Memory politics in post-conflict societies

The paper focuses on public memory and history education in three post-conflict societies, namely Finland after 1918, South Africa after 1994 and Bosnia-Herzegovina after 1995. Compared to the two latter cases, Finland provided a long, trans-generational perspective to the dark past. The three cases differ as to the kind of a conflict, reaching from a class war to racially and ethno-religiously motivated conflicts.

Memory politics in Finland changed with time from the manifestation of the victor’s truth to the cultural reconciliation during the third post-conflict generation, while South Africa balanced between a radical transformation and a building of a ‘rainbow nation’, and Bosnia-Herzegovina remained stuck in a history war.

The changes in memory politics appeared in monuments, museums, commemoration rituals and other forms of history culture. South Africa provides an example of radical transformation of the museums, where state interference on national level and civic community museum activities on local level complemented each other. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the different forms of post-conflict memorialisation developed ethno-nationally exclusive.

In Finland, while public memory eventually turned inclusive, history education lagged behind. In South Africa history lessons were transformed in the same pace as public memory, and in Bosnia-Herzegovina they served the building of the three ethno-nations together with public memory.

The differences in memory politics and history education mirror the differences in the preconditions of post-conflict reconciliation.
Conversion narratives, and testimonies, are among the most prominent forms of autobiographical writing which seek to introduce private experience into the public realm. Originating primarily as a religious form, in the nineteenth century in Britain the conversion template was adapted by adherents to and propagandists for more secular causes, including temperance and various political movements (Chartist; socialist). In 1931, the Women's Cooperative Guild (an organisation with over 70,000 working-class women members) published *Life as We Have Known It*, a collection of short autobiographical accounts by six Guildswomen. One of the first such British publications by working women, it combined the aims of testimony (to "life as we have known it") with conversion propaganda (how the Guild has improved my life). These texts were introduced with a Preface by Virginia Woolf (a supporter of the Guild) which paradoxically called its status into question (this "book" is not a book, since if it were it would not need a preface). More recent feminist critiques of the class-limited nature of Woolf's aesthetic criteria have, through their focus on the writer who carries cultural capital, ironically often continued this neglect of the Guild authors themselves. This paper will examine how Elizabeth Layton, author of the most substantial of the memoirs, adapted a supposedly masculine form of self-narrative to reveal the roots of both individual mobility and collective political action in experiences of the (supposedly) private spheres of childhood, domestic service, and maternal care – what might be termed the "hidden injuries of class and gender"
Private Spaces, Public Places; Collective Memory and Community Archives

The ubiquity of technology and the Web offers unprecedented opportunities for the digital consolidation and sharing of the collective memories and identities of diverse communities, particularly those under-represented in the social mainstream. Online community archives are one important way in which this consolidation and sharing takes place. Community archives, a recently recognized phenomena defined generally as collections of materials generated, preserved and managed by communities and grass-roots organizations, have flourished in the online environment. Often initiated, organized and maintained by volunteers, community archives gather and present invaluable documentation in a great variety of formats about those segments of society often overlooked by traditional archival institutions. Through their online sites, these archives bind together dispersed community groups and through their digital collections, communities build and share memory and identity, both for themselves and the wider society. At the same time, material that used to be relatively private and difficult to access in the physical archive, is now widely available online. Private memories and personal identities suddenly form part of larger community expressions. This paper explores the tensions between the private and the public within the context of an online community archive. Issues of the personal vs. the collective, individual vs. community memory, privacy vs. transparency are explored through an analysis of community archives web sites, interviews with community archives activists and the growing literature on community archives and collective memory.
Community Remembered: Imagination, Nostalgia, Memory

Modern Britain seems to be mourning the passing of a sense of community. A world where doors were left unlocked, the streets were safe, and neighbours knew one another is now a distant memory, if the popular imagination is to be believed. The enduring appeal of television period dramas, historical novels and local newspaper ‘nostalgia’ columns which romanticise the past are testament to the continued consumption of yesteryear’s community spirit, respectability and restraint. And whilst the economic hardships of this ‘olden days’ life may be acknowledged, the negatives of these closed and close-knitted communities- if they really did exist- are not. Yet these memories of the halcyon days of community tend to go unchallenged, both at a public level and at a community level.

Based a series of oral history interviews conducted with residents of a small town in East Northamptonshire, UK, this paper suggests that, outside of public and group acts of the remembering community, people’s individual oral testimony often reveals more complex and sometimes problematic memories of community. The medium of the oral history interview, it seems, permits and facilitates the exploration of alternative memories and experiences of community that complicate and occasionally counter the accepted narrative.

This paper also proposes that public and group memories of community are not made redundant in light of individual testimony but that in fact, the act of collective remembering and the process and experience of collective nostalgia works to generate the very sense of community and cohesion for which it grieves.
Perceptions of Class and Status among Women Workers in the Irish Textile Industry: The Relationship between Narration and Memory in Selected Oral Narratives

This paper conducts a close reading of oral narratives provided by employees of a textile firm that operated in Cork City between 1927 and 1990. The purpose of the paper is to examine how respondents related their encounters with class and status divisions in society. It also explores how these experiences are communicated through the organisation and structuring of oral narratives and the careful selection of particular memories and incidents. The paper begins by examining the relationship between gender and status in the testimony. As all respondents were women who worked in manufacturing, they were looked down upon because of the low status accorded to Irish women in factory employment during the twentieth century. The paper demonstrates how interviewees responded both overtly and in a more subtle manner to this public perception in the arrangement and narration of private memories and anecdotes, implicitly seeking to challenge it. The second part of the paper examines how one particular respondent articulates her resentment at the class bias of the Catholic church that she experienced, through the careful selection of particular memories and anecdotes. The paper demonstrates how this respondent uses narrative to articulate opinions and feelings that would have been impossible at a time when the Catholic Church’s power meant that it would have been impossible for her to publically proclaim these privately-held criticisms. The paper concludes by demonstrating that close examination of the construction of the oral narratives themselves reveal that Irish women workers were much more class-conscious than previously appreciated.
The tension between public and private memories, between vernacular and official forms, and between the participatory and the retrospective, has been a dominant paradigm of many inquiries into collective memory in the 20th and 21st centuries. Australia’s Bonegilla Migrant Camp, which operated as a migrant reception and processing centre for twenty-four years from 1947, has been analysed as a “memory site” under this paradigm in previous academic works.

But rather than set the oral (the vernacular and popular) against the official and institutionalised, (heritage, museums, and official events) I consider the provisional relationship between the individual and the collective, and the ways in which discursive practices are constantly in dialogue with each other. While memory studies do not deny that “dominant versions of the past are inextricably entangled with relations of power in society,” enquiries must, and have been, refocused around the processes of conflict and contestation, and the many actors involved in creating and maintaining public memories.¹ I adopt a similar focus in my study of Bonegilla’s public history and collective memories. In order to fully understand the changing representation of Bonegilla in these forms of public history, I interrogate how these forms interact, reflect, contest and co-ordinate the collective memories of respective groups and actors over time. This is not a simple task, nor one that assumes the “imposition” of memories on passively receptive collectives.

¹ Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory (London:
Sharing with our painful past: personal memories of young adult orphans

The paper focuses on biographical interviews with people orphaned during young adulthood, namely, young women who have lost one or both parents between the ages of 18 and 25. The loss of one's parents causes changes in the child's social status and often also results in a break in the child's identity. This is due to the fact that the child has lost not only her parents and the social roles they played in her life (providers of home, financial security, companionship, etc.), but she has also lost a sense of security, emotional support, and her so-called childhood repository, or, her biographical and identity resource.

Biographical interviews provide young adults with the opportunity to turn their experiences and memories into a narrative, to give form and meaning to what has happened to them. The study examines how young adults tell about their experiences, which aspects were told and which remained silent or, in other words, relationships between the private and public in the story.

When analysing the stories of older orphans, attention should also be paid to the acknowledgement of a subjective perspective and emotional contribution, because the researcher's emotions and actions during the biographical interview and subsequent analysis of the story can significantly influence not only the course of the story but also the interpretation of the results of the study. The paper thus explains what strengths and weaknesses may be observed in a researcher who has himself or herself lost a parent in young adulthood and who is therefore emotionally and personally involved with the study.
Mapping Berlin: Memories in the Present Moment

Photography is inextricably linked with memory. A photograph freezes a moment in time and holds it in an eternal present. Photography is also imbued with a sense of loss. The moment captured in a photograph is over as soon as the shutter closes and the enduring picture can be a painful reminder of this. In this paper I will present a visual project that uses oral history recordings to make photographic images that investigate how memory can influence our experience of the present.

My ninety-one-year-old grandmother was forced to leave Berlin as a Jewish teenager in 1933. Using recordings of her pre-Second World War memories of Berlin as a starting point for my own explorations of the contemporary city I have employed photography as a methodology for exploring the personal and collective loss that has occurred there. Walking around the city listening to recordings of our conversations about the time she spent in Berlin allowed me to immerse myself in its past while seeing its present through the lens of my camera.

This highly personal method of mapping Berlin combines two different perspectives of the city: my grandmother’s view from her life after fleeing to England and my own contemporary experiences of a city still in a state of flux.
“As if we have not worked at all…” Private and public in the former Estonian agricultural leaders’ biographical narratives

There is no need for fear if personal views and memories do not coincide with the so-called formal concepts about the past. With these words the Estonian Agricultural Museum encouraged to send in memories about the agricultural reform launched in 1992 to liquidate collective and state farms in order to re-establish family farming and create new agricultural enterprises. This quotation reflects the conflicting experiences and narratives about the life in collective and state farms and the de-collectivization of agriculture in Estonia. The agricultural crisis of the 1990s, followed by increasing social problems in the rural areas, functions as a memory filter that helps to remember the 1970s and 1980s as a period of prosperity when collective and state farms developed the infrastructure and took care of people’s social and cultural needs. This is why this reform is sometimes referred to as the destruction of agriculture. Of course, this expression does not occur in the so-called formal Estonian transition narrative.

The report is based on life history interviews with Soviet era agricultural leaders, as well as on biographies and history books they have issued. I analyze the processes of shaping public memories by exploring the impact that public attention and approval or disapproval has had on the ways they interpret the past. The dynamics between their personal recollections and the institutionalized memory politics affects nolens volens their attempts to balance the historical accounts about the Soviet era and to perpetuate their contribution to the development of Estonian economics and rural life.

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Lasting unfulfilled longing

The framework of this paper is the adaptation of Estonian refugees in their new homelands, based on their autobiographical accounts.

The time period’s beginning is the flight during World War II. Overtime, political exile turned into resettlement.

The adjustment of the refugees to their new situation, and the organization of their social lives took place in the force-field between private and public spaces. The public sphere had two levels: the social life of the new homeland and exile community. Rebellion against the national rituals of their parents was a way of declaring one’s preference for the second generation.

This paper will focus on the story of one individual, Elin Toona (born 1937). When she fled, Elin was 7 years old. Raised by her mother and grandmother, she belonged more to the first generation. During her growing-up years in post-World War II Britain, she not only had to hide her ethnic origin, but literally had to be kept hidden in the hospital where her mother worked as a nurse.

In Elin’s case, the private and the public conflicted in the several ways: ethnicity, class, and, as she grew up, generation. Three generations of women survived exile in similar ways, but the individual conflicts they experienced in different ways.

The central theme of Elin’s autobiographical fictions is the opposition between the exile’s private world and public space. Elin preserves her mother and grandmother’s lasting unfulfilled longing for a lost home. She does not hide her feelings in an enclosed privacy, but as writer brings her personal experiences into the public space.
Contesting the public memory of the Holocaust: The grandchildren of Nazi perpetrators and followers and their family narratives of National Socialism

This paper discusses the intersections between public and private articulations of the National Socialist past in unified Germany by analysing interviews conducted with young Germans, i.e. the grandchildren of the war and Nazi perpetrator generation. In particular, it looks at how the interviewees recount the memories of the National Socialist past transmitted to them through the family. Unlike their parents’ generation, these so-called ‘third generation’ Germans have grown up with a highly developed, i.e. institutionalised and ritualised, official and public as well as an increasingly transcultural or cosmopolitan Holocaust memory. Thus this paper examines how the grandchildren’s narrative family memories of National Socialism draw on and/or contest public (trans)cultural memories of the Third Reich and especially the Holocaust. Many theorists (Levy and Sznaider 2006; Hirsch 2008; Landsberg 2004) have remarked on how the structure of collective memories in high modernity has changed dramatically to argue that the boundaries between ‘private’ family memories and public memories have become very fluid and permeable. As Marianne Hirsch (2004: 114) writes: ‘family life, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in a collective imaginary shaped . . . by a shared archive of stories and images that inflect the transmission of individual and family remembrance.’ While the tropes drawn from a public Holocaust memory are used by the interviewees to narrate their fragmented and nebulous Nazi family histories as seamless and continuous stories of victimhood and heroism, the act of publicly recounting these ‘private’ family stories of wartime suffering has to be interpreted as a form of resistance or contestation against the institutionalised official and cultural memory of the Holocaust. Many ‘third generation’ Germans thus im- or explicitly use these family stories of their grandparents’ wartime suffering to challenge what they sense to be a predominance of representations of Jewish suffering in the German public sphere and set up relation of competitive victimhood.
The Burden of the Past. Contrasting Memories on Co-existence in the Post-war Yugoslavia in Istria, Slovenia

The paper investigates the complex games of memories, forgetting, distortion, selectivity and mythologization of the past and their relations to the “officially” established national memory founded after crucial political turnovers. The case-study of the research is the Northern part of Istria (nowadays Slovenia); which faced several waves of mass migrations during and after World War II, especially with the departure of the Italian speaking population, that occurred due to the annexation of the region to the new country (Yugoslavia) and the new (socialist) system. Subsequently, the region almost emptied and the emptied spaces were progressively inhabited by people from different parts of Yugoslavia, while new relations between the natives and newcomers were being established.

Similarly to the identity, collective memory is constructed in opposition to other memories, or by assimilating them. At this point, discordances of memories can occur, which implies the confrontation of different groups in the attempt to make the memory of one group prevail over the alternative memory of the other group and eventually to erase it. However, oblivion is not only an absence of memory, but it represents the censorship that enables a group to construct a satisfactory image of itself. “Suppressed memories”, amnesias of pressures, complicity, enmities, remain hidden because of their incompatibility with the national collective memory. On the one hand, the identity of a community is founded precisely on tragic memories, on the notion of “the victim”, on the other hand the same tragic events will be neglected, reinterpreted and censored by the winning collective (national) memory, which will refer to the concept of victim too. Between the two poles there are the memories of those who can generate alternative memories as observers, opposing in this way the hegemonic discourse of state power.
How to re-tell a grand narrative? Private and collective in the memories of women’s work in the 1940s

Oral history materials often contain many similar narratives told by various narrators. Different versions are, of course, told from subjective viewpoint and personal details differ from each other but the content and theme of the narratives can be very much alike. This is especially true when analyzing memories of an exceptional era like wartime connected to a strong memory culture. The collective discourses about the Winter War and Continuation War in Finland repeat certain themes, and personal narratives are often parallel with the dominant narrative.

The connection between personal and collective memories is not necessarily easy to analyze. In my presentation, I will look at the reconstruction of a grand narrative of women’s work and position during the war. In my view, a grand narrative can be recognized from supportive elements like e.g. an emphasis on shared values, often use of nostalgia, sometimes use of passive or first person we form (in Finnish), or choices of words that put aside the narrator and bring into light the collective experience. My aim is to search for those elements in my case material, and to introduce examples of how private and collective memories interact with another.

Currently, I am working with my doctoral dissertation about women’s memories of wage work in Finland during and after the 2nd World War. The presentation is based on my research material that has been collected through archive-driven inquiries and interviews. Most of the material was submitted in written form.
Public and private in Soviet Estonia: analysis of narrative events and narrative context

In the presentation I deal with interviews focusing on the beginning of the Soviet period in the University of Tartu (1940s–1950s). Interviews with university employees and alumni were recorded at the end of the Soviet period (in the 1980s). On the one hand, the studied texts are framed by the Soviet period, which shaped both the events, the choice of topics and the ways of approaching the past. On the other hand these recordings are part of the continuity of Estonian science. It is also an important aspect that the interviewer and the interviewees formed a relatively small community, in which everyone knew one another. The three mentioned aspects have significantly influenced what was narrated and why.

In the presentation I analyse, with the example of one interview, the interrelationships of the time of events (start of the Soviet period in Estonia) and the time of narrating the events (end of the Soviet period). I place the study into a research-methodological as well as a historical-political framework. While the research-methodological framework is primarily associated with the question whether memories give new information for studying history or for narrating, the historical-political framework is directly connected with the topic of the public and the private. To what extent and how the public sphere affected the private sphere, and in this situation, where the privacy of memories is placed with respect to the public sphere.
Constructing the Future Past: Treasuring the Everyday in Homing Blogs

In the act of remembering, we never only document experiences, but reconstruct them. In this presentation, we examine the process of remembering that takes place in what we call homing blogs. The homing blogs are public weblogs that focus on the everyday life of the bloggers, who often announce that the reason why they blog is to treasure the fleeting moments of their lives with rapidly growing children. The blogs are thus constructed as a force against forgetting, and reveal the processes and ideologies of memory-making for future generations. Furthermore, the bloggers form often tightly-knit communities who share aesthetic codes and ideologies, which affect the ways in which online private memories are created.

Our approach differs slightly from the concept of memory as "a way for people to give meaning to and transform their past", as we take memories as means to construct also a shared present - and future. In our presentation, we will read homing blogs as shared acts of remembering, as places for both documenting and constructing public presentations of private family life. Homing blogs thus offer an intriguing basis for the analysis of the media-based construction of memories and the role of intimate publics (Lauren Berlant), i.e. processes and mechanisms that increasingly expand the private sphere onto the public space.
Model narratives, subjective experiences, and inter-subjectivity in life narrative context

Narrating one’s life is a process of subjective meaning-making. This process, however, always involves other people and inter-subjective relations. Life narratives also connect to other narratives and narrative models, culturally specific grand narratives, discourses of norms and ideals. People can, for example, tell their life as a story of heroic survival or seek empathy as victims. Life stories themselves can also be seen as model narratives, as they often form a life course, a chronology of life stages. How to distinguish between subjective experiences and cultural models? Should these two even be separated at analytical level?

In my PhD research I examine the experiences of gender, class, and work in a life narrative of a female laborer born in 1927. Research material consists of series of open life narrative interviews. I am especially interested in the narrator’s experiences of social transformation related to gender roles, social mobility, and industrial working life. All these issues are crucial part of modernizing developments of Western societies in the 20th century as well as national narratives. In my study, I have asked how an elderly female laborer has experienced social change and how she narrates herself. This paper discuss the possibilities of analyzing the subjective and the collective levels of narratives and the potential analytical tools offered by oral history and folklore studies to scrutinize the subjective meaning-making as well as the impact and use of cultural model narratives in life narrative context.
Institutionalized oral history from above? Critical thoughts on parliament as a producer of oral history knowledge

Parliaments are, by definition, public places for political debates in democracies. These national institutions publish parliamentary documents that shed light on the official and public politics. Private views on politics can be mapped by interviewing single members of parliament, either during their parliamentary years or afterwards.

My paper asks, whether a national parliament institution is able to produce fruitful oral history knowledge of the former members of that institution. What kind of benefit or drawback causes the fact that interviews are conducted, transcribed and archived by the same institution that has served the ex-MPs during their political career? Does elite oral history in this case just preserve and strengthen the voice of the strongest in our society?

These questions are approached by analyzing an ongoing project that has collected oral history interviews from the veteran MPs of the Finnish parliament for almost 24 years. The Veteran MPs’ Oral History Archive, located in the Library of the Finnish Parliament, today consist of 345 interviews, almost six hours of length each in average.
Stories of the Wartime and Escape in the Memories of World War II Refugees from Latvia

During World War II, when Soviet troops approached Latvian territory for the second time, approximately 250 thousand people left the country. An important factor in this emigration was the decision made by the German occupying forces to evacuate the majority of the Estonian and Latvian populations whereby many people living in those countries had the opportunity to flee to Germany. Nonetheless this evacuation policy was not always the decisive factor and in many cases decision of leaving was up to the people themselves, which bring forward the important question of the reasons for leaving.

The life-story interviews of exile Latvians in the National Oral History Archive show that in most cases exiles state the fear of returning Soviet power as the main if not only reason for leaving as that most likely meant new waves of terror and repressions which Latvian population experienced in 1940-1941 already. However, interviews with those who did not become refugees show that people could choose not to leave even if they had resembling experience of 1940-1941 and/or felt that their lives could be in danger under Soviet rule. That leads me to the assumption that the memories of exile Latvians are to a greater or lesser extent shaped to fit their own concept of the necessity of leaving Latvia. In order to examine this assumption I will explore the common practices of depicting wartime and escape process in the life-story interviews of the exile Latvians and try to weight out to what extent they are shaped by the need to justify their exile.
Public and private memories of significant events in the 20th century. An example of biographical narrations of the Soviet Union citizens.

The memory creates us and we create the memory – as we can in a single sentence define the relations between the private and public memory; they are the material of one another and could not exist separately. The topic of this paper is to establish and demonstrate the mutual dependence between the private images of the past shaped by the personal experience of historical events and their existing canonical images present in the public sphere. As the illustrations of my conclusions I have chosen authorised narrations recorded with people who had experienced a number of events crucial for our civilisation sphere and currently overused by the media. The purpose of my speech is in fact to present the difficulties faced by a narrator who is conscious of the discrepancies between his memories of the Second World War, the Holocaust, the experience of forced labour in the Third Reich, the everyday life in the Soviet Union etc. with their usual public, and therefore more socially acceptable images. The main question I have been looking for the answer to is whether under the pressure of public memory we can at all assume the existence of the private memory of such events. Many of the analysed narrations are marked by fear of being different and the eagerness to fit into the existing stereotype, which results in copying the stereotypical images and leads to further distortion of the image of the past “as it really was”.
Remembrances From Below: Public and Private in Two ‘Vernacular’ Texts from Nineteenth-Century Finland

My paper deals with texts written by unschooled rural people in nineteenth-century Finland. The first case study focuses on Paavo Korhonen (1875–1840), the best known of the self-taught ‘Peasant Poets’ who created their texts at the interface of oral and written. For example, Korhonen wrote about the 300th anniversary of Lutheranism in Finland, celebrated at his local church in 1817, characterising his poem as muistomerkki (literally a ‘sign of remembrance’) created by his pen. Korhonen’s metacommentary brings forth the act of writing in preserving historical memories.

The second case concerns Efraim Lindgren (1834–1909), an eccentric country tailor from south-western Finland. Among other texts, Lindgren left behind a notebook entitled Muisto Kirja Tapauksista (‘Memory-book / Remembrance-book of events’). Modelled after a list of historical events, published as an appendix to the Finnish Hymnal 1701–1888, Lindgren’s chronicle starts from the New Testament and includes events such as shooting stars, wars and famines. The closer the chronicler comes to the moment of writing, the less he writes about “big” events. The attention is turned to his parish, village, relatives and his own life. Moving from public to private memories, Lindgren writes collective, local and individual history in his hybrid text.
Power/Knowledge Discourse about the Communist Past: the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland.

The Institute of National Remembrance (below as the “IPN”) is a national institution, which emerged during and played a considerable role in the transformation in Poland. It is, to a large degree, because of the IPN that the „settlement with the communist past” is taking place, which is a part of the “grand systematic change” (Sztompka 2002: 463) and “total social experience” (Szacki 1999: 123). Besides the political, sociological and economic changes, the significant dimensions of this process are the changes in the symbolic tissue of social life - a symbolic transformation.

The Institute’s presence in Polish social life, as well as its research and educational activities, construct collective notions about the past (public memory) with reference to historical truth. In my paper I ask: With what measures and what kind of notions are being created? What idea(s) and what goal(s) motivate the IPN? That is: What institutional apparatus and what kind of technologies create the power/knowledge discourse of the Institute of National Remembrance (Foucault 1977, 1980)?

I shortly present the IPN’s position in the structures of state authority, before moving to text analysis, by which the IPN expresses explicit and implicit the vision of itself and its role in the process of symbolic transformation in Polish state and the society. In the second part of the analysis I focus on issues presented in the popular journal “IPN Bulletin’s” vision of Poland’s past in the communist period, which I consider to be the most significant for the period of transformation discourse.

Reference:
Subaltern geopolitics and performative silence: socio-spatial memories of Finnish war children

The general problematic of the socio-cultural in-betweenness of displaced people is widely recognised, but more attention to the emotive-spatial memories and subaltern geopolitics is needed. The concept of subaltern geopolitics suggests that the position of some people is not completely other, resistant or alternative, but ambiguously marginal. I propose that displaced children and young people, particularly during the displacement but also after returning home, are practising subaltern geopolitics, i.e. trying to reconstruct the ties and sites of belonging. They are not outside the state or associated institutions, but their practices are characterised by the asymmetry of power relations and subordinated modes of representation (e.g. hooks 1990; Sharp 2000; Slater 2004).

I discuss how the challenge of “silence” can be overcome in studying the bodily and visual practices of remembering the displacement. By emotional silences I refer to often semi-conscious and unreflective bodily memories of displacement which are only rarely narrated, but continue to affect subject’s (re)production as political self (also Wood & Smith 2004; Parr 2005). Empirically I focus on the war-time drawings of one Finnish war child called Pekka Suokas (Kuusisto-Arponen 2011). Through the analysis I show how the different (a)temporal, spatial, visual and narrative performances of memory have crucial role in creating the ties and sites of belonging.

Key words: spatial belonging, memory, body, performativity, displacement, Finnish war children, childhood drawings
Where is power in veteran MPs interviews? Perspectives on/beyond the Memory and Experience

My paper presents a critical look to so called ‘elite oral history’ by examining oral history project that is carried out since 1988 by the Parliament library, Veteran Members of Parliament Oral History Archive in Finland. The concept of ‘the political elite’ does not necessarily fit in to our political cultures, because most of the ex-MPs regard themselves as “a regular MP” without having any significant power. In the same time, however, they are aware of the imagined gap between the people and the political decision makers, their privileged position in a society, which causes the lack of trust among the voters. Following Saward (2006, 312), my aim is to find out, what kinds of cultural codes the ex-MPs employ in their interviews when speaking about power. By paying attention to memories of political representation as cultural phenomenon, I will stress that the “interview narratives” (See Hyvärinen 2010) create flexible positions for the voters/folk.

The data stored in the Parliament library consists of total 343 interviews conducted by 16 interviewers. By now, I have acquainted myself with some 1/3 of it. My presentation focuses shortly on the main challenges, which the corpus arises when studying it from the perspective of cultural studies, communication and oral history –and not from the political studies. I will analyse the categories on power that can be examined from the research material. How the experienced power relates to the abstract views (and stereotypes) on politicians’ power? Finnish ex-MPs seem to regard political power mostly as network-based power, instead of individual power. Furthermore, the conflict between the views on public, institutionalized power and experienced, individual power will be analysed in relation to “narrated representation”. In order to analyse patterns of meanings concerning power as well as views on MPs’ positions, it is especially important to analyze the different aspects of representation, diverse experiences on its expectations and limits as well as the positions of the interviewer and interviewee in the dialogue during the interviews.


In Spain, the living memories of the Spanish Civil War and the beginnings of the Franco dictatorship are about to vanish as the witnesses are passing away. This imminent disappearance of communicative memory has caused an urge to collect and fix in different media personal memories that still circulate in the society.

During the last two decades, literature has played an important role in the process of social remembering in Spain. Although literature is not restricted by accuracy like historiography, novels about the Civil War and the dictatorship are frequently not written nor read as ”pure fiction”. The authors use their work as means to raise public knowledge of the injustices of the past and to restore the dignity of those persecuted by the dictatorship. Therefore, most novels on the topic are based on careful historical documentation and/or testimonies. In a semi-fictional form, these texts bring private experiences and memories to the public sphere in order to make them part of the collective cultural memory.

In this paper, I discuss three novels about Spain’s recent past published in the 2000’s and written by authors born in the 1960’s and early 1970’s. Although all the books give public visibility to private experiences, they employ very different narrative strategies, which affects the kind of memory they promote. My aim here is to explore how the use of certain narrative features is connected to the political, ethical and epistemological ramifications of the novels in question.
Public and private testimonies over the Soviet nuclear testing

The Soviet Union established the Novaya Zemlya nuclear test site in 1954, and the actual testing of the weapons begun in 1955. At the time, Novaya Zemlya was populated mainly by the Nenets, though they were moved with dispatch to the nearby areas and Nenets communities. Few Nenets families were resettled to the island of Kolguyev, situated to the west of Novaya Zemlya.

Nuclear waste testing and the dumping of nuclear waste took place in The Soviet Union before the eyes of the people living in the North, yet it was neither commented nor opposed publicly until the late 1980s and post-Soviet years. In the Soviet images, the testing was set in the wider frames of Soviet cold war success, and the public discourse on the subject was dominated by the authorities. During my own field work among the Nenets in the Kolguyev Island, I came across with the private memories of the Novaya Zemlya Nenets which are naturally in contradiction with the public images. Nevertheless, The Nenets told their histories in many different tones.

In the paper, I discuss an interview with an elderly woman whom I interviewed in 2000. The islanders told me that she had a tragic story to be told, but yet in the interview I could hear nothing tragic. I discuss the interview within the subtexts of official and private memories and consider, what happened in the encounter of a young western researcher and an elderly Nenets commoner in the post-Soviet Russian North. Did she lie or did she perform something else than a private testimony?
Privatising the streets

Serbian uprising in 96/97 was an attempt to overthrow dictatorship of president Milosevic after he annulled elections because of the victory of the opposition party. Ashamed by the unsuccessful outcome of their protest, the people of the capital Belgrade, have never produced an archive of photos, banners and graffiti which emerged during these demonstrations. Scarce information on the Internet and the inability of the media to reveal the data gathered during the protest has left the public without the full account of the upraising. My project is that archive – an online portal of images, leaflets, badges, flags, vouchers, cartoons, crochets, poems etc, a digital record of the elucidated protest available to the participants, scholars and the public.

The narratives of this event have been locked within the community and there are only odd visual references hidden in people’s houses. I generated them through interviews and image elicitation that looked at the uprising by analysing the accumulated historic relics. This overview of the geographical, political and social circumstances within which the protest’s artwork was produced demonstrates how it influenced the actions of the citizens. The purpose of the project is to develop the storage of cultural memory and collect images that people responded to sentimentally, which sustained this urban spectacle and enthused creative participation that became the force of the protest, exchanged between artists and other citizens.

I assembled and interpreted history and protest’s culture, evident on the street walk which symbolised reclaiming of the public arena, making communal memory visible.
When the American Dream Became a Nightmare: US Immigration Medical Detentions at Ellis Island

Ellis Island served as a major port of entry for approximately 12 million American immigrants between 1892 and 1954. For immigrants to be admitted to the country, they first had to pass a medical inspection that involved a physical examination and possibly mental testing. Failure of this inspection could lead to detention and eventually to deportation. This paper analyses the differences between the public collective memory of this medical inspection by comparing official photos and videos with the private recollections of the immigrants who were marked for detention. The data used for this study is from the archives of the Ellis Island Oral History Project. It will be argued that these official representations of inspection rarely depict the anguish of those who were detained and instead contribute to the image building of immigration as the first step in attaining the American Dream. Furthermore, it will be shown that the theoretical policies that motivated these inspections, including eugenics and xenophobia, contributed to the nightmare for detainees because after a long crossing and often traumatic passage, each immigrant had to subsequently demonstrate that they were healthier than the general population of the United States.
Memory narratives of death and survival during Genocide Commemorations in Rwanda

Since 1995 after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that claimed over one million people, commemorations are organized each month of April-June. These commemorations are conducted in public as well as private spaces. Furthermore, verities of other activities are organized throughout the three months that bring out memories of deaths and survival. During these commemorations stories of memories are told by survivors and other Rwandans who participated or were simply present as massacres unfolded. This paper will look at the changing narratives of memories by comparing the commemorations organized between 1995-2003 and 2003-2012. The paper will feature interviews that I have collected over the last five years.
Remembering the Civil War: Southern American Women Diarists and Their Editors

Many Southern women documented the American Civil War (1861–1865) in diaries. They perceived the conflict as a historical moment and attempted capturing events and the sentiments of their time for posterity. Although, these women mainly envisioned their family members as their eventual audience, there was a huge surge in the publication of diaries around the turn of the nineteenth century. This wave of public remembering was initiated and supported institutionally by white supremacist memory groups, such as the all female United Daughters of the Confederacy (founded 1894). The main objective of these institutions was to challenge the northern Whig-interpretation of the Civil War and establish a Lost Cause mythology in its place that strengthened the white-South’s claim to social supremacy. As a result, the diaries often were severely edited and annotated, before entering the public arena. This paper investigates how collective memory was revised in the editing process by third parties (men and women) as well as by the authors themselves. I shall look at individual diaries and their publication history and sketch how the original “experiences” were altered in order to adhere to the propagated grand narrative of the Lost Cause.
From Drivers’ Fight to Gypsy Hunt
Tracing Memories on Gypsies’ Forced Dislocation of 1970, Canakkale, Turkey

In 1970, townspeople in the town of Bayramic, Canakkale, Turkey attacked immigrant Gypsies, and later on local Gypsies, stoned their houses and pushed them to leave the town. After a while, some came back while some never returned again. For the reasons of the conflict and further attacks, immigrant-Gypsies recall their economic empowerment in the time of economic transformation in the town and with the general trend of urbanization i.e. increasing movement from villages to towns and enhanced connections with cities. However, non-Gypsies generally do not even mention economic discontent but instead emphasize Gypsies’ immorality and misbehavior especially in relation to non-Gypsy women.

My paper is based on the findings through my oral history project in the town, which is also my mother’s hometown. I will explore how people remembered and represented the forced dislocation of 1970 through two main stories and the dynamics revealing why they remembered and represented in their particular ways. Silence will also appear as a very important component in these representations. Thus, different ways of remembrance and representation will appear in parallel with socioeconomic positioning and personal engagements as well as in relation to two different categories of identity; Gypsyness and Turkishness. These memory constructions will overlap with power allocations, effects of terrorization in the town and general constitutions of the aforementioned categories in relation to citizenship and nationalism in Turkey while revealing interconnections between public and private memories.
Narrated Memories

Classifying a personal experience narrative as a “memory” is a keying that allows the narrator to take advantage of it being private and not public and at the same time informs the audience about how to interpret it. This keying also bestows that which is remembered with a distinct quality of being something that is selected and thus important, simply by not belonging to the sad category of forgotten experiences.

When private memories are communicated verbally, they are structured according to the formal demands of the genre “narrated memories” and they are adapted thematically to fit in with collective agreements concerning historical facts. Individual life histories can be regarded as negotiations of and contributions to the construction of a collective grand narrative.

In my paper, I will exemplify this dialogic process at different levels of collectivity by using excerpts from a corpus of 50 tape-recorded life history interviews made in 1995 with retired Visby citizens. I will discuss examples ranging from individual contradictions of collectively accepted historical “truths” (a German-born lady giving her version of WW II events) to interviewees changing their private narratives to bring them in accordance with the collective master narrative. While individual life histories have beginnings and ends, a society’s grand narratives are constantly changing and never-ending.

Methodologically, I will demonstrate how folkloristic analytical tools can be applied to describe the genre “narrated memories” as well as to understand to what extent private experiences can be communicated socially.
“THE MISERABLE AND THE BEAUTIFUL…”
FOREST AS HOME IN LATVIAN PARTisan WOMEN LIFE STORIES

Toward the end of WWII many Latvians escaped to hide in the forests. Some of them involved into armed resistance against Soviet occupation, others were hiding and waiting for changes to appear. The paper is devoted to the life stories of two Latvian women—national partisans, their narrated life experience and relationship with forest and home. They both have had particular, unique and hard experience—being in their twenties they both spent nine years living in the forest. Although the reasons for that were quite similar, their narrated experiences, attitude and emotions toward the forest period are different. In the paper I will analyze the image of the forest in their life stories emphasizing its diversity and fluidity in a wider context of social changes their families were forced to go through after WWII and interrelating the narrated images of forest and/as home to the various communication praxis and private/public space in their forest societies.
Between Public and Private: Teachers’ Religious Life during Sovietisation of Latvia (1944-1959)

The Soviet power tried to turn occupied Baltic countries into soviet republics as quickly as possible. Wanted changes could be made not only by repressions against local population but also by educating young generation as „builders of Communism”. Teachers were seen by totalitarian regimes as the key. This paper focuses on the first generation of Latvian teachers trained as Soviet teachers. Born in 1920-30s, they grew up in pre-war society and their transformation into a ‘Soviet Person’ involved not only adopting certain new qualities and adapting to new values, but also rejecting values which had long been familiar, for example, religion. The life stories collected at the Oral History Centre of Daugavpils University show models of individual religious behaviour of the teachers: rejection of religion and anti-religious activity; participation in anti-religious measures while secretly practising religion; refusing to take part in anti-religious measures and attendance of church; open protest against limitations on freedom of religion, etc. An analysis of oral history sources clarifies people’s motivation when making choices and consequences of carrying through those choices. Decades after the collapse of the communist regime in people’s memories you hear a bitterness about spiritual retreat committed many years ago. Many blame themselves for not preserving religious considerations acquired earlier in the pre-war Latvian society, but then replaced by communist considerations.
The Genre of Reminiscence Writings – Intersections of People, Professional Writers and Institutions

During the 20th century different archives and organizations in Finland started to collect personal writings about the memories and experiences of ordinary people, in addition to for example “collective folklore”. Finnish Literature Society’s Folklore Archives have arranged numerous writing competitions and theme collections of writings with topics that have often related to the past. These collections of writings have offered materials for research in different fields, but in Finland especially oral historians and folklorists have been analyzing them and using them as sources.

In my research, I call material of this kind as *reminiscence writings*. I raise the questions of 1) on what conditions reminiscence writings can be considered to be a genre and 2) what profit does the notion of genre offer for the investigation. In my paper the concept of genre is understood in the Bakhtinian way as a flexible frame of production and interpretation of a discourse that is inherently social. I use the collected reminiscence writings of Karelian child evacuees as an example. I compare these writings to the autobiographical works of Eeva Kilpi, who is a professional writer and a child evacuee, and discuss whether these texts can be considered as representatives of the same genre. I also analyze how the roles of the collector and the researcher influence the formation of these writings and on defying them as a genre.

Karelian evacuees are one of the groups whose members have composed writings about their memories about Karelia, the evacuation journey and losing one’s home. It has also been one of the groups whose experiences have interested archives and associations enough to collect them. The group of Karelian evacuees was born when Finland ceded areas in Karelia to the Soviet Union during and after the Second World War and the Finnish population living in that area was evacuated to the Finnish side of the border.
Tearaways or decent workers? Representations of dockers

In my paper I will explore the images and representations of Finnish harbour workers of 1950s. The image of dockers is on the one hand filled with erratic behaviour, alcohol and pilferage and on the other hand representations of responsible workers and positive team spirit. The polarization of the images can be seen to have its roots in the way working class people are represented in relation to private and public. I argue that for example father figures and other positive images of dockers have stayed in the shadows because the working life reminiscence concentrates on the memories which have been perceived public. Cutting off the personal and family life has affected the image of dockers. This exclusion has a lot to do with the shared stereotypical representations of masculinity and harbours as disreputable places.
As Maurice Halbwachs and his followers have noted, remembering is not purely a private act taking place in a “social vacuum” (Zerubavel: *Social Mindscapes*, 1999), but, instead, it is greatly affected by our social environment. As members of a “mnemonic community” (ibid.), we have a “sociobiographical memory” (ibid.) that allows us to experience even the distant past of our community as if it were part of our own, personal history. Furthermore, both private and public memories are also closely connected with place – an alliance that manifests itself particularly in connection with certain local myths and significant events from the past of the spatially defined mnemonic community (cf. Malpas: *Place and Experience*, 1999; Casey: *Remembering*, 1987; Halbwachs: *La mémoire collective*, 1950). In this paper, I shall examine the relationship between memory and place in Michael Moorcock’s (b. 1939) novel *Mother London* (1988), an episodic novel weaving together voices of London’s past and present in the minds of three mental hospital outpatients whose central symptom is their proneness to hear voices, or, read minds. Their role as “wireless receivers” (*ML*, 30) of other Londoners’ thoughts, memories, and dreams is a central element in the way Moorcock’s novel constructs a collective memory based on the city’s shared myths, of which in the novel’s world the London Blitz is the most recent and also the most powerful.
Questioning master narrative: conflicting memory in the shaping national identity

It is often said that post-socialist states were involved in huge biographic/memory work. Individuals and whole nations reassess their identities according to the new circumstances. Reconsidering the history never is a neutral “memorial act”. The result, in terms of Foucault, is in our case new truth regime concerning historical representation. What implication has it on society? Chaotic memory boom in Latvia rapidly was caught in certain memory regime as a base for national historic “grand narrative”. In the centre of this master narrative is placed a story of suffering and heroism of Latvian nation under alien forces. It served the political need to construct and maintain particular national identity, and to legitimize new set of power relations. Not every voice fits for that purpose. Memories, narratives, and ideology had formed discursive field authorizing subjects to remember or to forget, to take a voice or to be silent regarding specific representations about recent Soviet period. The master narrative in Latvia has a serious effect on ethnic relations actually dividing the society in two communities of memory – roughly Latvians and Russian-speakers. Therefore the given memory regime allows reinforcing cultural (linguistic) differences to construct these conflicting ethnic identities. Moreover, the memory and historical preferences, and their coherence with master narrative in fact are used in public speeches to question for one’s belonging to the nation regardless their actual citizenship. On what extent such discursive field creates possibility for counter-narratives, new sites of contesting, and other subject to emerge? The study shows various ways in which memories, biographies, and historic representations may interact to construct, defend and question identities.
On the Border: Trauma, Madness and Memory in a post-war Finnish family biography
A documentary by Lizzie Thynne

Lizzie Thynne will present a discussion of clips from her film On the Border (58 mins, UK, 2012).

The title On the Border is intended to invoke several interrelated things: the ways in which boundaries are both blurred and inscribed between subjects within a family between generations (mother/father and children) and between siblings; the disputed and shifting border between Finland and the USSR, the war over which meant my mother and her family were evacuated from their home in Terijoki in 1939; the borderline between conscious and unconscious, ‘sanity’ and ‘madness’, ‘real’ and ‘imagined’, ‘fact’ and ‘imagination’.

The film is a reflexive biography in which Thynne explores her Finnish mother, Lea and her family’s post-war history through the materials that remain from it – particularly objects, photographs and letters left in her flat. These materials are juxtaposed with memories from other relatives, including Lea’s brother and sister, and the director’s own journey to significant places in the family’s history. The research aim is, to interrogate conventional biography by both tracing the influences on life histories whilst also acknowledging the impossibility of creating a coherent narrative from these traces, which is not marked by the others’ desire, loss and projection, especially that of the director.

The film is informed by work on memory by Radstone, Huyssen, Ricouer and its method draws on the work of Marker, Minh-ha and practitioners of experimental biography including Julien, Morley and Akerman.
Doing Jewishness – a discussion on the relationship between private discourses and national or public representations

In a research project (funded by the Swedish Research Council), “Swedish-Jewish refugee receptions. Narratives and negations of “Jewish” identities and communities in Sweden 1933–2013”, I work with narratives about and from “Jews” in Sweden. The “Jew” has been a crucial category and even a stereotype in the formation of different Swedish national identities in different social contexts over time. In contrast to most other research projects with a focus on narrative material I want to analyse how a marginalized group like the Swedish Jews are negotiating their own identities and communities by othering and marginalizing or including other Jewish groups over time. I will do this by examining how the Swedish Jewish refugee activities have been narrated in different materials and contexts over the period 1933–2013.

In this paper I work with narratives from the archive “Jewish memories” at the National Museum of cultural history (Nordiska Museet). During the years 1994–1998 the museum collected autobiographical material (interviews and written life stories) from Jews in Sweden. Similar to how feminist researchers use the expression “doing gender”, I use the expression “doing Jewishness”. If doing gender refers to how the differences between men and women, masculinity and feminity are constructed and creates normative conceptions of what a true and correct masculinity/feminity is, I argue that you can investigate the doing of “Jewishness” in relation to Swedishness in the same way. In this paper I will focus on how “Jewishness” and “Swedishness” is negotiated in the interviews collected by the Nordiska Museet. How do the interviewees narrate “Jewish memories”? How do the interviewers ask about “Jewish memories”? What themes are considered relevant to ask and narrate about? Who is interviewed and by whom? How do the interaction/communication between the interviewee and the interviewer create different types of narratives about “Jewishness”? 
Clandestine Memory: The Strange Case of Irish Remembrance of the Great War

Remembrance of the Great War has garnered much scholarly attention within British, German and French history yet Ireland, a nation which sacrificed nearly a quarter (24%) of its volunteers, presents an understudied contrast. 210,000 Irishmen volunteered to serve in the British military during the conflict. 49,500 never returned home. Remarkably, in the post war period the Irish failed to create a usable official or popular memory of the war. Such a significant number of veterans and casualties should warrant continued study, yet for much of the twentieth century their involvement has met with terse silence in Ireland. Newly gained independence from the British following the Great War and the subsequent civil war intensified the already rampant divisions within Irish society and the First World War quickly became a distant memory which was rarely commemorated. The 1920s and 1930s provide a significant opportunity to understand how and why the “war to end all wars” was virtually erased from Irish history. By examining the discordant and often violent opposition to the war within popular memory and the ambivalence which characterized official memory, we can see that memory of the war was pushed to the private level and remained there for the majority of the twentieth century. This layering of Great War memory is important, not only for understanding Irish history but also for comprehending the complexities of war memory. This paper will explore the intricacies of the relationship between official, popular and private war memory to demonstrate that although they are in constant contestation and discussion, private memory can exist independently.
We will discuss the fact that the question of memory and the institution of a new order or mode of identification in (post)conflict societies has to be articulated in relation to a shared history. Discourses of ‘collective memory’ are representative of the specific values, beliefs and traditions which unite political and social agents through narratives of a shared past. In the current context of commemorations of our shared and conflicted past, be it the 1916 Rising or the 1981 Hunger Strikes, it is necessary to reflect upon the complex interplay between Postcommunist Transformation (social, political, economic and cultural) Memory and Historical Narratives Ethnic Conflicts & Territorial Disputes Nationalism and Populism Political Violence and Conspiracy Theories Media, Politics and Society Political Elites and Ideological Dominations Militarism and Post-Militarism Problems of Democratization Crisis of Equality and Solidarity Challenges of Modernization. Conference Web-Site: http://cssge.ge/conference-conflicts-society-politics-post-communist-south-caucasus/#more-336.

Opportunities Digest. Over 40,000 scientists worldwide have already subs Forget politics! theorising the political dynamics of commemoration and conflict. R Graff-Mcrae. Anger at teen gun display in Dungiven Retrieved from http://www.londonderrysentinel.co.uk/news/local/anger-at-teen-gun-display-in-dungiven-1. This article explores practices of memorialisation in post-conflict society, through the case study of the James McCurrie Robert Neill Memorial Garden, located in East Belfast, which has been vandalised on a number of occasions. It notes the similarities between these attacks and Jenny Edkins’ theorisation of resistance at the sites of state memory.