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Regions of Memory. A Comparative Perspective on Eastern Europe. European Network Remembrance and Solidarity; Free University of Berlin; Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw; Institute of Sociology, Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities, 26.11.2012-28.11.2012.

Reviewed by Kornelia Konczal
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Regions of Memory. A Comparative Perspective on Eastern Europe

A couple of years ago Jeffrey Olick observed that "the diversity of subject matter in social memory studies is by no means a disadvantage; quite the contrary, it is an indication of the wide applicability of the concepts, approaches, and questions we can ask from the point of view of a social approach to memory. The wide variety of mnemonic products and practices, forms, and functions, that have been addressed under the rubric of collective memory signals the vibrancy of the field (if that is indeed what it is)." Jeffrey K. Olick, Between Chaos and Diversity: Is Social Memory Studies a Field?, in: International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society 22.2 (2009), pp. 249-252; here p. 250. The range of questions asked by scholars interested in memory increases significantly when we consider Memory Studies as an interdisciplinary field. A very good illustration of this variety was the conference "Regions of Memory. A Comparative Perspective on Eastern Europe" http://genealogies.enrs.eu/cfp2012 (06.12.2012). that took place in Warsaw at the end of November 2012 and followed the previous year's symposium dealing with "Genealogies of Memory in East Central Europe: Theories and Methods". Tagungsbericht Genealogies of Memory in East Central Europe: Theories and Methods. 23.11.2011-25.11.2011, Warsaw, in: H-Soz-u-Kult, 20.01.2012, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=4058>.

Both conferences are the result of cooperation between the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, the Institute of Sociology at the University of Warsaw, the Institute of Sociology at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw and the Osteuropa-Institut at the Freie Universität Berlin. "Regions of Memory" was organized with the financial support of the National Centre for Culture (PL), the Nord-Ost Institut (D), the Secretary of the State for Culture and Media (D), and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

According to the academic committee, consisting of Jeffrey Olick (University of Virginia), Małgorzata Pakier (University of Social Sciences and Humanities), and Joanna Wawrzyniak (University of Warsaw/Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies), the conference pursued a twofold objective: its aim was to discuss the newest developments in the field of Memory Studies in an international framework and to facilitate the academic exchange between scholars working on memory issues in different regions of the world. The scope of the undertaking and therefore the dimension of the academic exchange were indeed impressive: the conference was composed of 16 main panels and five keynote lectures. Moreover, the dense programme was complemented by several written presentations and accompanied by a series of events for the non-academic public. The 114 (!) researchers invited to Warsaw were scholars from a wide geographical range, with an emphasis on presenters from Central and Eastern Europe - especially Poland (with 55 participants). Another clear focus of the conference was made visible by the strong presence of historians and sociologists - about half of the presenters were practitioners in these two disciplines; it does not often happen that a conference brings together historians and sociologists with scholars from cultural studies, political science, archaeology, art history, communication and literature studies, law, linguistics, musicology and psychology. In addition, it is worth stressing that more than two thirds of the 84 presentations were given by PhD-students and post-docs.

In his introductory remarks JEFFREY OLICK (Charlottesville) presented the advantages of the concept of memory region: the focus on region could challenge the still dominating concentration on the nation/state and inspire new comparative studies. The keynote lecture on "Operations of Memory: East Europe/East Asia" given

by CAROLE GLUCK (New York) demonstrated how productive this perspective can be. Drawing examples from Japan, China and Korea she traced the processes of construction and transformation of post-war heroic narratives. As for the second, Gluck stressed two powerful factors: bottom-up movements questioning the hitherto dominant interpretations of the past and the impact of external factors on rethinking one's own history and memory. The negotiation of memory narratives was also addressed by DIRK MOSES (Florence). His keynote lecture dealt with "Terrorized Histories and Cosmopolitan Futures" pertaining to the discourse on genocide. Moses introduced the concept of partisan memories, i.e. fighting and one-sided interpretations of the past, in order to demonstrate some similarities between the double genocide thesis in Eastern Europe and the idea of the uniqueness of Holocaust. His account was a plea for the decolonization of memories and a mutual learning process.

Inspired by a publication of the Polish historian Oscar Halecki from 1950 (The Limits and Divisions of European history) STEFAN TROEBST (Leipzig) explored different models of regional divisions in Europe stressing some appealing parallels between Halecki's model of different historically shaped regions and today's settings in European cultures of remembrance. Another perspective on memory opened the keynote lecture by GYANENDRA PANDEY (Atlanta) who presented two unorthodox women's memoirs: the first, written by an African-American woman from Georgia (USA), represents an interesting source of information about the 1960s and the civil rights movement; the second was the work of a Dalit women from Western India chronicling her life and the liberation movement of the ex-untouchables. Instead of *regions* of memory Pandey proposed the concept of *realms* that, he argued, better captures the cultural and political dimensions of memory.

The problems addressed in the keynote lectures reflect quite well the most important keywords of the 84 presentations. As all topics were related to the 20th and 21st centuries, it is not surprising that so many presenters dealt with four issues that, in our opinion, constitute the core of the conference programme: instances of mass violence; victims and trauma; the quest for recognition or legitimation; and modes of collective, above all political and social, appropriation of the past. In other words, the symposium was focused on conflicts and discursive struggles over their meaning(s) and interpretation(s). Particularly thought-provoking were presentations from sessions dealing with "Memory in the historical space of violence" and "Spatial frames of remembrance: reframing the national." Video recording of the presentations and keynote lectures are available online on the homepage of the project: http://genealogies.enrs.eu (26.02.2013). An overview of all the panels of the conference show that scholars working on memory are primarily interested in wartime and post-war histories, genocides and expulsions, the politics and legacies of totalitarianisms as well as memories of minorities. Not addressed, however, were issues considering the history and memory of colonisation and links between collective memories and religion. Another insight comes from the focus on the not too distant past, i.e. the history of the 'short' 20th century and recent developments, which suggests that previous periods are less stimulating for scholars interested in memory.

The main question, however, that should be asked after the conference pertains to the promise made in its title: what have we learned about the history of memory in East Central Europe in the light of other regions of the world? What are the specific features of the cultures of remembrance in this European region? Are there any? The Warsaw conference provided a very appropriate framework for a serious reflection on these questions. Suffice to say that about one quarter of the presentations and lectures were based on comparisons. Furthermore, roughly 60 per cent of them dealt with topics concerning Central-Eastern Europe - especially Poland, Romania and Ukraine. The remainder were related to other regions of the world: not only Western Europe but also Latin America, Africa and Asia - in this case especially Southeast Asia. It is striking, however, that despite the participation of several scholars from the USA and Canada, Northern America as a region of memory was absent in the conference programme as well as in the discussions. Be this as it may, the strong focus on comparisons on the one hand and the wide geographical scope of problems addressed during the conference on the other, constituted particularly good preconditions for a regional approach to memory. Although the overall "Comparative Perspective on Eastern Europe" was discussed only in a few statements, the conference provided many interesting mid-range insights as for the specificity of memory issues in this part of Europe. The longstanding tradition and high density of otherness in East-Central Europe "Ein besonders hervortretendes Kennzeichen der zentraleuropäischen Region war schon immer die Dichte von 'Fremdheiten', das heißt von Völkern, Sprachen, Kulturen und Regionen, die sich hier vorfand.", in: Moritz Csáky, Das Gedächtnis der Städte: Kulturelle Verflechtungen - Wien und die urbanen Milieus in Zentraleuropa, Wien 2010, p. 10. and its painful historical experiences located "between Hitler and Stalin" Timothy Sny-

der, Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin. New York 2010. constitute a specific cultural, social and political setting. However, case studies from other - often very distant - regions of the world, for instance Japan, Indonesia or Rwanda, demonstrate that the Eastern European cultures of remembrance have fewer peculiarities as we sometimes tend to imagine. That is to say that a comparative perspective on memory regions is yet another example of the truth of Marc Bloch's statement: the comparative approach prevents researchers from failing into a trap of exceptionalism. Marc Bloch, A contribution towards a comparative history of European Societies, in: Land and work in mediaeval Europe. Selected papers, London 1967, pp. 44-81.

Meanwhile many scholars have observed "that comparative history could profit from the results of transfer history by becoming aware of the constructed nature of the units of comparisons and of their connections". Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Comparative history - a contested method." Historisk Tidskrift 4 (2007), pp. 697-716, here p. 712. Perhaps the next conference of the Warsaw project or some of the follow-up events could focus precisely on transfer and entanglements within the cultures of remembrance. This aspect was pointed out by ELIZABETH JELIN (Buenos Aires) in her keynote lecture on "Memories of State Repression: the Past in the Present in Latin America". Jelin stressed the strong interconnectedness of memory politics and memory culture in Latin America, going as far as thinking of a comparison as a not sufficient methodological approach.

The particularly valuable feature of the Warsaw project is the very fact that the first conference on "Genealogies of Memory" from 2011 inspired a series of memory-related events and workshops that took place in the last few months. They are a very good opportunity to discuss the latest developments in Memory Studies in a truly international and interdisciplinary context and to promote East Central European and particularly Polish research projects and traditions abroad. In this manner, over the course of time, the Warsaw initiative could become a kind of academic directory in the field of Memory Studies.

Conference Overview

Jan Rydel, Rafal Rogulski: European Network Remembrance & Solidarity

Jeffery Olick, Malgorzata Pakier, Joanna Wawrzyniak: Introduction to the Conference

Keynote 1

Carol Gluck: Operations of Memory: East Europe/East Asia, Chair: Jeffery Olick

Keynote 2

Stefan Troebst: The Limits and Divisions of European Memory, Chair: Jan Rydel

Keynote 3

Elizabeth Jelin: Memories of State Repression: the Past in the Present in Latin America

Chair: Burkhard Olschowsky

Keynote 4

Gyanendra Pandey: Realms of Memory - 'archived' and 'un-archived'; Chair: Slawomir Kapralski

Keynote 5

Dirk Moses: Terrorized Histories and Cosmopolitan Futures: Decolonizing Memories in Global Context; Chair: Elzbieta Halas

Panel 1a: Mapping Memory Regions

Chair: Carol Gluck

Philippe Perchoc: How many European memory regions? Mapping EU memories

Gregor Feindt, Rieke Schäfer: Mapping the semantics of "European Memory"

Joanna Wawrzyniak: Beyond East and West: Eastern Europe & African historical consciousness: a scholar biography

Malgorzata Wosinska: Established vs. emerging memory region: Reflections on genocide memory in Poland and Rwanda

Written presentation:

Marco Siddi: Russia and the forging of memory and identity in Europe

Discussant: Stefan Troebst

Panel 1b: Memories of Eastern Europe: Theoretical approaches

Chair: Gertrud Pickhan

Alexey Vasilyev: Repressed pain vs. reserved memory: specifics of nationalism studies in the Eastern Europe as reflection of traumatic historical experience

Marta Karkowska: Counter-memory, alternative memory and violence in the Polish research on the social aspects of memory

Katarzyna Szalewska: Reception of 'memory studies' in Poland (in Polish)

Andrzej Szpocinski: The three-dimensional conception of the social memory as a starting point for comparative studies

Discussant: Jeffery Olick

Panel 2a: Memory in the historical space of violence: The ideological beginnings of the 20th century

Chair: Marcin Kula

Maciej Górny: "The Hun at Work". Atrocities and memory (in Polish)

Stephen Scala: Remembrance and rupture: memory as motor and mirror of the Socialist-Communist split in interwar Poland

Anna Zalewska: Diffused memory of the WWI gasscapes (1914 2014). How to use without abuse the results of archaeological studies for the design of memorial landscapes? (in Polish)

Seda Özdemir: Contemporary Armenian novelists in Turkey: The literary representation of Armenian collective memory

Written presentation:

Catalin Turliuc: Games within frontiers: Memory and Citizenship in Interwar Romania

Discussant: Dariusz Stola

Panel 2b: Spatial frames of remembrance: Displacement and memory (1)

Chair: Katharine McGregor

Irene Sywenky: History, trauma, and spatial imagination: A comparative perspective

Olesya Khromeychuk: The construction and reconstruction of the 'historical truth' and memory of the Waffen SS 'Galicia' Division in Ukraine and the diaspora

Ekaterine Pirtskhalava: Muslim Meskhetians (Meskhetian Turks) from 1944 to nowadays

Judy Brown: Home away from home(land): local memory politics and 'national' activism among the Crimean Tatars of Sevastopol

Written presentations:

Anna Wylegala: The missing 'Others': comparative study of the memory of the ethnic violence in Poland and Ukraine

Joanna Cukras-Stelagowska, Jakub Stelagowski: German-Polish common religious heritage in social reflection

Victoria Dunaeva: Memory and Survival during the Socialist period. Case of Old Believers in Siberia (Russia) and in northeastern region of Poland - comparative analysis

Discussant: Slawomir Kapralski

Panel 3a: Memory in the historical space of violence: Authoritarian regimes: Official narratives

Chair: Valerie Rosoux

Adriana Decu: The aftermath of dissident reeducation: a comparative approach of Romania's 'Pitesti phenomenon' and the Chinese labor camps

Éva Tulipán: 'Counter-memory'. The official representation of the 1956 Hungarian revolution before 1989

Rachel Joyce: The solidification of conflict memory in Sri Lanka

Mustafa Menshawy: War of memories, memories of war in Mubarak's downfall

Discussant: Carol Gluck

Panel 3b: Spatial frames of remembrance: Displacement and memory (2)

Chair: Jenny Wüstenberg

Ewa Nowicka: Civil war and evacuation in the biographical memory of Greek repatriates from Poland (in Polish)

Malgorzata Glowacka-Grajper: Diaspora in the homeland? Memories of resettlements from the former Kresy of the Second Polish Republic in contemporary Poland (in Polish)

Kamila Dabrowska: Not-experienced extermination and experienced expulsion. The post-memory of the Holocaust, the memory of exclusion and the process of creating identities in Polish memory places among postwar Jewish emigrants.

Claudia Draganoiu: The long way to Ithaca: the exiles are coming Home

Written presentations:

Mariusz Kalczewiak: Jewish experience of violence in dictatorial Argentina

Wiktoria Kudela-Swiatek: "Distant Sibirans" Polish scientific discourse about the Kazakhstani Pole's biographical narratives

Discussant: Slawomir Lodzinski

Panel 4a: Memory in the historical space of violence: Authoritarian regimes: Counter memories

Chair: Elizabeth Jelin

Yana Yancheva: Remembering agricultural collectivization in Bulgaria. A comparative analysis of different viewpoints

Shaban Darakch: Hidden stories of Bulgarian Mohammedans

Slawomir Kapralski: Memories of East European Roma. Between encapsulation, homogenization, and proliferation of memory-scapes

Written presentation:

Waldemar Urbanik: Memory of martial law. Guards and prisoners of oblivion (in Polish)

Discussant: Dirk Moses

Panel 4b: Spatial frames of remembrance: Region as a figure of memory

Chair: Joanna Kurczewska

Csaba G. Kiss: Gömör/Gemem: region in the Slovak-Hungarian borderlands (in Polish)

Olimpia Dragouni: "Famous Macedonia" - the commemoration of the region in 20th century Greece

Oleksii Polegkyi: Historical narrative discourse of WWII in Ukraine in the context of "Russian world"

Piotr Chmiel: An Italian foreground of the "new" Europe. Some remarks of

Clausio Magris and Paolo Rumiz on the Eastern part of the continent and its historical legacy of the 20th century (in Polish)

Discussant: Piotr Kwiatkowski

Panel 5a: Memory in the historical space of violence: Transitions: The challenges of democracy and the market

Chair: Tadeusz Szawiel

Berta Jozsef: Between violence and remembrance - negative memory in post-colonial and post-authoritarian societies: Indonesia´s example

Uladzislau Belavusau: Law or politics of memory in Central and Eastern Europe?

Florentina Dobre: Remembering communist persecutions: A comparative study of Romanian and Bulgarian politics of memory

Matthias I. Köhler: Lost in Transition. "Post-Authoritarian" identity and the memory of "authoritarian" violence

Anna Mlynarska-Sobaczewska, Adam Czarnota: Law between Mnemosyne and Lethe. Collective memories and constitutional identities in Central-Eastern Europe

Written presentation:

Alina Hogea: Futures of the past: memory and identity in post-communist Romania

Discussant: Tomasz Zarycki

Panel 5b: Spatial frames of remembrance: city as a memory scene

Chair: Maria Lewicka

Piotr T. Kwiatkowski: The bombardment of a defenseless town. A study of memory and forgetting

Krystyna E. Siellawa-Kolbowska: War after war. The WWII memorials as memory sites - the case of Warsaw

Ana Aceska: War memories and urban planning in the post-war divided city: the case of Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Jenny Wüstenberg: Civil society activists and clashing memories in post-wall Berlin

Katarzyna Sztop-Rutkowska, Maciej Bialous: The processes of collective memory in culturally diverse cities on the example of Bialystok and Lublin

Written presentation:

Marcin Napiórkowski: The Warsaw Rising of the Death. Mourning and Melancholia in Post-War Warsaw

Discussant: Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska

Panel 6a: Memory in the historical space of violence: ambigous aftermaths

Chair: Burkhard Olschowsky

Karine Ramondy: The Democratic Republic of Congo, lands of violence: "afterschocks" of Patrice Lumumba's murder

Dragos Petrescu: Bloody events and contradictory truths: The revolutions of 1989 and the "Rashomon Effect"

Lucia Popa: Post-communist artistic memorialization: the portraits of Ceausescu

Nadiya Trach: Chornobyl as a concept in Ukrainian collective memory

Discussant: Valerie Rosoux

Panel 6b: Spatial frames of remembrance: Reframing the national

Chair: Malgorzata Pakier

Gal Hermoni, Udi Lebel: Penetrating the 'Remembrance Day' Playlist: music and the localization of memory

Agnieszka Topolska: "Musik macht frei": West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

Mayhill C. Fowler: A social history of post-Soviet Arts: theater and trauma in Poland and Ukraine

Stephenie Young: The forensics of memorialization in post-war Balkan photography

Written presentation:

Olga Barbasiewicz: Monuments, places of remembrance and foreign policy making. The case of Japan and United States. Japanese perspective.

Discussant: Katharine McGregor

Panel 7a: Memory in the historical space of violence: Justice, acknowledgement, compensation(1)

Chair: Jeffery Olick

Katharine McGregor: The struggle over memories of the 1965-68 mass violence in Indonesia

Valerie Rosoux: Memory versus reconciliation. The limits of a fairy-tale

Luis Tsukayama Cisneros: How do memory, ideology and national identity discourse relate? Reactions to the Peruvian Truth Commission

Maria Mälksoo: Criminalizing Communism: Transnational Mnemopolitics in Europe

Written presentations:

Marcin Komosa: Institutionalized memory, institutionalized truth

Sokol Lleshi: We are not like them: continuous modernity in East Central Europe's institutional memory production after the fall of communism

disscussant: Lutz Niethammer

Panel 7b: Framing the future: Education
Chair: Dirk Moses

Zlatko Bukac: Violence, war and endorphins: children popular culture during civil war in Croatia

Tamara Pavasovic Trost: Rewriting history in Southeast Europe: A processual analysis of remembering and forgetting

Borislava Manojlovic: Dealing with contentious past: memory and education in post-conflict Croatia

Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs: National histories and identities in education about the Holocaust in post-1989 Poland and the wider world

Discussant: Nobuya Hashimoto

Panel 8a: Memory in the historical space of violence: Justice, acknowledgement, compensation(2)
Chair: Anna Horolets

Stephanie Benzaquen: The memory of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia

Gyunghee Park: Politicized Traumas: the Transformation of 'Comfort Women' Memory as a Memory of Injustice

Piotr Filipkowski: German compensation payments and differentiated memories of the World War II

Stanislawa Trebunia-Staszel: Memory of the Germans anthropological and racial research among Polish Highlanders during WWII (in Polish)

Written presentation:

Joanna Szymoniczek: German cemeteries of World War II in Eastern and Central Europe

Discussant: Maciej Bugajewski

Panel 8b: Framing the future: Art & public sphere
Chair: Marie-Claire Lavabre

Katarzyna Bojarska: When Absence Becomes Loss and Other Fables. Artistic and literary solutions for confronting and shaping collective memory

Agnieszka Klos: Fading memory of Birkenau, hidden in nature and objects (in Polish)

Uilleam Blacker: Remembering Jews and the Holocaust in contemporary

Warsaw from Polish and Israeli perspectives: the work of Joanna Rajkowska and Yael Bartana

Bozhin Traykov: Alyosha vs. Superman: Remembering the past through the ideological lenses of the present

Discussant: Anda Rottenberg

Sessions open to the public: Panel 9a: The future of memory projects
Chair: Adam Czarnota

Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, Joanna Kalicka: Modi Memorandi

Bartosz Korzeniewski: Polskie miejsca pamieci

Michal Luczewski, Tomasz Maslanka: Politics of history in Poland, Germany and Russia

Izabela Skórzynska, Anna Wachowiak: Wizualne reprezentacje polsko-niemieckiej przeszlosci w kontekscie otwartej/zamknietej polityki regionalnej

Discussant: Csaba G. Kiss

Panel 9b: Framing the future. Oral testimonies
Chair: Lukas Krzyzanowski

Jaroslaw Palka: The methodologies of oral history.

Alina Bothe: Virtual memories of Jewish resistance against the destruction

Marcin Jarzabek: Karolina Zlobecka: "Poles in Wehrmacht", Germans in Wehrmacht. Individual versus collective memory

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