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from the 1950's until today

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Declaration of oath

I, Martina Kogler, herewith declare, that I wrote this master thesis on my own and did not use any unnamed sources or aid.

Words of Acknowledgement

Now, that I have finished my thesis I am looking back on a journey, that was far longer than expected at the beginning. Whilst I have been passionate about the issue right from the start, the complexity was over-whelming at times. There are thousands of possible ways to research, think, talk, and write about “Germans” in Argentina. But by the necessity to choose my form of discussing it; I have grown. However, without the help of so many people, I would not have been able to finish this work. They have accompanied me on different junctures of the working process.

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Geständnis

Seit mehr als siebzig Jahren
in Argentinien, aber

beim Worte „Baum“
fällt mir zunächst und noch immer
die Dorflinde Rannas ein,
in der Fränkischen Schweiz,
gelegentlich auf eine Eiche
oder ein Tannenbaum;
nie dagegen oder doch nur selten
ein Ombú der Pampa,
ein Paraiso in Entre Rios
ein Ñandubay, Lapacho oder Algarrobo,
wie sich's doch geziemen würde
schon aus Dankbarkeit
dem lebensrettenden Land gegenüber.

Aber „Frühling“ bedeutet mir noch immer
Mörikes blau flatterndes Band.
Schiller, Goethe und die Romantik.
Jugendstil, Bauhaus und Expressionismus,
prägten mir ihren Siegel auf,
nicht weniger wie der deutsche Wald,
der deutsche Professor
oder der jüdische Religionsunterricht –
wohlgemerkt: der der letzten Zwanziger-,
der ersten Dreißigerjahre.

Robert Schopflocher¹

*Confession*²

For more than seventy years
in Argentina, but

the word “tree”
initially and still makes me think
of the linden tree in the village
at the Frankish Part of Switzerland,
at times it makes me think of an oak tree
or a fir tree;
but never or very rarely
of an Ombú which is found in the Pampa,
or the Paraiso of Entre Rios
a Ñandubay, Lapacho or Algarrobo,
as it would behove
if only for the reason of gratitude
towards the lifesaving country.

“Spring” to me is still
the flittering, blue ribbon of Mörike.
Schiller, Goethe, and romanticism.
Jugendstil, Bauhaus and expressionism,
stamped like a seal on me,
just like the German forests,
the German Professor
or the Jewish religious education –
albeit: the one of the late twenties-,
and early thirties.

¹Robert Schopflocher migrated to Argentina as a 14- year old boy. As a Jew he fled persecution and genocide. Yet, even after 70 years he felt connected with Germany and Switzerland.

Schopflocher, Robert: Buenos Aires. Eine deutsche Kulturinsel 1933 – 1945. Erinnerungen. In: Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg: Erlanger Universitätsreden. Nr. 82/2013. 3. Folge. S. 34.

² Translation to the English Language by the author of this thesis. Please note, that the English version must be read considering the missing skills of poetry writing by the author.

Table of Content

1.	Introduction.....	8
1.1.	State of Research and relevance of the subject.....	9
1.2.	Methods used.....	12
1.3.	Structure of the thesis	14
1.4.	Clarification of terms.....	16
2.	History of “German” immigration in Argentina	21
2.1.	Precondition before the mass immigration	26
2.2.	First wave of mass immigration: To govern means to populate.....	32
2.3.	Second wave of mass immigration: The result of World War One	35
2.4.	Third wave of mass immigration	39
2.4.1.	Influence of the Nationalist Socialists in Argentina.....	40
2.4.2.	Immigration due to the Nationalist Socialist Regime.....	46
2.4.3.	The Peronist reign and it’s meaning for the “German” communities.....	50
2.5.	After the last mass immigration	52
2.6.	“German” immigration and gender	54
2.7.	Conclusion	57
3.	Theories around memory, assimilation, and identity	59
3.1.	Individual, social, collective, and cultural memory	60
3.2.	Assimilation	67
3.2.1.	Three-generation-assimilation-cycle.....	67
3.2.2.	Problematization of the Chicago School and the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”	69
3.2.3.	Application of the „three-generation-assimilation-cycle”	70
3.2.4.	Revisiting of the reference model	71
3.3.	Identity	73
3.3.1.	Individual, social, and collective identity.....	74
3.3.2.	The enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject	76
3.4.	Conclusion	81
4.	Trajectories of “German” identities	83
4.1.	“German” communities during the investigation period.....	84
4.2.	Initial situation of “Germans” in the 1950’s.....	84
4.2.1.	“Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland	85
4.2.2.	“German” Jewish community.....	91
4.2.3.	Volga German community.....	99
4.3.	„German” communities from the 1950’s until the 1980’s.....	102

4.3.1.	“Germans” between the 1950’s and 1980’s	103
4.3.2.	„German“ Jewish community in the 1950’s to the 1980’s.....	106
4.3.3.	Volga Germans in the 1950’s to 1980’s.....	108
4.4.	The situation from the 1980’s until today.....	110
4.4.1.	“Germans” from the 1980’s until today	111
4.4.2.	“German” Jews	121
4.4.3.	Volga Germans	123
4.5.	Conclusion	128
5.	Memory, assimilation, and identity in the “German” communities	130
5.1.	The construction of a “German” memory.....	130
5.2.	The process of Assimilation in the different communities.....	133
5.3.	Process of identity building	136
6.	Conclusion	140
7.	Bibliography.....	144
7.1.	Sources	150
7.2.	Internet Resources	151
7.3.	List of figures	153
7.4.	List of tables.....	153
7.5.	Data interview partners	154
8.	Abstract	160

1. Introduction

Tango, Gauchos, and beautiful landscapes are the connections most Europeans make, when thinking about Argentina – and so did I. Not knowing much about the complex history and culture of the country, I was able to visit Argentina for the first time in June 2016. Whilst coming to Argentina with stereotypical images and a lack of knowledge, I had to reframe my impression when I left. One phenomenon gathered my interest in particular – the visibility of the European heritage in the Argentinian culture to this day. As I will describe in chapter two, the contemporary Argentinian population comprised mainly of the descendants of people who immigrated to the country from the middle of the 19th until the middle of the 20th century. Most immigrants came to Argentina from Spain and Italy, but also people from Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia, Austria, Switzerland and elsewhere across the world arrived. This rapid demographic shift had an impact on the language, the culture, and the development of the country Argentina itself.

Especially the traces of the “German” culture gained my interest as an Austrian. I found out, that the history and presence of “German” immigration in South America – and especially in Argentina – is multi-layered, contradictory, and persistent. First, the demographic composition of “German” immigrants became intriguing to me. It is widely known, that after the Second World War several high ranking National socialists – such as Mengele, Eichmann, or Priebke – found rescue in Argentina. Yet, the “German” immigration, as I should find out, was by far more complex than often portrayed. Whilst I expected “German” immigrants from Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, the immigration of “German” Jews to Argentina, who tried to flee terror and Genocide, was new and astounding to me. Also, the presence of Volga Germans – who already maintained their “German” dialect and culture for about a century in Russia – before coming to Argentina and continuing their “German” way of living here – was new to me. Second, the development of “German” communities since the last mass immigration in the 1950’s in Argentina is fascinating. After the 1950’s there was no immigration of “Germans” in large quantities anymore, yet places exist where people wear Lederhosen and Dirndl, dance “German” folk dances and eat “German” dishes. During my investigation I met people that were still deliberate to upkeep their “German” heritage.

As a student of MATILDA – European Master in Women’s and Gender history – my original intention was to investigate on the “German” communities, but also to focus on how gender roles transformed due to immigration, and how the act of immigration, acculturation and assimilation had an impact on gender relations and roles. Yet, it turned out, that there is only little information, and even less scientific evaluation, connected with the theme of

“German” immigration in Argentina in relation to gender, moreover my interview partners – male and female ones – could hardly relate to the issue of gender and “German” migration. As a result, I chose to analyse the historical background of “German” communities in Argentina and to compare the developments of different “German” communities after the last mass immigration wave. After this point not only did immigration of “German” only occur in small numbers, but also the influence of Germany and Austria on the “German” communities decreased – as I will depict. I will try to find out which factors furthered or hindered a development and preservation of “German” communities. Furthermore, I will analyse how identity building of “Germans” and their descendants over the last three generations took place and how they identify in contemporary times.

1.1. State of Research and relevance of the subject

“Germans” in Argentina have been a subject of investigation to many historians, linguists, and amateur researchers since the 1950’s. However, the research basis is broad and must be subdivided. After a short presentation of anthologies, dealing with “Germans” in Argentina or South America in a broader context, I will draw a special focus on “Germans” from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, as well as on “German” Jews and Volga Germans. As in my thesis itself, the demarcation is fluid, and therefore the issues addressed in the works overlap at times.

The anthology “Deutsche in Lateinamerika-Lateinamerika in Deutschland” published by Kohlhut, Briesemeister and Siebenmann in 2004, provides a collection of texts, dealing with the history of “Germans” in Argentina from the colonial times until today. “German” expeditions, the reception of culture, and international relationships, are as well presented as the development of “German” institutions, religion, and art in Argentina is discussed. Yet, there is only little content dealing with politics and especially with the issue of National Socialism. Anne Saint Sauveur-Henn’s Article on Argentina as a place of refuge, as well as Harry Werner’s exposition on “German” schools and institutions in the 20th centuries are the exception. “Von La Quiaca nach Ushuaia. Sprachen, Kultur und Geschichte in Argentinien” published by Kremnitz in 2007, focusses on the linguistic developments in Argentina. The analysis of the historical developments falls short behind the linguistic ones. Yet, the focus on language offers an interesting insight into the inter-relation between language and culture, as well as the assimilation of a multicultural country.

Birle’s “Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien“, published in 2010, addresses the history of relations between Germany and Argentina in the 19th and 20th century. It does so, by looking at migration, diplomacy, science, military, and culture.

All three anthologies give an insight into specific issues of “Germans” in Argentina.

The eldest research on „Germans“ in Argentina, called “Geschichte des Deutschtums in Argentinien”, was commissioned by the German Club (Deutscher Klub) of Buenos Aires, and published in 1955. Lütge, Hoffmann, and Körner managed to cover the time between the first immigration of “Germans” in Argentina and 1955, describing migration and settlements in detail. Even if written more than sixty years ago it is still a standard reference until today.

Another work, used as a standard reference, that needs to be seen under a critical light is “Das Deutschtum in Chile and Argentinien” by Ilg. Ilg manages to present the history of „Germans“ in Argentina short and understandable, but the language used in his work is inappropriate, and shows tracks of racism. Looking at his vita, the work is even more problematic. After the takeover by the National Socialists, Ilg became an assistant at the “Alemannisches Institut”, which shows that he was close to the National Socialist ideology. Also, it is reported, that he didn’t participate in the re-orientation of the historical field in the 1960’s, further away from nationalist ideas.³ Until today Ilg’s work is quoted frequently, but hardly contextualized.

Fröschle’s anthology “Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika. Schicksal und Leistung” presents a collection of texts focusing on “Germans” in Latin American countries. Especially the contribution of Werner Hoffmann, dealing with “Germans” in Argentina, comprises a lot of information on the specific issue of “Germans” in Argentina, whilst the presentation of “Germans” in different parts of Latin America in the anthology, allows comparison between the developments in the different countries. Even though being published in 1979, the book is a standard reference.

The connection between National Socialism and Argentina, gained the interest of many researchers, which becomes visible when looking at the large number of publications, written on the subject.

A closer look towards the development of Latin America during the National Socialist Regime – with a special focus on the issue of exile – draws the anthology “Alternative Lateinamerika. Das deutsche Exil in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus” published by Kohlhut and von zur Mühlen.

One of the most profound researchers on the issue is Meding Holger, who has published various works on National Socialists and their connection with Argentina. “Flucht vor Nürnberg? Deutsche und österreichische Einwanderung in Argentinien, 1945-1955” deals with the the post war immigration of Germans and Austrians and the connection to National

³ Cf. Sagen. URL: <http://www.sagen.at/doku/biographien/ilg.html> (As consulted 15th of February 2018).
Cf. Wikipedia: Karl Ilg. URL: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Ilge (As consulted 15th of February 2018).

Socialism.. He highlights the pro-German attitude of Perón and the legislation, which made immigration for some people easier and harder for others. In “Nationalsozialismus und Argentinien: Beziehungen, Einflüsse und Nachwirkungen“ Meding furthermore shows the influence of National Socialism in Argentina and the German colonies. Medig also published articles on the issue in various anthologies on the issue.

“Nationalsozialismus in Lateinamerika. Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP in Argentinien, Brasilien, Chile und Mexiko, 1931-1945“, by Jürgen Müller, gives an insight into the influence of the National Socialist party in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Even though written in 1997, it is still the most comprehensive work in terms of the issue addressed.

Furthermore, Saint Sauveur-Henn published several articles dealing with “German” migration to South America from various points of view and sheds a well-researched light on the issue.

“German” Jews in Argentina was addressed much later in science and mostly relied on the method of oral history.

The most analytic work was conducted by the psychologist and gerontologist Alfredo Jose Schwarcz. “Trotz allem... Die deutschsprachigen Juden in Argentinien; Y a pesar de todo“ published in 1995, presents an analysis of the life- experiences of “German” Jews that came to Argentina. He does so by providing a historical overview in addition to using the method of oral- history. The work addresses the persecution of the National Socialist Regime, the experience of forced emigration, cultural shock, integration in the receiving country, and the connection to the country of origin are discussed. The author, who himself is a descendent of „German“ Jews, furthermore looks at the development of the succeeding generations, that were born in Argentina. Schwarcz based himself on ten years of work as a psychoanalyst in the “German”- Jewish retirement home “Hirsch” and in the “German”-Jewish community.

A more recent study – also based on oral-history interviews – was done by Litsauer Alexander and Litsauer Barbara, in 2010 and called “Verlorene Nachbarschaft. Jüdische Emigration von der Donau an den Rio de la Plata“. Pfeiffer Erna published 2014 her work “Mit den Augen in der Hand: Argentinische Jüdinnen und Juden erzählen“. In my thesis I will use interview passages that were taken by Litsauer and Schwarcz, to provide the reader with a broader base.

In “Historias de una emigración (1933-1939). Alemanes judíos en la Argentina.” Elena Levin captures the life journey of 41 people of “German” Jewish descend, who immigrated to Argentina as young people, fleeing the persecution of the National Socialists. She evaluates their settling patterns, their relation to their country of origin, and their social structure – amongst many other features. Even though limited to the life experiences of 41 people Levin manages to present the complex situation of “German” Jews in Argentina.

The Volga German communities in South America have mainly been researched by linguists. In 1997, Arnd Schmidt published “Kollektive Zweisprachigkeit in einsprachiger Umgebung: eine wolgadeutsche Sprachinsel in Argentinien“. A study that focused on a linguistic enclave of Volga Germans. Arndt concentrates on the preservation, and the change, of the Volga German dialect of a small collective, within a Spanish speaking country. By doing so, he connects the linguistic situation with the historical and contemporary situation of the Volga Germans.

The linguist Hipperdinger Yolanda also focusses on Volga German linguistic enclaves. Especially her article “Masseneinwanderung und sprachliche Homogenisierung in Argentinien: Spuren der verdrängten Sprachen“ was crucial for this thesis, for Hipperdinger manages to provide an explanatory model for linguistic homogenization in Argentina and why there are still tracks of the immigrants languages.

In terms of identity of Volga Germans “Kollektive Identitätskonstruktionen in der Migration: Eine Fallstudie zur Sprachkontaktsituation der Wolgadeutschen in Argentinien“, carried out by Ladilova Anna in 2013, is of interest. Ladilova not only has a linguistic approach, but also analyses the history and identity construction of Volga Germans. The author furthermore held interviews and managed to put them into relation with the development of the Volga German communities in Argentina and their identity construction.

“Identidad e inmigración. Un espacio de convivencia. Graficar Sociedad de Impresores” by the Volga German Horacio Agustín Walter, from 2003, deals at the same time with the long enduring isolation of Volga Germans and the increasing assimilation into the majority society.

The subject of Gender in relation to “Germans” in Argentina to my knowledge has been researched only by Hock Beate in her book “In zwei Welten. Frauenbiografien zwischen Europa und Argentinien“, which was published in 2016 and depicts biographies of „German“ women that came to Argentina at different times, for different reasons.

Hopfengärnter Johanna investigated in her article “Zwischen Emigration und Immigration. Deutschsprachige jüdische Frauen in Argentinien“ how the act of immigration changed the perception of roles and gender relations.

1.2. Methods used

As multi-layered as the chosen topic is, as diverse are the methods used. At first, I based myself on a topic related literature research. The literature used often includes demographic data, with oral history, a variety of sources, such as diaries or newspapers.

Therefore, the scientific basis in the literature quoted is broad. Thus said, I tried to compare findings of different researchers and evaluate their results for my own thesis.

I have furthermore spent several hours going through written sources, such as letters, autobiographies, “German” newspapers, and documents, as well as non-written sources, like videos, pictures of “German” settlers, and maps of “German” settlements. Whilst only a couple of them were included in the thesis, the whole spectrum helped to provide a better understanding and a critical view on the issue.

The most important method used in this thesis, is the method of oral history. Whilst this thesis is not the first to address “German” immigration in Argentina and the life of the descendants of “German” immigrants, it is the first to analyse the development of identities within different “German” communities, and the first trying to find out more about the reasons for people to assimilate or not to assimilate. To be able to do that, oral history has been chosen as a method. Oral history makes it possible not only to look at given literature, or older sources, but to get in contact with the people and to hear their (different) approaches on the subject.

Lynn Abrahams refers to oral history as a *practice, a method of research (...) the act of recording the speech of people with something interesting to say and then analysing their memories of the past.*⁴

For I am not a member of the “German” community in Argentina I think it is crucial to consider the experiences and opinions of those who are. Trying to find out more about the similarities and differences of the “German” communities, I talked to members of each community, not only waiting for them to “say something interesting,” but considering them as experts. The individuals’ memories of the past are taken as perspectives on the past. Individuals might share memories or thoughts with other members of a “German” community but disagree in other points. Oral history takes place in this tension field. Shopes Linda, a consultant for oral and public history states that, *oral history interviews are valuable as sources of new knowledge about the past and as new interpretative perspectives on it. (...) providing information about everyday life and insights into the mentalities of what are sometimes termed “ordinary people” that are simply unavailable from more traditional sources.*⁵

Whilst a profound literature research is necessary, oral history allows to go beyond data but is complementary to the data. Information on everyday life and mentalities means, that it is

⁴ Lynn, Abrams: Introduction: Turning practice into history. In: Lynn, Abrams: Oral History Theory. 1 Ed. 2010 Pg. 2.

⁵History matters: Shopes. Linda: Making sense of oral history. URL: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/how.html> (As consulted 4th of February 2018).

possible to depict the impact historical events had on the lives of individuals and how they thought about it, as well as how they dealt with it.

For this thesis I have interviewed 16 people in the time between November 2016 and January 2017. The interviews were mainly held in German, some of the interviews were held in Spanish. The Spanish Interviews were held with the help of an Argentinian historian, who also assisted in the transcription and translation of the interviews. All interviewees were highly interested in the issue, member of “German” clubs, or even publishing on the topic – in self-organized newspapers, or even scientific works. In the section “Data interview partners” the coding of the footnotes is explained, age, sex as well as German skills and the “German” background is declared. The background of the interview partners family is furthermore roughly explained –regarding the subject. The interviews were held anonymously.

The interview setting, was a half-open narrative interview. Whilst the life of the interviewee – as a member of a “German” community, and a descendant of “German” immigrants – was of interest, the focus was on the interviewees expertise on the development of “German” communities. Therefore, certain subjects were pre-defined, whilst the interviewee could choose where the narration went. The interviewees were asked to talk about their “German” background, their connection with the “German” community, their expertise on the history, development, and identity of the “German” community, they referred themselves to be members of, or where their ancestors stemmed from. Furthermore, they were asked which factors fostered a “German” identification, and which hindered it, as well as how they perceived the future of their “German” communities. The subject of “gender” and “German” immigration was brought up, but only few remarks on behalf of the topic were made.

Further subjects arose while interviewing, depending on the person interviewed, and the interviewees individual sight on the issue. Most interviews were taken in the interviewees home. One was taken at the work place, and two were taken at a café.

Additional to the interviews taken by me, I will refer to oral history interviews done by other researchers – such as Litsauer, Schwarcz and Ladilova –to provide a basis, that is as representative as possible, for a qualitative research.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

In the first sections of this introduction I have defined my interests of research and stated, that I want to find out how “German” communities developed after the end of mass immigration from the 1950’s and onwards. Furthermore, it is my interest to define factors that

fostered or hindered the development and maintenance of “German” communities. Finally, I want to find out more about the identity building of “Germans” and their descendants over the last three generations, and how “German” descendants identify nowadays.

To shed a light on these issues I have divided this thesis in four crucial parts. In chapter two I will discuss the history of “German” immigration. By doing so, I hope to provide an understanding of the heterogeneous composition of “Germans” in Argentina, the demographic shifts and their results, settlement structures, and conditions under which they immigrated to Argentina. The immigration of “Germans” took place in three waves. As a result, I will investigate on the history of “German” immigration by looking at “German” immigration and the legal implementations prior to mass immigration, during the first wave, second wave and third wave, and I will try to present the situation of “German” communities, as well as their connection to Germany and Austria, after the last immigration wave in the 1950’s.

In chapter three I will look at theories around memory, assimilation, and identity. Having a “German” memory on an individual, social, collective, as well as cultural level functions as a fundament for the identification with the “German” culture. Concerning the maintenance of a “German” culture and identity, I will critically discuss the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”, introduced by the Chicago School, which indicates that immigrants and their descendants will assimilate within three generations. This model serves as a base to compare “German” communities since the 1950’s – a time in which the assimilation, according to the theory, should be completed. As the assimilation processes are more complex I will furthermore draw attention to the findings of the Argentinian linguist Yolanda Hipperdinger. The last discussed topic in chapter three will be identity. I will do so, by first looking at the connection between the individuals, society and the collective and second, by drawing attention to the changes since postmodernism, where time and space modified and therefore created new conditions under which identities are built.

In chapter four I will enlarge upon the development of different “German” communities, from the 1950’s onwards. I will present my findings and discuss the interview passage in detail. I have chosen to look at three groups: “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, “German” Jews and Volga German. Furthermore, I will analyse the development of these groups in three chronological segments – which relates to the three-generation-assimilation-cycle. Making it possible to outline the most influential impacts in the communities and how they dealt with them differently.

In chapter five, finally, I will bring the theories on memory, assimilation, identity together with the findings, presented in chapter four.

1.4. Clarification of terms

Dealing with a subject this complex, I think it is necessary to clarify two terms used in this thesis. First, “German” which will be either linked as an umbrella term for people united by the “German” language and/or sharing a related culture. I will distinguish further between “Germans” – referring to people coming from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, as well as their predecessor states – and “German” Jews – distinct from “Germans” due to their experiences during the Second World War – and Volga Germans – for they came to Argentina, after living in Russia for about a century already.

Even though I will refer to “German” groupings as communities or collectives, at times the term colony is mentioned by an interview partner or in a source. The term colony is often linked to colonialism. I think it is important to distinguish between a colony in colonialist structures and a colony in terms of a group or collective of people.

Usage of the term “German”

There is no satisfying conclusion about which term would be accurate to describe immigrants from a German speaking community or a German ethnicity. The similarities and differences between the people, I in the end decided to call “Germans”, is highly interesting. Therefore, limiting the term “German”, to people coming from Germany is unfavourable in this thesis. It is fascinating how immigrants that share similar linguistic and cultural features – with all their differences – develop different strategies of building Identity, assimilate in different ways and maintain or do not maintain the heritage of their ancestors.

According to Aleida Assmann one possible way to talk about culture is, perceiving it as a unity defined by language, mentality, art, and ways of living. Using the principle of delimitation this unity is constructed and becomes an undefined-defined peculiarity.⁶ Language – as we can see – is not the only factor responsible to create this “unity” but plays a major role in it. Linguistic enclaves in Argentina have drawn attention to a row of researchers, that also connect their results with questions of identity – as my further explanations will show.

“German” – referring to the Encyclopaedia Brockhaus – is the only designation for a Nation within Europe, which is not based on the name of a tribe or country but has been developed based on the “German” language and has its focus until today in the areas of language and culture. The adjective “deutsch” (German) is rooted in the German Substantive “thiot” (folk,

⁶ Assmann, Aleida: Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft. Grundbegriffe, Themen, Fragestellungen, 2011. Pg. 13. Furthermore, Assmann points out, that culture becomes problematic as soon as it is used to substantiate values and hierarchies.
Cf. Ibid. Pg 14.

people). In the 7th century “Theudisk” referred to the “affiliation to one’s tribe”. Characterizing rather the people within this tribe, than the tribe itself. Charlemagne introduced the medieval form “theodiscus”, which was connected to the language. The Old High German word “diutisk” was formed in the late Medieval time in the East Franconian area and became a designation for the languages spoken, which became a predecessor for the German nowadays used.⁷

Thus said, the term “Deutsch” (German) has never been a geographical marker only, but even more importantly a linguistic and cultural one. Yet, “German” in a linguistic or cultural sense is rather heterogenous and therefore equating German speakers or people that identify with the “German” culture with people coming from Germany is problematic. Individuals might speak German or a German dialect and acting within the various facets of “German” culture but define themselves for example as Swiss, Austrian or Volga Germans. Furthermore, over centuries the European borders shifted, regencies changed, wars transformed societies, and settlers moved. A “German” identity only slowly developed in the 18th and 19th century – based on a variety of traditions. Even at the end of the 19th century Austria and Germany –both countries that are nowadays mostly connected with being “German” – did not know for sure what a “German” identity was. Both Austria and Germany were politically divided, multilingual, and multicultural.⁸ In 1871, the German Empire was united for the first time, whilst only a few years earlier Austria established a double monarchy with Hungary in 1867. Thus said, both monarchies domiciled various ethnic and linguistic groups.⁹ Especially the First World War changed the perception of Austria and Germany, due to the breakdown of the monarchies. Therefore, migrants marked by the Argentinian immigration authorities as “Germans” at the beginning of the year 1918, could have been for example Polish or Czechoslovakian by the end of the year, people marked as Austrians could have

⁷ deutsch. Der Name und Begriff d. geht als einzige Nationalitäts-Bez. in Europa nicht auf einen älteren Landes- oder Standesnamen zurück, sondern wurde in geschichtl. Zeit auf dem Wege: dt. Sprache – Deutsche – Deutschland entwickelt und hat bis heute sein Schwergewicht im Sprachlich-Kulturellen (...). Das Adjektiv d. lässt sich auf ein german. Substantiv „thiot“ („Volk“) zurückführen. (...) „Theudisk“ wurde nun als „dem Stamm zugehörig“ interpretiert (...) Unter KARL D. GR. wurde die (768 erstmals belegte) mittelalt. Form „theodiscus“ gebildet und auf die Sprache bezogen. (...) Die im ostfränk. Raum entstandene althochdeutsche Form „diutisk“ (sie entsprach dem westfränk. „theudisk“) verdrängte das mittelalt. „theodiscus“; sie wurde zur Sammel-Bez. der Stammessprachen im Ostfränk. Reich, (...) Erstmals im Annolied (um 1080) wurde die Bez. auf die Sprachträger (->Deutsche) angewendet.

Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. Volume 6. Pg .510 (column 2).

⁸ Cf. James, Harold: Deutsche Identität 1770-1990. Pg. 17.

⁹ According to Harold, the linguistic groups and relations in Central Europe have caused many confusions. There was no possibility to draw clear lines between one linguistic group and the other. Harold tries to discuss the difference between Germans and Germany and where differentiations are possible. In 1910, 2 599 154 out of 3 741 971 Swiss named German as their first language. In Cisleithania (The northern and western part of the Habsburg Monarchy) 9 950 266 out of 28 571 943 and in the Hungarian part 2 073 435 out of 20 886 787 people spoke German. In Russia 1 813 717 out of a total population of 100 331 516 were registered as German speakers.

Cf. James, Harold. Deutsche Identität 1770-1990 (1991). Pg. 44.

been Yugoslavian or Italian.¹⁰ Not only the borders, country areas, and forms of government changed, also “German” settlements were found in other countries than Austria and Germany.¹¹ When looking at the contemporary borders, German speakers or people identifying themselves with the “German” culture emigrated from Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland and elsewhere across Europe.¹² Also, “Germans” were divided by their faith and political attitude.

An interesting event – in terms of a “German” identity took place in Austria, when in 1933, a fascist government took over. The Austro Fascist government distanced itself from the National Socialist Germany. Yet, as one of the central aspects of the “Austrian” Ideology was the “German” calling.¹³ Which is the idea of a Great German Nation – that should unite Austria and Germany. Consequently, the idea of the “German” calling was contradictory.

When taken to account, that the highest number of immigrants came to Argentina between the Second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th Century, it becomes visible that they came in a time, when the idea about what and who is “German” was a controversial issue. Yet, the category “German” has been simplified and various individuals were subsumed in a seemingly homogenous mass. The researcher Béatrice Ziegler points out that German speakers arriving in Argentina were counted as “Germans”, without considering the divergent identities and citizenships of the immigrants. Their “social existence” was – how Ziegler calls it – mutilated. This on the one side is caused by the immigration authorities simplifying their work processes, counting for example Swiss people as Germans, French or Italian and on the other side by the researchers that are not discussing the heterogeneity of “German” immigrants.¹⁴ Talking about “Germans” in Argentina therefore means talking about a heterogenous group of settlers – which is significant for the Argentinian population – that has been composed of a variety of different nationalities, languages, beliefs, and backgrounds.

“German” hence is a fragile concept and category which describes a heterogenic group, that has its roots in the “German” culture and/or language. In Argentina most “German” descendants are stemming from Germans, Austrians, Swiss-Germans, Volga Germans and

¹⁰ One clear example of the complexity of identification with nationality is South Tyrol. Where many South Tyroleans – even after almost 100 years – still define rather with Austria or the German language and culture than with Italy.

¹¹ With the rise of nationalist discourses also an ethnic homogenisation has been initiated. Especially in the context of the Second World War, people have been resettled repeatedly, facing life threatening conditions, and very often losing all their belongings.

¹² Cf. *Marshall*, Oliver: *European Immigration and Ethnicity in Latin America. A bibliography* (1991). Pg. vi.

¹³ Cf. *Tólos*, Emmerich: *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem: Österreich 1933 – 1938* (2013). Pg. 554.

¹⁴ *Ziegler*, Béatrice: *Auf der Suche nach Brot und Freiheit. Die Auswanderung aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz*. In: *Kohlhut*, Karl, *Briesemeister*, Dietrich, *Siebenmann*, Gustav (Ed.): *Deutsche in Lateinamerika-Lateinamerika in Deutschland* (1996). S.48

In the case of Immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian empire, there has hardly been any research done. Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 50.

Black Sea or Odessa Germans. This differentiation is based on the geographical origin. The political developments in the 30's until the early 50's of the 20th century make it necessary to furthermore distinguish between the "German" Jewish Immigrants, Political immigrants, and members of the National Socialist party. Another group which can be considered as Germans are Mennonites.¹⁵

Colonies or Communities

The term colony showed up in several interviews, names of settlements and sources. Because of its historical connotation with colonialism and its violent and oppressive character it is necessary to discuss the usage of the term. Colony – after Osterhammel and Jansen – is a political formation which, using invasion (conquest and/or settlement), has been established on pre-colonial conditions. A permanent state of dependency to a geographically distant "mother country" or imperial centre – which claims tenure over the colony is perpetuated.¹⁶ Osterhammel and Jansen emphasise, that colonies are usually linked to colonialism¹⁷ and colonisation¹⁸ but they not necessarily occur together all the time.

Also, the area of the contemporary Argentina was colonised. It was occupied and appropriated by the Spaniards, which resulted in the brutal exploitation and displacement of the indigenous tribes, until the middle of the 19th century.

Yet, when the term colony falls in my thesis I will not use it in the context of the colonialist system, but only when interview partners themselves, or sources, use the term "German" colony instead of community. By using the term colony, they are referring to a unity of people, that shares certain features – for example having ancestors coming from Valais.

¹⁵ The Mennonites are a Christian group belonging to the Church of Anabaptist. Due to religiously motivated persecution they have a long history of migration. Nowadays they can mainly be found in South America and Canada.

It however does not reflect on the complex shifts of borders, composition of groups, and contradictoriness. An intensive discussion on these issues would be interesting for another research.

¹⁶ *Eine Kolonie ist ein durch Invasion (Eroberung und/oder Siedlungskolonisation) in Anknüpfung an vorkoloniale Zustände neu geschaffenes politisches Gebilde, dessen landfremde Herrschaftsträger in dauerhaften Abhängigkeitsbeziehungen zu einem räumlich entfernten „Mutterland“ oder imperialen Zentrum stehen, welches exklusive „Besitz“-Ansprüche auf die Kolonie erhebt.*

Osterhammel, Jürgen, Jansen, Jan C.: *Kolonialismus. Geschichte. Formen, Folgen* (2012). Pg. 16.

¹⁷ Colonialism is a relationship of domination among collectives, where fundamental decisions of ways of living are determined by a culturally different minority of colonial rulers, which would not adapt to the ways of living of the locals. External interests are considered as more important and therefore enforced.

Kolonialismus ist eine Herrschaftsbeziehung zwischen Kollektiven, bei welcher fundamentale Entscheidungen über die Lebensführung der Kolonisierten durch eine kulturell andersartige und kaum anpassungswillige Minderheit von Kolonialherren unter vorrangiger Berücksichtigung externer Interessen getroffen und tatsächlich durchgesetzt werden. (...)

Ibid. Pg. 20.

¹⁸ Colonisation is the process of occupation and appropriation of land
„Kolonisation“ bezeichnet einen Prozess der Landnahme und Aneignung.

Ibid. Pg. 8.

Although a European immigration in the area of the contemporary Argentina was only possible due to the establishment of colonial structures, I think it is crucial to distinguish between a political and invasive formation, and a community of settlers.

2. History of “German” immigration in Argentina

To understand the complex and heterogeneous processes of assimilation, integration, and identity building of “Germans” it is crucial to contemplate the historically multi-layered backgrounds of “Germans” and “German” communities in Argentina. For this purpose, this chapter will focus on the history of “German” immigration and “German” Communities in Argentina. To do so, I will first concentrate on demographic shifts in Argentina, caused by immigration, to frame the preconditions of “German” immigration and “German” settlements in Argentina in succession. At the end of this chapter the relation between “German” countries in Europe, Argentina and the “German” communities after the last wave of mass immigration will be discussed, further I will also briefly discuss connections of gender and “German” immigration.

In the sections, I will clarify the various reasons for the demographic shifts and will explain the historical development of “German” communities – structured by three time-frames. First, I will start my remarks with factors that influenced the immigration of “Germans” in Argentina before the 19th century and will continue with the time after the achievement of independence at the beginning of the 19th century, when “German” immigration was predominantly male and individually or occurred in small groups. Slowly the idea of supporting European Immigration to populate the country became important, resulting in the start of mass immigration – especially from the 1880’s onwards. Second, I will focus on three waves of mass immigration of “Germans” in Argentina starting the late 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, which had a huge impact on the demographic changes and formed the base for the various “Germans” communities.¹⁹ The first wave started in the second half of the 19th century – caused by a growing interest of the state to attract immigrants. The second wave was triggered by the post- First World War conditions. The third wave occurred due to the Nationalist Socialist Regime and the Second World War. These three waves resulted in an exceptionally heterogeneous set of various “German” communities, sharing certain features – but being divided by other features. Lastly, I will discuss the time after the last immigration wave of “Germans”. Since the 1950’s European immigration to Argentina is individualistic and usually related to a work contract or transnational relationships, while immigration of neighbouring

¹⁹ Saint Sauveur- Henn distinguishes between the first stage – the pre-migratory phase which is situated between 1810 and 1860’s, the second stage – which is marked by a social differentiation that she locates between 1870 and 1933 and the third stage – which is marked by a new professional composition due to people coming to Argentina as refugees.

I instead will focus on the pre- migratory time, afterwards will distinguish three immigration waves and later on explain the post- mass immigration of “Germans”.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn*, Anne: Die deutsche Migration in Argentinien (1870-1945). In: *Birle*, Peter (Ed.): Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien (2010). Pg. 409 to 425.

countries became stronger. In the last part of this chapter, I will give a brief insight on the impact of gender in terms of “German” immigration in Argentina. Whilst in literature hardly discussed, it is necessary to be aware of the different experiences women and men made when migrating.

In this chapter I will present numbers of “Germans” that might differ. I will base myself mostly on Anne Saint Sauveur-Henn – who worked on a variety of articles and books, that focus on “German” immigration, particularly in the case of Argentina – and Günther J. Bergmann – whose book “Auslandsdeutsche in Paraguay, Brasilien und Argentinien”²⁰ helps to see “Germans” in Argentina in a broader context. Yet, the numbers Saint Sauveur-Henn and Bergmann use differ at times. The numbers vary according to what is considered as “German” by the researcher and, on the other hand, it depends on which sources the authors use. Nevertheless, both expositions reveal, how massive the demographic shift – even in the rather small “German” communities – due to the immigration waves was.

The first “German” set foot on ground – nowadays known as Argentina – in the 16th century. Usually as explorers or individuals, “Germans” came to South America soon after the conquest of the continent by the Spaniards. Yet, only after independence was achieved in the year 1816, heterogeneous groups of “German” communities in larger quantities started to emerge. This time was marked by the beginning of a rapid change in the demographic composition of the Argentinian population. While in the 1870’s only two million people lived in a country of 2,8 million square kilometres, in 1914 eight million people were in Argentina already. Within less than 50 years the population almost tripled, with most immigrants coming from Italy and Spain.²¹ Georg Kremnitz stated, that since the middle of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century the population of Argentina grew by twenty times.²² Therefore the saying “Todos descendimos de los barcos” – which means: We are all descendants of those, who came with the boats – is still valid today.²³

The number of foreigners constantly increased from the middle of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, turning the new-born Nation Argentina into a country of immigrants. The increase only stopped, when the immigration of Europeans declined. The pattern of European and “German” immigration during this period was typically in the form of mass immigration, preceded by individual immigration until the middle of the 19th century, and declining back to individual immigration after the middle of the 20th century. Furthermore, after the 1950’s most people who immigrated to Argentina, no longer came from Europe but from neighbouring countries, such as Bolivia.

²⁰ Bergmann, Günther J.: *Auslandsdeutsche in Paraguay, Brasilien, Argentinien* (1994).

²¹ Cf. Hock, Beate: *In zwei Welten. Frauenbiografien zwischen Europa und Argentinien* (2016): Pg. 12.

²² Cf. Kremnitz, Georg (Ed.): *Von La Quiaca nach Ushuaia. Sprachen, Kulturen und Geschichte in Argentinien* (2007). Pg. 10.

²³ Cf. Hock (2016). Pg. 12.

Table 1²⁴ shows the proportion of foreigners in relation to the population of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, it reveals the gender ratio of the immigrants. It also gives information on how drastic the development of immigration in Argentina was, and how it continued for one and a half century.

Year	Proportion of foreigners			Foreigners: N Men/ 100 Women
	Men	Women	Total	
1855	47,7	21,4	34,5	222,7
1870	62,1	34,5	49,8	223,1
1885	62,2	41,1	52,3	190
1895	57,5	45,4	51,9	148,4
1905	49,2	40	44,8	137,3
1915	52,7	43,3	48,4	144,8
1935	41,7	33,6	37,7	127
1950	32,1	24,5	28,2	124,6
1960	26,2	21,8	23,9	107,9
1970	21,1	18,9	19,9	96,3
1980	16	15,8	15,9	84,4
1990	13	13,9	13,5	78
2000	12,1	12,7	12,4	79,8
2010	13,2	13,7	13,5	83,8

Table 1 Proportion of foreigners City of Buenos Aires

One can see clearly, that the proportion of immigrants increased at the end of the 19th century and again at the beginning of the 20th century. The data in between the years 1935 and 1950 is not provided in the table. Therefore, the massive impact on immigration due to the Nationalist Socialist Regime in the German Reich is not depicted.

²⁴ The table is based on Beate Hock's table: „Anteil der Ausländer/-innen an der Bevölkerung sowie Zahlenverhältnis Männer/Frauen unter den Ausländer/-innen (Stadt Buenos Aires.) She uses the demographic analysis of Alfredo E. Lattel, Gretel E. Andrada and Pablo Caviénzel “ Dinámica demográfica” from 2010 In: Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (Ministerio de Hacienda, GCBA): “Dinámica de una ciudad 1810-2010”. Cf. Hock (2016). Pg. 21.

Also, it is important to stress, that children born in Argentina were by law considered as Argentinians²⁵ in accordance with the birthplace principle (*ius solis*). Therefore, the number of immigrants does not include the second generation anymore, even though these might still live in homogenous ethnical communities and consider themselves, for example, “Germans”. Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century more than half of the population of Argentina counted as foreigners.

After the 1950’s – when mass immigration from Europe started to decline – the proportion of foreigners in relation to the population of Buenos Aires fell to less than 30 percent for the first time since the middle of the 19th century. In the 1970’s, the figure dropped to less than 20 percent, while at the same time, more women than men migrated.

Table 1 also shows how immigration has changed in terms of its gender composition. A male dominated immigration continued until the 1960’s, but the ratio of women coming to Argentina – very likely in a family bond – increased constantly. “Germans” on the contrary, showed a balanced gender ratio from the 1930’s onwards – as a result of the NS- persecution.²⁶

Although thousands of “Germans” immigrated to Argentina in the 19th and 20th century – in comparison with other groups, such as Spanish and Italian – “German” immigration occurred in smaller quantities. In the years between 1857 and 1910 on average only 1,2 percent of immigrants were “Germans”. In the years between 1920 and 1930 only 6 percent were “Germans” but between 1933 to 1945 – due to the National Socialist regime – the number increased to 28 percent. Despite their relatively weak quantitative representation, they were able to establish themselves well over the decades.²⁷

The exact number of “Germans” living in Argentina is hard to tackle down. Based on the national census Anne Saint Sauveur-Henn takes a closer look at “Germans”²⁸ in Argentina. For the year 1869, she counts 5000 “Germans” in Argentina, with three times more men than women. In 1895, about 17.000 “Germans” were counted, more than 10.000 of them male, which sums up to about 60 percent. For the year 1914, she doesn’t provide Gender relation, but mentions 27.000 “Germans” and for the year 1936 45.000 “Germans” were counted, 56

²⁵ In Germany for example the citizenship is based on parentage (*jus sanguinis*). Saying that, a child of “Non-Germans” is not automatically German just by being born in Germany. Due to this law, people born in Germany, speaking German, going to school in Germany and working in Germany, still are not seen as Germans.

²⁶ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 21.

²⁷ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn*, Anne: Zur Struktur der deutschen Einwanderung in Argentinien (1870-1945). In: *Becker*, Felix, *Meding*, Holger M., *Potthast-Jutkeit*, Barbara, *Schüller*, Karin: Iberische Welten. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Günter Kahle (1994). Pg. 409.

²⁸ For the term “German” is not examined closely, I assume that she refers to people that were registered, coming from Germany – which at the period under review is still rather imprecise.

percent being male.²⁹ The number of German Speakers in 1936 was by far higher – she names 240.000. 40.000 of them being “German-Jewish” and about a hundred that were politically persecuted and lived in exile.³⁰

Bergmann names 130.000 people belonging to the “German” ethnic group for the time of the First World War and 236.755 for the year 1933.³¹ Referring to “Germans” as ethnic group is a broad attempt, whilst he becomes more precise when he additionally lists 4.991 people holding the German passport³² in the year 1869. In 1914, he states that 47.094 people were holding a German passport, whilst in 1938, 43.626 were holding one.³³

The demographic shift also affected the habits of settling as well as the professional composition of the migrants. “German” immigration was strongly connected with urban immigration. According to the Argentinian census of 1869, 1895 and 1914, more than one third of the “Germans” were living in the city of Buenos Aires. The “Deutscher Volksbund für Argentinien” (German ethnic bond Argentina) suggests, that after 1936 more than half of the „German“ population was living in the City of Buenos Aires.³⁴ In terms of the professions that “Germans” practiced, the immigration waves brought different types of immigrants that worked in various fields. At the beginning of mass immigration, many people who wanted to farm came to Argentina, while over the decades more craftsmen, workers – and due to the National Socialism – also intellectuals came to Argentina. This shift is visible for example when examining the proportion of farmers within the “German” community. While in the years between 1870 and 1930 farmers made up about 20 percent of “German” immigrants, after 1933 less than five percent worked in the field of agriculture.³⁵ The numbers show significant demographic shifts within the Argentinian population, but also within the “German” community.

²⁹ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn*, Anne: Die deutsche Einwanderung in Argentinien (1870-1933): Zur Wirkung der politischen Entwicklung in Deutschland auf die Deutschen in Argentinien. In: *Meding*, Holger: Nationalsozialismus und Argentinien: Beziehungen, Einflüsse und Nachwirkungen (1995). Pg. 12 et seq.

³⁰ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 21.

³¹ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 23.

³² This number corresponds with Saint Sauveur-Henn’s results.

³³ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 25.

³⁴ To Austrians, Argentina has been a main migration destination – after the United States and Canada. In Between 1857 and 1899 about 29.674 Austro- Hungarians immigrated in Argentina. Until 1902 36.000 were counted. From 1900 until 1907 28.169 were counted, 34.611 until 1912 and in 1914 38.000 people being Hungarian or Austrian were in Argentina.

Cf. *Chmelar*, Hans: Höhepunkte der österreichischen Auswanderung (1974). Pg. 34 et seq.

³⁵ Cf. *Saint Sauveur- Henn* (2010). Pg. 30.

2.1. Precondition before the mass immigration

Migration in European countries was highly restricted until the 19th century. The emigration of certain groups was even forbidden. England, for example, did not allow qualified professionals to emigrate, to avoid the transfer of technological knowledge, and to protect the country's industrial and technical primacy. In the Habsburg Monarchy, high penalties were given to people in serfdom or men of soldiering age, who wanted to emigrate. It was only in 1867, when the Austrian Constitution provided the right to emigrate for all citizens – except for men after serving in the military.³⁶ As a result, it was rather difficult for most people to undertake a transatlantic emigration. Only a small group of people could distribute the colonized land and find promising employment. Prospects of employment as an official of the king, for example, was usually limited to people of Spanish origin. Merchants had to possess a high quantity of capital and were limited by bureaucracy. Consequently, only wealthy European descendants of the upper class had a chance to establish themselves in the La Plata Region – where in the following years the United Provinces of La Plata would be established, and which finally became Argentina in 1853.³⁷ Furthermore, transatlantic immigration went along with high costs of travelling, long journeys and was perceived very risky. Nevertheless, people tried to make their way, for Europe was scourged by wars, famine, an unstable political situation, epidemics, as well as overpopulation.³⁸

In the 18th century a liberalisation of trade and a mercantile expansion increased the number of merchants and consolidated their position within the construction of social networks in the La Plata region.³⁹ “Germans” were amongst them but only in low numbers.⁴⁰ The economy started to improve, and many people moved to the city. While in 1750, only 11.000 people used to live in Buenos Aires, in 1775 there were more than 20.000 and in 1810 about

³⁶ Cf. Hahn, Silva: Arbeitsmigrationen. In: Cerman, Markus, Eder Franz X., Eigner, Peter, Komlosy, Andrea, Landsteiner, Erich: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Europa 1000 – 2000 (2011). Pg. 275.

³⁷ Cf. Lütge, Wilhelm, Hoffmann, Werner, Körner, Karl: Geschichte des Deutschtums in Argentinien. Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Klub in Buenos Aires zur Feier seines 100jährigen Bestehens (1955) Pg.42. The name Argentina has first been mentioned in the epic poem *Argentina y conquista del Río de la Plata, Tucumán, y estado de Brasil* in 1602. Ten years later the name Argentina became known due to the chronic *La Argentina*, which described the Region. 1813 a song directed to the “Argentinian people” has been invented – later to become the anthem of the country. In the first version people did not know what Argentinian meant. Only with the constitution of 1853 the terminology Argentina became obligatory.

Cf. Riekenberg, Michael: Kleine Geschichte Argentinien (2009). Pg. 7f.

³⁸ Cf. Ziegler, Béatrice: Auf der Suche nach Brot und Freiheit. Die Auswanderung aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz. In: Kohlhut, Karl, Briesemeister, Dietrich, Siebenmann, Gustav (Ed.): Deutsche in Lateinamerika- Lateinamerika in Deutschland (1996). Pg. 56.

³⁹ Cf. Riekenberg (2009). Pg. 35.

⁴⁰ “German” travellers made their way to the area nowadays known as Argentina already from the 16th century onwards. Yet, they came only in small numbers. Usually mixing with other groups of settlers or ethnicities, their presence was rather invisible, if they stayed at all.

Cf. Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner (1955). Pg. 42.

42.000 people, which turned Buenos Aires into the city with the most dynamic growth in Latin America.⁴¹

In 1810, the upper class in Buenos Aires held a meeting in which they overthrew the Vice-King and assigned a junta to build a government. The detachment of Spain also resulted in an opening of the borders.⁴² In 1816 at the Congress of Tucumán, the Independence of the United Provinces at the Rio de la Plata was officially declared. Even though, some “Germans” were in the La Plata region during the Colonial Time already, only after Argentina’s independence did a continuous immigration of individuals and groups start and result in the subsequent increase of the number of “Germans”.⁴³ At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th Century the strict limitations of emigration in Europe also were loosened and emigration of large quantities of people was even encouraged. Due to more ship traffic, the prices for passage decreased as well as the capacity of ships increased. Another factor that supported transatlantic migration was the introduction of new ways of travel finance – such as the Redemption System and travelling bound to a work contract.⁴⁴ Europeans had a strong desire to leave Europe and to start a new life, a factor that benefited the immigration policy of Argentina, which aimed to attract European immigrants.⁴⁵

In Argentina, systematic support of immigration started under Bernardino Rivadavia, the first president of the United Province of Rio de la Plata⁴⁶. Rivadavia, the son of an Italian

⁴¹ Cf. *Riekenberg* (2009). Pg. 38.

Yet, workers and day labourers struggled to make a living. Ritualized violence was present, especially in the lower classes. Physical violence was directed especially against women.

Cf. *Ibid.* Pg.40.

⁴² Cf. *Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner* (1955). Pg. 120f.

⁴³ *Werner, Harry: Deutsche Institutionen und Schulen in Lateinamerika. Vielfalt und Wechselfälle des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts.* In: *Kohlhut, Karl, Briesemeister, Dietrich, Siebenmann, Gustav* (Ed.): *Deutsche in Lateinamerika- Lateinamerika in Deutschland* (1996). Pg. 182.

⁴⁴ Many European migrants travelled bound to a contract, for this was the only way to finance the journey. Signing this contract, the indentured servants were bound to work in a non-free like state. Still, they were not slaves, for their working relation was established on a contractual footage. About half of the Europeans arriving in British North America in the 18th Century arrived bound to such a Contract. Another possibility to travel without money has been the Redemption System. In this case, the captain advanced the costs for the journey. After the arrival in the country of destination, the migrant has had two weeks of time to find a job to pay the travel expenses. Nevertheless, they were by contract obliged to work the debts off.

Cf. *Hahn* (2011) Pg. 270 et seq.

Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 7.

⁴⁵ *Bergmann* calls it an accumulation reasons for the emigration from Europe: economic despair of many people in instable pre-national country amalgamations, the disappointing results of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the start of the demagogue’s pursuit, oppression by the regime, censorship, the unsatisfying results of the revolution 1848/1849, the loss of privileges that Volga German’s held in Russia, crop failure and as a result malnourishment, impoverishment, unemployment, increase of prices and a continuing instability in politics and wars were amongst the reasons that caused millions of people to leave Europe. As a comparable figure: In 1900 90 percent of the emigrants went to the United States, six percent migrated within Europe and Brazil and Argentina together ranked as third most interesting destination for three percent of the emigrants. The Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 9 et seq.

⁴⁶ The United Province of the Río de la Plata was the name of the territory of nowadays Argentina, Uruguay and the Bolivian Departamento Tarija in the years of 1810 until 1831.

merchant played a leading role in the early days of independence. He spent a few years in Europe, returned to Buenos Aires and became a minister in 1821. In his understanding, it was necessary to expand the free trade, to facilitate the abolition of inland duties, and to transit taxes as well as to develop a credit and banking system. Furthermore, he wanted to support European immigration. These (European) immigrants were to open the countryside – which still was not totally under control by the government.⁴⁷ One of the legal foundations was the “Ley de Enfiteusis”⁴⁸ (Emphyteusis Law), which was sanctioned by president Rivadavia. With this law, several goals could be achieved: First, they aimed to populate the country side, to extend and defend the frontiers and to strengthen their territorial claims against Chile. Second, most of the owned land belonged to oligarchic big landowners, which used to make it impossible for immigrants to settle. By giving land to immigrants, small producers settled, made the land more productive and were furthermore available as workers. Third, by leasing public property, the Argentinian government would gain a constant income and would be able to take bonds.⁴⁹

To Rivadavia, European immigration was central and should be supported directly. In 1823, the government supplied means for the settlement of 1000 “moral and hard-working families” from Europe in the Province and an additional 200 in the city of Belgrano, which was founded by Rivadavia.⁵⁰ Yet, while many attempts were made to support European immigration, many promises made to European immigrants were not kept. As a perfect example serves the case of the first “German” colony founded in 1827. The German Karl Heine got the order to bring farmers and craftsmen to Argentina. As a reward, he was promised to get 150 pesos for each immigrant, female, or male between twelve and fifty years and half of the money for people who were older or younger. He was not able to organise enough immigrants and could only recruit 300 by using unfaithful methods, such as wrong promises on the land they would receive, or the support the government would provide. At the same time, Argentina faced a politically unstable situation, resulting in long waiting periods for the settlers and non-fulfilment

⁴⁷ Cf. *Riekenberg* (2009). Pg. 69 et seq.

Yet, the results of the law differed from the original intentions. In 1828 the oligarchic big landowners managed to modify the law. Especially the clause that forbade an emphyteutic to acquire new land. Consequently, a further concentration of the land took place.

The promises given to the settlers were not kept. Either the work or the land was not available or if the land was available, it was unworkable land.

Levene, Ricardo: Rodríguez and Minister Rivadavia. In: *History of the Argentine Nation*. National Academy of History, Vol. VI, Chap. VI (1996). Pg. 294.

⁴⁸ The Emphyteusis Law (La Ley de Enfiteusis) was sanctioned by Rivadavia, as a collateral for the Baring Brothers loan, which had mortgaged all land and other real property Public, prohibiting their alienation throughout the Nation.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Riekenberg* (2009). Pg. 70.

⁵⁰ *Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner* (1955). Pg. 116.

of the promises made.⁵¹ The immigrants that followed Heine's call to Argentina founded a colony called Chacarita – officially named Chorroarín, after waiting for more than a year to receive land. Yet, Chacarita itself fell short on expectations. Instead of receiving 27 hectares, they only got 3,4 hectares' leasehold land and they were facing harsh conditions. Unsurprisingly, the first "German" Settlement did not exist anymore three years later and disappeared from the map. Some of the settlers remained for a couple of years at a closed down monastery, which was there prior to the "German" settlement. Most "German" settlers moved away, usually joining the growing "German" colony of Buenos Aires.⁵²

On the 1st of December 1829, the conservative Juan Manuel de Rosas became Governor of Buenos Aires and implemented a totalitarian and dictatorial system that did not – in contrast to Rivadavia – support immigration. Only a few weeks after his inauguration he dismissed the commission of immigration as well as the Immigration Act, which had been passed after the independence. Due to this, the former opening of borders stopped. Over the next 24 years any governmental support of immigration ended. According to Lütge, this didn't necessarily cause a total stop of immigration.⁵³ The numbers of immigrants increased, slowly but steadily. Yet, immigrants were excluded from every form of political participation, which resulted in the development of autonomous foreign communities, rather than sociocultural integration.⁵⁴ Not only were they forming their own communities, they were furthermore not allowed to include any Argentinians in these communities either. Rosas' politics enhanced an isolation between the different ethnicities⁵⁵ and the formation of colonies (in this case used in the prevalent meaning of the word). In these colonies "Germans" could define their own rules and live a "German" life within the boundaries of the colonies.

Still under the reign of Rosas, the first "German" Protestant Church ("Deutsche evangelische Kirche") was established, and the first worship service was held there in German

⁵¹ Cf. *Hoffmann*, Werner: Die Deutschen in Argentinien. In: *Fröschle*, Hartmut: Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika. Schicksal und Leistung (1979). Pg. 71 et seq.

⁵² Cf. *Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner* (1955). Pg. 121.

Cf. *Hepe*, Rodolfo: Crónica sobre 50 años de historia. Federación de Asociaciones Argentino- Germanas. Chronik über 50 Jahre Geschichte. Verband deutsch-argentinischer Vereinigungen (2005). Pg. 7.

⁵³ Karl Ilg on the contrary claims that immigration was stalling. Yet, he adds that the number of Germans in Buenos Aires increased in the years between 1830 to 1850 from 200 to 600 people.

Furthermore, Rosas supported the immigration of German Officers to build an Argentinian Army.

Cf. *Ilg*, Karl: Das Deutschtum in Chile und Argentinien (1982). Pg. 59 et seq.

⁵⁴ Foreigners therefore remained in the areas of trade, industry, and agriculture. Which for Germans resulted in an increase of wealth. The foundation of lobbies has been their advance.

Cf. *Werner* (1996). Pg. 183.

Cf. *Hoffmann* (1979). Pg. 77.

⁵⁵ In May 1841, 16 merchants of different European and American Nations met for an assembly of foreign merchants. After a convocation of all German merchants soon afterwards, the "Club de Residentes Extranjeros" was founded. Only men had been given access to the club which served not only economical purposes but also a variety of leisure activities.

Cf. *Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner* (1955). Pg. 164.

language on the 29th of October 1843. Only one week later, the “German” community school was founded. General School Inspector Segurola demanded that only children with “German” parents be allowed in this school and Spanish as a teaching language was forbidden. Both parents had to be “German”. If one parent was not proven to be “German” by birth certificate, an approval of the school inspector was mandatory, so the child could attend the school. Furthermore, it was forbidden to teach in Spanish. This was the starting point for the establishment of a row of foundations of “German” schools, churches, associations, and institutions, which continues until today in different variations and serves to maintain the “German” language and culture.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, these colonies were not solely homogenous and sealed off. “Germans” for example used to be in close relations with colonists from Great Britain over the decades.⁵⁷

In 1852, Rosas was overthrown, and European immigration became a major goal and central to politics again. The constitution of 1853 – in which the nation is addressed as Argentina for the first time – maintains the intentions to attract immigrants. In the constitution, it is explicitly mentioned that (European) immigration must be encouraged. Soon recruiters went to Europe to advertise immigration to Argentina. At this time “German” immigration should particularly be supported for the moral values and their will to work – that “German” immigrants supposedly brought with them – was an advantage for the confederation.⁵⁸

Recruiters became key figures for migration. As one example for the work of recruiters serves the case of Aaron Castellanos who committed himself to the officials of Santa Fe – an area where many Swiss people settled - in 1853. He was supposed to bring 200 families every second year for a decade to the region. Each group was supposed to form an autonomous community. Castellanos went to Europe, got in contact with people and advised people to migrate. Yet, due to a change of government, half way through, the project stopped. About 500 men, 350 women, 161 boys and 151 girls were brought to the east of Santa Fe, where they lived in miserable hut settlements and lacked medical supplies and tools to work with.⁵⁹ Harsh conditions were a common problem, as the foundation of colonies – especially the first colonies that were founded in the 19th century – were often connected with a struggle for survival. Lacking supply of farming implements, food, and the specific and unknown conditions of the new settlements caused desperation. Especially the missing medical aid led to a high mortality rate.⁶⁰

Recruiters very often focused on a specific region and advised people in that area – partly by using dishonest methods – to migrate. Consequently, settlers came from rather

⁵⁶ Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner (1955). Pg. 134.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 138 et seq., 155, 163.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hoffmann (1979). Pg. 85.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ilg (1982). Pg. 69.

⁶⁰ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 39.

homogenous groups and therefore specific dialects and customs were brought to Argentina and were subsequently maintained as well as further developed. In a time where nations only started to emerge, smaller geographic units were more important in terms of identification and more stable as political units. Therefore, the regional origin at that time was more important than national constructs. The big area of Argentina allowed different “German” ethnicities to settle, and to maintain their own cultural and linguistic features. The immigrants tried to find destinations that complied with their own knowledge and experience, to enable themselves a good start for the future. To assist them special emigration associations (Auswanderungshilfsvereine)⁶¹ were founded in the sending countries, that advised and informed people willing to migrate.

Homogenous migration occurred for example in the city of San Jerónimo Norte, which became home to Valaisians – people from the Swiss Canton. The Research of Hess-Lüttich for example shows, traces of the Valaisian Cultural Imprint are visible even today.⁶²

While at the same time in the United States immigrants were obliged to assimilate, Argentina provided the possibility for “Germans” to stay amongst “Germans”. Which meant that – especially in closed settlements – they not only had the possibility to keep their “German” traditions and language but also to develop it further and beyond of this there was no further need to assimilate. Thus, relatively closed communities of “Germans” emerged in Argentina, but also in other countries of South America.⁶³ Therefore, it is possible to assume that not only economic questions were important, when deciding the immigration destination. Bergmann,

⁶¹ Until 1902 private associations as well as the foreign minister were – in the case of Germany – in charge of providing information for emigrants. 1902 to 1913 the “Zentrale-Auskunftsstelle für Auswanderer” (Central Information Office for emigrants) was the major institution that cared for emigration. 1918 to 1933 the “Reichswanderungsamt” (Reich Office for Migration) – also using a Newspaper and information leaflets – was held responsible. 1933 to 1945 the “Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung” (Central Reich Office for Jewish emigration) as well as Jewish associations such as the “Hilfsverein der Juden in Detuschland” (Aid Organisation of Jews in Germany) or international associations like Joint or the ICA cared for the possibility of Jewish people to migrate. In Argentina, specific Organisations cared for the “German” immigrants. 1882 to 1912 the “Verein zum Schutze der germanischen Einwanderer” (Aid association for Germanic immigrants), helped “German” immigrants – amongst other functions – to find jobs. In 1918 the “Deutsche Volksbund für Argentinien”(German Ethnic bond for Argentina) has been founded. For “German” Jews in 1933 the „Hilfsverein deutschsprechender Juden” (Aid Organisation for German speaking Jews) has been founded that helped to find a job or retraining, offered language courses and helped to find flats. Those who were in Politic exile found help in “Das Andere Deutschland” (the other Germany).

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 24.

⁶² Cf. *Hess-Lüttich*, Ernest W.B. (2013).: Deutschsprachige Enklaven in Südamerika. Hunsrückisch in Brasilien und Wallisisch in Argentinien. Zur Sprachinselforschung in Rio Grande do Sul und San Jerónimo Norte. In: *Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Germanistik*. Volume 4. Number 1.

A case which will be further discussed in Section 3.3.2.

⁶³ Especially Brazil – where the highest numbers of “Germans” in South America settled – also Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay were important for “German” immigration.

distinguished between economical-material reasons when deciding the country of immigration and sociological-folkloristic ones.⁶⁴

To sum up, the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century marked an era, where the need to attract immigrants met with the desire of many Europeans to emigrate. The former elite-immigration of individuals, that was mainly caused by strict migration regulations of the European countries, and the difficult pre-conditions in the La Plata region, as well as the expensive and long journeys started to change. The opening of borders associated with the independence of Argentina, the isolation of foreigners under Rosas, and consequently the development of homogenous communities. The government before and after Rosas actively fostered immigration, also by allowing them to remain in their closed communities instead of trying to assimilate them. This became attractive to those who wanted to leave Europe yet remain in familiar surroundings, where their language and traditions could be upheld. Which led to a stabilisation of ethnic communities.

Prior to the start of mass immigration in the 19th century, the first “German” institutions and associations had already been founded, facilitating the arrival of the future immigrants. Especially the establishment of the first colonies eased the arrival of further immigrants, for the struggle to survive was still harsh, but they could rely on a prior consolidated network and refer to the experiences that the established settlers had made already.

2.2. First wave of mass immigration: To govern means to populate

With the first legal support of immigration of large numbers of people, the professional composition of immigrants changed, a phenomenon which should continue over the next decades. Not only farmers and rural settlers came to Argentina, but also craftsmen, and a few years later industrial workers.⁶⁵ An important milestone for the change of the demographic composition – which allowed a higher quantity of people to immigrate – was the immigration law, passed by Avellaneda on the 19th of October 1876. Avellaneda – who was president from 1876 to 1880 – agreed with the political scientist Juan Bautista Alberdi, who shaped the phrase “*gobemar es poblar*” - to govern means to populate. Therefore, the immigration law simplified immigration for those who were not wealthy.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Bergmann (1994)*. Pg. 11 et seq.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 15.

Law of Immigration and settlement Nr. 817, “Law Avellaneda”

Art. 14 Each immigrant, who can proof his qualification and attitude towards a handcraft or business – which ever this might be – can enjoy following advantages after the entry of the country:

1° to be housed and nourished for a determined amount of time, at the expense of the state.⁶⁶

2° to pursue a work or business, after free decision.

3° to be transported to the desired place of residence, at the expanse of the state.

4° free Import of everyday objects, clothing, furniture, tools, and farming implements.⁶⁷

This law increased the number of immigrants tremendously. It was a clear sign for the objective of Argentina to attract immigrants, which was an incentive for people wanting to leave Europe, including “Germans”. In the 1870's,⁶⁸ Argentina became interesting to a Group of “Germans”, that had already left German-speaking areas in the 18th Century and moved to different regions of Russia – such as Odessa, the Black Sea area and of course also the Volga region.⁶⁹ These people usually called Volga Germans, were desperately looking for a place elsewhere to build new settlements. At this point Volga Germans could maintain the “German” language and culture for a century in foreign land already.

⁶⁶ From 1912 to 1953, the immigrants could stay in the so called “Hotel de Inmigrantes”. A place which is nowadays used as an immigration museum.

⁶⁷ Ley de Inmigración y Colonización N° 817, „Ley Avellaneda“.

Art. 14: Todo inmigrante que acredite su buena conducta y su actitud para cualquier industria, arte u oficio útil, tendrá derecho a gozar, a su entrada al territorio, de las siguientes ventajas especiales:

1° Ser alojado y mantenido a expensas de la Nación, durante el tiempo fijado [...]

2° Ser colocado en el trabajo o industria existente en el país, a que prefiriese dedicarse.

3° Ser trasladado a costa de la Nación, al punto de la república a donde quisiese fijar su domicilio.

4° Introducir libres de derecho prendas de uso, vestidos, muebles de servicio domésticos, instrumentos de agricultura, herramientas.

English translation by Martina Kogler

Cf. Hock (2016). Pg. 17.

⁶⁸ The 1870's were also overshadowed by the brutal conquest of the desert, where the army fought persistent groups of indigenous people, to get hold of the entire country. In the purpose of colonializing Patagonia too, also “Germans” participated in these acts of violence. Such as the Prussian lieutenant Rohde from Pomerania, who originally came to Argentina for Vacation but participated in the Conquest of the desert. Eventually stayed in Argentina and worked on a military career. In 1883, he published in the “La Plata Zeitung” – a German newspaper in Argentina – an article in which he campaigned for “German” settlements in the Rio Negro Valley: We need the settlement of the “German” race, he writes, not people of Romanic descent – that are demanding towards the government.

Wir brauchen Ansiedler germanischer Rasse“, sagt er, „keine Romanen, welche alles von der Regierung erwarten.

Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner (1955). Pg. 257.

⁶⁹ Therefore, the term “Volga Germans” is misleading too. Yet, it is the one also used by the majority of those whose ancestors came from German minorities in Russia. Alternative designations are Black Sea Germans, Odessa Germans, and Russia Germans. It is difficult to determine if they were counted as Germans or Russians by the authorities.

After losing their privileges and facing life threatening conditions in Russia, Volga Germans sent scouts to different countries, such as the United States, Canada, and South America. In South America, Brazil became the most interesting destination for them. Yet, after their arrival, the settlers found out that the cultivation of wheat was hardly possible in Brazil, and therefore were drawn to the neighboring countries. Argentina provided a welcoming immigration policy, which allowed the Volga Germans to remain within their own community and to continue to farm the way they wished. According to Hoffmann, the government actively offered Volga Germans land ownership due to their reputation as hard-working people of high moral standing, and their expertise in farming. Andreas Basgal – a harbinger of the Volga Germans – reported to his people about the offers, the Argentinian government made. An official legate was sent who achieved to negotiate not only property to plant wheat, corn and other crops but also land that was suitable for livestock breeding. Furthermore, they demanded good traffic links – possibly at a water route – to access a potential sales area. Moreover, the land should have an extension that allowed 50.000 people to settle. They wanted to be free from military service, have the choice of their local council, and to maintain a Volga German school.⁷⁰ Subsequently, the government tried to convince Volga Germans to immigrate to Argentina directly instead of coming to Brazil first. The first Volga German colony was established in 1878. In the following years – facing the hardship of building new colonies in vast land – the Volga Germans became rather successful and caused many more to follow over the decades. In 1940 an estimated 130.000 Volga Germans lived in Argentina.⁷¹

The 1870's also marked an important time for "German" communities in Argentina. The unification of Germany in 1871 caused a merging of various "German" groups and an increase in relations with Germany. While in 1872, only three percent of imports came from Germany, ten years later the import of German goods increased to nine percent – which exemplifies how the relations between Germany and "German" settlers had strengthened. Thanks to the trade relations, "German" merchants did very well at the end of the 19th century, which also resulted in a frequent ship traffic between Germany and Argentina.⁷² As a result, the journey to Argentina became more affordable. The immigration of several different "German" groups, other than the Volga Germans, kept rising constantly, coinciding with an improvement of the Argentinian economy from the 1880's onwards.

At the end of the 19th century, the Argentinian military was re-organized after the Prussian model. The military should, due to a radical reformation, be able to secure the elite-orientated

⁷⁰Cf. Hoffmann (1979) Pg. 94.

⁷¹Cf. Ibid. Pg. 96.

⁷²Cf. Ibid. Pg 97 et seq.

modernisation project against foreign and inner enemies.⁷³ The connection with the Argentinian military lasted until the middle of the 20th century, resulting in a strong sympathy of the military towards Germany – especially under the reign of Perón, who had a huge influence in the Argentinian politics since the 1930's and became president for the first time in 1946.

In the wake of the massive immigration waves and the settlement of different (“German”) ethnicities, several “German” schools were founded so that children already born in Argentina could learn German, and therefore the possibility to return to the country of origin was upheld. “German” Schools also served to strengthen the “German” community and according to the sociologist Beate Hock can also be considered as a sign for the mistrust towards the Argentinian Schooling system.⁷⁴ Furthermore, it illustrates to which extent the still perceived themselves as “Germans” rather than as Argentinians.

2.3. Second wave of mass immigration: The result of World War One

The First World War marked a clear change in the “German” communities in Argentina. The German Empire and the Austrian Monarchy were the defeated powers, which had dramatic consequences not only for “Germans” in Europe, but also for the “Germans” living in foreign land.

The second immigration wave is a consequence of this First World War, where people tried to flee the destruction of war, as well as the increase of unemployment rates. For the immigrants of the second wave, the situation of arrival differed from those of the first immigration wave. On one hand, “German” institutions and associations were well established, but on the other hand immigration restrictions were introduced, and after a few decades of economic prosperity, the Argentinian Economy was afflicted too. Newly arriving workers were hence not what Argentina needed. In Argentina “Germans” and “German” businesses were blacklisted and many established “Germans” and “German” descendants in Argentina struggled to make a living.⁷⁵ Although the blacklisting in Argentina was harsh, it was mild in comparison to what happened in other countries. Brazil – which was home to most “Germans” living in South America – declared war to Germany in 1917⁷⁶ and also showed in their internal

⁷³ Cf. *Gliech*, Oliver: Die deutsch-argentinischen Militärbeziehungen (1900-1945) In: *Birle*, Peter (Ed.): Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien (2010) Pg. 75.

⁷⁴ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 81.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 28.

⁷⁶ Brazil did not declare war to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Cf. Calendar of War declarations. URL: https://science.apa.at/rubrik/kultur_und_gesellschaft/1914_2014_-

policy that the way of living that “German” migrants’ had and their “Germanness” (Deutschtum) was no longer wanted. Consequently, “Germans” no longer were permitted to publish in “German” print media, such as newspapers and community newsletters (Gemeindebriefe), free association was forbidden until the end of the war. The latter change also affected schools as they were often founded and maintained by the work of “German” associations. Similarly to Brazil, “Germans” and “German” associations were blacklisted in Argentina, as well.⁷⁷ Newspapers such as La Prensa and La Nación, engaged in the “Anti-German” propaganda, which, contrary to its ideological agenda, led to a consolidation of “Germans” in the country. The two bigger “German” daily newspapers, the Deutsche La Plata Zeitung (German La Plata Newspaper) and the Argentinisches Tageblatt (Argentinian daily Newspaper) supported “German” patriotism during the First World War and emphasised that the community must unite and not divide.⁷⁸ Even a new newspaper “La Unión” was founded by the director of the “Deutsche La Plata Zeitung (German La Plata Newspaper)”, in order to fight “Anti-German” propaganda in Argentina.⁷⁹

The augmentation of migration towards Argentina also occurred, due to end of free land reclamation in the United States, in 1893. As a result, after the end of the First World War, it became difficult to immigrate to the United States and the Cono Sur (Southern part of South America) became more attractive to those wanting to escape the demolished Europe after the war.⁸⁰ Yet, the newly arriving immigrants had to face harsher conditions than their predecessors. Due to the First World War, orders in “German” businesses decreased and consequently, the new immigrants arrived to find a “German” community that had to deal a row of existential threats itself. Also, as previously mentioned, Argentina was hit by an Economic crisis in the 1920’s.⁸¹ The newly arriving immigrants were desperate and willing to work for less

_Kalender_der_Kriegserklaerungen/SCI_20140708_SCI54612457619274084 (As consulted online on the 28th of March 2017).

⁷⁷ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 28.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Hoffmann*, Werner: Die Deutschen in Argentinien. In: *Fröschele*, Hartmut: Die Deutschen in Lateinamerika. Schicksal und Leistung (1979). Pg. 114.

⁷⁹ The “five million donation” of Argentina (the composition of the money is unknown to the author) caused the renaming of a street to “Argentinierstraße” in Vienna in 1921.

Cf. Wien.at: Argentinierstraße. URL: <https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php/Argentinierstra%C3%9Fe> (As consulted online on the 12th of March 2017).

Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 29.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 23.

⁸¹ Also, Schoepp Sebastian diagnoses a proletarianization of workers, due to the increasing industrialisation. Class conflicts increased, and workers unions were founded. Immigrants imported Marxist ideas, which heated the class struggle further.

Cf. *Schoepp*, Sebastian: Das ‘Argentinische Tageblatt’ 1933 bis 1945. Ein Forum der antinazionalsozialistischen Emigration (1996). Cf. Pg. 22.

Saint Sauver Henn states that Argentina was offering good work- and life conditions and had a constant need for workers. Due to the successful integration in the Global economy as export country of agricultural goods and by the Process of Industrialization Argentina had an economic upturn until 1929 only until 1935 she states years of crisis. Therefore – according to her – Argentina hardly was affected by unemployment.

money, also accepting worse living-, working-, and settlement conditions, which made the economic situation even more difficult.⁸²

Table 2⁸³ illustrates in numbers how the First World War and the following years till 1923 contributed directly to the distribution of the next immigration wave – including all immigrants and not being limited to “Germans”. While during the First World War about 130.000 “Germans” were living in Argentina, this number increased by 1933 to 236.755.⁸⁴

Year	Sex			Legal status		
	Men	Women	Total	Single	Married	Widowed
1914	76.217	39.104	113.321	68.708	44.283	2.330
1915	27.957	17.333	45.290	26.520	17.750	1.020
1916	19.680	13.310	32.990	20.074	12.031	885
1917	10.909	7.155	18.064	11.047	6.288	729
1918	8.358	5.343	13.701	8.569	4.618	514
1919	26.756	14.543	41.299	26.077	14.129	1.093
1920	64.343	35.461	99.809	60.570	36.999	2.240
1921	72.884	35.707	108.591	66.577	39.515	2.499
1922	96.151	43.802	139.953	83.454	53.327	3.172
1923	141.680	53.383	195.063	108.853	82.257	3.953

Table 2 (Over-Sea) immigration according to Sex and Legal Status

Starting with 1919 the number of immigrants coming to Argentina increased every year, in the wake of the German Constitution of 1919, granting the right of immigration for the first time.⁸⁵ This table furthermore depicts how many women in relation to men came to Argentina during the war and the post war years. The huge gender gap of 1923 is a result of the economic

Saint Sauveur Henn (2010). Pg. 22.

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century Argentina did – due to exportation of meat and a rising industry – economically well. A middle class emerged that became an important counterbalance to the military and large land owners. Later ones used the Economic crisis to overthrow president Irigoyen – who was mainly supported by the middle class.

⁸² Cf. *Ziegler* (1996). Pg. 52.

In Buenos Aires and Patagonia workers fights were held from 1921 to 1922, as a sign of the deterioration of the conditions workers had to face.

⁸³ The table is based on the evaluation of Beate Hocks table. She refers to the “Anuarios Estadísticos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires 1891 – 1923”.

Cf. *Hock* (2010). Pg. 22.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Bergmann* (1996). Pg. 23.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 23.

crisis and the fact that the transatlantic migration was less of a problem for young single men than it was for single women. Single women therefore were less likely to migrate, than single men. Most women coming to Argentina were married already. The few women who came to Argentina as single usually married endogamous, within their own ethnicity - following a pattern typical of those ethnic groups who came in larger groups, like Italians.⁸⁶ The second wave of mass immigration has a direct link to the economic crisis of Europe which led to an increase of unemployment rates. In the years between 1920 and 1924, about 86.000 people left Germany due to these circumstances. Argentina attracted about 47.000 Germans from 1920 to 1931– however, the unemployment quota of these immigrants back in Germany is unknown. In 1932, six million people were looking for work in Germany. This led on the one hand to a radicalisation of politics and to the rise of National Socialism and the displacement of people and on the other hand it led to mass suffering and the demand to emigrate.⁸⁷

In 1933, a decree was passed in Argentina that aggravated the possibilities to immigrate. People who considered to immigrate had to prove, that they could sustain themselves. They also had to proof, that they would get support in Argentina by a person that had lived at least two years in the country and would carry the responsibility for the immigrant.⁸⁸ Briefly speaking, the livelihood security had to be proven.⁸⁹

The development of German migrants' clubs, cooperatives, unions, and schools briefly deflated after the First World War, yet did not stop. Soon they established new institutions, like the "Deutsche Handelskammer", the "Deutsche Volks-Bund für Argentinien" and the "Deutsche Wohltätigkeitsgesellschaft". These associations supported "Germans", who came into precarious situations to make a living and were especially important for those who were black listed by the Argentinian Government, as a response to the loss of the First World War.⁹⁰

At the end of the 1920's, another group of "Germans" arrived in Argentina, whose presence needs to be reflected on, when discussing the "German" diaspora in Argentina: The Mennonites. They had their cultural origin in the anabaptised movement of the Reformation days and started to settle in the Chaco region.⁹¹ According to Dirk Hoerder, the Mennonites are the "only real 'German' Diaspora" – which is not based on an ethnical but rather on a

⁸⁶ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 22.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 83.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (1996). Pg. 68.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 17.

Cf. *Jackisch*, Carlotta: Einwanderungspolitik und öffentliche Meinung in Argentinien 1933-1945. In: *Kohlhut*, Karl, *von zur Mühlen*, Patrik: Alternative Lateinamerika. Das deutsche Exil in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (1994). Pg. 44.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner* (1955). Pg. 275.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 39.

⁹¹ Cf. *Bergmann* (1996). Pg. 26.

cultural, religious “Germanness”.⁹² Even though the Mennonites had bonds to Germany and the “German” culture,⁹³ they did not mingle with the established “German” communities or participate in their cultural and social life, rather they remained amongst themselves, usually living in isolated areas, such as the Chaco or the Pampa region. Therefore, even though being another group of “Germans” arriving in Argentina, I argue, that their impact on the “German” communities I will describe more closely was minimal.

Consequently, most “Germans” living in Argentina in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s – previously to the third wave of mass immigration – came from the predecessor states of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, as well as – in the case of Volga Germans – from Russia.

2.4. Third wave of mass immigration

In 1933, the National Socialist party won the elections and became the strongest party in Germany and should stay in power until the end of the Second World War, in 1945. The National Socialist regime had an impact on the immigration patterns in Argentina. At the very beginning, the political refugees – who were seen political enemies and targeted by the National Socialist regime – migrated. As they were being persecuted, most of the oppositional writers and politicians left the German Reich in autumn 1933 already, with many of them trying to continue their work in exile.⁹⁴ Although the first Anti-Jewish laws were passed in April 1933, the upcoming danger for Jewish men and women was not visible yet. A Jewish mass emigration from Germany to Argentina therefore did not start immediately after the National Socialists won the elections. Yet, some people already foresaw the developments and founded the first Jewish aid associations. These were needed, especially after 1938, when Jewish people left the German Reich, because of the November pogrom and the Reichskristallnacht. In the following years thousands of Jews found refuge from persecution in Argentina. After the end of the Second World War, Argentina became a destination to Displaced Persons, and fleeing National Socialists. Whilst the fugitive National Socialists represented the most “famous” group of “German” immigrants in Argentina, their quantitative proportion was in comparison marginal.

⁹² Cf. *Hoerder, Dirk*: The German-Language Diasporas. A Survey, Critique, and Interpretation (2002). Pg. 33. According to Janet Fuller, religious group identity is more effective in maintaining for example “German” identity and the language, than an ethnical group identity.

Cf. *Fuller, Janet*: Language and Identity in the German Diaspora. In: *Schulze, Mathias, Skidmore, James M.* (Ed.): German diasporic experiences. Identity, migration and loss (2008). Pg. 3 to 19.

⁹³ Cf. *Barbian, Nikolaus*: Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und “Auslandsdeutsche” in Lateinamerika 1949 – 1973 (2014). Pg. 465.

⁹⁴ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 23.

Cf. *Schwarcz, Alfredo Jose*: Trotz allem... Die deutschsprachigen Juden in Argentinien (1995). Pg. 91.

The immigration of different “German” groups, previously, during and after the Second World War is complex, yet the rise of the National Socialists also caused another phenomenon, for the National Socialist Regime had an impact on the already established “German” communities in Argentina and the Argentinian policy of immigration. In the 1930's and 1940's, National Socialist ideologies found either a strong affirmation or rejection within various “German” communities and led to a separation of the community. In addition, the Argentinian foreign politics had strong sympathies with the German Reich, as well as Germany after the Second World War, as will be described in this section.

2.4.1. Influence of the Nationalist Socialists in Argentina

Foreign policy and sub-institutions played a major role in the consolidation of the regime and the spread of the fascist ideology. Therefore, in the 1930's the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei abbreviated NSDAP) targeted the strong connection foreign “Germans” had with their – or their ancestors’ – country of origin.⁹⁵ Being confident of the superiority of “Germans”, they should hold a special position within the world, according to the National Socialists. The ethnic cohesion (völkischer Zusammenhalt) should therefore not be limited to the German Reich only, but be visible also to “Germans” living in ‘foreign’ land, where they should act as ideology multipliers.

Different Institutions in the German Reich worked on foreign issues. Of these, the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) was probably the most influential one. The NSDAP invented local organisations – which were organized in the A.O. (Auslandsorganisation/Organisation for Foreign Matters)⁹⁶. With the foundation of the A.O. the NSDAP attempted to legitimize and institutionalise all “Germans” around the globe into the body of the Reich. The A.O tried to permeate and bring into line (gleichschalten) “Germans” living in transatlantic countries by

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 45.

The book „Nationalsozialismus in Lateinamerika. Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP in Argentinien, Brasilien, Chile und Mexiko 1931-1945“ by Jürgen Müller provides a more detailed explanation about the development of National Socialism in Argentina.

Cf. Müller, Jürgen: Nationalsozialismus in Lateinamerika: Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP in Argentinien, Brasilien, Chile und Mexiko, 1931-1945 (1997).

⁹⁶ Head of the department was Ernst-Wilhelm Bohle, who himself used to live in foreign land. Until the middle of 1934 the number of members was already five times as high as when it was founded – resulting in 10.000 people. Also, the number of employees increased from 1933 to 1935 from 25 to 170. In 1937 700 – which was the peak – worked for the A.O.

Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 48.

Prior to the foundation of the A.O., NSDAP Organizations have been founded on personal initiatives. Such as 1929 in Paraguay, 1930 in Switzerland and the United States, 1931 in 17 further countries – amongst them Argentina.

The NSDAP organization in Argentina was founded and started to work in 1931 already. It caused a split between two groups: First, the republicans and monarchists and second the republicans and democrats. Controversies over which flag was the German one and in “German” Newspaper were constantly present. Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 49.

spreading propaganda in “German” communities and at the same time considering people as Germans, who very often did not even hold a passport from Germany, Austria or Switzerland and were by the birthplace principle Argentinians.⁹⁷

Although a “Landesgruppe” (National group) of the National Socialist Party in Argentina had been founded in 1931 already – prior to the German Reich and its legal institutions – “Germans” living in Argentina usually showed little interest in politics beyond the communal level.⁹⁸ The rise of the National Socialist Regime in Europe changed that. In the years between 1933 and 1945 the importance of politics grew and people were forced to stand up either for or against National Socialism. Especially associations were drawn towards one or the other direction.⁹⁹ This started to cause disputes and resentment and eventually a split between “Germans” of the Argentinian diaspora.

The split of the “German” community was visible on various levels. As a perfect example serves print media. The proponents of democracy or republican political institutions would oppose the National Socialists and were drawn to the “Argentinisches Tageblatt” (Argentinian Daily Press); while monarchists and conservatives were more likely to be attracted to the NSDAP and read the “Deutsche La-Plata Zeitung” (German La-Plata Newspaper). The “Argentinisches Tagesblatt” was critical of National socialism and was the first international newspaper banned by the German Government of the Reich (Deutsche Reichsregierung) in 1933 in Germany. In addition, “German” businesses, companies and other “German” institutions in Argentina were invoked by whom and through what means/measures to boycott the Newspaper.¹⁰⁰ The owner of “Argentinisches Tagesblatt”, the Alemann family, not only critiqued the National Socialists in 1934, they also founded the Pestalozzi School in the city of Buenos Aires. The Pestalozzi School should function as an oppositional pole to the

⁹⁷ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 48.

⁹⁸ Interests on the communal level could be the self-administration of colonies, implementation of rules within the municipality, or school policy.

As an exception serves the socialist movement „Aufwärts“ (Upwards), that already demanded political engagement in 1894.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 38.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 106.

Cf. *Meding*, Holger M.: *Flucht vor Nürnberg: deutsche und österreichische Einwanderung in Argentinien, 1945-1955* (1992). Pg. 31.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 49.

The importance of the „Argentinisches Tageblatt“ can not be discussed in detail in this thesis. Recommendable is the publication “Das ‘Argentinische Tageblatt’ 1933 bis 1945. Ein Forum der antinationalsozialistischen Emigration.” by Sebastian Schoepp.

Cf. *Schoepp* (1996).

A comparison between different Newspapers in the context of National Socialism in the press, was done by Olaf Gaudig and Peter Veit.

Cf. *Gaudig*, Olaf, *Veit*, Peter: *Der Widerschein des Nationalsozialismus. Das Bild des Nationalsozialismus in der deutschsprachigen Presse Argentiniens, Brasiliens und Chiles 1932-1945* (1997).

Goethe Institute , which by then was strongly influenced by the National Socialist ideology, as many other schools and institutions of the diaspora at this time were.¹⁰¹

As already pointed out, “German” colonies in Argentina had an increasing interest in the NSDAP ideology. 103 “German” associations and the overwhelming majority of schools were brought in line (gleichgeschaltet) with the NSDAP in 1933 already. Many more followed. Wilhelm Lütge, founding head of the “VDA – Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland points in the book “Geschichte des Deutschtums in Argentinien” out: “*Stronger than rational thoughts, was the idea that the new regime was able to construct Germany in its greatness, like it existed in the blurred, idealized memories of those who left home (Heimat) long time ago.*”¹⁰²

When in 1938 the Annexation of Austria to the German Reich took place, approximately 15.000 people¹⁰³ came together in the Luna Park in Buenos Aires, to celebrate – at a time when, according to Bergmann, 43.626 people were living in Argentina that held a German passport.¹⁰⁴ Figure 1, depicting the celebrations in the Luna Park, gives an impression on how big the meeting was and how immense the enthusiasm for the ideology of the National Socialist Party in Argentina was. Until 1937, the National Socialists could work relatively undisturbed under the right wing-conservative political climate in Argentina.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 50.

Cf. Saint Sauveur-Henn (2010). Pg. 42 et seq.

¹⁰² *Stärker als rationelle Erwägungen war der Glaube daran, daß das neue Regime Deutschland in jener Größe wiederherstellen würde, die es in der unscharfen, idealisierten Erinnerung der lange von der Heimat Getrennten besaß.*

Cf. Lütge, Hoffmann, Körner (1994). Pg. 297.

Kannapin names four reasons for the success of the National Socialists in Argentina.

- a.) The relatively strong economic position of National Socialists in Argentina, especially due to the businesses of AEG and Siemens.
- b.) A significant influence on the Argentinian military since the Wilhelmine time.
- c.) Well organised, due to years of support and development of Germaneness (Deutschtumsarbeit), nationalist “German” communities.
- d.) A systematic demagogic propaganda of an anti-Imperialist policy of Germany, which took advantage of the anti-Imperialist sentiment of “Germans”.

Cf. Kannapin, Klaus: Zur Politik der Nazis in Argentinien von 1933 bis 1945. In: Sanke, Heinz (Ed.): Der deutsche Faschismus in Lateinamerika 1933 – 1943 (1996). Pg. 81.

¹⁰³ Perfil: Difunden fotos nunca vistas del enorme festejo nazi en el Luna Park. URL:

<http://www.perfil.com/sociedad/difunden-fotos-nunca-vistas-del-enorme-festejo-nazi-en-el-luna-park-0520-0024.phtml> (As consulted online on the 19th of March 2017)

Meding instead names 20.000 people.

Cf. Meding (1992). Pg. 30.

¹⁰⁴ The number of people belonging to a “German” community, but officially counting as Argentinians was probably by far higher

Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 25.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Schoepp (1996). Pg. 32.



Figure 1 Celebration of the Annexation of Austria. Luna Park, Argentina.¹⁰⁶

Yet, the influence of the National Socialists in the German Reich on “Germans” in Argentina turned out to harm the bilateral relations between Argentina and the German Reich.¹⁰⁷ Argentina, being in a process of nationalisation itself, was – despite its strong bonds to the German Reich – critical towards further segregation of ethnic communities within the country.¹⁰⁸ Whilst being cooperative towards the urge of living out the cultural heritage of immigrants, an alienation of Argentinian citizens of “German” descent was not wanted.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, a dispute occurred over the question whether members of the “German” communities were Argentinians or “Germans”, especially due to the different approaches between the principles of descent (*ius sanguinis* in Germany) and the birthplace principle (*ius soli* in Argentina). The German Ambassador for Argentina, SS- Brigadeführer Edmud Freiherr

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Rare historical Photos: Nazi rally in Buenos Aires, 1938. URL: <http://rarehistoricalphotos.com/nazi-rally-argentina-1938/> (As consulted online on the 13th of March 2017).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 49.

¹⁰⁸ Some groups neither support the first, nor the second group. For example, the Mennonites, rejected the totalitarian policy of the National Socialist Party, but at the same time this does not necessarily mean, that they were at the side of those who fled from the National Socialist German Reich.

Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 57.

According to Schoepp, the majority of „Germans“ had a national body of thought but rejected the National Socialist Ideology.

Cf. Schoepp (1996). Pg. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 51.

von Thermann, urged for a more restrained policy by the government of the German Reich, since it was important for the German Reich to keep good relations with the states of South America. Ribbentrop, Reichsminister of the Foreign office, therefore in 1939 argued that, in order to reach the “Endsieg”, it is important to subordinate the ideal of inclusion of foreign “Germans”, for the government did not want to evoke further enemies.¹¹⁰ Bohle, as representative of the A.O., eventually gave in, scared that Argentina might take drastic measures towards its “German” communities and that they might lose another confederate.

Yet, to Bohle, maintaining the awareness of being German or of “German” descendants had to be maintained all around the globe for, according to the official ideology, there is no bigger sin than giving up German blood voluntary.¹¹¹

In the first half of the year 1939, the public critique of Argentina towards the national groups, forced the A.O. to self-restrictions. “Germans” from Argentina should leave A.O. Organisations and continue their work in less obvious ways in “German” associations with a National Socialist tendency. Reich-Germans at the same time should leave associations of expatriates to demonstrate a clear cut. Yet at this point, the Argentinian government had already set actions that targeted “Germans”.¹¹² Foreign Schools were put under new regulations and on the 15th of May 1939 Decree No 31321 was passed, which prohibited foreign associations to engage politically. This was aimed mostly at the NDSAP Landesgruppe – which was founded in 1931.¹¹³ As a result, the “Germans” of the diaspora revoked their split between “German” communities, they terminated the “Landesgruppe” and founded “Círculus de Beneficencia y de Cultura Alemana”, which targeted “Germans” in Argentina.¹¹⁴ Those

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 52.

¹¹¹ „Die Auslandsorganisation will jeden Deutschen für das Reich erhalten, wo auch immer er in der Welt sein mag, sei er reich oder arm, jung oder alt, in dem Bewusstsein, daß es keine größere Sünde gibt, als freiwillig deutsches Blut aufzugeben.“

Ibid (1994). Pg. 52.

¹¹² In 1940 a committee was founded, that researched anti-Argentinian activities, which the socialist member of Parliament Enrique Dickmann campaigned for already in 1938. They reported about the avid activities of National Socialists in the country. These papers caused heavy discussions in the chamber of deputies. Although measures like the cancellation of relations to the German Reich and the designation of emissaries were discussed no actions were taken, for the pro-German president Castillo preferred to ignore the reports. Cf. *Schoepp* (1996). Pg. 34.

¹¹³ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 29, 39 et seq.

¹¹⁴ One of the reasons was the fear of a 5th colony. In March 1939, several Newspapers published intentions of the National Socialists to conquer Patagonia. Even though the documents were unmasked as counterfeits, people demanded strong measures against the National Socialists in the country. In May 1939 a decree was issued, targeting foreign associations. Which said, that foreign associations had to clarify their aims and statutes and to profess to democratic values. Association of foreign origin were forbidden, to use foreign flags, uniforms, and symbols. Only associations with cultural or social purpose remained legal. Cf. *Schoepp* (1996). Pg. 34.

Círculus only worked on local levels and continued their work for the NSDAP, for their work was not marked as national socialist.¹¹⁵

In 1943, a military putsch took place in Argentina. Under the military reign – which had strong bonds to the German Reich – the situation for the National Socialists in Argentina became easier. Rigid press censorship – especially against democratic, left wing and Jewish institutions – and the dismissal of democratic politicians from their political offices facilitated the work of the Nationalists.¹¹⁶ Argentina sympathised with the axes until the last months of the Second World War. Only briefly before the capitulation of the German Reich, Argentina declared war to the German Reich – pressured by the United States – and changed sides. When Argentina declared war to the axis powers on the 27th of March 1945, they belonged to the winners, which had negative consequences for German Communities in Argentina.¹¹⁷ Businesses, schools, and clubs were expropriated and seen as enemy property, as well as forced administration was put upon them. “Germans” and “German descendants” were fired and black lists were generated. People were forced to leave “German” Clubs and “German” teachers lost their title and ability to teach.¹¹⁸ The Second World War therefore, caused a break in the “German” Community as well as their social and cultural continuity

¹¹⁵ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 53.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 35.

The axes friendly policy has also been caused by the Prussian/German influence on the military since 1871. Cf. *Meding*, Holger M. Außenpolitische Weichenstellungen nach dem Umsturz von 1943 in Argentinien. In: *Becker*, Felix, *Meding*, Holger M., *Potthast-Jutkeit*, Barbara, *Schüller*, Barbara: Iberische Welten. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Günter Kahle (1994). Pg.252 et seq.

Perón, who gained in strength in the after march of the military putsch, openly admired Mussolini and believed in the “Endsieg” of Hitler and therefore was suspicious to the allies too. The state department put together a polemic investigation on Argentinian cooperation with the German Reich and emphasizes on the role of Perón. The following reports – called Blue Book – aimed to weaken Peróns position but instead it caused anger due to the meddling of the United States and consequently even more sympathy for Perón.

Cf. *Meding* (1992). Pg. 40 et seq.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Hepe* (2005). Pg. 8.

Even though their previous politics, especially under the military reign have been pro Axes. Schoepp explains the War declaration to Germany – 42 days before the capitulation of Germany – with economic and political pressure by the Pan-American front.

Cf. *Schoepp* (1996). Pg.35 et seq.

Especially the United States put pressure on Argentina to declare war on the German Reich and Japan. They recalled their Ambassador and requested all South American States in a memorandum to do the same, if Argentina does not declare war on The German Reich and Japan. Although, Argentina did declare the war, the measures by the U.S. were seen as a degradation.

Cf. *Meding* (1994). Pg. 251.

¹¹⁸ The Burmeister-, Cangallo-, and Pestallozi Schools were treated less restrictive, for they were critical towards the National Socialist Regime.

Cf. *Ibid* (1992). Pg. 52.

2.4.2. Immigration due to the Nationalist Socialist Regime

As already pointed out, the politically persecuted left Germany immediately after the takeover of power by the Nazis in 1933, while the threat that the Nationalist System embodied for Jewish men and women was not yet visible in its full dimensions. Only two years later, the Nuremberg Laws were a legal exacerbation of the situation of Jewish men and women, which were no longer seen as citizens of “the Reich” and as such forbidden to marry ‘Aryans’. At this point the Jewish emigration intensified and became strongest in 1938, due to the pogrom of November 9th and 10th, where Jewish men and women were mocked, dehumanised, killed, synagogues were set on fire or demolished as well as Jewish meeting rooms, also Jewish property was demolished or stolen. The pogrom was followed by mass imprisonments, and further sanctions were put upon Jewish people.¹¹⁹ At this point Latin America became an interesting target regarding immigration. An estimated 16 percent of “German” migrants found rescue in Latin America.¹²⁰ The organization “Asociación Filantrópica Isrealita” – a Jewish aid organisation – warned against the threat of National Socialists for Jews in 1933 already and started to support Jewish refugees. Non-Jewish political refugees found help in the organisation “Das andere Deutschland” (The other Germany), which was founded in 1937.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Jews were only allowed to take 10 Mark with them, when emigrating and additionally had to pay a “Reichsfluchtsteuer” (Reich escape tax). The start of the Second World War made migration conditions even worse. And in 1942 the National Socialists decided the “Endlösung”. Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 23.

¹²⁰ Finding rescue in Europe became more difficult. 1933 two thirds of the Jewish Emigrants found rescue in Europe. From 1937 onwards, a quarter remained in Europe, 60 percent went overseas and 15 percent to Palestine. The emigration to Latin America became more important. 3,7 percent of emigrants were estimated coming to Latin America in June 1935, in March 1936 11,3 percent and in December 1937 13,4 percent. After 1938, even higher numbers can be estimated.

Yet, the statistics are vague. Official German statistics in this time are difficult to evaluate, they only measure a fraction of the emigration and illegal immigration flourished. Furthermore, Latin America very often has not been the first country in which the “Germans” emigrated. Therefore, studies are based on immigration statistics of varying immigration offices or aid organisations.

The Jewish emigration to Latin America between 1933 and 1941 is estimated to be 83.150 by the Joint Distribution Committee, the aid organisation of German Speaking Jews in Argentina estimates 111.250 persons between 1933 and 1943 – in Latin America. Both sources claim that most “German” Jews coming to Latin America went to Argentina (35.000-45.000), followed by Brazil (16.000 – 25.000) and Chile (13.000 -12.000). 30-40 percent of the “German” Jews coming to Latin America found rescue in Argentina.

Furthermore, the political immigration is of interest. An estimated 8-10 percent of the total immigration between 1933 and 1945 can be estimated as such.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (1996). Pg. 67ff.

According to Bergmann, in 1941 28,6 Percent of the emigrants went to the United States, 15,7 Percent to Palestine, 16,3 Percent to England or Countries of Western Europe, that were already occupied by the Germans, 20 Percent went to Brazil, Argentina and Chile and a further 19,4 Percent to other states such as Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Cuba, Columbia and Ecuador.

Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 54.

¹²¹ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 20.

In the years between 1933 and 1945, 537.000 Jewish men and women left the areas of nowadays Germany, Austria¹²² and the Czech Republic. Of these, about 45.000 came to Argentina.¹²³ 95 percent of the immigrants coming to Argentina between 1933 and 1940 remained in the city of Buenos Aires, which was due to the structure of professions and better possibilities to network within the communities in the city.¹²⁴

The emigration – until 1932 predominantly male – shifted from 1933 to 1938 to a gender balanced immigration, which was caused by the different circumstances of immigration¹²⁵ Also, the age ratio changed. Whilst, in the 19th century a young “German” population immigrated, in the year 1923, more than half of the “German” men immigrating were between 18 and 30 years old. 1938, only a quarter of men were in this age group. While at the beginning of the 20th century, and in the strong immigration years of 1923 and 1924, about a third of immigrants came with their families, from 1938 onwards about a half of all people immigrated together with their families. Saint Sauveur-Henn’s explanation for this phenomenon is, that to young, single people it was easier to leave the country, while families and elder people waited, until they were forced to leave.¹²⁶

Although Argentina received many Jewish refugees, their role in terms of Jewish immigration and their relation to National Socialists was dubious, for behind their neutral façade, they sympathised with the axes. During the Conference of Évian in July 1938 – which should find solutions for the refugee crisis – the Argentinian foreign minister signed a secret directive, which limited the chances to get a visa for people that were “unwanted” in their country of origin – targeting mainly Jewish people. Shortly after – due to a presidential decree – the entry requirements became more difficult.¹²⁷ The official reason, why refugees were rejected, were the high numbers of unemployment in Argentina, as well as the threat of political disputes, caused by the heterogenous background of the refugees. These were just superficial reasons, as scientists could prove, that the work- and social structure of the refugees would not have had a negative impact on the Argentinian society. Ethnocentrism, demographic

¹²² 147.000 were counted for the case of Austria.

¹²³ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 119.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 34.

¹²⁵ Between 1933 and 1937 there were only 2,3 to 1,6 Percent more men than women. Between 1939 and 1941 1,3 to 0,8 Percent.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 34.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Cf. 120.

In the Article “Argentinien und die Unerwünschten” (Argentina and the unwanted) Theo Bruns illuminates the circumstances of Jewish migration and the anti-Semitic position of Argentina, which did not even try to get their own Jewish citizens from the Third Reich back.

Cf. *Bruns*, Theo: Argentinien und die Unerwünschten. URL: <https://www.ila-web.de/ausgaben/298/argentinien-und-die-%E2%80%99Eunerw%C3%BCnschten%E2%80%99C> (As consulted online on the 8th of March 2017).

While Argentina pursued a restrictive immigration policy, it nevertheless – in relation to its population size – accepted more refugees between the 1930’s and 1940’s and became the most important receiving country between 1933 and 1945.

Cf. *Schoepp* (1996). Pg. 36.

thoughts, and racism were more likely to be the reason for the political actions. Refugees therefore tried to reach Brazil and Argentina via illegal routes, usually going to Paraguay first.¹²⁸

Even though, only eight to ten percent of the “German” immigrants coming to Argentina during the reign of the National Socialist Party were politically persecuted,¹²⁹ their presence in Argentina was very important. They founded two movements that tried to work against National Socialism from abroad, based in Mexico and Buenos Aires. The first political Organisation of “German” immigrants in Latin America was the movement “Das andere Deutschland”¹³⁰, founded in 1937 in Buenos Aires by “Germans” in exile. At first thought as an aid organization, they considered themselves as a grouping of political opposition to the National Socialism. They defined four objectives: (1) to help political emigrants; (2) to unite antifascists – first in Argentina, later all over Latin America; (3) to unmask propaganda and activities of Nazis; and (4) to raise public awareness of the danger that National Socialism could cause. They also distributed their Newspaper “Das andere Deutschland” all over Argentina and reported about the situation of the German Reich under the reign of the National Socialists, antifascist activities and also included an “Austrian” fraction. Furthermore, they had a Spanish addition and they distributed flyers in Spanish. The group had unions all over Latin America. The second movement in Mexico was founded by the KPD in 1941 and was called “Freies Deutschland”. Their aim was to show “unity in the fight against Hitler”. Also in Buenos Aires a union existed. Because the first movement was founded by Social Democrats and the second by Communists, there was a conflict between the movements, only to be solved by a Congress and the following foundation of a committee, that united both anti-fascist movements.¹³¹ Latin America also was a refuge for artists and writers. In the Exile they continued their work, which enriched the “German” Cultural life in terms of Theater, Radioprogramms, Music, Fine Arts, Newspapers and Novels.¹³²

After the Second World War, more than a million people were displaced in Europe. DP-Camps were crowded with people that were resettled repeatedly, left without home. The United

¹²⁸ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 55.

¹²⁹ Beate Hock quoting Saint Sauveur- Henn names six to eight percent of political refugees. The exile usually was perceived as a temporary solution.

Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 88.

Saint Sauveur- Henn reports, that the „Hilfsverein deutschsprechender Juden“ (Aid organisation of German speaking Jews) complained in July 1937, that difficult bureaucratic steps in order to get necessary documents was set to tight. This had “dramatic consequences” at times. People that already packed their luggage, got to know about the refusal of their entry and had to remain in Germany, where their situation became increasingly dangerous.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2010). Pg. 22.

¹³⁰ „Das Andere Deutschland“ started as „Das Andere Deutschland. Unabhängige Zeitung für entschiedene demokratische Politik“ in the Weimar Republic, in 1925. The magazine and was considered republican and pacifistic.

¹³¹ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (1996). Pg. 73 et seq.

¹³² Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 76 et seq.

States, Canada, Brazil, and Argentina ranked within the first travel destinations for refugees.¹³³ 30.000 to 50.000 immigrants coming from Germany and Austria found refuge in Argentina in the post-war time. Bergmann considers most of those coming after the Second World War as being not “Reich-Germans” (Reichsdeutsche) but ethnic “Germans”.¹³⁴ One to two percent of the Post-war refugees were active National Socialists, only few of them were high ranking National Socialists. Well known National Socialists hiding in Argentina were Priebke, Eichmann and Mengele who could rely on National Socialist Networks, that simplified the rebuilding of a new life.¹³⁵

Consequently, the “German” community after the Second World War was as complex as possible. There were already various groups of “Germans” that willingly immigrated to Argentina, prior to mass immigration, and in higher numbers immigrants of the first or second wave of migration, as well as their descendants. Additionally, to this complex composition – as a consequence of the Second World War – there were people that came to Argentina due to the Nationalist Socialist Regime. This group can be split into three groups.

- Those who fled the National Socialists and did not want to return to their country of origin, or were not able to return yet, due to restrictive remigration regulations.
- Fugitive NS-criminals, that could leave Europe, before the allies were able to catch them or even fled with help of others – like the allies or the church and arrived in Argentina, where they could count on the help of the former Foreign Nationalist Socialist Organisation (A.O.: NSDAP- Auslandsorganisation).¹³⁶ Even though this group of “German” Post- War Immigrants is the most known one, they immigrated in far lower numbers, than people that had to flee the Nationalist Socialist Regime.¹³⁷
- Displaced persons, left without home, desiring to start a new life.

Understandably, this resulted in various communities, that shared the “German” language and certain cultural features but developed differently. Furthermore, it led to a further split between communities and legal changes that strengthened the pressure to assimilate on the “German” groups.

What is probably the most striking result of the third immigration wave, is that several thousand people, that had to flee the Nationalist Socialist Regime, found rescue in Argentina, whilst members of “German” communities passionately supported the National Socialism, the government sympathized with the National Socialists and after the Second World War also

¹³³ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 103.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 104.

¹³⁵ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 20.

¹³⁶ Also the „Kamaradwerk“ supported former National Socialists and their families, such as Adolf Eichmann. Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 158.

¹³⁷ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 105.

welcomed fugitive Nazis. Resulting in the situation, that persecuted, and persecutors found refuge in the same country.

2.4.3. The Peronist reign and it's meaning for the "German" communities

In February 1946, Juan Domingo Perón Sosa became – with a tight lead – president of Argentina. His term of office was a mixture of democracy and dictatorship. Media and trade unions were under his control, but other parties were allowed, and elections held. At the beginning of his reign the economy did well – also due to post-war conditions and a lack of agricultural products in Europe and a weak industry.¹³⁸

Perón established a five-year plan, that targeted governmental supported immigration. The aim was to implement the social reconstruction of Argentina. Perón thought, that "Germans" would be eager to modernize the country, which should help to detach the "narrow Mediterranean Catholicism".¹³⁹ For the "German" communities Perón was a key figure in their re-establishment. The Peronist reign actively wanted to support "German" immigration. Also, Argentina supported immigration without complete documents, made possible by a delegation that granted a travel permit. Especially "Germans" addressed the consulates in this matter.¹⁴⁰ Whilst in general "Germans" were only allowed to emigrate in exceptional cases and with verification of their papers,¹⁴¹ Argentina renounced to participate in the process of denazification, minimized the monitoring of "Germans" and did not insist on required certificates. Even though the allies protested, Argentinian Consulates did not change their practice.¹⁴² Furthermore, Argentina was the first country that legally received "German" immigrants after the Second World War. Perón had a strong affection for everything that was

¹³⁸ The United States caused a difficult foreign policy for Argentina which resulted in the cooperation with other isolated states, such as Spain – under Franco. The fear of a Hispanic power led to drastic methods, that aimed to harm the Argentinian economy – which succeeded in the end of the 1940's. Furthermore, they spread the these, that Argentina became a refuge for National Socialists. Methods such as the boycott of Argentinian products, dumping of Agricultural goods, hindrance of the transport of goods, barrier of technology export and financial embargos were taken.

Cf. *Medig* (2012). Pg. 44.

¹³⁹ Argentina offered to receive four million refugees after the Second World War and to start with a quota of 30.000 immigrants per month. At the 20th of March an official Migration agreement has been made. At the 18th of October 1948 an agreement has been made with Spain and the state contract with Italy intended to support the immigration of 700.000 Italians within three years. Furthermore, they received huge quotas of Displaced Persons.

Cf. *Ibid* (2012). Pg. 46 et seq.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 56.

¹⁴¹ "Germans" were only allowed to emigrate because there was the need of able people to build up the (yet again) demolished Europe, and to hinder fugitive National Socialists to flee.

¹⁴² The elements that shaped the body of politics under Perón – the doctrine of "Justicialismo", the authoritarian regime, the ideological base against capitalism and communism, a "German" friendly, fascism admiring president was attracting to those who saw their ideals buried under the ruins of the Second World War, as well as to those, who committed crimes against humanity.

Cf. *Medig* (2012). Pg. 54 et seq.

“German”, which matched with the preference of the military. He therefore aimed to reestablish an amicable relation to Germany as soon as possible. Directly after the end of combat operations – Perón was not yet president – he already sent huge quantities of food, medical aid, and clothing via the Red Cross to Germany.¹⁴³

In Argentina “Germans” could celebrate a festival of brotherhood (Kameradschaftsfest) in 1950 and two more in 1951. In 1951, the Norte School in Martinez re-opened again (Argentinian School with German Language Academy) and two years later the “Steck School” in Villa General Belgrano (Cordoba) and furthermore the School Primo Capraro (San Carlos de Bariloche – Province of Rio Negro). In 1952, Argentina became a German Ambassador again.¹⁴⁴ In 1954, Ludwig Erhard – who was called the Father of the German Economy miracle – came to visit Argentina to talk about ways of normalisation and the restitution of “German” Property with Perón.¹⁴⁵ This shows that while Germany was still occupied by the allies, Argentina did everything possible to build strong ties again. Figure 2¹⁴⁶ depicts this meeting. It also gives an idea of the close relationship Perón had with the “Germans”.



Figure 2 Visit of the German minister of economics - Ludwig Erhard with Perón.

One year later, in 1955, the Federación de Asociaciones Argentino-Germanas (F.A.A.G) was founded, which figured as an apolitical umbrella organization for “German” associations. In a speech in honor of its foundation, President Perón mentions that he has heard with joy about the combining of the German-Argentinian Associations into a Federation that includes Germans, Ethnic “Germans” and Friends of Germany. He also saw himself as a part of this federation, for there might be good friends of Germany, but no one is a better friend than himself.¹⁴⁷ On the 11th of March – just before Perón left office – Decree 6127 was passed

¹⁴³ Also Perón's military education has been influenced by „German“ officers. As Lieutenant at the General staff and teacher of the military academy, he published military studies on German tactical operations in the First World War, and went to Germany in the 1930's in Order to learn about the military. Perón continued to have strong bonds to the German embassy. There are rumors, that the Third Reich financially supported the military putsch in Argentina in 1943, where Perón has been a major participant. Perón maintained his connection to Germany at all times.

Cf. Meding (2012). Pg.49, 53.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Hepe (2005). Pg. 10.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 13.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Ibid. Pg 10.

¹⁴⁷ In seiner Ansprache stellt Staatspräsident J.D. Perón fest: „Soeben habe ich aus dem Munde meines alten Freundes Ludovico Freude vernommen, dass sich die deutsch-argentinischen Vereinigungen zu einem Dachverband zusammengeschlossen haben, der die Deutschen, die Deutschstämmigen und die Freunde Deutschlands umfasst. Infolgedessen fühle auch ich mich diesem Verbands zugehörig, denn es mag wohl ebenso gute Freunde Deutschlands geben, aber keinen besseren als mich. Während meines Aufenthaltes in Deutschland habe ich die Kameradschaft und Freundschaft der Deutschen in Deutschland selbst erleben dürfen und bleibe ihnen daher für das ganze Leben herzlich verbunden. (...) Durch alles das, was ich angekündigt habe,

that allowed “German” associations to get their legal entity back- F.A.A.G. is said to have played a major role in the organization of the restitution.¹⁴⁸

By 1960, most of the confiscated institutions were restituted or were in the process of restitution and the “German” community started to evolve again. The restitution of “German” schools was difficult, due to the housing needs of Argentinian Institutions.¹⁴⁹ The last non-restituted properties were financially replaced in 1963.¹⁵⁰

2.5. After the last mass immigration

In the 1950's, Germany and Austria achieved a situation of stable economy and politics which, amongst other things, led to the decline of transatlantic mass immigration. The BRD, the DDR and Austria were “German” state forms emerging out of the German Reich. According to the official policies of the BRD, after the Second World War, foreign “Germans” in Argentina were considered as integrated Argentinians of “German” descent. The post-war Anti-German atmosphere led to the policy of seeing foreign “Germans” rather in an intermediary role and the focus was set towards bilateral connections rather than maintaining claims towards “German” minorities. Therefore, cultural cooperation started a few years after the Second World War, partly due to the initiative of Argentina.

In 1948, the first Austrian Ambassador was sent to Argentina. Four years later, Argentina received a German Ambassador from the BRD.¹⁵¹ Cultural exchange, strongly supported by Perón,¹⁵² became the focus of the policy and remained the focus until today. In a transnational and sub-governmental network of relations, there was a clear support of contacts on the level of Science, Education, and Economy. Foreign Schools, University Co-operations as well as the mediation of German Language and Culture – mostly due to the Goethe- Institutes or Activities by the DAAD, the Humboldt-foundation and Inter Nations serve as examples.¹⁵³ “German” schools now opened for Non-“German” students too, in order to support the contact between people talking in different languages.

sowie durch alles, was diese Idee der Gerechtigkeit beseelt, wollen wir alle Anstrengungen, alle Opfer und die außergewöhnlichen kulturellen und wissenschaftlichen Beiträge entgelten, die wir den Deutschen verdanken. (...)

Cf. Hepe (2005). Pg. 17.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 15, 28 et seq.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 24.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 195.

¹⁵¹ At that time, Germany was split between the BRD and the DDR. The DDR belonged to the former Soviet Union and was governed separately.

¹⁵² Cf. Werz, Nikolaus: Kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit seit 1945. In: Birle, Peter (Ed.): Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien (2010). Pg. 189.

¹⁵³ Cf. Mols, Manfred: Das Verhältnis der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu Lateinamerika: Defizite und Lösungsansätze. In: Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Lateinamerika (1988). Pg. 326.

In 1979, Helmut Kohl – then in his capacity as chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, who became Federal Chancellor of the BRD in 1982 – visited Argentina. In 1983, Kohl signed a Nuclear Agreement with Argentina, which enforces an increase of diplomatic relations. The Malvinas War caused another retreat of BRD politics in Argentina.¹⁵⁴ Curiously, the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 did not cause critical questioning of the international relations in the BRD and the DDR, at least on the outside.¹⁵⁵ Bruno Kreisky, who was the Chancellor of Austria at the time of the Argentinian dictatorship, was an interesting personality in the international relations between Austria and Argentina. Kreisky courageously spoke out against the dictatorial reign and offered asylum to hundreds of politically persecuted from Chile and Argentina. He even recalled the Austrian Ambassador in Chile, for not granting asylum in the Embassy building. Yet, it took Kreisky time to set further actions as a social democrat. The poet and underground fighter Juan German criticised, that when in 1976 the Argentinian military regime was established, he could gain the support of many European Social democrats such as Olof Palme, François Mitterrand, and Willi Brandt, but not the support of Kreisky. They protested for the stop of human right abuses in Argentina, but Kreisky took some time to sign the document, which condemned the dictatorship – on the ground of the diplomatic relations. A few years later – to maintain employment in the Austrian heavy industry – Kreisky agreed to the expansion of arms-industry. Only under massive protest, an export of tanks to Chile was prevented. A transport of tanks to Argentina did not take place due to the Malvinas War.¹⁵⁶

While the governments followed a restrained policy towards the repressive regimes, foundations, and NGO Organisations were partially able to support oppositional groupings, without snubbing the Argentinian government.¹⁵⁷ In other words, an official support of

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Bergmann*. Pg. 197.

¹⁵⁵ Sad notoriety gained the case of Elisabeth Käsemann (1947-1977). The young woman studied sociology and political science. She went to Bolivia in 1968 and went to Argentina in 1971, to work in a social project in a poverty-stricken area, close to the train station Retiro. In the night from the 7th to the 8th of March 1977, she has been kidnapped by the military and killed in the night from the 23rd to the 24th of May 1977, together with 15 other inmates.

Also, Claudio Zieschanck (1951-1976) who visited the Goethe School in Buenos Aires became a target of the military. He was tortured and killed.

The passive policy of the German Government has been criticised broadly.

Cf. *Werz* (2010). Pg. 195 et seq.

Also, the case of Sara Rus, who survived the Holocaust and went with her husband and mother to Argentina and whose son was kidnapped and disappeared as well, was not targeted by the German policy.

Eva Eisenstaedt has written a touching story based on interviews with Sara Rus, that also reveals the parallels between two fascist systems.

Cf. *Eisenstaedt*, Eva: *Zweimal Überleben: Von Auschwitz zu den Müttern der Plaza de Mayo. Die Geschichte der Sara Rus* (2010).

¹⁵⁶ *Stackl*, Erhard: Bruno Kreisky, 100: Als die Welt noch nicht egal war URL:

<http://derstandard.at/1295570570687/Stackls-Suedblick-Bruno-Kreisky-100-Als-die-Welt-noch-nicht-egal-war>. (As consulted online on the 22nd of March 2017).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 198 et seq.

oppositionists did not happen and the ignorance towards people disappearing sent a clear message.

Even though the connections between “Germans” in Argentina and their ancestor’s country of origin weakened, they continued to take a strong interest in the incidents happening in the two Germanies, Austria and Switzerland. The political uprising in the DDR, the fall of the Berlin Wall or the bilateral relations between Germany and the “German” community were seen important and celebrated.¹⁵⁸ Yet, the relation between “German” countries and the “German” communities in Argentina over the years became less important.¹⁵⁹ The last immigration wave to Argentina took place more than 60 years ago, thus, the bonds slowly loosened.¹⁶⁰ “Germans” in Argentina were able to maintain customs and traditions until today, and some “German” linguistic enclaves do still exist, but the “German” features decrease and blend into Argentinian culture.

In 2007, an assumed 40.000 to 50.000 people holding a German passport were living in Argentina. The guesses about who is of “German” descent range between 300.000 and 800.000 people. An estimated 100.000 people use German for communication purposes at home. Only 24 “German” private schools with 15.000 students exist today.¹⁶¹ Bilateral relations based on many personal contacts and networks, upheld by single people, groups, and institutions¹⁶² are the foundation of a stable relationship between Argentina, Germany, and Austria, as well as Switzerland, nowadays.

2.6. “German” immigration and gender

Although hardly researched, gender played a role in how “German” immigration in Argentina took place and on how the life situation of the immigrants turned out, as also presented in the tables at the beginning of this chapter. In this section I will base myself on the findings of the scientists Beate Hock, and Johanna Hopfengärnter as well as a work done by the artist Daliah Zipper and a thesis written by the Argentinian historian Julia Bacchiega. Hock

Amongst them: the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (founded 1964), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (founded 1925), the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (founded 1958), the Hanns-Seidl-Stiftung (founded 1967) and the Stiftungsverband Regenbogen (founded 1989).

Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 200.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *Hepe* (2005). Pg. 43 et. Seq.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 196.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 196.

Bergmann also refers to the relation between the South American countries and the BRD as traditionally amicable and burden-free. This is caused by the historical past of the “positive colonization”, which means that even though many “Germans” settled in South America, they were not connected to the colonial past.

Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 196.

¹⁶¹ *Werz* (2010). Pg. 185.

¹⁶² Cf. *Birle, Peter*: Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien (2010). Pg. 7.

published her book „In zwei Welten: Frauenbiografien zwischen Europa und Argentinien. Deutschsprachige Emigration und Exil im 20. Jahrhundert“ (In two worlds. Women's biographies between Europe and Argentina – Emigration and Exile of German Speakers in the 20th century).

Hopfengärtner Johanna, a cultural mediator, who also researched in the field of history and Latin American studies, did research on the migration of “German” Jewish women. Daliah Zipper worked with film material, that depicts educative material on syphilis, but more over it reveals human trafficking – and therefore forced migration of women – to Argentina. The work of the Argentinian historian Julia Bacchiega goes in a similar direction and deals with the legal rights of women in terms of their sexual exploitation. Due to the underrepresentation of the topic in research, this section examines only two areas of Gender relations: First, the influence of immigration on role models and second, the traumatic consequences of the National Socialist Regime for the roles “German” Jewish women.

Hock Beate outlines the historical background, that the women portrayed had to face and then focusses on individual experiences of women venturing to leave their country of origin and come to Argentina.

She not only explores how social conventions and moral concepts shifted due to emigration, she also tries to find out if women and men perceive the immigration situation in gendered ways. Furthermore, she examines if and how gender relations shape their activities in the new setting. Hock states, that in general women seem to deal better with the situation of emigration in terms of their existential progress. They adapt to situations like work, dealing with the education system, grocery shopping, or the new housing easier. They are faster when it comes to learning a new language and looking for contacts to avoid isolation. Furthermore, they seem to handle the loss of social prestige better. The number of working women increased rapidly due to the exile, and therefore women stood better chances to break out of the gendered roles they learnt back in their home country. Because of these diverse dimensions of life, they ended up working as servants, nannies or in other work-fields associated with womanhood, while men were usually looking for allegedly “important work” even if it was more difficult to find.¹⁶³

Hock also compares roles of women in their country of origin and Argentina. She found out, that new possibilities were created that enabled women to leave typical roles behind, for gainful work was necessary and the possibilities to enter the world of work was easier. However, when gained, the shift of Gender Roles was often only short term and was replaced by the model where the man served as the breadwinner and women as housewives, and mothers.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Cf. *Mettauer*, Philipp, *Horváth*, Martin: Flucht über den Atlantik. In: Gedenkdienst Issue 3 (2004). Pg. 13.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 23 et seq.

Hopfengärtner states that the phenomenon of emigration – described as a process of critical instability – offered the possibility to transform social roles, values and cultural perception of self and others.¹⁶⁵ Yet, “German” faced some problems that differed from those of other “German” immigrants. First, due to the lack of access to education and work that Jews faced in the German Reich from 1933 until 1945 – due to legal restrictions – many young Jewish emigrants were not able to finish school or their training at work. The training of young men was perceived as an investment, while the necessity to train young women in these difficult times was questioned. Second, the reconcilability of family and working life played a crucial role. Young immigrants married and founded a family due to a “normalisation” of life, also in economic terms. Yet, the birth of children was also seen as an approach to life, hope and future, especially to those whose family members were murdered, or scattered all around the world. This led at the same time to a strong emphasis to traditional roles of men and women. Domestic life and family were ideals, that many – not all – women wanted to achieve. If the economic necessity of work was not given, a professional life for a mother was not desirable and condemned by the community. Due to a lack of child care it was difficult in any case.¹⁶⁶

Another Gender related aspect goes back further in history. As already presented in section 2.1., Argentinian immigration was predominantly male until the middle of the 20th century. This caused another dramatic “side effect”. The artist Daliah Ziper went to Buenos Aires in 2015 and discovered film material – which was one of the first shots in motion in Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century. The movie deals with the issue of syphilis and pictures female prostitutes, that usually suffer from this sexually transmitted disease. Around this film footage, Ziper illustrates human trafficking, that took place in 1867 already, when women travelled to South America hoping for a better future. Especially Polish Woman traffickers – by the end of the 19th century large groups of “Germans” lived in Poland, for it was between Austria, Germany, and Russia – transferred tens of thousands woman to Argentina. Some of them knowing of their future profession, others tricked into it. On their journey, they made a stopover at the Viennese Hotel Kummer. In Argentina, their papers were taken away from them, and they were deprived from their identity. Especially Buenos Aires – as a prosperous port city of a country of immigration became a location for trafficking in women.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *Hopfengärtner, Johanna: Zwischen Emigration und Immigration. Deutschsprachige jüdische Frauen in Argentinien*. In: Carreras, Sandra (Ed.): *Der Nationalsozialismus in Lateinamerika*. (2005) Pg. 7. URL: http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/fileadmin/dokumentenbibliothek/Ibero-Online/Ibero_Online_03_2.pdf (As consulted online on the 10th of April 2017).

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 16 et seq.

¹⁶⁷ *Ziper, Daliah: Hotel Kummer*. In: *Stadtform* Ed. 5. (2016). PG 31.

In her thesis „Liberando esclavas. La aplicación de la ‘Ley Palacios’ en la provincia de Buenos Aires (1913-1922) Ley contra la trata de blancas, la prostitución forzada y el proxenetismo” Julia Bacchiaga, discusses the impact of legislation on human trafficking, forced prostitution and pimping – law No. 9.143. Amongst other cases, she discovers the case of the Austro- Hungarian woman Juana Rappel, who came to Argentina in 1911 and accused her alleged husband the Swiss Victorio Zumstein of pimping, claiming that she and Zumstein’s sister were forced to prostitution. Zumstein however was acquitted for lack of evidence.¹⁶⁸

As heterogeneous as the history of “Germans” in Argentina, is the situation that women coming to Argentina had to face in terms of their Education, Access to Work, Family background, involvement in the local ethnic community. Dominant roles and the immigration background as well as the time of immigration had an impact on how women’s lives in Argentina developed.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to illustrate, why the “German” immigration in Argentina is complex, heterogeneous, split and nevertheless interesting to contemplate. I discussed the time prior to mass immigration, which already laid the foundation for the incipient “German” colonies and communities. Furthermore, I put a focus on the time of mass immigration, which caused a unique composition of long-established and new “German” immigrants, that were partially split, partially united. Also, I tried to briefly characterise the relation of “Germans” in Argentina, with their ancestor’s country of origin until the beginning of the 21st century.

The mass immigration took place in three waves. The first wave occurred at the end of the 19th century, in a time when Argentina did economically well. “German” communities, associations, schools, institutions, and cooperatives were established, and immigration was explicitly wanted by the government. In this time the Volga Germans immigrated to Argentina also, a group of “Germans” that lived isolated from German ground more than 100 years already, before migrating to Argentina. The First World War caused the second wave, when “Germans” tried to escape the demolished Europe. Whilst Argentina was still a country that supported immigration, first restrictions were made. The third wave took place between 1933 and the first years after the Second World War. Politically persecuted as well as Jewish People fled the Nationalist Socialist German Reich to find a split “German” community in Argentina. The National Socialist ideology was attractive to many “Germans” living in Argentina, at the same time there was a strong resistance towards it – for example by the “Argentinisches Tageblatt” (Argentinian Daily Newspaper).

¹⁶⁸ Bacchiaga, Julia: Liberando esclavas. La aplicación de la ‘Ley Palacios’ en la provincia de Buenos Aires (1913-1922) Ley contra la trata de blancas, la prostitución forzada y el proxenetismo (2015). Pg. 157.

The Argentinian Government – especially after the Military Putsch – was drawn towards the German Reich, and although officially neutral, they sympathised with the axes. Only two months prior to the End of the Second World War, Argentina declared War to the German Reich. Due to the declaration of War a process of expropriation of “German” institutions, associations and companies took place and people were blacklisted.

Yet, Argentina remained a main target for people wanting to escape Europe after the Second World War. Amongst tens of thousands of Displaced People coming to Argentina, also former National Socialists came to Argentina to hide from jurisdiction.

All this led to the co-existence of several “German” groups. First, long-established “Germans” that came to Argentina mostly at the end of the 19th and at the very beginning of the 20th century, who were mostly merchants, farmers, craftsmen, and workers. Second, People that willingly fled Europe after the First World War. Third, People that were forced to leave Europe, persecuted by the Nationalist Socialists, Jurisdiction or were left displaced. These “German” groups were furthermore divided by their faith, their political values, their geographic positioning – especially in terms of a rural or urban situation, their educational background, and the customs of their “German” communities.

At the end of the Chapter, I tried to discuss the impact of Gender in terms of migration. Due to lack of scientific research in this matter I cannot present a more detailed analysis but could detect that women tended to cope with the situation of immigration better than men did, and therefore found a profession – even if of a lesser challenge and frequently only until they got married – more easily than men. Yet, as soon as a traditional distribution of roles was possible, they made the move. Furthermore, the predominantly male immigration in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century entailed trafficking in women.

3. Theories around memory, assimilation, and identity

As shown in the previous chapter, the history of “Germans” in Argentina is complex and marked by heterogeneity. As a result, the contemporary presence of the “German” culture in Argentina exhibits many – partially contradictory – facets. One aim of this thesis is to find out how the identification of Argentinians of “German” descent transformed since the last immigration wave after the Second World War. This raises many questions. First, it is necessary to ask how it is possible that “German” culture is still existent in Argentina after so many years and how a memory of the “German” past could be maintained by people who themselves have no immigration background. Second, it is crucial to analyse which factors affect the upholding of “German” culture and partially even upholding the „German“ language. And third, I want to investigate how “German” identity formation took place in Argentina.

To answer these questions, I will take a closer look at collective memory to reflect on how “German” memory in Argentina is constructed, how assimilation took place, and to analyse contemporary identifications with “German” culture. Though the theoretical approaches I have chosen about memory, assimilation, and identity overlap and are complementary, I shall look at them separately for analytical purposes.

Discussing memory, I will draw on Aleida Assmann’s and Jan Assmann’s work about collective memory. They differentiate between individual, social, cultural, and collective memory. Their distinction makes it possible to analyse processes of development and maintenance of the different forms of memories, as well as the role of memory for the “German” individual, the “German” community, or the “German” collective.

In the second part of the chapter I will emphasise on the assimilation theory, which will help to explain the persistence of “German” culture, for it focusses on the development of the immigrants. The “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”, which was developed by the Chicago School¹⁶⁹ in the 1920’s, serves as a reference model. Having said this, a critical approach towards their concept is crucial. For the members of the Chicago School supported – especially from a contemporary point of view – questionable views towards race and class. The theories were developed in the United States of America and consequently show different basic conditions. Therefore, I will discuss the connection of the Chicago School with racism. Also, the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” simplifies several complex issues, which is problematic when adapting it to the diverse groups of “Germans” in Argentina. Therefore, the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” is a useful tool only when extended. I will do this by taking

¹⁶⁹ The Chicago School was a body of work, that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and dealing with issues of criminology and sociology. Most important are their findings on urban sociology.

into consideration the conclusions Yolanda Hipperdinger – an Argentinian linguist – has made. She names factors that weaken or strengthen the (linguistic) connection, with the ancestor's culture. In my case, about three to five Generations have been born since the end of the Second World War, the End of "German" mass immigration to Argentina. Since the concept is based on the process of assimilation over generations, it is ideal for me to make comparisons across those generations.

In the third part I will discuss the complex issue of identity. Firstly, I will locate identity within the tension of individual, social, and collective formations. Secondly, I will revisit the transformation of the idea of identity in the modern and postmodern era. In this regard, the sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall defines three concepts: the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject.

3.1. Individual, social, collective, and cultural memory

The contemporary "German" communities are mainly set together by descendants of "Germans" who did not live in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, but were born in Argentina. When talking to my interviewees, they therefore refer to their "German" or European past by relating to the remembrance of their ancestors who came to Argentina many generations ago. The relation to and the memory of the "German" past, is – in most cases – a relation to the experiences and memories of their ancestors. The heterogeneity of "Germans" regarding their time of immigration, their economic, religious, and social background, their country of origin, and most of all, their reason for migration means that, when my participants talk about the "Germans", many different communities, groupings and individuals are implicated that, at the same time, have different approaches towards their "German" past.

While, for example, in the city of Villa General Belgrano, in the village La Cumbrecita – both situated in the Province of Córdoba – or in the city Bariloche in the South of Argentina, the "German" culture still has a strong presence, other people descending from "Germans" don't want to be reminded of their "German" past. The immigration of "German" Jews to Argentina for example has often been marked by traumatic experiences and the forced exodus from their homes.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰The author Ariel Magnus – grandson of Jewish immigrants of "German" descent recalls: *My grandmother didn't want to talk about it (...). It isn't a nice topic to talk about. (...) My sad background story has been the Argentinian dictatorship and not the German Dictatorship, somehow. (...) When Ariel Magnus went to Germany to study, he realized: Everything in my upbringing I thought of being Jewish, was "German". Going to bed early, collecting Easter eggs. These customs were "German" and not Jewish. Consequently, I got a "German" upbringing, which my parents wouldn't like to hear. Most of my family don't want to hear about that.*

People in “German” influenced places like Villa General Belgrano, La Cumbrecita, and Bariloche refer easily – even those who have no “German” ancestors – to their “German” roots or the “German” past of the region. Without any problems the “German” tradition is adopted, and historic imaginations as well as an active – yet not necessarily critical – search of that history takes place. Figure three to six show how architecture, naming, and typography, that are perceived as being “German” are still used and adapted in the case of Villa General Belgrano and La Cumbrecita.



Figure 3 "German" teahouse in Villa General Belgrano



Figure 4 Graz as a for a tourist accommodation referring to an Austrian city

Figure three and four depict the “German” way of naming houses. In figure three the owner welcomes the guests by having a shield saying “Willkommen”, on top of the building. Also, in figure three the owners of an Argentinian tourist accommodation not only name their buildings after Graz, a Styrian town but also name their buildings “Häuser”, the German word for houses. Furthermore, both signs are using typography that is usually linked with the “German” culture, the gothic script.

Figure three also shows the sculptures of a man and a woman in Lederhosen and Dirndl – clothing that is perceived to be “German”. This image is also visible in figure five. Figure five shows an effigy of musicians, wearing “traditional German” clothing and playing instruments – which are also connected with “German” folklore. The effigy is situated in front of a tavern.

Meine Großmutter wollte darüber nicht sprechen. (...) Es ist auch kein schönes Thema, worüber man sprechen will. (...) Meine traurige Hintergrundgeschichte war die Argentinische Diktatur und nicht die Deutsche Diktatur, irgendwie. (...) All die Dinge von denen ich dachte ich hätte sie aus meiner jüdischen Erziehung, waren Deutsche Dinge. Dass man früh ins Bett geht. Das man Ostereier sammelt, und was weiß ich wie viele Dinge. Sie waren alle Deutsch und nicht jüdisch. Also ich habe eher eine Deutsche Erziehung bekommen, was meine Eltern nicht so gerne hören werden. Und viele Leute in der Familie, das wollen sie nicht mal hören.

Cf. Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acnuMQPMmPc> (As consulted. 9th of May 2017) Min. 3:55.



Figure 6 Effigy of musicians wearing "traditional" clothing



Figure 5 Casita Suiza (Little Swiss House) in La Cumbrecita

Figure six shows a tourist store, called Casita Suiza (Little Swiss house), in which tourists can buy products that are linked to the Swiss and “German” culture. The building uses similar elements, as described in terms of figure three and four, the Gothic script and the reference to Switzerland – this time in Spanish. Furthermore, the architecture shows parallels to the Alpine Region in Europe.

These pictures reveal the references made to the “German” culture in places of Argentina - where an urge to upkeep the “German” past takes place. Whilst other people don’t want to be reminded of their “German” past. Which shows that memorizing takes place on different levels and in different contexts. What is relayed as memory can be positively or negatively connotated – or anything in between, even in contradictory forms.

“German” immigrants – especially the immigrants of the third wave – are composed of politically persecuted people, Jewish people, National Socialists and Displaced Persons. They remembered their “German” past differently. What is more, the actual immigrant’s descendants may have a different idea of “German” values, characteristics, traditions, and the need to uphold them in comparison with the immigrants themselves.

The history of “Germans” in Argentina – who in many cases never could visit the country their ancestors came from – is obviously convoluted. So is their memory, when it comes to individuals, as well as when it comes to collectives and societies. Consequently, it is necessary to define a theoretical frame that could account for these diverse and contradictory tendencies.

The theories around different forms of memory – such as the social and collective memory – go back to 1920’s and have been developed independently by the sociologist and

psychologist Maurice Halbwachs¹⁷¹ and the art historian and cultural scientist Aby Warburg.¹⁷² Both rejected the idea that collective memory was passed on biologically and argued for its cultural origin. According to them, belonging to a specific community, or society goes hand in hand with socialization and lore. To maintain a community, a sense of belonging must be created. The collective memory functions as a melting pot of knowledge that guides actions and experiences within a culture or community and must be repeated over time.¹⁷³ A more detailed look at memory was taken years later by Jan and Aleida Assmann. They not only questioned the objectivity of historiography but also asked how and why certain interpretations of past incidents are made.¹⁷⁴ According to them, memory of “Germans” in Argentina must be seen through different subjective filters used by different communities and individuals. Memory itself is not fixed to the single individual but can be found in – overlapping – variations.

Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann define four forms of memory: The individual, the social, the collective, and the cultural form of memory.¹⁷⁵ Individual memory, according to them, is based on one’s own biographical memory that helps to create a sense of identity. It is only a fragment of memory and part of personal history. Which means, that we do not remember ‘everything’ at the same time, as well as parts of our memory are repressed or ‘forgotten’. ‘Memories’ depend on the individual’s perspective and are not isolated stories but are interwoven with the memories of other people: hence they implicate a community building process. Furthermore, memories exist in fragments as cut, unconnected moments. They gain in structure by subsequent narratives from a given perspective – which means they are actively re/created. Memories are then fugitive and instable and will be judged differently over life time and relative to perspective. Individual memory therefore is dynamic and related to other forms of memory; it is not isolated but is shaped by interaction and shared experiences. Social memory, according to Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, refers to a memory profile that several people share. These people might be a community, a colony, or a generation. This profile of memory shifts with every change of generation. Generations share experiences, values, social norms, and cultural explanation models, which connect them. Social memory is

¹⁷¹ 1925 Halbwachs published his first work on collective memory. Persecuted by the National Socialists he died 1945 in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald. His book “Das kollektive Gedächtnis” was published in 1950 posthumously.

Cf. *Schraten*, Jürgen: Zur Aktualität von Jan Assmann (2011). Pg. 16.

¹⁷² Warburg focused on the impact of conscious and unconscious memory on expression.

Cf. *Wedepohl*, Claudia: Aby Warburg Mnemonics, Mneme and Mnemosyne. Aby Warburg’s Theory of Memory. In: Bruniana & Campanelliana: Ricerche filosofiche e materiali storico-testuali anno xx 2014/2. Pg. 385.

¹⁷³ Cf. *Assmann*, Jan: Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität. In: *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (1988). Pg. 9.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *Schraten* (2011). Pg. 14.

¹⁷⁵ *Assmann*, Aleida: Vier Formen von Gedächtnis. Von individuellen zu kulturellen Konstruktionen der Vergangenheit. In: *Wirtschaft & Wissenschaft* 9 (2001). Pg. 34 – 45.

based on everyday communication, where memory is constructed, that is, socially transmitted and group related. Already by being born into a specific group, a person takes on forms of interaction, behaviour, and ways of talking. Therefore, within a community, an individual memory is constructed in communication with others.¹⁷⁶ This form of memory can usually be upheld for 80 to 100 years, or three to five generations. Consequently, it modifies over generations.

Memory that lasts longer than three to four generations, usually needs a cultural formation and therefore cannot be identified as “everyday memory”. In this case, a knowledge structure is created, which Jan Assmann calls “identity specific” (*identitätskonkret*).¹⁷⁷ This knowledge structure makes it possible for a community to reason unity and shared character and is drawn on to reproduce it.

Collective memory must be created by using texts, pictures, rituals, monuments, places, and actions. Jan Assmann calls them “figures of memory” (*Erinnerungsfiguren*).¹⁷⁸ These “figures of memory” are external to our sense of time. The Individual becomes a carrier of memory within the collective. This makes it possible to create an identity for a collective or an institution. Collective memory does not emerge spontaneously but is created intentionally, and symbolically. Myths and legends are produced that locate memory, generalize it, and pass it on over generations.¹⁷⁹ One example that can be named for the “German” Community is the “Fiesta de la Cerveza” or Oktoberfest, where thousands of people come to Villa General Belgrano to celebrate this “German” festival.¹⁸⁰ Figure 7 and 8 not only depict the interest visitors show, but also how “German” symbolism is used with Argentinian becomes visible. Especially Figure 7 must be highlighted in this sense, bringing together the flag of Argentina and the flag of Germany. Furthermore, two towers are visible, constructed in the style of the

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Assmann, Aleida: *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (2006). Pg. 206.

Cf. Assmann (1988). Pg. 10.

Cf. Schraten (2011). Pg. 15.

¹⁷⁷ Assmann, Jan: *Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität*. In: *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (1988). Pg. 11.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Pg. 12.

¹⁷⁹ ODS3: *Gedächtnis ein vielschichtiger Begriff*. URL: http://ods3.schule.de/aseminar/lernen/grundlagen/4_gedaechtnis.htm (As consulted on the 15th of May 2017).

¹⁸⁰ The celebration derives from different backgrounds, as the jubilee publication *Festschrift „Oktoberfest 50 años. Historia ilustrada de la Fiesta Nacional de la Cerveza Villa General Belgrano – Córdoba – Argentina”* depicts. In the 1930’s the foundation of the “German” settlement has been celebrated, called “Stiftungsfest” (festival of foundation). Furthermore, the “Fiesta de la Manzana” (Festival of the apple) and shortly thereafter the asphaltting of the street and the celebration in honor of the young men convened called “Fiesta de la Conscriptos”. As the region turned into a tourist area and Villa General Belgrano got famous for its “German” character, in 1963 the idea was born to celebrate a collective festival, so tourists could participate too. The “Fiesta de la Cerveza” (beer festival) also known as Argentinian Oktoberfest nowadays attracts thousands of people to come to Villa General Belgrano.

Cf. *Oktoberfest 50 años. Historia ilustrada de la Fiesta Nacional de la Cerveza Villa General Belgrano – Córdoba – Argentina* (2013). Pg. 8.

German half-timbered architecture. Figure 8 makes the usage of the Gothic script visible, as well as people wearing Tyrolean hats, and Lederhosen. The beer, which is a key element of the Argentinian Oktoberfest – also called Fiesta de la Cerveza (beer festival), is spread over the crowd. Both figures stem from a touristic page and serve to attract tourists to visit the Oktoberfest of Villa General Belgrano.



Figure 7 People toasting at the "Oktoberfest"



Figure 8 Tapping of the beer¹⁸¹

Cultural memory, Jan Assmann argues, serves to avoid forgetting, but functions on a more formal level. Like collective memory, it helps to transfer experiences, knowledges and functions across generations and thus builds a social long term memory but while other forms of memory have a selective function and their content is strictly chosen, cultural memory maintains, interprets, and passes on functions, knowledge, memories, and experiences more comprehensively. Schools, libraries, archives, and museums usually are institutions that help to create a structure where this is possible. Cultural memory is created, when it is considered as important by people. Even though cultural memory apparently is of a broader view, in the end a certain selectivity is unavoidable. For example, it is impossible to maintain every single fragment of the history of “Germans” in Argentina.¹⁸²

Jan Assmann defines six features as important for differentiating “cultural memory”:¹⁸³

- 1.) Specificity of Identity (Identitätskonkretheit) or group relatedness (Gruppenbezogenheit): Knowledge is produced, maintained, and saved by a community that constructs a unity or a character through this knowledge. This knowledge also serves to mark the self and the other, and therefore to build identity.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Welcome Argentina: Villa General Belgrano. Beer- Festival. URL: <https://www.welcomeargentina.com/villageneralbelgrano/beer-festival.html> (As consulted on the 23rd of May 2017).

¹⁸² Cf. ODS3: Gedächtnis ein vielschichtiger Begriff. URL: http://ods3.schule.de/aseminar/lernen/grundlagen/4_gedaechtnis.htm (As consulted on the 15th of May 2017).

¹⁸³ Cf. Assmann (1988). Pg. 13-15.

- 2.) Reconstructivity: In each epoch, society reconstructs what is perceived to be needed for their own frame of reference. Memory therefore does not have the ability to maintain the knowledge. Cultural memory is comprised of a collection of pictures, patterns of acting or texts and the actuality of presence.
- 3.) Formedness: A linguistic, visual, and ritual forming serves to objectify and crystalize communicative meanings and collectively shared memories. This is a precondition for the cultural and institutional hereditability of a society.
- 4.) Organisation: This refers to the institutional protection of communication and the specialisation of bodies responsible for the cultural memory. (Spezialisierung der Träger des kulturellen Gedächtnisses).
- 5.) Liability: Cultural memory is related to a self-image of a group and is connected with an understanding of values and relevance. Which means certain symbols are considered as more important than others. The liability of knowledge, that is preserved in the cultural memory, has two aspects: Formativity, which serves to educate, civilize, and humanise and normativity, which serves to guide actions.
- 6.) Reflexivity: Cultural memory is reflexive on three accounts. First, it is practical-reflexive, which refers to the practical usage of sayings, rituals, or ethno- theories. Second, it is self-reflexive, meaning that cultural memory is intertwined with interpretation, exclusion, reinterpretation, censorship, control, change and the way it is received. Third, it is reflexive towards the self-image of the group. The system that underlies society is made a subject of discussion. Texts, images, and rituals stabilize self-image. A group can 'find their character' in the collectively shared knowledge.

Even though Assmann assigned these features to the cultural memory, they partially count for collective memory too. Both forms of memory entail the production and maintenance of memory by a group, both forms of memory are created in relation to their frame of reference, and both forms of memory rely on a linguistic, visual, and ritual articulation. Furthermore, both forms of memory are reflexive and present the self-image of a group.

I argue that these four forms of memory have helped and still help to maintain a sense of "German" culture in Argentina. It is especially the collective and the cultural forms of memory that connect the immigration background of "German" ancestors to today's Argentinians with/of "German" descent. For if memory was only created on a social level, there would hardly be any trace of a "German" heritage. Over decades, many "Germans" settled in relatively homogenous groups and married endogamous, which formed the base for a strong memory building. "German" schools, associations, collectives, and colonies were founded, and "German" culture was connected to texts, images, clothing, rituals, actions, and places. Due

to this, memory not only helped to maintain some “German” past but also to develop it further and to reshape identities.¹⁸⁴

3.2. Assimilation

Assimilation is a term which is used in various scientific disciplines, such as biology, linguistics, psychology, history, or sociology. In sociology, the term denotes how processes of adaption and adjustment lead to the share of an increasing number of features of a dominant collective. Usually assimilation takes place, when an individual or a group takes on behaviour patterns and/or attitudes of a majority or dominant group. Simultaneously, a process of “dissimilation” occurs, in which the previous socio-cultural character is partly abandoned. Assimilation also means, that individuals or groups must learn and perform cultural systems of signs and practices of the ‘host’ culture and therefore acculturate.¹⁸⁵ Also, assimilation could refer to the development of new cultures due to the interrelation and blending of different social and cultural groups.¹⁸⁶ In the case of the contemporary Argentinian society that evolved over decades mainly due to waves of immigration from the 19th century onwards– assimilation is certainly the case. What we know today as Argentinian culture, has its roots in different cultures, with some – such as the Spanish and Italian – more dominant than others in the formation of the social and collective memories.

Even though “German” culture influenced the formation of the Argentinian one – for example in the fields of science, architecture, and the military¹⁸⁷– it remained most influential within the “German” communities and for the descendants of the “German” immigrants in the Argentinian diaspora.

3.2.1. Three-generation-assimilation-cycle

Theories on assimilation help to understand, why “German” descendants and „German” communities have upheld their “German” heritage despite of living in Argentina for many

¹⁸⁴ Cf. *Assmann*, Jan: Unsichtbare Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis. In: *Sprandel* Walter M.: Die Objektivität der Ordnungen und ihre kommunikative Konstruktion (1994). Pg. 413, 415.

¹⁸⁵ Uni Oldenburg: Begriff Assimilation. URL: <http://ome-lexikon.uni-oldenburg.de/begriffe/assimilation/> (As consulted on the 27th of May 2017).

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *Schuleri-Hartje*, Ulla-Kristina, *Floeting*, Holger, *Reimann*, Bettina (Ed.): *Ethnische Ökonomie. Integrationsfaktor und Integrationsmaßstab* (2005). Pg. 17.

¹⁸⁷ In the anthology “Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Argentinien” several authors deal with the exchange between “Germans” and Argentina. The contributions of the authors Oliver Gleich – who investigated on the military connections Argentina with Germany and its predecessors between 1900 and 1945 – Sandra Carreras – who depicts the influence of German scientists between 1860 and 1950 – Nikolaus Werz – who worked on the cultural and scientific collaboration since 1945 – as well as Thorsten Eßer, who writes about the musical co-operations between Germany and Argentina.

Cf. *Birle*, Peter: *Die Beziehungen zwischen Argentinien und Deutschland* (2010).

generations, and their official recognition as Argentinians. While migration theories – such as the Push- and Pull theory¹⁸⁸ – focus on reasons for emigration and immigration, assimilation theories observe and interpret processes occurring after the act of immigration.¹⁸⁹ The process of assimilation in a majority society cannot be completed within a short period but takes time and very often can only be ‘completed’ by subsequent generations. In the 1920’s the Chicago School – under the lead of Robert E. Park – started to show an interest in how European Immigration influenced urban development in the United States over a long period. Based on empirical sociological methods, they investigated the causes and effects of migration, and developed an assimilation model.¹⁹⁰

Their concept of “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” suggests, that regarding values, behaviour, characteristics, and rules, the similarity of immigrants, ethnic minorities to majority societies varies with the amount of time. According to the theory, immigrants that stay the longest in the receiving country and members of subsequent generations will show more similarity with the majority society, than immigrants that didn’t spend a long time in the receiving country.¹⁹¹ The Chicago School suggests, that first generation cannot be assimilated, for they have been socialized in their country of origin. This generation can only adapt, especially within ethnically closed communities of diaspora. The second generation is argued to grow up in the tension between their parents’ culture and the culture of the receiving country. This is usually accompanied by a situation of conflict when it comes to rules, values, and patterns, because they are to fulfil the expectation of the community of their parents and the receiving country. Only the third generation can assimilate, as they are able to participate in the process of acculturation within the receiving country.

According to the Chicago School, all immigrants and their descendants undergo this cycle in which – over three generations – they take on the language of the receiving country and establish a shared memory with the majority society.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ In the case of “Germans”, the Push- and Pull theory, for example can be applied at the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th century, when a mass exodus from Europe met with the interests of Argentina to attract immigrants, as well as its attractive economic growth and its welcoming immigration laws.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Oswald*, Ingrid: *Migrations-Soziologie* (2007). Pg. 93.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 19 et seq, 94.

¹⁹¹ Migration Policy: Assimilation Models old and new. URL:

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/assimilation-models-old-and-new-explaining-long-term-process>. (As consulted on the 25th of May 2017).

¹⁹² The “Chicago School” also assumed, that the contact between migrants and the receiving society is always shaped by thoughts of competition and conflicts. Immigrants could establish themselves only after some time and eventually will merge with the receiving society. The basic assumption is, that every group of immigrants must go through this race-relation-cycle. The race-relation-cycle has been established in connection with the immigration of people from Asia and has been adapted to ethnical issues.

Cf. *Oswald* (2005). Pg. 94 et seq.

3.2.2. Problematization of the Chicago School and the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”

However, Park adds that people undergo different processes of acculturation and assimilation – due to allegedly “deviating” cultures and “racial differences.”¹⁹³ In Park’s highly controversial view people of colour, indigenous people, and inhabitants of slums, cannot be displayed in the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” for they, in Park’s view, are not able to assimilate.¹⁹⁴ This theory is – especially from a contemporary point of view – problematic and indeed racist, colonialist and discriminating as well as marked by the naturalization of class hierarchies. Lösing Felix points out the complex entanglement of the Chicago School with racism in „From the Congo to Chicago. Robert E. Park’s Romance with Racism “. ¹⁹⁵ Park’s work is considered as a defence of the race concept and the legitimacy of race hierarchies. Park developed his unidirectional concept of assimilation based on ideas about the alleged superiority of white people and the inferiority of people of colour, when explaining the problems of modernity in terms of ‘progress’ and ‘change’. He even favoured the Jim Crow Laws¹⁹⁶ that prescribed and legitimized racial segregation in the United States of America.¹⁹⁷

Prejudice were not only held against African Americans, but also against people coming from Italy, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Tsarist empire, and other groups of immigrants. In “Das interpretive Paradigma. Eine Einführung” Reiner Keller points out that the hostility and discrimination at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century is the expression of some moral panic over the alleged over-population of cities. The perception of the various groups of immigrants from Europe were then considered as less adaptable and less able to assimilate, legitimizing the fear of the ‘locals’. Chicago at this time faced an enormous increase of population, and due to the immigration of Europeans and Afro-Americans, turned into a city of separation of ethnicities. While the Anglo-Saxon population of Chicago could establish themselves already as the ‘host’ and became an economic and cultural elite, the Non-Anglophone immigration society of the first and second generation faced existential predicaments.¹⁹⁸ To Park Chicago seemed a laboratory where social inequalities,

¹⁹³ Cf. *Park*, Robert E.: Migration and the Marginal Man. In: American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 33. No. 6. (1928). Pg. 890.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *Oswald* (2005). Pg. 95.

¹⁹⁵ *Lösing*, Felix: From the Congo to Chicago. Robert E. Park’s Romance with Racism. In: Racism and Sociology. Yearbook 5 (2014). Pg. 107 – 123.

¹⁹⁶ The Jim Crow Laws were state and local laws that favored and produced racial separation. They were valid until 1965. The laws determined that the usage of public facilities had to occur according to one’s ‘race’. The laws caused discrimination in economic, educational, and social matters.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Lösing* (2014). Pg. 107 – 123.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *Keller*, Reiner: Das interpretative Paradigma. Eine Einführung (2012). Pg. 23 et seq.

confrontations between ethnic groups, and diverse imaginations of values formed the base for reforms.¹⁹⁹

Even though the problematic background of the Chicago School must be considered, their observation of the process of assimilation over generation over several generations is still valid. Wirth, a student of Parks, who was also a member of the Chicago School, states that for collective acting, at least a partial consent is necessary – hence a social and cultural homogeneity is not essential for a functioning society as long as shared similarities make social and cultural actions possible.²⁰⁰ Therefore, in spite of its shortcomings, the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” is of explanatory power today, its focus on the shifts between generations is interesting and valid until today. When using the „three-generation-assimilation-cycle“ in this thesis as a reference, I am aware of the problematic past and the context of its creation but will use it as a possibility to focus on the changes within generations, to explore the articulation of overlapping consent across their members.

3.2.3. Application of the „three-generation-assimilation-cycle“

Generations co-exist and cannot be looked at or analysed as separate entities, as there is interaction within a generation but also throughout multiple generations and they are thus connected. When establishing which generation an individual belongs to, it is – according to Aleida Assmann – important to consider the individual biography, the family background, religion, culture, as well as the date of birth.²⁰¹ A generation therefore is not only based on age, but on shared experiences in the past, patterns of socialization and shared concepts of values. The generation someone grew up in, is defined therefore not only in terms of belonging to a certain age group, but also seen as a factor that influences the individuals’ identity and what they identify with as their memory. Whilst within a family the demarcation of generations can easily be done – even though a single person passes through various stages, such as child, parent, grandparent – it is relatively difficult to clearly define a generation in society. People are constantly born and die. Especially out of this reason, biological elements do not only determine a generation, but rather do socio-cultural factors.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ *Alles in allem gleicht die damalige Chicagoer Situation einem Hexenkessel, in dem sich neue und extreme soziale Ungleichheiten, Konfrontationen zwischen unterschiedlichen ethnisch-kulturellen Gruppen und Wertvorstellungen, kreative Potenziale und Gegensätze zwischen offiziellen Moralvorstellungen und dem tatsächlichen Alltagsleben (...) eine Stadt, wie gemacht für Debatten und Sozialreformbewegungen aller Art* Ibid. Pg. 26 et seq.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Vortkamp, Wolfgang: Partizipation und soziale Integration in heterogenen Gesellschaften. Louis Wirths Konzeption sozialer Organisation in der Tradition der Chicagoer Schule (2003). Pg. 21 et seq.

²⁰¹ Cf. Assmann, Aleida: Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung (2007). Pg. 31.

²⁰² Cf. Ibid (2007). Pg. 32 et seq.

This is important, for the first half of the 20th century was a time of instability and change in Europe – especially in the cases of Germany, Austria, and their successor states with constantly changing forms of government, and shifting borders, as well as a changing national consciousness, which also affected people migrating to Argentina. When differentiating across the generations, not only their heterogeneous reasons for migration must be emphasized but also the differing concepts of their former home, their understanding of “German” cultures and Identity. This means the multiple “First Generations” made a different connection to the “German” culture, as the second or third did.

3.2.4. Revisiting of the reference model

The heterogeneous composition of “German” immigrants in terms of their social, religious, economic, geographic, but also historical immigration background causes that the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” is suitable only as a reference- or initial model. The findings of the Chicago school, and their observation of the process of assimilation over several generations is an interesting starting point, to be able to adapt it to the Argentinian situation it should be revisited. To do so, I will base myself on the findings of the Argentinian linguist Yolanda Hipperdinger, who investigated on mass immigration and processes of homogenization in Argentina in terms of the language aspect of immigration; which is not equivalent with the “cultural” but one aspect of the latter only.²⁰³

Whilst Hipperdinger also focusses on the process immigrants undergo over generations, her findings are more recent, done specifically researching the Argentinian situation, and most importantly, she names factors that foster or hinder linguistic assimilation.

Hipperdinger states that immigrants and their descendants were torn between two interests. On the one side, the preservation of identification with the country of origin and on the other side the participation in the society of the receiving country. In her perspective the following aspects influence how fast immigrants and their descendants assimilate:

- Living conditions prior to the immigration and the existence of former migration experiences.
- Geographic concentration or contribution of immigrants, urbanisation, level of education, maintenance of ethnic institutions, attitude of the immigrants towards their own culture.

²⁰³ Hipperdinger, Yolanda: Masseneinwanderung und sprachliche Homogenisierung in Argentinien: Spuren der verdrängten Sprachen. In: *Kremnitz*, Georg (Ed.): *Von La Quiaca nach Ushuaia. Sprachen, Kulturen und Geschichte in Argentinien* (2007). Pg. 213-229.

- Status/Prestige of the mother tongue, language knowledge, dialectal splitting, homogeneity of the group.
- The degree of cultural and religious similarities between immigrants and the resident population.

In an interview I conducted in December 2016 with the author, Hipperdinger states:
*La asimilación (.) el decrecimiento de los razgos culturales hace un rebote. Y en el caso de las instituciones eso es muy visible. Cada vez hay más. (.)*²⁰⁴

Which means, that the assimilation of the “Germans” goes hand in hand with the decrease of cultural traces, on several levels. As an example, she claims that this becomes even more visible when looking at institutions. The Argentinian culture becomes more part of the “German” institutions, the more time passes. Hipperdinger’s study also showed that immigrants that could not plan their migration for a long time in advance and moved to a heterogenous, urban environment, had only little linguistic and cultural distance to the resident population and so assimilated faster.²⁰⁵

People belonging to a minority society, might also develop counter-identities in reaction to a dominant group. They hold on to their ethnic identity and don’t show any ambitions to assimilate. The linguist Anna Ladilova could observe this in the case of Volga Germans in Argentina.

In her study “Kollektive Identitätskonstruktion in der Migration: Eine Fallstudie zur Sprachkontaktsituation der Wolgadeutschen in Argentinien“ she finds out that especially due to the (forced) integration in the majority society – which in particular took place from 1945 until the 1980’s – a perpetuation of the Volga German identity occurred as a counter reaction. The counter-identity has been developed, which also can be noticed by the increase of interest shown to Volga German folklore.²⁰⁶ The descendants of immigrants decide at times consciously not to assimilate totally and react towards assimilation pressure with an intensified identification with the Volga German culture. As the next section will reveal, this doesn’t necessarily mean, that they define as Volga Germans “only” but that multiple identities are build.

²⁰⁴ IntYoHi4min56sec

²⁰⁵ Cf. Hipperdinger (2007). Pg. 218 et seq.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Ladilova, Anna: Kollektive Identitätskonstruktion in der Migration: Eine Fallstudie zur Sprachkontaktsituation der Wolgadeutschen in Argentinien (2013). Pg. 38.

3.3. Identity

The term identity is subject to many interpretations and definition in daily life as well as in science. National, ethnic, and cultural identity, European identity, political identity, split identity, or search for identity are only few keywords that are frequently mentioned in this matter.²⁰⁷ This thesis aims to investigate the identity building of “Germans” in Argentina. While the previously presented concepts on memory and assimilation serve as a base for the development and the maintenance of “German” culture and language in Argentina, this section will focus more on the identity perception of this process.

The educationalist Eva Borst states that the individual is in a permanent confrontation and negotiation with its surrounding. Identity building is therefore a process that never ends and does not follow a uniform pattern but is unique. Every participating subject perceives experiences made collectively differently. Consequently, the process of identity building is difficult to grasp and takes place in the tension across individual, social, and collective memories.²⁰⁸

According to this definition, the sense of “German” identity of the individual only exists in connection and negotiation with a social and collective “German” identity. This concept of identity implicates the theories of memory – which I discussed earlier in this chapter – where individual, social, collective, and cultural memory are in a strong relation to each other. First thoughts on the influence of society and the collective on the individual’s identity emerged at the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th century, and contributed to the definition of an individual, social, and collective identity.

At the beginning of postmodern times in the 1970’s, the term identity became even more diverse and fluid. Stuart Hall²⁰⁹ differentiates between the subject of enlightenment, the sociological subject in the modern era, and the postmodern subject or rather postmodern subjectivities. According to his distinction, the differentiation between individual identity, social identity, and collective identity can be assigned to the concept of the sociological subject, whilst the concept of the postmodern subject creates an awareness for the impact of globalization and the shift of the national idea to the idea what identity means. Due to the post-modern times, the subject of enlightenment and the sociologically subject loose in importance and Hall points out the discussion over a crisis of identity.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Müller, Bernadette: Identität. Soziologische Analysen zur gesellschaftlichen Konstitution der Individualität (2009). Pg. 10.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Borst, Eva: Identität und Exil. In: Sprache-Identität-Kultur (1999). Pg. 13.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Hall, Stuart: The question of cultural identity. In: Hall, Stuart, Held, David, Hubert, Don, Thompson, Kenneth (Ed.): Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies (1996). Pg. 596 et seq.

3.3.1. Individual, social, and collective identity

A sociological research and theory formation, in terms of identity, started to emerge at the end of the 19th century. In 1890, the psychologist and philosopher William James published “The Principles of Psychology” in which the 10th chapter dealt with “The Consciousness of Self”. While previously the issue of identity had only been interesting to philosophy, at this point psychology and sociology participated in the theoretical debate on the term “Self”.²¹⁰

The philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist George Herbert Mead held the view that mind and identity are only developed due to the interaction with society. According to Mead, Identity is created after birth due to experiences and activities.²¹¹

The theories of James and Mead contributed to the differentiation between social and personal identity. Social identity was perceived as connected with a social group, such as nation, religion, culture, ethnicity, political party, family, or faith community. The social identity is comprised by the sum of social part-identities, while the personal identity relates to the particularities of an individual and its individual features. This can be related to the biography but also genetically conditioned features, such as height, fingerprints, colour of the skin, special talents, or the sound of the voice.²¹²

Different forms of memories – the individual, the collective and social identity – exist parallel, but are valued differently in different contexts. Certain characteristics of the individual, or the collective, are produced by externals – by members of the collective or by the individuals themselves, which also contributes to the development of the self and the other. This production of the self and the other helps the individual to identify with a group or on the contrary to distance him- or herself from other individuals, other groups or even a society.²¹³ In the context of this thesis I will use the terms individual identity, collective identity, and social identity as follows:

Individual identity is created by using a cognitive structure or category, that serves to organize knowledge about the own person. It includes information about personal characteristics, roles, values, membership in groups, etc. This cognitive structure can be understood as a theory about the self. Its structure is socially shared and forms the base for the collective identity. In other words, several people have a theory of their own self. Where they reach agreements, the base for a collective identity emerges. Individuals feel connected

²¹⁰ Cf. *Straub, Jürgen*: Identitätstheorie, empirische Identitätsforschung und die „postmoderne“ armchair psychology. In: *Zeitschrift für qualitative Bildungs-, Beratungs- und Sozialforschung*, 1 (2000). Pg. 168.

²¹¹ Cf. *Mead, George Herbert*: Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft aus der Sicht des Sozialbehaviourismus (1973).

²¹² Cf. *Müller (2009)*. Pg. 10 et seq.

²¹³ Cf. *Ladilova (2013)*. Pg. 34.

due to similarities and sameness – even when these are limited to a few aspects, such as having Volga-German ancestors.²¹⁴

As with collective memory, collective identity is consolidated by the usage of collective symbols and gestures. Collective identities rely on the individual's willingness to participate and maintain the collective. This also happens by creating images about the Self- and the Other, which also leads to identities of inclusion and identities of exclusion.²¹⁵

The construction of a collective identity is dependent on which similarities – such as the collective memory – a collective can refer to and which collective points of reference a group has.²¹⁶ The creation of images of the Self and the Other as well as the process of differentiation and demarcation is necessary in this matter.²¹⁷ The individual participates and profits from this process. The individual him- or herself is furthermore responsible for upholding the collective. Without the interest of an individual to participate, a collective and as a result a collective identity cannot be formed.²¹⁸ The individual plays a major role, for the collective identity. Without the individual, no collective identity can be formed. The collective depends on the individual's interest on participating.

The social identity of a person comprises social roles, such as employee, father, neighbour, or patient, but it also involves collective identities such as being a member of a Swiss German community or being Argentinian. In addition, symbolic-material elements can play a major role. Such as wearing "traditional German" clothing, speaking German or a "German" dialect, or owning objects that have a "German" connotation in the given collective.²¹⁹ Social identity deals with the process of interaction and the consciousness about the fact that the individual as well as the collective identity is embedded in a society, that has certain expectations towards the individual. Through the social identity the awareness of the external view is implemented. Therefore, while the individual, as well as the collective identity are centred around (several) individuals, social identity goes hand in hand with a de-personalisation.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 33.

²¹⁵ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 40, 108.

²¹⁶ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 37.

²¹⁷ Cf. Kaina, Viktoria: „Wir“ und „die Anderen“-Europäische Identitätsbildung. IN ZfP 57. Jg. 4/2010. Pg. 415.

²¹⁸ Yet, the individual can be exchanged, for several individuals participate to form a collective.

Cf. Simon, Bernd, Mummendey, Amélie: Selbst, Identität und Gruppe: Eine sozialpsychologische Analyse des Verhältnisses von Individuum und Gruppe. In: Mummendey, Amélie, Simon, Bernd (Ed.): Identität und Verschiedenheit (1997). Pg. 17 et seq.

²¹⁹ Müller, Bernadette: Identität. Soziologische Analysen zur gesellschaftlichen Konstitution der Individualität (2007). Pg. 77.

²²⁰ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 75.

Like the different forms of memory, the forms of identity are intertwined. The individual profits from being assigned to a social background or a collective and from being able to define themselves. By that the individual can reason his or her identity. As a result, the belonging to a group changes the behaviour of its members.²²¹

While individual identity can be ascribed to a person – the collective and social identity are more difficult to grasp for they are not embodied in a physical unit. They are constructs and can only be created in the processes of identification of individuals.²²²

Regarding the individual, collective, and social identity of “Germans” in Argentina, it is possible to state that an individual’s “German” identity can only be upheld when in dialog with a collective or society. Belonging to a “German” group helps to define the individual’s sense of “German” identity due to the creation of images of the Self and the Other. At the same time, without “German” descendants interested in maintaining “German” culture and at times “German” language, a “German” culture in the diaspora would not exist anymore. Being a “German” descendant also means enacting a role and fulfilling societal expectations, which implicates a social identity.

3.3.2. The enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject

The description of individual, collective, and social identity founds the basis for an understanding of the interrelation of the individual, collective and society, but it does not depict the increasingly complex world we live in, caused by globalization, modern technologies, demographic changes, environmental changes, etc. Even though the world has never been simple, the beginning of the postmodern era makes it even more necessary, to look at identity from different angles.

Stuart Hall – taking into consideration a historical development – differentiates between three concepts of identity: The enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject. The first concept can be located in the pre- modern world, prior to the late 18th or early 19th century, the sociological concept is connected to increasing awareness of the connection between individual and society in the modern times – therefore, the differentiation between individual, social, and collective identity can be located in the modern era, and finally the postmodern subject is a concept connected with the transformation of the term identity in the modern era.

²²¹ Cf. *Simon, Bernd, Mummendey, Amélie* (1997). Pg. 12 et seq.

²²² Cf. *Ladilova* (2013). Pg. 33
Cf. *Assmann* (1992). Pg. 131.

According to the concept of the enlightenment subject, the core of identity remains basically the same over the individual's life span. Consequently, it is thought, that there is no external influence on how the individual's identity develops. The concept of the sociological subject is related to the modern era when individuals are seen to be in relation with significant others. Those relations influence values, opinions, and the cultural surrounding. Identity is formed due to the interaction of the self and society. The individual still has a "real me", yet, that is subject to a constant formation and modification due to the dialog with other individuals and the external world. In this concept identity can therefore be located between internal and external world. While the individual bases itself on the opinions and values of the external world and internalizes them it also partakes in its construction due to self-projection. An alignment occurs.

In the postmodern era, beginning in the 1970's, this supposed stability starts to totter. The subjective identity – previously thought to be consistent and stable, is considered fragmented when it comes to the postmodern subject. The postmodern subject is composed not only by one but several – partially contradictory – identities. These identities are continually formed and transformed in relation to how the cultural systems appeal to the subjects they are surrounded with, or how the subjects are represented within the systems. The subject is confronted with the possibility to take on a set of identities and can enact different identities in different (temporary) contexts.²²³ The development of multiple identities started with increasing processes of globalization in the late years of the modern era.²²⁴ Modern and after the 1970's especially postmodern societies – in contrast to traditional societies – are a subject to constant and rapid change, that takes place globally. Especially the transformation of time and space are in this context significant. Anthony Giddens mentions in this context the dis-embedding of the social system and the lifting of social relations in the local context of interaction. Social relations are re-structured in an undefined time-space relation. This re-structuring happens on an external and internal level. On the one hand structures of social networking are built, that work on a global level. On the other hand, the daily existence is marked by fragmentation, and fractures.²²⁵ Consequently, postmodern society is increasingly differentiated. Different social divisions and oppositions lead to the construction of a variety of identities.

Another effect of globalization is the fluidity or multiplicity of national identity. Hall suggests that instead of thinking nations as territorialized units we should consider them as

²²³ Cf. Hall (1996). Pg. 597 et seq.

²²⁴ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 598 et seq.

²²⁵ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 599.

Cf. Giddens, Anthony: The consequences of modernity. (1990). Pg. 21.

discourses, in which differences are ignored and a fictional unity is presented.²²⁶ In the modern era national thinking became increasingly important and “national culture” became a primary source of cultural identity. Taking into consideration that most “German” immigrants arrived in Argentina in the modern era, this is highly relevant. However, to belong to a nation inevitably means to be part of a distant symbolic community that has symbols and modes of representation evoked in the diaspora. To feel Austrian, German, Swiss, or Argentinian means to stand in for a collective identity and belonging together – even when this is limited to a predominantly symbolic nation.²²⁷ The tremendous increase of globalization in the postmodern era also changed the attitude towards the nation. In Hall’s opinion, the following three effects can be identified:

1. National identities are pushed back due to the increase of global cultural homogenization.
2. Local or particular identities are strengthened as a resistance against globalization.
3. New, hybrid identities emerge.

Consequently, in the postmodern era, the idea of a national belonging changes. An individual does not necessarily have to be connected to one nation only, but can identify with several nations for several, sometimes contradictory, reasons. In my interviews I can expose these tendencies, which will become visible in chapter four and five. The claim to belong to the German nation, for instance, stands for several attributes. A “German” might stereotypically be considered as more “diligent” and “orderly”. Being related to the German nation, as a result ascribes attributes to the person claiming to be of “German” descent and becomes a source of the cultural identity. In the postmodern era, an individual can identify with “German” attributes and still considering oneself as Argentinian.

Two theoretical approaches to identity were presented in this section. First, individual, social, and collective identity were discussed, second, the theories around the subject of enlightenment, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject. Drawing on them, I argued that the cohesion of societies or individuals cannot be found in their unity or sameness, but their coherence depends on a contingent constellation where forms of identity, or shared needs, meet and a consensus is negotiated collectively. The consensus is only partial, postmodern identities – individual, collective, and social ones – are always unsteady and provisory. Yet, this complication also bears the possibility of new articulations and new creations of identities.²²⁸

²²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 617.

²²⁷ Cf. *Hall* (1996). Pg. 611 et seq.

²²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 600.

I would like to demonstrate this with the example of language. Language is an important factor, when forming individual identity. It can mark the belonging to one or several (“German”) groups, influences behaviour and is also used to mark identity externally. The collective usage of the German language makes it furthermore possible to display similarities which causes a feeling of “we” and differentiates ‘us’ from the (non-speaker) other. As the formation of individual, social and collective ideas are always mediated through language, it is crucial to consider when it comes to communication within collectives.²²⁹

When taking a closer look on the impact of language, it is necessary to keep in mind, that until the end of the Second World War German had been the language of use in closed “German” communities.²³⁰ Only due to the legal restrictions the usage of “German” was pushed back in the private domain, where it remained dominant until the 1970’s and partially until the 1990’s – especially in remote, rural communities.²³¹

The usage of German turned into an identity marker, as part of a “German” community and as a “German” individual.²³² As time went by, endogamous marriages decreased, using the German language no longer was promoted and Spanish became the preferred language in domains of private life as well – this was also due to a lack of linguistic competences that could have been maintained only through support, practice in the public domains of life. This loss of language didn’t necessarily mean the exclusion from the “German” communities, but markers of identity shifted. Speaking “German” used to be crucial as an identity marker, yet as time passed and “German” communities changed and participated in the process of assimilation, identity markers changed too.

Two studies in this matter are interesting: First, a study done by the linguist Ernest Hess Lüttich: “Deutschsprachige Enklaven in Südamerika“, second, a Study done by the linguist Schmidt Arnd called “Kollektive Zweisprachigkeit in einsprachiger Umgebung. Eine wolgadeutsche Sprachinsel in Argentinien.”

Hess Lüttich investigated the usage of the Valais dialect in San Jerónimo Norte in the North-east of Argentina, where Swiss Immigrants settled, while Schmidt worked on Volga Germans in the village of Pueblo Santa María. Both state, that until the 1970’s – and in Pueblo Santa María even until the 1990’s – German was the dominant language in the private domain.

In Pueblo Santa María and in San Jerónimo Norte a German dialect was used that could not be acquired by visiting a Language School or studying German grammar books. Therefore,

²²⁹ Cf. *Ladilova* (2013). Pg. 35.

²³⁰ Cf. *Hess-Lüttich* (2013). Pg. 23.

²³¹ Cf. *Schmidt, Arnd*: Kollektive Zweisprachigkeit in einsprachiger Umgebung. Eine wolgadeutsche Sprachinsel in Argentinien (1997). Pg. 22.

²³² Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 24.

the language skills decrease constantly.²³³ Yet, fragments of the “German” language are used, due to a phenomenon called Code Switching. Code Switching refers to situations when a person speaks one language while taking linguistic borrowings. German words, sentences, phrases, or whole sentences are used while continuing to talk primarily in Spanish.²³⁴ In other words, a descendent for example of Volga German immigrants might not be able to speak the dialect of his or her ancestors but uses phrases such as “Unser Leit” (our people) in the middle of his conversation, signalling his membership in that cultural group.²³⁵

In the case of San Jerónimo Norte, Hess-Lüttich states, the dialect of the Valais canton can only be found occasionally in the Private Space, to stay in touch with other people from Switzerland or other neighbouring “German” linguistic minorities. While only the eldest generation is capable of a fluent usage of the dialect. The younger generation is using the dialect via Code-Switching as they don’t have sufficient linguistic competences any longer but can self-identify as one of ‘us’, diaspora members.²³⁶

Hess-Lüttich pointed out, that the fluent usage of the Valais dialect had been a sign of membership within the community and therefore, a marker of collective identity. However, as the language competences declined, the rules of inclusion changed. Not being able to use the Valais dialect, the usage of Valais words, phrases, or sentences allows to signal the membership to a group. At the same time, with the decrease of language skills, the knowledge about traditions, clothing, stories, and dances becomes more important²³⁷ – which further justifies my point earlier about the need for considering language as one of several elements of cultural identity and not coexistent with it.

The decrease of language competences falls together with the beginning of postmodern times, when multiple identities were more common. Even though (partially) continuing to use German via Code Switching, the usage of the German language does not necessarily mean the individual defines as “German” rather than as Argentinian. An individual has multiple identities that constantly change with the contexts, which the phenomenon Code Switching can perfectly demonstrate.

²³³ Cf. Hess-Lüttich (2013). Pg. 12, 24 et seq.

Cf. Schmidt (1997). Pg. 58.

²³⁴ Cf. Riehl, Claudia Maria: Sprachkontaktforschung (2009) Pg. 20 et seq.

²³⁵ Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 202.

²³⁶ Cf. Hess-Lüttich (2013). Pg. 21. Et seq.

²³⁷ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 23.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, theoretical approaches have been presented that seemed applicable to my investigation of the maintenance, the transformation, as well as the mode of contemporary presence of “German” culture in Argentina. First, individual, social, and collective memory have been differentiated and discussed. Furthermore, it was stressed, that memories of “Germans” in Argentina are as heterogeneous as their carriers. The time of immigration, the process of immigration, and the reason for immigration caused relevant differences in what is remembered as “German”. Individual memory is furthermore based on one’s own biography but influenced by the social, collective, and cultural memories it is embedded in. Social memory refers to the generation or time individuals live in, for they share experiences, values, social norms, and cultural explanation models. Both, the collective as well as the cultural memory, must be created. The collective memory is created by using texts, pictures, rituals, and actions, whilst the cultural memory establishes a long-time memory on a formal level via schools, museums, archives, or libraries. Both help to construct a unity or a character and help to define the self and the other. This knowledge refers to the time it is produced in and is formed. These two forms of memory are also related to the self-image of the group and relate to interpretations, exclusion, censorship, etc.

As a second theoretical concern, the concept of assimilation has been chosen. I did this by adapting the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle.” I revisited the Chicago School’s concept with the help of the Argentinian linguist, Yolanda Hipperdinger, who names factors such as living conditions prior to the immigration, the experience of former migration experiences, geographic concentration, urbanisation, level of education, status and prestige of the mother tongue, and the degree of the cultural similarities between immigrants and the resident population as important when grasping the multiplicity and diversity of identity/memory formations.

Finally, I have discussed identity in two moves. First, I discussed the differentiation between individual, social, and collective identity to indicate their interconnectedness. The process of identity building was negotiated between the individuals and their surroundings. Yet, in the context of the postmodern era and the increasing importance of globalization, the perception of identity has been looked at from a historical point of view too. Especially since the 1970’s identity becomes ever more fragmentized and unstable. A single individual can have mutual – partially contradictory – identities. Consequently, not only does the concept of identity get more complex, but there is also the bigger chance for new or hybrid identities to emerge.

In short, the three angles of my discussion show that there are two main interconnected factors that must be taken in consideration when analysing “German” identity in Argentina: time and (social) surrounding. Time in terms of the importance of memory, the shift over generations, the influence of global history and political as well as economic developments. The surrounding in terms of the connection between individuals, communities, and societies that influences memory, processes of assimilation, and identity building.

4. Trajectories of “German” identities

In this central section I will present the results of my own research on identity building of “Germans” in Argentina from the 1950’s until today. I will try to highlight some of the factors responsible for the upkeep or rejection of a “German” identity, as well as the development of “German” identities in different communities. I will do so, by presenting segments of my oral history interviews in combination with the findings of other scientists. For the development of “German” communities and the development of “German” identities after this point in time have been the main interest of my investigation, I have put a temporal focus on this chapter of “German” history in Argentina. Resting myself on the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” I will present my findings in three chronological segments. These three segments stand for three generations, since the end of mass- immigration. In these three chronological segments, I will take a closer look on “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, “German” Jews and Volga Germans. Whilst this chapter has its focus on my practical findings, the following chapter will offer a more elaborated analysis of my work.

As a starting point, I would like to reflect once more on the background of “German” immigrants – as a basis for the development of “German” communities. The history of “German” immigration took place over many decades and in waves. Which means, that generations of various “German” groups co-existed over a long period of time. Due to the Argentinian declaration of war to Germany, in February 1945, and the accompanying expropriation of “German” possessions, as well as the liquidation of “German” institutions and organizations, an opening of “German” communities was forced for the first time. Being able to stay amongst themselves caused, that until then an assimilation was not necessary. Even when living in Argentina for several Generations already, people of the 1950’s represented the first generation to undergo the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”.²³⁸

Whilst the process of assimilation started simultaneously for all groups after the Second World War, the groups still were heterogenous, in their composition and time of immigration, also causing, that the term “German” had a different meaning to the different groups and individuals. This influenced their “German” memory, their imagined “German” values, and the idea of what it means “to be German” and had an impact on how different forms of memory were built, the assimilation behavior and the forming took place and if the “German” identity was upkept or abandoned. As we observe the development, less and less people who

²³⁸ Furthermore, as stated in chapter two, not only “Germans” immigrated to Argentina, but the population was set together by immigrants – on a large quantity from Spain and Italy. Consequently, an Argentinian culture and language at first had to be developed.

experienced immigrating themselves were alive and could contribute to the understanding of what “German” means. Consequently, the “German” identity of “German” descendants Argentina developed and develops separately from the closed “German” settlements in Europe.

4.1. “German” communities during the investigation period

In this section I will undertake a chronological division in time-frames, as well as the subdivision in the three mentioned “German” groups, to be able to analyse and compare them side by side. The time-frames presented relate to three generations, the first generation to assimilate is connected to the situation after the forced opening of colonies in the 1950’s, the second is situated in the time between the 1950’s to the 1980’s, and finally the third presents the time between the 1980’s until today. I will furthermore distinguish between “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland as well as their predecessor states, “German” Jews, and Volga Germans. To simplify the indication, I will call “Germans” from Austria, Germany and Switzerland “Germans” in this chapter.

When describing the development, I base myself on interviews that I held in November and December 2016, oral history interviews done by the authors Litsauer, Schwarcz and Ladilova, as well as scientific literature and written sources. I hope to provide a better understanding on how the groups developed and why the developments were different from one another.

4.2. Initial situation of “Germans” in the 1950’s

“German” communities were able to maintain and develop their culture hardly interrupted until the end of the Second World War. Due to the (temporary) liquidation of “German” organization, “German” communities faced a first regress. Even though many “Germans” were eager to keep the community together and to maintain the “German” culture and re-established many organisations, they were not able to get back to the pre-war state. Not only did the new regulations change the situation, but the immigration of “Germans” in large quantities came to a halt, and immigration of “Germans” only occurred on an individual level. At this point most of the immigrants of the First mass immigration wave of “Germans” were not alive anymore, but only their children and grandchildren. In terms of their “German” memory, they had to rely on their ancestors’ reports. There were still a few “Germans” of the first generation that migrated from Europe to Argentina after the First World War and during the National Socialist Regime, as well as in the years after the Regime. Consequently, they had a different understanding of what the term “German” means.

The most heterogenic group I will present in this section are “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, as they were part in every immigration wave. Furthermore, they have settled all over Argentina, in the country side as well as in the cities. A condition that had an impact on their memory, assimilation process and identity. Most “German” Jews on the contrary immigrated in the third immigration wave. Many of them have identified with the “German” culture, previously to the German Reich. Due to the persecution they have faced, this identification with the German culture became problematic. “German” Jews settled mainly in the city of Buenos Aires, as will be presented in this chapter. Volga Germans arrived in Argentina in the first immigration wave at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century, settling in rural areas, isolated from the majority of the Argentinian society. This subchapter should reveal the main characteristics of these so diverse communities.

4.2.1. “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland

At the beginning of “German” mass immigration in the 19th century, there was no such thing as a national identity of “Germans” from Germany, Austrians or Swiss, for immigrants felt connected to their region, rather than to a nation.²³⁹ Having said this, they were still considered as a cultural and linguistic “German” unity by the Argentinian majority society. A shared identity of German speakers – or people belonging to the “German” culture – which went beyond regional references, only developed due to material pressure, the isolation of the cultural space of origin and the distancing from the resident society.²⁴⁰ In other words, whilst in Europe the differences between different “German” communities was used in defining the self and the other – for example emphasising the differences between the Viennese culture, language and customs with those of Berlin – in the distance sharing linguistic and cultural features united. Even when there were differences between the “German” communities, there were more shared features, than with the Argentinian society. The perception of the Self- and the Other changed due to the context.

In the 1950’s, a large quantity of “German” communities still existed – such as the already mentioned colony San Jerónimo Norte, which had regional references to the canton Valais – but these communities at the same time connected to a larger “German” network. An interview partner from Buenos Aires, born in the 1940s, states how Austrians were integrated in the “German” associations – if they wanted to. He emphasizes the friendly connection and that at the same time, they were still able to remain “Austrian”.

²³⁹ Cf. *Hess-Lüttich*. Pg. 16.

²⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid*. Pg. 16.

*Da hat es eigentlich nie Konfrontationen zwischen Deutschen und Österreichern gegeben. Im Gegenteil. Die Österreicher wurden sozusagen miteingepackt und mitgenommen. Außer sie wollten ihren eigenen Brötchen backen. Aber es war nicht anti-österreichisch. Im Gegenteil. Sie haben überall mitgemacht.*²⁴¹

The strong solidarity of “Germans” is a result of the network, a long history of the foundation of “German” schools, and the cultivation of a life style that was considered being “German”. This solidarity led to a slow approximation of different Austrian, Swiss and German communities and helped to build, and to maintain the “German” colonies.²⁴² A theory which is affirmed by the interview partner, who especially emphasizes the importance of associations for the development of “German” communities.

*Die Deutschen haben eine gute Tendenz zum Verein – zur Vereinsmeierei. Deswegen haben die stundenlang Vereine gegründet. (excursus to another topic) Argentinien hat eine sehr liberale Verfassung und jeder kann hier so nach seiner eigenen Façon glücklich werden und braucht sich nicht zu nationalisieren und das hat sehr stark die Kolonien gefördert.*²⁴³

Right after the start of “German” mass immigration in the 19th century, “Germans” started to found associations, in order to maintain the community and the cultural heritage.²⁴⁴ Even when “German” organizations and institutions were forbidden, “Germans” saw it as their duty to maintain “German” language and culture and organized themselves privately.²⁴⁵ Especially in the country side people wanted to maintain their “German” identity, for they were not integrated in the Argentinian – Spanish speaking – majority.²⁴⁶ Associations contributed to maintain the “German” past and to differentiate from the Argentinian majority society. When large numbers of Austrians, Swiss, and Germans left their home- countries, they transferred their “German” identity to the country of immigration and wanted to keep this identity for the upcoming generations.²⁴⁷

By doing so, they glorified the “German” heritage and considered it as superior. An interview partner stated, that the “German” colonies in Argentina, looked at their “home” with awe, admiration, and wistfulness and they thought everything coming from there, was good.²⁴⁸ Immigrants transmitted to the following generations an idealized idea of their country of origin.

²⁴¹ IntLE35min42sec.

²⁴² Cf. Hess-Lüttich. Pg. 16.

²⁴³ IntLE4min15sec.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Bergmann. Pg. 34.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Hepe. Pg. 8.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Hock. Pg. 80.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Schoepp. Pg. 27.

²⁴⁸ IntLE38min20sec.

In her book “Ella und der Gringo mit den großen Füßen”²⁴⁹ (Ella and the Gringo with the big feet) Maria Bamberg takes a stand towards the connection of her family to their “German” heritage. Maria came to Argentina after the First World War as a child, together with her family. She recalls, that her parents were deliberate Germans and remained Germans until they died. They brought all their children – even those born in Argentina and Chile – up to be “German”. Her parents expected their children to get only married endogamous to “Germans” and maintained friendships to “Germans” exclusively. Maria Bamberg and her siblings were not allowed to speak Spanish and every kind of Argentinian culture was ignored. She only got to know Literature from Latin America in 1963 when she started working as a translator in Berlin.

*Unsere Eltern waren bewußte Deutsche und blieben es bis zu ihrem Tode. Und sie erzogen ihre Kinder, einschließlich unserer in Argentinien und Chile geborenen Brüder, ‚deutsch‘, verlangten von uns nur deutsche Ehepartner zu heiraten, und pflegten nur deutsche Bekanntschaften. Wir durften als Kinder kein Spanisch sprechen, und was es in Argentinien an Kultur gab – z.B. Schule und Literatur – wurde einfach übergangen. Argentinische Bücher und die Literatur der anderen Lateinamerikanischen Länder habe ich erst nach 1963 in Berlin kennengelernt, als ich zu übersetzen anfang.*²⁵⁰

These examples illustrate the interest of the “German” community, to raise the following generations not as Argentinians, but as “Germans”. They perceived themselves as “Germans” living in a “German” micro-cosmos in Argentina. This was not an isolated case. Often “Germans” were living for many generations in Argentina without being able to have a conversation in Spanish. One interview partner from Buenos Aires, describes how he studied together with a friend – who was also of “German” descent. They met at the “German” school, that both attended in the late 1950’s. The interview partner recalls one scene, in which they studied together at his friend’s house. His friend’s mother – who lived in Argentina in the third generation already – was not able to speak Spanish. Which the interview partner explains, by stating that if a “German” was working in a “German” company, sent the children to a “German” school, read a “German” newspaper, surrounded oneself with “German” friends, went to the “German” hospital, was member of the “German” club and eventually was buried at the “German” cemetery, there was no need to learn Spanish. The interview partner also claims, that this situation was normal in the 1950’s and even more in the previous years.

Dann haben wir immer (.) er bei mir, ich bei ihm studiert und gelernt und die Mutter von ihm, war dritte Generation Deutsche hier. Hier. Dritte Generation in Argentinien und die sprach nicht richtig Spanisch, weil man konnte nicht besonders. (.) Wenn man in einer Deutschen Firma

²⁴⁹ Title in Spanish: Allá en la Patagonia.

²⁵⁰ Bamberg, Maria: Ella und der Gringo mit den großen Füßen (2000). Pg. 15.

arbeitete, dann ging man in eine Deutsche Schule, las die Deutsche Zeitung, hatte Deutsche Freunde, irgendeinen Deutschen Club den es gab (Aufzählung Clubs) Deutsches Hospital, es gab Deutsche Ärzte und man wurde am Deutschen Friedhof beerdigt. Man brauchte also gar kein Spanisch. Das war in den 50er Jahren noch ganz stark. Und vorher genauso.²⁵¹

Another interview partner affirms this. She was born in a “German” hospital, visited the “German” school, went to a German church and was part of the “German” community.

Int: Waren Sie auch auf der Goethe Schule? KW: Ja. Ja, das ist komisch hier in Argentinien. Wenn man hier so in der Deutschen Kolonie ist, dann wird man im Deutschen Hospital geboren und geht in die “Deutsche” Schule und geht in die Kirche. Sei es katholisch oder evangelisch.²⁵²

Whilst she and her husband speak Spanish perfectly, her husband recalls, that his wife’s grandmother did not speak any Spanish, even though she was living in South America for more than 60 years. They had to hold their wedding in Spanish, so her grandmother would be able to follow the ceremony – even though many guests were not able to speak German.

Interessant ist auch, dass wir vor über 40 Jahre auf Deutsch getraut wurde. Wieso ist das? Obwohl wir alle Freunde hatten, die kein Deutsch sprechen. Aber diese Großmutter, hm. Die aus Deutschland nach Paraguay gekommen ist – von Seiten des Vaters. Die ist gestorben als sie beinahe 90 Jahre alt war. Die hat über 60 Jahre in Südamerika gelebt und hat nie richtig Spanisch gesprochen. Und deshalb (.) man konnte es der Oma nicht antun, dass wir auf Spanisch heirateten.²⁵³

Yet, the 1950’s were also marked by the consequences of the rise and fall of National Socialists. On one hand the defeat of the German Reich led to the restrictions against “German” associations and possession. On the other hand, the Nationalist Socialist body of thought had supporters and opponents within the “German” community. Furthermore, Germany and Austria had to distance themselves from their foreign “German” communities – which in the early 20th century they considered as “Germans” living in foreign land but after the defeat had to consider as integrated South Americans of “German” descend.²⁵⁴

Whilst the issue of National Socialists in Argentina in the media is often reduced to a few prominent National Socialists hiding in Argentina, in fact the National Socialism was more problematic than the fugitive Nazis. In an interview taken by Litsauer Alexander, one interview partner addresses the influence that National Socialism had on the “Germans” in Argentina.

²⁵¹ IntLE17min30sec.

²⁵² IntKW13min39sec.

²⁵³ IntKA14min00sec.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Bergmann (1994). Pg. 195.

This part of the history has been discussed comprehensively in section 2.4.1.

The isolation from the Argentinian majority society fostered the impact National Socialist ideas had within the “German” communities.

*Man muss sich im Klaren sein, dass der Einfluss der Nazis auf die Deutschen und Österreicher hier enorm war. Da besteht überhaupt kein Zweifel. Das hat aber mit den Argentinern nichts zu tun. Die Deutschen waren hier immer abgekoppelt. Die hatten ihre eigenen Vereine. Also war auch der Einfluss der Nazis sehr stark.*²⁵⁵

One of my interview partner claims, that the “German” community had one major issue after the Second World War – to cope with the past and with what happened under the National Socialist regime, and its lasting consequences in the years after. Whilst “Germans” in Europe faced the end of the German Reich with all its consequences, most “Germans” in Argentina did not experience the same. As a result, not the fugitive National Socialists that were submerged in the “German” colonies after the Second World War where the problem, but an ideology which spread within the “German” colonies in Argentina, which faced no dismantling due to the end of the Second World War. Two distinct communities started to form – one favoring the National Socialists, the others opposing it – without political and socio-cultural communication. Every side had its own associations, caritative organizations, schools, and press.²⁵⁶

Another interview partner states, that whilst the “German” colony in Argentina experienced the rise of the National Socialism, they did not experience the fall – such as the “Germans” in Europe did. According to him, Germans in Germany witnessed the downfall until the end, but the “Germans” in Argentina did not. In South America, “Germans” read enthusiastically about the rise of the German Reich, and how “Germans” conquer the world, but they did not process when it was over - the German Reich defeated, and destroyed. Not realizing this, caused many tensions between “Germans” and other groups in Argentina. According to the interview partner “Germans” were mostly drawn to the values that National Socialists propagandized, such as “Germans” stick together; “Germans” talk German, “Germans” eat German food. The people, according to the interview partner, did not necessarily believe in the Anti-Semitism but liked the idea of supporting “German” values. When the German Reich was defeated, “Germans” in Argentina did not understand it at first but needed time to process what has happened.

²⁵⁵ Litsauer, Alexander: Aspekte argentinischer Geschichte und jüdischer Immigration im 20. Jahrhundert. In: Litsauer, Alexander, Litsauer, Barbara: Verlorene Nachbarschaft (2010). Pg. 34.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Saint Sauveur Henn: Multiple Identitäten und Integration; Eine Eigenart des Exils? In: Díaz Pérez, Olivia, Gräfe, Florian, Renner, Rolf G. (Ed): Intermedialität und Alterität, Migration und Emigration. Tendenzen der deutschsprachigen Literatur (2014). Pg. 265.

Die Deutsche Kolonie hat den Aufstieg des Großdeutschen Reiches mitgemacht aber nicht den Abstieg. Nicht. Auf einmal. Die Deutschen in Deutschland haben den Abstieg mitgemacht, bis zum letzten, bitteren Ende, sag ma' mal. (Exkurs zu Brasilien und Chile) Die haben den Aufstieg mitgemacht und haben begeistert gelesen, wie die Deutschen die Welt eroberten und dann war es auf einmal zu Ende und Deutschland zerstört und das gab's nicht mehr. Und das hat den Deutschen hier auch viele Probleme gemacht. Das waren die problematischen Deutschen die auch entnazifiziert werden mussten. Int: Welche Probleme? LE: Die haben den Aufstieg mitgemacht und toll, alles was Deutsch war und national war und alles war was weiß ich. Die Werte die zum Teil sehr stark von den Nationalsozialisten gefördert wurden. Nicht den Antisemitismus, sondern die Deutschen Werte. So wie: ‚Deutsche haltet zusammen, spricht Deutsch und Deutsche esst Deutsche Küche.‘ Und auf einmal war Deutschland weg. Und das haben die Auslandsdeutschen erst mit der Zeit mitbekommen.²⁵⁷

As pointed out, the National Socialist ideology was strong within the “German” community but it also had a powerful opposition in Argentina. Furthermore, resistance fighters and their families found refuge in Argentina. This situation caused problems. One interview partner reports on the tensions that existed after the Second World War in the different “German” communities. She recalls a rugby-club which was frequented by “Germans”. The children of resistant fighters were not welcomed in the Club, for they were perceived as traitors to the German Reich. The interview partner mentions, that the conflicts going on in Europe, were continued in Argentina.

Es gibt einen Rugby-Club hier, den man kennt. Der heißt Casi – hier in der Nordzone. Und da hattest du – nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg (.) jetzt schon – Deutsche die nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg gekommen sind. Vielleicht Ex-Nazis. Die haben aber die Leute die Kinder vom Widerstand waren (.) die wurden nicht angesprochen. Und dann gab es direkt, weil ja die (...) Die Ex-Nazis haben gesagt, die wären Vaterlandsverräter. Also du hattest wirklich (...) So ähnliche Konflikte wie du in Deutschland hattest, hattest du hier. Vielleicht hier mehr traditionell – bewusst.²⁵⁸

The presented interview passages show, that “Germans” in the 1950’s had a big interest in maintaining „German“ values and traditions. Being “German” was perceived as an important part of one’s own identity. The country of origin, or the country of the ancestor’s origin, was idealized and glorified. An integration in the majority society– often even in the third, fourth or fifth generation didn’t take place, for there was no necessity given. In the 1950’s, “Germans” were living in “German” micro-cosmoses, where they did not rely on the Argentinian system. At the same time the 1950’s marked the beginning of an opening of the “German”

²⁵⁷ IntLE36min21sec.

²⁵⁸ IntCSL2min13sec.

communities, and an external pressure to assimilate, for there were no more “German” immigrants and no support from Europe. The “German” communities in the 1950’s were still affected by the developments due to the rise of National Socialism and faced a split of the community as a result.²⁵⁹

4.2.2. “German” Jewish community

Prior to the 1930’s, “German” Jewish immigration already occurred, but these immigrants usually became a small and wealthy part of “German” communities. Only after the National Socialism ideology became popular in the “German” communities in Argentina, were Jews excluded from the “German” associations they used to be members of.²⁶⁰ Most “German” Jews arrived in Argentina because of the persecution they faced in Europe. As a result, the majority of the “German” Jewish community was set together by people who immigrated themselves prior and during the Second World War in the 1950’s.

It was difficult for “German” Jews, that fled Europe from 1933 onwards, to find a cultural home in Argentina. Jews were not welcomed by the “German” community, whose majority sympathized with the National Socialist regime. Furthermore, a widespread anti-Semitic atmosphere amongst Catholics in Argentina existed.²⁶¹ Also, they could not integrate in the resident Jewish communities. These communities were usually of Eastern-European and/or of Sephardic origin and linguistically and culturally distant to the arriving “German” Jews.²⁶² The letter “J”, standing for “Jew”, affixed in their passport, furthermore hindered a successful employment in “German” and non- “German” communities,²⁶³ which fostered a social degradation for people that were mostly used to a bourgeois life in Europe. The situation for

²⁵⁹ Cf. *Bergmann* (1994). Pg. 232.

²⁶⁰ Hopfengärtner names 300 long-established families.

Cf. *Hopfengärtner* (2005). Pg. 8.

Anti-Semitic tendencies still had tradition in Argentina. The only pogrom in American history occurred under the Yrigoyen presidency, where about 100 Jews were killed and many more injured. Also, previously to the National Socialist Regime Jews started to emigrate, for the surmised, that the anti-Semitic tendencies would increase. Most of them were immigrating with false passports. Some of them were “Germans” but pretended to be from other Nationalities to be able to stay in Argentina - hidden.

Cf. *Schiller*, Herman: *El primer pogrom* (1999). Pg. 12.

Cf. *Valente*, Marcela: *Grietas Nazis en pasado encubierto*. URL:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080422052458/http://www.ipslatam.net/interna.asp?idnews=33622> (As consulted 13th of January 2018).

Cf. *Saint Sauveur Henn*, Anne: *Exotische Zuflucht? Buenos Aires eine unbekannte und vielseitige Exilmetropole*. Pg. 244.

²⁶¹ Cf. *Twiss Quarles van Ufford*, Jack, *Merkx*, Joep: *Ich hab’ noch einen Koffer in Berlin: German-Jewish Identity in Argentina, 1933-1985*. In: *Jewish Social Studies* (1988). Pg. 102.

²⁶² Alfredo Schwarcz states, that „German” Jews were “too Jewish” for the resident “Germans”, too middle-European for most Argentinians, and too “German” for the Jewish community. Which caused an isolation and only a “partial-belonging”, as Schwarcz describes it.

Cf. *Schwarcz* (1995). Pg. 305.

²⁶³ Cf. *Mettauer*, *Horvath* (2004). Pg. 12.

Jews therefore was tense. Consequently, in October 1937 a Cultural Jewish association was founded, that tried to support the “German” Jews and to provide a cultural home. Furthermore, three “German” synagogues were build, and in 1940 a Jewish Newspaper, written in German, was published for the first time. In this newspaper, the authors also pushed towards a return to Judaism. Judaism was supposed to help the “German” Jews with the trauma they experienced.²⁶⁴ Religion furthermore became an aspect of identity, whilst it was not necessarily important prior to the National Socialist Regime. This phenomenon of re- ethnicization can be explained due to the discrimination and threat that Jews faced as a collective. The (re-)creation of the collective was fostered through the hatred they faced from the external world under the National Socialist regime. Under the regime the individual identity of “German” Jews was reduced to one feature – the Jewish descent. An external definition occurred that fostered hostile behavior and the legitimation of mass-murder. As a counter-reaction to the hostility the collective was re-created.²⁶⁵ This collective also became important in Argentina, helping to survive the first years, and to feel as a part of a social network, as well as in creating a collective identity and coping with the shared past.

“German” Jews also suffered from the loss of home. Prior to the National Socialist regime they didn’t necessarily self-define as Jews, but rather as being Austrian, German or from elsewhere across Europe.²⁶⁶ “German” Jews engaged in combat for Germany and Austria in the First World War, which made it especially hard to be treated hostile, in the country they considered home.

One interview partner recalls her father, who perceived and identified himself fully as a German citizen, and who fought for Germany during the First World War, winning an Iron Cross for bravery – as many other “German” Jews did. According to her the “German”-Jewish Symbiosis was very fruitful, for the possibility to be a citizen and to belong to a country was a huge desire for Jews. Therefore, the persecution was a bitter disappointment and awakening to her father and other “German” Jews.

²⁶⁴ Cf. *Hopfengärtner (2005)*. Pg. 7.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur Henn: Exotische Zuflucht? Buenos Aires eine unbekannte und vielseitige Exilmetropole*. In: *Krohn, Claus-Dieter (Ed.) Exilforschung ein internationales Jahrbuch (2002)*. Pg. 250 et seq.

The situation of exile caused a return to Judaism and Jewish identity for many “German” Jews that previously were not defining themselves as Jews.

Cf. *Schoepp (1996)*. Pg. 38.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Schwarcz, Alfredo Jose: Trotz allem... Die deutschsprachigen Juden in Argentinien; Y a pesar de todo. (1995)*. Pg. 20.

Cf. *Reinprecht, Christoph: Zurückgekehrt: Identität und Bruch in der Biographie österreichischer Juden (1992)*. Pg. 14.

Cf. *Ottomeyer, Klaus: Fremdenfeindlichkeit als Selbstwertdroge: Identität, Ethnizität und die Bedeutung des Fremden für das Unbewusste*. In: *Berghold, Josef, Menasse, Elisabeth, Ottomeyer, Klaus (Ed.): Trennlinien: Imagination des Fremden und Konstruktion des Eigenen (2000)*. Pg. 23.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *Schwarcz (1995)*. Pg. 198.

INT: *Wegen dem Eisernen Kreuz: Ich habe häufig gelesen, dass viele Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg gekämpft haben für Deutschland und dass das (CMT MK der Ausschluss aus der Deutschen Gemeinschaft, für die sie gekämpft und als deren Mitglied sie sich empfunden haben) für sie entsetzlich war. EL: Aber ja! Eine Enttäuschung! Sondergleichen! Fürs Vaterland. Aber ja! Fürs Deutsche Vaterland. Weil für die Juden (.) Deswegen (.) diese Symbiose, diese Deutsch-jüdische Symbiose ist so seltsam, weil sie so fruchtbar war. Sowohl für die Deutschen, als auch für die Juden war es sehr fruchtbar. Weil sie zum ersten Mal wirklich die (unverständlich) Staatsbürger zu sein eines Landes und eine Zugehörigkeit und sie haben alle gekämpft im Ersten Weltkrieg. Und (Klicklaut) bittere Enttäuschung. Bitteres Erwachen.*²⁶⁷

Many Jews still had a strong connection to their country of origin. One interview partner of Litsauer, whose family upkept the Viennese lifestyle, remembers that the friends she made at university were astonished about how different they lived compared to other families in Argentina, and referred to her home as “Little-Europe”, according to the interview partner, this was not caused by any nostalgia to Europe, but a matter of a way to do things, the way it used to be.

*Meine Familie hat das Wien von früher nach Argentinien mitgebracht, irgendwie. Meine Freundinnen von der Universität, wenn sie zu uns gekommen sind, haben gesagt: ‘Oh, hier ist Kleineuropa. Bei euch ist Kleineuropa. Da ist alles anders.’ Das war absolut keine Nostalgie, das war eine Art zu leben. Es war eine Art Sachen so zu machen, wie man es früher gemacht hat.*²⁶⁸

The connection Austrian Jews had with their country of origin was strong, yet an interview partner of Schwarcz argues, that to Jews from Germany, being German was even more important, than being Austrian for Austrian Jews.

*Ich glaube der deutsche Jude hat sich mehr als Deutscher gefühlt als der österreichische Jude als Österreicher.*²⁶⁹

Another interview partner of Schwarcz traces this back to the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural history of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Also, after the end of the monarchy, the Austrian residents still had ethnically diverse backgrounds, and so did the Austrian Jews. As the interview partner explains, Austrian Jews had their country of origin for example in Bohemia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

²⁶⁷IntELMin32sec27

²⁶⁸ Cf. Hahn, Julie: Wenn man mich nach meiner Nationalität fragt, antworte ich: Immigrantin«. In: Litsauer, Alexander, Litsauer, Barbara: Verlorene Nachbarschaft (2010). Pg. 164.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Schwarcz (1995). Pg. 53.

*Es waren sehr wenige Juden in Wien, die eine lange Familiengeschichte in Österreich hatten. Und nicht nur unter den Juden. Wenn man ein bißchen nachgeforscht hat, ist immer das Ursprungsland herausgekommen: Böhmen, Ungarn, Tschechoslowakei, Jugoslawien usw.*²⁷⁰

Yet being European was seen as a source of pride. One interview partner of Litsauer remembers that he unconsciously never had contacts with Argentinians, had no Argentinian Friends, nor participated in the Argentinian society. He confesses, that he felt superior as European.

*Ich habe komischerweise niemals Kontakte mit Argentinern gepflegt. Niemals einen argentinischen Freund gehabt, niemals argentinische Gesellschaft gepflegt. Das ist komisch, weil das genau das Gegenteil ist von dem, was ich heute predige. Eigentlich sage ich das ungerne, aber wir sind uns als Europäer den Argentinern überlegen vorgekommen.*²⁷¹

Even the formerly persecuted idealized the memories on the cultural programs in Europe, the cleanness, the behavior, the access to music and literature.²⁷²

Previously identifying as “Germans”, until the 1950’s, only a minority of Jews clearly distanced themselves from the “German” language and culture. They tried to upkeep “German” values, traditions, and habits – such as punctuality, willingness to work, or early dinner. This supported the maintenance of a “German” Jewish identity – not to mistake with a “German” identity, which they were forcefully excluded from.²⁷³ The maintenance of language was also crucial. Living isolated in a foreign land, language was a shared identity marker, that connected the “German” Jewish community.²⁷⁴ The German language was still used in clubs and “German” Jewish institutions and in families. Two thirds of all “German” Jews participated in a “German” Jewish club.²⁷⁵

In an interview with Schwarcz, one interviewee states, that due to the persecution and the humiliation, they experienced in Austria, in their family there was a refusal against anything that could make their children interested in Austria or Germany, but nevertheless the German

²⁷⁰ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 53.

²⁷¹ Cf. Löwy, Kurt: Ich bin ein Ausländer, fühle mich aber sehr wohl dabei. In: Litsauer, Alexander, Litsauer, Barbara: Verlorene Nachbarschaft (2010). Pg. 88.

²⁷² Cf. Danglmaier, Nadja: Seine erste Liebe vergisst man nicht...: Vom Heimatgefühl aus Österreich vertriebener Jüdinnen und Juden und deren Nachkommen in Israel (2009). Pg. 88.

²⁷³ Cf. Saint Sauveur Henn: Exotische Zuflucht? Buenos Aires eine unbekannte und vielseitige Exilmetropole (2002). Pg. 251. Et seq.

Cf. Saint Sauveur Henn (1996). Pg. 71.

Cf. Hock (2005), Pg. 152.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Stroinska, Magda: The Role of Language in Re-construction of Identity in Exile. In: Stroinska, Magda, Cecchetto, Vittorina (Ed.): Exile, Language and Identity (2003). Pg. 95 to 101.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Schwarcz (1995). Pg. 168.

language was passed on. The passage reveals how even when opposing the “German” culture, language remained a crucial part of the identity.

*Unsere Kinder sind Kinder von Emigranten, die die Flucht aus Österreich und die Erniedrigung erlebten, sich vor dem Holocaust retteten und die Bestialität der Unterdrücker kennenlernten. Wir vermeiden, sie etwas zu lehren, das bei ihnen irgendein Interesse an Österreich oder Deutschland erwecken könnte. Die Sprache ja, die geben wir ihnen.*²⁷⁶

“German” Jewish parents who wanted to pass on “German” language and culture to their children, sent their children to the Pestalozzischule. The school was founded by Swiss but provided a safe place for “German” Jews and people opposing the national socialist regime. An interview partner, who herself attended the Pestalozzischule, reported about the importance of the school for the “German” Jewish community. Not only did the children learn Spanish and more about the „German” culture and language, but also it provided a possibility for “Germans” with Jewish origin or people with a Jewish spouse to find work. Consequently, even though not being a Jewish school, the Pestalozzischule was strongly influenced by “German” Jews. Nowadays the interview partner defines it as a “German” school that many Argentinians attend, who want to learn German.

*Und die Pestalozzischule war dann die Schule wo die Deutschen Juden alle ihre Kinder hingeschickt haben, die weiter das Deutsche behalten wollten. Und die deutschen Lehrer die emigrieren mussten, weil sie irgendwie Jüdische Anhängsel hatten. Sind dann auch hierhergekommen. Und so ist die Pestalozzischule im ersten Moment beinahe eine jüdische Schule. Obwohl sie nachher. Sie war ja eigentlich keine jüdische (.) sondern eine schweizerische Schule. (...) Jetzt ist es eigentlich auch keine jüdische, sondern eine deutsche Schule mit vielen Argentinern, die da Deutsch lernen wollen.*²⁷⁷

According to the author Robert Schopfloch, who fled from Europe when he was 14 years old, the Pestalozzischule was founded, since all the other “German” schools and institutions were brought into line with the national socialist regime. Furthermore, the Pestalozzischule was important to him, for he not only had the possibility to continue his “German” education there but also learned Spanish. Additionally, the Pestalozzischule connected the students with the “German”- Humanistic thoughts.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 130.

²⁷⁷ IntEL28min20sec

²⁷⁸ Cf.: Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=deutsche+spurensuche+in+argentinien (As consulted 23rd of November 2017). 7min10sec.

Whilst “German” Jews did the best to cope with the situation, in the 1950’s they didn’t feel home in Argentina. More than that, they had no desire to really assimilate.²⁷⁹ The “German” Jews showed an Argentinian external world and a “German”-Jewish internal world, which made it difficult for them to integrate socially and culturally. “German” Jews had to witness, that assimilation does not necessarily lead to integration and therefore remained cautious.²⁸⁰ “German” Jews who wanted their children to learn German sent them to the Pestalozzi Schule, they read “German” Jewish newspapers and were organized in “German” Jewish organizations. As a result, the second generation also often got married to a descendant of “German” Jews, who was involved in the same clubs, and activities. Furthermore, a “German” Jewish partner could understand the complex background.²⁸¹

Most “German” Jews lived bourgeoisie lives in Europe, whilst they had to live a proletarian or modest middle-class life, and were overstrained by the alien climate, culture, and the unknown language in Argentina.²⁸² The emigrants were neither mentally nor materially prepared for the act of migration, and after their arrival in Argentina had to work in fields they were not trained for. The urgency to flee Europe without sufficient time to prepare the emigration, and the loss of money and economical goods– which was taken off them by the National Socialists – resulted in a migration with empty hands and empty pockets. An interview partner of Schwarcz remembers, that they were not able to take anything with them, whilst non-Jewish “Germans” were able to take many belongings with them. Furthermore, the interview partner states, that at the day of their arrival they received a letter from their aunt in Vienna, describing, that just a few days after their departure the Gestapo was at their apartment to arrest the interview partner, as well as the father of the interviewee.

*Gar nichts, gar nichts. Viele Deutsche haben hingegen ganze Lifts (CMT MK: Schiffsladungen mit Übersiedlungsgegenständen) kommen lassen... An einem Sonntag sind wir von Wien weggefahren, und als wir in Buenos Aires ankamen war schon ein Brief von meiner Tante hier, in dem sie uns schrieb, daß am Montag, einen Tag nach unserer Abfahrt, die Leute von der Gestapo gekommen sind und uns abholen wollten, meinen Vater und mich.*²⁸³

In the first years, many Jewish immigrants experienced feelings of degradation and struggled economically for some time. An interview partner of Litsauer reports, that his father never could cope with the loss of his status. In Vienna he used to be an important personage,

²⁷⁹ Cf. Bergmann (1996). Pg. 117.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Hopfengärtner (2005). Pg. 18 et seq.

²⁸¹ Cf. Schwarcz (1995).Pg. 236.

Cf. Mettauer, Philipp: Erzwangene Emigration nach Argentinien: Die Österreichisch-jüdische Lebensgeschichte (2010). Pg. 147.

²⁸² Cf. Ibid. Pg. 248 et. Seq.

²⁸³ Schwarcz (1995). Pg. 41.

but in Argentina he was a nobody - which resulted in depression. The interview partner describes the loss of energy and the missing lust for life. His father died in 1947.

*Mein Vater hat die Lage hier in Argentinien nicht ertragen. In Wien war er ein großer Herr, aber in Argentinien war er ein Niemand. Und hier ist er langsam eingegangen. Er hat die Kraft verloren, die Lust aufs Leben verloren und ist im Jahre 47 gestorben.*²⁸⁴

Being used to a rather comfortable life, the life in Argentina was not even remotely comparable to the living standards Jews from Austria and Germany were used to. Often living in so called *Coventillos*, which were one-room flats for poor people – they were challenged to make ends meet.²⁸⁵

Beyond that “German” Jews were tortured by feelings of guilt. The immigrants felt guilty for not being able to save their friends and families from death, while they were able to survive.²⁸⁶ One woman describes, how her aunt and cousin died in a concentration camp. It became a tragedy in the family which, the ones in the know were not allowed to talk about, for the grandmother shouldn’t know that her daughter and grandchild had to die under these circumstances. In the end the interviewee was plagued by the question why she was able to save herself, while others were not.

*Einer Schwester meines Vaters gelang die Emigration nicht. Während meine Großeltern emigrierten, kam sie mit ihrer Tochter in Auschwitz um. Diese Nachricht musste man vor meiner Großmutter geheim halten. Man hat ihr nie gesagt, daß ihre Tochter deportiert worden war. Dies belastet mich sehr. Immer stellt man sich die Frage: Wieso konnte ich mich retten und andere nicht? Diese Frage stelle ich mir immer wieder.*²⁸⁷

After the first harsh years, and the struggle with the degradation, most Jews were able to establish themselves in Argentina and became economically more successful. Whilst they were not able to assimilate culturally they were relatively fast in their economical assimilation.²⁸⁸ Their assimilation was a necessity, but the maintenance of their culture a need.²⁸⁹

To maintain the culture, “German” Jews settled relatively close to one another. The clear majority of “German” Jews that came to Argentina in the years between 1936 and 1940

²⁸⁴ Schmer, Felix: Seit der Gründung Israels muss ich mich nicht mehr verstecken. In: Litsauer, Alexander, Litsauer, Barbara (Ed.): *Verlorene Nachbarschaft* (2010). Pg. 145.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Mettauer, Horvath (2004). Pg. 13.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Wimmer, Adi: *Die Heimat wurde ihnen fremd, die Fremde nicht zur Heimat: Erinnerungen österreichischer Juden aus dem Exil* (1993). Pg. 16.

²⁸⁷ Nigg, Regula: *No estaba ni allá, ni acá* (2001). Pg. 9.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Saint Sauveur Henn (1996). Pg. 72 et seq.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Hopfengärtner (2005). Pg. 19.

stayed in Buenos Aires.²⁹⁰ Most “German” Jewish immigrants tried to settle in cities, which was helpful when looking for work. The desire to stay amongst a “German” Jewish community – and by that staying amongst a “Schicksalsgemeinschaft” (community bound by their destiny) also could be much easier fulfilled in the city of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, the “German” Jews who did not settle in Buenos Aires at first, later came to Buenos Aires.²⁹¹ The “German”-Jewish community they found in the city, represented a network of friends, family, and institutions that they could rely on. But most of all, within the “German”-Jewish cosmos, they could not only share their origin, language, and values but most of all a fate, that could hardly be communicated to the outside world.²⁹² This “Schicksalsgemeinschaft” functioned as a community where the formerly uprooted immigrants could settle down again. The support of the group helped to alleviate the emotional pain.²⁹³

The memory of “German” Jews in the 1950’s was shaped by the traumatic experiences of persecution, escape, exclusion, loss of home – and a partial loss of identity. These experiences influence, how following generations experienced their “German” memory and how they remember their “German” roots. For most “German” Jews a return to Germany or Austria was no option.²⁹⁴ An understandable stance, which an interview partner affirms. According to her, every migration has a chance of return, but not the re-migration of the Jews.

*Ja, ich meine eine Sache ist klar. Jegliche Migration hat eine Chance des Widerkehrrs. Ein Jude hat keine Chance des Widerkehrrs. Eine Sache ist ein Tourist und eine Sache ist um dort zu leben (Exkurs anderes Thema) Hier gab es kein Zurück. Als Tourist ja, aber zurück nein.*²⁹⁵

In summary, “German” Jews in the 1950’s were traumatized, felt the loss of home, degradation, and the partial loss of identity. Whilst a minority fully distanced themselves from the “German” language and culture, the majority upkept it – within their closed “German” Jewish community. They created an Argentinian external world, in which they adapted and a “German” Jewish inside world in which they maintained culture and language. “German” Jews did not fully assimilate in Argentina but lost their roots in Europe at the same time.²⁹⁶

Despite the existence of both – a “German” and a Jewish community – in Argentina, the “German”-Jewish immigrants remained amongst themselves. The acculturation of “German” Jews is marked by a double movement, on one side the necessity to adapt to the Argentinian

²⁹⁰ Cf. *Saint Sauveur Henn* (2002). Pg. 244.

²⁹¹ Cf. *Levin, Elena: Historias de una emigración (1933-1939) Alemanes judíos en la Argentina* (2010). Pg. 66.

²⁹² Cf. *Ibid.* Pg. 15, 17 et seq.

²⁹³ Cf. *Treibel, Annette: Migration in modernen Gesellschaften* (2011). Pg. 102 et seq.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *Saint Sauveur Henn* (1996). Pg. 251.

On the contrary to the Jewish immigrants, people living in political exile did not suffer from a break of identity. Cf. *Hock* (2016). Pg. 88 et seq.

²⁹⁵ IntEl1min39sec.

²⁹⁶ Cf. *Saint Sauveur Henn* (2002). Pg. 252.

environment and on the other side the desire to maintain the own language, culture, and customs.²⁹⁷

4.2.3. Volga German community

Volga Germans were often called “Rusos” by the Argentinian majority society, for they emigrated from Russia to South America. Yet, their migration history is more complex and goes back to the 18th century, when the Volga Germans left the politically and economically instable “German” areas and immigrated to Russia. At this time the Russian Empress Catherine II ensured the “German” colonies a high number of privileges and territories.²⁹⁸ One interview partner makes a reference to the special conditions the Volga Germans agreed on, that made them migrate to Russia. This is important, for it shows that Volga Germans were determined to maintain their “German” identity in the 18th century already. The interview partner states, that Volga Germans only went to Russia under the conditions, that their (German) language had to be respected, they could practice their religion, they would not have to serve in the military, and their (“German”) schools would be directed by a “German Schulmeister”. Until the 1860’s they could keep these privileges.

Los alemanes fueron allá con condiciones especiales, se les respetaba el idioma, la religión, no hacían el servicio militar y las escuelas eran dirigidas por el Schulmeister. Todo eso anduvo bien hasta el 1860.

Also, the interview partner states, the religion they brought from Germany was important for the Volga German community. 60 percent were Lutherans and 40 percent catholic. The religion helped the community to maintain their identity.²⁹⁹ Most of the people that immigrated from “Germany” to Russia were craftsmen, and farmers and had to face long and harsh winters, famine, loss of harvests and lack of support by the Russian government, as well as robbery. Consequently, the numbers of deaths in the first decades of immigration were terribly high.³⁰⁰ Geographically and culturally they were isolated from the Russian majority society, which led to a cultural and linguistic segregation.³⁰¹ German remained their most important language. In

²⁹⁷ Cf. Hopfengärtner (2005). Pg. 14.

²⁹⁸ The most important ones were: Free choice of religion, exemption from taxation for 30 years, exoneration of the military service, non-restrictive use of the native tongue, self-custody of the school system and their villages.

Cf. Schmidt (1997). Pg. 14f.

²⁹⁹ IntHW11min30sec.

³⁰⁰ Schmidt (1997). Pg.14f.

³⁰¹ The colonisers even had to apply for a passport to leave the colony.

Cf. Ibid. Pg. 15.

Schmidt asserts that Slavic languages had only minor influences to the German dialects used by the Volga Germans in Argentina.

Cf. Ibid. Pg. 16.

the 1870's many former "Germans" – now subsumed under the term Volga Germans – started to leave Russia.³⁰² Argentina became one of their destinations of desire.³⁰³

One interview partner describes, how the repeal of the Volga German privileges led to the migration of Volga Germans, for they didn't want to give up their religion and culture and didn't want to serve the Russian military. Volga Germans who had money migrated to the United States. He furthermore describes, that whilst in relation to the total number of Volga Germans only a small number migrated, they were fertile and reproduced quickly.³⁰⁴

Con esta crisis, un solo reino, una sola religión, un solo idioma, una sola rusia... y el servicio militar obligatorio, entonces el "para siempre" (from the edict of Catherine to the Volga Germans) se cae y mucha gente pero no toda ni la mayoría emigra... los que tenían dinero emigran a estados unidos, en muy poco tiempo entre 1880 y 1910... la mayoría emigra, después es esporádico. Tampoco son miles, son pequeños grupos que a lo largo del tiempo y por ser muy fértiles se transforman en la quinta comunidad de inmigrantes de los que llegaron en 1880 a Argentina.

At this point Volga Germans were able to maintain their "German" identity for more than hundred years in foreign land. Neither the time in Russia, nor the act of emigration was easy for Volga Germans and connected with experiences, they later didn't want to talk about. Due to the need to make a living they were not able to process what happened to them, instead they kept it their unconscious collective memory. In the newspaper "Deutsche und ihre Nachkommen in Argentinien. Alemanes y sus descendientes en la Argentina", published by Volga Germans, Volga Germans not only share Volga German traditions and recipes, but also remember the time before their immigration to Argentina and what they left behind in Russia.

³⁰² One of the reasons was the Mir-System.

The colonial administration made it mandatory to organize agricultural production alongside the Mir-System. Under the Mir-System every male settler got 30 dessjatinen (approximately 33 hectare) of land. Yet the land remained property of the municipality. The son entitled to inherit also did not get to own the land but only the usage. Every now and then land was distributed also to those who were not entitled to inherit. Due to enormous increase in population they had to shrink the size of distributed land. Consequently, the yield per head decreased, which lead to a hunger catastrophe.

Even more important were decisions in the domestic policy of the tsardom.

The privileges German settlers experienced were not accepted by the local population. Consequently, the prerogatives were retracted.

Cf. Ibid. Pg. 16 et seq.

³⁰³ The first settlement of Volga Germans in Argentina were Hinojo in the Province of Buenos Aires and Diamante in the province of Entre Rios in 1878. About 10.000 Volga Germans emigrated until 1914 to Argentina. Just as in Russia they founded their settlements in distance to economic centres and defied the Argentinian administration. They founded the settlements Valle Maria (1878), Protestante (1878), Salto (1878), Spatzenkutter/Campo Maria (1878), San Francisco (1878), Aldea Brasilera (1879) – close to Diamante in Entre Rios, San Miguel (1887) close to Olavarria (Buenos Aires), Pueblo Santa Tridad (1887), Pueblo San José (1887) and Pueblo Santa María (1887) at Coronel Suarez.

³⁰⁴ IntHW19min10sec.

They report, that “their people” had to deal with unimaginable pain, and that they hope, they will be reunited in heaven, with those they left behind.

*Nuestra gente ha sufrido en su mayoría, el peor despojo afectivo, difícil de imaginar, la dimensión y el arraste que es traído aun en nuestros días, por sus descendientes, los alemanes del Volga asé 130 años al despedirse de sus padres y hermanos, allá en Rusia, se deseaban lo mejor, y desde la fe, soñaban con volverse a encontrar en la Patria Celestial.*³⁰⁵

Also, the text makes the harsh conditions under which the Volga Germans settled in Argentina, founded families, villages, and colonies, and how they tried to work towards the future, visible.³⁰⁶ Volga Germans have a complex memory in terms of their Russian past. The memory of Volga Germans is loaded with trauma, not only due to their time in Russia, but also because of what they experienced when migrating, and in their first years in Argentina. Until the 1970's there was no psychological processing, but rather repression of the past.

One interview partner points out, that their traumatic past led to a “tower that no one leaves”. Which means, that the hostile environment they had to face in Russia led to a closed community, where they lived in a world that allowed them to upkeep their identity.

*Siempre como ellos vivieron manteniendo su identidad en esta torre "nadie entra y nadie sale" viven en un mundo que les permite resolver la identidad... por una razón muy simple, el que esta afuera rusos y demás eran hostiles.*³⁰⁷

Furthermore, he states, that the first Volga German immigrants coming to Argentina never wanted to assimilate. The interest of the Volga Germans was to continue their way of living, just as they did in Russia. Within less than five decades the Volga German immigration in Argentina was completed. Mostly they settled in isolated rural areas in the provinces of Entre Ríos and La Pampa. Whilst they came from different regions in Germany and migrated over different routes at different times, their appearance in Argentina is in comparison to other “German” communities rather homogenous. They were ethnical “Germans” in Russia and they wanted to keep it like this. The villages they built right from the start were intended to be sealed off.

En los dos lugares (the two first colonies) la gente que viene a instalarse, no quiere vivir en forma integrada con el resto de las comunidades como lo hacían el resto de los inmigrantes y como estaba previsto por la ley de 1880 de inmigración y población. (...) ellos lo que desean

³⁰⁵Cf. El Desarraigo In: Deutsche und ihre Nachkommen in Argentinien. Alemanes y sus descendientes en la Argentina N°10. (Bahia Blanca/2008). Pg 15.

³⁰⁶ Así llegaron muchos a la Argentina y formaron sus familias, en muchos lugares inhóspitos e inimaginables, formaron aldeas o colonias, y muchos se integraron a localidades pequeñas, a construir su futuro y soñar con algo que les había sido quitado allá en su querido y lejano río Volga.

³⁰⁷ IntHW17min29sec.

*es reproducir lo que sabían hacer en Rusia, no había una estructura nacional ni ningún líder ideológico... en Rusia siguieron siempre siendo alemanes étnicos, mantuvieron su religión su lengua, su familia y colectivamente no se contaminaron con los rusos... Los gobiernos de la Provincia de Buenos Aires para Inojó y de Entre Ríos para las distintas aldeas que se iban a armar, les permiten que vivan separados de las demás comunidades.*³⁰⁸

Yet, in the 1950's to 1980's Volga German children were obliged to learn Spanish. Over many years "German" schools ignored, that they were supposed to teach Spanish in schools, which in 1944 led to the closing of schools, as the interview partner reports. He perceives this forced opening, as a big damage for the "German" and Volga German communities, for the Spanish language began to emerge in the colonies. People started to listen to Argentinian radio and the Spanish language became portable to every place.

*Las escuelas alemanas enseñaban alemán y se habían olvidado de la ley de educación nacional... que obligaba a las escuelas a enseñar el castellano, entonces el estado en 1944 ratifica la necesidad de la enseñanza del castellano en las escuelas, incluidas las alemanas. Eso sucede de forma normal en Buenos Aires y no en Entre Ríos donde cerraron prácticamente muchas escuelas, generando un daño muy grande a la comunidad. Digamos así que el castellano empieza a romper por el lado de la lengua, esta "torre" pero el elemento más importante que rompe la torre por el lado del idioma es la radio portátil... el castellano se fue metiendo por arriba.*³⁰⁹

In the 1950's, Volga Germans had been living isolated from majority societies for about two centuries already, maintaining their Volga German language and customs. Their time in Russia, the process of migration and the first years in Argentina, were marked by harsh conditions. The memories of this time were at first repressed, for there was no time to deal with the past. This supported an isolation from the Argentinian majority society and closed Volga German communities in rural areas. Only with the forced opening the Argentinian culture and the Spanish language slowly arrived in the Volga German communities.

4.3. „German“ communities from the 1950's until the 1980's

In the time between the 1950's and the 1980's, the "German" communities consisted mostly of people that did not migrate themselves to Argentina, but were the children, grandchildren, or great grandchildren of immigrants. Until this point, as I have described, most "Germans" remained "German" and did not feel the desire to assimilate, but to upkeep their roots. Yet, the second generation had to learn Spanish at school and whilst the "German"

³⁰⁸ IntHW21min50sec.

³⁰⁹ IntHW30min40sec.

microcosms still existed, they were also able to participate in Argentinian society – which caused a co-existence of different realities of lives.

4.3.1. “Germans” between the 1950’s and 1980’s

As shown, up until the 1950’s, the attempts of „Germans“ to remain „German“ were clearly visible. Only when “Germans” were forced to open, a slow adaption of language, social behavior, and values took place in public, but a “German” identity was upkept in private. In the 1950’s to 1980’s, the descendants of “Germans” felt conflicted by the tensions between their parents’ culture and the culture of the country they grew up with. They at times had to face rules, values, and cultural patterns that were opposing another. These rules, values, and cultural patterns were also transmitted in “German” as well as Argentinian associations. In the 1950’s to 1980’s, associations still played a major role in the lives of “Germans” and their descendants. They contributed to the maintenance of “German” culture and allowed, that an identification as “German” was still possible, despite the ongoing process of acculturation and assimilation into the Argentinian majority society. An interview partner, who grew up in the 1960’s and 1970’s, mentioned that his generation still had a huge contact to the “German” culture. They went to “German” associations, and “German” schools.

Ja, aber ich bin ziemlich mit Deutscher Kultur aufgewachsen. (Hustet) Ja, wie gesagt: Deutsche Schule, hab mich immer im Deutschen Milieu bewegt, im Deutschen Ruderklub usw. aber auch im Skandinavischen Milieu hab‘ ich mich bewegt. Aber (..) Ja man (..) meine Generation ist sehr mit einer Deutschen Kultur aufgewachsen. Das kann man heute nicht so sagen.³¹⁰

At this point the “German” communities were intact and “Germans” and their descendants interested in maintaining them. In some families “Germans” still preferred endogamous marriages. An interview partner describes how unwanted it was in the 1950’s to get married to a “local”, instead of a “German” descendant. People rolled their eyes, even in the 1970’s when the interview partner married, people were not too fond of a non-endogamous marriage.

Als ich in den 50er Jahren, ich bin ein Jahrgang 44 (..) War ich in der Schule. In den 50er Jahren. Wenn einer eine Hiesige heiratete, dann rollte man mit den Augen. Das war so ähnlich wie, wenn ein Jude eine Nicht-Jüdin heiratete. Dann rollte man auch mit den Augen. Nicht und das war damals so. Ich habe auch eine Hiesige geheiratet. Meine Eltern haben mit den Augen

³¹⁰ IntOl30min53sec.

*gerollt. Aber ich hab' erst 1972 geheiratet. Das war so. Das war ein ganzes striktes. Das war das Kolonieleben. Das gab es auch in Chile und in Brasilien.*³¹¹

One interview partner reports on the situation when in the 1970's the daughter of the president of the "Bayernverein" (association of Bavarians) dated another "German" whose ancestors were not from Bavaria. When her fiancée wanted to become a member of the association too, a general meeting had to be held. Finally, he was accepted in the "Bayernverein". This example perfectly illustrates how important the origin of a person was to "Germans", even in the 1970's. The interview partner furthermore states, that even having brown instead of blue eyes, could lead to suspicions.

*Es gibt hier auch einen Bayernverein. Und wenn sie da Mitglied werden wollten im Bayernverein, dann müssen sie aus Bayern kommen. Ist ja eigentlich ganz logisch. Und das muss ungefähr vor 50 Jahren gewesen sein oder so. Und dann ging die Tochter des Präsidenten mit einem Deutschen, der nicht aus Bayern war. Und der sollte auch Mitglied werden vom Bayernverein. Dann mussten die eine Generalversammlung einberufen statutengemäß – der war aus Braunschweig und dann wurde der aufgenommen – zum Glück. Der wurde nachher der Präsident vom Bayernverein. So war das früher. Das hat sich aber ganz geändert. Früher hat man. Also wenn sie nicht blaue Augen. Also, sag ma' mal, wenn sie braune Augen hatten, dann sind sie verdächtig, nicht.(.) Aber das ist vorbei und das ist auch schon lange vorbei. Ich bin eigentlich kein Freund von dieser Philosophie. Jetzt kann man gar nicht.*³¹²

Many children of "Germans" were only exposed to Spanish, when they started to go to school, like an interview partner of Austrian descent, who in the 1960's only spoke German until he was confronted with Spanish in class.

*Zuhause wurde nur Deutsch gesprochen ich habe dann hier in der Schule erst Spanisch gelernt – in Buenos Aires.*³¹³

The contact to the Argentinian – Spanish speaking – majority society became natural to him over the years, yet he emphasises the role of the Austrian culture in his family. His aunts were married to Non-"Germans", but the Austrian culture was still dominant in the families.

*Da herrschte immer (.) sozusagen (.) das österreichische Klima. Wir haben uns immer am Sonntag getroffen obwohl jede, die Hedi, die Irma (.) die haben nicht Österreicher geheiratet, sondern hiesige.*³¹⁴

³¹¹ IntLE18min45sec.

³¹² IntEL31min42sec.

³¹³ IntAI14min54sec.

³¹⁴ IntAI13min55sec.

Oftentimes „Germans“ had prejudice towards Non- „Germans“, as following interview suggests. The interview partner reported how his father – who was considered well integrated and ran a company – talked about the local Argentinians. He states, that his father perceived them, as if they were “underdeveloped” foreigners. The family of the interview partner participated – when necessary – in the Argentinian society, for example, by reading not only the “German” but also the Argentinian newspaper. Yet, in many other families there was no receiving of the Argentinian culture at all. The interview partner states furthermore, that to him the upkeeping of the “German” community for such a long time was only possible because of the isolation of “German” colonies.

Die Deutschen haben sich in der Hinsicht nicht... Das erinnert mich an meine Eltern. Mein Vater (.) obwohl mein Vater sich gut integriert hat. Er war Leiter einer Firma. Hat die aufgebaut und es ist ihm sehr gut gegangen. Aber er hat eigentlich von den Hiesigen immer geredet wie von Fremden, die in Namibia leben. Oder was weiß ich. Das ist ein sehr netter Herr, der Herr Gomez, der isst auch mit Messer und Gabel. Nicht so. sag ma' mal. Man verkehrte kaum. Wir lasen auch eine Argentinische Zeitung aber in manchen Familien las man nur Deutsch und deswegen hat sich die Kolonie so gut erhalten. INT: Wenn sie von Kolonie sprechen (.) LE: Die Deutsche Kolonie. INT: Die Deutsche Kolonie im Sinne von den Kolonien am Land oder generell?. LE: Nein, generell.³¹⁵

Even when trying to maintain the “German” culture, the reorientation within the “German” community was necessary but difficult at times. Not the identification with a “German” nation but the integration in the country they lived in, in some families over many generations, had to be priority.³¹⁶

Most “German” descendants that started to assimilate to the Argentinian majority society, but at the same time were still connected to the “German” community, found a way to cope with this situation. One interview partner describes, that to him his fatherland is Germany and his motherland is Argentina. Just as one has a mother and a father – referring to the term “Vaterland” in German and (madre) patria in Spanish and revealing the double identity the “German” descendant has, at least when it comes to the cultural belonging.

Und, naja (..) ich seh' das so. Ich hab' da (...) ein Vaterland das ist Deutschland und ein Mutterland das ist Argentinien. Also, man sagt hier auch Mutterland, man sagt nicht Vaterland. Und in Deutschland sagt man Vaterland. Nicht? Ich, ich hab' das immer so gefühlt. Wie man Vater und Mutter hat.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ IntLE20min39sec.

³¹⁶ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2014). Pg. 265.

³¹⁷ IntOI30min27sec.

In the time between the 1950's and 1980's, the "German" communities were strong and solidly united, feeling the urge to stick to their "German" roots. The re-established associations, newspapers, schools and organisations helped to maintain the "German" memory and identity at this time. Yet, the second generation already partially assimilated and were able to establish an identity despite the tension between their parents' culture and the Argentinian culture. Due to the heterogeneity of the "German" collectives and because of their differences in rural/urban settlements, the developments towards assimilation into the Argentinian majority society turned out to be varying, which will be particularly visible in the following "third generation" – according to the "three-generation-assimilation-model."

4.3.2. „German“ Jewish community in the 1950's to the 1980's

Most descendants of "German" Jews of the second or third generation had – due to the painful and traumatic experiences of their families and their individual, social, and collective memory – the urge to distance themselves from the past. Their fragile connection to their "German" past was – due to the trauma of the holocaust – loaded with negative associations. Therefore, they identified with the Argentinian culture more, than with the "German". Consequently, the second generation felt the desire to assimilate. The traumatic past of their families led to a conscious refusal of "German" culture and language, to distance themselves. A fracture of the "German" identity occurred, and the German language only was used if there was no other choice. The second generation also showed no interest in getting in contact with "German" associations and communities.³¹⁸

An interview partner mentions that "Germans" amongst each other, always spoke German, "German" Jews on the contrary, chose Spanish.

*Die Deutsche Kollektivität. Die Nicht-Jüdische haben unter sich Deutsch gesprochen und wir haben nie unter uns Deutsch gesprochen. Wir haben immer Spanisch gesprochen.*³¹⁹

Whilst the first generation of "German" Jews had a difficult time to assimilate in Argentina and remained in a "German"-Jewish community, the second generation did everything they could to distance themselves from their "German" past. As already mentioned, many children of "German" Jews attended the Pestalozzischule, which assumingly would lead to a perservation of the "German" culture. Yet, the Pestalozzischule represented a "different Germany" to them. The Pestalozzischule – according to the interview partner was a special

³¹⁸ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2014). Pg. 265.

Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2002). Pg. 252 et seq.

³¹⁹ IntEl48min08sec.

place for “German” Jews in Argentina, that the “German” Jews in the United States did not have.

*Aber die Pestalozzi Schule war sozusagen wie ein anderer Teil, wie wenn das andere Deutschland und weil (.) wie woanders hast du das nicht. Weil in den Vereinigten Staaten hast du das nicht.*³²⁰

The Pestalozzischule was not able to keep up the “German” culture in the “German”-Jewish communities. The rejection of the descendants of “German” Jews had against the “German” culture was too strong.

Not only the pain of the past accompanied the “German” Jews in Argentina, but also the consequences of the military dictatorship in the years between 1976 and 1983.³²¹ During the dictatorship many people were killed or disappeared. Most relatives never found out what happened to the “desaparecidos” (the ones who disappeared). The number of Jewish people disappearing was disproportionally high. One reason for this might be the on average high education of Jewish people, and therefore the high number of students being Jewish. Another reason might be, that most Jews settled in the cities, where more political and social engagement took place. Even though there are logical explanations, eyewitness reports testify, that the repression against Jewish people was especially harsh. The military regime automatically suspected Jews were enemies of the government. In relation to the Jewish proportion within the Argentinian population, twelve times as many Jews were killed or disappeared than other people.³²²

In an interview for a documentary, a “German” Jewish descendant reported, that he was never interested in the “German” past of his family. The issue of the “German” past is one that nobody wanted to talk about. To him, his sad background story was the dictatorship in Argentina and not the German dictatorship.

*Es ist auch kein schönes Thema, worüber man sprechen will. Ich habe mich nie richtig interessiert dafür. Also, ich meine. (.) es ist wie meine (.) meine traurige Geschichte, meine traurige Hintergrundgeschichte war die argentinische und nicht die deutsche Diktatur irgendwie.*³²³

The descendant of “German” Jews was one year old, when the dictatorship in Argentina began. He states, that the dictatorship was anti-Semitic and furthermore, that many Jews were close

³²⁰ IntEl43min30sec

³²¹ IntEl40min51sec.

³²² Eisenstaedt (2010). Pg. 108.

³²³ Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=deutsche+spurensuche+in+argentinien (As consulted 23rd of November 2017). 4min12sec.

to the communist ideology. It was terrible, for many Jewish people were persecuted in Germany and later in Argentina. Half of his Jewish friends lost their parents at this time. Consequently, to him this part of history is much closer than the time of National Socialism.

*Die Militärdiktatur war ziemlich antisemitisch hier und viele Juden waren kommunistisch gesinnt und es war schrecklich. Ich kenne Fälle von Juden, die verfolgt wurden in Deutschland und die hierhergekommen sind und sie wurden wieder verfolgt. Meine ganzen Freunde (.) Die Hälfte hat die Eltern bei der Diktatur verloren und viele sind Juden. Und deswegen ist mir diese Geschichte viel näher als die Nazizeit.*³²⁴

To sum up, the second Generation of “German” Jews distanced themselves from the “German” past. They tried to assimilate into the Argentinian majority society faster, and not even “German” institutions, such as the Pestalozzischule, could prevent their repeal of the “German” culture. Furthermore, the Argentinian dictatorship became more present in their lives, due to the anti-Semitic politics and the constant disappearing of Jews.

4.3.3. Volga Germans in the 1950's to 1980's

Volga Germans were able to maintain their culture and language over more than two centuries. In the time between the 1950's and 1980's, Volga Germans were forced to slowly assimilate into the Argentinian majority society. Especially in terms of language³²⁵ and education they adapted to the majority society.³²⁶

One interview partner states, that for all migrant communities one process is similar. Starting with a decrease in cultural content, a progressive – or at times even a radical – abandonment of the (Volga German) language begins. In the case of Volga Germans this abandonment went hand in hand with the interest of Volga German parents to provide better opportunities for their children, compared to the ones they had. For their German was also different from the German taught in schools and books, they faced many linguistical problems, as well as ridicule and discrimination by others. Therefore, many parents decided to discontinue passing on the language to their children.

Para todas las comunidades migratorias el proceso ha sido similar... el decrecimiento del contenido cultural, el abandono progresivo o muchas veces radical de las lenguas habladas por los antepasados...y si a eso le sumamos el interés de los padres porque los hijos tengan mejores oportunidades que ellos... tener interferencias del alemán resultaba un problema,

³²⁴ Ibid. 4min45sec.

³²⁵ Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 107.

³²⁶ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 203.

*sobretudo en la escuela; fueron objeto de burlas y discriminación, se puede entender que hayan decidido, muchos de ellos... discontinuar la enseñanza del lenguaje.*³²⁷

Another interview partner describes his experiences with discrimination and being made fun of in school. He says, that by having internalized the “German” linguistic pattern, it was difficult, to understand the grammatic structure. For example, “der Tisch” in German is masculine, so Volga Germans used the masculine article “el mesa”. Yet, in Spanish that is wrong and to understand that, was very hard for the children.

*Habian chicos que se les enseñaba a hablar en las escuelas, y el idioma alemán, usted lo sabe mejor que yo, a veces los verbos son similares pero no existe el verbo neutro, como por ejemplo der tisch (the table) “el mesa” (which is the wrong gender in spanish) entonces... era una gran joda eso, era muy duro; el silla, el mesa, el luna, todo al revés.*³²⁸

In Volga German communities of the 1950s to 1980s, usually the mother passed on the language to the children, for women held the main responsibility for domestic work and raising children. In previous generations mothers would only speak (Volga) German with their children, for usually the men only were able to speak Spanish due to work-related contact with the public (Argentinian) life.

*La madre que normalmente es la tiene que enseñar el idioma a sus hijos, aprende el castellano de sus hijos, porque la madre no tenia una función social, no tenia porque salir de la casa y ella hablaba siempre en alemán... el padre aprende castellano por necesidad, por razones de trabajo y de negocio.*³²⁹

As pointed out, Volga Germans were discriminated in School for their “odd” language and their heritage. As a result, mothers tried to provide their children with a better start and stopped imparting the Volga German language. One interview partner calls this the first rupture of Volga German culture. As a second rupture he states the necessity to leave the colonies, for the families were too numerous.

*Esta es la primer ruptura, la de la lengua, la segunda ruptura es la de la familia, las familias eran muy numerosas... y el espacio que tenían era chico para tanta densidad de familia...*³³⁰

As a result, young men had to find work elsewhere. Some worked for other Non-Volga German farmers, others went to the growing cities, for good workers were needed there.

³²⁷ IntYH13min01sec.

³²⁸ IntJM33min21sec.

³²⁹ IntHW33min24sec.

³³⁰ IntHW35min56sec.

*Entonces el hijo se tiene que ir, se tiene que ir a trabajar, y donde se va a trabajar? al campo del otro, del que no es alemán y a la vez en bs as... se produce una explosion de trabajo y de demanda de mano de obra muy importante.*³³¹

This caused many Volga Germans to leave and young people started to marry partners, that were not part of the Volga German community, which turned out to be a problem.³³²

At the same time, the Volga Germans became conscious about their complex history, prior to the immigration and ever since they came to Argentina. In 1978, Volga Germans celebrated 100 years of Volga German colonies in Argentina. During that, they started to actively engage with their collective memory, in which the traumatic experiences were still present – even though there were no open discussions about it. Coping with the past turned into a therapy process, in which the preserved trauma was turned into conscious memory. The reconstruction process was difficult for the collective identity construction at first – for the suppression of memory had been going on over a long time. Also, by the time the memory transformation took place, what was perceived as typical Volga German, might not actually have been Volga German - a subject which i will further elaborate, when discussing the development of Volga Germans since the 1980's.³³³

In short: In the 1980's the Volga German community slowly opened up. First, because of legal implementations, concerning language acquisition. Second, for the Spanish language became more frequently used. Third, due to the necessity to look for work outside of the colonies and fourth, because young Volga Germans started to marry Non- Volga Germans. At the same time the process of an ethnical revitalization took place, in which they remembered their complex past. After decades of silence around the traumatic experiences, the descendants started to find out where their Volga German ancestors came from and what they had experienced, and how this affected the Volga German community.

4.4. The situation from the 1980's until today

Until the 1980's, "German" identity had transformed in the various communities. For more than thirty years there was no "German" immigration in high quantities. Furthermore, according to one interview partner, few newly arriving "Germans" had interest in participating in maintaining the "German" culture.

³³¹ IntHW36min58sec.

³³² IntHW41min11sec.

³³³ Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 203. Et seq.

*Die Deutschen die jetzt seit 1970 hierhergekommen sind. Gibt es auch ein paar. Das sind aber irgendwelche gesellschaftlichen Aussteiger, die die Nase voll hatten (...) die wollten von der Gesellschaft. Die haben aber keinen großen Beitrag für die Deutsche Kolonie oder das Deutschtum gebracht. Sind hier glücklich und interessieren die Deutschen nicht und suchen auch keinen Kontakt. Darunter leidet die Deutsche Kolonie.*³³⁴

Even though a cultural contact with Germany, Austria, and Switzerland occurred, as described in chapter two, Germany, Austria and Switzerland had no influence on the “German” communities in Argentina on a larger scale. Due to this, the “German” identities developed predominantly detached from the closed “German” linguistic area in Europe, after the Second World War. The communities at this point started to show different manners of assimilation. Referring to the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” “German” descendants in the 1980’s and afterwards should be fully assimilated to the majority society.

4.4.1. “Germans” from the 1980’s until today

When, according to the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”, by the 1980’s all “Germans” should be assimilated, it is curious how linguistic enclaves, such as San Jerónimo Norte existed in the 1980’s and why “German” villages – such as Villa General Belgrano – attract thousands of tourists, who want to see the “German” culture. Even though the majority of „German“ descendants nowadays hardly have “German” ancestors only, but also Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, and many others, there is a big interest in what “Argentiniens” perceive as “German” culture.

One attempt to look at this could be made, by looking at the role of “German” schools. Which, one interview partner states, help to maintain the “German” culture until today even more than associations do.

*Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass die Identitätsfrage heute mehr mit den Schulen zu tun hat, als mit Klubs und Vereine. Also, die verschiedenen Deutschen Schulen. Die erhalten mehr als die Vereine.*³³⁵

Yet, these “German” schools are not exclusively open for “Germans” but every Argentinian who is interested in the “German” culture and language can attend it. Also, studying “German” in Argentina is by far not limited to descendants of “Germans”. As one interview partner, who currently studies German studies in Buenos Aires, reports. She was astonished by how many people without “German” roots are interested in the “German” culture.

³³⁴ IntEl29min54sec.

³³⁵ IntWE14min14sec.

*In meine Studium habe ich erfahren, dass sich viele Argentinier für die Deutsche Kultur interessieren, die keine Familie aus Deutschland haben oder das fand ich ein bisschen lu(.) war komisch, weil ich dachte, warum studieren sie Deutsch wenn sie keine Verbindung mit der deutschen Sprache haben.*³³⁶

Yet, having “German” ancestors and participating in “German” associations doesn’t mean, to have German language skills, as an Interview partner states.

*Man kennt einen, der heißt Müller in diesem Klub der kann kein Wort Deutsch und einen der heißt Garcia und kann perfekt Deutsch.*³³⁷

As the development of “Germans” since the 1980’s became increasingly diverse, I will now distinguish between three different groups of contemporary “Germans”, that have developed in the third generation.

4.4.1.1. Fully assimilated “Germans”

As the previous sub-chapter suggested, “German” descendants stuck willful to their “German” roots. However most of the “German” descendants over time identified less and less with the “German” culture and collective. These “Germans” finished the “Three-generation-assimilation-cycle” and the country of origin of their ancestors is not crucial for their own identity. This state of assimilation did not occur over night but is a result of a slow change that is not finished for all individuals completely. Processes of assimilation occur to different degrees. One reason is the increasing age of people that grew up in a “German” community. The members of the associations become older, leave, die. Associations become more “local”, less German. This is a normal process - one interview partner states that his children are quite typical Argentinians, despite having a multicultural background, as they are 4/8 “German”, 2/8 Croatian, 1/8 Spanish, 1/8 Italian, and thus have roots in several European countries.

*Und jetzt, veraltern alle Vereine und verhiesigen. Sag ma’ mal so. Weil es gar nicht anders geht. Meine Kinder sind typische Argentinier. 4/8 Deutsch. 2/8 kroatisch. 1/8 Spanisch und 1/8 Italienisch. Nicht, das ist ein typischer Argentinier.*³³⁸

Even in villages that are “German”, the process of assimilation is ongoing. One interview partner from Sierra de la Ventaña describes, how in Villa General Belgrano the “German” culture is eroding.

³³⁶ InPaTo44min02sec.

³³⁷ IntOl31min45sec.

³³⁸ IntLe26min51sec.

*Na, Na aber gut. In Bariloche oder in Villa Villa General Belgrano.. das bröckelt ja auch ab. Nicht. Oder wie?*³³⁹

An interview partner from Villa General Belgrano – who himself is of Austrian descend – affirms this, saying that there are less and less “Germans” in the village.

*Das hat sich auch geändert im Dorf. Es gibt nicht mehr so viele Deutsche Familie (...)*³⁴⁰

Another interview partner talks about the loss of impassioned “Germans” in Villa General Belgrano either due to death or their return to Europe – therefore, the culture is slowly disappearing.

Was ich merke, die (CMT MK. die „überzeugten Deutschen“) sind gestorben. Viele sind zurück nach Europa. Und es ist logisch. Es verliert sich ein bisschen. Es verliert sich alles.³⁴¹ Die Einwanderer, die sind schön langsam gestorben. Andere sind zurück. Ich habe eine Cousine die ist zurück nach Wien und die wohnt dort.³⁴²

Also, the descendants of „Germans” often show little interest in learning “German” as interviewee, whose children refuse to learn German, reports.

Es ist nicht mehr so leicht. Meine Kinder wollen momentan kein Deutsch sprechen.³⁴³

These processes have been traceable over the years. In the 1970’s, when one of the interview partners grew up, he states that the way of life in Villa General Belgrano was very similar to that in Europe and people would rather speak German in the streets than Spanish. Now the culture has changed, which is also visible, when looking at the local cuisine. The German culture is tailing off.

Wenn ich Kind war hier. In die Straße, sprechen mehr Deutsch als Spanisch. Und jetzt nicht mehr. Alles schon weg. Und Kuchen, alles was war. Es wurde praktisch alles so gemacht wie drüben aber jetzt nicht mehr. Die Kultur ist was anderes. Und unsere Kinder. Es verliert sich.³⁴⁴

Yet, as I will point out in this section, the upkeep of the “German” tradition in Villa General Belgrano is outstanding.

One interview partner suggests, that the reasons for the loss of the “German” culture, are feudal structures within the “German” associations, and a lack of initiatives to include young people. She states, that especially bigger “German” institutions have a lack of members, for

³³⁹ IntOl39min50sec

³⁴⁰ IntMu2min48sec.

³⁴¹ IntAl17min26sec.

³⁴² IntAl16min44sec.

³⁴³ IntMu3min36sec.

³⁴⁴ IntMa17min55sec.

they care too little about young people's interests or how to make their associations attractive to them and further generations. As a result, the elder members slowly die and there is no younger generation to take their place. She says, that in a meeting of members from "German" associations, she was one of the youngest to attend, being born in 1963.

*Ich weiß nicht ob die (Vertreter*innen großer Deutscher Vereine) das jüngeren auch schmackhaft gemacht haben da reinzukommen.es ist manchmal hab' ich so das Gefühl das ist ein bisschen feudal und da kommt der Sohn von dem (.) aber das so von den (.) das ist so schwer da reinzukommen. Aber da muss man sich mal damit beschäftigen. Wir hatten Probleme bei vielen großen Deutschen Institutionen (zählt Institutionen auf), dass manche Vereine manchmal aussterben, weil sie keine Mitglieder hatten. Und es gab die Frage wie kann man das schmackhaft machen. Und wir hatten ein Treffen in Olivos und da war ich fast eine der Jüngsten (CMT MK: Interviewpartnerin ist 1963 geboren).³⁴⁵*

Even though to her, the "Germans" attempts to maintain the "German" culture are touching. Many of them see the upkeep of the "German" culture as their lifework. Their suggestion to upkeep the culture was to found a choir with voluntary attendance, yet "German" descendants were not interested in attending.

Aber es ist auch rührend wie sich die Leute hier kümmern! (Exkurs: Umfrage in Schulen) Der Vorschlag war: Wir machen einen Chor! Und wer mitmachen will, macht mit. Ist natürlich nichts passiert.³⁴⁶

When she asked her daughter what she thought about the choir, she said, that nobody will attend a choir with traditional songs. The interview partner states, that to many people maintaining the "German" culture is their life, but they are scared to open the communities. Maybe because they are scared that a part of their life might get lost, but according to the interview partner, there is a need to act – otherwise the situation for "German" communities and the maintenance of the "German" culture will become even more difficult.

Ich hab' zum Beispiel meine Tochter gefragt (Exkurs zu anderen Vereinen) Sie sagt: ‚Mammi, niemand geht mehr zu einem Chor mit traditionellen Liedern.‘ Ich glaube schon, für viele Leute ist das ihr Leben diese Deutsche Tradition aufrechtzuerhalten. Aber. Sie wagen es nicht zu öffnen. Vielleicht, weil sie Angst haben, dass Teil ihres Lebens gestohlen wird. Aber irgendwas muss man machen, weil sonst (.) ist es schlimm.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ IntCSL52min19sec.

³⁴⁶ IntCSL53min12sec.

³⁴⁷ IntCSL54min03sec.

4.4.1.2. Modern “German“ or European Identity

In Argentina – as a country whose population is set together mainly by immigrants arriving in the 19th and partially at the beginning of the 20th century – as well as their descendants, it is less a question of having an immigration background but of being aware of this immigration background. Many people are aware of this background. Some Argentinians even hold a European passport and have a relation to the country their ancestors came from. An interview partner suggests, that if you’d ask an Argentinian about which nationality they belong to, it is likely, that the person would say, that they are European. Especially those holding a European passport. An issue that is not limited to Germans, but a general one.

*Bei einem Argentinier kann man fragen wie er sich fühlt und er wird sagen er fühlt sich als Europäer. Vor allem, die die einen anderen Pass haben. Sei es aus Spanien, oder aus Dänemark. Das ist ein argentinisches Problem. Ich glaube, dass das weniger etwas Deutsches ist, sondern allgemein ein Thema.*³⁴⁸

The interest to identify with a European culture does not necessarily mean that one defines as European (for example as German) but that the person uses the link, uses the link to elevate themselves into a superior position. One reason might be the constant political and economic instability that is going on in Argentina. An interview partner admits, that he always keeps an eye on Europe, for if things get worse, it would be better to emigrate.

*Ein bisschen kucken wir immer nach drüben, weil sie hier nicht gut gehen. Dann hast du es vielleicht wo besser.*³⁴⁹

One woman interviewed said, that she feels as an Argentinian, but she knows she has German blood, and thinks that this is great. Her heart is Argentinian, but her blood is German, and to her that’s an interesting mixture. Having European (German) roots does not imply not being able to be a proud Argentinian.

INT: Mir ist gesagt worden, dass sich viele dafür interessieren sich als Europäer – nicht jetzt unbedingt als Deutsche- aber die Argentinier haben ja auch diese Europäischen Wurzeln CSL: Ja, das stimmt. INT: Ja, aber ist das vielleicht nicht auch ein Widerspruch? CSL: Ja, also wir fühlen das nicht als Widerspruch. Also, ich spreche (.)wir (.) als Europäerin. Also, ich fühle mich als Argentinierin aber ich weiß, ich habe Deutsches Blut und, ich find’ das toll! Ich bin, äh, also wie sagt (.) Ich bin (.) Mein Herz ist Argentino, pero la (.) mi sangre es cien por cento

³⁴⁸ IntWE9min05sec.

³⁴⁹ IntMa40min37sec.

*Alemán. Es una mezcla interesante. E (.) und vielen ist so was ähnliches. Wir sind Argentinier, aber wir sind stolz (.) aber das stimmt. Das ist so.*³⁵⁰

The interview partner furthermore emphasizes, that Argentinians must first learn Solidarity, as the Argentinian identity is still in the process of creation

*Das ist was wir mehr brauchen! Zusammenhalt? Genau! Wir haben schon die Seele die uns zusammenhält aber der Mischmasch von Immigranten, die wir sind (.) haben wir keine (.) richtige Identität vom EL Argentino.*³⁵¹

4.4.1.3. Mystification and Blending

So far, I have presented examples that fit well with the theory of the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”. In this section I will address more complex cases. Starting with a statement of an interview partner reporting on how the German chancellor Helmut Kohl was greeted in 1996 by a cheering crowd of “German” descendants. Kohl visited the Goethe School and a parade took place. According to the interview partner, not everybody who cheered for Kohl, cheered in appreciation of his personage, but rather because he came from Germany, and that alone was worth being celebrated.

*Ich weiß, ich hab‘ 1996 hier mitgemacht eine Begrüßung von Helmut Kohl. Da haben wir in begrüßt in der Goethe Schule in der Turnhalle. Mit großem Aufmarsch und dann hab‘ ich auch gesagt, dass ist nicht weil alle Kohl freundlich sind. Was aus Deutschland kommt. Wird gefeiert.*³⁵²

Especially in rural areas, that were – due to their remote location – isolated over a long time, “German” culture was able to be maintained better - just as Hipperdinger suggests. One interview partner, who works in public service and therefore travels a lot, reports that in her journeys she sees that “German” traditions are more important the further you get away from the city. Her daughter doesn’t visit a “German” school but an Argentinian one. Yet, she speaks German and participates in the “German” culture.

Umso mehr du dich von der Stadt entfernst, umso traditionsbewusster sind die Gruppen. Die Deutschsprachigen. In der Stadt hat sich das mehr gemischt. Ich selbst habe (.) wollte sie nicht auf eine Deutsche Schule schicken. Die hat schon die Deutsche Kultur und spricht perfekt

³⁵⁰ IntCSL28min01sec.

³⁵¹ IntCSL27min17sec.

³⁵² IntLE38min35sec.

*Deutsch und so weiter. Aber man versucht sich schon (.) vielleicht ist man mehr kosmopolitisch. Aber im Landesinneren stimmt das.*³⁵³

In my thesis I have pointed out two places. First, the “German” village Villa General Belgrano in Córdoba and the town San Jerónimo Norte. Both examples perfectly illustrate a contemporary presence of “German” culture, in a remote area. I shall start my remarks with Villa General Belgrano.

Villa General Belgrano is a village, which due to its history has been branded “German”, and this “German” past is visible until today. Villa General Belgrano used to be a place, where it was more common to hear German spoken in the streets, than Spanish and the customs and traditions, as well as the local cooking and bakery had a “German” connotation. Over time, tourists showed an interest in the “German” village in the mountains of Argentina. This tourism shaped how the village developed, for the people of the region make their living off tourism. Therefore, an interview partner describes, the image of being a “German” village attracts people and makes it possible to maintain a variety of stores.

*Villa General Belgrano lebt eigentlich vom Tourismus. Diese Sicht. Es ist ein Deutsches Dorf in Argentinien und deshalb siehst du diese verschiedenen Geschäfte.*³⁵⁴

Yet, being dependent on tourism has its side-effects. Descendants of “Germans” in the Village of Villa General Belgrano report, that the “German” culture is falsified and used to be more realistic, when they were children,³⁵⁵ but due to tourism, and the tourists desire to see a “German” village, this has changed.³⁵⁶ They report, that it is an attraction to visit the village of “Germans” and to buy a beer mug but tourists are not interested in getting to know the “real German” culture – for example if there is wine culture in Austria. The interview partner sums up, that the tourist is fine with buying a beer mug in a store with loads of wood and decoration because there is no sensitivity in this matter.

*Oh! Vamos al pueblo de los alemanes! Oh, wir werden das Dorf des Deutschen besuchen und alles. Also, wenn (.) sie wollen einen Bierkrug. (...). Jetzt, ob in Österreich viel mehr Wein getrunken wird, zum Beispiel als Bier das wissen sie nicht und das ist ihnen Wurst. Die Sache ist die: Sie haben hier in Villa General Belgrano in einem Geschäftchen mit viel Holz und Dekoration einen Bierkrug gekauft(...) In dieser Hinsicht hat der Besucher nicht so ein Feingefühl. Für ihn ist das in Ordnung.*³⁵⁷

³⁵³ IntCSL29min35sec.

³⁵⁴ IntMu5min11sec.

³⁵⁵ IntMa23min19sec.

³⁵⁶ Cf. IntMu5min48sec.

³⁵⁷ IntAl21min22sec.

“German” culture often is perceived in a reductional manner, as “German” beer, Lederhosen, and Polka, the usage of the Gothic script (Frakturschrift) and the symbol of the eagle. The accuracy of this representation of “German” culture – not even to mention the contemporary “German” culture – is not questioned. There is no dialogue about the complexity and diversity of the German culture in these places. On the contrary, the most effective way to attract tourists seem to be artificial sites, reduced to mere stereotypes

The “German” descendants can discern, that the represented culture is not real but a kitschy façade, as one interview partner from Switzerland points out.

*Aber für mich ist es schon. Wie sagt man (..) wie sagt man auf Deutsch (..) spanisch (...) Ist nichts Reales. Ist nur eine Fassade. Kitschig. Ist alles kitschig was da gezeigt wird.*³⁵⁸

The representation of “German” culture became a business, and the locals sell this image. In Villa General people don’t represent the Gauchos – as in other parts of Argentina – so they work with their “German” heritage and the traditions they inherited.

*Es ist ein Geschäft. Der Einwohner sieht so. Kuck mal. Was verkaufen wir? Alles diese Kultur. Wir verkaufen nicht den Gaucho. Es ist alles so gemacht und da so traditionell geboren dieses Dorf und mit dieses leben wir.*³⁵⁹

One of their main issues is, that many stores are not in the ownership of descendants of “Germans”, and these store owners saw and see the “German” branding as a way of merchandising. The interview partners describe, that it is obvious, that the goods for sale in the stores are not a hundred percent “German” and have nothing to do with a “German” identity but seem to be entertaining.

*Jeder weiß, dass das nicht hundert Prozent Deutschland ist, aber es ist eine Sache die auffällt und Spaß macht. Aber ich würde nicht sagen, dass das eine Identität zu Deutschland ist.*³⁶⁰

The “German” culture in Villa General Belgrano has adapted to the demands of the region. The interview partners say, that there are people in “German” clubs that have no “German” descendants, but they want to maintain the “German” culture for the region, for they understand the importance of it.

*Hier hat sich die Deutsche Kultur... wie sagt man.. adaptiert an Argentinien und ähm... in den Deutschen Vereinen findest du Leute die sind nicht Deutschstämmig aber die möchten weitermachen, weil sie verstehen, dass das wichtig ist.*³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ IntOl40min13sec.

³⁵⁹ IntMa41min37sec.

³⁶⁰ IntCSL36min12sec.

³⁶¹ IntMu6min03sec.

From this perspective, the “German” culture in the village of Villa General Belgrano, has its roots in the “German” past of the village. The tourism and the people moving to Villa General Belgrano contributed to the falsification and reductionism of the culture and to the increase of kitsch, but also, they helped to maintain a “German” culture. Which is important – also for the identity of the community and the individuals. In the contemporary Villa General Belgrano an active maintenance of “German” culture, language, and music takes place. One interview partner talks about his “German” band “Die Biermusikanten” (the beer musicians). They do “German” folk music – but also other music – wearing Lederhosen and Tyrolean hats. They play at every festival in the village. Furthermore, Villa General Belgrano has three “German” dancing groups, a “German” choir association, and a “German” school.

*Wir halten die Kultur, Sprache und Musik... ich spiele in einer Musikkapelle. Wir sind die Biermusikanten. Wir machen Deutsche Volksmusik. Wir machen auch andere Musik aber wir tragen die Lederhosen, Tirolerhüte. Jedes Fest im Dorf sind wir auf der Bühne. Es gibt auch drei deutsche Tanzgruppen. Es gibt die Deutsche Chorvereinigung, wahrscheinlich der älteste Verein im Dorf, es gibt die deutsche Schule.*³⁶²

What on the one hand is an attempt to maintain the cultural heritage, is on the other hand a cultural mixture. A Swiss interview partner mentions, that the Tyrolean dance group “Grupo Tirol”, also dances Swiss dances and Dances from other areas of Austria. He states, that everyone’s wishes are fulfilled. Everyone gets to see, what they think “German” culture is.

*Es gibt auch verschiedene Tanzgruppen. Also die „Grupo Tirol“ mit Lederhosen, die tanzen auch ein, zwei Schweizer Tänze. Ich denke auch ein, zwei österreichische Tänze. Es ist richtig gemischt. Man kann sagen, dass man jeden ein bisschen bedient.*³⁶³

The same interview partner makes a reference to the Swiss enclave Esperanza in San Jerónimo Norte. Originally the immigrants were speaking a dialect nobody else could understand, causing the community to stick together. Now there is also a big parade, dances, and music. People come from all over Argentina. However, it is not really Swiss, because it represents a specific Swiss region.

*Dort in Esperanza in San Jerónimo Norte (...) den Dialekt den sie reden hat kein anderer Schweizer verstanden. Deswegen ist dort das Schweizerfest aber es repräsentiert nicht die Schweiz. Dort machen sie auch einen großen Umzug und Tänze und Musik. Aber nicht vergleichbar mit dem Oktoberfest. Aber hier kommen sie wirklich von ganz Argentinien.*³⁶⁴

³⁶² IntMu3min06sec.

³⁶³ IntSa1h04min59sec.

³⁶⁴ IN Pa28min13sec

In Esperanza the maintenance of the “German” past, still has a strong regional component. Even though in San Jerónimo Norte people have a strong interest in the culture and language of their ancestors, and according to Hess-Lüttich even a dialect revival is occurring, he also thinks that a linguistic death will happen at one point, as the blending of culture and language is not reversible. Hess-Lüttich also states, that nowadays there is a re-vitalization of the dialect for serving tourists, and not for the private usage within the community. Which – he concludes – will not prevent the linguistic death.³⁶⁵

I will finish this section with by quoting an interview partner. He said, that they are proud of their origin. It is important to maintain the relation to the Austrian culture. They were born in Argentina – a country they love. But the second home, will always be the old home – Austria. They were born in Argentina but at home everything was made the way it was done in Germany or Austria. The interview partner states, that his generation (according to the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” he’d belong to the second generation) will be the last generation where it is obvious that they were born in Argentina, but they are not a 100 percent Argentinian. Therefore, at times people call them Gringos.

*Wir sind stolz auf unsere Herkunft. Wir versuchen immer, also sozusagen, die Beziehungen zu halten, zur österreichischen Kultur, zur österreichischen Kultur. Wir sind in Argentinien geboren. Wir lieben unsere Heimat aber für uns ist die zweite Heimat immer die alte Heimat Österreich. Wir sind hier geboren aber alles zuhause gemacht wie in Deutschland oder Österreich. Unsere Generation ist noch vielleicht die letzte Generation wo man merkt, ja die sind hier geboren aber die sind nicht hundert Prozent... wie sagt man... hiesige. Deshalb nennt man sie oder uns öfters Gringos.*³⁶⁶

The interview partner perfectly affirms the points I have tried to highlight. The second generation is still active in Argentina, still tries to maintain the “German” culture to a certain point. Yet, the developments cannot be reversed, for identities are fluid.

To conclude the observations made in terms of the development of “Germans” over the past decades: „Germans“ are by far the most heterogenic group within the “German” immigration. Therefore, also the processes of Assimilation occur differently. I have distinguished between “Germans” that fully assimilated and “Germans” that maintained a “European” identity – either for safety reasons, or because a European identity has a high prestige. Other than that, I have referred to the mystification of the “German” past and the Blending of culture. Hence, I don’t think, that “Germans” that maintained the “German” culture, did not assimilate. All my interview

³⁶⁵ Cf. Hess-Lüttich (2013). Pg. 23 et seq.

³⁶⁶ IntAl37min14sec.

partners spoke perfect Spanish and perceived themselves as Argentinians. Yet, they also identify with a “German” identity. Which relates to Hall’s theory on the postmodern subject.

4.4.2. “German” Jews

The distancing of the “German” Jews towards their “German” past lead to a loss of the “German” character in “German”-Jewish institutions over the last decades. The traces of the „German“ Judaism slowly start to dissolve, but the Jewish tracks remain.³⁶⁷ The descendants of “German” Jews had little interest in maintaining the “German” roots in the time between the 1950’s and the 1980’s. Over the last decades this phenomenon became even stronger. Some descendants of “German” Jews possess a “German” passport, in case they need it, but not because they feel any connection to Germany, as an interview partner describes.

*Der deutsche Pass es una companiensi pero no de l’amor.*³⁶⁸

Descendants of “German” Jews are more interested in having a European passport. They don’t want to be „German“ but to have the possibility to be European. Europe promises support and a safe place in potentially harsh times. Also, a slight idealisation of Europe might happen, but no idealisation of Germany.

*Ein Teil war es mehr einen Europäischen Pass zu haben. Einen Pass von der EWG zu haben. Ich glaube nicht, dass es eine direkte Form war Deutsche zu sein. Sondern eine direkte Form, Versuch Europäer zu sein (...) Ich glaube, es hat mehr mit einem Rückhalt von Europa und einer Idealisierung von Europa, als mit Deutschland zu tun.*³⁶⁹

In a documentary on “German” Jews in Argentina the young author and journalist Ariel Magnus, descendant of “German” Jews in the third generation, is portrayed. He started to deal with the roots of his family, when he studied in Germany. There he realized, that everything he thought of being culturally Jewish, was “German”. He realized, that he was raised culturally „German” but his family refuses to accept that. To them identifying with the “German” culture would be betrayal. Making a connection between the family and the “German” culture therefore is unwanted.³⁷⁰

Als ich da war, habe ich gemerkt, all die Dinge von denen ich dachte, dass ich sie aus meiner Jüdischen Erziehung hatte, waren in Deutsche Dinge. Das man früh ins Bett geht, das man

³⁶⁷ Cf. *Saint Sauveur-Henn* (2014). Pg. 265 et seq.

³⁶⁸ IntEL28min41sec.

³⁶⁹ IntEL24min35

³⁷⁰ Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=deutsche+spurensuche+in+argentinien (As consulted 23rd of November 2017). 6min12ec.

Ostereier sucht. Was weiß ich wie viele Dinge... Das waren Deutsche...Also, ich hab' eher würde ich sagen, eine Deutsche Erziehung bekommen. Was meine Eltern nicht so gerne hören werden und viele andere in meiner Familie (.) dass (.) das wollen sie nicht mal hören. Also, das war wie ein Verrat, dass ich Deutsch erzogen wurde.

The exile caused a fundamental crack in life and identity for those who had to escape the horrors of the National Socialist Regime. Whilst the elder generation still suffers from this experience, the younger generation doesn't want to be related to the "German" culture. In her book "Zweimal überleben. Von Auschwitz zu den Müttern der Plaza de Mayo. Die Geschichte der Sara Rus" (Surviving twice. The journey from Auschwitz to the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. The story of Sara Rus) Eva Eisenstaedt describes a meeting of survivors of the persecution – Sherit Hapleitá - of the National Socialist Regime, organized by a Jewish organization in 2005. She defines the meeting as a space for the people who remained. A space to feel home and where no explanations are needed about where they came from. The association that exists since the 1950's helps the survivors not to carry the burden alone.³⁷¹

In the years since the 1980's until today, people that survived the Holocaust are still living in Argentina and even though the burden will never vanish, most of them still feel a connection – unlike their descendants – with the "German" culture. One of them was the author Robert Schopflocher, who died 2016, but until the very end dreamt in German, and had a "German" phantasy. This "German" phantasy to him he upkept, to him was his home, but he considered himself as living between three worlds – the Argentinian, the "German", and the Jewish.³⁷² Until the end Schopflocher read the "German" newspaper "Argentinsches Tageblatt", which finds most readers in Belgrano, where most "German" Jews settled.³⁷³

The younger generation on the contrary perceives themselves as Argentinians. Ariel Magnus states, that his father always told him, that he has received a Jewish upbringing, to provide him with an identity. However, he never understood that, for his identity was Argentinian. Magnus thinks, that the identity is most visible, when it comes to football. He

³⁷¹ Am 26. Juli 2005, lange vor Veranstaltungsbeginn, strömten die Menschen in die Räume des Jüdischen Verbandes der Überlebenden der Naziverfolgung – Sherit Hapleitá – in der Paso Straße. Hier haben die „Übriggebliebenen“ ihren eigenen Ort, an dem sie sich zu Hause fühlen und niemandem erklären müssen, wer sie sind und woher sie kommen. Der Verband existiert seit den frühen 1950er Jahren. Das Bedürfnis das Erlittene nicht allein tragen zu müssen, brachte sie zusammen und so gründeten sie diese Institution. Man erzählt lieber nichts über das Erlebte, darüber schweigt man lieber. Eisenstaedt (2013). Pg. 23.

³⁷² Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=deutsche+spurensuche+in+argentinien (As consulted 23rd of November 2017). 11min55sec.

³⁷³ Cf. Ibid. 09min02sec.

cheers for Argentina, but not for Germany. He has an Argentinian identity, with some “German” and little Jewish influence.

*Mein Vater hat mir immer erzählt, er hat mir eine jüdische Erziehung gegeben, damit ich eine Identität habe und ich habe das nie verstanden. Weil meine Identität war Argentinier. Also, ich glaube, man ist von dem Land, von dem man auch für die Fußballmannschaft ist und ich bin für die argentinische. Ich könnte nie für die deutsche sein. Also, ich bin Argentinier. Dann kommt das Deutsche und dann das Jüdische.*³⁷⁴

From the 1980’s until today, Jews also had to deal with the loss they faced during the military dictatorship. Eva Eisenstadt describes, that in 2005, another commemoration took place, in which 1.900 Jewish people who never returned were remembered.³⁷⁵

Since the 1980’s the vanishing of the “German” culture in the Jewish communities continued. The people that survived the holocaust and are still alive, are probably the last “German” Jews, with a relation to “German” culture and language. The past “German” Jews had was traumatizing and left open wounds, which makes it difficult for the second and third generation to identify with the “German” part of the Jewish past. Jews in Argentina –whether they were “German” or not, were confronted with anti-Semitism in the society during the military dictatorship. Consequently, they had to deal with a range of staggering facets of their past.

4.4.3. Volga Germans

Volga Germans started to show more interest in their culture and language from the 1970’s onwards. In the past Volga Germans were discriminated against and felt ashamed of their culture. One interview partner points out, that people were also ashamed for their language, or for coming from Russia. They were made fun of, for being different, and ridiculed at school. But now, being of Volga German descend is a reason to be proud of.³⁷⁶

*Nosotros, dicen personas algo mayores que yo, teníamos vergüenza de ser alemanes o de hablar alemán o de ser rusos... en la escuela, de chiquitos, porque se nos oía raro, éramos diferentes a los demás, se nos reían. Siempre aparece eso, la burla, la vergüenza. Y ahora estamos orgullosos(.)*³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Cf. Kultur 21: Deutsch-jüdische Spurensuche: Argentinien. URL: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=deutsche+spurensuche+in+argentinien (As consulted 23rd of November 2017). 9min58sec.

³⁷⁵ Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 109.

³⁷⁶ 329 out of 381 Volga Germans state, that they are proud of being Volga German, Cf. Ibid. Pg. 128.

³⁷⁷ IntYH32min02sec

Externally, they are often (discriminatorily) described as Rusos, but Volga Germans don't feel comfortable with this external ascription. In a survey about two third stated that most of all they perceive themselves as Argentinians, while 27,1 percent identified as Volga Germans.³⁷⁸

One Volga German makes it clear: I am an Argentinian, descendant of Volga Germans. I am not a Russian.³⁷⁹

„Ich bin ein argentino, descendiente von alemanes del Volga, rusos no.“

One interview partner points out, that “Russia hurts”, and that this is one of the motives why their grandparents didn't talk about the past in Russia, which is the first problem with the term “Ruso”. The other problem is, that the majority society in Argentina called Volga Germans “Rusos de mierda” (Shitty Russians). Unsurprisingly, Volga Germans do not consent to the term Ruso.

*Rusia duele y ese uno de los motivos por el cual los abuelos no nos hablaban... de lo que habia sucedido allá, eso por un lado, por otra parte habia una verguenza, porque aqui eran considerados al principio eran considerados "rusos de mierda".*³⁸⁰

Another interview partner states, that being considered Russian was insulting, first because it wasn't accurate, second because they were pre-revolutionary – meaning that they emigrated from Russia prior to the revolution – and therefore, the social status of a peasant in Russia was inferior to the one they were accustomed to.

*El hecho de ser considerados rusos era insultante, primero porque no era correcto, segundo porque ellos eran prerevolucionarios, por lo cual, el status social de algun campesino en Rusia era inferior al que ellos estaban acostumbrados.*³⁸¹

Volga Germans after immigrating did not have the time to process their traumatic past and had to work hard to maintain a living, rather than being able to upkeep their stories. By the 1970's – when interest in the Volga German past and culture grew, the sources people had to construct their memory from were dubious. Consequently, the blank spaces were filled up with the memories of books and movies about Volga Germans from Russia – even though they did not emigrate and therefore had different experiences from those coming to Argentina.³⁸²

In a study, done by Ladilova Anna, it became obvious, that out of 381 interviewed persons, only a third (33,2 percent) knows the background story of their families. Even more

³⁷⁸ Ladilova (2013). Pg. 131. 107.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. 130.

³⁸⁰ IntHW50min40sec.

³⁸¹ IntYH1h00min55sec.

³⁸² Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 114 et seq.

(37,8 percent) have no knowledge whatsoever of their descendants.³⁸³ For the immigration background of Volga Germans dates back to the 19th century, most Volga Germans state that their great-grandparents, or grandparents came to Argentina.³⁸⁴ Consequently, the knowledge about the past is very limited, leading to wrong information and misconceptions.

Volga Germans might draw lines to the history of their ancestors and the experiences Volga Germans made under Lenin, Hitler, and Stalin. As one of my interview partners states, when the revolution of the communists was imminent, and Lenin took over, it was shocking for the Volga German people, for they were religious. He even recalls the time of the First World War, the Second World War and the horrors Volga Germans had to suffer under the dictatorship of Stalin – who considered Volga Germans as accomplices of Hitler, expropriated them, and sent them to Siberia, where most of them died of hunger and cold. Yet, all the incidents he refers to, happened to the Volga Germans in Russia – that didn't migrate, and it happened years after the last Volga German colonies were founded in Argentina and as much the Volga Germans who came to Argentina had suffered – these memories were not their own but retrospectively generated ones, resulting from the revitalization of culture.

*Yo he visto, lastima que no me di el trabajo de fotocopiarlo, pasaportes que decian alemán habitante de Rusia. Cuando ya venia la revolución, asume Lenin, con el comunismo era una cosa muy chocante para nuestra gente porque eran muy religiosos... Vienen los cambios de la primera guerra y de la segunda guerra. Ahí ya estaba Stalin que los culpó de ser complices de Hitler... Les expropria todos los bienes y los lleva a Siberia... Los alemanes del Volga la mayoria murieron de hambre y de frio. La inmigración a Argentina se produce en el 1878.*³⁸⁵

Not only the difficulty to reconstruct the Volga German history accurately turns out to be a problem for the Volga Germans, but also the loss of the Volga German dialect. The native language is a key factor for ethnic identity. Volga German is not considered as “real” language, but in the course of the Ethnic Revitalization the Volga German dialect gained in importance³⁸⁶ Yet, the language must be “re-learned” because Volga-German is not frequently used at home and there is no material – such as grammar books – that teach you how to speak Volga German.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 108.

³⁸⁴ 37 percent of the interviewees (median age 39 years) stated that their great-grandparents came to Argentina, for 24,7 percent the great-great grandparents immigrated (median age 20,5 years), in the case of 23,1 percent the grand-parents arrived in Argentina (median age 53,3 years) and for 1,3 percent the parents immigrated (median age 83 years), 13,9 percent were not able to make any statements.

Cf. Ibid. Pg. 109.

³⁸⁵ IntJM7min02sec.

³⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid. 145 et seq, 107 et seq.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Ladilova (2013). 111 et seq.

Nowadays Volga German is practically not spoken anymore. One interview partner refers to Coronel Suarez, where in isolated colonies a few people are still able to speak Volga German, but thinks they are about the last ones to use Volga German frequently.

*Practicamente no se practica más... queda muy poco en Coronel Suarez que es una de las colonias mas alejadas (.)*³⁸⁸

Volga Germans now use Code-Switching to demonstrate their identity. When speaking Spanish, Volga German words, phrases, or whole sentences are added into the conversation to highlight, that they are Volga Germans and identify as such. This Code-Switching serves a functional, and social motivation and lays open the variety of linguistically hybrid elements of which the volga german culture consists.³⁸⁹

In her study „Kollektive Identitätskonstruktion in der Migration. Eine Fallstudie zur Sprachkontaktsituation der Wolgadeutschen in Argentinien“ Ladilova Anna tried to ascertain, how Volga Germans identify themselves. Whilst I have already pointed out at the beginning of this section that about two-thirds of the Volga Germans considers themselves most of all as Argentinians and the rest as Volga Germans, it is still interesting to investigate on the identity building of Volga Germans. Most Volga Germans – that were interviewed by Ladilova Anna – named Germany as their original home country, from which also the traditions come. Furthermore, they believe, that many of the traditions are upkept until today are “German”. The displaying of the Oktoberfest – with women wearing Dirndl, and the men wearing Lederhosen affirms this thought,³⁹⁰ as following statement confirms.

*„Básicamente lo mihmo, o sea que conserva todah la cohtumbreh, o sea lo baileh, la comida, todo eso conserva. Porque en la tele pasan una fiehta, ¿ cómo eh?, de Alemania. Oktoberfest. Y siempre pasan, y astán vestidoh así como alemaneh, que toman la cerveza y bailan y todo.“*³⁹¹

Whilst to most Volga Germans, Germany represents the original home country, they don't identify with contemporary Germany. Also, Volga Germans feel that there is a lack of interest from Germany in those Germans that emigrated to Russia.

*Aber diese Deutschrussen haben den ganzen Kontakt mit Deutschland verloren. Nicht, ja. Besser gesacht (..) die deutsche Gesellschaft kümmert sich nicht mehr. Möchte auch keinen Kontakt mit den Deutschrussen haben, das ist irgendwie zu fremd. Das finde ich nicht gut.*³⁹²

³⁸⁸ IntJM35min30sec.

³⁸⁹ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 202, 204, 126.

³⁹⁰ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 117 et seq.

³⁹¹ Ibid. Pg. 118.

³⁹² IntOlmin27sec11.

Consequently, to Volga Germans Argentina is the “real home”, and Germany is the “original home”. When referring to it, Germany is not only positively connotated, but even idealized – whilst Russia has a more negative connotation, as a place where the ancestors suffered. The stronger identification with Germany can also be seen at the level of ethnic identity. Over many decades a silencing of the traumatic past occurred, for dealing with the past seemed to be hard. At the same time the silence was burdensome too.³⁹³

Even though Volga Germans identify more with Germany than with Russia, there is a consciousness of the influence of the Russian language and culture on the Volga German language and culture.³⁹⁴ Yet, due to the lack of dealing with the past, many „German“ elements are perceived as Russian and Russian elements as authentic German.³⁹⁵ This is a result of the lack in knowledge on the Russian past.³⁹⁶

Nowadays there are some initiatives that try to support the increasing interest in the Volga German history.³⁹⁷ Even competitions are held to reflect on Volga German issues. The ones organized by the Centro Argentino Cultural Wolgadeutsche have programs that go on over several weeks and perform speeches.³⁹⁸

A 17-year old completed his survey in one of this programs with the sentence: “*Rescartar, difundir y preservar la cultura de los Alemanes de Wolga.*”(…)³⁹⁹, which stands for the desire to revitalize the Volga German culture. Especially the dances, history, genealogy, but also language seem to be fascinating for Volga Germans. Also, the Youth shows an increasing interest in the activities – not caring if others make fun of them. The maintenance of food, festivals, dances, and music and even the interest to learn Volga German is present.⁴⁰⁰

Yet, an interview partner has a more pessimistic view on the future development. To him, reaching the youth is crucial, but it is difficult, for the Volga German community is getting weaker. He also claims that the current methods to reach the youth will not be enough for they don’t raise awareness of the issues that move the Volga German community. The interview partner referred more to festivals, than to the initiatives.

En las aldeas no se piensa en esto (mantener la identidad)... cuesta muchísimo porque es algo que le esta sucediendo a todas las comunidades, la busqueda es llegar a la gente joven... pero la gente joven esta en otra dimensión... todas estas identidades van camino a ser más

³⁹³ Cf. Ladilova (2013). Pg. 127 et seq, 203.

³⁹⁴ Cf. Ibid. Pg.122, 125.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 201.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 119. Et seq.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Ibid. 148

³⁹⁸ Cf. Ibid. Pg. 115.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. 116.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Ibid. 145 et seq.107 et seq.

*debiles. Vas e encontrar algun fortalecimiento en las aldeas o en algunas instituciones, pero yo tengo miedo que las fiestas no alcancen, las fiestas lo que hacen es fiesta, pero no generan conciencia, no genera racionalidad...*⁴⁰¹

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter provided an insight into the reasons for “German” communities to assimilate or not assimilate. I based myself on the findings of the Chicago School, who have distinguished between three generations, in which the process of assimilation is supposedly completed. The findings of Yolanda Hipperdinger helped to extend this assimilation model. My research showed that “Germans” from Austria, Switzerland, and Germany took a different development from “German” Jews and Volga Germans. “Germans” from Austria, Switzerland, and Germany were the most heterogenous group that I have described for not only did they immigrate at different times, but also was their demographic composition and settlement structure highly diverse. Yet, they have certain features in common. First, the strong implementation of “German” associations and organizations. Second, the urge to maintain the language and culture of their descendants and the belief of superiority. This caused, that the process of assimilation only started when the communities were forced to open. Due to their heterogeneity, the assimilation process occurred differently. As a result, mostly people from isolated, rural areas maintained their “German” heritage, or people that profited from maintaining it. Other than that “Germans” assimilated over the last years, or only have loose bonds to a “European” past.

“German” Jews in the first years after the Second World War preferred to stay amongst themselves. Whilst a large quantity of immigrants wanted to upkeep the “German” culture, the second generation tried to distance themselves from it, for the “German” past perceived traumatic. Also, the Argentinian dictatorship caused immense harm and pain within the Jewish community and dealing with this was of greater importance to the descendants of “German” Jews. The fast ability to assimilate of “German” Jews was fostered by their high level of education and their urban settlement structure.

Volga Germans had no interest in assimilation when they arrived in Argentina in the late 19th century. They consciously distanced themselves from the majority society but also had to open up in the late 1940’s. The Volga German culture and language was discriminated against for many years. As a result, many parents decided not to raise their children speaking Volga German, but Spanish. Furthermore, due to the high reproductivity of Volga Germans, young people started to leave the community and non-endogamous marriages became more

⁴⁰¹ IntHW69min49sec.

common. In the 1970's an ethnic revival started. Whilst many descendants of Volga Germans now show an interest in the past, the information they have is limited and wrong connections are made. It is difficult for Volga Germans to recreate the past, relying on sources that might not be accurate. Volga Germans furthermore tend to idealize Germany and demonize Russia as a place of suffering. Consequently, looking at the cases of Volga Germans and "German" Jews I argue, that traumatic events of the past lead to a repression of memory, and cultural identity.

Recalling Yolanda Hipperdinger's factors which influence assimilation processes, trauma as a factor by itself should be added. Trauma influenced in the case of the "German" Jews, as well as in the case of the Volga Germans how they assimilated and which connections they make with their countries of origin. Traumatic events lead to repression of the past and to a partial repression of identity.

5. Memory, assimilation, and identity in the “German” communities

After addressing the complex history of “Germans” in Argentina, and the CO-Existence of different “German” groups, I put emphasis on theories around memory, assimilation, and identity. I did so to establish a base, that helps to understand the different developments that went on in the “German” communities since the 1950’s. In this chapter I will bring together the theoretical attempts with my own research to analyze the impact of memory, different processes of assimilation, and identity building of “Germans” and their descendants in Argentina.

5.1. The construction of a “German” memory

“Germans” in the 1950’s based their individual identities on being “German”, they remained in social networks that were “German” and in which “German” values, social norms, and cultural explanation models were constructed and socially transmitted. “Germans” were constantly founding associations, schools, and institutions, which helped them to strengthen and maintain a “German” memory. In the middle of the 20th century a large quantity of “German” associations existed in which “German” memories were passed on. “Germans” at this time showed a lot of pride in their “German” heritage and actively tried to keep their “German” memories. Individuals and social groups contributed in keeping the colonies together, inter alia via creating a specific “German” memory, which was related to an idealization and glorification of the “German” culture and language. They furthermore tried to raise their children as “Germans” and not as Argentinians, for they perceived the “German” culture as superior. Due to the geographical distance to Europe, they started to create a “German” memory that originated in Europe but became more distinct from the European one over time. Especially the missing reappraisal of fascism during the time of the German Reich and the influence of national socialism on “German” communities, led to further divergence. Consequently, “German” communities referred to their “German” past differently. Depending on one hand on the time of immigration and on the other of the social grouping the individual was part of.

Thus said, the individual was not a passive part of a “German” collective and therefore collective memory. Quite the contrary, for without individuals showing interest in maintaining a “German” collective and memory, as well as contributing to it, there is no such thing like a “German” collective, or a collective “German” memory. “

“German” schools, and later also “German” archives as well as libraries contributed to the establishment of a cultural memory, that was able to maintain the “German” memory way

beyond a life-span. It does so in a comprehensive way, trying to lose as little information about the “German” past as possible.

The “German” past also was not forgotten in the years between the 1950’s and 1980’s, for there was still a big community that wanted to upkeep the “German” collective and with it the “German” past. Especially in the remote areas where the descendants were still embedded in a “German” community but also had to learn Spanish due to the School system. As a result, they participated in both, the Argentinian, as well as the “German” community. Young “German” descendants were contributing to a large extent to the collective memory of “Germans” by participating in festivals or visiting “German” schools, but also, they became part of the Argentinian society and by that the collective Argentinian memory applied to them too. Thus, the younger generation of the 1950’s had both, a “German” and an “Argentinian” memory, in relation to which their individual memory was built.

In the time between the 1980’s and today, I have differentiated between different types of identity building. This refers to the “German” memory as well. Whilst many of the “German” descendants, had only little interest in remembering their “German” roots, in other communities – especially in places that were more isolated – a “German” memory is still present on an individual, social, collective, and cultural level. As a result, the “German” memory is rather complex, for it developed detached from the one in Europe, blending different “German” memories, and there was no possibility to completely differentiate between Austrian, German, Swiss or any other “German” memory nowadays.

The “German” memory of “German” Jews and their descendants formed differently. Because of the horrible events that took place before and during the Second World War, “German” Jews were forced to flee Europe. Therefore, the last connection of “German” Jews in Argentina in the 1950’s was loaded with trauma, and so was their memory. Every individual suffered much loss and pain – on an individual level, as well as on a collective – that their “German” memory could not remain unaffected. In the time after the Second World War “German” Jews stayed amongst themselves, being neither able to connect with the resident Jewish communities, nor with the “German” communities. In their rather closed community they were able to share their “German” memory with the collective. As memory serves also to build identity, the following generations of Jews of “German” descent, were not interested in maintaining a “German” memory. The second generation rather repressed a “German” memory to distance themselves from the painful past of their families and friends. Even though some went to the Pestalozzischule most were more interested in building an Argentinian and a Jewish memory, than a problematic “German” memory. Keeping this in mind, it is no wonder, that a “German” Jewish memory from the 1980’s onwards is hardly passed on. Unsurprisingly, “German” Jewish institutions lost their “German” character.

Whilst remembering a Jewish past, this Jewish past is detached from its “German” connotation. Even “German” traditions and values, that are still present in many families that descend from “German” Jews are considered as Jewish and not “German” for they want to cut all links to a conscious “German” memory.

Volga Germans had a strong and persisting “German” memory. Even though Volga Germans emigrated from Germany in the middle of the 19th century already, they were able to maintain their “German” memory in the century they spent in Russia and in the time after. Being rather isolated in Russia over decades the “German” memory was crucial for them to build, and to maintain their collective identity. To survive, the community was forced hold together and individual identities related to their social surrounding and the “German” collective. Thus, their “German” memory was a cornerstone of the reasoning of their connection and the necessity to upkeep the Volga German communities.

After emigrating from Russia this connection continued in Argentina, when most Volga Germans settled in rather isolated rural areas again. There was only little contact to the majority society. The Volga Germans had to face harsh conditions in Russia and when coming to Argentina, there was no time to reflect on the past. Consequently, the Russian part of the Volga Germans history was repressed, for its traumatic and painful content and the lack of time to process it. Often considered as Rusos, Volga Germans did not think of themselves as Russians and neither did they remember being Russians. The Volga Germans hold a rich culture, in which they were able to consolidate their collective memory with their music, dances, clothing, and the use of the Volga German dialect.

The end of the Second World War not only forced the “German” communities to open up and to get in contact with the majority society, but also the Volga Germans. Whilst in the 1950’s this still had only a minor impact on the Volga German community, in the decades after, a slow convergence to the Argentinian culture – also visible on a linguistic level – occurred. Opposing an adaption to the majority society, the Volga Germans also started to show an increasing awareness for their own complex history. This awareness initiated the beginning of a conscious memory, that functioned as a therapy process against the repressed trauma of the Volga German past. For the repression of the traumatic past was pursued over decades on an individual, social, collective, as well as cultural level, the reconstruction process turned out to be difficult. To Volga Germans it was challenging to analyze what influenced their values, social norms, their culture and consequently their collective production of Volga German knowledge and its cultural roots.

In the last decades the Volga German experienced an ethnic revival, and so did the memory on the Volga German past. Especially the collective and cultural memory are maintained actively. Yet, due to the long repression of fractions of their past, this actively

created memory contains elements that were subsequently ascribed to the own culture but in fact were not part of the past of the ancestors that immigrated. This false re-creation of memory occurred through the search for information and at times by referring to historic events that were not in any relation with the Volga Germans that came to Argentina.

5.2. The process of Assimilation in the different communities

According to the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle” over three generations the values, behaviors, characteristics, and rules of immigrants adapt to those of the majority society. Consequently, within three generations the descendants of “German” immigrants should be assimilated in the Argentinian majority society. Whilst the first generation cannot assimilate but only adapt, the second generation is conflicted by the rules, values, patterns, and expectations of their parents and those of the majority society. Only the third generation can fully assimilate.

My own research has shown, that there is a lot of truth to this theory, but it also proved that the theory does not fit with the assimilation process of every “German” immigrant and their descendants. Therefore, I extended this relatable idea in chapter three, by linking it to the factors influencing (linguistic) assimilation, that the Argentinian linguist Yolanda Hipperdinger defines. Therefore, assimilation does not only depend on generations, but on the living conditions of the immigrants prior to immigration, previous migration experiences, geographic distribution, education, attitude towards one’s own culture, similarities of the culture of migrants in comparison to the culture of the receiving country and the time immigrants were able to spend planning their migration. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize again the role trauma takes, when it comes to repressing memories and assimilation.

In the case of Argentina as I have pointed out, until the forced opening of “German” communities, many “Germans” were living in a “German” microcosm, and therefore were not able to assimilate – even though they at times were living in Argentina for many generations already.

“Germans” – who had a long history of networking and founding associations – showed a strong solidarity and were keen in maintaining and cultivating a life style that was perceived to be “German”. In the 1950’s, there was especially no interest to assimilate in the country side – which corresponds with Hipperdinger’s findings. “Germans” were living in a “German” microcosmos, in which they read the “German” newspaper, worked in “German” companies, went to the “German” hospitals, and sent their children to “German” schools. It was not difficult to get along without speaking Spanish and without assimilating in the majority society. Yet, in the 1950’s the children of “Germans” were forced to learn Spanish in school, and due to the events

of the Second World War, Germany and Austria distanced themselves and stopped making claims towards the “German” communities but perceived them as South Americans of “German” descend.

The forced opening of the “German” colonies resulted at first in an adaption in public life – whilst privately they often remained “German” and stayed amongst “Germans.”

In the 1950’s to 1980’s, the second generation of “Germans” found itself torn between the culture of the “German” community and the Argentinian culture. What one interview partner described as having a fatherland and a motherland, just like you have a father and a mother, responds to the second generation within the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”. Even though the younger generations in the city as well as in the country side was confronted with both sides, in urban areas the assimilation process occurred faster, whilst the geographically more isolated communities in the country side were able to maintain their connection with the “German” culture far longer. In my thesis I have referred to the “German” village” Villa General Belgrano, and the town San Jerónimo Norte, where the persistence of a “German” culture in an isolated, rural area could be demonstrated.

In my analysis of the development between the 1980’s and today, I have differentiated between three types: First, “German” descendants that assimilated and therefore finished the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”, second “Germans” with a loose connection to their “German” or European past and third a form of mystification of the “German” past as well as blending of cultures. Nowadays the majority of “German” descendants in Argentina, are not only descendants of “Germans” but also of people from Spain, Italy, Hungary or elsewhere around the world. Coming back to Yolanda Hipperdinger’s categories, geographic concentration, the attitude towards the “German” culture, the maintenance of ethnic institutions, and the status and prestige of the “German” culture played a crucial role in the assimilation patterns. According to my research, all places that are still considered “German” are geographically isolated and small places. Only where belonging to the “German” community related to a “German” network and “German” associations, a “German” identity could be maintained. Moreover, this also provided a higher status for the “German” culture.

In the case of the “German” Jewish community, the following assimilation factors are crucial to bear in mind, when analyzing the development. First, the change of living conditions prior to immigration and afterwards. Second, their preference to settle in the capital of Buenos Aires. Third, the high education most “German” Jews received. Fourth, the attitude towards the “German” component of their culture. These categories help understand the astoundingly fast assimilation of “German” Jews, as the next lines will conclude briefly.

“German” Jews that immigrated to Argentina between 1933 and the middle of the 1950’s remained amongst themselves and neither connected with the Jewish nor with the

“German” communities in Argentina. Whilst they desired to maintain their own culture, language, and customs they were still able to adapt to the Argentinian environment, able to sustain themselves and to improve the living standards. Most “German” Jews sent their children to the Pestalozzischule, where they learned how to speak German as well as Spanish and got in contact with the “German” culture. The first generation of “German” Jews had no interest in assimilation but tried to make the best out of the circumstances, they found themselves in. In the 1950’s to 1980’s, the second generation wanted to distance themselves from the “German” culture. Whilst other “German” descendants used the German language in private life frequently, the second generation of “German” Jews tried to avoid the usage of the “German” language and preferred speaking Spanish. Consequently, by distancing themselves from the “German” past, they assimilated faster.

“German” Jews were able to assimilate within only two generations. In the second generation a conscious expiration of the “German” identity took place and the assimilation – in its most important elements – was completed. I argue, that in contrast to Volga Germans, the descendants of “German” Jews did not find pride in their “German” past, for it is negatively connotated. Descendants of “Germans” Jews might reflect and rethink their concept of what they perceive as “German” but an ethnical “German” revival won’t take place.

Contrary to “German” Jews and their descendants, Volga Germans mainly settled in the country side. Volga Germans managed to live in Russia over a decade without assimilating into the majority society. The geographical and cultural isolation fostered this non-assimilation. Hence, their assimilation process in Argentina occurred quite differently. Like “Germans” from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, Volga Germans founded their own schools, churches, and associates – as a result they lived in a micro-cosmos without any need to assimilate. Consequently, by then the Volga Germans maintained their culture and language for about two centuries in foreign land. In this time, they kept their culture and language. In Argentina, not only did they isolate themselves, but there were also only little attempts of the majority society to integrate them. Volga Germans were discriminated for their language and culture over a long time. With the end of the Second World War also the Volga German communities were forced to open. Slowly realizing that there was no possibility to isolate from the majority society any longer, many parents started to prefer the usage of the Spanish language over the Volga German, to simplify the lives of their children and to protect them from discrimination. At the same time Volga Germans started to process their own history. Whilst one component of this reflection on the past was to deal with the traumatic experiences Volga Germans had to face in Russia, when immigrating and in the first years in Argentina, the other component was the starting point for an ethnic revival. They started to acknowledge the richness of the Volga

German culture and began to participate in dances, music, search for history and genealogy, which became a key factor for the creation of an ethnic identity.

Since the 1980's, the Volga German's have strengthened their bond to their culture even more and show an increasing pride in it. Yet, they most of all identify as being Argentinian. To answer the question, whether the Volga Germans assimilated or not, I must briefly relate to the identity building of Volga Germans since the 1980's. As Stuart Hall concludes in his definition on the postmodern subject, due to the transformation of time and space the individual underlies constant and rapid changes. The postmodern times, are times in which the identity is fluid, differentiated, and can take on a multiplicity of forms. Local and particular identities are strengthened, whilst at the same time a cultural homogenization takes place. In this post-modern constellation it is questionable, if the ethnical revival of the Volga Germans, as well as other "Germans" is a sign of missing assimilation or of the possibility to assimilate while at the same time recalling one's own ethnic roots.

5.3. Process of identity building

In the third chapter I based myself on the definition of identity made by the educationalist Eva Borst, who defined the individual as in permanent confrontation and negotiation with its surrounding. This confrontation influences the development of the individual, the social and the collective identity. This means an individual, social, and collective "German" identity must first be created. Furthermore, I referred to Stuart Hall, who took a closer look to the creation of the term "identity", when distinguishing between the subject of enlightenment, the sociological subject, and the postmodern subject. I tried not only to take the individual, the society, and the collective into consideration, but also to consider the tremendous changes our world faced over the last decades.

The tendency of "Germans" to found schools and associations has been addressed on several occasions in this thesis. These foundations helped to maintain a "German" memory, and an idea of what can be perceived as a "German" culture in Argentina. When it comes to identity building, this point is crucial too. If the individual has a "German" surrounding, it can identify with this surrounding and this opens the possibility for the individual to create a theory about the self. Consequently, not only did the schools and associations help to maintain a "German" memory and a "German" culture but also to create the possibility for the individual to identify as "German" and to profit from that identification, for the individual wants to relate to (some) images that are connected to the "German" culture. The individual on the other hand helps – due its social relations – to share these ideas about the "German" culture, to connect with others, that share similarities and therefore creating a "German" collective. In other words, no "German" individuals mean no "German" collective. Within the "German" collective images

of the Self and the Other are created, that lead to inclusions, and exclusions, by defining what is “German” and what is not and thereby defining who belongs to the collective. Yet, the definitions of the Self and the Other can change over time and so can the categories that define what is “German”. “Germans” and their descendants also belonged and belong into a society, that is and was marked by social interaction and therefore created a social identity.

Referring to Hall I would like to especially draw attention to the sociological subject and the postmodern subject. The first one can be assigned to the modern times, a time in which the majority of “Germans” immigrated to Argentina. The sociological subject is created due to the relation of the subject (individual) to significant others and significant values, opinions, cultural surroundings, and cultural formations. The construction of identity is shaped according to the interaction and participation of the individual with the collective. Which is especially interesting when looking at rural communities. This approach is corresponding to the definition of Eva Borst and the relation of individual, social, and collective identity with one another.

Thus, due to the increasing complexity of the world, identity becomes more fragmented in the postmodern times. In the postmodern times, which are characterized by globalization, the notion of time and space changes and identities are continuously formed and transformed in relation to how the cultural systems appeal and how subjects are represented within the system. In the postmodern era it is possible to inherit not only one, but several – partially contradictory – identities. Identities are now influenced by cultural homogenization but can also create local, and particular identities – like in the case of Villa General Belgrano. Consequently, in postmodern times new and hybrid identities start to emerge. Which provides the possibility to call oneself Argentinian, and still feel “German”.

In the case of “Germans” and their descendants coming from the areas of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland taking this development into consideration is crucial. In the modern times there was no shared identity of “Germans” but rather regional “German” references, which not necessarily were in any connection with a broader understanding of what is “German”. This shared “German” identity or understanding of what is “German” had to be developed first. This development occurred detached from Europe and was passed on in many associations, schools and organizations and was therefore not only actively maintained but also actively created. While only slowly starting to develop a shared “German” community, “Germans” were not interested in assimilating into the Argentinian majority society, for they glorified their “German” heritage and identity and wanted to maintain it. The rise of the National Socialists caused a break within the up until then shared “German” community of people from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland and caused tensions.

In the time between the 1950’s to the 1980’s, “Germans” still had a strong network of associations and tried to maintain their “German” culture, for defining as “German” was –

especially for the elder generation – still possible and a need. Yet, identifying as “German” or as Argentinian led to tensions, for the “German” community increasingly assimilated. Whilst in the 1950’s to 1980’s German was still spoken frequently within the communities, from the 1980’s onwards less and less “German” descendants had linguistical skills in German. The skills were not passed on by their parents, or “German” descendants showed only little interest in learning German. Yet, in some regions in Argentina, as I have shown, the “German” past is still present. I especially drew attention to the village of Villa General Belgrano, where “German” elements are visible on every corner of the village. The “German” past is actively maintained in architecture and culture, and yet is considered as falsified, for the “German” attributes are maintained and developed not only to upkeep the “German” past, but also to attract tourists. Even though the “German” elements are created to serve the tourist’s desires and are often not accurate from a European point of view, the people of Villa General Belgrano show a big interest in supporting the cultural development of the village and in keeping the “German” character. Whilst the tourism leads to falsification of certain “German” elements, it also helps to prevent a loss of the “German” culture. In the third generation of “Germans” I not only have defined a group that fully assimilated into the Argentinian majority society and “Germans” still living in “German” communities and trying to maintain their “German” past, but also Argentinians that feel as Argentinians but relate to their European past. First, because Europe represents a place where the descendants of Europeans could re-migrate to, in case of a crisis in Argentina, and second, because a European past is still seen with pride.

To conclude on the identity building of “Germans” from Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, “Germans” were able to maintain a “German” identity until the communities were forced to open and experienced a change of identification, where they slowly approached the Argentinian Society. In the third generation however, it was possible to upkeep their “German” identity, even though defining as Argentinians. For in the postmodern era, a multiplicity of identities is possible.

For “German” Jews the anti-Semitic politics of the National Socialist regime and the persecution they experienced in Europe led to a loss of home and identity. “German” Jews prior to the German Reich, identified as “German” citizens and fought side by side with other “Germans” in the First World War, winning medals for their brave behavior. They were proud to be “German”. Taking into consideration however, that at the beginning of the 20th century national thinking and the desire to belong to a nation was crucial, the identification as “Germans” is relatable. Furthermore, most of the “German” Jews prior to the Second World War, were educated and were living a bourgeois or wealthy live. After their migration to Argentina, they not only lost their identity as citizens of a “German” nation, but also their economic power – which went hand in hand with the feeling of degradation. This loss of a

national identity and their identity connected to economic wealth, as well as the traumatic experiences led to an isolation from the rest of the Argentinian society. Whilst only a minority completely distanced themselves from their “German” past, and most “German” Jews still spoke German and maintained “German” customs, the loss of home affected the whole community. The first generation created an inside and an outside world, to survive but also to be able to share their woe. The second generation on the contrary identified as Argentinians and fully acculturated. They also refused any identification with the “German” culture. Over the last decades even the “German” Jewish associations lost their “German” elements.

Volga Germans were able to maintain their “German” identity since the middle of the 19th century until the 1950’s, when they were forced to open up. In this time, there were many Volga German Colonies where people only spoke Volga German, upheld their culture, and defined as Volga Germans and not as Argentinians. Due to the forced integration, they adapted on the outside in terms of language and social behavior, whilst in private the Volga German elements were kept up. Yet, the Argentinian society discriminated against the Volga German culture and language. Due to this Volga Germans approached the Argentinian culture, which is most of all visible on a linguistic level. Conscious decisions were made to distance oneself from the Volga German past and therefore from the identity as Volga Germans. At the same time an ethnic revival occurred – going hand in hand with the beginning of postmodern times. Consequently, the descendants of Volga Germans have lost their linguistic “German” identity, but at the same time show interest in the reconstruction process of their past and in an ethnic revival. Due to the difficulties of reconstructing the past, hybrid and partially falsified elements of the Volga German history are passed on. The Volga German community historically had to hold together, consequently their individual, social and collective Volga German identity is strengthened. In the postmodern times, they identify as Argentinians and as Volga Germans, some even referring to “German” elements in their past and identity. The identity of Volga Germans nowadays is marked by hybridity and multiplicity. The individual Volga German identity consists of several elements that coexist.

6. Conclusion

Highlighting the history and identity of “Germans” and their descendants in Argentina means working on a complex field. The persistence of the “German” language and culture in history and contemporary times is astonishing. Yet, this persistence must not be simplified, for the diverse “German” communities led to various forms of memorization, assimilation into the Argentinian majority society and identity building.

In the course of my thesis I not only gave an insight in the fascinating history of “German” immigration and living in Argentina, but also, I looked at the developments of different “German” communities – detached from closed “German” settlements in Europe. As I have elucidated, German immigration primarily took place in three waves, from the second half of the 19th century onwards until the middle of the 20th century. Whilst the immigrants shared certain linguistic and cultural features, their immigration background influenced how they remembered their “German” past, how they perceived the “German” culture, how willingly they assimilated into the Argentinian majority society, and most of all, which identity or identities they built for themselves and the communities they lived in.

To analyse this phenomenon I have differentiated between three main groups: “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, “German” Jews and Volga Germans. Whilst Volga Germans predominantly immigrated at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century and “German” Jews from the middle of the 1930’s to the middle of the 1940’s – as a result of the persecution they faced in Europe – “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland immigrated in every immigration wave.

Until the middle of the 20th century, none of the three described groups showed interest in assimilating into the Argentinian majority society. For some being “German” was perceived as a source of pride and reason to claim superiority, for others the “German” community they belonged to, offered a place of understanding and retreat in an alien surrounding. Yet, in the middle of the 20th century a conversion took place. Firstly, due to end of mass immigration. A few years after the end of the Second World War, “German” mass immigration came to a stop, and was replaced by individual immigration. Secondly, as Argentina changed sides just weeks before the end of the Second World War and declared war to the German Reich, “German” associations, schools and organizations were forced to close temporarily and/or expropriated. Whilst, from the 1950s onwards, many were able to re-establish, they could not remain isolated from the Argentinian majority society, as they did prior to 1945.

This brings me to one of the central argumentations of this thesis. I observed, that until the middle of the 1950’s there was no real assimilation of “Germans” in Argentina, for they

previously were living in isolated sub-cultures. In these sub-cultures the availability of “German” schools, “German” associations “German” hospitals, “German” newspapers and “German” cemeteries ensured that they could live a “German” life in foreign land. Consequently, people were living in South America for generations and were not able to speak Spanish. Furthermore, there was no governmental attempt to integrate immigratory communities, in the 19th century the government even fostered cultural isolation. This however changed in the middle of the 20th century.

Starting in the 1950's, when for the first time “German” groups were forced to open up, I have analysed “German” communities and their development, based on theories around memory, assimilation, and identity. I did so, by comparing the groups in three time-frames, standing for three hypothetical generations. The base for this analysis is the “three-generation-assimilation-cycle”, which was developed by the Chicago School, and claims that immigrants and their descendants fully assimilate after three generations – and therefore after the 1980's the immigrant's descendants – according to the theory – should fully identify themselves as Argentinians. This however is more complex and depends on several additional factors, which will be explained subsequently. Also, I have considered theories around memory and identity when looking at the three groups and three time-frames

Firstly, I analysed the communities in the 1950's when the changes started. Secondly, I observed their development in the time between the 1950's to 1980's. Thirdly, I examined how the communities have progressed since the 1980's.

Briefly summarized, the research revealed, that “Germans” from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, at the beginning of the investigation period, showed a high pride in their “German” heritage. Being “German” was considered as being superior. They actively engaged in the upkeep of “German” memory on an individual, social, collective, and cultural level, due to a variety of “German” associations, schools, and institutions. There was no desire to learn Spanish or to participate in the Argentinian society. The second generation, on the contrary to their ancestors, was not able to isolate themselves from the majority society. In school, as well as in daily life, they were confronted with the need to speak Spanish and to participate in the majority society. Yet, they remained active in their “German” communities. Consequently, they were torn between the culture of their parents and their community, as well as the culture of the country they grew up in. In the third generation – from the 1980's until today – the interest towards the “German” culture and language decreased. In this generation I have differentiated between fully assimilated descendants of “Germans”, that don't identify with the “German” culture anymore and perceive themselves fully as Argentinians, “German” descendants that show some interest in their “German” or European descent and “German” descendants that

still are very eager in upkeeping the “German” heritage, often by blending together features of different “German” cultures and/or “German” features with Argentinian features.

In the case of Volga German, it is crucial to bear in mind, that prior to their arrival in Argentina, they upkept a “German” dialect and “German” culture in foreign land for more than 100 years already and saw no reason for assimilating. Whilst they remembered the “German” past actively and positively, their time in Russia was perceived traumatic and not openly communicated. Furthermore, being a Volga German often went hand in hand with demotion. As they – for several aforementioned reasons – had to open their communities as well, transmitting the Volga German dialect was seen a disadvantage. As a result, members of the second generation often did not learn how to speak Volga German but were raised in Spanish. At the same time an ethical revitalization took place, in which they tried to process their historical background. Volga Germans of the third generation unlikely to speak the Volga German dialect but are eager in participating in Volga German events and upkeeping the Volga German culture. Whilst they identify as Volga Germans, and at times as “Germans”, they at the same time identify as Argentinians.

“German” Jews on the contrary had an intricate relation towards their “German” past. Forced to flee Europe, due to persecution, they unwillingly left their homes. Often identifying rather as “Germans” than as Jewish, the hostility they faced in the German Reich caused an identity crisis. Yet, the majority of “German” Jews of first generation, united by a shared fate, kept speaking German and their “German” customs. Often, their children were sent to the Pestalozzischule – which was one of the few “German” institutions opposing the National Socialist regime – where they not only learned German and Spanish, but also got in touch with the “German” culture. “German” Jews from the first generation adapted to the new environment rather fast but did not assimilate. They remained in their isolated “German” Jewish communities. They neither tried to connect with Argentinians – nor with other “German” communities. The second generation soon tried to distance itself from the “German” past. Whilst in school and within the “German” Jewish world they learned how to speak German, they tried to assimilate as fast as possible into the Argentinian society. Often still identifying as Jews, there was no desire to identify with the “German” culture, but rather rejection. Consequently, the second generation of “German” Jews was already well assimilated.

I come to conclude, that not only the residence of immigrants and their descendants in the receiving country over many generations is of importance, but that there are several factors that foster, or hinder assimilation processes and consequently influence identity building.

Firstly, communities must see a need to assimilate. In the case of “Germans” in Argentina, the government rather participated in isolating the “German” communities from the Argentinian society, than including them. Furthermore, “Germans” felt either superior towards

the Argentinian majority society, or their community provided them with safety. Assimilation did not offer an advantage, at least not until the middle of the 20th century.

Secondly, traumatic experiences shape how the cultural background is remembered and how immigrants and their descendants identify. In the case of Volga Germans, the experiences the immigrants made in Russia were traumatic, and consequently the Russian past was suppressed, whilst the “German” background, was remembered actively. Volga Germans rather perceive themselves as Germans than as Russians, even though they left German areas in the middle of the 18th century already. On the contrary the descendants of “German” Jews wanted to distance themselves from their “German” past as much as possible. The National Socialist regime not only caused the loss of loved ones and home, but also the partial loss of identity.

Thirdly, individuals and communities are shaped by different features, such as the geographic concentration, level of education, maintenance of ethnic institution, the degree of cultural and religious similarities and many more, which I have named in section 3.2.4. comprehensively. Thus, assimilation processes differ between individuals and communities.

Furthermore, the perception of space and time has changed and individuals as well as communities can inherit multiple and even contradictory identities. In the case of “Germans” in Argentina, this is certainly true. “German” immigrants and their descendants managed to upkeep traces of the “German” culture until today. As an Austrian, some features are familiar, some are not. Identities and cultural features are not fixed but flexible. As the “German” culture transformed in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, so it did in foreign land. Linguists foresee the linguistic death of “German” dialects in Argentina, also the characteristics of “German” communities change. Yet, it is still fascinating with how much passion and interest cultural diversity is upheld and nowadays causes mainly interest from the majority society.

Immigration and its consequences is not only a subject one can find in history books but is highly relevant and constantly present. The case of “Germans” in Argentina exemplifies that the wish to perceive the culture one stems from, is not limited to “certain cultures” but a global phenomenon. Also, one can learn from the case of “Germans” in Argentina, that isolation leads to the emergence of sub-cultures. Furthermore, mutilating, and submerging immigrants, by depriving them from their personal backgrounds inevitably leads to wrong conclusions. Such as “German” Jews cannot be easily ascribed to the “German” community and Volga Germans don’t perceive themselves as “Rusos”.

The history of “Germans” in Argentina also shows, that a successful co-existence of identities is possible. Which I hope we will reach as societies globally.

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7.3. List of figures

Figure 1 Celebration of the Annexation of Austria. Luna Park, Argentina.	43
Figure 2 Visit of the German minister of economics - Ludwig Erhard with Perón.	51
Figure 3 "German" teahouse in Villa General Belgrano	61
Figure 4 Graz as a for a tourist accommodation referring to an Austrian city.....	61
Figure 6 Casita Suiza (Little Swiss House) in La	62
Figure 5 Effigy of musicians wearing "traditional" clothing	62
Figure 7 People toasting at the "Oktoberfest"	65
Figure 8 Tapping of the beer	65

7.4. List of tables

Table 1Proportion of foreigners City of Buenos Aires.....	23
Table 2 (Over-Sea) immigration according to Sex and Legal Status.....	37

7.5. Data interview partners

In this section I will describe the interview partners. The interviews were held anonymous, therefore instead of names, codes are listed. These codes can be found in the footnotes. The footnotes are set together letters that stand for the specific interview partner and at which time of the interview the chosen interview passage was recorded.

Following descriptions should depict roughly the age ratio, sex, German skills, the community the interview partner belongs to, as well as the personal background within the “German” community.

CSL

Age:	50- 60 years
Sex:	Female
German Skills:	Excellent
Community:	German

Background:

The interview partners great-grandfather worked for a German company, in the function of a representative for South America. Her great-grandfather and his wife lived for some years in South America and the interview partners grandfather was even born here. Yet, the family returned to Germany, when her grandfather was one year only. Due to the positive connection with Argentina, the interview partners grandfather returned to Argentina after the Second World War. The (pro-German) government of Argentina helped her grandfather’s family to come to Argentina too. Her family supported „German“ communities and schools. The interview partner has one daughter, that speaks German but does not actively participate in any “German” clubs or communities.

Pa

Age:	50 – 60 years
Sex:	Female
German Skills:	Excellent
Community:	Swiss/German

Background:

The grandmother of the interview partner on her father’s side was a famous German opera singer, who was on a concert tour –with stay in Buenos Aires. There she fell in love with a Belgian, who came to Argentina to escape the First World War. They became parents of five boys. One went back to Germany and played the Violin at the Berlin Symphonics, another one was the father of the interview partner.

The background of the interview partners mother is even more complex. Whilst her great-grandmother was already born in Argentina – as a descendant of Germans. She had to go back to Germany, due to the loss of her parents at the age of twelve. As a young woman she suffered from tuberculosis and went to Switzerland to get some treatment. There she met her future husband, a doctor, who also had tuberculosis. They married and had two children. Unfortunately, the interview partners grandfather died when he was 50. After his death, the grandmother of the interview partner went back to Argentina, to rent property of her parents. There she fell back in love with the country. She and her daughter (the mother of the interview partner) – who didn’t speak Spanish – decided to stay, whilst the brother remained in Switzerland.

The interview partner also lived for some years in Switzerland, working as a nurse in a hospital. Later she and her husband – who is of Dutch descent – came back to Argentina. They have three daughters. The youngest one studies German at University, to become a professional translator and teaches in a German school.

Due to the background of the family, the interview partner is well connected to Germany and Switzerland.

PaTo

Age: 20 -30
Sex: Female
German Skills: Excellent
Community: Swiss/German

Background:

The daughter of interview partner 7.1.2. studies German, and teaches at a “German” school. She briefly joined the conversation and contributed to the subject.

WE

Age: 30 -40 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Excellent
Community: Austrian

Background:

The interview partner immigrated to Argentina recently. He met his Argentinian wife, when he did a traineeship in Buenos Aires. Together they went to Austria and lived there for ten years. Yet, they decided to move back to Argentina. The interview partner is well connected and advocates for the German/Austrian culture maintenance in Argentina, in an Austrian association.

LE

Age: 70- 80 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Excellent
Community: German

Background:

The interview partner originates from the West-German area Silesia. After the Second World War his father used the chance to migrate and came to Argentina, with the help of his Uncle who lived in Argentina already. The interview partner was born in Germany but immigrated in Argentina at a young age. He attended a German school and later got married in 1972 to an Argentinian woman, who was not of “German” descent. At this time endogamous marriages were wanted, but there was an acceptance of non-endogamous marriages already. The wife of the interview partner how to speak German but they didn’t live a “German” life style. They got four children, one of them is in a relationship with a woman of “German” descent.

KA

Age: 60- 70 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Excellent
Community: German

Background:

The interview partner is “German” in the fourth generation. His great-grandfather originates from the Black Forest area in Germany and worked as a banker. At the end of the 19th century, he moved to Argentina – for skilled bankers were needed. He made career fast and was well connected. His great-grandfather actively supported the “German” community and the Goethe school, co-founded the “German” rowing club “Teutonia”. It was self-evident, that the family of the interview partner’s great-grandfather was “German” and the children were brought up to be “German”. One daughter was the grand-mother of the interview partner. She met her husband in Germany. She returned to Argentina and her husband came with her. They had five children, all born in Argentina. Also, his father got married to a woman of “German” descent. The interview partner has one sister, who lives in Argentina and one brother, who lives in Germany. The three daughters of the interview partner all went to the Goethe-School. Two of them got married to men of “German” descent. Only one married an Argentinian. Most of the grandchildren – 6th generation of “Germans” in Argentina – speak German to some degree.

Due to his employment in an Austrian company – prior to his retirement – the interview partner and his wife have a strong connection to both, the Austrian and the German culture. The interview partner and his wife furthermore advocate for Germany and Austria and the culture in the countries, were active in the Goethe school, are engaging in “German” and Austrian associations and frequently visit Germany and Austria.

KW

Age: 60- 70 years
Sex: Female
German Skills: Very Good
Community: German

Background:

The interview partners great-grandfather (father’s side) was a representative for a German company and came to Paraguay with his future wife. The interview partners father then was born in Paraguay and attended the Goethe-School there but studied in La Plata (Argentina). This part of the family originated from the Rhine Valley area. The mother’s side stems from East-Prussia. The great-grandfather originated from a wealthy family, but he was a gambler. His family sent him to South America. First, he came to Paraguay (to Formosa, which is situated closely to the Argentinian border) and later to Argentina. He started to work hard and received a piece of land. He got married to a woman from Spain. With her he had six children, they stayed in Argentina, Paraguay, and later came back to East Prussia. The interview partners grandmother was born in East-Prussia and married an East- Prussian there. Yet, she and her husband later moved to Paraguay. In Asuncion the mother of the interview partner was born, where she also went to the German school. There she met the interview partners father. They moved to Argentina together.

The wedding ceremony of - and - was held in German more than forty years ago, for the grandmother of the bride (who was born in East-Prussia) was not able to speak Spanish, even though she was living in South America for more than 60 years.

EI

Age: 60- 70 years
Sex: Female
German Skills: Very Good
Community: "German" Jewish

Background:

The parents of the interview partner arrived in Argentina as a result of the persecution Jews faced under the National Socialist regime. Her ancestors were all active as doctors, and prior to the National Socialist regime were even in high positions. Her mother had the chance to migrate to Argentina during the Second World War. She could come here, due to the invitation of relatives. Also, her father had the chance to come to Argentina, for he was invited by his uncle. Both of her parents didn't choose to come to Argentina but took the chance to leave Germany. Yet, the interview partner stresses out how welcoming Argentina was to her family and emphasizes the open culture that made it possible to make a living quite fast. Her mother at first worked as a maid, even though she was a trained dentist. Later she – illegally – worked in her field. Yet, according to the interview partner, papers were not that important. According to her, nobody was interested if something or someone was legal or illegal.

The interview partner attended the Pestalozzi Schule, in which they spoke German. In private yet, she only speaks German with very few people. The interview partner, who is a doctor and psychologist, has written a book on "German" Jewish immigration and is an expert in the field.

OI

Age: 50 – 60 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Excellent
Community: "German"

Background:

The interview partners grandparents stem from Stuttgart. His grandfather arrived prior to the First World War, the grandmother after the First World War – due to the official invitation of her husband.

The interview partner recalls, that he grew up with the "German" culture, he attended a "German" school, and was active in "German" communities as well as in "German" associations. For the other side of family is Scandinavian, he also had connection to Scandinavian communities. According to him, his generation was still very connected with the "German" culture. His recent partner is also of "German" descent. Both were thinking about giving German lectures and advocating for the "German" culture.

When he attended the "German" Hölder Schule, he was in a boarding school and got in touch with "German" classmates from all over Argentina. Due to this he could visit different "German" communities.

AI

Age: 50- 60 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Very Good
Community: Austrian

The interview partner's grandfather served the military in the Austro-Hungarian military and got married to a Hungarian woman from Sopron. They got six children two of their children died due to the influenza, in 1918. When the First World War was over, his grandfather lost his job. He returned to his home to Bad Sauerbrunn and they faced famine. He heard that jobs were

available in Argentina. In 1923, he and one of his daughter went via Bremen to Argentina – the rest of the family stayed in Bad Sauerbrunn. The first years were difficult, due to the lack of Spanish but he and his daughter found work. In 1927, they could afford to pay the costs for the journey of the rest of the family. The interview partner's mother was seven at this time. Whilst the grandfather wanted to return to Austria, he never managed to go back. He suffered from the loss of home. The interview partner grew up in a family that was living an Austrian life style, they ate Austrian desserts and sang Austrian songs. His aunts and his mother didn't marry "Germans" but they still would keep the Austrian traditions. Also, the interview partners father is Italian, which makes it possible for him to hold the Italian passport. His father and his mother met at the "German" Humboldt Schule. Consequently, also the father of the interview partner spoke German. At home solely German was spoken. The interview partner learned Spanish in school.

When his grandfather died in 1973, the bond slowly loosened.

According to the interview partner, he is the only one that tried to maintain the Austrian heritage. He wants to speak German and to upkeep the heritage. He is proud of his Austrian roots and perceives Austria as his second or "old" home. Nowadays he is the head of the „German“ school in Villa General Belgrano. He is active in the "Asociación descendientes y amigos de Austria"

Ma

Age: 30-40
 Sex: Male
 German Skills: Good
 Community: Austrian, German

The interview partners grandfather originates from Vienna and his grandmother from the former Czechoslovakia. The ancestors of his mother originate from Germany. The interview partner was born in Villa General Belgrano and grew up in the village at a time when people were still using German in conversations. The interview partner holds the Austrian passport. He is active in the "Asociación descendientes y amigos de Austria"

Sa

Age: 30-40
 Sex: Male
 German Skills: Excellent
 Community: Swiss

The interview partner comes originally from Switzerland. He fell in love with an Argentinian woman. Whilst she stayed in Switzerland for some time, they decided to settle down in Argentina. He is active in a Swiss association in Villa General Belgrano. He recalls the connection between the different "German" groupings in Villa General Belgrano.

Mu

Age: 30-40
 Sex: Male
 German Skills: Good
 Community: German

The interview partner's ancestors originate from the "German" region of Swabia. Great-grandfather came 1921 to Brazil first. His grandfather was one year at this time. For the times were harsh, his great-grandparents sent his grandfather back to Germany, where he stayed with his grandparents (the great-great grandparents of the interview partner). His great-grandparents moved to Argentina and were able to send for their son, when he was twelve years old. His parents both were born In Buenos Aires- The interview partner did not give any information on his mother's side of the family. In 1972 they moved to Argentina, where they

stayed. German speakers came often at this time to Villa General Belgrano. The interview partner was born in the Village.

The interview partner is active in different “German” associations and plays music in a “German” folk band, called “Biermusikanten”. His children refuse to speak German currently.

YH

Age: 30-40
Sex: Female
German Skills: No German skills
Community: Volga German

Background:

The interview partner is a linguist and an expert in Volga German immigration. She also is of Volga German descent, but her parents didn’t pass on the dialect.

JM

Age: 60-70
Sex: Male
German Skills: Some German skills
Community: Volga German

Background:

The interview partner is publisher of a Volga German magazine, several books in which not only the Volga German customs, and culture are transmitted but also the history of the Volga German community is discussed. Furthermore, he ran a Volga German radio station. He actively participates in the upkeep of the Volga German culture. He doesn’t speak German fluently but uses Volga German phrases via Code-Switching in conversation. His great-grandparents immigrated to Argentina. He spent his first years in the Volga German colony Santa Maria de Hinojo, which was founded in 1877. He recalls his mother speaking Volga German to relatives and friends, but only speaking Spanish to him and his siblings.

HW

Age: 70-80 years
Sex: Male
German Skills: Some German skills
Community: Volga German

The interview partner was born in a Volga German colony San José in Coronel Suárez – an area that was branded by the Volga Germans. He later lived in the city Pigüé, where predominantly French immigrants lived. He was the first of his family to study. He did research on the Volga German community and wrote a book, that issues Volga German identity in Argentina. The interview partner’s grandparents migrated to Argentina. His parents didn’t pass on the dialect, so he only knows few words.

8. Abstract

Seit der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts kam es zu keiner quantitativ bedeutenden Immigration „deutscher“ Gruppen in Argentinien und dennoch sind die Spuren der „deutschen“ Einwanderer*innen bis heute sichtbar. Der Wunsch die „deutsche“ Sprache, Geschichte und vor allem Kultur für nachkommende Generationen zu erhalten, führte dazu, dass die „deutsche“ Vergangenheit ein Faktor der Identitätsstiftung für Nachkommen „Deutscher“ wurde und wird.

Vorliegende Arbeit untersucht die Entwicklung „deutscher“ Identitäten seit der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts – der Zeit, in der die Massenimmigration zum Erliegen kam. Dabei werden unterschiedliche theoretische, sowie methodische Zugänge gewählt. Zunächst wird anhand von Literaturrecherche sowie der Arbeit mit schriftlichen und bildlichen Quellen, ein historischer Überblick über die Massenimmigration und die heterogene Komposition der Migrationsgruppen gegeben. Daraufgehend werden Theorien rund um Erinnerung, Assimilation und Identität diskutiert, um als zentralen Schritt die Ergebnisse der empirischen Arbeit anhand dieser Theorien zu analysieren.

Im Zuge der empirischen Arbeit wurden Oral History Interviews mit Nachkommen „deutscher“ Einwanderer*innen geführt und diese durch bereits bestehende Forschungen erweitert. Die Ergebnisse werden dazu genutzt, drei „deutsche“ Einwanderungsgruppen zu vergleichen: „deutsche“ Jüd*innen, Wolgadeutsche sowie „Deutsche“ aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz. Darüber hinaus wird erforscht, wie sich deren Erinnerung an die „deutsche“ Vergangenheit, die Assimilation im Aufnahmeland und die Identifizierung als Nachfahr*in von „Deutschen“ seit den 1950er Jahren entwickelten.

In der Arbeit werden Faktoren vorgestellt, die Entwicklung der „deutschen“ Identitäten beeinflussen. Es kann festgehalten werden, dass die Entwicklung bzw. Beibehaltung einer „deutschen“ Identität innerhalb dieser drei Gruppen vollkommen unterschiedlich verläuft. Während die Nachkommen „deutscher“ Jüd*innen – vor allem aufgrund der traumatisierenden Erlebnisse unter dem Nationalsozialistischen Regime – größtenteils eine Identifizierung mit der „Deutschen“ Kultur ablehnen, gibt es innerhalb der Wolgadeutschen Gemeinschaften ein vermehrtes Interesse an der (wolga-)„deutschen“ Kultur. Im Falle der Nachkommen von „Deutschen“ aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz reicht das Spektrum von einer völligen Assimilation im Aufnahmeland Argentinien, bis zur Entwicklung von multiplen Identitäten.

Abstract

“German” mass-migration to Argentina started in the middle of the 19th century and ended shortly after the Second World War. Even though a quantitatively relevant immigration stopped, the transfer of “German” memory, language and culture within the receiving country continued. Being of “German” origin became potentially important for identity building.

This thesis aims to investigate the development of “German” identities in Argentina, from the 1950’s until today. For this purpose, a variety of methods and theoretical approaches were used. Resting myself on literature-based research, as well as the work with written and visual sources, the historical background of “German” mass immigration as well as the composition of the heterogenous groups is presented. Thereafter theories around memory, assimilation and identity are re-visited and discussed. Finally, as the central part, the results of my empirical work are presented. Oral-history interviews were conducted with the descendants of “Germans” from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, “German” Jews and Volga “Germans”. These interviews related to the theories previously discussed, to identify the factors responsible for the upkeeping or vanishing of “German” culture amongst the immigrant’s descendants.

I concluded, that the development and maintenance of “German” identity took different directions within the presented groups. Descendants of “German” Jews were – most of all due to the traumatic experiences during the National Socialist Regime – more likely to reject an identification with their “German” origin, whilst Volga Germans shared an increasing interest in their “(Volga-)German” roots. Descendants of “Germans” from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland show different identification processes, ranging from a full assimilation in the receiving country to the development of multiple identities.