibition or attended a lecture. (M = 2.87)	33.2 %	15.0 %	12.1 %	11.4 %	28.3 %
Used social media. (M = 2.69)	50.5 %	5.6 %	3.5 %	5.3 %	35.0 %
Met a contemporary witness. (M = 1.80)	64.7 %	12.7 %	9.0 %	4.5 %	9.0 %
Listening to a podcast. (M = 1.64)	78.2 %	3.1 %	5.7 %	1.8 %	11.1 %
Speaking with so-called digital contemporary witnesses. (M = 1.59)	81.0 %	3.4 %	2.2 %	2.7 %	10.6 %
Making a virtual visit to a concentration camp memorial site, e.g., using a computer. (M = 1.52)	79.5 %	5.9 %	4.3 %	3.2 %	7.0 %
Participation in an international exchange or international trip to a memorial site. (M = 1.47)	75.4 %	13.1 %	5.5 %	1.4 %	4.6 %
Playing a mobile phone or computer game set in the time of National Socialism. (M = 1.39)	87.4 %	2.0 %	1.6 %	1.1 %	7.6 %

**Why would you say people did nothing to stop the systematic murder of groups of people back then?**

Reason	Percentage of responses
They were afraid they would be punished or persecuted by the National Socialist regime.	91.4 %
They did not have a personal sense of responsibility for taking action.	66.5 %
They shared the views of the National Socialist regime.	50.2 %
They did not know anything about the murders.	29.2 %
They did not have any opportunity to do anything about it.	48.4 %

**Would you say that the social significance of the remembrance of World War II ... among the different European countries?**

Varies greatly	Varies rather a lot	Neither/nor	is rather similar	is very similar
26.3 %	31.1 %	24.2 %	10.6 %	5.6 %

**Apart from Germany, which three European countries do you associate most with World War II personally?**

Country	Percentage of responses
France	74.9 %
Poland	60.3 %
Great Britain	41.3 %
Russia	36.3 %
Italy	24.2 %
Austria	13.4 %
Soviet Union	8.1 %
Netherlands	7.5 %
Czech Republic	6.5 %
Spain	2.3 %
Belgium	2.2 %
Hungary	1.8 %
USA	1.2 %

Switzerland	1.1 %
Ukraine	1.0 %
Romania	0.8 %
Greece	0.7 %
Unspecific answers	0.6 %
Yugoslavia	0.5 %
Slovakia	0.5 %
Sweden	0.3 %
Denmark	0.2 %
Luxembourg	0.2 %
Latvia	0.2 %
Japan	0.1 %
Israel	0.1 %
Belarus	0.1 %
Lithuania	0.1 %
Norway	0.1 %
Portugal	0.1 %
Serbia	0.1 %
Republic of Türkiye (Turkey)	0.1 %
Vatican	0.1 %

**Have you ever visited places of remembrance of World War II located outside of Germany intentionally?**

Yes	No
41.5 %	58.5 %

### What place/places have you visited?

Country	Percentage of responses
France	40.5 %
Poland	31.2 %
Czech Republic	9.9 %
Russia	6.6 %
Great Britain	5.3 %
Israel	4.3 %
Italy	4.3 %
Austria	4.1 %
Netherlands	4.1 %
Denmark	2.9 %
Belgium	2.5 %
Greece	1.6 %
USA	1.4 %
Norway	1.2 %
Ukraine	1.2 %
Hungary	1.0 %
Spain	0.5 %
Sweden	0.5 %
Lithuania	0.4 %
Belarus	0.4 %
Croatia	0.4 %
Luxembourg	0.4 %
Republic of Türkiye (Turkey)	0.4 %
Philippines	0.2 %
Romania	0.2 %
Hawaii	0.2 %

Slovenia	0.2 %
Ireland	0.2 %
Latvia	0.2 %
Serbia	0.2 %
Tunisia	0.2 %
Finland	0.2 %

### In your opinion, how much should the following topics be the focus of a common European culture of remembrance?

	Not at all	Not very much	Neither/nor	Rather much	Very much
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (M = 4.50)	0.3 %	1.6 %	11.7 %	20.6 %	65.5 %
The systematic persecution and murder of people during World War II. (M = 4.31)	1.6 %	3.2 %	11.7 %	30.2 %	53.1 %
The Liberation of Europe from National Socialism. (M = 4.21)	0.8 %	3.0 %	18.5 %	30.2 %	47.2 %
The European values. (M = 4.09)	1.5 %	6.4 %	18.1 %	29.8 %	43.7 %
The establishment of the European Union. (M = 4.01)	1.9 %	5.8 %	21.6 %	31.8 %	38.1 %
The history of migration. (M = 3.93)	1.4 %	4.9 %	25.6 %	36.3 %	31.2 %
The soldiers killed during World War II. (M = 3.90)	0.9 %	6.4 %	26.1 %	35.8 %	30.2 %
The history of European colonialism. (M = 3.76)	1.6 %	10.9 %	28.8 %	30.2 %	26.5 %

### Germany is a country that has learned from the mistakes of its past.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.8 %	8.1 %	31.8 %	31.3 %	23.6 %

### It is time to draw a line under Germany's National Socialist history.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
36.4 %	19.3 %	18.5 %	12.7 %	12.9 %

**I don't understand why, today, I am still supposed to deal with Germany's history in the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
46.8 %	18.3 %	16.3 %	8.9 %	9.3 %

**My own family's history is a part of the German culture of remembrance.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
6.0 %	8.3 %	25.9 %	21.5 %	36.3 %

**The era of National Socialism is part of the German identity.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
5.7 %	9.7 %	18.1 %	30.7 %	35.2 %

**Germany has a special moral responsibility as a result of the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
5.8 %	5.8 %	19.6 %	29.1 %	38.9 %

**The perspectives of today's representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.2 %	20.4 %	39.6 %	22.2 %	11.0 %

**The societal remembrance of the time of National Socialism does not place a sufficient focus on the variety of victim groups who were persecuted and murdered by the National Socialist regime.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.4 %	12.7 %	32.6 %	31.8 %	16.8 %

**People should finally be able to be proud of being German again.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
8.1 %	9.6 %	29.6 %	22.5 %	28.6 %

**A comparison can be made between the historical significance of the coronavirus pandemic and the historical significance of World War II or the German reunification.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
57.7 %	24.9 %	8.1 %	5.0 %	3.4 %

**There are secret organizations that exercise a great deal of influence on political decision-making.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
26.4 %	20.2 %	20.2 %	15.1 %	15.1 %

**I find it reasonable to compare the adversity faced by the German population during the coronavirus pandemic with the suffering of people during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
74.5 %	13.7 %	5.7 %	2.1 %	3.5 %

**Jews have too much influence in Germany.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
56.4 %	25.4 %	12.8 %	2.2 %	1.0 %

**Being European is an important part of my identity.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
6.5 %	6.8 %	15.0 %	23.0 %	48.4 %

**I doubt that all the reports about the extent of the persecution of the Jews are true.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
46.5 %	17.3 %	15.2 %	9.2 %	10.1 %

**Today, German society is less receptive to right-wing ideologies than German society during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
8.7 %	22.2 %	34.0 %	23.8 %	10.0 %

**I think Germans today would be capable of acts similar to those of the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
19.5 %	20.7 %	27.4 %	20.2 %	10.8 %

**I think people today would be capable of acts similar to those of the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
9.5 %	10.7 %	26.4 %	29.9 %	23.4 %

**I see parallels between current political developments in Germany and the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
21.0 %	22.6 %	27.7 %	18.8 %	8.9 %

**The persecution and murder of Sinti and Roma during National Socialism should play a greater role in German school education.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
3.3 %	8.0 %	25.1 %	38.8 %	23.2 %

**For a long time, the German government did not recognize the systematic marginalization and murder of Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist era.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1 %	5.6 %	31.8 %	30.2 %	17.4 %

**The German government has a special moral responsibility regarding the group of Sinti and Roma as a result of the crimes committed during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.0 %	8.1 %	27.9 %	35.8 %	23.2 %

**Within German society, the systematic marginalization of and discrimination against Sinti and Roma persisted beyond the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
6.3 %	14.0 %	34.9 %	29.4 %	10.6 %

**It is the responsibility of all people in Germany to ensure the remembrance of the Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.0 %	10.2 %	20.5 %	35.4 %	28.9 %

# Imprint

## Responsibility for the content of the study

Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on  
Conflict and Violence (IKG)  
Universitätsstrasse 25  
33615 Bielefeld, Germany

## IKG Research Team

Michael Papendick  
Phone: +49 521 106-3106  
Email: [michael.papendick@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:michael.papendick@uni-bielefeld.de)

Dr. Jonas Rees  
Phone: +49 521 106-3106  
Email: [jonas.rees@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:jonas.rees@uni-bielefeld.de)

Maren Scholz  
Email: [maren.scholz@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:maren.scholz@uni-bielefeld.de)

Prof. Dr. Andreas Zick  
Phone: +49 521 106-3124  
Email: [sekretariat.ikg@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:sekretariat.ikg@uni-bielefeld.de)

## Funding for the study provided by

Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future"  
Friedrichstrasse 200  
10117 Berlin, Germany

Projektkoordination:  
Corinna Jentzsch  
Phone: +49 (0)30 25 92 97-26  
Email: [jentzsch@stiftung-evz.de](mailto:jentzsch@stiftung-evz.de)

**IKG** Institut für interdisziplinäre  
Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung



**Forschungsinstitut  
Gesellschaftlicher  
Zusammenhalt**

STANDORT BIELEFELD



Stiftung  
**evz** Erinnerung  
Verantwortung  
Zukunft

# The most important events in German history - Part 2:

Presented here as a word cloud are the content-related responses of the participants to the open question of what event from German history they think future generations in Germany should remember most likely. The larger an event is shown, the more frequently it was named by respondents. The illustration includes all open responses that cannot be clearly assigned to any of the historical contexts of the preceding word cloud (first inner page). Fundamental references in terms of content and time to these contexts are not excluded. The figure is based on the respondents' actual answers, regardless of whether they answered the underlying question correctly. Thus, for example, keywords instead of concrete events are also included, as well as events that cannot be assigned to German history.







[www.stiftung-evz.de](http://www.stiftung-evz.de)

[www.stiftung-evz.de/memo](http://www.stiftung-evz.de/memo)