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Compared collective memories: the collapse of communism and its effects on the Eastern European collective memories. Focus: Romania and Hungary
Summary

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Content

Another research which comes to question the collective memory problem may seem a little bit redundant. Since the early '70s, when the works of Maurice Halbwachs were rediscovered, the first sociologist who has given a theoretical approach to this social process in the inter-war period, memory studies have exploded in many fields of human inquiry and Humanities: History, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, politics. As known, this development took place in two stages: the first coincided with the growing interest of Germans about the truths of the Second World War, which led to the appearance of a "model" of penance whose symbol became Germany, followed, in turn, by the symbolic gestures of the leaders of other Western countries parties to the Holocaust, gestures that continue to this day.

The second stage began after the collapse of communism, when the aura of the young democratic Central and Eastern European public sphere allowed to the victims of this regime to have a powerful voice. So powerful that it covered the scanty evidence which broke through communism, remained from the collaborationist regimes with the Nazi Germany and mingled with the anti-communist intellectual discourse, taking the form of official, public statements, mixed with political issues, rather than storing at "grassroots", where communism was experienced. Basically, only international pressure led to a re-balancing of narrative voices (perhaps functioning as little signs of (ex) clamation of that need to recover and of that useless past from the point of view of political instrumentalization), but they didn't counter Semitic trends and outlooks, combined with extremism, nationalism and xenophobia that dominated transition. And the manifestation of extremism and xenophobia raised another memory problem: ethnic relations in a highly heterogeneous area from a ethnical point of view, with young states, where the construction of identity at the expense of the Other is not yet considered complete.

Adding to all these things the fact that in Romania the study of collective memory has entered only recently,and that there is no tradition of research in the field, as the French, German or Americans have, and that as far as it developed, it was rather towards building a memory of the communist regime, the redundancy of the memory research is dissolved in a need to capture and conceptualize democratic discursive slippages that originate from the exploitation of the past.

In general, collective memory researchers agree that there are two ways to relate to it: as a

means of democratization of society and as a means to coagulate society into an organic unity of earth and blood. In the first case, memory lessons talk about tolerance, about leaving space for expression for all community members, about repentance for all the bad caused - is an inclusive memory, of "dialogue"type as Aleida Assmann called it, with benign effects. In the second case, however, it is an exclusive memory, resentful, intolerant, which defines identities and demonize the opposition, easily instrumentalized   and   impossible   to   negotiate. The main objective of the hereby research is to identify the discursive symptoms of the second type of memory, to conceptualize them and check them mainly in Romanian-Hungarian ethnic relations in post-communism.

In order to do this I considered it necessary to discuss about the relationship between memory and history in terms of language and discourse in the first chapter of the thesis, entitled "Memory and history- language and discourse in postcommunism." I made four points of intersection of the two ways of knowing the past, making a comparison of the views of researchers who have made contributions in the analyzed fields of knowledge.

The four points are: subjectivity, narrative, design, fiction. Passing through the positions of authors such as Jacques Le Goff, Pierre Nora, Paul Ricoeur, Michel de Certeau, Karl Popper, and Aleida Assmann Jan or Hans Gadamer, I found out that history and memory are facing the same dilemmas regarding the issue of accuracy about past knowledge . Historians had to admit that their own subjectivity troubles the objectivity "itself" of the historical writing (or as Professor Michael Shafir says, historians themselves have their own memory), while "memory carriers" (especially witnesses) are par excellence subjective. Similarly, the narrative aspect is common both to memory and history, as a way of the human thought to fix the spatial and temporal cues. The fictional aspect is another point of convergence-we know that history can be rewritten and mythicized in support of a political regime, while memory as a process of remembrance, mobile and constantly reorganizing, moves away from the reality of the living moment. The idea of "construction" and "reconstruction" separates the roads of knowledge for scientific and popular past, because we are talking about two different ways to achieve understanding: memory reshapes the past keeping in mind the interest of the present, while history keeps a certain epistemological rigor, which gives it some kind of authority upon memory. The conclusion is, however, that the two knowledges are interdependent.

But while the epistemology of history is very well defined, that of the collective memory is less discussed. Thus, understanding that this interest focuses mainly on ritual, symbol and narrative aspects

and that its expression is closely related to language, I proposed the method of discourse analysis for its research and I proposed the term "mnemonic politics" to conceptualize discursive relationship between Memory, history and their political instrumentalization in post-communism, which I applied to specific circumstances (the issue of the Hungarian carpet located in the building of the Council of Europe in early 2011 and issue of Basescu's statement about King Mihai and marshal Antonescu) and I compared the the discourse of the collective memory in Romania with the one from Hungary, given that the themes and structure are similar. To this end, we dissected and proposed an anatomy of mnemonic politics: historical facts, the allusive element (against them), verbalization a narrative scheme, emotional positioning, mnemonic distortion,a state of Truth (with the safety that only true memory can offer). The features of the mnemonic politics are: reducing history to a few symbols listed in a fugitive manner, lack of shades, coagulation of facts in a seemingly limited temporal space (even if they actually span to a much broader temporal area), symbolic refference entity represented by the transmitter (known politician or intellectual , " a pro of the memory"). Speaking of mnemonic politics, we can say that it acts as a "snapshot discourse" that appears in a lecture or a press release (or, less commonly, in a symbolic object, as we will see below) and then generates an intense debate. It is important to note that because addressing history *in actu* (in terms of Reinhart Koselleck) one must take into account the fact that language is the container that contains the conditions of possible events, which makes the language violence a potentiator of the violent act itself, no mater if unmaterialized.

At the level of compared collective memory, we can say that in the two countries coexist three fields of memory: the memory of the authoritarian regime of fascist character, collaborationist with Nazi Germany, with major involvement in the Holocaust - a field of memory not enough explored by the official memory, for which there is a clear preference for "silence", "taboo'"; the memory of communism, which officially is expressed through a anti-communism liable to become radical (which generally occur in Central and Eastern Europe), and, last but not least, the memory field of Romanian-Hungarian relations, in which the resentments and suspicions feelings manifested, make the political agenda until today.

In the second chapter of this thesis, „DOES THE MANNER IN WHICH THE REGIME CHANGED IN ROMANIA AND HUNGARY HAVE ANY IMPACT UPON THE discourse OF THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN POST-COMMUNISM?" I followed the path of institutional change in both countries to see if their constitutive module is source of new discursive mnemonic practices. Out of the many institutional changes that took place during 1989-1990, I have chosen the political party formation and the occurrence of social cleavages, some administrative reforms and some institutional

changes with special relevance regarding the Romanian-Hungarian relations following the change of regime in Romania, such as the transformation of Security in SRI. I also included here constitutional changes, given the fact thar the constitution is the fundamental law of the state. I also introduced the concept of cultural violence belonging to the sociologist Johan Galtung, which highlights the ways to make acceptable and legitimate structural and direct violence, taking into account the fact that it has been incorporated into the new institutions, tensioning interethnic relations and fueling mnemopolitic discourse. Passing through the negotiated change in Hungary versus the Romanian Revolution, I found out that one of the objects discursive practices became Hungarian minority in both countries.

The concept of discursive practices was initiated by Michel Foucault, and theorized in his book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and refers to practices that build up the object of which they speak. For the appearance of an object of discourse to take place, it is first necessary for people to say something about this object, then to determine what relationships exist with other objects: of proximity, distance, similarity, difference, transformation . These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, ways of characterization, which do not define the composition, but the conditions that make it appear.

Discursive relations are situated at the limits of the discourse, giving it objects to speak about and determine the group relations that discourse must establish in order to to talk about an object or another, to call, examine, classify, explain, and these relations characterize not the language used, but the discourse itself, as a practice. It should be noted that discourse, in Foucauldian vision, is a unit of knowledge in a particular moment, in time.

We see that the Hungarian minority is an object of discourse both in internal and foreign policy of Hungary, as well in Romania's policy , always built in opposition to most of the state in which it was caught. At the same time, it is an object of discourse of collective memory in post-communism, thus justifying folding the two types of discourse within the concept of mnemonic politics. The game of institutional changes described above, allowed to reproduce this type of discourse beyond political transformations as such. Moreover, the relationships established at the time of transformations allowed its exacerbation, the stake being political legitimacy. In Romania it served by then to keep the functional form of the repression that was occurring in the first instance, for then to be instrumentalized into a wellspring of electoral mobilization. In Hungary, however, it served to legitimize and as a

cohesion factor for the new party which won the elections in 1990, MDF, which used the nationalist rhetoric and symbolic politics to distract public attention from the criticism of the opposition.

An explanation of the discoursive options adopted by MDF comes from Ivan Szelényi et all. , focusing on the role of intellectuals in post-communist institutional transformations. Sociologists, using the bourdesian theory, show that the area was primarily occupied by the cultural capital (that is education, skills and their accreditation), thus being more important than the economic capital (property ownership) and social capital (ties and social networks) as importance for achieving the elite status.

Central European intellectuals managed to convince society of their role as moral and spiritual leaders, not perceived as simple "professionals" with a monopol on knowledge, but with a plus of ethical responsibility for the whole community, and their interest was to transform the old order in a civil society. Its ideology involves harsh criticism against the irrationality of communist paternalism, creating a society of "adult citizens" and the rule of reason, under the shape of the procedures to be followed. Thus, instead imagining a community of real individuals with their own interests and conflicts, they've imagined a "community of saints" dissident intellectuals who have "a certain spiritual power, by virtue of the example they give to the rest of society, on how to live an authentic moral life". Moral force would arise from the sacrifice they have made for the truth, creating a society of "civility" based on compassion, love of your fellows and respect, an ethos of individual autonomy and following of one's own intrest. It was a world of "magic" because it was "authentic" because the inner self would corresponded to the exterior self. But this perspective was also a trap for the vision of authenticity was similar to that of Stalin, who set as a goal to abolish the private sphere precisely for this purpose.

Yet a split emerged within the opposition between liberal and patriotic religious right, which broke its cohesion after the regime change. One of the reasons for which the patriotic right was anti-communist (and still is) was that, in their view, the Communist leaders neglected the cause of the "outside" Hungarians , that were part of that civil society envisioned by them. Coming to implement their vision that aimed to build a new world, this involved some violent rituals of sacrifice (budget cuts, for the "future"), of purification (people being "polluted" by communism, they had to be purified to become the "new capitalist man", and this ritual involved layoffs, not only for economic recovery but also for purifying society), confession (because individuals had to realize the enormity of their crime of not having resisted the regime and after the German model, the traces of communism could disappear only by means of confession).

Another problem of the post-communist Hungarian politics, identified by András Kovács, is the " Hebrew issue" reappeared as part of post-communist intellectual discourse, using the intact language of the inter-war period preserved during the decades of communist rule due to lack of constant debate on Hungary's involvement in the Holocaust. This language has kept anti-Semitic stereotypes that have emerged in the post-transitionperiod at political level, not only because of the important role of Western modernization that Jews had in Hungary, as Viktor Karady pointed out, mantioned by Kovács, but also because of lack of social vision radically different that Hungarian politicians should had offered to society, using instead political and historical symbols in order to differentiate from one another, compensating for the lack of legitimacy through symbolic construction. The discourse imposed on society that was supposed to transform itself according to the principles imagined by the religious right, has boosted the cultural violence encapsulated in the mnemonic politics practiced by MDF, expanded through the " Antall doctrine " also upon the Hungarian communities outside the borders.

Regarding the Romanian intellectual elite, they also turned to an anticommunist discourse, conceiving a society project similar to the Hungarian one, considering necessary the process of undoing communism through those steps of "purifying", "sacrifice" and "confession" (in order to use the terms already discussed), except that there was a delay in their application due to the first government of the successor Party of the Communist one, Tismăneanu Report being an example of confession, transcending the boundary between memory and history, as Florin Poenaru noticed.

Another difference would be that the "anti-communism" does not have roots in a coherent opposition outlined during the regime, but appeared later with a compensatory role and is even more critical as the new leaders were accused of neo-communism. Security was one of the favorite themes of criticism, its persistence in the Romanian society in various forms is considered one of the reasons, if not the main reason for which the transition was slow. Being the main source of extremist discourse, intellectuals considered necessary to redefine the idea of nationalism in civic shape which could oppose "that" aggressive nationalism promoted by the Party România Mare.

The third chapter, called "The dynamics of interethnic relations under the influence of discourse of collective memory in post-communism" treat the impact that the unsolved memory issues give to the relations between Romanians and Hungarians, demonstrating that there is a discoursive blockage with significant effects on the democratization of the country, that did not disappeared with the integration of both countries in the European Union, as hoped. I proposed a scheme adapted to

interethnic relations as oposed to that of Roger Brubacker, considering five components to the three from the first version: nationalized state-ethnic-minority- "related" state- ethnic-majority of the nationalized state, suprastate institutions. I watched their interaction and the discourse produced around them in a few 'classic' moments, on three levels: local, national and interstatal – the issues of Funar's administration in Cluj, the issue of inscriptions on the statuar complex Matthias Corvinus in Cluj (local level), the issue of territorial autonomy and the question of Hungarian identity (national level); the conservative Hungarian governments and the impact on Romanian discourse regarding the Hungarian minority, Romanian-Hungarian basic treaty (at the level of the relations between states).

I conducted the study on media coverage of these issues in postcommunist press while analyzing the discourse alternative and the solutions offered by the Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals. The examination of the magazines Regio (Budapest) and Provincia (Cluj) showed that the Hungarian perspective on the issue has not entered the Romanian political space, while the ideas of the group formed in Cluj had no impact on the political discourse because of the manner of building a unique identity and since the beginning well defined of this, instead of initiating a dialogue. For this reason, the mnemonic politics discourse remains a hegemonic discourse in post-communism, being produced and reproduced in the early '90s to the present time partially and regardless of governance in Romania, but limited only to conservative governments in Hungary. We analyzed the press release of The 89 archive which is currently reachable at the Library "Octavian Goga" Cluj, also my own collection of press materials gathered during the three years of research, to highlight how mnemonic politics manifests and functions.

I proceeded to expose specific situations involving Romanian and Hungarian political figures in the 90's and in the last three years and I found out that the violent rhetoric nucleus formed 12 years ago has been preserved until today. Discursive events of "forced inclusion" can still be seen today (in the words of Will Kymlicka), within which I understand the refusalof other's right to have an identity different from that of the majority, even within the public sphere. We speak thus of oppressive memory, exclusive one, which feeds nationalism and which mixed with political discourse, held public agenda in post-communism also. The "danger" of border revision, the fear of "autonomy" , the regionalization fear, the fear that Hungarian community has of being assimilated, the Hungarian state university issue, all the major "issues" of relations between the Romanian and Hungarians begin to leaven in the early '90s, powered being, on the one hand, by the interest of secret services in order to legitimate themselves, if we consider the claims of group members Province and the rush for political capital on the other hand.

Comparing the theories of Jurgen Habermas on discourse in the public sphere with those of Michel Foucault, comes out that mnemonic politics postcommunist discourse fits better inthe theory developed by the latter. Habermas recognizes that the public sphere implies inequality and exclusion, but believes that formal equality and universal inclusion framework could be a relaxed enough frame in order to be able to turn gradually. On the other hand, the philosopher points out that critical and rational debate has been replaced by consumption and the consumer's individuality manifests through choices based on taste and not on reason. At the same time, Habermas warns that the public sphere is in decay, as debate criticism is replaced by consumerism. We must add that, since 1989, the public is exposed to and consumes memory debates.

The sensitive aspect of these debates and their ability to mobilize voters through collective memory myths allow politicians to manipulate the public. Foucault's considerations on the meaning of discourse are more pessimistic. For Foucault, discourse is the result of discursive practices that are often present in politics and it does not express just the fights for power, but power itself that needs to be monopolized.

discourse becomes obvious by means of exclusion, among which there is the taboo, which establishes the topics for debate banned in the community, the way to distinguish between a valid and an invalid way of thinking, and third, the opposition between truth and falsehood. This opposition is present in human history, as well as the will for the truth. The desire for truth is the one that represents a constraint to society and creates mechanisms of exclusion. These mechanisms arise because discourse must be coherent; otherwise, the assertion inconsistent with the template are excluded. Foucault insisted on the violent nature of the discourse, violence which manifests on things as practice we ourselves impose upon. We believe, therefore, that Foucauldian approach best describes the nature of the discourse of memory, which can become violent and exclusive.

Unlike the other two fields of collective memory, the one regarding the acceptance of the collaborationist past and of the memory of communism, the field of interethnic relations has not been explored, analyzed and reconsidered in terms of memory policy measures that would be able to reduce the violence of discourse.

Regarding the memory field of interethnic relations, we must be aware that we are currently in a phase of temporal border between communicative memory and cultural memory. According to Aleida Assmann, quoted by Welzer, communicative memory is that space of interaction between the individual and group memory, the "short term memory" of the community with which one operates

each day. It spans three or four generations and contains the basic elements of narrative template that defines the common past of a group.

The cultural memory, on the other hand, is fixed in structures that do not change with the present, but is embedded in texts, rituals, memorials and monuments. This difference, observed Assmann, can operationalize only in theory, because inside the community the two become one. Thus, three or four generations have passed since Romania became responsible for a large Hungarian community without actually assume this responsibility and since when Hungary is trying to claim either to protect it or to politically exploit. It is time, therefore, to ask ourselves: what kind of cultural memory do we want to have? Violent and resentful, exclusive, petrified in fear of an apocalyptic future territorial loss (Romanian perspective) or the messianic dream of territorial reunification, although socio-political reality makes it impossible (Hungarian perspective)? Or a shared memory, in which the "narcissism of small differences" have been exceeded, characterized by dialogue and meaningful

A formal policy of memory is needed which can address specifically and to deconstruct discursive power moments, of a "hybrid" memory in the sense perceived by Homi Bhabha u, and this may start from the history taught in schools. Of course, there have been significant progress in the rights claimed by the Hungarian minority in the Romanian state, progress due to the consistent policy of the Hungarian elite, political cooperation at government level since 1996 and due to the discursive flexibility of UDMR, which succeeded almost always to remain in the state government or by direct participation or through parliamentary support, so until now, from the list of priorities established in the early '90s (mother tongue education supported by state, usage of the mother tongue in local government, press and judiciary system, the return of confiscated goods to religious cultures, cultural and territorial autonomy), as the authors Monica Andriescu and Sergiu Gherghina state, the only area where demands were not met is that of autonomy.

Due to the practical effects that the mixing memory and populist politics described so far have (reduced acccess to European funding because of the lack of political action directed at restructuring the country's administrative or even the violation of law, as in the case of Matthias statuary group) Iconsidered it necessary to define this new postcommunism specific discourse by another concept, mnemonic politics. Its importance is related to the fact that it clearly distinguishes between what abuse of memory in politics means and what history is (political statements being part of the first category).

Of course, there is much of a need to deepen it, by checking it in all countries belonging to the former communist bloc, to see all its features. At the same time, we know that the shapes of collective

memory are generally valid (mechanisms of transmission from one generation to another through the process of socialization mechanisms, propagation through media, the essential role that language plays), while the content is particularly from one community to another. This universality of collective memory mechanisms can create the premises to investigate the specificities of mnemonic politics discourse in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.