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Institute of Sociological Studies

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**Memory in the borderland. A study of collective
memory in the former East Prussia region of Poland
and the Sudetes in the Czech Republic**

Dissertation Thesis

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Abstract

Collective memory has recently become one of the most explored topics in the social sciences and has led to the emergence of a separate and independent subdiscipline called memory studies. The thesis investigates the awakening of collective memory in two borderlands of Central Europe: the former Sudetes region in the Czech Republic and the southern part of former East Prussia in Poland. The thesis provides an overview of the current theories about collective memory with a focus on the interactional and visual character of the studied phenomenon. In line with this, the thesis presents, discusses, and elaborates on research conducted in the two borderlands in 2016 and 2017. The aim of the research was to study the role and form of collective memory (shared remembrance) in ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands.

The contributions of the thesis are both methodological and theoretical. Firstly, the discussed research revealed that between particularly family-based communicative memory and official, institution-generated cultural memory, there is ritualised communicative memory, maintained through interactions among members of the borderland community (community of memory). Secondly, the thesis contributes to various studies within the interactionist paradigm and proves the usability of Goffman's *face-work* theory as an analytical tool. Thirdly, the conducted research demonstrates the validity of the photo-elicitation method. The thesis concentrates lastly on two different borderlands of Central Europe which became state peripheries after 1989 and have become a voice in the debate over the social, economic, and cultural condition of the borderland territories in Central Europe.

Keywords

collective memory, communicative memory, cultural memory, ritualised communicative memory, borderland, photo-elicitation method, visual sociology, face-work, interaction ritual, symbolic interactionism

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

Prague

Ludmila Maria Władyniak

July, 19, 2019

In memory of my father, who taught me that most boundaries are social and cultural constructs which may be challenged.

Dedicated to the East Prussian families of Skrotzki and Fahl from the village of Soweiden (Zawidy).

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INTRODUCTION

This kind of nostalgia pisses me off. Everyone collects old postcards of Teplice and says that it used to be better, it was all beautiful, and a little Paris . . .

Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Teplice

‘Monuments, museums and memorials are . . . attempts to make statements and affirmations [to create] a materiality with a political, collective, public meaning [and] physical reminder of a conflictive political past.’ (Jelin and Kaufman in Alexander 2004: 8) What happens when there are (not yet) monuments or museums or appropriate memorials, but still, there is a need to find a way in which to cope with the conflictual past?

In a community, collective memory contributes to establishing and maintaining the identity of its members. In regard to social institutions, we can distinguish between institutionalised *cultural* memory, a domain of institutional action which leads usually to confirmation of the status quo (museums, manuals, historical books, etc.), and interactional *communicative* memory, performed on the level of individuals and their interactions in which they actualise documents of memory (souvenirs, images, objects, etc.) (cf. Assmann 2008). This dissertation will focus on the communicative form of collective memory and aims to contribute to the betterment of knowledge concerning it. On a general level, I will argue that in borderland communities with hybrid national, ethnic, regional, and local identities, everyday-life acts of communicative memory may produce a threat to the status quo identity of its members. Day-to-day interactions are always contingent, driven by a particular situation as well as the knowledge and interests of involved individuals that, in a community whose members have a heterogeneous past, present potential risk of identity conflict. In order to manage this risk of past-related interpersonal identity conflicts, communicative memory is ritualised into certain locally functional notions (metaphors, idioms, taboos, etc.) shared and used by the members of the community, but not (yet or ever) institutionally fixed in the form of cultural memory. Ritualised communicative

memory (rCM) thus functions as protection against the actualisation of a conflictual past which threatens the identities (in the form of face-threatening acts) of members of the community of memory.

Central Europe is a region which has been subject to various political, social, and economic changes for the last hundred years. Starting with the end of the great empires following the First World War, the birth of the modern nation-states, such as the Second Polish Republic or the First Czechoslovak Republic, took place only to be followed by the nightmares of war and Nazi and Soviet occupation, including the experience of massive migrations and resettlement in the post-war period. The area then saw its borders shift and the establishment of officially homogeneous communist states, where the region's past was made silent in the various new borderland territories. And finally, it underwent the fall of the communist system, an opening of borders, and ascension to the European Union. The presented thesis is devoted to the study of *regional memory awakening* which has occurred mostly over the last ten years in two Central European borderland regions: the former East Prussia region in Poland and the former Sudetes in the Czech Republic. The described process is distinct for the Central European region and manifests itself in various group activities and on the level of social interactions.

Randall Collins states, 'The small scale, the here-and-now of face-to-face interaction, is the scene of action and the site of social actors. If we are going to find the agency of social life, it will be here. Here reside the energy of movement and change, the glue of solidarity, and the conservatism of stasis. Here is where intentionality and consciousness find their places; here, too, is the site of the emotional and unconscious aspects of human interaction. (Collins 2004: 3).' Following Collins, I argue, that the microsociological perspective and face-to-face interactions are the appropriate perspective with which to investigate collective memory as newly formed by the borderland inhabitants, as well as its role and ritualisation in the life of the local community.

The structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis 'Main Contributions in Memory Studies' is an overview of the fundamental theories on collective memory within the field of transdisciplinary

memory studies. The chapter presents and discusses the concepts of Maurice Halbwachs (social frames of memory), Pierre Nora (lieux de mémoire), Jan Assmann (cultural and communicative memory), and Jeffrey C. Alexander (cultural trauma).

The second chapter 'Theoretical Framework of the Study' discusses the theories which directly underpin the discussed research, that is, theories highlighting the interactional and dynamic character of shared remembering. The starting point for the discussion is Wulf Kansteiner's theory on dynamics of collective memory (2002). The assumption in the presented research is that memory in borderland regions, being the subject of the research, is a communicative one, but what is more, it is also interactional. This means it is created, shared, and negotiated through interactions among members of the borderland community. Another crucial aspect of the studied phenomenon is that it would not be possible without the rapid development of digital media and the democratic character of the Internet (Hajek, Lohmeier, Pentzold 2016), especially social media, since it allows people to share and exchange representations of the past as well as co-experience the past in a collective way. The visual aspects of the communicative collective memory found in the borderland regions of Central Europe is also discussed in the theoretical chapter of the thesis. A special part of the chapter is devoted to Erving Goffman's theory of *face-work* in memory interaction, used as an analytical tool for the gathered data, as well as Randall Collins' theory on interaction rituals and politeness theories.

The third chapter 'Memoryscape of Central European Borderlands' presents the two borderland regions chosen for the research. The first is the former Sudetes region in the Czech Republic, an area in the north-west of the country which is an ethnic, cultural, and historical Czech-German borderland. The second, is the Polish Warmia-Mazury region, a historical, ethnic, and cultural Polish-German borderland which used to be a region of southern East Prussia before the Second World War. Today, there is no physical border between Poland and Germany there. The regions chosen for the research are alike in their experience of massive expulsion and resettlement after 1945, and the experience of sudden socio-economic failure after 1989 having been labelled a state periphery. It should also be clarified that for many different reasons the regions are different, as is their long borderland history dating back to the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, the latest post-war events saw them undergo a similar process which resulted in the most recent phenomenon and the

subject of the discussed research: the appearance of a bottom-up, created collective memory which goes beyond family frames and becomes the shared experience of the borderland community members, becoming a community of memory (Spalová 2017, Bauer 2012, Traba 2006). The emergence of different online pages, mainly on social media, devoted to the past of the region, has allowed the population to gather around and make room for, to paraphrase Anderson (1983), *imagined communities of memory*.

The methodological assumptions and requirements are discussed in detail in the chapter four, 'Research Methodology'. Since the phenomenon of regional memory awakening is internet-based and photography-oriented, the research method was also chosen on these bases. The photo-elicitation interview (PEI) is a form of semi-structured interview which assumes the use of photographic material during the research interview. The method has become more and more common among not only visual sociologists but also within qualitative research methods. Photo-elicitation allowed for situations to be imitated as interviewees from both borderland regions were confronted with different visual texts of memory—the same texts they face or interact with rather often on the Internet—which enables the study of collective memory at its communicative and interactional display.

The analytical part of the thesis consists of two chapters. The first chapter, 'Main Contributions in Memory Studies', presents an analysis of data gathered through the photo-elicitation interviews in the two borderland regions in 2016 and 2017. The interactional approach to the analysis is manifested through the employ of Erving Goffman's (1967) theory on face-work as an analytical tool. The study of the interviewees' interactions leads to a study of the role communicative collective memory and its different elements play in the life of a borderland community and reveals its ritualisation—a crucial finding of the discussed research.

The second part of the analysis described in the chapter 'Visuality and Mediality of (Ritualised) Collective Memory' pursues the notion of pre-mediality of collective memory and its deep visual embodiment. Based on the interviews conducted and the visual material used during PEIs, as well as the interviewees' own images and suggestions, the chapter is devoted to a discussion of to what extent collective memory is a visual phenomenon and would not be possible without visual mediation.

The last chapter ‘Conclusions and Recommendations’ gives a summary of the research results and places them in the wider context of studies over memory as a social and cultural phenomenon. The chapter contains a discussion over the limitations of the study, possible future directions, and the researcher’s autobiographical reflections.

Contributions

The contributions of the presented thesis are both theoretical and methodological.

Firstly, the discussed research reveals the ritualisation process of communicative memory, which might be placed among other research proving the insufficiency of the communicative-collective approach (Spalová 2017; Pickering and Knightley 2016) to cover the complex work of different kinds of collective memory. The ritualised communicative memory observed in the two borderland regions is the *functional element* between family-based communicative memory and official, institutionally generated cultural memory—the latter, in this case, is still fragmentary. The ritualised communicative collective memory is a bottom-up created, shared memory maintained through interactions among members of the borderland community (community of memory).

Secondly, the thesis contributes to the various studies within the interactionist paradigm and proves the usability of Goffman’s theory (1967) as an analytical tool which helps to study interactional strategies and to reveal different patterns of social behaviour that might be otherwise hard to observe. The research completes theories, for example, Pierre Nora’s theory on *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), where collective memory is regarded as situated in places, and proves that it is also performed within social interactions. The performance of collective memory through social interactions leads to the ritualisation of its elements. The deployment of Goffman’s face-work strategies in the post-field data analysis enabled tracking of the communicative memory ritualisation in these ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands.

Thirdly, the conducted research demonstrates the validity of the PEI method. In times of hyper-visibility (Rose 2014: 4), PEI might be a proper research device which resembles the social world and its complexity, especially regarding the intertwining of online and offline interactions.

Lastly, the thesis, concentrated on two different borderlands of Central Europe which became state peripheries after 1989, contributes to the debate over the social, economic, and cultural condition of the borderland territories in Central Europe (Traba 2006; Bauer 2012). The discussed research gives voice to those who perform regional belonging through the collective exercise of ritualised communicative memory in the struggle to own their (borderland) territory. Interaction rituals enable people to act as they eliminate from them a fear of acting. In places where identity may be a problematic issue (borderlands with many identities, hybrid identities, taboo identities, etc.), memory is given a special 'instrumental' role: It substitutes identity with the performance of belonging.

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS IN MEMORY STUDIES

In order to provide readers with a complex review of the main contributions to memory studies which frame the research discussed in thesis, I will, in the first theoretical chapter, present a review of the main streams of memory studies. I will start with the very first sociological interest in the social and collective aspects of the collective remembrance phenomenon (Maurice Halbwachs) and will then discuss the theories of Pierre Nora (*lieux de mémoire*), Jan Assmann (temporal and institutional dimensions of collective memory), and Jeffrey C. Alexander (cultural trauma).

Why memory studies?

The so-called memory boom, according to David Blight, consists in the collective scientific interest of historians, anthropologists, and public opinion in making a common past (2009: 242). The rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century resulted in a change of traditional folk stories, historical memories, and cultural norms into national—both emotional and moral—narratives. (Boyer 2009a: 9). Newly created states reinforced their power and existential legitimacy through the creation of a completely new, at that time, forms of mnemonics, such as museums, archives, and modern historiography (Olick 1999: 343).

In the last thirty years, we have witnessed a phenomena of memory emancipation from the national, official historical discourses in most countries around the world. This is a consequence of the democratisation of history, meaning academic historians have lost their monopoly on explaining and describing history. This ‘memory release’ has become an emancipatory tool for various social groups and minorities and sometimes even for whole nations (Żakowski 2002: 59–68).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, most societies were trying to understand their own past traumatic events (Blight 2009: 249). From this point on, historiography was no longer able to maintain its authority over knowledge about the past in Western societies. Many contemporary democracies have in their history crimes or traumas. Moreover, there is no version of history which cannot be questioned. Any version of the past excludes some social groups, especially when revealing facts which cast doubt upon hegemonic historical narration. Thus, we can observe a pluralisation of the modern

democracies, and memory of a painful past seems to be the least effective way of integrating highly differentiated societies.

The reasons for this expanding interest, both by the public and academia, in sharing, recalling, and creating memory on different levels (local, ethnic, national, state) are varying. For instance, Kammen (1995 in Olick 1999: 107), among others, indicates multiculturalism, the fall of communism, and the politics of victimisation and regret. Schwartz (1996 in Olick 1999: 108) finds the explanation in changes within the intellectual culture of the 1960s and 1970s: dominant historical narratives identified as a form of cultural hegemony and oppression; the postmodern questioning of basic concepts such as linearity of development or stable identity; and a politics of memory understood as a class-struggle tool (relations between memory and power). All of this has led to the establishment of social memory a solid subject of academic interest.

Social frames of memory (Maurice Halbwachs)

The first sociologist to ever raise the problem of collective remembering was Maurice Halbwachs, the French sociologist and student of Emile Durkheim, who, influenced by the Durkheimian definition of the *sui generis* social reality, decided to capture the problem of social remembering. Memory per se is an individual ability to memorise things which took place in the past. Nonetheless, the art of memorising is deeply rooted in the social environment as it needs suitable social/cultural frames and background (Kansteiner 2002: 185). The book *Social Frames of Memory* is regarded as the beginning of the sociological interest in collective memory processes. Halbwachs first pointed out the fact that remembering has a social aspect—a superindividual phenomenon shaped by social conditions and groups—and there might be studies as such. Halbwachs developed his theory on the Durkheimian notion of collective representations—representations, independent of individual minds, are socially constructed, thus existing only within the society which creates them (Król 1969 in Halbwachs 1969: 9-10). Halbwachs follows this assumption and defines social reality as a reality shared by the collective consciousness (1969: 21). Halbwachs, as well, divides memory into two kinds: historical memory and collective memory. Historical memory is close to traditional historiography, whereas collective memory is the tradition of a particular social group (1969: 29). Apart from this

division, the French scholar also elaborated on the frames of collective memory. He perceives frames and what is inside them as a constant interplay of those two social constructs, where frames become part of the picture inside (Halbwachs 1969: 156). The function of a frame is to distinguish tradition and common values, which becomes, according to Halbwachs, the foundation for the existence of various social groups or societies (Halbwachs 1969). What is more, Halbwachs claims that the human mind is prone to repeat past memories under pressure from society, and the way those memories are reproduced forces the individual to regret the past (Halbwachs 1969: 168). Social memory then is also a process of constant reconstruction of past events within socially constructed frames provided to an individual by the group of which they are members. The influence of a group into the shape and content of memory cannot be underestimated undermined (Szacki 2006: 400).

Studies over memory as a social and cultural phenomenon also developed thanks to the sociology of knowledge tradition and Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism, where they claim, 'The symbolic universe also orders history. It locates all collective events in a cohesive unity that includes past, present and future. With regard to the past, it establishes a "memory" that is shared by all the individuals socialized within the collectivity' (1966: 120). Consequently, collective memory is a superindividual social and cultural phenomenon, strictly linked to the process of an individual's socialisation into a full-fledged member of a given community. The link between socialisation and the intergenerational transformation of memories has become a founding assumption for different studies concerning memory and is also one of the pre-research assumptions of this study.

Lieux de mémoire (Pierre Nora)

When presenting the basic concepts of memory study as a social and collective phenomenon, it seems necessary to briefly discuss the concept of Pierre Nora, a French sociologist, which was inaugurated in late 1970s' France (1977) during a seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences). According to Nora, the *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) are something between history and memory. It is a feature of modern societies, where the site of memory

(lieu de mémoire) is created in place of ‘real environments of memory’ (*milieux de mémoire*) based on rituals (Nora 1989:7). Traditional societies based their memory on the ritual—the source for all knowledge about the past of a given community. Today, contemporary societies create their own history using places of memory such as monuments, museums, archives. Ritualised memory is manifested mostly through custom, whereas ‘located’ memory is manifested in writing. (Nora 1989: 7 in Kurz 2007: 151). Nora's concept is not only a kind of mnemonics but also, or rather above all, a concept containing ideological inclinations, far from being cognitively neutral and renouncing value judgments. Most memorial sites are constructs created for the needs of nation-state institutions (den Boer 2008: 21). Nora studies French society and French sites of memory, making the process of contemporary nation-making the centre of his interest. The concept, although essential for studies on the social and collective character of remembering, has been criticised (Traba 2006) for reinforcing already existing constructs instead of deconstructing the phenomenon.

Nora’s approach assumes that ‘there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally’ (Nora 1989: 12). This assumption, applicable on the nation-state level (institutionalised memory), might be difficult when applied on the local level of more spontaneously bottom-up created collective memory, which is a subject of this thesis.

Nonetheless, it must be stated here that Nora’s remarks on the materiality of memory, that is, the idea that contemporary memory relies completely on the ‘immediacy of recording, the visibility of image’ (Nora 1989: 13), is one of the main suppositions of the presented thesis and is also one of the more interesting inputs of Nora’s work.

[Temporal and institutional dimensions of collective memory \(Jan Assmann\)](#)

The temporal and institutional dimensions of collective memory have been addressed by Jan Assmann, a German Egyptologist. In his understanding collective memory consists of communicative memory and cultural memory (Assmann 2008: 117). This distinction has been, in recent decades, among the most prominent theories regarding the shared remembering within a particular social group or community. Cultural memory is a term

which conveys a past that is ‘exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that are stable and already-framed’ (2008: 110-111). Communicative memory, on the other hand, resides in communication and language and includes only 3–4 generations (the previous 80–100 years), which implies a living intergenerational transmission of memory elements (events, symbols, importance of certain elements of the past for the present and future of a community, language, etc.). Whereas cultural memory stands for the transmission of meanings and is rooted in the absolute past, communicative memory is closest to autobiographical remembering. It is lived and embodied and finds itself in a vernacular language.

Collective memories are negotiable versions of the past which are to be discussed during the communication process between members of a particular community. Considering this, I have decided to apply this juxtaposition (the division into cultural and communicative memory), as proposed by Jan Assmann, and classify the form of collective memory in the borderland regions of Central Europe as a communicative collective memory (2008: 117). This assumption is based on the following indicators:

- There are still three generations living;
- the memory about the past is still an autobiographical memory transmitted mostly inside families; and
- the remembered period covers the last 80–100 years.

Assmann’s theory, although a cornerstone of studies concerning shared remembering, has also become the subject of criticism, polemics, and further development, some of which I will discuss in the second chapter.

Cultural trauma, collective memory, and identity (Jeffrey C. Alexander)

There is an obvious link between the notion of collective memory and the concept of identity, and in a borderland, this relation seems to be even more vivid and vulnerable. ‘Identities are projects and practices, not properties.’ (Olick, Robbins 1998: 122) This perspective seems most coherent with a notion of communicative memory which is also a matter of practice and projection rather than a thing. What is more, what links the studies of identity and memory is the process of family socialisation, through which our remembering of the past is shaped by the family surroundings and experience: ‘This

“sociobiographical memory” is the mechanism through which we feel pride, pain, or shame with regard to events that happened to our groups before we joined them.’ (Olick, Robbins 1998: 123) The families which came to settle in the borderlands brought with themselves and gathered different traumas and autobiographical memories that were passed down via intergenerational transmission, mainly within the socialisation process.

As Jeffrey C. Alexander states, ‘Traumatic status is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of their actual harmfulness or their objective abruptness, but because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity. Individual security is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectations that provide a sense of security and capability. . . . What is at stake, rather, is the collectivity’s identity, its stability in terms of meaning, not action.’ (2004: 10) Crucial here is the meaning ascribed to the certain event, not the event itself. The traumatic status is a result of a cultural process, as Alexander puts it, which is affected by power structures and ‘reflexive social agents’ (2004: 10). Collective trauma, therefore, is not the result of some kind of pain but the result of ‘discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity’ (2004: 10). In line with this notion, memory is social and in profound connection to the contemporary situation. These identities are also constantly being constructed through reconstruction of the past (2004: 22).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The theoretical framework underlying the design of my field research and the post-field data analysis is discussed in the following chapter. As memory studies suffer from terminological chaos and overload (Olick 1999), in the following sections I will discuss the notion of collective memory and its meaning, semantic implications, and challenges for research and study. I will then present the main concepts and criticism within the study of shared remembering, focusing on theory which seems crucial for collective memory in the cultural, ethnic, and historical borderland (interactional memory, visual memory, interscalarity of memory). Once the definition of collective memory is established, I will evaluate Erving Goffman's theory of *face*, along with a short overview of politeness theories, which are an analytical starting point for the post-field data analysis, as well as Randall Collins' theory of interaction ritual chains.

Collective memory and collected memory

The first distinction I would like to discuss is the differentiation between *collected* and *collective* memory addressed by Olick (Olick 1999). In the text analysing the roots and implications of the term collective memory, he points to the problem of a notion which covers vast numbers of other notions—oral tradition, language, art, personal testimonies, and so on—leading to different epistemological and methodological understandings of collective/shared remembering. This derives from two definitions of the word *culture*: The first interprets culture as subjective meanings produced and kept by individuals in their mind, whereas the second interprets culture as objective reality of different symbols available to the members of a particular culture (1999: 336).

Collective memory must be shared by a group. It requires some social frames which, according to Halbwachs, provide the group with definitions and divisions (1999: 341). It is not rooted or based on individual remembering but rather on exchange and common experience of the elements of a memory regarded by the group as carrying an important meaning. It follows the logic of Gellner's argument that nationalism creates nations, not the other way around (1983), as well as Anderson's idea (1983) that a nation is imagined and socially constructed by group members.

Collected memories are individual experiences of the past which belong to the members of a particular group. They consist in a phenomenon where a particular group (a cohort, a generation) undergoes the same events(s) in life and has some memories regarding that event. In this regard, Olick cites interesting studies on generational aspects of collected memories: Assuming Mannheim's definition of generations 'not as objective periods but as subjectively defined cohorts'—'[a] generation exists if and only if a number of birth cohorts share a historical experience that creates a community of perception' (Olick 1999: 339)—he quotes Howard Schumann et al.'s studies on big samples of respondents, examining their perception of particular historical events. The studies, however, focused on collected experiences, working with memories on the individual level.

In which case, what makes people remember some things more than others? The most important seems to be the long-term impact of the event on some historical changes. But this would not succeed if there were no particular age cohort affected by the event. The most fragile and prone to be affected is the age cohort between thirteen and twenty-five. The memories gathered during that time are the most important ones and become referential points for the rest of one's life as they contribute to the development of an independent, but integrated identity (Pennebaker and Gonzales 2009: 173).

Historical events must additionally be shared by a group. Usually, such events bring with them the stress and negative emotions when people analyse these events with others in order to understand them. Pennebaker and Gonzales give here examples of the First Gulf War in 1991, the 1989 earthquake in San Francisco, and the events of September 11, 2001 in which the number of talks and discussions about these events immediately after their occurrence among their participants and witnesses was very large (2009: 174). In addition, historical events which we want to remember must be well reflected in culture. This is particularly true of events here, some of which we can be proud of. Those which are contentious or controversial issues, and usually condemned to memorised non-existence, are of interest only to historians (2009: 174–175). There is also a relationship between the time elapsed after a given historical event and its reappearance in culture and thus in the collective awareness of people—this period is, on average, twenty to thirty years. An example of this is the war in Vietnam, which appeared in cultural texts only after the 1986 film *Platoon* by Olivier Stone. Thus, what affects the fact that some historical

events return to the social consciousness after some time and others do not? Pennebaker and Gonzales provide two options: the effect of a demographic cohort and psychological distance. Only with time does a historical cohort affected by an event have the right capital, both social and economic, to be able to build monuments and influence the shape of a nation's culture. As far as the psychological distance is concerned, usually, in the very beginning, there is a common mechanism of repression in people, whereas a longer passage of time allows people to determine how to talk about a given event (2009: 185–186). Over time, as the authors note, memories evolve towards mythical stories, where the balance of profits and losses is forgotten in favour of the former. The memory of historical events is shaped in accordance with the interests and subjective experiences relevant to various social groups. This assumption seems to be crucial for studying forms of collective (not collected, as members of a community of memory belong to different age cohorts and share almost no historical generational experience) memory in an ethnic, cultural, and political borderland.

Interactional collective memory

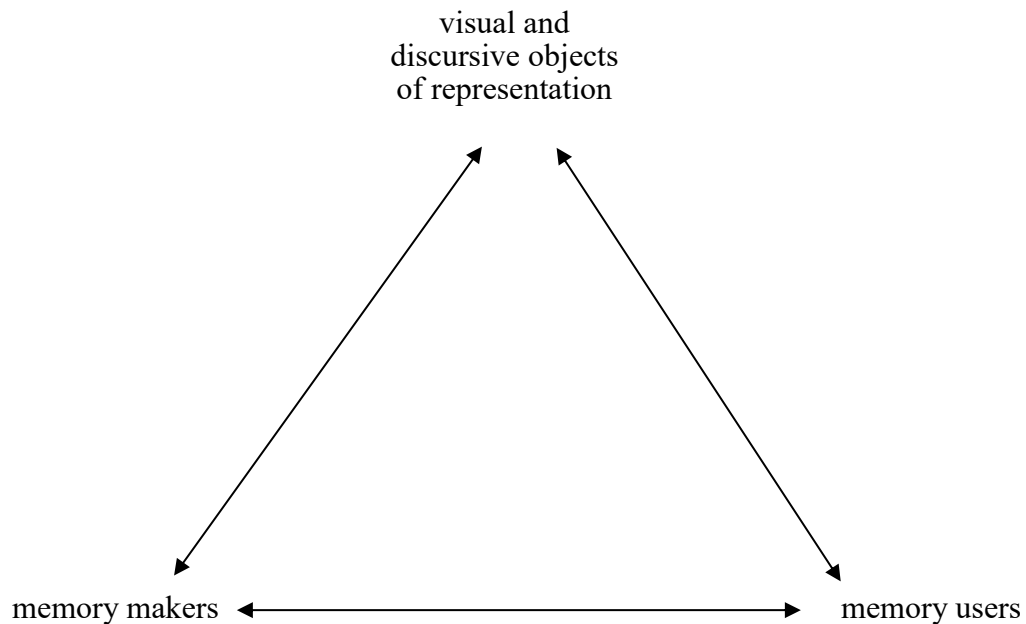
As a term, collective memory was coined by Halbwachs in his *Social Frames of Memory*. The term cultural memory is much younger and directly connected to three dimensions: time, memory, and identity. Below, I present the most important, from the point of view of the discussed research, taxonomies of collective memory, the most significant distinctions and notions which compose the basic theoretical framework for studying collective memory and its functions in the cultural, political, and ethnic borderland of Central Europe.

Dynamics of collective memory

Remembering is social and occurs in the social environment (Harris, Paterson, Kemp 2008: 216). Schudson argues that remembering has three aspects: collective, public, and interactive. It appears for some kind of audience and is by that audience inspired (1995: 360). The whole process of shared remembering takes place within a certain set of norms and values. The autobiographical memory is selective but so too is the collective memory. I find this assumption essential to the presented research.

In line with this notion, I define collective memory as ‘the result of the interaction between three historical factors: the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artefacts according to their own interests’ (Kansteiner 2002: 180). This definition seems the most suitable considering the character of borderland memory, and applying it allows the omission of the traps of terminological discussions and misunderstandings. Moreover, in my approach, I assume as well that ‘knowledge about the past is not the only or principal component of collective memory but is rather a precondition or a tool for its production’ (Hájek, Dlouhá 2013: 220). This kind of knowledge must be ‘always defined in relation to historical, cultural, social, cognitive and contextual variables within specific epistemic communities’ (Jovchelovitch 2007 in Bietti 2010: 504). The whole process should be interpreted as an interpretative cooperation which takes place through communication.

Once the definition of collective memory and its form is established, the very concept of communication must be extended as well since communication does not only take place between members of a community of memory, it also involves *documents of memory*. This process takes place within a hermeneutical triangle which includes communication/interaction between memory users, memory makers, and visual and discursive objects of representation. Those three elements constantly create the meaning attached (Kansteiner 2002: 197); the meaning of particular elements of the collective memory is constantly being negotiated, named, and framed.



Graph 1. The hermeneutical triangle forming collective memory.

The whole phenomenon is strictly connected to the development of the fifth, according to Le Goff (1992), period in the history of memory—a revolution marked by the invention of electronic means of recording and transmitting information. The Internet, serving as a huge stock for different documents of memory—mostly visual—has shaped the way people chose, interact with, and create the meaning of particular elements of collective memory. Consequently, and considering the fact that borderland collective memory is based on visual texts of memory, mostly circulating online, the collective memory being subject to study in this research is visually mediated and visually represented.

Visual collective memory

Susan Sontag in her book *On Photography* writes, ‘Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we are shown a photograph of it.’ (2008: 15) This utility of visual material is strictly connected to the idea of mediality and pre-mediality of collective memory since ‘photographs give people an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal’ and, similarly, ‘they also help people to take possession of space in which they are insecure’ (2008: 9). When it comes to collective memory

processes, visual resources or visual objects of representation (also as visual texts of memory) are very often focused around the emancipation and counter-narratives of the past, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Images serve as one of the most powerful vehicles of memory. (Kansteiner 2002: 190–191). They serve both as an ‘externalization and trace’ (Ruchatz 2008: 367). What I find crucial for the analysis of communicative collective memory is the way visual documents of memory interact with people. As Barbie Zelizer puts it:

As vehicles of memory, images work in patterned ways, concretizing and externalizing events in an accessible and visible fashion that allows us to recognize the tangible proof they offer of the events being represented. Images actively depend on their material form when operating as vehicles of memory, with our ability to remember events of the past facilitated by an image's availability and interchangeability. In a sense, then, visual memory's texture becomes a facilitator for memory's endurance. (2004: 9)

It seems necessary to think about visual texts of memory in the context of a process called premediation, which encapsulates the phenomenon of different media (especially visual) providing a public audience with an established schemata of how to visualise, represent, and then read past events in the future; the representation of the Vietnam War, for instance, became the given framing for the war's relationship to modern military conflicts (Erl 2008: 389–399).

Online photo-sharing has become a tool for different memory practices (MacDonald 2015: 24) including interactional communicative memory based on the circulation of different objects of representation which are shared and exchanged among members of a community of memory. MacDonald, in a study of online circulation of family photographs among two Facebook groups devoted to Salford, in North West England, points to the fact that:

The impulse that drives individuals repeatedly to seek out and engage others with whom their memories can be reconstructed is not itself algorithmically determined. The perception that there are other members interested in those memories is formed as a consequence of intentional human acts of communication and expression. (MacDonald 2015: 33)

Social media based or digitally-mediated communities of memory are a phenomenon which goes beyond the frame of Central European borderlands but is common among groups or communities which deal with some kind of social change affecting their present and shaping their future. The phenomenon is worthy of sociological interest as most of the people actively taking part in creating a new version of collective memory are not the participants or witnesses of past events. Despite this, they create multimedia collages of memory (Kansteiner 2002: 190–191) consisting of different elements: visual, audible, linguistic, and so forth.

Temporal and spatial aspects of collective memory (following Jan Assmann)

Assmann's distinction resonates in the studies of memory on many levels. Below, I briefly introduce the theories which approach the spatial and temporal dimensions of collective memory beyond differentiation of cultural and communicative memory.

Interscalarity of collective memory

An argument I find crucial to the discussed problem is an analytical and methodological approach by Pickering and Keightley, who raise the question of a proper methodological background for studying memory which consists of three assumptions: (1) Any form of an individual remembering is affected and shaped by collective forms of association and belonging; (2) any form of collective remembering is participated in or interpreted by an individual with their own experience of the past; and (3) the relationship between individual and collective remembering is dialectical in the sense that there is constant interplay between those two kinds of remembering (2016: 39). This implies a different approach than that of Assmann:

Communicative memory is cultural, and cultural memory is communicative, both in vernacular milieux and in the communications media with which cultural memory becomes increasingly associated under conditions of modernity. (2016: 47)

The authors postulate that social remembering appears across different scales, and researchers should take this into consideration any time they try to study a manifestation of shared memory. The approach might be especially useful in studying digital forms of collective memory since social media and digitally networked communities operate across scales, mixing the individual and collective at the same time (2016: 47). The collective and shared memory found on the Central European borderlands is mediated through digital texts of memory (mostly visual); therefore, the aspect of its interscalarity must be taken into consideration at the analytical level.

Cognitive taxonomy of collective memories

Nonetheless, the idea of memory being collective, a superindividual phenomenon, does not in fact represent that some elements of the past are shared across a community. In order to be genuinely collective, they must play a certain function for the community (Manier, Hirst 2008: 253). Manier and Hirst propose a taxonomy of collective memory based on its temporal dimension. They divide collective memory into three categories: episodic, semantic, and procedural—and in so doing, they oppose Assmann's well-known proposition. They suggest instead that:

- collective episodic memories last only one generation and experiences, which come mostly from an individual's life, are easily connected to a particular place or date;
- collective semantic memories (individuals do not remember the source of their knowledge about some elements of the past—books, media, friends, education system, etc.) might be transmitted from generation to generation, but are fragile—in order to survive more than one generation they must be externalised into texts or cultural artefacts; and
- collective procedural memories (established rituals, practices, and traditions) are about to become the foundation for a community's cultural memory and contribute to the community's identity.

For the purpose of this study, the concepts of semantic and procedural memory may be a useful analytical category since they focus more on mediation of the process of shared remembering and on sources of knowledge about the past, finding them crucial in memory as a collective process. In Assmann's theory, the role played by the source of the past's knowledge is not highlighted much. In regard to the form of collective memory subject to study in this research, mediated as it is through various digital visual texts of memory, the role of the source in the process of memory-making process is vital.

Face and face-work in collective memory interaction (Erving Goffman)

Assuming that collective memory is communicative and created through interactions (both online and offline), a closer look at the interactional order should be taken. In order to study interactions and communication through which a collective version of remembrance is shared, discussed, and negotiated, the concept of face by Erving Goffman must be mentioned here. The Goffmanian concept has a relatively long history in sociology as it was used for the first time by Goffman in the 1960s, and it has since become a key term in the interactional approach. Goffman himself describes face as:

The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit images that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. (1967: 5)

The concept of face derives from the dramaturgical metaphor applied by Goffman to the observation of the social world. *Face-work* is face in practice. Goffman describes in detail the possible interactional strategies in terms of face-keeping against possible face-threatening acts (FTAs) such as:

- *the avoidance process*—avoiding a situation where threats may occur;
- *the corrective process*—when a particular encounter needs correction since it was recognised as an FTA situation.

'The sequence of acts' evoked by the FTA ending with ritual equilibrium is called by Goffman *an interchange* (1967: 1–45).

The modern concept of framing, developed by Goffman first in *Encounters* and expanded upon in *Frame Analysis*, is non-static; frames are movable and interactional. Since it is beyond the limits of this thesis to develop more the idea of frames and framing, I would like to pay attention only to the *rule of irrelevance*—a concept that ‘seems to exist to let something difficult be quietly expressed as much as to exclude it entirely from the scene’ (Goffman 1961: 69).

In Goffman’s understanding, interaction ritual consists of ‘following the rules of conduct that affirm the moral order of society’ (Collins 2004: 16). As Goffman claims, ‘I use the term *ritual* because I am dealing with acts through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he feels others are of it. The imagery of equilibrium is apt here because the length and intensity of the corrective effort is nicely adapted to the persistence and intensity of the threat’ (1967: 19, emphasis in original). The uniqueness of every individual is a key notion in the interactional understanding of ritual, later elaborated by Randall Collins (discussed later in this chapter). Nevertheless, it should be stated here that this uniqueness is a product of particular social and cultural conditions, and it is understood as such by Goffman. Rituals are there to respect what is regarded as valuable in a particular society (sacred objects in Durkheim’s theory). Goffman claims that an individual self is the contemporary sacred object. (Collins 20014: 25).

In contemporary society rituals performed to stand-ins for supernatural entities are everywhere in decay, as are extensive ceremonial agendas involving long strings of obligatory rites. What remains are brief rituals one individual performs for or to another, attesting to civility and good will on the performer's part and to the recipient's possession of a small patrimony of sacredness. What remains, in brief, are interpersonal rituals. These little pieties are a mean version of what anthropologists would look for in their paradise. But they are worth examining. (Goffman 1971:63).

Following Durkheim, Goffman too perceives ritual as crucial to social solidarity—they mark someone as a member of a certain social group. The ability to perform the ritual well proves an individual's belonging within some social collectivity.

Politeness theories

Face and face-work have also been implied in the field of linguistic pragmatics, the study of the pragmatic aspect of language interaction, where face is something which requires emotional investment from an individual and which could also, according to Goffman, be lost, kept, or permanently monitored in the course of interaction (Brown, Levinson 1987: 61). Brown and Levinson developed the idea of face-threatening acts, which is based on the assumption that acts are understood in terms of verbal or non-verbal communication which threaten either the positive face (want to be accepted, liked, etc.) or negative face (want to be free from expected patterns of behaviour and interaction) of actors taking part in a particular interaction. These strategies disturb interactional equilibrium and politeness restores it. There are two ways of behaving: 'do the FTA and "don't do the FTA"'. *Do the FTA* actors may go on record in case there is one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent. This strategy consists of two smaller ones: without a redressive action representing direct and clear actions and with redressive action, meaning the addressee receives 'face' during an interaction. There are two types of redressive actions: (1) positive politeness, in which S (the speaker) tries to show his wants are also the wants of H (the hearer), for instance, by treating him as a member of a social group to which H would like to belong (1987: 68–70);

and (2) negative politeness, which is described as ‘self- effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H’s self-image, centering on his want to be unimpeded’ (Brown and Levinson 1987: 70). Brown and Levinson view politeness as fundamental to any social unit. In their conception, politeness is part of a universal tool used by actors to avoid conflict and aggression within society.

Politeness theories operate on two levels, as differentiated by linguists. FTAs are not only common and occur daily as ‘offer[s]’, ‘promises’, ‘compliments’, and so on, but they also—and this is extremely important to the problem under study— bring up ‘dangerously emotional or divisive topics e.g. politics, race, religion, women’s liberation’ (Eelen 2001: 51). The question of the problematic and difficult regional past of the Central European borderlands is one of those sensitive topics which places any person in the position of a constant face threat and makes them undertake actions to maintain their face.

Ritualisation and collective memory (Randall Collins)

Randall Collins continues the analysis of interactional ritual and proposes interaction ritual chains. He points out the terminological concern of the solemn word ritual, which used to be employed by Durkheim and his followers, is also a key notion in anthropology. This omnipresence of ritual in the social sciences might lead to fundamental misunderstandings as its definitions mean a variety of things in regard to its embodiment within a discipline. The basic problem lies between anthropological and microsociological understandings of the term. In anthropology, a ritual is a part of a society structure, its function is to manifest values, and it is a gateway to understanding the macrostructure of a certain society—‘the local manifests the total’ (Collins 2004: 7). Microsociology perceives ritual as a source of action, where the situation is ‘the analytical starting point of explanation’ (2004: 7), which might help to reveal that taken-for-granted elements of culture are in fact situationally created meanings and rules (2004: 8). In keeping with Goffman, Collins proposes starting with the dynamics of situations and an analysis of the social surroundings underlying particular moral beliefs within a certain intersection of history and society. Collins defines ritual as ‘a mechanism of mutually focused emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality, which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group membership’ (2004: 7). Ritual is a correct way of handling sacred objects, meaning morally significant

entities. Ritualisation is a process which aims to reduce the risks implied in the handling of these objects. In modern society, the individual is sacred (i.e., a morally significant object) (Collins 2004: 4). One of the key features of an individual is their group membership status (belonging to a social group). Therefore, situations in which the group membership of an individual is at stake are morally consequential and thus tend to be ritualised. The main manner in which ritualisation proceeds is through the designification of the original multiplicity of meanings and the attribution of a novel (ritualised) non-risky meaning. Designification can take the form of tabooing (avoidance).

Communicative memory (CM) is a domain of interaction between members of the community in which they actualise (make present) documents of memory (souvenirs, images, objects, documents, etc.). Communicative memory interaction has the potential for dissensus because it is driven by the particular knowledge and interests of individuals. Therefore, it is ritualised into certain locally functional notions (metaphors, scripts, taboos, etc.) which are not yet institutionally fixed as cultural memory (for example, they do not appear in textbooks); however, they are shared, and members of the community of memory are aware of them. Ritualised communicative memory (rCM) functions as a protection against the actualisation of a conflictual past which threatens the identities (in the form of FTAs) of its members in their mutual interactions. We find acts pertaining to rCM in various places, but we can also stimulate it through research. We encounter it as objects of display which explicitly or implicitly inform about the identity of an individual or a group—memory display.

MEMORYSCAPE OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN BORDERLANDS

The title of the chapter suggests that the borderlands and their past will be discussed through collective memory-related processes. The term *memoryscape* (*Erinnerungslandschaft* in German) refers to a landscape which consists of different commemorative and memory activities (Macdonald 2015: 197).

The following part of the thesis is devoted to the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands of Central Europe which are the subject of the presented research. Both studied regions—the Czech-German borderland in the Czech Republic and the Polish-German borderland in Poland—are presented here in the context of their borderland experience, as well as their similar, turbulent, and complex history of the last hundred years.

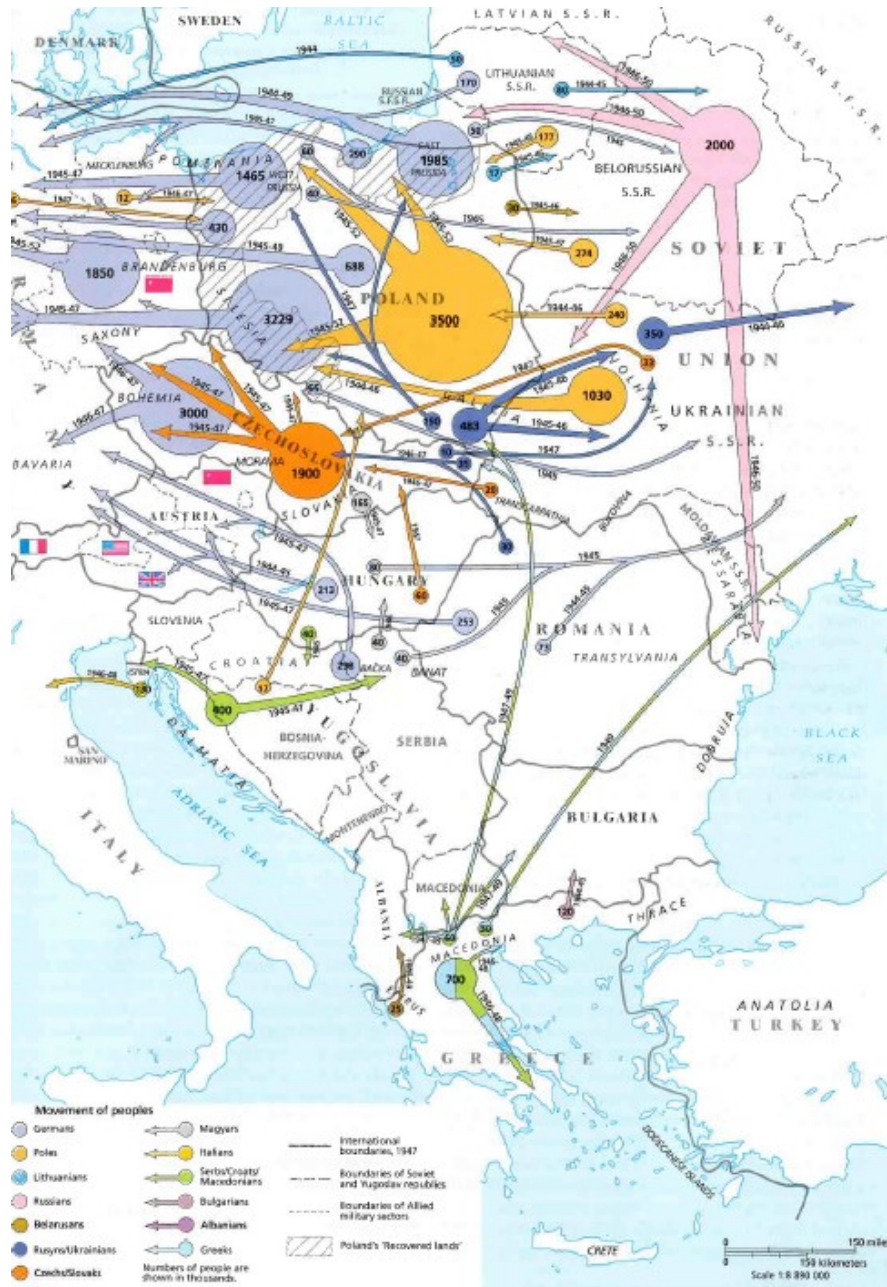
Why Central European borderlands?

A borderland is a special place, with its own mythology, its own timing, and its own sense of borders. It is both a place and a symbol of power (Hastings and Thomas 2001: 1). A borderland is also a place of different tensions. In today's Europe, where there are almost no internal borders, borderlands play a special role. On the one hand, there are no observation towers, security gates, wire fences, and such, while on the other, the same centre-periphery relationship and feeling that 'the world really ends here' is still there, as is the border, imaginative or material, some hundred meters to the north in the mountains.

One of the most distinctive features of a borderland is that regional and local bonds are equally strong or sometimes even stronger than national ones. The regional collective memory is also different and consists of various elements, sometimes even contradictory. As Jönsson et al. (2000) postulate, regions are created through social processes which result in a 'shared way of thinking'. In the case of the Czech-German and Polish-German borderlands, this is a shared way of thinking about the regional past.

These regions were chosen as the subject of study not only due to their similar post-war experience (the expulsion of the German-speaking population and an artificial state-imposed homogeneity) but also because both of them are undergoing a process consisting of the bottom-up creation of local collective memories—they are a form of communicative collective memory.

The map below presents the massive migration movements after 1945 and population resettlement which shaped both present day borderlands of Central Europe.



Map 1. Population movements in Central Europe, 1944–1948.
 Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 191,
 University of Washington Press, 2002

The post-war resettlement and massive population movements in the region (see map 1 above) resulted in the total discontinuity of ethnic, cultural, and social heritage of several borderland regions of Central Europe, including the studied southern part of the East Prussian region in Poland and the former Sudetes region in the north-west of the Czech Republic. This had a severe impact on the region's shape in the post-war period and its condition (ability to stand alone) after the political and economic shift of 1989. The exact numbers and details of those processes are described later in the chapter.

Central Europe lost its multicultural flavour and moved some of its borders while resettling most of its peoples. Under the communist regime, where the variety of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds was regarded as a threat to the communist, centre-oriented state status quo, the borderland regions of Central Europe were made to forget their roots and deal with the resettlement trauma individually—mostly within narrow circles of family and relatives with the same experience. The whole-state transformation to liberal democracies and neoliberal economies as a consequence of the events of 1989 in the regions gave the space and opened the possibility of talking about the pre- and post-war borderland experiences (including discriminated ethnic minorities and religious groups). This phenomenon is distinctive for most of the Central Europe borderlands, including the two regions discussed in this research.

The Czech-German borderland (the former Sudetes)

The Sudetes has a similar past to the other Central European borderlands in terms of forced migration and expulsions. In 1945, more than 2.5 million German Czechoslovaks living in the region were forced to move to Germany (*odsun* in Czech and *die Vertreibung* in German), and Czechs from different parts of Central and Eastern Europe—the Czech inlands, Eastern Slovakia, Volhynia, Transylvania, Carpathian Ruthenia—migrated to the area (Spalová 2017: 84). Due to the involvement of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the expulsions and the events which surrounded them, there was a state-led push for forgetfulness. This created a new generation of Czech people, completely unaware of the post-war events and the role of German culture in Czechia (Spurný 2012: 353–367).



Map 2. Map of Central Europe in 1938 (before the enforcement of the Munich Agreement).

The red dot marks the town of Teplice.

Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 175,

University of Washington Press, 2002



Map 3. Map of Central Europe after 1945.

The red dot marks the town of Teplice.

Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 186,

University of Washington Press, 2002

The expulsion of Sudeten Germans is still a topic which divides Czech society. In research conducted in 2016 by the Public Opinion Research Centre, 37% of the Czech population considered the expulsion justified. Almost the same number of people—38%—stated that the expulsion was not justified and 25% of the population had no opinion on the issue or were not interested in the topic (Naše společnost 2016). This points to the ongoing presence of the borderland's past in the Czech public debate—politicians use or abuse the moral aspects of the German expulsion, as well, from time to time. The second important change was the 1989 fall of communism, which turned nearby Germany into an accessible and frequent destination, permitting the re-establishment of transnational relations. The political transformation of 1989 allowed people to search and become interested in such topics as regional history, ethnic minorities, or diverse cultures. The Sudetes became a point of interest for scholars, academics, journalists, and social activists. The memory of the Sudetes and its former inhabitants—those who left and those who stayed—became recalled and told in a new way (Kreisslová 2013, Wagnerová 1993). In the case of the Sudetes region, the events of 1989 and the 2008 admission of the Czech Republic to the Schengen Area indicated a new 'transboundary space', questioning the Westphalian order of national identities and boundaries (Johnson 2009: 177).

All three crucial moments influenced and shaped the condition of the region—from a German-speaking, economically strong part of the First Czechoslovak Republic, to a communist state region with closed borders and a focus on heavy industry, and finally, to the place which suffered the most in the political, economic, and social transformation which followed the Velvet Revolution (Glasheim 2006: 65–92).

Today, the borderland is an intersection of most of the current problems in Czech society: structural unemployment and poverty, socially excluded localities with Roma minorities (Čada 2012), a specific electoral behaviour (corresponding with the borders of the former Sudetenland) (Šimon 2015: 139-150), and extremely high over-indebtedness (Kučera, Kropáček 2018), to mention only the most significant.

It must be emphasised that between the years 1945 and 1989, the regional history or cultural regional affiliation had been officially removed and made forgotten. The main objective of the communist government was the industrialisation of the space and the secularisation of the society (Bauer 2012: 367–386). The situation changed after the Velvet

Revolution when the symbolic boundaries between contemporary Czech reality and the Sudeten past disappeared. First, there was a discourse created from the centre (defined through a centre/marginal relation, where ‘marginal . . . is best defined in terms of the limitations of a subject’s access to power’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007: 121) and ‘centre’ means possessing discursive tools to exercise power) by young people interested in the region, for example, Antikomplex, an organisation that, among others, published a lot of books covering the memories of those who had to leave and those who stayed after the war. Consequently, a public debate over the borderland, its silent post-war time, and its current shape has been opened. The expulsions have been included in the mainstream discourse of Czech society. A publication worth special attention is the book *Zmizelé Sudety* (2006), which presents changes in the landscape of the borderland. The book is a combination of photos putting *now* and *then* into contrast for comparison. This is probably one of the most significant works when it comes to visual analysis of the borderland landscape after 1989. However, it deals only with the temporal dimension as it focuses on changes in the material landscape and its elements throughout time, working with, as already mentioned, the metonymy of *now* and *then*, with an extremely strong accent put on the fact that *then* usually means something better, both materially and aesthetically.

Slowly, following the economic, social, and political transformation of 1989, the region’s inhabitants have become more and more involved in the process of creating their own version of the region’s history. Paul Bauer points to the evolution of the relationship between society and space in the Czech-German borderland, stressing that space is a key dimension in forming past-oriented ties. A relationship to the past is crucial in a region inhabited mostly by people without a regional family affiliation beyond three generations:

While the physical environment of social life can be seen as assisting studies in understanding how societies orient themselves in relation to their past, it is important to show that it is precisely through space that social ties with temporality are formed. While the physical environment of social life can be seen as assisting studies in understanding how societies orient themselves in relation to their past, it is important to show that it is precisely through space that social ties with temporality are formed. The structuring of the memories of a group takes place through the relations of that group to a specific space of reference, whether formulated as such in institutional frameworks (as ‘cultural memory’), or lived in the repetitiveness of daily life (as ‘communicative memory’). This assertion is one of the conditions for understanding how society establishes its relationship to its past, and the evolution of relations between society and space in the Czech border regions during the second half of the twentieth century. (Bauer 2012: 367–386)

The described phenomenon—the common interest of the borderland inhabitants in the regional past (Spalová 2017: 84–109)—is a bottom-up emancipatory phenomenon, where finally the region itself can tell its own story. In a process similar to decolonisation, groups who had previously had no ability to speak found a voice with which to tell their own stories and narratives.

[The Polish-German borderland \(former East Prussia\)](#)

The region of former East Prussia in Poland (a part of Prussia and Germany before 1945), now known as Warmia and Mazury, is a typical borderland region. Before the Second World War the region was one of the provinces of the Third Reich. The war itself saw the Red Army conquer the territory, leaving the region destroyed and depopulated. The pre-war population of 960,000 inhabitants was diminished to 170,000 (Białyński, Jasiński 2014: 106).



**Map 4. Map of Central Europe in 1938 (before the enforcement of the Munich Agreement).
The red dot marks the town of Reszel, at that time in East Prussia
and part of the Third German Reich.**

**Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 175,
University of Washington Press, 2002.**

The 1945 border shift created a new region on the Polish map out of the southern part of East Prussia—a Polish borderland inhabited mostly by ethnic Poles from the eastern parts of the country incorporated into the USSR after the war, as well as from central Poland. The end of the Second World War meant the end of centuries-old political, territorial, national, and economic continuity. East Prussia was divided into two (nowadays three) countries: communist Poland and the USSR and later, in 1989, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast). (Sakson 2017: 31).

The southern part of the region, which became today’s Polish borderland region of Warmia and Mazury was inhabited by four different groups following the war (2017: 41):

- the former inhabitants of East Prussia—Germans (131,000 in 1945; 97,000 in 1946; 11,000 in 1947; and 5,800 in 1948), Masurians (80,000 in 1950), Warmians (40,000 in 1950), and a few inhabitants of Russian origin (Philippians);
- newcomers from Central Poland around Warsaw;
- Resettled people from Eastern Poland and made part of the USSR after the war, the Vilnius district (today’s Lithuania), and Volyn (today’s Ukraine);

- Ukrainians resettled as part of Operation Vistula (55–60,000 people)



Map 5. Map of Central Europe after 1945.

The red dot marks the town of Reszel, already within the Polish territory and a part of the newly created cultural Polish-German borderland.

Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 186, University of Washington Press, 2002.

East Prussia formally vanished from the map of Europe in 1947. Since 1944, the region had been conquered by the Red Army but, in 1946, there were still a hundred thousand Germans (of different ethnic origins) living there. Those, who had not left East Prussia by 1948 did so later on, after 1956 and after 1971. Only a few stayed in the region and remain living there today. (Traba 2009: 245–248)

The massive resettlement and its consequences became a point of interest for Polish sociologists. One of the biggest studies performed in the post-war period was one led by the great Polish sociologist Stanislaw Ossowski between the years 1947–49. Since sociology departments were officially closed by the communist state, the research was never finished, and, moreover, most of the documentation gathered by Ossowski and his

research team from the University of Warsaw was lost and never put into an archive (Sakson 2017: 263–264).

All of these mass migration movements transformed East Prussia into a borderland region with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. People who settled in the Polish part of East Prussia had various identities, pasts, war experiences, and memories. It led to many culture clashes and conflicts. For other groups, it meant disintegration and disappearance (Germans, Masurians, Warmians), while still for others, it meant a slow stabilisation through adaptation to the new social environment and integration (with different dynamics for different subgroups) (2017: 41).

It must be highlighted here that although there was no official expulsion of the German-speaking population, such as that which took place in Czechoslovakia as a consequence of the Beneš decrees, ethnic Germans were also expelled from the region. The cruelty at the beginning of the resettlement process was similar to the one Polish inhabitants experienced under Nazi occupation during the war, including violence, rape, murder, and theft (Białuński, Jasiński 2014: 109). This also led to the visible separation of the indigenous population from the newcomers. The German-speaking population were exclusive groups focused around families as families had become the main units of survival (2014: 109).

The communist government put much effort towards unifying the highly differentiated regional community into one homogenic Polish nation, including propaganda campaigns proving the region's true Polish roots and the use of different elements of historical heritage as evidence. The aim of the campaign was also to neutralise the role of different religions being represented in the region and to replace it with the communist state one-nation mythology.

When it comes to the economic performance of the region, it became nationalised, and since it was primarily based on agriculture, state-owned farms were created throughout the region. It should be stated here that the region's economy was not rebuilt after the war thanks to several different reasons and, what is more, the most economically prosperous part of former East Prussia was incorporated into the USSR, cutting the southern Polish part off from many strategic supplies—energy, for instance. The socio-economic transformation of 1989 also took a severe toll on the region's economic performance. The

quick shift of the economy to a market-driven one, based on the Balcerowicz Plan, left huge parts of the region in economic freefall—state-owned farms closed; companies and factories, both big and small, went bankrupt; etc. This was immediately reflected in the region's condition, which suddenly faced increasing poverty, structural unemployment, increasing substance abuse (mainly alcohol), and depopulation (due to economic migration from the region). In 2005, the region was among the poorest regions in the European Union and one of the least developed regions in Poland, with poor infrastructure and little industrialisation (Heller, Warżała 2006: 36). The youngest generation of the region's inhabitants migrated to bigger Polish cities outside the region and also abroad—mainly to the United Kingdom—after joining the European Union in 2004 (Hrynkiewicz, Potrykowska 2017).

Regarding the memory-related processes, the new identity of this *post-migration* group has been creating itself over several decades and generations. (Traba 2009: 244). The history of this region had been absent from official history books, school curricula, and culture activities prior to 1989. The sociopolitical transformation of that year created a positive social background for a new generation of Poles to start asking questions about the past and the history of the region (Trepte 2006: 98–99). The change to a democratic and open society allowed different associations and local communities to emerge and become institutionalised. Organisations like Borussia were created by local activists and memory makers, who decided to recall the heterogeneous and rich cultural past of the borderland through different activities and the publication of a journal covering different aspects of the sociocultural heritage of the region, including the creation of a new version of regional memory and its frames. For instance, they decided to continue Ossowski's research in the village of Purda, which focused on forms of remembering on the Polish-German borderland and bring it to the wider public (Kardach, Pilecki, Traba 2009).

In the last decade, one which saw the establishment of the Internet as an available source of knowledge and communication, grassroots communities around local memory and commemoration have emerged in virtual reality. As one of the main leaders of the regional renaissance movement and one of the greatest historians of the region concluded:

The salt of the earth understood that, for the change of Warmia and Mazury into a civil society, the connection between tradition and modernity are the independent initiatives of formalised or spontaneous groups of inhabitants—intergenerational and non-political. And they have one thing in common: to act in the void created by malfunctioning government structures. (Żytyniec, Traba 2006: 3)

Traumas and memories

The last hundred years resulted in the creation of places in the Central European borderlands which reflect most of the social, cultural, and political changes that took place in the region, but also those places which, in some regard, were affected most by those changes. As Milan Kundera summarised in his famous essay ‘The Tragedy of Central Europe’:

Central Europe therefore cannot be defined and determined by political frontiers (which are inauthentic, always imposed by invasions, conquests, and occupations), but by the great common situations that reassemble peoples, regroup them in ever new ways along the imaginary and ever-changing boundaries that mark a realm inhabited by the same memories, the same problems and conflicts, the same common tradition. (1984)

It should be emphasised that although the studied regions have gone through similar processes since 1945, they also prove to be unique in their own way as every borderland is a mixture of components typical only for them (either ethnic, cultural, religious, or other). The biggest distinction between the regions is their pre-war status. When it comes to the Czech-German borderland, as is also clearly visible on the maps in this chapter, the former Sudeten region has always been part of the Czech or Czechoslovak state. The Czech-German borderland, with a border established in the Middle Ages, is a very old borderland, territorially speaking, on the map of Central Europe. Thus, this is a classic borderland with a proper physical border and proximity of the Other living on the other side of the Ore Mountains.

The Polish region of Warmia-Mazury had been mostly part of the German-speaking state structures, with a distinctive Polish ethnic minority living mostly in the very south.

The border which cuts the East Prussian region in two, north and south, is, as a matter of fact, the border between the Russian Federation (then the USSR) and the Republic of Poland. Due to various reasons, the biggest of which is the fact that the Kaliningrad region is a military district, there has never been free cross-border cooperation on the basis of cultural exchange, with a few exceptions for economic exchange (after the fall of the USSR at the beginning of 1990s forced many Russians to earn a living by coming to the borderland so as to sell goods; borderland people today go to the Russian side of the border to buy cheaper petrol, but rarely go into the district to get to know it). Conversely, exchange with Germany or referring to the German-speaking culture of East Prussia has become a legitimate heritage of the region since 1989. Therefore, it should still be called a cultural Polish-German borderland despite no actual physical border between Poland and Germany.

The resettled people had gone through a traumatic experience of war atrocities and post-war forced resettlement, in many cases a consequence of their ethnic or religious background. They brought their traumas with them but, due to the policy of the communist regime, were unable to talk publicly or share these traumas with other members of the borderland community. Those traumas were preserved inside the borderland families, having been a part of the intergenerational transmission of family biographical memory. They have never become a common cultural, collective trauma in Alexander's meaning (Alexander 2004), but instead they have stayed at the level of collected traumas, that is, an individual experience among people who underwent the same or similar traumatic events (see Pennebaker and Gonzales 2009, discussed earlier in chapter two). The memories in fact have become more and more collective in the two studied borderlands, and they have crossed the boundary of being only a family-based and family-shared communicative memory in the Assmannian sense. The traumatic and difficult borderland experiences created a positive background for finding a way in which to cope with the conflictive past through the shared remembering and collective cooperation of redefining the meaning of local/regional history.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological chapter starts with the research questions which derive both from the theories regarding collective memory and the sociocultural context of the studied regions. The research procedure is described in detail, as is the photo-elicitation interview research method. The process of data gathering on both borderlands is discussed at the end of the chapter.

Research questions

The aim of this research is to analyse the role of regional collective memory in two borderland regions of Central and Eastern Europe: the former East Prussia region of Poland and the Sudetes in the Czech Republic. The study attempts to explore the configurations of elements of collective memory and their functions. The following research questions were formulated in order to investigate fully the studied phenomenon:

- What is the form of collective memory in the borderland region?
- What is the role of collective memory in the borderland region?
- What kind of collective memory is it—communicative or cultural, semantic or procedural?
- What elements construct collective memory in the borderland region?
- What are the frames for collective memory on the borderland?
- Is the studied memory typical for a borderland? If so, what distinguishes it from memory created in a different place?
- What interactional strategies (face-keeping acts) are undertaken by members of the borderland community of memory in order to prove their membership and the status of the inhabitant?
- What is the role of visual texts of memory in the memory-making process in the borderlands?
- What are the similarities and differences between the collective memories in the former East Prussian region of Poland and in the Sudetes in the Czech Republic?

By answering the research questions, my aim is to contribute to the debate over functions of interactional and communicative collective memory in an ethnic, cultural, and political borderland. My intention is also to emphasise and bring to light the ritualised character of communicative memory and the meaning of it for a local community, as well as the whole process as such.

Description of research procedure

The research was planned to take place in two different borderland regions of Central Europe. The locations chosen for the research were two borderlands (discussed in detail in chapter two) with a similar history and experience: resettlement of inhabitants in 1945, a German past, and socio-economic problems after the transformation began in 1989. From the perspective of the investigated phenomenon—collective memory and its functions in an ethnic, cultural, and historical borderland—of importance was not only the great demographic, ethnic, and cultural shift of 1945 but also the contemporary experience of exclusion and its regard and frame as a state periphery. All things considered, this led to the choice of the two regions, whose characteristics were discussed in detail in chapter two. The two borderland regions of Central Europe chosen for this study are alike in terms of their migration and post-migration experience, as well as their ethnic background. This allowed me to presume that the dynamics of collective memory and its functions are similar, and comparing results from the two borderlands may bring to light new insights on collective memory in a cultural, historical, and geographic borderland.

The research was planned to be conducted using the same methodology in both places in order to observe whether collective memories in cultural, ethnic, and historical borderlands possess common features which make the phenomenon more universal.

The research was designed so as to cover the whole spectrum of the studied problem, including the visual aspect of collective memory—photo-elicitation interviews. From the beginning, the aim of the research was that it may be repeated in different locations.

The field work, of which the main goal was to gather data through interviews, was split into two parts. The first part, concerning the Czech-German borderland, was conducted in the second half of 2016 and included a few visits to the town of Teplice, where the research

was conducted. Teplice is a town in the Usti nad Labem region with a population of almost 50,000 people. Since the nineteenth century, the town has been well-known for its spa. Before World War II, the town, although within the borders of the First Czechoslovak Republic, had a seventy-eight percent German-speaking population (Kural, Radvanovský 2002:74).

The second part of the research, set in the Polish-German borderland, took place a year later, in September 2017, during a one-week field stay in the town of Reszel, with a population of 4,000 people. The town was once an East Prussia district capital before 1945 and has since lost its importance, first after the war in the newly established region, and second, as a result of the 1989 transformation.

The described fieldwork resulted in research material that includes recordings of the conducted photo-elicitation interviews, visual material used during the research, observations, and field notes.

Conceptualisation

As stated in the theoretical chapter on memory, there are various definitions which attempt to capture remembrance as a superindividual and shared phenomenon. For the purpose of this research, the memory, named here later as communicative memory, is a collective phenomenon (following Assmann's differentiation) which consists of its interactional character. This ontological assumption requires an adequate research strategy focusing on interactions as a main place through which the collectiveness of a memory is created. This assumption is the foundation for the main chosen method of research: a photo-elicitation interview.

Research methods

The presented research is based on photo-elicitation interviews and a visual semiotic analysis was deployed while working with the visual material.

Photo-elicitation interview (PEI)

The photo-elicitation interview was used for the first time by John Collier in 1967. Since that time, it has become a recognised method of collecting data within qualitative research in social sciences, mainly in visual sociology (Clark-Ibáñez 2004: 1523). It consists in conducting a semi-structured, in-depth interview with the usage of visual texts—mostly photography. The interview is framed and structured by the visuals used. Since the interview is about confronting the interviewed person with two different symbolic systems of representation—verbal and visual—it also requires reflection in the further analysis.

One of the main advantages of the photo-elicitation technique is that it enables the researcher to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding between an interviewer and an interviewee. Through the use of visual material, the questions asked during the interview are framed by that material, which helps both sides of an interview situation be more assured that they know what the interaction is about while also making the interview more contextualised.

The key element in the photo-elicitation approach is not the photo itself but the relationship with the problem under study. The images serve as triggers for evoking certain reactions which are to be studied in a given research. The visual material itself is not the object of study. Its so-called function is to help elicit desired information from the research participant. Since the method consists of confronting people with visuals, it also helps respondents to analyse and see their own taken-for-granted thoughts and experiences (Harper 2002: 14).

Jenkins, Woodward, and Winter (2008) claim that the process of data analysis in photo elicitation starts not during the post-field analysis but precisely as the interview itself is being conducted. They call it a ‘reflexive collaboration in the locally situated practices’, that is, when both an interviewer and a respondent cooperate through the interactive accomplishment of the interview. This approach to the photo-elicitation method is not common. As explained above, however, according to the nature of communicative

collective memory and its interactional character, the reflexive analysis of material starts the moment the interview resembles more an interactional exchange of knowledge and meanings rather than a classical interviewer-interviewee role play.

The dynamics of photo-elicitation resemble the dynamics of the process of forming communicative collective memory. Participants (the inhabitants of the studied borderland region) are confronted or *faced* with visual material they know or is familiar, and during the interview, they discuss, name, frame, or sometimes even negotiate with the interviewer over the meaning of the visual texts of memory (chosen by the researcher on purpose). When it comes to the borderland experience of mixed cultures, backgrounds, and alternative versions of history, photo-elicitation helps to track the development of regional collective memory and ground the phenomenon in particular circumstances and an environment. Therefore, the assumption in the presented research was to conduct individual photo-elicitation interviews in a way which would allow people to talk about the past and remember experience, but also evoke and frame the story by using a selected sample of images (Šmídová-Matoušová 2014: 236–257). The photographs interviewees face during the PEIs convey different meanings which were supposed to evoke certain reactions; since photographs ‘play’ with our memory—in a way, they ‘reinforce and recreate, assure and trouble’—they are never simply pure; they are instead ‘artificial constructions, hence sites of contestation and dispute’ (Hughes and Noble 2003: 5 in Cabañes 2017: 35).

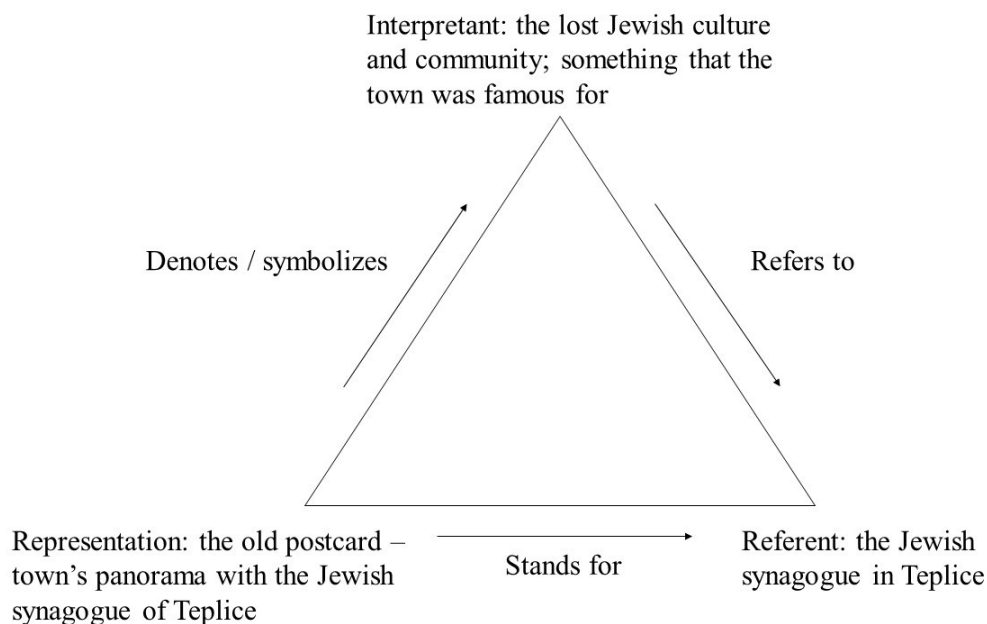
Semiotic approach

While working with the selected material, I applied a semiotic approach in the visual analysis. The selection of photographs used in the PEIs (see table 3 and 4) was made based on this approach. Semiotics presumes that ‘messages are made of signs and conveyed through sign systems called codes; meaning is derived only to the degree that the receiver of the message understands the code’ (Moriarty 2002: 20–21). My understanding of how these codes, encapsulated in the photographs (visual texts of memory), work is founded on Peircean semiotics, where one of the key concepts is interpretation (against de Saussure’s idea of arbitrary signs). Interpretation as such is regarded as essential when it comes to making sense out of visuals (2002: 21). According to Peirce, a sign represents somebody

for something in regard to something. His theory of signs includes three elements: signifier/representation (the form of a sign), signified/referent (the object or concept), and an interpretant (the idea inside the concept; the sense made out of a sign).

In regard to this, I decided to code the pictures with metonymies (part for the whole), since the photographs are constantly denotative and connotative at the same time, and they ‘move’ from the indexical mode, losing their primary context, becoming more and more connotative—either iconic or symbolic (Scott in Cabañes 2017: 34–35). Metonymies are connotative signs, the kind of signs which are ‘associated with something else, which then represents that something else’ (Rose 2012: 82).

In the presented research, there is a metonymic shift, meaning that the metonymies (along with other rhetorical figures, such as metaphors, for instance) may function as connotations. The metonymies encoded in the visual texts of memory function as symbols for some specific community (community of memory), and they denote the photographs with the specific triad of interpretants. For instance, a photograph of the synagogue in Teplice (see Appendix 3. Picture 5) denotes the meaning of the Jewish culture and community which used to be in the town of Teplice.



Graph 2. Metonymic triangle of reference for the visual text of memory included in the research. (see Appendix 3. Picture 5)

Sampling (interviewees)

Choosing the proper way of sampling in qualitative research seems to be one of the most complex challenges in the study design. For the purpose of the discussed research, a purposive sampling technique was implemented while designing the sample for both borderland locations. Purposive sampling, which could also be called judgment sampling, consists of choosing research participants on the basis of differing qualities or characteristics which are desirable from the point of view of the research. The technique is not random, and the researcher is the one who decides what criteria people are to meet in order to be included in the research sample. (Etikan et. al 2015: 2). Purposive sampling methods could be divided into a few kinds. Regarding the discussed research, maximum variation sampling (MVS), also known as ‘heterogeneous sampling’, was chosen for this study. MVS is based on selecting research participants on a broad spectrum of qualities relevant to the research. The aim of this sampling approach is to comprehend the studied phenomenon at its fullest from different possible perspectives. (Etikan et. al 2015: 3)

All things considered, this seems to be the most suitable way to design the samples for both borderland regions in order to reflect their heterogeneity and borderland variety. The following criteria was chosen to correspond best with the sociodemographic, ethnic, and other important features of the borderland community, which may also contribute to answering the research questions:

- age;
- gender;
- education—the category was chosen as, presumably, there might have been a difference regarding knowledge of the past related to education level;
- ethnic background—the category implies the family background of the interviewee, especially in the pre-, post-war context;
- generational affiliation—the category was introduced in order to identify how long a particular person and their family has been living in the borderland (if they are indigenous, people resettled after WWII, or moved to the place later);
- role in the community of memory—the last criterium added to the list is strictly connected to the notion of communicative collective memory and was added on the basis of Kansteiner’s idea of memory makers and memory users.

The tables below show the designed samples for the research in both borderlands and include all the categories described above. In order to meet the requirements of anonymity and maintain research ethics, all the names of the interviewees have been changed to various Polish or Czech equivalents.

Sample for Teplice (Czech-German borderland)

The sample consisted of fourteen interviewees of different age, gender, and ethnic background, including members of families which used to live in Teplice before the Second World War. The youngest interviewee was eleven, the oldest was ninety-six when conducting the field research. The sample reflected three main ethnic groups which used to live in Teplice—Germans, Jews, and Czechs—and cover both memory makers and memory users of the community.

Interviewee	Age	Ethnic origin	Education	Gender	Generation in borderland	Role in the community of memory
Jana	27	Czech	higher	F	3rd	memory user (local activist)
Eliška	12	Czech-German	student	F	more than 5	memory user
Helena	11	Czech-German	student	F	more than 5	memory user
Michal	26	Czech-German	higher	M	more than 5	memory maker (local activist)
Jakub	30	Czech	higher	M	3rd	memory maker (local activist)
Eva	39	Czech	higher	F	1st	memory user
Jiří	42	Czech-German	higher	M	more than 5	memory user
Martin	72	Czech	higher	M	more than 5	memory user
Alena	62	Czech-German	secondary	F	3rd	memory user
Petr	72	Czech	secondary	M	1st	memory maker (local activist)
Jan	50	Czech	higher	M	2nd	memory user
Kryštof	52	Czech-Jewish	secondary	M	2nd	memory maker (local activist)
Barbora	96	Czech	elementary	F	more than 5	memory user
Tomáš	40	Czech	high school	M	more than 5	memory user

Table 1. Research sample participants in Teplice.

Sample for Reszel (Polish-German borderland)

The sample consisted of twelve interviewees of different age, gender, and ethnic background. All of the research participants were from families which resettled after the war from different parts of pre-war Poland. Representatives of the indigenous German-speaking community are barely found in the town today. Due to the economic situation, the younger generations migrated, at the latest, to Germany in the 1990s.

The youngest interviewee was twenty-one and the oldest was eighty-six when the field research was conducted. The sample reflected the most common ethnic background of the resettled people in Reszel: Polish (Roman Catholic), Ukrainian (Greek Catholic), Polish from today's Lithuania (mostly Roman Catholic), and Polish from today's Belarus (Roman Catholic or Orthodox). It also covers both memory makers and memory users of the community.

Interviewee	Age	Ethnic origin	Education	Gender	Generation in borderland	Role in the community of memory
Piotr	81	Polish	elementary	M	1st	memory user
Andrzej	52	Polish	high school	M	2nd	memory user
Halina	59	Polish from Belarus	higher	F	2nd	memory user
Iwona	30	Polish	higher,	F	3rd	memory user
Marcin	31	Polish	higher	M	3rd	memory maker
Waldemar	48	Ukrainian	high school	M	2nd	memory maker
Marek	86	Polish from Lithuania	elementary	M	1st	memory user
Katarzyna	30	Polish	higher	F	3rd	memory user
Maciej	33	Polish	high school	F	3rd	memory maker
Paweł	21	Polish	student	M	3rd	memory user
Aleksandra	52	Polish	high school	F	2nd	memory user
Marta	56	Polish	higher	F	2nd	memory maker

Table 2. Research sample participants in Reszel.

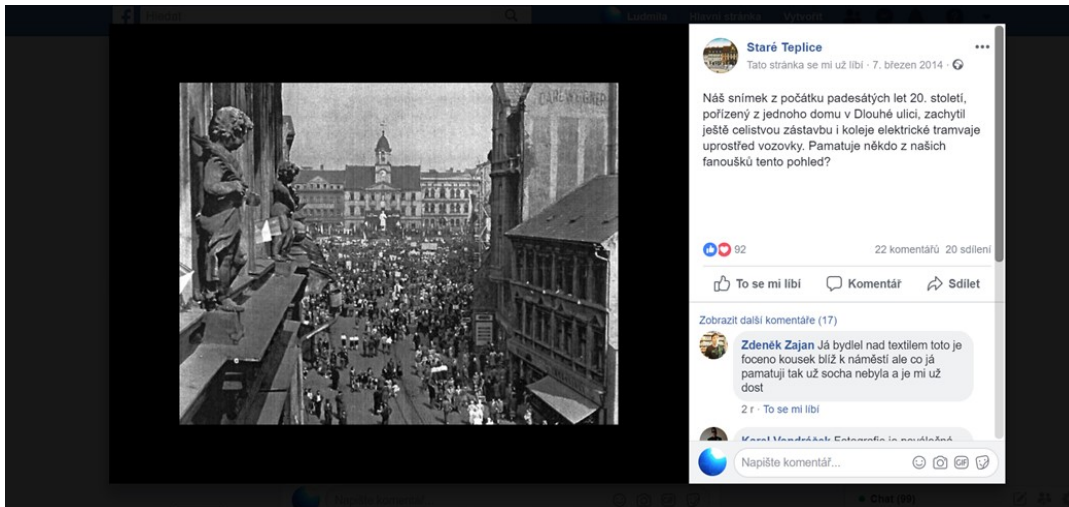
Selection of photos used in the photo-sample for the PEIs

The photo samples (See Appendix 3 and 4) used during the interviews were designed to reflect different elements of local memory and contained the following elements:

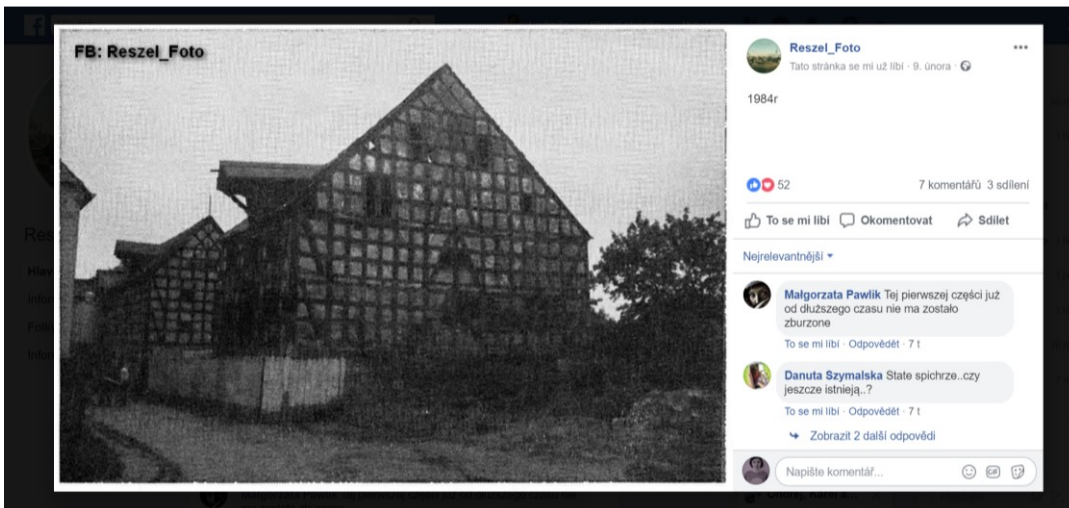
- public places with/without people;
- monuments;
- panoramic views;
- religious places;
- community activities—sport, etc.;
- commemorations and celebrations;
- train stations and railways;
- 1945 and war related photos; and
- symbols reflecting the change of 1989.

The Teplice sample consisted of twelve photos, while Reszel's comprised fifteen. Having considered the nature of internet-based collective memory texts, as described in the theoretical chapter on memory, the source for all the photos was the Internet and mostly from different Facebook fan pages created by the memory makers where different digital visual texts of memory had been uploaded, published, shared, and commented on (for the list of internet sources see Appendix 2).

The two screenshots below are from two popular fan pages regarding old pictures and photos from the two borderlands, demonstrating the popularity of this way of memory-communication. Through these fan pages, past actions, places, or events are both available and tangible across time and space, through semiotic representations captured by the digitally reproduced images (Hajek, Lohmeier, Pentzold 2016: 4). They also become the subject of 'interpretative cooperation' (Hájek, Dlouhá 2014: 207) as people discuss them and attempt to place them in the correct temporal and spatial context, as well as historical or other discourses. What is more, the interpretation very often goes through individual experience and family-oriented memories. In line with this, I analysed different websites and social media pages to decide what pictures would work for photo-elicitation in the sense of allowing people to talk, name, frame, and negotiate the meanings.



Picture 1. A screen shot presenting a social media website devoted to visual texts of memory of Teplice.



Picture 2. A screen shot presenting a social media website devoted to visual texts of memory of Reszel.

Teplice

The set of photos tested during the interview consisted of twelve photographs, carefully selected from the internet sources described above for the purpose of photo-elicitation. The photos represent different elements/parts of the communicative collective memory typical for the town of Teplice.

Photo Number	Main theme	Metonymy
1	classic view with the mountain	universal beauty of the place
2	Czech policemen marching out of town after the Munich Agreement	once Czech, then gone
3	the town's most representative street in the 1950s	once beautiful, then destroyed/non-existing
4	protests on Beneš Square (1989 Velvet Revolution)	once politically important, then periphery
5	a synagogue	once Jewish past, then gone
6	village of Flaje	once a normal place with people, then no place/no people
7	old brewery	once economically prosperous, then abandoned, bankrupt
8	<i>odsun</i> and liberation of Teplice in 1945	once German, then gone
9	train station in the 1960s	train station, non-connotative picture
10	crowded cafe in the old theatre building	once well-known and stylish, then average, provincial
11	football game on the local playground	universal sport activity
12	local commemorations (of American soldiers who died during WWII)	once absent in collective memory, then commemorated on the political level

Table 3. Set of photos used in Teplice PEI.

Reszel

The set of photos tested during the interview consisted of fifteen photographs. The photographs were chosen from different internet sources. The photos represent different elements/parts of the communicative collective memory typical for the town of Reszel.

Photo Number	Main theme	Metonymy
1	a baroque sanctuary	unquestioned monument and universal beauty
2	local fire station	one of only a few community making places
3	old granaries	once beautiful, now destroyed
4	ruins of the restaurant Hotelowa	once full of people, now depopulated
5	Catholic public ceremony on the street (which took place in Poland)	once a part of state-wide events
6	Villa Maria	once well-known and stylish, then average, provincial
7	view of the main town square (German times)	once economically prosperous and well-kept, then bankrupt, poor
8	view of an ordinary street (communist times)	once a living street with buildings, now empty, destroyed
9	classic panoramic view of the town (German times)	universal beauty of the place
10	train station (German times)	once politically important, then periphery
11	a medieval monument (recently restored)	once absent in collective memory, then commemorated only by memory makers
12	monument of the Franco-Prussian War	once part of collective memory (German times), now forgotten, excluded
13	first free political elections of 1989, during the Solidarity movement in Poland	once politically important, now provincial
14	people waiting in a queue for food before a shop (communist times)	socialist economy of shortage
15	old vicarage	once beautiful, now destroyed

Table 4. Set of photos used in Reszel PEI.

Structure of photo-elicitation interview

Assuming that the photos together with the questions asked during the interviews, understood here as interchange, served as potential face-threatening acts, forcing participants to take action to maintain their positive face (connected to one's self-image and personality—in this case, to being an inhabitant of the borderland region and belonging to the borderland community, and, consequently to the community of memory), the interviews were structured as follows:

1. Respondents were given the selected collection of images (up to fifteen), and they were asked to create a collage from the pictures that, according to them, relate to the past/memory/history of their region.

Q1: 'Please, select from the presented pictures those which you associate with the past of your region.'

After selection, the following questions concerned the selected set of images; the researcher took a photo of the images selected by the interviewee.

2. The interview then focused one-by-one on the pictures the interviewee chose.

Q2: Why have you chosen that picture?

Q3: What is special about that picture?

Q4: Have you seen that picture before? If so, where?

There was also a revealing and discussion part of the interview after the researcher revealed and explained some unknown information.

3. Then, the interview focused on the pictures which were *out of the frame* and the reasons why respondents had not included them.

Q5: Why did those photos not fit with the rest you have just chosen?

4. The respondents were then asked, if there was any picture they would like to add to their collage but which was not included in the set.

Q6: Is there any other picture or image you can think about, but cannot find here?

5. All the respondents' collages were photographed and then compared.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, I decided to provide the context for the interview and presented pictures (source for the pictures) at the beginning. It allowed me to set up the interview in frames—otherwise the interviewee would feel lost and have problems with finding a proper point of reference for the discussed topic.



Picture 3. Example of a *collage* made out of the provided photos by one of the interviewees (Michal, 30, Czech origin), Teplice, Czech Republic, 2016.



Picture 4. Example of a *collage* made out of the provided photos by one of the interviewees (Aleksandra, 52, Polish origin), Reszel, Poland, 2017.

The data

The data, as mentioned before, was gathered during field research in two different Central European borderland regions. Firstly, I went to the Czech-German borderland town of Teplice in 2016, where I applied a purposive sampling method and conducted photo-elicitation interviews (PEIs)—discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. In 2017, I then repeated the same methodological and sampling approach in Reszel, Poland, a cultural and historical Polish-German borderland. I conducted all the interviews myself in the native language of my respondents or, in one case, an official language (a Ukrainian ethnic respondent)—Polish in Poland and Czech in the Czech Republic.

I later coded the material, first by importance and then using a coding sheet I had prepared on the basis of the research questions and theoretical approach underlying my study. The analysis was done in the language of the research—both in Czech and Polish. The extracts and utterances from the interviews presented in this chapter were translated into English for the purpose of this dissertation thesis. Since some meaning could have been lost or not reflect properly the original intentions of the author or the analytical interpretation, the original version is always provided for the reader in a footnote.

Access, ethics, and informed consent

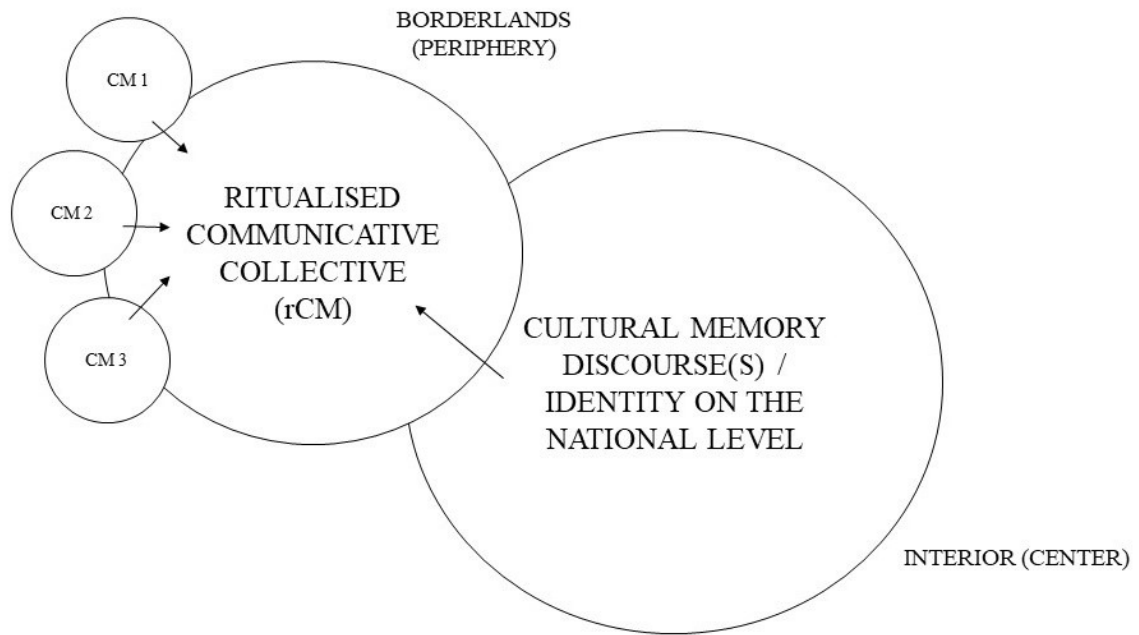
All the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analysed as text documents in the language of origin (Polish or Czech). All the interviewees were informed about the procedures and asked to accept the terms of the interview and later data usage for scientific purposes. The research was anonymous, and the personal information is known only to the researcher and will not be used in the analytical part of the study nor in any presentation of the results. Other data—digital images—used both in the interviews and as a part of the semiotic analysis come from different internet sources listed at the end of the thesis (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)

COLLECTIVE MEMORY: ITS FORM AND ROLE IN AN ETHNIC, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL BORDERLAND

The following chapter is devoted to the main part of the post-field analysis. The face-work theory, introduced in the second chapter, is used as analytical tools for the gathered data. Throughout the analysis the main research questions are addressed—the form and role of communicative memory (CM) in the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands of Central Europe, as well as its elements.

How does communicative collective memory work?

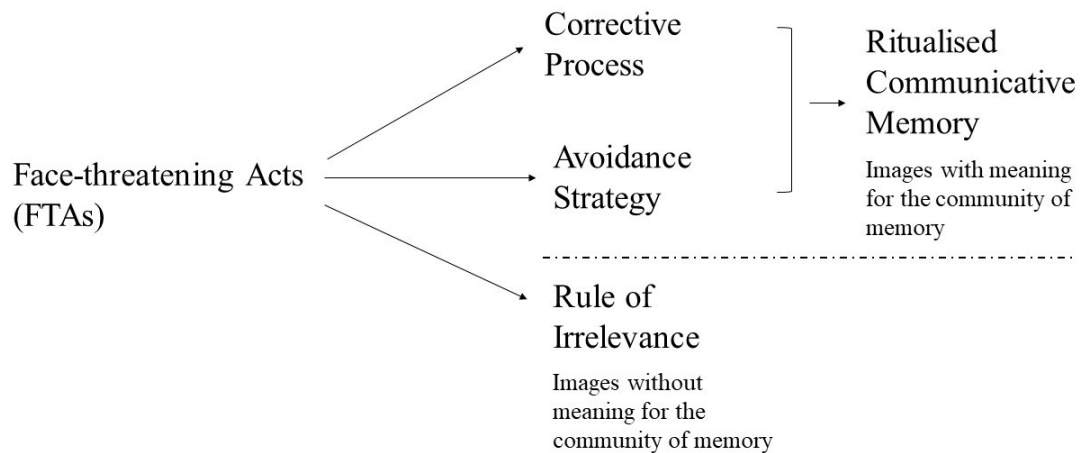
As I explained in the theoretical introduction, collective memory (i.e., human activity that can be subsumed under this term) fulfils the social function of creating (constituting) and maintaining members of the community (of memory). It may lead to both consensus and conflict. Communicative memory (CM) is a domain of interaction between members of the community in which they actualise (make present) documents of memory (souvenirs, images, objects, documents, etc.). Communicative memory interaction has the potential for dissensus because it is driven by particular knowledge and the interests of individuals. In my research, I found that it is ritualised into certain locally functional notions (metaphors, scripts, taboos, etc.) which are not yet institutionally fixed as cultural memory (e.g., they do not appear in textbooks, museums, etc.); however, they are shared, and members of the community of memory are aware of them. It seems that ritualised communicative memory (rCM) thus functions as protection against the actualisation of a conflictual past threatening the identities (in the form of face-threatening acts) of its members in their mutual interactions. The relations between communicative memory, cultural memory, and ritualised communicative memory are depicted in the illustrated graph below.



Graph 3. The phenomenon of ritualised collective memory.

Face-work in PEIs on communication memory

We can find acts pertaining to rCM in various places but, in this case, it was stimulated through the research. We encounter it as objects of display which explicitly or implicitly inform about the identity of an individual or a group. This process is performative when necessary and leads to *memory display*. Ritualised memory appears when some gesture, metaphor, taboo, etc. is used by different members of the community for similar purposes. I have applied Goffman's strategies of face-keeping in a face-threatening situation to the analysis of the conducted interviews. For the purpose of the research, I have changed the Goffmanian *avoidance process* to the more suitable, for my research, *avoidance strategy*. I have also included the *rule of irrelevance*, discussed in the theoretical chapter, as a third possible reaction to a face-threatening situation evoked by questions and when facing the selected images (visual texts of memory).



Graph 4. Face-keeping strategies in FTA situations.

The graph above presents the interpretation of FTA strategies during photo-elicitation interviews on communication memory in the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands. Corrective process and avoidance strategy may lead to the ritualisation of communicative memory under suitable circumstances. The rule of irrelevance is applied to the elements of memory, mediated through visuals, which are deprived of any meaning to the community of memory and in the memory-making process. The elements put aside and made irrelevant in the process also have a potential for ritualisation; nevertheless, this requires a specific change in the social, economic, political, or axiological constellation inside the community of memory.

The display of different meanings functions as a face-threatening act which made research participants undertake certain face-work strategies. This allows for the observation of the communicative memory in practice, that is, in interaction not only with a researcher's question(s) but, most of all, with the visual texts of memory.

Coding

The following table presents the analytical coding according to which data from both borderlands were coded. The coding was oriented towards capturing the face management of my respondents in situations of communicative memory actions created by me in a photo-elicitation interview.

The first three codes focus on different interactional face-working strategies introduced by Goffman and described in the theoretical chapter of this thesis; the code rCM stands for the ritualised CM and its function in the studied borderland communities of memory. The last code was created to capture the process of pre-mediality of memory and to check to what extent rCM in a borderland is mediated through mostly digital visual texts of memory (photographs, pictures, movies, etc.).

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION
FTA: corrective process	Role of CM
FTA: avoidance strategy	Role of CM
FTA: rule of irrelevance	Role of CM
ELEMENT (IMAGE1 -> IMAGE 12)	Elements of CM
Ritualised communicative memory (rCM)	Form of CM/most frequent motives of CM (gesture, metaphor, taboo etc.)
Mediality/Visuality of memory	Relation between media of memory and CM

Table 5. Coding of communicative memory (CM) in photo elicitation interviews.

On the basis of the already discussed coding, I would like to present the results of the analysis, focusing on the particular FTA actions which occurred during the photo-elicitation interviews. The analysis is conducted on examples of reactions of the interviewees while exposed to images capturing various meanings connected to the region's past and its present condition. The aim of the analysis of various types of face-work is to uncover different elements of collective memory, the way they function inside the community of memory, and, most of all, to reveal the elements of ritualised communicative collective memory.

For each citation there is information regarding the age, ethnic origin, and specific borderland.

Corrective process

The *corrective process* (CP) is, as already discussed in the theoretical chapter, a situation recognised as a possible FTA, forcing an individual to undertake actions which restore order, to correct it and re-establish interactional equilibrium (Goffman 1967: 1–45). In the conducted interviews, while confronted with the researcher's questions and visual texts of memory, the research participants pursued the corrective process in the various FTAs which occurred during the interviews and which are described below.

The first such situation was the moment where the interviewees agreed with the researcher's question(s), although it was unclear whether they really agreed or not. It took

the form of a short agreement, functioning as a closure of the topic, suggesting that the interviewee did not want to elaborate on the particular issue. It re-instituted the interactional equilibrium along with establishing a certain consensus regarding the meaning of particular elements of collective memory. The following example is in regard to a railway connection in the Polish-German borderland (see picture 10, Appendix 4):

FTA (direct question about the railways) | R: How about the railways?

Face-keeping—CP | I: Well, railways? They used to be here.

Now, they are gone.¹

(Piotr, 81, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

The problem of railways in the town of Reszel is a fragile topic as the town was extremely well connected by rail during German times. It was still a part of the communist railway system of Northern Poland, although much smaller and limited compared to German times. After 1989, the railway connections were shut down and the town became cut off from the rest of the region and country. The picture of the railway station from the German period, together with the researcher's direct question, threatened the respondent's face through direct confrontation with the town's isolation and regional marginalisation after 1989. The situation, which resulted in the interviewee experiencing an FTA, made him undertake the corrective process to protect his face as an inhabitant of the place—the interviewee has been living in the borderland since 1945 and has experienced most of those changes himself. He agreed that the railways used to be here and ended the subject by stating 'now they are gone' (a new definition of the situation).

Another example comes from the Czech-German borderland, where the interviewee, while choosing between pictures, picked one (see picture 6, Appendix. 3), because it 'seemed nice' and, when given the proper context of the mountain village which

¹ R: A kolej?

I: No kolej – była. Teraz już nie ma.

was destroyed and made into a water tank after the war, just as quickly agreed with the place and restored the interactional equilibrium by closing the subject.

Pre-FTA | I: This one seems nice to me.

FTA (information about the exact place) | R: This is Flaje.

Face-keeping—CP | I: Ore Mountains, Flaje. Yes. So, yes.²

(Eva, 39, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

Since the picture captures children (presumably ethnic Germans) standing in the middle of the village in the 1930s, it was at first classified as nice by the interviewee. The proper contextualisation though, provided by the researcher, served as an FTA, as the village is one of the symbols of depopulation and material destruction which took place in the region during the post-war period and changed the memoryscape of the Czech-German borderland forever.

A second situation when the interviewees pursued the corrective process was in the exchange of roles with the researcher, when they tried to frame the image and the particular element of CM before the researcher's question. This turn might be interpreted as a safe interactional strategy which would allow the interviewees to control the situation and not allow questions that might serve as FTAs, especially regarding some complex historical events and moments. The interviewees provided the researcher with a 'correct' interpretation and placement of particular visuals before they could become a potential FTA.

An example for this kind of interaction was dialogue regarding the Jewish past of Teplice, where an interviewee herself turned to the picture of the no-longer-existing synagogue (see picture 5 in Appendix 3) and proved that she has knowledge regarding this particular place and its history; by pointing to its fame, she demonstrates an

² I: Tady to, ta je mi docela sympatická.

R: To jsou Fláje.

I: Krušný hory, Fláje. Jo, Tak jo.

acknowledgement of the positive role of the Jewish community but without saying so explicitly. The danger of being a potential ancestor of destroyers of the Teplice's Jewish community (uncertainty is typical for the borderlands, as ethnic and other roots were tabooed during the communism) is thus ritually prevented by pointing to the fact that the synagogue 'used to be famous for something' (a positive and acclaimed meaning for the community of memory) .

Face-keeping—CP (guessing the place) | I: I think this is that Jewish—,
a former Jewish
synagogue . . .

FTA (confirmation of the supposition) | R: Yes, that's it.

Face-keeping—CP (proof for community membership) | I: I know that it used to be
here, and that it used to be
famous for something.³

(Eva, 39, Czech origin, memory user, Czech-German borderland)

A similar process could be observed in the Polish borderland. Below, there is an example of a situation whereby the interviewee herself framed the image showing posters of the first free elections in Poland in June 1989 and provided an interpretation of the event, putting it in the wider context of state-wide political change. She subscribes to the evaluation of the event but, at the same time, distances herself from it by acknowledging that she knows nothing about it.

³ I: Já myslím, že to je ten židov-, bejvalá synagoga židovská...

R: Mh, to je ona.

I: O který vim, že to, že tu byla, že byla něčím i významná.

Face-keeping—CP (proof of knowledge about an event on the local and countrywide scale)

I: And another picture, the eruption of the Solidarity movement in Reszel. I hardly knew anything about it at that time. But . . . it was a very important moment in the history of our town, and the country as well. ⁴

(Marta, 56, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland—reacting to a picture chosen by the interviewee herself in her collage)

Linking the local history with the official historical discourse on the national level was a common strategy of the corrective process. The condition is the historical importance of it from the perspective of the community of memory, which does not have to follow or be in accordance with the national or official historical discourse (the relation between cultural memory in Assmann's theory and the communicative memory shared among members of the borderland community). This means that it might be related to the official institutionalised version of the memory (presumably cultural memory on a state-wide scale); however, it might also be an element important from the perspective of a community as well as being completely site-specific and understood only by the community members. Most of the interviewees tried to combine unofficial/local/private memories and associations with historical events of nationwide importance or part of a bigger movement. This appears to be another safe strategy which prevents further FTAs from occurring and functions as a quick restoration of the interactional equilibrium.

I: Kolejne zdjęcie – rozkwit Solidarności w Reszlu. Małą miałam wtedy wiedzę na ten temat. Ale... był to ważny rozdział w historii miasta, tak jak zresztą w całym naszym kraju.

FTA (direct question about the interviewee's selection) | R: Why have you chosen those six photos?

Face-keeping—CP (justification using cultural memory categories) | I: So, that's the town. They seem historical to me.⁵

(Eva, 39, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

The interviewee based her choice of six photos, which according to her belong to the local history, on the condition of their historicity. Something worth remembering and commemorating is perceived as carrying the value of historical importance, meaning a memory component shared by a bigger group of members in the community of memory and which goes beyond narrow family/relative/ethnic frames. Her choice includes three of the most frequent rCM elements discussed later in this chapter.



**Picture 5. A photo collage by the interviewee
(Eva, 39, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland).**

⁵ R: A proč si vybrala těch šest fotek?

I: No jako to město prostě jako. A přijdou mi takový jako historický.

The corrective process reveals how certain elements of local communicative memory prevent possible frictions while being corrected in interactional intercourse, where a certain meaning—safe from the perspective of FTAs—is ascribed to them. The status of being part of the cultural memory—something important—is a strategy which helps members of the community of memory (inhabitants of the peripheral borderland) to avoid direct confrontation with certain elements of the borderland reality and allows for further ritualisation of certain elements of communicative memory.

Avoidance strategy

The avoidance strategy (AS) is based on the Goffmanian avoidance process, where a person employs a strategy to avoid an FTA. During a photo-elicitation interview, the interviewees pursued a strategy of avoiding some sort of questions or confrontation with particular events, images, motives, etc. The strategy was observed in four different types of memory display.

Firstly, the avoidance strategy was pursued by the inhabitants of the borderland community when confronted with photos they recognise as elements of CM but which they consider a potential threat element to their identity or group membership. The avoidance strategy thus makes it possible to distinguish between CM and rCM. The most typical example might be the post-war history of the Sudetes, which for some members of the community of memory might serve as the biggest face-threatening act:

FTA (a direct question concerning the expulsion of Germans)

R: So, how about the expulsion, for instance? Any personal attitude towards it?

Face-keeping—AS (declared distance from the event)

I: No, no, no. I don't have any, because I am from. . . I'm not from here, like . . . from this community which used to be here, yeah . . . from Germany, not even partially, yeah. And, perhaps, it is also a historic tragedy, but I think this was measure for measure, right?⁶

(Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Czech-German borderland)

Because the expulsion of the Germans is a very contested issue and, therefore, has the potential to threaten the face of the interviewee, in particular when asked about a personal attitude, he first refused to give the opinion ('no, no, no'), referring to his outsider status in the community of memory ('I'm not from here'). Nevertheless, once his position outside of the community was declared and, consequently, his membership face was temporarily suspended, he could express his personal opinion, which is identical to the mainstream interpretation of the event.

In the Polish-German borderland the reaction of the interviewee, who is old enough to remember the monument he was asked about, serves as an example. In this case, the participant pretended to hardly know what the question was about. The monument was placed by the communist government in a small park in the middle of the town to commemorate the Red Army defending Nazi Germany and winning the Second World War. The monument was abandoned after 1989 but left in place. It was demolished after the interview, in 2018, on the basis of a de-communisation bill introduced by the Polish government, which ordered the demolition all the monuments symbolising the communist regime in the country:

⁶ R: Mh, jo. A co třeba odsun? Máš k tomu nějaký jakýkoli vztah?

I: Ne, ne, ne. Nemám, protože jsem ani jakoby nepocházím z té komunity jakoby, která tady byla, jo. Z Německa ani částečně nějak, jo, a je to taky asi tragédie historická, ale myslím si, že to bylo něco za něco, že jo.

FTA (a suggestion implicating there is another monument) | R: There is this small monument as well.

Face-keeping—AS (declaring a lack of knowledge) | I: The one in the small park? But I don't remember, I don't know, it. . . . Something's there, something's there. . . . I don't know.⁷

(Andrzej, Polish origin, 52, Polish-German borderland)

Like in the quote above, the most common answer in the avoidance strategy was 'I don't know', which allowed members of the community of memory *to keep their face* by proving insufficient knowledge about the particular element of the town's history (and about cultural memory as well). The strategy might be undertaken to hide an opinion which does not suit that shared by the community, even in the form of rCM; or, when rCM is not available, as in the example of the memorial.

In a confrontation, one possible approach is to hide the personal through the veil of an avoidance strategy:

⁷ R: Jest jeszcze ten mały pomnik.

I: Ten w parczku? Ale ja nie pamiętam, nie wiem, on Coś tam coś tam..... nie wiem

FTA (a direct question regarding the interviewee's own experiences and their evaluation)

R: And how did the Germans treat you during the war?

Face-keeping—AS (refusing to answer the question directly)

I: Not in any manner, so.⁸

(Barbora, 96, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

A few times in the interview, this interviewee referred to the war that she, as an ethnic Czech, spent in Teplice—part of the Third Reich at that time—as a great time in her life. Her unwillingness to interpret the war and Czech-German relations through the common (both the mainstream societal memory and rCM) frame of terror and violence, presumably due to her good personal memories of that time, is performed through the avoidance strategy.

Another possible way to avoid a memory display which one might find threatening their face is detachment from the element of memory using the time perspective:

FTA—facing the picture.

I: So, here is a march; these are not my times [Face-keeping—AS (self-declared time and space distance)]. And here is the other part of the town.⁹

[Face-keeping—AS (change of subject by choosing next photo)]

(Iwona, 30, Polish, Polish-German borderland)

The picture (see picture 14, Appendix 4) presents an ordinary queue in front of a shop during communist times, but it was rather often interpreted as a political march organised

⁸ R: A jak se vůči vám jakoby chovali Němci během války_

I: Nijak, no.

⁹ I: Tutaj jakiś pochód, to już nie moje czasy. A tutaj ta strona miasta....

in Poland on May 1st each year (the communist International Workers' Day). The woman avoids any elaboration or further interpretation by classifying the element as 'not from my times'. By saying this, she implies that, because of her age, she is not a competent member of the community of memory of communist times.

Collective memory and local identity

By undertaking this strategy, members of the community of memory also try to depoliticise their hybrid local identity. In the case of the borderland communities of memory, where people have different regional, ethnic, and religious roots, common ground for the local identity might be difficult to establish. For many of the interviewees, it was almost impossible to identify themselves with one notion of their identity.

FTA (a direct question regarding the interviewee's own experiences and their evaluation)

R: Do you feel like you are from Reszel?

Face-keeping—AS (repeating the researcher's question)

I: Do I?

FTA (a following direct question points out the interviewee's place of birth)

R: Or maybe more so that you are from Vilnius?

Face-keeping—AS (no answer provided)

I: . . .¹⁰

(Marek, 86, Polish from Lithuania, Polish-German borderland)

¹⁰ R: A czuje się pan z Reszla?

I: Ja wiem?

R: Czy bardziej z Wilna?

I: ...

FTA (a direct question regarding the interviewee's own experiences and their evaluation)

R: If you have a sense of regional identity?

I: Yeah! If I have a sense of regional identity [Face-keeping—AS (repeating the researcher's question)] Oh. Regional identity. . . Oh, I don't quite know if I can have a sense of regional identity [Face-keeping—AS (hesitation, declaring a lack of knowledge)]. As if I can feel like someone from Teplice, right? [Face-keeping—AS (repeating the researcher's question)]¹¹

(Jakub, 42, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

The first respondent came to Reszel in 1952, so he spent most of his life there with his family. The latter was born in Teplice, spent all his life there and, what is more, comes from a family which used to live in Teplice before the Second World War on both his mother's (German) and father's (Czech) side. Therefore, it might be legitimate to expect that both of them would have some internal, socialised foundation in which to feel rooted to their place of living. The second interviewee's avoidance strategy towards the direct self-declaration of identity is even more surprising but might be perceived as proof of the tabooing of the regional identity in the former Sudetenland in Czech Republic. Declaring direct regional attachment in this region is still taken as directly declaring German nationality; however, by also declaring oneself a member of the community of memory, the respondents will find it difficult to adopt the avoidance strategy later in the interview.

This strategy of avoiding direct identity self-declaration could be interpreted through the broader question of regional/local identity in a cultural, political, and ethnic borderland; as there is still a lack of institutions or discourse matching borderland

¹¹ R: Pokud máš pocit regionální identity.

I: Jo! Jestli mám pocit regionální identity...Eh. Regionální identity. Eh, já úplně nevím, jestli jako můžu mít pocit regionální identity s, eh. Jestli se můžu jako cejitit jako tepličák. Eh, jo?

inhabitants to their place of living, the regional identity cannot be fully and openly performed.

Rule of irrelevance

The *rule of irrelevance* works when some elements of the past are made irrelevant for the community of memory and are not part of its ritualised version. In the conducted photo-elicitation interviews this was performed by not picking certain images for one's collages. This is a strategy which does not function as an FTA since it is deprived of any significance before it might threaten someone's face.

A particular visual element related to the past was interpreted as irrelevant by the members of community in two cases for the most part. First, when it contained some personal reference, for example, an unpopular local politician. The photo below was not chosen by any of the interviewees in Teplice, and very often it was described as: 'This is a Communist.' Although the picture presents the local commemoration of the American parachutists who found themselves in Teplice instead of Dresden during the war, an unpopular local politician with a communist past took part in. Through this political figure, the event was classified as unimportant, without meaning for the community of memory. Only one respondent declared any knowledge concerning the commemorations.



Picture 6. Local commemorations (of American soldiers who died during WWII), Teplice.

I: So, I have to admit that I do not know much about this part of history and this politician Bubeníček does not seem to me (laugh) an interesting personality.¹²
[while providing justification for not choosing the photo]

(Michal, 26, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: I am not choosing that one, you can take this away, since this is a communist governor.¹³ [interviewee-driven reaction to the picture in front of him]

(Petr, 72, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

Of note, none of the speakers expressed interest in the historical facts, even with the proper context introduced by the researcher.

The second picture—a railway station in the 1950s and a female dispatcher—was included in the PEI picture set as it represents ‘the train culture’ of the Czech Republic and trains are still the most popular means of transport in the borderland region. However, during my talks with people from Teplice, the picture did not evoke any historical connotations, associations, etc. Not once was it chosen by any of the interviewees to be included in their collages.

¹² I: Aha. Tak to se přiznám že jako nějaká část historie, vo který třeba ani moc nevím a nějak mě Bubeníček nepřipadal asi jako (smích) zajímavá postava.

¹³ I: Tady. Toho nevybírám, toho můžeš dát pryč, protože to je komunistickéj hejtman.



Picutre 7. Train station in 1960s Teplice.

I: Yeah, it looks so ordinary. . . (laugh).¹⁴

[while providing justification for not choosing the photo]

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: Hm. I don't know. This does not evoke anything in me.¹⁵

[while providing justification for not choosing the photo]

(Michal, 26, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

¹⁴ I: Jo, jo, jo, to vypadá tak obyčejně, no (smích).

¹⁵ I: To je možný, no. Ale nic mi to neříká prostě ta fotka.

While justifying their decision to make it irrelevant, the interviewees were looking for any meaning, connotations which might help them to place it somewhere. Instead, the picture was classified as ‘ordinary’ and ordinariness is outside the frame of communicative collective memory. Something is worth sharing and remembering when it contains something more than just the ordinary capture of railway reality.

In the Polish-German borderland there was one image which was either picked up as a significant symbol for the town and community or it was placed out of the frame. The building itself is an art nouveau style villa preserved in its original version to the present today. In German times it used to be a boarding school for girls. After the war, it was made into flats for people. Nowadays, the condition of the building is not good. It is one of the most significant architectural monuments in the town but unknown to ordinary inhabitants, hence why it was also classified as irrelevant.



Picture 8. Villa Maria.

I: And this is Villa Maria. I don't associate Villa Maria with any life. It just stands, I cannot say anything, and so on.¹⁶

[while providing justification for not choosing the photo]

(Iwona, 30, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

R: And Villa Maria?

I: Villa Maria, no! I don't know its history.¹⁷

[while providing justification for not choosing the photo]

(Halina, 59, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

Those who could place it in the proper context of architectural style, for instance, referred to it as a monument and a valuable building on the town's map:

FTA (a direct question regarding the building)

R: And Villa Maria?

FTA—CP (proving knowledge of architectural and local monuments)

I: A nice art nouveau building which has not changed for years. From the architectural point of view, it is a very interesting building in the region. It deserves a stop by, to take a look at it . . . a glance¹⁸

(Maciej, 33, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

¹⁶ I: Tutaj Villa Maria. Villa Maria tak z życiem to mi się w ogóle nie kojarzy. Sobie stoi, nic nie potrafię powiedzieć, i tak dalej

¹⁷ R: A Villa Maria?

I: Villa Maria nie! Nie znam jej historii.

¹⁸ R: A Villa Maria?

I: Fajna secesyjna kamienica, która się nie zmieniła od lat. Jest architektonicznie bardzo ciekawym obiektem w tym regionie. Zasluguje na, jakieś tam, zatrzymanie się Spojrzenie

FTA—CP (proving knowledge of architectural and local monuments)

I: So, here is the flagship building. We always showed it. This is Villa Maria. So nice that it is worth taking a look. That something like that used to be in Reszel before the war.¹⁹

(Waldemar, 48, Ukrainian origin, Polish-German borderland)

Since the pre-war history of the town is usually unknown to the inhabitants, and there are neither reliable nor accessible sources of knowledge regarding that subject, a direct confrontation with something which cannot be contextualised evokes an avoidance strategy among members of the community of memory (regardless of their level of education). In contrast, memory makers or users who were able to classify the monument both in place and time usually included it in their collages of memory.

Ritualised communicative memory (rCM)

The experience of sharing and exchange, especially through social media channels, makes the phenomenon social and collective. Those memories which are most shared and appear in the form of symbols, metaphors, taboos, etc. are being ritualised and form a ritualised communicative collective memory (rCM) which functions as protection against possible FTAs, meaning a threat to the status of the borderland inhabitant and a member of the particular community of memory. Proper ritualisation goes beyond the solemn corrective process since members of the community of memory willingly choose the elements, talk about them, and ascribe them certain meaning. The ritualised elements are no longer a threat, they are being internalised in the process of ritualisation.

Below, I present various examples of already ritualised communicative collective memory using extracts from the interviews and relevant images.

¹⁹ I: No tutaj taki sztandarowy obiekt, zawsze się pokazywało, tutaj jest Willa Maria. Taka fajna, że warto popatrzeć. Że coś takiego przed wojną w Reszlu było.

Symbols

Ritualised communicative memory has its own symbols which are site-specific, typical only for the particular place and fully comprehensible only to the members of the community of memory which shares them. In this part of the analysis, I discuss the most frequently appearing (most frequently chosen from the photo sample or mentioned by the interviewees) symbols and motives of communicative collective memory which I regard as ritualised.

Protests of 1989

The picture showing the protests on Beneš Square in Teplice (Czech-German borderland) in November 1989, preceding the main protests of the Velvet Revolution in Prague, was one of the pictures picked by the interviewees most often and included in their collages. Although the event does not belong to any official discourse on the Velvet Revolution (which means that it is still not a part of the cultural collective memory regarding Assmann's differentiation), it turned out to be a visible and distinct element of the ritualised communicative collective memory.



Picture 9. Protests on Beneš square (Velvet Revolution of 1989), Teplice.

The following extracts from different interviews indicate how the event (still not a part of any cultural memory discourse) is ritualised and shared and has become a collective experience, even among those who did not take part in it for different reasons (age, personal, etc.)

I: That one seems important to me. These are presumably ecological protests on Beneš Square, if I am correct. So that one seems to me that it captures some important moment.²⁰

(Michal, 26, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: That was a great feeling. This, this started with keys clinging . . . and this feeling of pride that we can do it . . . I am just thinking this cannot be those first days . . . People did not have banners prepared at the beginning.²¹

(Martin, 72, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: So, it actually started here, the revolution in November! And it was actually here that the Communists, meaning power, spoke for the first time, THE FIRST TIME, to the people!²²

(Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Czech-German borderland)

There protests are regarded as important, not only because they link an important historical event of nationwide recognition and which became institutionalised through a local event,

²⁰ I: Tak asi mi přijde důležitá tadle, to budou asi ekologický demonstrace na Benešáku, jestli se nepletu. Takže tadlecta mi jako přijde, že vystihuje důležitý moment nějaký.

²¹ I: No to byl pocit úžasný, takovýho toho, nooo tak takový to cinkání klíčkama začínalo, jo, prostě, asi asi hrdosti a to, že se dokážem tohle to... Já jenom přemejšlim, to nemůže bejt z těch prvních dnů. To ještě lidi neměli připravený transparenty.

²² I: A vlastně, jak byla revoluce v listopadu hned, tak tady to vlastně začlo! A tady vlastně komunista jako moc se poprvé POPRVÝ bavil s lidem!

but also—and what was highlighted by the interviewees—because it marked the beginning of the whole revolution and this is why it is important. As one of the interviewees said, ‘We were here before Prague’, meaning Teplice was the first place in Czechoslovakia where protests against the communist regime on such a scale started. The issue of recognition is crucial here. In a peripheral area which has lost its political and economic meaning, as discussed in the second chapter, the ritualisation of the events of particular political importance and potential state-wide recognition seems to be one of the functions of collective memory and shared remembering. It is important to add that the protests are also hardly present in the local public discourse and was not commemorated until a year after the research took place. Since 2017, a commemoration has been organised by local activists who might be classified as memory makers.

Little Paris: Theatre and spa life of Teplice

The metaphor of Little Paris appeared extremely often in the Teplice interviews as a phrase the members of the community of memory used to describe the town’s past. The image below, refers to it, as it looks like a Renoir painting and resembles the atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Paris. The photo, showing the old theatre cafe in Teplice, was also frequently chosen by the interviewees. What is important here is that the metaphor was used across gender, ethnic origin, and age categories (from an interviewee who was ninety-six to a young inhabitant of the town).



Picture 10. A crowded cafe in the old theatre building, Teplice.

I: This fame, that it was like a little Paris here, as my granny says, this might suit here, too.²³

(Tomáš, 40, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: This kind of nostalgia pisses me off. Everyone collects old postcards of Teplice and says that it used to be better, it was all beautiful, and a little Paris.²⁴

(Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: There was a huge difference [between Teplice and the rest of the Republic]. It was called a little Paris.²⁵

(Barbara, 96, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

²³I: Potom tady ta stará sláva, že to tady bylo jako malá Paříž, jak říká babička, to by možná bylo ještě i tady to k tomu, že...

²⁴ I: Mě to třeba hrozně sere ta nostalgie. Všichni sbíraj starý pohledy Teplice a říkají si, jak to dřív bylo lepší, jak to bylo krásný a malá Paříž

²⁵ I: To byl velkej rozdíl. To vono se říkalo Teplice malá Paříž.

But the image was chosen not only due to its resemblance to Paris but also due to its representation of the prestige Teplice used to have as a European-wide, well-known spa in the nineteenth century, where a lot of cultural activities took place, and where cultural life flourished (from today's perspective):

I: And this one. This theatre in the nineteenth century was something. There were those, there was an opera, a musical comedy theatre, a drama theatre. They came here to the baths. And I think that the cultural life was a dominant part of that bath life, which I regard as important.²⁶

(Jiří, 30, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

The picture stands for the glamorous past of the place and is connected as well to the economic prosperity of the town and region:

I: I am thinking about those villa parts of town which the Germans left . . . those . . . the people, who were rich and smart, brought some culture here.²⁷

(Jiří, 30, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

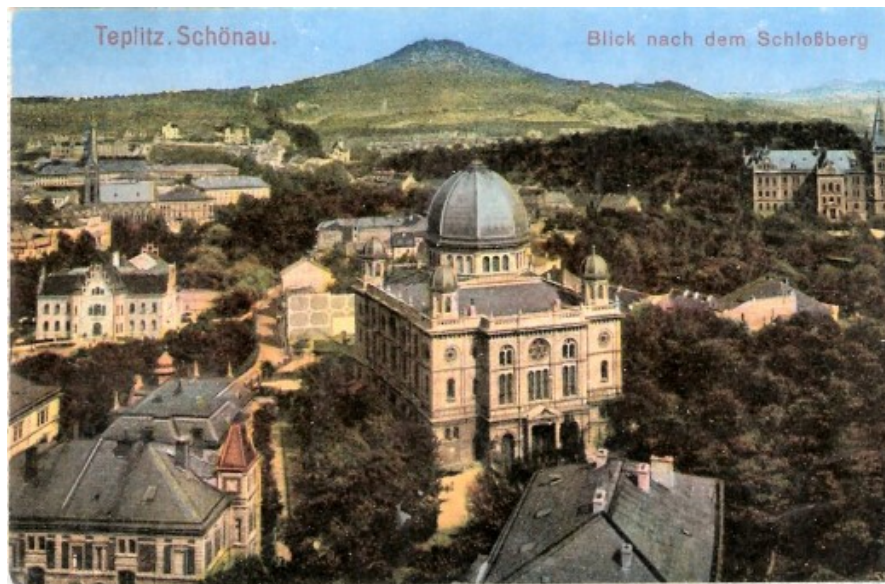
An important element of the ritualisation of the Little Paris metaphor is that the German past of the place is almost automatically incorporated into it.

²⁶ I: Pak tady ta. Protože vlastně to divadlo v celým 19. století, to bylo prostě něco, že jo. Tady byly ty, tady byla opera, opereta, činohra, jezdilo se sem do lázní a myslím si, že jako to ten kulturní život k tomu lázeňství silně patřil, tak proto si myslím, že je tohle důležitý.

²⁷ I: Mně se třeba asociujou ty vilový čtvrti, co tady zbyly po těch Němcích, ty který jako, kde vlastně žili ty lidi, který byly bohatý, chytrý a přinášeli sem nějakou kulturu a to, no.

Jewish synagogue

The third element of ritualised communicative memory in Teplice is the non-existing Jewish synagogue. Its ritualisation might be explained twofold: It is another dominant element of the memoryscape that is gone and exists only in old photographs, which refers to the aspect of loss in the ritualisation, but it also belongs to an ethnic community which no longer lives here. Their absence, however, is the result of a third force (the Second World War and Nazi occupation) and is not the result of Czech political or social actions. Therefore, compared to the difficult and complex history behind the expulsion of the German speaking population after 1945, it functions as a 'safe' element which cannot serve as a direct face threat. It is also worth mentioning that the synagogue was well-known in pre-war Czechoslovakia as it was one of the biggest in the country at that time.



Picture 11. The Jewish synagogue in Teplice.

R: And why the synagogue?

I: Because it was the biggest one in the Czech Republic. But is no longer here as it was demolished. I think this is an important part of the history of Teplice—this Jewish diaspora is still here somehow and, compared to the rest of the republic, it is rather significant. Or maybe significant is a too strong a word. But it is still functional, it has roots here.²⁸

(Jiří, 30, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: The Jewish synagogue was simply fascinating. It had . . . It had capacity for 2,000 believers. Here, before the war, eh, was the second largest Jewish community after Prague. 5,000 Jews used to live here, you know.²⁹

(Jan, 50, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: This is one of the symbols that has disappeared, big symbols of Teplice. And the whole community disappeared with it.³⁰

(Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Czech-German borderland)

It should be emphasised that the synagogue is also a symbol of something which is gone, both in a material and non-material sense: the building and the people. The motive of loss

²⁸ R: Proč? A proč ta synagoga?

I: No protože byla, že jo, největší v Čechách a už tady není, protože byla zbouraná. To si myslím, že je důležitá část té teplický historie, že ta židovská obec tady pořád tak nějak funguje a asi na poměry v republice je docela jako silná. Nebo silná je možná silný slovo, ale jako funkční, že to taky mělo kořeny.

²⁹ I: Židovská synagoga, která prostě byla fascinující. Měla... Vešlo se tam 2 tisíce věřících, což je neuvěřitelný. Tady byla před válkou, eh, vlastně druhá největší komunita Židů po Praze. 5 tisíc Židů tady bylo, jo.

³⁰ I: To je jedna ze symbolů jako takových, který zmizely, velkejch symbolů Teplic. A vedešla s tím celá komunita vlastně.

and disappearance is also being ritualised in the borderland communicative collective memory (discussed in detail later).

The biggest employer in the town: 'Mother REMA'

In the Polish-German borderland, members of the community of memory themselves pointed out an element which forms a significant part of the ritualised communicative memory but was not included in the photo sample. This was done purposefully, as the supposition was that this might be an interesting element of the shared memory of the community. Therefore, the aim was to check if and how it would appear during the interviews.

The topic of the once-operating factory appeared in some way in most of the interviews conducted in Reszel. The factory was described as 'Mother REMA' by some interviewees, explaining that this expression was commonly used by the inhabitants of the town to highlight that it was the main employer in the town:

I: So, REMA used to hire whole, whole families. When REMA went bankrupt, whole families fell with it. No, you won't take a picture of it, as it does not exist any longer. Maybe some old photos. When workers entered the factory through a main gate.³¹

(Andrzej, 52, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

³¹ I: Natomiast REMA zatrudniała całe, całe rodziny. Jak REMA padła i całe rodziny padły. REMĘ to powinnaś uwiecznić. Teraz to już nie uwiecznisz, bo już nie ma . Chyba, że jakieś stare zdjęcia. Gdzie robotnicy wchodzi tą główną bramą.

R: And does REMA have any meaning to you?

I: So, my father worked there and my grandfather as well. Now, half has been demolished. But the whole of Reszel was employed there, wasn't it? Taking into consideration that REMA was here, everyone was employed.³²

(Paweł, 21, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

The strategic importance of the factory to the condition of the town as whole (in regards to the problem of depopulation and migration of younger generations) was also raised:

I: But REMA and Szpulki [another smaller employer] used to hire the whole town, didn't they? So, you go out [now] and see only cars . . . [. . .] But there are no people.³³

(Aleksandra, 52, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

³² R: A REMA ma dla ciebie znaczenie?

I: No tata tam pracował i dziadek. Teraz już zburzyli, nie ma połowy. Ale cały Reszel miał tam pracę, tak? Biorąc pod uwagę, że ta REMA była, to wszyscy mieli pracę.

³³ I: Przecież REMA czy Szpulki, to kiedyś zatrudniały całe miasto, no nie? Wychodzisz i same samochody... [...] A ludzi nie widać.

REMA was also regarded and interpreted as one of the symbols for which the town was famous and recognised in the region:

I: REMA most of all. The whole post-war history of the town and this communist prosperity—so Mother REMA is one of the symbols of the town. Anyway, it still is when you go somewhere and meet older people. And I go to football matches, and when you talk to the elderly people—they associate REMA as integral to Reszel.³⁴

(Marcin, 31, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

I: Well, everyone was surprised that Reszel, not situated on any main route but a little out of the way, would have so many employers, so many factories.³⁵

(Marek, 86, Polish from Lithuania, Polish-German borderland)

Although a question regarding the bankrupt factory might work as an element evoking other FTAs (most commonly, the avoidance strategy) since the consequences of its closing were severe for the town's community—unemployment, increasing poverty, social problems related to a sudden change in the economic situations of families, and, last but not least, a loss of importance in the region—it instead revealed that the memory of REMA functions as this ritualised element, shared among members of the community of memory in Reszel.

³⁴ I: REMA to przede wszystkim. Czyli cała powojenna historia i taki komunistyczny rozkwit miasta to Matka REMA to jeden z symboli. Miasta. Z resztą do tej pory jak się pojedzie gdzieś tam wokół i starszych ludzi się spotyka...., a jak jeżdżę na mecze i ze starszymi ludźmi się gada, to Reszel nieodłącznie im się z REMĄ kojarzy.

³⁵ I: Także, także każdy dziwił się, jak na taki Reszel, na takie, że tak powiem, że ten Reszel nie przy głównej trasie, tylko tak troszkę na uboczu ale, że tu tyle miejsc pracy było, tyle zakładów.

The ruined restaurant Hotelowa

The photo sample for the town of Reszel in the Polish-German borderland also included a current photo of a restaurant which had been standing abandoned for more than twenty years on the main, historic square of the town and finally tumbled down. The photo evoked a lot of emotions and comments, indicating the ritualised and shared character of this element.



Picture 12. Ruins of the restaurant Hotelowa, Reszel.

I: That was a drinking place. Hotelowa—it was one big WATERING HOLE! Everybody—blue collar workers and bachelors and married people and REMA employers and other employers . . . Hotelowa was ‘a murder-hole’. Vodka poured like tap water there. . .

R: Really?

I: Yes. Vodka, vodka, vodka . . . typical of communism, to booze. After a work shift—6 a.m. to 2 p.m—at two o’clock there was a siren (the end of work) and, at 2:05 p.m., everybody was at Hotelowa.³⁶

(Andrzej, 52, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

I: I would never ever in my life let Hotelowa . . . let it fall down . . . this building.³⁷

(Aleksandra, 52, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

I: Well, people remember it, since Hotelowa is part of the history of those who are a little older . . . They used to say that is used to be a cheerful place. And on the first floor, above the restaurant, there was a place to play ping-pong. And people used to go there and passionately played ping-pong.³⁸

(Andrzej, 31, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

³⁶ I: Tam się piło. Hotelowa to się CHLAŁO! Tam wszyscy robotnicy, i kawalerowie i żonaci i pracownicy REMY i Nieremy,... Hotelowa to była „wykańczalnia”, tylko lała się woda strumieniami...

R: Naprawdę?

I: Tak. Wóda, wóda, wóda ... to typowa komuna taka, do chłania. PO pracy 6.00-14.00. O 14.00 wyła syrena (koniec pracy) i 14.05 już wszyscy pracownicy byli w Hotelowej.

³⁷ I: Bo ja w życiu bym nie dopuściła do czegoś takiego, żeby tą Hotelową, no żeby doprowadzić do upadłości tego budynku, no.

³⁸ I: No i wspomnienia ludzi, bo Hotelowa to kawał historii tych starszych trochę... Gadali o tym dużo, że to była taka knajpa wesoła. A na górze, nad Hotelową to była taka salka do ping-ponga. I ludzie chodzili i tam namiętnie grali w ping-ponga.

R: Do you like those old photos?

I: I do. I do, as I see it used to have atmosphere, here. And especially, this milk bar at the corner. These are not my times, but mum used to talk about it—as these are not my times—everyone went there after work, to Hotelowa for a glass of vodka and a tripe soup or a chicken soup. These are nice stories. So Reszel does not live like that anymore.³⁹

(Katarzyna, 30, Polish, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

The non-existing restaurant has become a symbol of the town's prosperity before 1989 and the economic turbulence following the transformation to the capitalist economy. Regardless of its status and reputation in connection to the town's biggest social problem—alcohol addiction—it is still regarded as something of a positive value for the community (mostly).

Having haunted inhabitants for almost thirty years, the story of this abandoned building has become a collective experience and a collective responsibility, one of the very few collective experiences the community could share in recent decades:

³⁹ R: Lubisz te stare zdjęcia Reszla?

I: Lubię. Lubię, bo widzę, że było naprawdę klimatycznie. Więc szczególnie ten bar mleczny co był na rogu. To nie są moje czasy, ale jak mi mama czasem opowiadała - bo to nie moje czasy - każdy po pracy chodził do Hotelowej na setkę i na flaki czy tam rosół. Jakby to są fajne historie. No Reszel już tak nie żyje, tak mi się wydaje przynajmniej.

I: You know, I know Hotelowa only from the stories. I regret it does not operate any longer as I am interested in what it used to look like. It evokes those old times. It haunted us for a long, long time with its look, and now there is no trace of it left. Well, I remember when it tumbled down. And this was dangerous. Such situations always make an impression on us, the inhabitants. We live by those events. It fell down!⁴⁰

(Iwona, 30, Polish, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

The ruined restaurant stands not only for the economic prosperity or the ‘normal’ functioning of the town but also for the community which used to gather there. It is a symbol of belonging to some place. The importance of it even precedes its material aspect since, despite no longer being there, the building is still a vivid and strong element of the ritualised communicative memory in Reszel.

Motives

Ritualised communicative memory has its own motives. The motives identified through the analysis were similar in both places and are presented in this way as relevant examples from the two borderlands.

Loss and ruin

Most of the respondents pointed to the notion of disappearance as something typical of the place. The rCM is, among other things, about dealing with loss and adapting to a situation of constant change in the landscape (understood both in the material and non-material sense). Through ritualisation, the component of loss, as an immersive part of things in the

⁴⁰ I: Wiesz co, Hotelowa to jest mi znana jakby tylko z opowieści. Żałuję, że to już nie funkcjonuje, bo byłam bardzo ciekawa jak to wygląda. Zawsze się takie starodawne czasy przypominają. No długo, długo straszyla takim wyglądem, a teraz nie ma po niej śladu. Tak więc pamiętam moment tego zawalenia. No i było to niebezpieczne. Takie sytuacje na nas, na mieszkańców zawsze robią jakieś wrażenie. My tym żyjemy. Bo to się zawaliło!

borderland, becomes part of shared remembering and no longer serves as a face-threatening trigger which might evoke hidden conflicts. Most of the interviewees referred to this experience as a key one of the place.

I: So, I have chosen these four photos. You can see here the oldest square, and here you can see a street which no longer exists, which in my opinion, is typical of Teplice. That these are things which you, which you just know of—that they used to be and now, and now they are no longer there (laugh). This is the feeling I have. I always walk down and think of what used to be here but is not anymore.⁴¹

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: Nobody did anything. It has been investigated recently. The building became more and more abandoned. Water got into it. It became a ruin and a few years ago they demolished it. Thus, in place of a municipal spa, there is a hole, where there is nothing.⁴²

(Tomáš, 40, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

Including this experience into the shared frame of ritualised communicative collective memory could be also seen as a way of dealing with this, at the very least, unpleasant (and sometimes perhaps traumatic) experience. In the second quotation, the interviewee says ‘nobody did anything’ but it is not clear to whom he refers. Nevertheless, he feels some kind of responsibility that something should have been done. He also says, ‘[t]hey

⁴¹ I: Tak jo, tak já jsem si vybrala tyhle čtyři, protože tady je vidět právě ta nejstarší to náměstí a je tady vidět ulice, která už neexistuje, což mi přijde takový jako typický pro Teplice, že to jsou věci, který prostě vo kterých víš, že tam byly a už tam už už jako tu nejsou (smích). To je ten pocit, co z toho mám, jako. Vždycky chodím a přemýšlím, co tam bylo a už tu není.

⁴² I: No ale nikdo s tím nic nedělal, teď se to vyšetřovalo, budova zůstala stát, chátrala, chátrala, zatejkalo do ní, až celá prostě zpusťla a teď jí nedávno vlastně před pár lety vodstřelili. Takže místo městských lázní je to teďko taková díra, kde není nic.

demolished it', without pointing directly to *them* and who *they* are (private investors, the municipality, local government, the community of Teplice?). The story was brought up by the interviewee himself. The photo sample did not include an image related to the place he described as an example of something typical for Teplice.

The following example comes from the Polish-German borderland, where the common experience of an abandoned, ruined building (often of architectonic, cultural, or historical value) becoming part of the local memoryscape is reflected. The interviewee frames the building (see picture 15, Appendix 4) as being important since it is uncommon for a building to be saved from disappearing in the borderland:

I: The vicarage? Now that is a hot topic because they had saved the building before it fell down completely . . . (laugh).⁴³

(Maciej, 33, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

The comment below somehow proves that the notion of disappearance and loss is already ritualised in the communicative collective memory of the Central European borderlands:

I: And yes, this is an interesting picture, but I have no idea how to frame it, so . . .
But maybe those buildings do not exist any longer. Yes, that might be interesting.⁴⁴

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

⁴³ I: Plebania? Teraz się zaczęło głośno robić, bo się jeszcze nie zawaliła a już się udało ją uratować.... (śmiech)

⁴⁴ I: A jo, je to tak jako zajímavá fotka, ale ne-, nějak asi k tomu žádnéj narativ mě jako nenapadá nebo...I když možná, tydle baráky, že už neexistujou. Jo, to je zajímavý (smích).

As the story of loss and ruin is a common element for both of the studied places, the ritualised communicative memory serves as a way to adapt to the experience of constant loss that is also brought by the resettlement experience of the borderland community.

Future through past

Although the collective memory (and its communicative version) is a process presumably oriented backwards, its latent or hidden function is to move forward. By talking about the past, members of a community of memory discuss the current status of the place they live in, and through this reflection, try to discuss the region's future.

In the Czech-German borderland (Teplice) the question of the town's downfall after communism and its current fall into lethargy was raised. But the common concern regarding the place's condition is always put on a timeline and compared to the past, where the past stands as a point of reference for the current situation. It is worth mentioning here that even the communist past, usually condemned in the general discourse for its overall damage to the societies of Central Europe, appears as a time of economic prosperity and social order in the borderland peripheries.

I: And what happened to that town later [after 1989]? These are individual stories which I don't fancy talking about, because . . . This is why we decided to enter politics, in order to do something with it, because it is horrible, it is horrible. Paradoxically, some things are much worse than they used to be during these shitty communist times.⁴⁵

(Kryštof, 52, Czech-Jewish origin, Czech-German borderland)

⁴⁵ I: A to, co se s tímhle městem dělo potom, tak to sou jednotlivý příběhy, který mě nebavěj moc vo tom mluvit, protože to je... Proto jsme tady se dali do nějaký politiky, abychom s tím hnuli, protože to je strašný, to je strašný. Paradoxně jsou některý věci ještě daleko horší, než byly za toho posranýho komunisty. Jako třeba kauza... Tady nemáme koupaliště jako jo, to je prvorepublikový, nádherný, eh, v zámeckým parku zasazený jako koupaliště neexistuje.

I: This town does not deserve it [to be liked]. It does not give me what I want. I would like it to be in a place where you can ride a bike or a scooter, where there are cycling paths, where the town is connected to its surrounding, where you can go hiking to the Ore Mountains. And this town does not offer that at all.⁴⁶

(Jakub, 42, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

A symbol of the past the used to be better than the present in the case of the Polish-German borderland is the non-existing railway connection, which represents the fact that once the town was part of the railway grid in the region—it was connected with the rest of the region and the country, and, therefore, on the same level as bigger towns and cities. This also represents the notion of (un)importance and the symbolic exclusion of Reszel—its status as a geographical, social, and economic periphery:

I: I do regret there are no railways. If there is something significant, that's it.

R: Why?

I: Why? Since it would be much easier to get anywhere. Wouldn't it be? For instance, in order to get somewhere from Olsztyn, I have to leave the car in Olsztyn in order to get somewhere.⁴⁷

(Katarzyna, 30, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

⁴⁶ Je to město si to jako moc nezaslouží. Vono v tom, co bysem vod něj chtěl, moc jako nedělá. Já bysem vod něj chtěl, aby to bylo město, kde by se dalo jezdit na kole a na koloběžce, že jo. Kdyby jako byly cyklostezky, jako kdyby to město bylo spojený s tím okolím, kde by se dalo tady v tom podhůří těch Krušnejch hor jako jezdit na výlety a to město tady ty parametry nemá jako vůbec, prostě.

⁴⁷ I: Na pewno żałuję, że nie ma kolei. Jeżeli to ma jakiś znak, to na pewno to.

R: Czemu?

I: Czemu? Bo zdecydowanie byłoby łatwiej gdziekolwiek dojechać. Tak? Bo na przykład, żeby dojechać – nie wiem – nawet z Olsztyna pociągiem gdziekolwiek to ja muszę samochód w Olsztynie zostawiać, żeby gdzieś dojechać.

I: So, the nostalgia, the sorrow that there are no railways in Reszel. Very much.

R: So, it would be better with railways?

I: Even if there was no economic reason, railways of those kind are in different places. For instance, a railway line between Węgorzewo and Kętrzyn is a tourist one. There are many such things due to political reasons. Like in 1945, it was Russians Communists who demolished it [part of the railway line was destroyed in 1945 and never reconstructed]. And, at the time, they did it for economic development. But is this economic development? Demolition.⁴⁸

(Waldemar, 48, Ukrainian origin, Polish-German borderland)

The ritualisation of the consequences of painful past events (mostly connected to the economic performance of the place) which have had a direct impact on the quality of life helps members of the borderland community to go through the traumatic events; to incorporate it into the local memory is to deprive it of the potential conflictual function and FTA.

The symbols and motives of the ritualised communicative memory in the Czech-German and Polish-German borderland are similar and play a similar role. The ritualisation is performed around the following meanings ascribed to particular elements of the memory: recognition, belonging, and responsibility. The ritualised elements facilitate the process of belonging and taking responsibility for the place of living, which might be viewed as a part of a bigger emancipatory process of the borderland inhabitants who have been deprived of any power over their region since 1945.

⁴⁸ I: Taka nostalgia, taki żal, że nie ma tej kolei reszelskiej. Bardzo.

R: Że lepiej by było gdyby była kolej?

I: Nawet gdyby nie było tego uzasadnienia ekonomicznego, jest wiele takich kolei, np. kolej Węgorzewo a Kętrzyn to turystycznie jest wykorzystywana. Jest wiele takich rzeczy, że ze względów politycznych, jak w tym 1945 roku, to chyba komuniści rosyjscy to zdemontowali. A później to w ramach gospodarczego rozwoju zrobili. Ale jaki to gospodarczy rozwój? Demontaż.

Discussion

As was discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis, the distinction between the two kinds of collective memory, suggested by Assmann, might not be sufficient when it comes to memory processes in the borderland of Central Europe (Spalová 2017). In the case of the two studied regions, there is still no institution which could produce the institutionalised, official memory discourse which might become a foundation for cultural memory. And, on the other hand, communicative memory seems to somehow be insufficient at fulfilling the need for new discourse on the local past which has already gone beyond the family frames of communicative memory and has become shared experience for members of the community of memory, regardless of their personal relations.

The ritualised communicative memory appears at the intersection of personal, family-shared memories and the need for collective sharing and exchange. Certain elements of the communicative collective memory are ritualised through interactions between the memory makers, memory users, and the visual texts of memory (Kansteiner 2004). As Geoffrey Alexander states:

Rituals are episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication in which the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of another's intentions. . . . Ritual effectiveness energizes the participants and attaches them to each other, increases their identification with the symbolic objects of communication, and intensifies the connection of the participants and the symbolic objects with the observing audience, the relevant 'community' at large. (2006: 30–31)

Vast parts of those interactions (and ritualisation) happen online and take place on different websites and social media pages devoted to the subject of the place's past (discussed in the methodological chapter).

But before we discuss the specifics of the ritualisation, it must be stated that the mechanism of putting some elements of the memory out of the frame was manifested significantly through the rule of irrelevance.

What, thus, differentiates ritualised communicative memory from its communicative and cultural version? As it is created bottom-up by members of the

community of memory without any institutional support, in some kind of social and cultural void, it consists of elements which are very often legible only to the members of the community of memory, as in the ritualisation of the memory of the Hotelowa restaurant and its importance for the local community of Reszel. This kind of element would likely not appear in any official history of the town or in any official discourse. The analysis also shows that not all local parts of CM were ritualised, that there are issues for which the face-saving solution is, for instance, to suspend one's member status and escape to the mainstream societal interpretation or declare lack of sufficient knowledge.

The ritualised communicative memory points to those elements of borderland social life which are regarded as important and significant to the local community: struggling with economic problems (collapse of industry and the economy after 1989), loss and disappearance as a constant element of both the material and non-material borderland memoryscape (the experience of the post-migration group), and the uncertainty of the future and the desire to influence it. The meaning ascribed to those elements—recognition, belonging, responsibility—are all adaptive parts of the emancipation process. As Boyer claims, 'Imagination and memories may well be functionally adaptive—not because they liberate us from down-to-earth, here-and-know cognition but, on the contrary, because they constrain our planning and decision making in efficient ways.' (Boyer 2009a: 20)

Belonging itself is a process which needs 'specific repetitive practices, relating to specific social and cultural spaces' (Yuval Davis 2006: 203). And, what is more, it 'is always a dynamic . . . not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations' (2006: 199). Thus, it is also related to the question of power over the borderland territory (emancipation). Ritualisation of communicative memory allows for performing active membership in the community of memory (responsibility), giving its members the possibility to gain, for the first time usually, a kind of control over their place of living.

It must, however, be clearly highlighted here that this still does not lead to direct regional identification since most of the interviewees in both regions used avoidance strategy to escape the need for self-declaration of their identity. In borderland communities with hybrid identities (for a discussion on the concept of hybrid identity, see Marotta 2008), more than elsewhere, acts of memory may produce a threat to the status quo of identity.

Studies claim that ‘memory is valorised where identity is problematized’ (Megill 1998 in Kansteiner 2002: 184). In both studied borderland regions, the role of the ritualised collective memory is not to prepare the foundations for a local identity to develop but to substitute it with the performance of belonging through the process of memory ritualisation.

VISUALITY AND MEDIALITY OF (RITUALISED) COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The following chapter deals with the visual aspect of (ritualised) communicative memory in an ethnic, cultural, and historical borderland. The main emphasis of the analysis is put on mediation of memory through visual texts of memory (discussed in the theoretical chapter of this thesis), the phenomenon of pre-mediality of memory, and the role visuals play in the memory-making process.

Image-based memory

Communicative collective memory is an image-based and imaged-mediated phenomenon. What does that imply? As discussed earlier, this stands for the different representations of the past as mediated through visual texts circulated mostly online. During the interviews conducted in both borderlands, it was determined that particular elements of shared remembering are known to members of the community of memory from different sources, mostly digital:

I: So, this is well-known. I saw this on Facebook. I might also have seen this on Facebook, or maybe I forgot it was discussed there. This one, I did not see . . . Then I've seen the expulsion. I've seen this too. So, I've remembered it.⁴⁹

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: When someone puts something on their Facebook. Since some people have their own private galleries there.⁵⁰

(Katarzyna, 30, Polish origin, Czech-Polish borderland)

⁴⁹ I: Tadle je hodně známá. Hhh, tudle jsem viděla podle mě na na facebooku. Ta tu už jsem možná taky viděla na facebooku a možná jsem zapomněla, že se to tam možná i řešilo. Tudle jsem asi neviděla. (...) A pak jsem viděla taky to ten vodsun. Ten už jsem taky viděla. Takže už jsem si to pamatovala.

⁵⁰ I: I jak ktoś na FB wrzuci. Bo tam niektórzy mają takie swoje galerie prywatne.

Social media, especially Facebook, serves as a huge stock for digitised versions of various memories. As discussed in the methodological chapter, Facebook fan pages create a space for imagined communities which gather around the past of a particular event, place, region, etc. The interviewees referred to Facebook as a source of image-based past knowledge of their place of living. They hardly refer to books, albums, or any other sources of visuals.

It should be emphasised here that the oldest generation, which does not use the Internet or digital media as much or sometimes does not use it at all, was mostly not acquainted with the images and was seeing them mostly for the first time. Furthermore, the oldest research participants were not as interested in the pictures used in the photo-elicitation interviews. The interviews conducted with them were only partially photo-elicitation interviews as they were mostly based on images at the beginning; later, the interviewees paid very little attention to the selection of photos and focused on their own stories and memories. The elicitation-role of the visual material during the interviews in that age category, for both borderlands, was minimal. The oldest inhabitants of the borderlands did not use the images during the interviews. They did not need them as they have their own stories to tell. It is also connected to the fact that in advanced age, problems with sight make pictures unrecognisable while also pointing to a general intergenerational difference in visual socialisation; representatives of the generation born before the Second World War were not socialised in visually mediated history.

Although I asked each person if there is any photo they would like to add to their collages, most of them answered 'no'. Only a few of them knew exactly the image they regarded as having been missed in my sample. Sometimes they had some particular images on their mind, but mostly it was a verbal description:

I: I don't think so. Only those smoking chimneys. I have this association, when you take this Usti-Teplice railway. And in Trnovany, in the direction of Usti, there are factories. Huge factories that were left and are abandoned nowadays. So, this is my association with industry.⁵¹

(Jiří, 30, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

The question regarding some additional/missing visual texts of memory was also framed through personal/family experience. One of the interviewees included a picture from his family album, provided with the following explanation:

I: And I also have a photo of my grandmother as she walks away with her first husband—a Wehrmacht soldier as he goes off to war . . . And I regard it as very symbolic. It is connected to what Teplice used to be like—Czechs and Germans—and how it intertwined. So that would be it.⁵²

(Jakub, 26, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

⁵¹ I: Ani ne, snad jenom ty čudící komíny prostě, jo. Hodně se mi to třeba asociuje, když jedeš po té ústecko-teplický dráze, tak vlastně v Trnovanech směrem na Ústí jsou prostě fabriky. Velký prostě etážovky, který tam teda tak nějak zbyly, z velký části sou nevyužitý. A tak to se mi třeba s tím průmyslem tak nějak jako asociuje, jo.

⁵² I: Pak mám ještě fotku babičky, jak vyprovází svého prvního muže, vojáka Wehrmachtu do války. (...) A ta mi přijde taky taková hodně symbolická, prostě. Souvisí taky prostě s tím, jak ty Teplice vypadaly vlastně český a německý a jak se to potýkalo. No. Tak tak.



Picture 13. A photo from a family album added by an interviewee of Czech-German origin to his collage of visual texts of memory.

Pre-mediality of memory

The other source of (visual) knowledge of the local and regional past mentioned by the interviewees were different films or movies or photographs which belong to the official cultural memory discourse (state-wide press, magazines, television, etc.).

Those visual texts of memory are sometimes the first visual representation of the local and regional history. Thus, they influence the way the particular components of the past are remembered and framed.

R: And the German times?

I: As I said, only from the old photos. From the movie *Odjazd*, where they made it the setting. Only this way. Only from the old photos.⁵³

(Katarzyna, 30, Polish origin, Polish-German borderland)

As stated above by a woman living in the Polish-German borderland, the visual representation on the local past comes from the film *Odjazd*, one of few Polish dramas regarding the complex past and present of the borderland. The film was also shot in Reszel, which makes it more recognisable to the borderland inhabitants as they come across the pre-war scenery placed in different places of town during the shoot.

In both borderlands, members of the community of memory referred to fiction films as a source for the way they think it used to be. Without any other source of knowledge for the region's past, especially during late communist times (the 1980s), fiction movies became the first and only source not only for the visual representation of the landscape but for any topic regarding the old times: ethnic relations, economic performance, etc.

⁵³ R: A te niemieckie czasy?

I: Tak jak mówię. Tylko i wyłącznie ze starych fotografii – z filmu „Odjazd” – jak robili charakteryzację też. Tylko na takiej zasadzie. Tylko ze starych fotografii.

I: Well, the local Germans took care of it [the expulsion of ethnic Czechs after the Munich Agreement in 1938]. Did you see that series that was recently on TV, *Vlak dětství a naděje* [The train of childhood and hope]? Even though it is set in Northern Moravia and around Brno, it was something similar here.⁵⁴

(Martin, 72, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

The interviewee, while describing his family experience of having been expelled from the borderland to the Czech interior (after the Munich Agreement in 1938), used a very popular Czechoslovak television series from the 1980s as a frame of reference and as legitimacy for a story of his which he told me during the interview. The television series functions here as objective proof (a source of cultural memory which is usually beyond question) of individual family stories (communicative memory).

⁵⁴ I: Takže vo to se postarali ty místní Němci, že jo. (Jestli) jsi viděla ten seriál Vlak dětství a naděje televizní, tak ten teď kon znova šel. Tam to bylo teda vo tom kraji, eh, na severní Moravě a u Brna, ale bylo to něco podobnýho, prostě.

(Mis)leading images of memory

Another aspect worth-mentioning of the way visually embedded memory works are certain photographs and the way they function among members of the community of memory.

For example, proving the embodiment of communicative collective memory in visual representations of the past is perhaps a photograph which misled most of the interviewees in the Czech-German borderland. It shows Czech policemen of Teplice leaving the town after the Munich Agreement in 1938. As Nazi symbols are visible in the public space and the picture is subtitled in German, it was misleading and very often interpreted during the interviews as showing Nazi soldiers marching in the town.



Picture 14. Czech policemen marching out of town after the Munich Agreement, Teplice.

I: You know, I would say those are Germans on first sight. When I see soldiers, that's the first association.⁵⁵

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: And this. These, I assume, are Nazis, Wehrmacht coming or . . .⁵⁶

(Michal, 26, Czech-German origin, Czech-German borderland)

I: Well, I don't know if this is Wehrmacht or other ordinary soldiers as . . .⁵⁷

(Jiří, 30, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)

The German language and Nazi symbols framed the photo's possible meaning for the viewers. Moreover, the marching-soldiers picture is a very common way to portray the beginning of the Second World War in Central Europe and is found in various school textbooks on twentieth century history.

Events which are often portrayed through visual media discourse narrow the way people want to think about them. The already mentioned expulsion of the German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia is rather often portrayed in media with, for instance, a photo from the Holešovice railway station in Prague (below). And, while responding to the photo from those times in Teplice (see picture 8, Appendix 3), a member of the community of

⁵⁵ I: Vidiš, já bych na první pohled řekla, že to jsou Němci. Prostě když když ře-, když vidim vojáky, tak jako my první naskočí...

⁵⁶ I: Taky tohle. Prostě, to předpokládám, že je teda asi nacisti-, Wehrmacht přicházející nebo...

⁵⁷ I: Nevim no, jestli je to nějakej Wermacht nebo obyčejný německý vojáci, jakože...

memory referred to the known picture and used it as a frame and a visual representation for the expulsion.

I: I need to see those people sitting at the railway station with their luggage
(laugh).⁵⁸

(Jana, 27, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland)



Picture 15. A photo of German-speaking inhabitants from Prague waiting at the Holešovice railway station in Prague during the expulsion following the Second World War.

She subconsciously referred to the common representation of the German expulsion in the Czech media, framed through a few widely dispersed images. The visual representation of the expulsion is the story of people at the railway station waiting for the train to take them out of the Czechoslovak territory, with visible signs (symbols) of their political affiliation functioning as a public stigma. This kind of picture also refers to widely spread images of Jews waiting for train transport during the Holocaust in, for instance, Warsaw. This picture

⁵⁸ I: Já bych k tomu docela asi potřebovala fakt ty lidi s těma kuframa prostě na tom nádraží (smích).

seems to be a reverse of those images. The sitting position of the people means, in both cases, submission and surrender.

Discussion

Susan Sontag claims that ‘all memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds’; we do not remember events, but images (2004: 86). This assumption seems relevant when it comes to the communicative memory of a cultural, ethnic, and historical borderland. Considering the analysis presented above, one could conclude that visual texts of memory are equal members of the interactional order through which local communicative memory is ritualised and shared. As MacDonald states, ‘Photo-sharing becomes a collective memory practice in which the mnemonic value and range of personal photographs are enhanced and rearticulated through their circulation beyond domestic space and familial networks’ (2015: 24). From the perspective of ritualised communicative memory which goes beyond the frames of family remembrance, this is a crucial recognition. The ritualisation of certain elements of memory which is very often mediated through digital images (visual texts of memory) is possible thanks to the digitalisation, online circulation, and online and offline sharing.

Concerning this, there is still a lack of official discourse, institutions, or channels which would disseminate the already-agreed-upon version of the past. Instead, knowledge about the past is gathered, shared, and distributed mostly online through unofficial websites and fan pages. It, therefore, gives social media an authoritative status. This creates a unique situation where the Internet, as a stock library for visual texts of memory, becomes the depository of local memory. And digital-photography, or analogue photography which underwent the process of digitalisation, is ‘a tool for social interaction and visual communication’ (van Dijck 2008: 62).

The analysis also proves the importance of the common framing of particular elements of memory by different visual discourses of film and journalism (Erlil 2008). Communicative memory is strictly related to different sources of visual representation of

the past, mediated mainly through popular films, television series, or photographs used as illustration and proof in media discourse. The pre-mediality of memory appeared in both borderlands and did not depend on the status in the community of memory (memory makers and memory users), nor the age and completed education. Both memory users and memory makers referred to various sources which framed and shaped their visual representation of local and regional history.

Nonetheless, the ability to use visual texts of memory is related to age category and basic Internet literacy. The oldest members of the communities in both borderlands did not declare knowledge of internet-based visual texts of memory, and they were not interested in the photo selection presented to them by the researcher. They simply told their own stories and described memories regarding the past. This points to the notion of visual socialisation that the pre-war born generation was not subjected to.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future*

T.S. Eliot

The final part of the thesis presents research conclusions, emphasising the main findings of the study and recommendations for possible further research, as well as reflections and an overall evaluation of the conducted study. The researcher's autobiographical reflection is included at the end.

Conclusions

Remembering is social and memory is always contextualised and put within a set of norms and values. Collective memory is as selective as the individual/autobiographical one, and the selection itself depends on actual goals and motivations (Harris, Paterson, Kemp 2008: 216). Its construction is a group process and is achieved through discussion and sharing. In the case of communicative memory in a cultural, ethnic, and historical borderland, its collective aspect is performed mostly online, on different social media websites, and on fan pages devoted to the local past.

The purpose of this study was to track the communicative memory in two Central European borderland regions and study its form and functioning in the borderland reality. The main theme to emerge from my analysis is the ritualisation phenomenon of communicative memory which takes place among the borderland community of memory. The study appears to support the argument of some researchers (discussed in the second chapter of the thesis) that the simple dual differentiation into cultural and communicative memory by Jan Assmann (2008) might not be enough to cover the complex phenomena of collective remembrance.

Below, I discuss the main findings of the research in connection to the research questions posed at the very initial stages of the study.

Elements of communicative memory in Central European borderland regions

The communicative memory in Central European borderlands is very site-specific and deals with subjects important to the borderland community (community of memory). It should be highlighted that those subjects are very often decipherable only to the members of the particular community and do not correspond to the centre-generated, official state discourse (cultural memory).

The analysis of the material gathered in two regions revealed that what is being ritualised has an adaptive function. The ritualised elements help the community to adapt to the complex and sometimes traumatic past events which have impacted the region's current condition and future prospects. Struggling with economic problems (the failure of the economy after 1989), loss and disappearance as a constant element of both the material and non-material borderland memoryscape (the experience of the post-migration group), the uncertainty of the future and the desire to influence it are all reflected in the elements being ritualised by members of the community of memory. New meaning is being ascribed to those elements such as recognition, belonging, or the question of responsibility.

The role of ritualised communicative memory in a cultural, ethnic, and historical borderland

The research conducted in both borderlands revealed that Assmann's distinction (2008) between the collective and cultural borderland is insufficient. Semantic in its form—as its source is not individual experience but external stocks of knowledge, mainly the Internet—communicative collective memory in an ethnic, cultural, and historical borderland is neither purely communicative nor cultural. The so-called memory gap is fulfilled through ritualised communicative memory which is interactional and dynamic and leads to the ritualisation of its particular elements. Taking into consideration that collective memory is very often *valorised* in a place where identity is too problematic for certain reasons (discussed in the theoretical chapter), the ritualisation of memory substitutes for collective identity which for various reasons (post-migration, different ethnic backgrounds, resettlement) still cannot be developed there. The ritualisation allows for the performance of belonging, which needs specific repetitive practices as a memory—a dynamic process

itself (Yuval Davis 2006: 199–203). As Bourdieu states, ‘Regionalist discourse is a performative discourse which aims to impose as legitimate a new definition of the frontiers and to get people to know and recognize the region that is thus delimited in opposition to the dominant definition.’ (1991: 223) The performative aspect of the ritualised communicative memory, revealed by the discussed research, is a substantial part of the borderland identity.

Castells claims that there has been a shift in modern ‘contemporary society’ and belonging is no longer part of the civil societies of nations but is part of the so-called defensive identity communities (Castells 1996). The belonging performed through the ritualisation of various elements of communicative memory forms the defensive community of memory, where the ritualised memory functions as a group-making factor and, using Durkheimian categories, reinforces social solidarity. As, once more, Bourdieu claims in ‘Identity and Representation’: ‘Struggles over ethnic or regional identity . . . are a particular case of the different struggles over classifications, struggles over the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and recognize, to impose the legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world, and, thereby, to make and unmake groups.’ (1991: 21) The defensive here also represents struggle to be recognised and again made important, responsibility for the place of living, and the emancipation process in order to gain some power and control.

The role of visual texts of memory in the memory-making process in the borderlands

Photographs gain their meaning through the subjective ‘gaze of the viewer’. People produce their meaning by attaching photographs to either their own personal experience and knowledge or some cultural discourses (Pink 2007: 82). The visual texts of memory, mostly old photographs which have sometimes been waiting—in drawers, attics, family albums, archives, and book stores—more than seventy or more years to be looked at again, are being recontextualised in the process of creating the ritualised communicative memory in the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands of Central Europe. New meaning is attached to them through the process of, mostly, online sharing, discussing, and naming.

They are being placed in and out the *social frames* of the agreed upon version of the memory.

The role of visual text of memory in the memory-making process is crucial. Without any official (cultural memory) discourse on the past, and regarding the notion of a discontinuity of borderland culture, history, and tradition, disrupted by the post-war resettlement, visual texts of memory are at the same time both the medium and the message (McLuhan 2004). They are both the facilitator of the memory-making process and a proof for belonging, and what is more, they are also the main source of knowledge about the past.

Photographs are about time and place and give viewers the illusionary feeling of owning them. The popularity of visual texts of memory in the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands of Central Europe is also connected to the notion of control over and *ownership of the place*; the visuality makes the process almost material and tangible.

Memoryscape of the Central European borderlands

A landscape (a space with human activity—both material and non-material) needs a viewer, somebody who looks at it; without it, a landscape is just potential (Ćwiek-Rogalska 2017: 29–32). The landscape of the Central European borderlands has been used as a subject of great political, social, and economic shifts for the past hundred years, but it has received a new viewer: groups of borderland inhabitants who, for the first time since the new political and ethnic order was established in the post-war period, dare to see it in a new way, leaving the already-established, centre-generated frames and discourses. The act of looking at, mediated through visual texts of memory, is a voice of acclaimed belonging which asks for the power over the territory and its uncertain future.

Limitations of the study

The following part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of several limitations of the presented research. This includes the attitude towards the research itself and the researcher, evaluating methods of data collection, identifying various field work challenges, and the linguistic aspects of the research.

It should be mentioned here that the findings of this study are restricted to the ethnic, cultural, and historical borderland regions of Central Europe and may not be generalised or applied to other borderlands or communities of memory.

Data collection and analysis method

The photo-elicitation method chosen for this research should be evaluated critically. Although it is a very appropriate method for studying collective memory in motion, that is, in its dynamic and interactional form, it also influences the process of data collection. Framing the interviews with a certain selection of photographs oriented the interviews towards a particular aspect of the memory—the subject of the discussed research. Nonetheless, this means that other aspects, such as the role of family and the intergenerational transmission of memory were minimalised and cannot be discussed here as a separate outcome of the research.

As far as the selection of photographs used in both borderlands is concerned, the arbitrary choice of the researcher may have also influenced the direction of the research and the topics the interviewees talked about during the interviews. There is still the possibility that different visual framing might reveal other issues related to the phenomenon of the communicative collective memories in these ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands. For instance, in the Polish-German borderland, the selected set of photographs did not evoke topics related to tensions between various ethnic and religious groups living in the town which might be observed in other sources.

The analysis of FTA strategies undertaken by the interviewees during interviews (1) is based on the researcher's field notes and observations during the research process and (2) works with the subjective meaning of the actor's behaviour and its interpretation during interactions which took place during the research process. There is no claim whatsoever to making objective the meaning of human interactions.

Languages

The issue of language should be also addressed in this section of the thesis. The research was conducted in the official languages of the borderland: Polish and Czech. The post-field transcription and analysis was also conducted in those languages. The face-work theory was applied in both the Polish and Czech language. For the purpose of the thesis, it was later translated into the English language with the original language version in a footnote. The three-language circle used in this thesis might also be perceived as a challenge in order to identify and translate face-work strategies in the most proper way, as the interviewees used colloquial language and many reactions are difficult to find alternatives for in other foreign languages.

Future directions and recommendations

The presented research is one of only a few which investigate the phenomenon of communicative memory from a comparative perspective in two separate regions. The study focused foremost on similarities between the studied places within the frame of the Central European region regarding collective memory processes. A more comparative-oriented study focused primarily on comparison might be a further step in studying the collective memory processes of ethnic, cultural, and historical borderlands.

The study did not address in an elaborative way the role of memory makers and memory users in the borderland community of memory. Following this direction might be a promising path in order to learn how memory makers and memory users interact, if there any frictions, how they negotiate the ritualised version of communicative memory, and finally, whether there is any difference regarding the process of memory ritualisation between these two borderland groups.

Another aspect which might be an interesting path to follow for the studied ritualised communicative memory is its intersection with family-based memory. Although there are many studies focused on the collaborative character of communicative memory in the family environment and the role of socialisation in the whole process (Welzer 20015; Bietti 2010), it might be of great research value to investigate how family memory interacts with its ritualised counterpart.

What is more, the studied phenomenon is quite recent; thus, it would require following its further development in the years to come so as to map in detail the memory process in the peripheral borderland regions (ritualisation of memory, institutionalisation of memory, identity-making processes, relation to centre-generated nationwide history).

Last but not least, in the case of the Polish-German borderland, the research did not reveal any larger religious-based tensions of memory in the highly heterogenic—when it comes to religion—region. The role of the dominant (Catholic) religion in the borderland and the town did not appear in the research either as a factor shaping or influencing the local collective memory. Since the role of the Catholic Church and Greek Orthodox Church is an important part of the borderland community, it seems surprising that it did not appear in the conducted research. This direction of analysis might also contribute to a wider picture of collective memory practices in the Polish-German borderland of former East Prussia.

Autobiographical Reflection

The presented thesis is the result of my long-lasting interest in the Central European borderlands and their history. Having been born and brought up until the age of thirteen in the Polish-German borderland, I myself faced the local past in its visual form for the first time while looking at the school photography of East Prussian children who, sixty years before, had attended the same small, village school.



Picture 16. Elementary school pupils and their teacher, school year 1936/37, Soweiden, East Prussia.

The image had been haunting me for years, and its meaning became clearer when, at the end of my M.A. studies in sociology at Nicholas Copernicus University in Toruń, I decided to become a visual sociologist and read Susan Sontag's *On Photography* for the first time.

While designing the research discussed in the thesis, I had some idealistic representation of the field research and assumed that my borderland roots and borderland habitus (although blurred very much by different institutions later on); the Polish education system; and several places of living would be enough cognitive equipment to pursue my research. The experience of stepping into the field verified my suppositions and expectations. Surprisingly to myself, due to my Polish upbringing, the very unfamiliar

Czech-German borderland was far easier ground for me to conduct research. My status as a total outsider, a foreigner, the Other, who took a long journey in order to get to know the community of Teplice, served as a facilitator in the interviews and allowed the process of data gathering to unfold much smoother.

The Polish-German borderland, so well-known to me, turned out to be a very challenging place for the research to be conducted. My status among the community was completely different from the one in Teplice. I was neither a foreign researcher interested in Reszel nor an old community member returning after many years. I was someone in between those two roles, and the community itself did not know how to treat me. This experience somehow influenced the gathered material and inspired me to undertake some corrective strategies as my own face of a borderland-born person, which I was so proud of for many years, was threatened. I realised that my very projected borderland identity, performed by me without bigger interaction with the community and while being outside of it, is just my borderland fantasy, since, as Hobbes wrote, memory is just the other form of imagination.

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APPENDIX 1

List of Tables, Graphs, and Maps

Graph 1. The hermeneutical triangle forming collective memory.

Graph 2. Metonymic triangle of reference for the visual text of memory included in the research.

Graph 3. The phenomenon of ritualised collective memory.

Graph 4. Face-keeping strategies in FTA situations.

Map 1. Population movements in Central Europe, 1944–1948. Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 191, University of Washington Press, 2002.

Map 2. Map of Central Europe in 1938 (before the enforcement of the Munich Agreement). The red dot marks the town of Teplice. Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 175, University of Washington Press, 2002.

Map 3. Map of Central Europe after 1945. The red dot marks the town of Teplice. Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 186, University of Washington Press, 2002.

Map 4. Map of Central Europe in 1938 (before the enforcement of the Munich Agreement). The red dot marks the town of Reszel, at that time in East Prussia and part of the Third German Reich. Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 175, University of Washington Press, 2002.

Map 5. Map of Central Europe after 1945. The red dot marks the town of Reszel, already within the Polish territory and a part of the newly created cultural Polish-German borderland. Source: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, p. 186, University of Washington Press, 2002.

Table 1. Research sample participants in Teplice.

Table 2. Research sample participants in Reszel.

Table 3. Set of photos used in Teplice PEI.

Table 4. Set of photos used in Reszel PEI.

Table 5. Coding of communicative collective memory (CM) in photo elicitation interviews.

Picture 1. A screen shot presenting a social media website devoted to visual texts of memory of Teplice

Picture 2. A screen shot presenting a social media website devoted to visual texts of memory of Reszel.

Picture 3. Example of a *collage* made out of the provided photos by one of the interviewees (Michal, 30, Czech origin), Teplice, Czech Republic, 2016.

Picture 4. Example of a *collage* made out of the provided photos by one of the interviewees (Aleksandra, 52, Polish origin), Reszel, Poland, 2017.

Picture 5. A photo collage by the interviewee (Eva, 39, Czech origin, Czech-German borderland).

Picture 6. Local commemorations (of American soldiers who died during WWII), Teplice.

Picture 7. Train station in 1960s Teplice.

Picture 8. Villa Maria.

- Picture 9. Protests on Beneš Square (Velvet Revolution of 1989), Teplice.
- Picture 10. A crowded café in the old theatre building, Teplice.
- Picture 11. The Jewish synagogue in Teplice.
- Picture 12. Ruins of the restaurant Hotelowa, Reszel.
- Picture 13. A photo from a family album added by an interviewee of Czech-German origin to his collage of visual texts of memory.
- Picture 14. Czech policemen marching out the town after the Munich Agreement, Teplice.
- Picture 15. A photo of German-speaking inhabitants from Prague waiting at the Holešovice railway station in Prague during the expulsion following the Second World War.
- Picture 16. Elementary school pupils and their teacher, school year 1936/37, Soweiden, East Prussia.

APPENDIX 2

List of the internet sources of photographs and pictures used in the research.

1. <https://www.facebook.com/TeplitzSchonau> [available: August 2016]
2. <http://www.e-teplicko.cz/zpravy/4484-v-mukove-uctili-pamatku-padlych-americkyh-letcu> [available: August 2016]
3. <https://www.gymtce.cz/index.php?sectionID=63> [available: August 2016]
4. http://krusnohorskedivadlo.blogspot.cz/2014_01_01_archive.html [available: August 2016]
5. https://www.facebook.com/Reszel_Foto-1427925597464167/ [available: August 2017]
6. <https://www.facebook.com/Towarzystwo-Mi%C5%82o%C5%9Bnik%C3%B3w-Reszla-i-Okolic-463390137116312/> [available: August 2017]
7. https://www.facebook.com/ospreszel/?ref=search&__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARBbeF-qimRdEL11oqR- [available: August 2017]
8. [joQaxiG2K7MJwfgo61ADmGs6Sjt2kP7KaIXSsjqlwJYTfPwra8lcFwgeX-ui](https://www.facebook.com/joQaxiG2K7MJwfgo61ADmGs6Sjt2kP7KaIXSsjqlwJYTfPwra8lcFwgeX-ui)
9. https://www.facebook.com/lostprussia/?ref=search&__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARD3Y9luthFg2jxQZm19vTm_PKJ7U0iNtUVwmmRVw_r9H9Yae3aundcfvzXBLgQeyNWtJtrbR8JMzVit [available: August 2017]

APPENDIX 3

Selection of photos for Teplice PEIs.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10



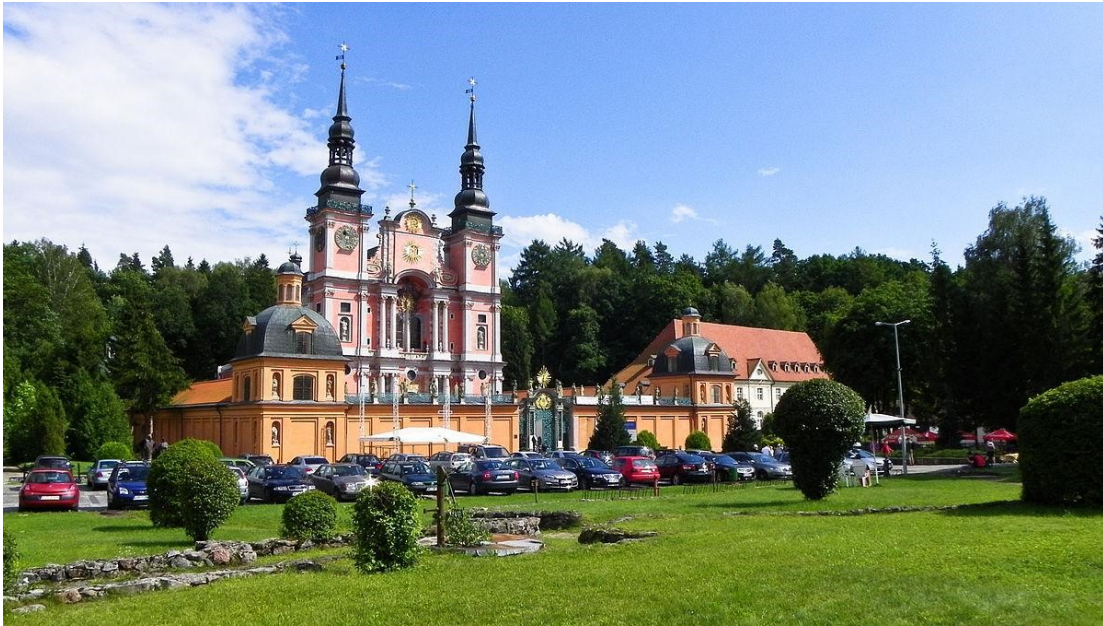
Picture 11



Picture 12

APPENDIX 4

Selection of photos for Reszel PEIs.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



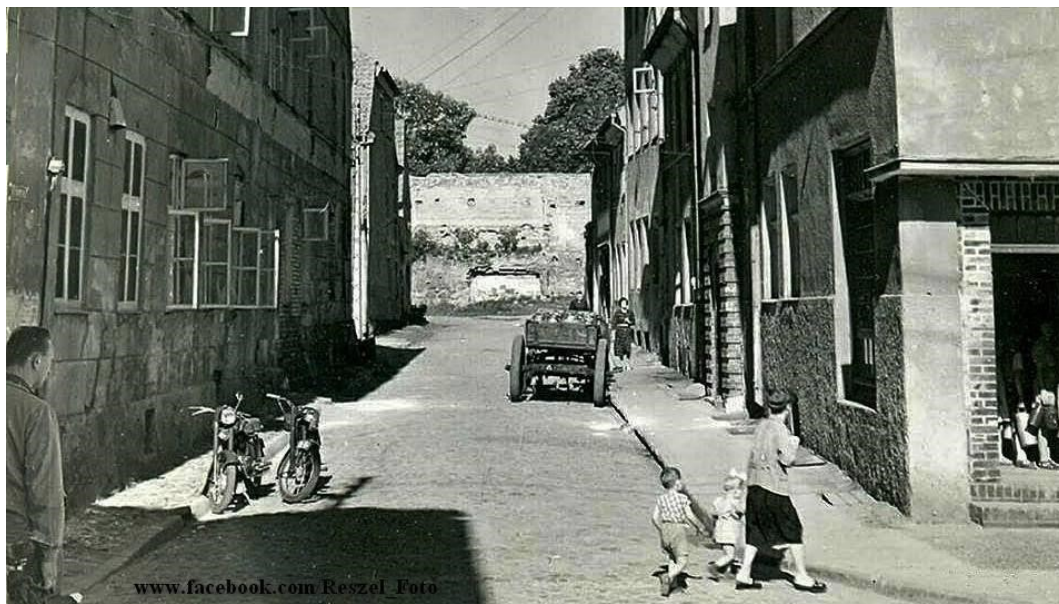
Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8



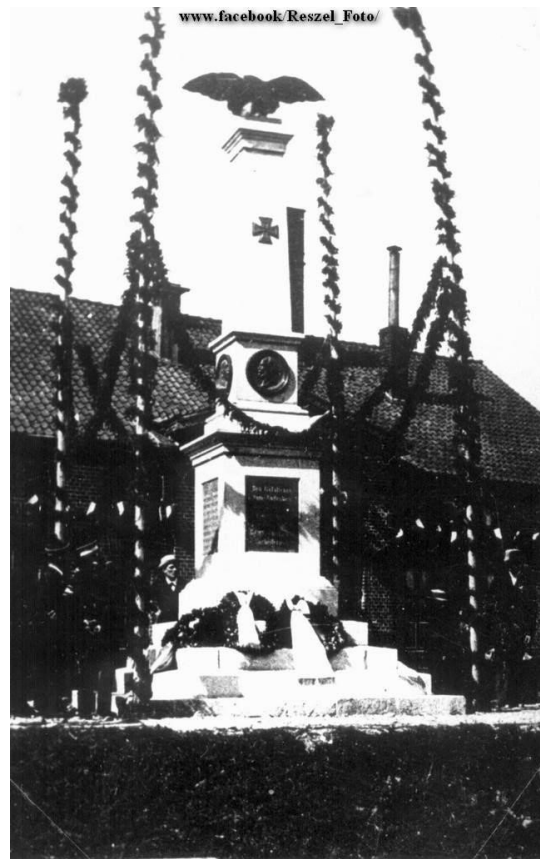
Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12



Wormyan@interia.pl

Picture 13



www.facebook.com/Reszel_Foto

Picture 14



Picture 15