

**Part III: POLITICS AND MEMORY**

**Part IV: THE MEMORY LANDSCAPE OF  
EUROPE**

# RESEARCH PAPER

Topic on Thursday

Find a topic: Preferably in Central and Eastern Europe

Find a question

Make an argument

# Research Paper: Question Needs to be specific

- Question:
  - What is official narrative of Poland toward Lithuania and what is the political significance of that? What is political significance of memory culture in Slovakia toward Czechia? What is the memory of regime in Serbia towards the Srebrenica massacre?
  - What is the memory regime in Croatia surrounding the Ustase?
  - How has Putin's discussions of Stalin changed over time?
  - What are different Czech narratives around the expulsion of Germans?

# Choose a particular case, time, etc.

- This can be an example: a particular speech; it can be a particular museum; it can be a film, it can be a novel
- It can offer a broader view, but be clear how you are doing it: Who is important to the discussion, why did you choose them
- It can be more empirical: selection of articles from one or two newspapers, laws, etc.

# Possible Methods:

- Methods:
  - Interpretive Methods: How do you identify the narrative and its significance?
    - In reading an account: Who are the actors? Who is the we? What are the limits to the we? Who is the other? What characteristics are given to the "we" and the "others"? What is the relation between the we and the others? Who did what to whom? What is the reason given for why they did it? What value is given to the actions?
    - Interpreting significance: consider the speaker, consider the audience, consider the context: what is happening, what events are happening at the time, what actions has the speaker done, etc.
  - More empirical: Content analysis---Look at selections of newspaper articles, speeches, etc over time.

# Example:

- Putin on the Munich Agreement (in response to Polish arguments that Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement helped start WWII):

“in case of the Munich betrayal that, in addition to Hitler and Mussolini, involved British and French leaders, Czechoslovakia was taken apart with the full approval of the League of Nations. I would like to point out in this regard that, unlike many other European leaders of that time, Stalin did not disgrace himself by meeting with Hitler who was known among the Western nations as quite a reputable politician and was a welcome guest in the European capitals.

# Outline

- Abstract- 200 words
  - Contains question
  - Why it is important
  - How you are going to approach the question
  - What is your conclusion
- Introduction: Quick background, question, importance, argument
- Background: Explain a little about the event and the case
- Discussion of which concepts from the literature you are using for analysis
- The analysis
- Conclusion

# REVIEW

- National Identity plays important role in how states define interests and strategies
- National Identity linked with memory and narratives
- Collective memory associated with memory community
- States and nations construct a narrative, a selective and often inaccurate account of history to help illustrate the origins, character and boundaries of the “memory community”
- These narratives and the associated definitions of identity become embedded in the state institutions



# THE POLITICAL WORK OF MEMORY

- HELPS TO FORM, REINFORCE POLITICAL COMMUNITY
- EXPLAINS AND LEGITIMATES POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND ACTIONS
- FREQUENTLY REMOVES, EXPLAINS OR JUSTIFIES NEGATIVE EVENTS
- FRAMEWORK TO INTERPRET CURRENT EVENTS, POLICIES
- DISCOURAGES DISSENT
- CREATES SCAPEGOATS

# Constructing the “Master Narrative”

Methods of Organizing and Elaborating Collective Memory

- Emplot events in an affectively charged and mobilizing narrative;

Collective victories, collective trauma

- Create sites and monuments that present palpable relics;

Create school curricula that introduce children to the narrative

- Create visual and verbal signs as aids of memory;

- Create and repeat commemoration rites that periodically reactivate the memory and enhance collective participation.

# POLITICS OF MEMORY

Different narratives exist in any society

Those who can get other people to believe in a particular narrative have an advantage

Therefore, memory is contested

Malinova: "Politics of memory comprises public activity of various social institutions and actors aimed at the promotion of specific interpretations of a collective past and establishment of an appropriate sociocultural infrastructure of remembrance, school curricula, and, sometimes, special legislation.

# AN EXAMPLE: WORLD WAR I

- Wars not only fought on the battlefield
  - In Germany many different interpretations of the reasons for the war and Germany's loss
    - The war was a result of centralized, unchecked power by governments backed rich industrialists and financiers fighting for increased access to markets.
    - The war was an attempt to protect the nation from attack. Germany lost because of betrayal of Marxists and Jews who "stabbed the country" in the back.

# How does politics of memory work?

- The role of the memory agents who help construct the narrative
- The resources and access they have to disseminate the narrative
- The credibility of the memory agents
- The way this resonates among the people
  - How does it fit with existing narratives
  - How does it help explain their circumstances
  - How does it appeal to emotions

# The Framework of Bernhard and Kubik

Official Memory “entwined with power.”

Actor-Centered Approach

An “instrumentalist “ approach

Constrained by Culture: “the weight of the past”

Or, in other words, institutionalized notions

# An Actor-Centered Approach

- Mnemonic Warriors
- Mnemonic Pluralists
- Mnemonic Abnegators
- Mnemonic Prospectives

TABLE 1.1

	Types of Mnemonic Actors and Their Dominant Strategies			
	Mnemonic warriors	Mnemonic pluralists	Mnemonic abnegators	Mnemonic prospectives
<i>Who</i> are the participants in memory politics	Us versus them.	Us and them.	Those who dwell on the past, not us.	Expansive and exhaustive us.
<i>What</i> is the predominant vision of collective memory?	Memory is non-negotiable, as there is only one "true" vision of the past.	Negotiation on memory issues but within an agreement on the fundamentals of mnemonic politics.	Low salience of memory issues for politics.	The riddle of history has been solved; both the past and the future are known.
<i>When</i> are the events to be remembered happening?	<b>In a single mythical past</b> (wrongs of the past are part of the tissue of present politics).	(Probably) in <b>multiple pasts</b> . Different interpretations of the past exist.	Never mind when, it is not important. There is no time like the present.	<b>In the future.</b> Teleological orientation. There is an inevitable or desirable and attainable end state.
<i>How</i> is the mnemonic contest to be carried out? <i>What</i> are the culturally prescribed strategies of action?	Defeat, deny power to, delegitimize alternative visions of the past. Do not negotiate, avoid compromise.	Practice respect, toleration for alternative views of the past on the basis of a common understanding of the fundamentals. Be ready to negotiate or disagree.	Avoid mnemonic contests. They are a waste of time.	Focus political energy on building a "brighter" future and challenge competing visions of the past in the name of the correct, revolutionary interpretation.
<i>Why</i> is it worthwhile or not worthwhile to engage in mnemonic struggle?	<b>Fundamentalism:</b> our "true" vision of the past legitimizes our claim to power.	<b>Pluralism:</b> there are several visions of the past that are acceptable. Our claim to power rests on our effort to institutionalize a frame for their coexistence.	<b>Pragmatism:</b> propagating a predominant vision of the past is not seen as worthwhile in comparison to responding to present-day problems.	<b>Utopianism:</b> An idealized future is attainable but requires action in the present.

# Mnemonic Regimes

## The Definition of a "Memory Regime"

The concept of "memory regime" in this study refers to a set of cultural and institutional practices that are designed to publicly commemorate and/or remember a single event, a relatively clearly delineated and interrelated set of events, or a distinguishable past process. We are particularly interested in official memory regimes, that is, memory regimes whose formulation and propagation involve the intensive participation of state institutions and/or political society (the authorities and major political actors such as parties, who are organized to hold and contest state power)... The whole set of official regimes existing in a given country in a given period can be called the official field of (collective or historical) memory.

## TYPES OF MEMORY REGIMES

FRACTURED

UNIFIED

PILLARIZED



## Examples:

POLISH MEMORY REGIMES ON MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT?  
POLISH MEMORY REGIMES ON POLISH PARTICIPATION IN HOLOCAUST?  
UKRAINIAN MEMORY REGIME ON HOLODOMOR?  
CZECH MEMORY REGIME ON EXPULSION OF GERMANS?  
SLOVAKIAN MEMORY REGIME ON JOSEF TISO?

# Questions?

- Does instrumentalism work as an assumption?
- What role does culture, history play?
- How do memory regimes change?

# Berthold Molden:

- “hegemony is the ability of a dominant group or class to impose their interpretations of reality—or the interpretations that support their interests—as the only thinkable way to view the world. The dominated groups come to accept the interests of the dominant ones as the natural state of the world. Hegemony thus establishes one particular narrative as a quasi-natural universality and delegitimizes alternative forms of reasoning. It is the successful creation of this powerful common sense of reality that includes most people in a social group while sapping those who think—or remember—outside the box.

# Memory as a Layering of Contingent Sediments

What does it mean?

“These sedimentations constitute the discursive strata where the contingent origins of memory and historical narration are hidden.”

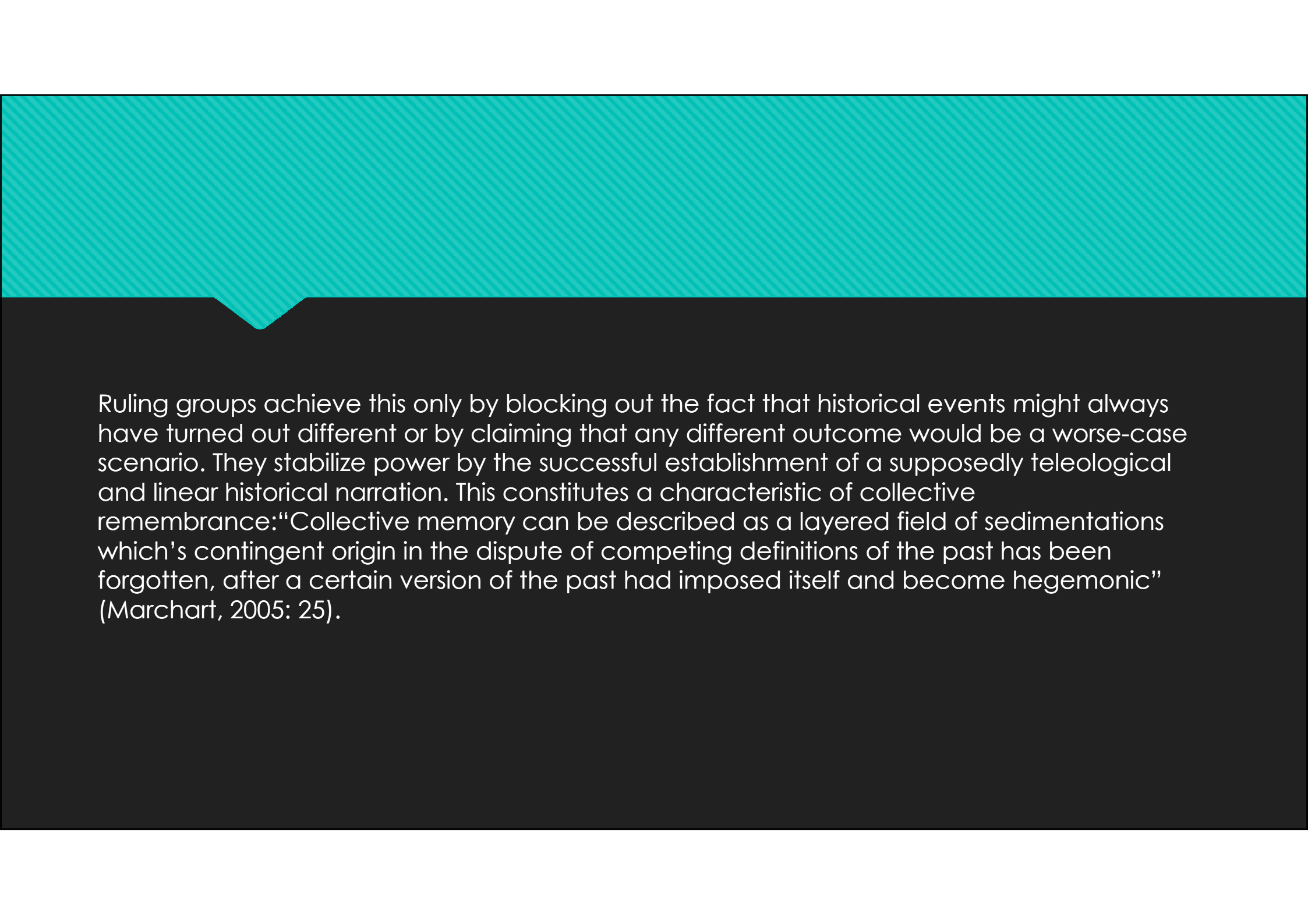
The political is “constituted through the rediscovery of these sediments in the “moment of antagonism where the undecidable nature of the alternatives and their resolution through power relations becomes fully visible” (p. 34–35).

EXAMPLE?

# Memory Culture

“any sign, word, or memory can be multivocal and can be put to use differently by different speakers, according to their experience, context, and needs”.

“A memory culture is defined by the frames of historical reference common to certain communities of experience and/or tradition who share a critical mass of content, patterns of interpretation, and rituals of collective memory.”



Ruling groups achieve this only by blocking out the fact that historical events might always have turned out different or by claiming that any different outcome would be a worse-case scenario. They stabilize power by the successful establishment of a supposedly teleological and linear historical narration. This constitutes a characteristic of collective remembrance: "Collective memory can be described as a layered field of sedimentations which's contingent origin in the dispute of competing definitions of the past has been forgotten, after a certain version of the past had imposed itself and become hegemonic" (Marchart, 2005: 25).

# The material dimension of memory

“dialectic of experience and discourse,”

- There is always a connection between historical experience, the structural context of power relations, and the history politics of a time. It corresponds to the relationship between history as the event or process that is experienced, memory cultures as the given structure, and the concrete agency of those who want to maintain or change this cultural framework as well as those who just live in it passively.
- The diversity of experience leads to diversity of memory

# Memory Culture as a Field of Agency

- Memory as a narrative social construction involves studying the narrator and the institutions that grant or deny power to the voice of the narrator and authorize him or her to speak, since as Pierre Bourdieu notes, the effectiveness of performative speech is proportional to the authority of the speaker. (Jelin, 2003: 23)
- The politics of history and official discourses of memory produced by the elite's ideological apparatus can be—but do not always have to be—cutoff from real experience. Counter-memory on the other hand—while possibly also constructed as an idealist myth—is more likely to have to rely on a material basis of experience, given its lack of strong media support and other amplifying and reifying tools.
- Civil Society provides an arena to act



# The Three Narratives

- The Western Narrative: The Good War
  - Nazism as key evil
  - Holocaust as prime signifier as evil
  - Lesson. “Never Again”. Human Rights
- Soviet/Russian Narrative
  - Fascism as key evil Soviet forces carry brunt
  - Holocaust part of Fascism evil
- Post-Communist
  - Two occupations
  - Holocaust external



# Building a “Common European” Identity

- The project for deepening integration
  - The Single European Market and Maastricht in 1992
  - Redefining Europe’s democratic mission after the end of the Cold War
  - Two World Wars and the Holocaust as a Negative Foundational Narrative
    - Quote from the “House of European History” website
      - The generation of people who experienced the tragedies of the 20th century and went on to build the European Communities is disappearing. [https://historia-europa.ep.eu/sites/default/files/assets/ga\\_en\\_2017.pdf](https://historia-europa.ep.eu/sites/default/files/assets/ga_en_2017.pdf)



<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Europe/The-House-of-European-History-178791>

STILL...

National narratives  
Remained pre-emine



# How does the Holocaust become the “founding myth of the EU”?

- THE STOCKHOLM DECLARATION: 2000
- What do we mean by “founding myth”?
- Why does European Union need a founding myth?
- How does the end of the Cold War affect European search for founding myth?
- Why does Holocaust become an “entry ticket” into the EU?
  - Yugoslavia?
  - Decontextualization? Deterritorialization?

# The Eastern Europe after the Cold War



- Need to redefine national identity
- Reject Communism and Soviet Domination
  - Seen as aberration
- The desire to "Return to Europe": NATO, EU
- Some resentment against EU demands on political, cultural issues
  - Fear of losing sovereignty again



# Tensions between narratives West and Central

- There are problems with the Western narrative
  - For many, WWI memory not about pointless slaughter, but about liberation
  - World War II was not seen as a “good war” against Nazism, but dual occupation
  - Authoritarian leaders of interwar regimes embraced by nationalists



# Challenges To Post-Communist Narratives (Subotić)

- Eastern European quest for national identity source of insecurity
- Finding a usable past: Masaryk, Tiso, Ustase
- Preferred narratives: victory over evil, resister of evil, victim of evil
- Holocaust Challenges
  - Murders occur on Eastern European territory
  - The diminution of national victimhood
  - The question of collaboration, economic benefits
- Resentments
  - Western European countries not forthcoming about own complicity
  - Western European accepted division of Europe after war

# What are the implications?

- By seeing communism as an aberration, go to earlier history
- Usually not much better
- Empowers the right wing
  - Hungary and Orban
  - The Croatian History

# Maria Malksoo

- Emphasis on Holocaust—Search for unattainable universality
  - Eastern European perspective as subaltern, “reclaiming history”
  - Disruption of European Memory project
- Construction of new transnational vision of communism
  - Memory Institutes
- Celebrating “Heterocentrism”