

- Title

Reconstructing War Memory through Community Education:
A Case Study of Toyonaka, Japan

- Research Overview

This study examines how family-based war memories are reconstructed through community-based social education in Japan. Focusing on practices in Toyonaka, it analyzes archival materials and interviews to show how memories are mediated, shared, and reinterpreted, highlighting the dialogic processes that transform private memories into collective understandings.

- Purpose of Study

This study investigates how family-based war memories are not merely transmitted but actively reconstructed through community-based social education practices. War memory has often been conceptualized either as a private legacy transmitted within families or as a form of public memory institutionalized by the state. However, less attention has been paid to the processes through which memories are narrated, mediated, and reinterpreted within civil society, particularly in educational contexts. Addressing this gap, the study focuses on how community-based educational practices function as sites for the formation and transformation of war memory.

This research is part of a broader comparative project on war memory and social education in East Asia. Within this framework, the present paper analyzes a Japanese case, focusing on community centers (*kominkan*) and a human rights and peace center in Toyonaka City, Osaka Prefecture. Toyonaka provides a significant case due to its early establishment of community centers in the postwar period and its sustained development of social education in close connection with formal schooling. This historical continuity and institutional integration make it a valuable site for examining how war memories are mediated and maintained within local contexts. These institutions serve as key platforms where residents engage in lectures, exhibitions, and workshops that facilitate the sharing and reinterpretation of war experiences. By examining this case, the study contributes to comparative research by illustrating how war memory is shaped through locally embedded educational practices in Japan.

- Research Methods

Methodologically, the study employs qualitative analysis based on archival materials

and semi-structured interviews. Archival sources include records of educational programs, exhibition materials, and internal documents that trace the development of memory-related initiatives. In addition, interviews were conducted with practitioners and participants involved in these educational activities, providing insight into how memories are narrated, mediated, and received in practice. This methodological approach enables a detailed examination of memory not as a static representation of the past but as an ongoing social and educational process.

The analysis is guided by the theoretical framework of Aleida Assmann, particularly her concept of recollection as an active and context-dependent process. From this perspective, memory is understood as something continuously reconstructed in relation to present concerns rather than as a fixed record of past events. Applying this framework, the study analyzes how individual and family-based memories are selected, rearticulated, and endowed with new meanings within educational practices, focusing on narrative exchanges, exhibitions, and participatory learning activities as key sites of reconstruction.

● Results and Discussion

The findings reveal that family-based war memories are not simply transmitted across generations but are actively reconstructed through dialogic processes within community education. Personal and often fragmentary memories are shared through narratives, exhibitions, and collective learning activities. For example, survivors of air raids recount their experiences in community centers, speaking directly to children and local residents. Through such encounters, memories of war are not only preserved but also rearticulated as reflections on the value of individual lives and the importance of peace. These processes enable participants to reinterpret and reframe past experiences in socially meaningful ways. Unlike models that emphasize one-directional transmission, these practices create dialogic spaces in which diverse perspectives intersect and interact. Within such spaces, memory is continuously renegotiated and reshaped in response to present-day questions and concerns. These findings also suggest that community-based educational practices play a crucial mediating role between private and public memory, enabling the transformation of personal experiences into collectively shared understandings.

By highlighting these processes, the study reconceptualizes war memory as a dialogic and educationally mediated practice within civil society. It offers a new perspective on

the role of social education in the formation of memory and provides an empirical basis for comparative research on war memory in East Asia. Through a detailed analysis of a locally grounded case, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how memories of the past are actively reconstructed within contemporary educational contexts.

● Keywords

- community education
- war memory
- memory reconstruction
- dialogic practices
- Japan