

# ABSTRACT BOOK

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Oral History Conference

## GENERATION, MIGRATION AND MEMORY: NARRATIVE AND ITS TRANSFORMATIONS

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University of Latvia Microsoft Innovation centre & on-line



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4. Starptautiskā mutvārdu vēstures konference

## PAAUDZES, ATMIŅA, MIGRĀCIJA: NARATĪVĀ PERSPEKTĪVA

2020. gada 12.-13. novembrī

Latvijas Universitātes Microsoft Inovāciju Centrā un tiešsaistē

### Conference organizational committee:

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As in families, several different generations tend to come together in groups of researchers as well. But simply age or a number of years is not the only factor in defining a researcher's or a whole generation's identity. What matters is the experience and historical context that helped to form the members of a given generation. **Augusts Milts** (1928–2008), a professor of ethics, stood by the establishment of the **Latvian National Oral History** (NOH) as an independent direction of research. He represented the generation born during the time when Latvia was still an independent republic, but his youth was marked by wartime and Sovietisation.

In 2020, the core of the oral history research group consists of nine employees representing three generations. Two of those generations began their academic careers after the restoration of Latvian independence in a liberalized academic and research environment open to international collaboration. The younger of those generations was born around the time of the Awakening of the late 1980s but was too young to participate in it. This generation, often referred to as Millennials, grew up in an already independent Latvia, but at a time that was still overshadowed by the difficult period of the 1990s (Maija Krūmiņa, Ieva Garda). The generation before it is the *Last Soviet Generation*, which experienced Soviet realia but also, in the “plastic” period of youth so important to socialization, experienced national euphoria as well as economic collapse (Ginta Elksne, Kaspars Zellis, Agita Lūse, Edmunds Šūpulis). They are, according to the accepted Western division of demographic cohorts, members of Generation X. The founders and longest-serving employees of the NOH belong to the *First Soviet Generation*, or *Post-Stalinism Generation*, which lived in a “society of whisperers” under the sway of Soviet propaganda but also enjoyed certain social protections. They have experienced two very different systems as well as sharp turns in the course of their lives (Māra Zirnīte, Maruta Pranka).

With the restoration of Latvia's independence, Professor **Vieda Skultāne**, the head of our research group, also experienced a significant turn in her life. She had established her academic career in the United Kingdom and gained international recognition as a professor at the University of Bristol. But after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, she was finally able to return to and work in her and her parents' native land. Since the 1990s, she has been able to conduct a number of studies in her native country, and since 2013 she has been a leading researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia.

The Latvian National Oral History collection and the more than 4500 life stories it contains cover an even broader range of generations. Today, the stories of all of these people freely meet and interconnect, and their memories travel between generations and countries.

The **“Narrative perspectives on intergenerational transmission of memory”** project, which is carried out by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia (2018–2021), is dedicated to the study of generational life stories. At the conference, we hope to share the findings of our research and promote discussion with researchers from abroad who have also focused on studying social and memory processes. We wish to reveal the mutual influence in the narrative perspective of the three concepts mentioned in the conference title: generation, memory and migration.

At the close of the conference, we will present an overview of the cooperation between Baltic and Nordic researchers in the Nordplus project, which over the course of three years provided an opportunity to assess the transfer of memory between generations due to migration. The **“From past to present: Migration and integration through the life stories network”** project provided an opportunity to interview various generations of immigrants from the Baltic states to Norway and Sweden and also to share researchers' experience and present the project's findings to the public.

## 'I am a child of my time': The (in)conceivability of a country that is no longer

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This paper examines the generational effect on experiences of national identity of a small group of East German political activists, compared with that of their parents and their children. What does it mean to speak of national identity in the context of a country that no longer exists? Based on a longitudinal research project carried in former East Germany between 1992 and the present day with key political anti-state activists, I will examine how the demise of the GDR in 1989 impacted on the shifting ways in which different generations within the same family experienced their national identity, exploring why for some East Germans it became easier to embrace an East German identity only after that country no longer existed.

## The Passage of Experience and Memory across Generations

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How is the experience of one generation passed on or transformed by later generations? The work of psychologists has made it clear that memory is not simply a storage system, but involves imagination in important ways. But the move from memory as passive receptacle to memory as imaginative faculty has made it available to multiple uses and misuses. We know that representations of the past change according to the needs of the present: personal memory is unreliable, does not guarantee authenticity and is easily manipulated for social and political ends. The malleability of memory is most in evidence in its passage across generations. I propose to draw upon two different intellectual domains in order to better understand the vertical movement of memory and experience: namely, literary theory and psychoanalytical thought.

The American literary theorist Harold Bloom proposed the term “the anxiety of influence” to explore the ways in which writers both draw upon and fear the influence of earlier writers (1973). Few want to be pale replicas of larger, stronger literary forbears. These same anxieties can be seen shaping the transmission of memory across generations.

But, on the other hand, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, two French – Hungarian psychoanalysts argue for the encryptment of earlier family traumas resulting in what they describe as a haunting (1994). The encryptment means that, whether we like it or not, the experience has been passed on as an unwanted inheritance but is not available for conscious reflection or meaning making.

Both theoretical approaches point to obstacles in the way of transmitting experience across generations. But equally we are urged that, “Collective traumas have no geographical or cultural limitation” and that they open up new possibilities of moral sensibility and universalism (Alexander, 2004: 27). So how can we determine the nature and uses of transmitted memory? Does it restrict or enlarge our concepts of human identity and experience? Or, can both take place? Is compassion only possible in certain specified and favourable social circumstances as a volume on the subject argues? (Berlant, 2004). Or is it a universally accessible human attribute? Does the aestheticization of experience heal or can it harm and exploit as Struk (2003) suggests? These are some of the questions I want to pose in a transgenerational perspective even if I do not have all the answers.

## Biographical writing: From generational memory to cultural memory

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Personal and cultural memories permeate one another. Research into memory problems suggests the need for a better understanding of how we preserve cultural memories when the traditions that once sustained them are broken or have been eradicated. Both the rise of totalitarian societies and their demise have exacerbated problems around upholding and translating traditions in the cultural memory.

Individual experiences shape the formation of cultural memories. This, in turn, prompts us to consider the role of personal memory in the creation of group memories and their retention in the cultural memory. Contemporary culture clearly has materials for these processes. These include various types of biographical texts: diaries, memoirs, notebooks, films and autobiographical novels.

Contemporary culture is now also making the shift from witness-based memory (collective memory) to cultural memory. Images are the storage site of this cultural memory. That is why research into the origins of image recall has become more and more significant. Diaries, memoirs, notebooks and autobiographical novels retain cultural images. Analysing biographical writing can confirm our understandings of these processes and, at the same time, inspire research into the links between autobiographical and generational memories and their retention in cultural memory.

## Migration and the experience of return in interviews with returning migrants in *IR* magazine

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Migration is often the focus of public discussion in Latvia, with emigration rates still exceeding immigration rates and young people leaving most commonly. These trends, in turn, amplify the social problems attached to low birth rates and an ageing population. The return of migrants is seen as highly important for the country's development and its future more generally. Remigration is, thus, a key concern for the government, researchers and the media.

In this study, I highlight the portrayal of returning migrants' experiences of emigration and return in the thematic series "Back Home", which ran in *IR* magazine in 2018 and 2019. Although not based on classic life story research interviews, this series presented biographical narratives to the public, including the reasons for migration, experiences gained, resulting changes and accounts of return and reintegration. At the same time, the series sketched a certain portrait of a generation; whose characters were young people mainly in their 30s and 40s who had chosen to return after several years abroad.

Although the construction of personal experience is at the core of my analysis, the themes of "back home" facilitate reflection on continuities and changes in migration discourse in Latvia, as described in the work of Dace Dzenovska (2012). The *IR* series invites the reader to reflect on traditional ethical questions in discussions of leaving and relations and responsibilities between the individual and the state. While the analysis of one magazine series does not allow us to assess broader discursive changes in Latvia, it does identify the discourse produced by this publication. It also encourages more exploration of current understandings of mobility, personal growth and individual-state relations in Latvian society.

## “My roots are old”. Generational identity and the transmission of memory in evangelical communities in northeast Romania

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Romania is known as a largely Orthodox Christian country. And the area of Moldavia, particularly the city of Iasi, is considered to be the national centre of Orthodox Christianity. Evangelical (i.e. Baptist, Brethren and Pentecostal) communities have existed in this region for around 100 years. During the interwar period and communist regime, these groups endured cultural and political repression and had to embrace their status as marginal communities.

This present study is part of my current PhD research, which focuses on these communities’ memories of communism and the transition periods. To this end, I have conducted more than 50 interviews with community members in north-east Romania. Held at both urban and rural sites, these interviews are based on life stories.

In this study, I draw on interviews carried out with members of the second generation of these communities. Some of the interviewees are now deceased while others are in their eighties or nineties. In the course of my research, I observed the important role of this generation in the history of these communities. Their parents were community founders at a time of repression. The second generation has faced three changes of political systems in Romania: from the monarchy to the communist dictatorship to the transition to democracy.

This study attempts to analyse and describe (1) how the second generation is passing on narratives about community origins and (2) the role of this second generation in shaping community identity.

## Intergenerational relations and migration in families among Latvian emigrant communities

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Considering the small size of Latvia’s population, the significant drop in numbers driven by emigration over the last decade has posed a serious challenge. Latvia, which barely has two million residents, is one of the typical ‘sending countries’ in Europe. Since 2000, some 10% of the population has emigrated.

This study focuses on the intergenerational ties between Latvian migrants and the family members they leave behind. The family unit is not just a source of economic and emotional support; it is a foundation that allows us to maintain language, values and cultural traditions. According to life story interviews with Latvian expatriates and their relatives at home as well as qualitative research data, the relationships between family members play an important role in maintaining family ties, preserving language and traditions and upholding links with the homeland.

Our analysis draws on life story interviews collected in the Latvian National Oral History Archive as part of the Latvian Council of Science (LCS)-funded project “Narrative Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission of Memory”. We also apply quantitative data derived from a large-scale web-based survey of Latvian emigrants (n=14 068, European Social Fund project “Latvian Emigrant Communities”, 2014) and the second phase of a longitudinal survey in the LCS project “Exploring Well-being and Social Integration in the Context of Liquid Migration”.

## Insights into the intergenerational transmission of memories in Latvian Oral History Archive

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Remembering is both a deeply personal and social process that is connected to an impulse and individual's capacities to verbalise and create texts. The story of one's life is enmeshed in and structured by one's language, consciousness and memory as well as one's cultural traditions and models of communication.

Unlike an official world history, the flow of a narrator's memories immerses us in their subjective feelings, perceptions and experiences. When subjective accounts of experience resonate with the listener's own perceptions, the transfer of knowledge takes on emotional weight. Oral history has the dynamism of tradition, as described in contemporary theories of folkloristics, a field that explores people's local, noncanonical, vernacular expressions. The link with folklore reveals itself in the diversity of the messages in orally conveyed memories. Over the generations, a family's historical experiences might take on the form of a folklore genre such as myth or legend.

Individual lines of transferred memories in the Latvian Oral History Archive show how the memories of past generations take on meaning in descendants' stories about their own lives, and how individual motifs pass between generations of the same family. They also reveal the horizontal movement of specific memory stories between members of the same generation dispersed geographically.

## Analysing traumatic memories

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This presentation focuses on methodological issues related to the analysis of narratives and recollections of traumatic experiences. It explores two perspectives on trauma:

1) *Traumatic experiences from a narrator's point of view.* The purpose of this inquiry is to find culturally determined language around trauma. This raises a number of questions: How do narrators connect dramatic events with traumatic experiences in their recollections? And what is trauma language like? To investigate, we compare the recollections of eyewitnesses and their descendants in both thematic oral history interviews and written life stories. We are particularly interested in how researchers can define traumatic experiences in situations where narrators themselves do not use the word "trauma" or apply concepts from trauma theory (e.g. perpetrator and victim, apology and forgiveness).

2) *The links between individual traumatic experiences and trauma theory.* As trauma theory relates directly to contemporary values and attitudes to the past, it also gives us cause to ask about the relationship between individual trauma and collective memory (cultural trauma). How do people connect past events, individual experiences and collective memory? How can concepts from trauma theory help us to interpret personal narratives based on real events?



The empirical research material includes interviews conducted in Finland in 2017 that focused on memories of the Soviet partisan attacks on Finnish civilian targets between 1941 and 1944. Written accounts are drawn from the manuscript collection of Estonian Life Stories (EKLA 350). The general theme of these accounts is World War II and the Soviet occupation of Estonia. These accounts were written in the early 2000s.

### Donations and collective transfers by migrants from small settlements

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This study focuses generally on the processes that have been taking place in small settlements in mountain areas as a result of intensive migration over the last 30 years after the political transition from communist to democratic systems in Bulgaria. Specifically, I analyse how migrants are organising donations and collective transfers to benefit the public in their place of origin.

My main discussion questions examine the value of these donations and collective transfers for the two groups: migrants and the people who choose to stay in these villages. The research raised many further questions: Could these actions represent a new kind of life strategy that seeks in the long term to ensure migrants a possible return to their place of origin? Do public service donations aim to dissipate the emotional tension generated by nostalgia? Is the goal to create a sense of shared community with the native place?

This work follows the principles of a classic case study as it focuses on the processes affecting single southern Bulgarian village, Davidkovo. The population of this village has shrunk dramatically due to intensive migration both to bigger towns in the country and to central and western Europe.

This study has been conducted using ethnographic study methods. Over the last two years, I have made several field expeditions of different durations. Over the last eight years, I have also conducted field surveys outside the village and throughout the entire Central Rhodope mountain region with multiple returns to the ethnographic field.

### One generation in the same region: Three ethnicities and different stories of migration

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The Klaipėda region or Memel Territory is a south-west border region of Lithuania with a complicated political and cultural history. World War II completely changed the population of the region. In the autumn of 1944, the vast majority of the local community fled to the West, depopulating the area. Shortly after early 1945 when the Soviet military and authorities established themselves in the region, they began colonising the area with new settlers. Three groups of migrants came to the Klaipėda region after World War II. The first was a small number of locals returning home. These individuals became an ethnic minority in the new post-war society. They may be considered immigrants since although they were returning home they came back to a different country where they would need to assimilate. The second group comprised the many migrants who came to the region from Soviet-occupied Lithuania and the third one involved the numerous migrants from other Soviet republics, mostly Russia and Belarus. These two groups formed the majority of the new post-war society.

I present three very different stories of migration and life told by representatives of the same generation, as collected in the research project “Klaipėda Region 1945–1960: The Formation of a New Society and Its Reflections in Family Stories”. All three subjects were born at the end of the 1930s and they each spent their childhood in different places, but World War II and post-war migration brought them all to the Klaipėda region. The first interviewee is Marta, who was born into a German family in the Klaipėda region. The second is Tatiana, who came from a Russian-Polish family in Belarus. The final interviewee is Stasys, who was born in Lithuania. His parents were Lithuanian. All three stories reveal typical post-war migration and life-course patterns which are strongly related to master narratives of particular ethnic communities.

### Place identity in the life stories of members of the Latvian diaspora

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Place and identity are closely bound up with one another. The two concepts are co-produced as we come to identify with the environment that we live in, and we shape and are, in turn, shaped by that environment. We also carry memories of spaces and places that have formed us. Exploring the ties between place and identity can deepen our understanding of identity formation and the role of place in social and individual development. Place-identity bonds can affect social forms, cultural practices and political actions. This is seen in the efforts of exiled populations to establish roots in their new homes.

*Place identity* is an aspect of individual self-identity and consists of the knowledge and feelings developed through everyday experiences of physical and social space. This is also part of *social identity*. Both these concepts can help us understand where and why people feel at home as well as why displacement – whether forced or voluntary – may be traumatic for individuals and groups.

The study focuses on meanings and experiences of *place identity* in the life stories of first- and second-generation Latvian exiles (i.e. individuals who left the country during World War II and their descendants). These stories show that the notion of *place identity* raises two distinct questions: “Where do I come from?” and “Where do I belong?” It is also worth asking how the answers to these questions differ across the generations.

The presentation draws on 1) life stories collected in the Latvian Oral History Archive and 2) two research projects “Narrative Perspectives on the Intergenerational Transmission of Memory” funded by the Latvian Council of Science and “From Past to Present: Migration and Integration through the Life Story Network” funded by Nordplus.

### “My memory is like a big house”: The transgenerational transmission of memory among Estonians in the diaspora

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In this presentation, I focus on the oral history interviews and life narratives of second- and third-generation Estonians who were born and grew up in Canada, the US or Sweden. I analyse processes of constructing subjectivity in relation to Estonia as a place of origin, a locus of identity and a site of (be)longing. The sources for the study include a) interviews conducted



with second- and third-generation Estonians in Canada, the US and Australia by students of Merle Karusoo at Kotkajärve metsaülikool (summer university) in the summer of 2000 and published in the life story anthology *Rändlindude pesad* (Nests of Migratory Birds, ed. Tiina Ann Kirss) in 2006 and b) the life stories of second- and third-generation Estonians contained in the life story collection in the Cultural History Archive of the Estonian Literary Museum.

Engaging with the concept of postmemory as elaborated by Marianne Hirsch (2008) and Eva Hoffmann (2004), the presentation discusses the possibilities and limits of applying this framework to Estonian life histories, particularly given its essential connection with trauma as an idea developed in relation to the Holocaust. I focus on how “received memory” shapes the self-conceptions of second and third-generation Estonians in the diaspora and the situations and contexts in which such memory manifests. I also observe its implication in life histories where it influences, for example, educational and professional life choices and modes of socialisation, including romantic relationships and the intimate bonds between family members. Special attention is paid to how the interviewees and authors of life narratives (re-)engage with the escape journeys of their parents and grandparents to the West and the perceived role of this escape in the narrators’ own self-conception.

### Remembering care and caring for memories: adoptees’ sources of self

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The intention of this paper is to explore how growing up in an adoptive or foster family shapes the experience of intergenerational memory transmission. This work builds on anthropological approaches to familial and intergenerational memory, in particular, those developed by Lambek and Antze (1996), Carsten (2008) and Lambek (2008; 2014). Three basic propositions guide this exploration. First, caring is understood as a fundamental form of remembering, characteristic of an ethos of kinship (Lambek 2008). Second, remembering is seen as a moral and intersubjective practice that oscillates between the stream of embodied experience and objectified narrative (Lambek 2008). Third, human action is considered as a kind of interpretation of one’s predecessors’ lives (Lambek 2014).

This paper argues that since more often than not, adoptees have few sources from which to draw to build their personal identity, they make special efforts to integrate into their life stories fragmented family memories and scant knowledge of their origins both as biological and social beings. These efforts may take various forms. Drawing on five life-story interviews (two from the National Oral History Archive and three that I conducted), I show that these subjects have developed opinions, pursued interests and made crucial decisions based on their interpretation of the lives of their parents and carers. Where adoptees are aware of past acts of care, their practices inspired by these acts may extend a caring attitude across the generations. At the same time, the embodied experience of early abandonment may feed anxiety about interpersonal relationships into adult life. In sharing their recollections, these storytellers convey the fragile balance between feelings of anxiety and care.

## History, memory, ideology

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After the pioneering considerations of Halbwachs's *On Collective Memory*, inquiries into the relationship between history and memory took off in the 1980s with two literary events: Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982) and Pierre Nora's "Between Memory and History", an introduction to the anthology *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984). Each of these texts identified memory as a sacred or primitive form in opposition to modern historical discourses. The paramount issues for Yerushalmi are the relationship of the Jewish people to their own past (the Hebrew imperative *zakhor!* – "remember!") and the role of the historian in this relationship. For Nora, memory is an archaic mode of being that has been eroded by rationalisation and the "acceleration of history".

This conference paper discusses these positions in light of more general concerns about the complex relationship between history, memory and ideology. The (largely political) dangers concealed within discourses of history and memory will also be discussed, especially in the context of so-called post-communist countries.

## Generational pressures of identity and belonging in the autobiographical works of Agate Nesaule and Elin Toona

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The works of authors Elin Toona (1937) and Agate Nesaule (1938) present the crucial perspectives of first-generation post-WWII Baltic diaspora. Toona and Nesaule are authors of the same generation and have written from the perspective of the generation who only knew homeland from their childhood or from the memory of their elders.

What becomes synonymous with this generation in exile is the word 'pressure': pressure to keep traditions alive and adhere to national ideals. In this paper, I focus on these tensions over being 'Estonian' and 'Latvian', as written in Toona's *Kaleviküla viimne tütar* (The Last Daughter of Kaleviküla) and Nesaule's *Lost Midsummers: A Novel of Exile and Friendship*. I aim to pinpoint similarities in these specific Estonian and Latvian experiences and examine how these may have been shaped by memory of homeland and trauma of escape.

Autobiographical fiction can be a way to express ambivalent or negative experiences within the diaspora, which may otherwise remain untold in the Baltic exiles' grand narrative of freedom and survival. My research aims to spotlight and compare these experiences represented within the literature of the Baltic diasporas.

## The family as the carrier of memories of Soviet exile and terror - Deported and diasporic Ingrian Finnish families

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This paper explores the transformation of Ingrian Finnish families who were originally from Ingria (an area near St. Petersburg) in the Soviet Union as a result of deportations, Stalinist terror and clashes of ideologies and practice. As previous studies have shown, Soviet state policies of persecution and stigmatisation of victims and their families had the effect of

deleting certain chapters from the Soviet era from Russian family histories. For the Ingrian Finns, however, family histories were often an important source and carrier of memories of exile and repression from one generation to another. I study one extended family with 35 members, including four rural Ingrian Finnish families and two generations who were deported during the 1930s and 1940s because of their social status as “kulak” peasants and their ethnic background as Finns living in the border area.

This research uses family archival materials such as letters and oral histories. In the wake of deportations, imprisonments, escapes and relocation, members of the extended family lived in the diasporas in Finland, the Kola Peninsula, Siberia, Central Asia, Sweden, Soviet Estonia and Soviet Karelia. Nuclear families were broken up because of the imprisonment or death of all of the fathers in the group. I uncover complex survival strategies within the family ranging from escape to silence about the past to the embrace of education. The meaning of deportation and exile has shifted and is different for the older and younger generations. Under totalitarianism, families and family histories became a secret meeting place for the individual and collective histories of Ingrian Finns.

## Second-generation migrants – Life experiences and historical consciousness

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Our understandings, uses and reproductions of history are important not only for the discipline of history but for society as a whole. This study explores how the children of Baltic migrants reproduce, manage and negotiate their parents’ lived experience. These experiences interact with the children’s own stories of growing up in the second generation. This work suggests different approaches that may help with the analysis of the historical consciousness of second-generation migrants.

It is often said that we are our history. But which history belongs to us? Traditionally, the answer to this question has referred to a specific community or nation.

## Genealogy of the Polish middle class in socialist Poland: Discursive denial, life trajectories and memory politics

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This paper argues that the genealogy of the Polish middle class should be traced to the socialist period and not, as is now customary, to the political and economic transformation that has been taking place since 1989. I show how intergenerational changes in the intermediate social strata, which were reflected in a political shift between the “revolutionary” and “technocratic” phases of the regime (Bauman), brought about the implosion of the communist system. Despite the initial and later deeply ingrained egalitarian ethos of socialist societies, competition and meritocratic distinctions became increasingly appealing even in the absence of a free market. This phenomenon may be explained by the gradual expansion of the middle class.

By demonstrating how middle-class traits developed in the time of socialist modernisation, I aim to present new perspectives for both historiographies and sociologies of the period. There are three salient parts of this argument. The first is a theoretical consideration of parallel modernisation in the Western and Eastern blocs in the context of class formation. The second is an analysis of biographical interviews with the children of white-collar workers

who advanced socially under socialism (and, thus, with individuals who inherited status in a supposedly classless society). The third is a reflection on how the socialist genesis of the middle class and the subsequent discursive denial of these roots have impacted memory politics since 1989. Although there is scholarly consensus that the socialist and capitalist paths of modernisation were in many ways analogous, this convergence theory has never been tested in relation to intergenerational changes as reflected in intersubjective experiences in the population. My research aims to fill this gap and highlight the social continuities between socialist and post-socialist Poland, which are generally left out of contemporary studies.

### Voices of generations: the transfer of memories in the Baltics States

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In the presentation, I explore developments in generational memory studies across Europe with focus to the neighbouring states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Scholars in each country have their own way of defining generations and the way to make distinction between generations. These definitions reflect the social and historical circumstances that gave rise to generational identities. There are different bases for these identities, and collective memory is among them. I focus on generational studies that highlight biographical narratives along with historical events and their place in national frameworks of remembrance. I then ask how different researchers use the notion of generations in their studies.

This paper discusses the extent to which changes, ruptures and consolidations in peoples' stories depend on generational factors. At the same time, it questions whether the definition of a generation reflects a society's remembrance framework. The interdependence of those frameworks and generational categories is clearest in cases such as the remembrance of social traumas, dictatorships and the Holocaust. In the Baltic context, we may look for common narratives around the Soviet legacy and its role in moulding particular generations. There are still many disputed memories and unrecognised stories. Are there similarly "canonical" and "silent" generations in our countries? I draw key insights from life history research and memory studies in order to shed light on the generations and the transfer of their narratives.

### Impacts of globalisation and the intergenerational transmission of memory in Lithuania's Šalčininkai region

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Jonathan Friedman (2003) claims that the sociocultural memory of a community often manifests in the narratives that connect its experiences and create a coherent story about itself and its surroundings (Friedman 1992). Such narratives have a significant impact on local identity in the multi-ethnic region of Šalčininkai in south-east Lithuania.

According to Aleida Assmann, our memories of the past are always shaped by our present situation. Some aspects of the past are magnified while others are forgotten (Assmann 2011:19). Among the most important findings of my research are the "liquidity" and constant revision of narratives and local identity. Two vastly different periods, the times of the Soviet occupation and the Republic of Lithuania, influence the narratives of the locals of the Šalčininkai region whom I interviewed. Under Soviet totalitarian rule, the sharing of personal

memories was partially suppressed. This radically altered the narratives of collective memory that were passed down from the older to the younger generation.

After 1990, Soviet rule ended and Lithuania opened itself up to the world. Globalisation began to affect how the inhabitants of the Šalčininkai region shared their memories. Relations with other countries such as Poland intensified. These states along with global institutions (for example, the United Nations and the European Union) influenced how locals perceived themselves and the situation in Lithuania. Memories of discrimination and harm were voiced, narrated and sometimes even exploited for the political goal of receiving support from different global institutions.

Based on my research to date (gathered during fieldwork in south-east Lithuania in the summer of 2019), I present responses to some key questions: What kinds of narratives do locals tell among themselves? How do they vary across different generations? How is globalisation affecting the narratives of local people and their local identity?

### Communicative family memory: The case of Lithuania

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This paper aims to test the usefulness of the concept of “family memory” for the analysis of memory’s role in preserving family unity. I examine how sharing memories can give family members a sense of a shared identity. In reflecting on the importance of family memory for research into the preservation of “familyhood”, I draw on Aleida and Jan Assmann’s concepts of cultural and communicative memory (Assmann 2008:117). In this framework, cultural memory denotes representations of the past and their role in setting up cultural forms and practices. Communicative memory describes the sharing of important memories across the generations in family networks through informal communication. I argue that in order to understand how families convey meaningful information in practice, we need to study “conversations at the table” (Keppler, 2001), narrators and themes.

The idiosyncrasy of family memory lies in its intergenerational perspective. When memories are communicated, a process of memory (re)construction follows. This involves the incorporation of the past into the repository of family memory.

The paper draws on the insights of two studies. The first of these, “The Last Soviet Generation” project involved 80 biographical interviews and three focus groups between 2017 and 2019. This project examined how people born between 1970s and 1980s in Lithuania remember the Soviet past in their biographical narratives. To this end, it explored generation-specific memory strategies in response to collective frameworks such as the dominant official discourse of post-Soviet cultural memory and family memory. This generation’s position in social time makes for a productive combination of bright, nostalgic memories of childhood and a critical perspective on the Soviet era. In the context of family memory, the younger generation values the memories of their grandparents’ experiences without censoring any negative assessments. My second key influence is a representative survey of Lithuanian residents that was carried out in 2017. Empirical data highlight how different communication channels – the family network and other initiatives – are used to share family memories and which memory communication contexts predominate. The content of communicated memories is analysed based on the historical context including traumatic experiences and achievements of family members and kin as well changes in the family network and common knowledge.

## Controversial memories in the life stories of the Soviet generation

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The Soviet era has affected several generations of Latvians and reflections on this time are integral to the memories of individuals. The memories left behind by the generation who lived through the Soviet occupation and subsequent terror mark an important dividing line between life then and now. These memories also differ significantly from those of the younger generation, who did not become acquainted with the Soviet regime until the post-Stalinist years.

This study aims to analyse the life stories of individuals whose birth, education and work occurred in the post-Stalinist period. In their memories, the Soviet period serves as an essential yet unnamed aspect of their life course. In this generation's life stories, references to repression by the Soviet regime, collectivisation and the like take the form of memories inherited from their parents which have been amplified by prevailing social metanarratives. At the same time, there is a tendency to include and normalise this period in biographies. In this paper, I analyse how the life stories of this generation aim to link their experiences with metanarratives and normalise them.