Collective Memory between Reconciliation and Contestation in Europe after 1989

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Abstract

This is the slightly modified text of a research proposal we prepared at the Center for European Studies, Lund University, for a larger grant application. The purpose of submitting it to the ECPR panel on European Politics of Remembrance and the Question of a European Public Sphere is to discuss its usefulness as a larger framework to bring together the different research project to be discussed here. I preserved the original examples of empirical research that fitted under the project’s umbrella as a reference, and not because they are in any way better than other possible alternatives.

The heritage of divisive historical experiences in Europe risks to be reactivated and to pose a challenge to democracy, peace and integration. Our comparative multidisciplinary project addresses the legacy of European wars, totalitarianism and colonialism in an original way that brings people into focus. It is people, individually or together, who can remember or forget; people, not sites, who commemorate or celebrate. Some work towards reconciliation; others contest the past using populist strategies. We therefore ask:

1. Who are the grassroots and elite actors, at local, national and transnational levels that use collective memories of past conflicts as mobilizing factors?
2. What do they try to achieve by using these memories, and how do they do it?
3. What role does collective memory play in the design and implementation of populist and reconciliatory strategies and how does that affect European integration, peace and democracy?

We use a mix of qualitative social science methods to investigate memory conflicts of the 20th century from a post-1989 perspective. The actor-focused approach captures the transnational dynamics of memory processes, a feature largely ignored by previous research. Our range of actors is unique both geographically and in terms of the levels studied: we go beyond the national government elite to include local civil society groups, county politicians, ethnic minorities, Diasporas and European Parliament members. These will be compared along a set of common criteria.

The large number of case comparisons will give us access to an unprecedented breadth of data, with the goals and strategies of actors being charted at different levels. This new information will be a corrective to existing theoretical explanations of how memory conflicts are reactivated and used. With this new knowledge, we will be able to recommend best reconciliation practices and suggest strategies to deal with populism as a challenge to democracy more effectively than before.
Principal aims and contributions

The heritage of divisive historical experiences in Europe risks to be reactivated and to pose a challenge to democracy, peace and integration. Our comparative multidisciplinary project addresses the legacy of European wars, totalitarianism and colonialism in an original manner that brings people into focus. It is people, individually or together, who can remember or forget, commemorate or celebrate; people, and not sites, that have motivations and strategies. Some work towards reconciliation, others contest the past, sometimes using populist means.

The main research questions are:

1. Who are the grassroots and elite actors, at local, national and transnational levels that use collective memories of past conflicts as mobilizing factors?
2. What do they try to achieve by using these memories, and how do they do it?
3. What role does collective memory play in the design and implementation of populist and reconciliatory strategies and how does that affect European integration, peace and democracy? The project innovations are designed to help us achieve the following objectives:

1) Identify actors at all levels who use collective memory when articulating and legitimizing their claims, and analyze their goals, motivations and strategies;
2) Compare these strategies and examine those features that are context-bound and those that are more generalizable;
3) Study the cross-border communication between various types of memory actors, observing whether and how different collective memories and historical narratives 'travel' within the European space and with what consequences for integration and peace;
4) Better understand how, what and when to remember in order to promote reconciliation between states and social groups;
5) Analyze populist strategies that use collective memory arguments and their implications for the quality of democracy and for integration dynamics in Europe;
6) Conceptualize the role of the European Union and other transnational actors in reconciliation processes;
7) On the basis of this new information, make policy recommendations that foster reconciliation processes and reduce the populist threat to democracy;
8) Raise awareness about memory conflicts and bring them into the public attention through large-scale dissemination activities: radio and newspaper presentations, exhibitions, a TV series and a documentary.

Main concepts

Europe has a long history of inter- and intra-state conflicts. The memory of these conflicts is not dead and buried, but lives on and can influence today's political and social life. The past is brought back into the present by a variety of actors at local, national and transnational levels, who mobilize and make claims based on the reinterpretation of collective memories. Some actors pursue grammars of reconciliation; others contest the way the past is remembered, at times using populist rhetoric.
In the context of European integration and enlargement, one of the most pressing issues is how to deal
with the potentially divisive historical experiences of European states and societal groups. The question
is how to contain them within a common frame, outlined by the existence of shared values and
accepted practices (Leggewie 2009), but without the risk of forced homogenization. The major
challenge is to discover ways in which these contestable pasts can coexist without undermining
democracy and integration. Since history and collective memory shape to a great extent the culture of
governance that underlies the development of European Union institutions, research that addresses this
challenge by necessity also informs the future development of these institutions.

Our research program is situated at the intersection of three intellectual traditions: collective memory,
reconciliation and actorness. These dimensions have not been previously examined in the proposed
three-way relationship, and our attempt to integrate the existing knowledge in each in these fields makes
a theoretical contribution in and of itself. From collective memory studies we use history, social and
political psychology as well as literary and cultural studies; from reconciliation we refer to the political
science and juridical literature as well as to that on trauma and psychology; finally, when dealing with
actorness, we use the vast traditions existing in international relations, sociology and political science.

Our project touches upon all the relevant key concepts involved in a study dealing with the heritage of a
divisive history: collective memory in post-totalitarian and post-colonial (including post-Soviet)
environments, the transnational circulation of historical narratives, populism and democracy. To these
we add another two key concepts, which, we believe, help us to better understand the dynamics of
disputes over collective memory: actorness and reconciliation. These concepts will be studied on a large
empirical scale, covering post-1989 memory conflicts from Europe East and West, North and South,
Old and New.

Memory conflicts affect European integration and democracy in two major ways, which translate into
two principal directions of academic exploration for our research. The first is a quest for European
integration and peace, as it deals with the heritage of wars and with the competing collective
memories of conflicts between states. Memories of wars and their accompanying tragedies of genocide,
forced labor, and expulsion are obstacles in the face of cooperation and integration efforts in an
expanded Europe. Almost everywhere on our continent, neighbor states share not only a history of
mutual help but also one of dramatic separation and violent conflict, dominated by disputes over
control of territories and the allegiance of the people. In this project, we will analyze memories of
conflicts such as World War II, including the Holocaust, the Soviet colonial-style annexation of former
independent states, as well as the forced migrations and ethnic cleansings. The last phenomenon is
connected not only to World War II but also other wars in 20th century Europe, such as the Greek-
Turkish population exchange of 1922-23, the conflict over Cyprus in 1960s and 1970s, and most
recently, the Balkan wars of secession in the 1990s.

The after-effects of interstate wars are particularly relevant when addressing the process of integration
that has accelerated since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Regardless of the particular understandings of
regionalization processes (Rosamond 2000; Breslin et al. 2002), integration presupposes a non-hostile
attitude among neighbors. The memory of past conflicts can be reactivated to affect contemporary
political decisions. It is important therefore to understand how this revival can be managed in a reconciliatory fashion. The entire European Union project began as a reconciliation initiative between former adversaries. In this spirit the EU has developed ‘grammars of reconciliation’ (Mink 2008: 471), sets of norms and rules rooted in the collective memory of difficult historical experiences. The work begun by the founders of the EU project must be critically assessed and updated. These norms of reconciliation need to be redesigned and adapted to post-1989 circumstances.

The second quest is a quest for democracy, as it pertains to processes of memory contestation within the state. This quest deals explicitly with the heritage of totalitarian regimes and with the challenges it brings: the split between the friends and foes of the dictatorship; the ambivalence between the need for justice and the need for rebuilding social trust; the weakening, after decades of misuse, of democratic traditions; and the risks associated with the rise of extremist populism, both on the right and the left side of the political spectrum. In this project we will explore the memory conflicts related to the Franco dictatorship in Spain, the communist regimes in the Eastern bloc, the fate of ethnic minorities in national and transnational contexts (e.g. Ukrainians in Poland, the Sami in Scandinavia), and the legacy of the colonial past in the Netherlands and France.

The internal divisions and hierarchies resulting from years of colonial and authoritarian rule see a new application in populist politics. Both in countries with long democratic traditions (Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands) and in countries where these traditions suffered an interruption (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia) the memories of unsolved conflicts resurge and flow into the contemporary political debate. Populist entrepreneurs use fragments of the historical experience of certain groups in order to mobilize emotions, which in their turn will serve as trump cards against their competitors in the political game.

The relationship between democracy and memory is not limited to the threatening populist aspects. The democratization of politics is paralleled by a democratization of memory. Technology and the demise of dictatorships allowed previously marginalized groups to be increasingly heard in the public spheres at all levels, including the transnational, European, one. We intend to study these processes of increased access and attention given to a variety of new memory actors, as part of our quest for democracy.

Both our quest for peace and integration and our quest for democracy face the issue of the divisions that crisscross Europe. Most significantly they must address the East–West split that is in no little measure the consequence of 40 years of living separately on either side of the Iron Curtain. Here again, we find reconciliation a useful concept, even if in need of further questioning. The communist dictatorship has left deep traces both within the states (with fault lines separating left and right political groups, or former adversaries and former supporters of the regime) and between states (with a difference of opinion between new and old EU-members manifest in the relationship with former superpowers like the United States or Russia, or on matters of energy policies or labor migration). The European Union has proposed thus far a model inspired by the early cooperation among the Western European states, an example of neutralizing the violent side of conflicts between former enemies. However, we are now faced with the challenge of finding new ways to apply the reconciliation model developed in the West to an expanded European Union, where memory conflicts are still used in political arguments. The task of appraising and developing the reconciliation model of the future
Europe will be one of the priorities within the theoretical phase of our project.

A central pivot in our argument is the concept of **actorness**. Going beyond the idea of agency, actorness is understood to refer to the capacity to act of ‘entities manifesting unitary behavior of significance’ (Frey 1985: 139). Actors are autonomous, even if deeply embedded in cultural frameworks, and are understood to be motivated both by pragmatic concerns and by ‘existential, emotional, and moral’ ones, whose meaning depends on actors’ social and natural universe (Alexander 2004: 530). They can affect the behavior of other actors and have consequences for policy change (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 16-21). Through actorness our project captures the power relations underlying memory conflicts, power relations which are less present in previous studies that mostly focused on sites and representations of memory (Young 1993). It is in fact **people**, individually or collectively, who remember or forget, who build monuments and hold anniversary celebrations. We want, following Jeffrey Olick, to avoid a static treatment of memory and see ‘social remembering as the ideological projects and practices of actors in settings’ (2003: 6).

**Mnemonic actors** are those individuals or groups that consciously make use of collective memory to formulate, design and implement their goals and strategies in the public sphere. Focusing on mnemonic actors allows for asking questions about the motivations, interests, and the actual strategies employed during the processes of remembering and forgetting. These concrete empirical facts can be gathered and compared widely across Europe, providing the grounds upon which conclusions with higher generalizability and validity can be elaborated.

Actorness has the additional advantage of expanding the inquiry on common representations of the past beyond national elites, to individuals, small local communities, and transnational actors such as migrant groups or supranational entities, all under-researched within memory studies. For our project, collective memory is understood as being produced not only in a top-down fashion but also at the grass-root level of everyday practices of remembering and forgetting. At the same time, charting actors’ strategies and motivations according to the three levels (local, national, transnational) and the two types of memory conflicts (between and within states) also permits the identification of those ‘holes’ in the matrix where we register a pause or a blank. The absence of voiced contestations over the past is also significant. As Passerini argues, to be sensitive to silences is another way to take power relations into account, to search for various modalities of repression, censorship or forced oblivion (Passerini 2003). It will be one of our tasks to uncover the presence of these silent actors and ask why they kept quiet or forgot.

The loaded issue of normativity can also be addressed by focusing on actorness. Our research program challenges the traditional static three-way cut between victim, bystander and perpetrator and opens the door to ‘a complexity of memory where victim and perpetrator are not exclusive, but rather concurrent identities’ (Cohen-Pfister 2005: 123). The consequences for the ethical treatment of memory as well as for reconciliation policies are obvious: if an individual or group can be, at the same time, victim and perpetrator, the ideas of guilt, justice, moral right and compensation can be redefined, with direct practical consequences. One effect may be the weakening of populist mobilization attempts in the name of national victimhood, betrayal or unfair treatment and the opening up of deeper dialogue and cooperation between social groups previously represented as sitting on the opposite ends of the spectrum. If European integration succeeds in defining itself as ethically sustainable, then it increases its
chances of being perceived as more legitimate and therefore more powerful, in a normative sense (Manners 2002).

The key objects of our investigation are memory conflicts. The nature of this concept is double-faceted. On one hand we have the memory of conflicts: the recollection, direct or mediated, of events that express an incompatibility of interests through actions meant to perpetrate something at someone else's expense. Wars are extreme forms of such conflicts, but gradations along the violent – non-violent scale are common. On the other hand, we have the conflicts over memory. If the memory of conflicts is situated in the past, the conflicts over memory unfold just as we speak. They are the actualization of past issues that are seen to be unsettled or problematic for contemporary actors. The two facets can hardly be understood without each other: memories of conflicts are a prerequisite for conflicts over memory, with the first term partly subsumed to the latter. This is the reason we prefer to use the term memory conflicts: it embraces both the historical dating of the events and their revival and acute relevance for the present.

The concept of collective memory forms one of the key vectors of our research. A thorough discussion of its polysemic nature is included in our chapter on the state of the art in this proposal. We understand collective memory dynamically, as set of practices, and not as an entity, in an essentialist sense. For the purposes of our analysis, we find, together with Misztal (2003: 7), three main ingredients to be most informative in regards to our understanding of collective memory: it is shared by a community or group; it is actively brought into the present through practices of commemoration; and it plays an important role in defining the way that community sees itself today and how it imagines itself in the future.

1.1.3 Project Objectives

The project is divided into two phases: phase 1 is empirical in that it aims to gather systematic information about the actors involved in memory conflicts and to compare their goals and strategies. The second phase derives from the first but moves it to a higher level of abstraction. It asks more general, theoretical questions about the nature of the relationship between collective memory on one hand and reconciliation and populism on the other.

In the diagram below (Figure 1) we represent in graphic form the empirical research variables and their mutual relationship. On the horizontal axis, we identify three levels of actorness: local, national and transnational. On the vertical one we place two types of conflict environments: conflicts between states and conflict within states. We want to observe which kinds of strategies are used by each type of actor when faced with one of the two memory conflicts and compare the findings along each axis.
Figure 1: Matrix with research variables for the empirical phase

The distinction between the two conflict environments is far from being clear cut in reality. However, for analytical purposes, separating these two types of conflict and the way in which they are remembered helps us systematize the process of information gathering and comparison. The distinction is also relevant in terms of our quests: conflicts between states challenge the existence of peaceful relations between neighboring countries with a history of hostility and the further integration among the European Union member states. A revived history of interstate conflict makes more difficult the tighter cooperation in the European neighborhood. On the other hand, conflicts within states are testing the limits of democracy, with ethnic, religious or colonial divisions playing into the hand of populist actors who may exploit the divisive past.

Each intersection of the two axes delineates a specific research focus that allows for a wide coverage of the empirical field while maintaining strong common grounds for comparisons. These comparisons will occur both along the horizontal line (find out the strategies shared by each type of mnemonic actor in both post-war and post-totalitarian milieus) and along the vertical line (find out which actors mobilize when the type of memory conflict is held constant).

The first question asked is then:

1) What strategies are used by each of the actor types under the two conditions for conflict? This matrix structure also allows us to compare which strategies (either predominantly reconciliation or predominantly contestation) are used by each actor type under the conditions of conflicts within and between states.
2) Are reconciliation strategies more likely to be pursued under the conditions of conflicts between or within states? Are contestation strategies more likely to be pursued under the conditions of conflicts between or within states?

3) Are transnational actors more or less likely to adopt reconciliatory strategies in comparison with national or local actors?

4) Which actors use collective memory for the purpose of populist mobilization and what is the interplay with those actors who pursue reconciliation?

The second phase is more theoretical in nature. It attempts to answer some questions left unsolved by previous scholarly work on the basis of the information analyzed during phase 1. Reconciliation, populism and democracy, transnationalism and normativity will be seen in their relationship to each other and in connection with collective memory. In this way the aspects in need of further development will become apparent and will be taken up for further elaboration.

The questions asked in this second phase are:

1) How can the concept of reconciliation be better defined in light of its relationship to collective memory?

2) What are the populist uses of collective memory? Are they symptomatic for the quality of democracy and for the current integration dynamics in Europe?

3) Does democratization of memory contribute to reconciliation or rather increases the potential for conflict?

4) Can the role assigning of victim-bystander-perpetrator continue to be meaningful in analyzing memory conflicts? If not, what can be proposed instead?

5) On the basis of our previous investigation of transnational actors and strategies, how can transnational memory be conceptualized and what implications does it have for post-national solidarity?

Starting from the questions stated for phase 1 and phase 2, and keeping in mind our quest for European integration, peace and democracy, we can formulate several objectives, to be addressed in several work packages.

**Empirical objectives**

These objectives will be met by all partners in coordination and are connected to the first phase in our research design.
**Objective 1.** Identify and describe memory actors, their motivations and goals, at multiple levels (from local to transnational) and in both types of conflicts (between and within states);

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<tr>
<td>Identify and describe which actors are involved in memory conflicts within and between states in Europe. Describe and analyze actors' reconciliation/contestation and populist strategies</td>
<td>Interviews, narrative or discourse analysis of print and visual media, internet sources, institutional description, films, literary productions</td>
<td>Every partner research team gathers information. Work package leaders and research area leaders report and communicate. Possible help of CSOs in collecting data; initial contacts with potential disseminators</td>
<td>A thick description of collective actors, their motivations, goals, and strategies</td>
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**Objective 2.** Comparatively analyze actors’ strategies of dealing with a problematic past and evaluate to what extent these contribute to or oppose the reconciliation of memory. Identify patterns of interaction that make some actors and their corresponding strategies more effective than others and thus contribute to the creation of potential models.

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<tr>
<td>Chart and compare the strategies employed in practice by actors identified in objective 1, finding common criteria for action. Establish criteria for effectiveness</td>
<td>Systematize the data gathered in objective 1 using literature- and empirically derived organizing criteria, as presented in the Comparative Guidelines</td>
<td>A number of partners. Feedback from CSOs and other practitioners</td>
<td>An overview of strategies used at multiple levels of actorness</td>
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**Objective 3.** On the basis of the data gathered, recommend best practices and make the information available to all interested parties.

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<tr>
<td>Communicate the identified best practices and middle-level models to the relevant stake-holders</td>
<td>Seminars, workshops, internet portal</td>
<td>Partners, institutions and CSOs relevant for reconciliation and memory, communication specialists, TV channels</td>
<td>Dissemination of usable knowledge to foster peace and democracy</td>
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Theoretical objectives

In line with the second phase of the research program the theoretical objectives attempt to provide answers to broader issues.

Objective 4. Theoretically elaborate, through disciplinary cross-pollination, the concept of reconciliation and in particular its connection to collective memory.

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<tr>
<td>Formulate theoretical propositions based on empirical data about the definition of reconciliation in memory conflicts challenging European integration, peace and democracy. Elaborate the scientific basis of the link to and importance of collective memory for reconciliation.</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary epistemic interaction, hypothesis formulation</td>
<td>Partner research teams. Scientific advisory board.</td>
<td>Reconceptualization of reconciliation. Scenarios about collective memory connection to reconciliation.</td>
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Objective 5. Problematize the ethical dimension of both reconciliation and collective memory studies by uncovering the power relations among various mnemonic actors, while critically engaging with the distinction between victims, bystanders and perpetrators pertinent to reconciliation and populism.

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<td>Highlight the power relations between various mnemonic actors and how these influence role assigning. Examine the role of victimhood in actors’ mobilization.</td>
<td>Political science, sociology, cultural, film and literary studies, philosophy, history</td>
<td>Partner research teams. Scientific advisory board.</td>
<td>Explain how normative positions are assigned by memory actors. Explain the role of memory of victimhood and of its alternatives. Clarify the implications for reconciliation.</td>
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**Objective 6.** Examine how populist actors use collective memory and how populist strategies affect democratic practices and discourses and thus the quality of democracy in Europe.

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<tr>
<td>Identify and compare populist actors' use of collective memory. Theoretically examine the concept of populism and its relationship to democracy. Discuss if and how democratization of memory is related to populism</td>
<td>Political science, sociology, history, cultural studies</td>
<td>Partner research teams. Scientific advisory board.</td>
<td>Overview of populist actors and strategies. Test of existing theories of populism and democracy. Theoretical refinement of the concept of populism and a better understanding of its implications for peace and democracy Suggestions for best practices in dealing with a threatening type of populism</td>
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**Objective 7.** Conceptualize transnational memory, with implications for post-national solidarity

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<td>Formulate theoretical propositions based on empirical data about the definition and manifestations of a collective memory that is not coupled with a nation. Discuss how this can be the foundation of identities and solidarities that go beyond the nation-state</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary epistemic interaction, hypothesis formulation and testing</td>
<td>Partner research teams. Scientific advisory board.</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Definition and examples of transnational or cosmopolitan memory Scenarios of the interaction of transnational collective memories as a foundation for transnational identities, especially applied to the European case.</td>
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Progress beyond the state of the art

Our project looks at how the local, national and transnational actors use the collective memory of the major 20th century conflicts from a post-1989 point of view. The year 1989 meant not only the end of a certain type of political and ideological regime, but had major consequences across the board (Antohi and Tismaneanu 2000). It signaled the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union and, implicitly, that of the Cold War. It permitted a more open discussion about other forms of totalitarianism kept out of the public eye. It marked the start of democratization processes, also in the area of memory discourse. The year 1989 is an important turning point not only for the Eastern part of the continent, but for the entire world. The end of the Cold War set free the flow of globalization (Held and McGrew 2000) and allowed for a more active role of the international community in conflict resolution, including reconciliation (Rosoux 2008: 543).

1 Collective memory

It is no coincidence that the resurgence of the interest in collective memory and the consequent memory boom took place in the mid-1980s, having its origins in the debate about the Holocaust (Judt 2008; Huyssen 2000) and in the colossal opus of the French historian Pierre Nora (1984), whose work signaled the start of the memory age. Periods of intense transformation, like the years after 1989, are times when the accepted norms and values are challenged. The old conventions, rules and established practices are slowly eroding or violently replaced. These times of change are more prone than others to contestations and conflicts (Tismaneanu 1998; Jedlicki 1999; Törnquist - Plewa 2003; Törnquist - Plewa and Petersson 2009). In any case, the post-1989 period became a more open terrain for discussions and controversies that dealt in no slight measure with questions of identity, for which memory was a relevant component.

‘If there are limits to what is being remembered, such can surely be traced along the political or cultural paths’ (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 24). This statement aptly defines the dynamics of memory processes in the post-totalitarian societies. Political activity is increasingly not just about market institutions and electoral contests but also about which lessons should be learned from the past. Several incisive studies addressing various aspects of collective memories in post-totalitarian Europe have been conducted in the recent decades (Opalski and Bartal 1992; Thompson, Leydesdorff, and Passerini 2005; Hodgkin and Radstone 2003; Kuzio and D’Anieri 2002; Alexander 2004; Hryaban 2007). However, major questions on the exact effects of memory conflicts on the politics and culture of post-totalitarian European societies and on the appropriate strategies and normative orders of remembrance (Müller 2002; Irwin-Zarecka 1994), are still awaiting further exploration.

Since memory is one of the mechanisms of identification (Megill 1998; Ben-Amos and Weissberg 1999; Zerubavel 1995), and since identity projects lay the basis of designs for the prospects of what is to come, collective memory became one of the most relevant variables in the debates about the future: the future of the individuals, of their immediate loyalty groups, of their nation, and not in the least of
Europe. These questions have become even more relevant since 1989, when a new Europe was born, in need of retelling the story of its origins.

The connection between democracy and memory encompasses two aspects. One of them is the memory of democracy, which may be of assistance as a historical reference and as a more profound basis for a return to democratic practices (Misztal 2005; Adorno 1986). This aspect has been used in the processes of reverting to an inclusive, pluralist and open society and political life in former authoritarian regimes, (Spain, Greece, Poland, or Slovakia). In all these cases, the reminiscence of a democratic past served as a buttress for those supporting this transformation, providing legitimacy and helping establish and evaluate the very definition of democracy.

The other aspect is the democratization of memory. Sometimes used interchangeably with the idea of pluralization of memory, this aspect refers to the end of the silence imposed on the groups marginalized or disliked especially in countries with regimes with strict control over the public circulation of memories. With regime collapse, there ensues a flow into the public sphere of these repressed social memories that, by bringing their version of the past into the open, contribute to the erosion of the ‘authoritative memory of the dominant culture’ (Misztal 2003: 43).

This democratization of memory is facilitated by technological developments, such as the expansion of virtual communication spheres, as well as by the increased attention given, in academia, to oral history research. In regards to the first facet, digital media and the recent developments in popular culture allow not only the distribution of previously silent memories into the public sphere, but also the creation of ‘new publics’, audiences much wider than previously allowed by print-based forms of communication (Hamilton 2009). Oral history studies, on the other hand, are particularly interested in listening to those groups that were excluded from public discourse: women, homosexuals, ethnic and religious minorities (Thomson, Frisch, and Hamilton 1994).

Liberalization and democratization in the arena of discourse also allowed, however, for the possibility of contesting the various understandings of the past. This turned to be an essentially normative dispute about the right and wrong ways of looking back into history as it is remembered, a competition about truth and about the right to express it publicly (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003: 1). It is also a dispute about who has the right to remember, and to be remembered (see for example (Gillis 1994 Young 1993 and others within the literature on commemoration), as doing so in the public or official space provides an additional layer of legitimacy. In other words, it is a contest over the power to interpret the past, over memory and politics. This is an aspect that has not been highlighted enough in previous studies, despite explicit attempts to do so (most notably (Müller 2002); our project finds the power relationships between different memory actors to be essential in understanding the relationship memory has with reconciliation and contestation.
2 Reconciliation

Despite its being potentially the key to stable post-conflict social conditions, reconciliation remains an ‘undertheorized phenomenon’ (Long and Brecke 2003: 147). Definitions of reconciliation give a complex but blurry picture, since it can refer to ‘a cluster of practices that include (among other things) repenting, restoring, punishing, apologising, repairing, forgiving, redeeming, forgetting, remembering, promising and understanding’ (Schaap 2005: 11). The problems surrounding reconciliation are therefore fundamental. There is theoretical confusion to some degree, as much writing on the subject has privileged either legal or psychological aspects (Brito, González Enríquez, and Aguilar Fernández 2001; Skaar, Gloppen, and Suhrke 2005), even though there are also analyses focused on the role of politics (for example on the role of international actors see Aggestam and Björkdahl 2009). If reconciliation is ‘the point of encounter where concerns about the past and the future can meet’ (Lederach 1997: 27), it becomes obvious that collective memory has a potential effect on the possibility of achieving social peace and mutual trust. It has been acknowledged that, at the cognitive level, a unilateral presentation of a group’s collective memory and of claims derived from it is detrimental to reconciliation (Bar-Tal 2008). However, despite its obvious connection to collective memory, there are only a few works (Schaap 2005; Kymlicka and Bashir 2008) that study the uses of memory in reconciliation situations.

Largely speaking, existing research has failed to accomplish this task on several grounds: 1. Disparate case studies, lacking connection or systematic comparison; 2. Inclusion of only some of the relevant national cases, resulting in very partial coverage of the general European situation; 3. Focus on the national elite as the only relevant actors and ignoring to a large extent both the implementation and the reception of the elite’s policies, and how other actors participated or contested the elite initiatives; 4. Tendency to omit the transnational dimension of collective memory and the role of actors that are constituted and can act beyond national borders; 5. Frequent omission of non-conventional places of collective memory codification such as blogs, web-based publications and their associated forums.

A great number of authors have framed remembering and forgetting as fundamental opposites rather than as part of a continuous process of mutual reinforcement, even though some exceptions must be duly noted (see, for example, Zehfuss 2006). Traditionally however, scholars have focused on making a case for either remembering (Günter Grass and the German practice of Vergangenheitsbewältigung; the legal tradition of truth and reconciliation represented by Hayner 2001; Biggar 2003) or forgetting (Connerton 2008; Blustein 2008; Elster, Offe, and Preuss 1998; Gupta 2005) as the most effective solutions to achieving reconciliation. Reconciliation is perceived often as a status change, a switch from negative to positive social relations, instead of as a continuum. Even so, it has been hard to define when exactly reconciliation is attained, as there was no clear description of what was to be achieved. Our project seeks to fill the gap and reinstate reconciliation as a clearer concept, understood as a process.

Studies that thoroughly investigate the link between reconciliation and memory lack comparative empirical breadth, even if studies exposing the relevance of memory for overcoming social problems in divided societies do exist (Whittaker 1999; Hamber and Wilson 2003). The majority of the cases studied
in the existing literature come from South America, and Africa. The European exceptions are Germany (Holocaust) and the post-war Balkans. Scholarly writing has focused on reconciliation in places that emerged from violent domestic conflicts. But reconciliation must not happen only between those involved in wars; the secret police informer and her target, the republican partisan and the Franco supporter, the Algerian and the native French, constitute entities whose relationship is problematic and who can benefit from reconciliatory attempts. Finally, reconciliation has not been discussed either in relation to the division of Europe into East and West during the Cold War or in relation to the scars left by this separation. We argue that reconciliation is just as necessary in instances where the social disruption occurred over an extended period of time, as a result of a traumatic experience with a totalitarian or a colonial regime, as it is in instances of violent conflicts.

3 Populism and democracy

Memory is neither true nor false, neither good nor bad. Collective memory may be used to justify, support, or legitimize claims whose nature varies depending on who is speaking. In order for memory to be truly democratic, it is necessary to allow a plurality of conflicting histories, feeding the self-understanding and identities of various groups, to be expressed in the public arena (Todorov 2003; Bell 2008). This implies accepting, at least in the realm of academic research, all pasts as deserving equal attention, even if they do not fit neatly with each other. However, such a pluralization of memory entails risks for democracy as well because it leaves room even for anti-democratic voices.

Collective memory can support conciliatory goals at the same time as it can foster populism (Blokker 2005; Canovan 2002). Until recently populism was widely analyzed as abnormal and clearly distinct from ordinary politics. Recently, however, a new trend has emerged in which populism rather than constituting a separate political life-world consists of elements that also inform mainstream politics (Mudde 2008). Rather than anti-democratic per se, populism, whether ‘left-wing’ or ‘right-wing’, could be described as anti-liberal, with a very strong emphasis on popular legitimacy and common values and contempt for formal legalistic procedures and minority group rights (Rupnik 2007). Building on strong anti-elite and anti-technocratic sentiments, populist movements might emerge when politics and decision-making, in Canovan’s (1999) terms, are perceived to lean too much on the pragmatic (formal) to the detriment of the redemptive (solidarity-based) face of democracy. In this sense, populism is ‘a shadow of democracy’ (Arditi in Blokker 2005: 381). Rather than being alien to it, it is a feature of democratic politics, or a symptom of its troubles.

While the democratic inclusion of all kinds of memories is a noble ambition, it nevertheless carries the risk for the articulation of voices that do not promote values like equality, democracy or reconciliation. Allowing memories about past traumas to be expressed is no guaranteed cure for populism or other fundamentalisms; as Gourevitch put it, ‘exposure to barbarism is not an antidote against it’ (quoted in Todorov 2003: 160). Our endeavour seeks to remedy the lack of studies on populism in connection with collective memory. We focus on situations where memory conflicts can provide material for populist mobilisation. Memory conflicts can appear as part of the original populist agenda or be an active response to reconciliation initiatives from local or national political elites or transnational or
minority mnemonic actors. Populist politicians have made a name in both Western and Eastern parts of Europe: Haider in Austria, Steinbach in Germany, Csurka in Hungary or Lepper in Poland. For a concrete illustration of the use of memory conflicts by populist actors, we can look at the domestic debate opposing the political right and left parties in Poland. The conservatives use the language of a ‘historical policy’ that hints occasionally at lustration measures. Their argument is that the country needs politicians firmly opposed to the communist ideology which the Polish political left still cosies up to, thus being ‘accomplices to the crimes of the past’ (Mink 2008: 472). In our comparative study we examine this and other cases of populism from both East and West, in order to understand the dynamics of memory uses in this type of political mobilization.

4. Actorness and transnationality

Another issue that has not been addressed enough in memory studies is actorness. As stated previously, the focus has been either on the sites of memory in the tradition of Nora, or on rituals, commemorations and other activities at the official level that have taken the label ‘politics of memory’. Even if the merits of such studies are numerous, it is impossible not to notice that the narrowness of their focus limits their explanatory power. As Kansteiner (2002) remarks, what is (still) missing in elite-based, top-down accounts is the reception aspect of these initiatives, their interpretation and implementation in the every day. Our innovative approach aims to fill this gap by investigating the role of actorness in memory studies.

Actorness is an ideal entry point into the investigation of memory conflicts, but not one that has often been used. The transnational actor perspective has been considered relevant when dealing with ‘hot’ conflicts, ones that are defined by the use of violence, of military arsenal and strategies, as has been the case with major works in security studies (Singer 2002; Aydinli and Rosenau 2005) and with some FP7 projects, like the International Civil Society Forum on Conflicts (INFOCON). This perspective has not, however, been applied to conflicts over how and what to be remembered. The implications of collective memory for conflict have already been the object of investigation of scholarly works, including that of other FP7 projects such as Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict (CRIC).

However, neither CRIC nor many other research programs have applied an actor-oriented approach to the study of memory conflicts, which have tended to be more descriptive and structural in orientation. OUR PROJECT seeks to find the points of complementarity with previous FP7 projects, and to build on their findings, while driving forward the theoretical agenda.

Moreover, actorness should be expanded outside reception studies that do not give full power over memory to non-elite groups. It includes, in our view, also the complex network of mnemonic actors that participate in the creation (and contestation) of collective memories at the local, regional or cross-border levels. Such accounts of actorness, if they exist, are rather scarce (Törnquist - Plewa 2006), or are more anecdotal than scientific. We read for example about the initiative of maintaining Jewish graveyards taken by some Polish high schools within the framework of the Poland Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project (Backman 2009), but the author does not venture to describe or explain the reasons for this particular action, its foundations and goals, its active participants and beneficiaries.
Most collective memory research is firmly planted on national soil (see for example Müller 2002; Lebow, Kansteiner, and Fogo 2006; Olick 2003). Truly comparative attempts that go beyond parallel descriptions of national cases are few. Recently some attempts have been made to capture memory as practiced beyond the national level, as a variable in international relations (Bell 2006), as part of the globalization trend (Levy and Sznaider 2006; Misztal 2010), or observed as local sites of memory with transnational value (Le Rider 2002). However, the above-mentioned studies are the exception and not the rule. An overwhelming majority of studies of collective memory and reconciliation are national case studies taken separately. Even when placed at the transnational level of the European Union, scholars employ the national collective memory as the building block (Eder 2005). Our project looks to go beyond this state of affairs, both by including empirical examples of transnational memory actors and processes and by theorizing on the nature of the transnational character of collective memory in the age of globalization and regional integration.

In particular we are interested in the role of the European Union as a memory actor and as a leader in reconciliation processes both at home and in the general normative sphere. There are remarkably few works dealing with the link between the capacity of the Union to act on a symbolic plane and the political and legal consequences of such action. Nevertheless, the time is ripe for this type of research that connects EU decision-making with political action in the symbolic arena, as the latest issue (January 2010) of the respectable Journal of Common Market Studies demonstrates. The theme of the volume is ‘Political Myth, Mythology and the European Union’. Under this label there is room for theoretical and empirical elaboration of the link between the presence of the Union and its impact on memory, identity and democracy (Hansen-Magnusson and Wiener 2010; Manners 2010). Our project aims to continue in the footsteps of this brand new trend and to develop theoretical propositions, inspired by the realities studied in our research, about the future directions of the European Union as an actor consciously involved with issues of collective memory.

5 Normativity

One of the fallacies of collective memory research has been to treat the groups as internally homogenous. Social constructivist theories that underlie most of memory study research presuppose fluidity and plurality of identities. However, there is an inbuilt contradiction when memory studies define and examine collective memory in a unitary and homogenizing fashion (Winter and Sivan 1999: 6-40). From an epistemological normative perspective, it is not desirable to forcefully create a harmonious but false picture of the past, but rather to permit contradictory memories to live side by side. Our study actively seeks to avoid such homogenizing tendencies and to give all memory actors the right to a voice.

Part of the incendiary nature of the debates around collective memory resides in the value-laden message they carry. Parties that have conflicting visions of the past have typically accused one another of committing crimes, acts of terror and injustice and have claimed for themselves the role of innocent victims (Khazanov and Payne 2009). This empirical characteristic has been at times transmitted into theoretical debates centered on the distinction between the normative actor categories of victim-
perpetrator-bystander (Hilberg 1992). These debates highlight the role of the intellectual in the public sphere and the importance of listening to a plurality of voices that are not mutually incriminating but that speak to each other.

Historians and philosophers have been preoccupied with the moral aspects of memory for some time (Ricoeur 2000; Le Goff 1988; Margalit 2002). Generally speaking the ethical perspective over memory has had two facets: on one hand the imperative to remember, grounded in both consequentialist (to promote good) and expressivist (to pay respect to the dead) accounts (Blustein 2008). On the other hand, some scholars (Connerton 2009) proposed to leave aside the problems of the past, in the name of rebuilding social trust. We propose to study this tension through the lens of ethics of memory. The normative perspective of philosophers suggests the value of memory needs to be assessed in terms of its capacity to benefit others and promote justice. However, what remains to be done is to create a stronger connection between the ethics of memory and the politics of memory (Bell 2008). Hitherto the two have been mostly decoupled, as philosophers' writing on the ethics of memory has been based on weak accounts of how memory works in concrete circumstances. We want to supplement the insights and propositions of the philosophers with an analysis of power relations and political interests involved in construction of memory based on concrete empirical cases. Ethical statements about memory in concrete situations are often linked to claims for political legitimacy. The normative claims made by different agents that link morality and memory should be subjected to deconstruction and contextualization, something that has very seldom been done.

6 Multidisciplinarity

By their nature, memory studies have the chance to overcome traditional delimitations within academia and to confront the central social problems of today from a multitude of angles and with a variety of tools (Assmann 1999). However, in practice, disciplinary boundaries have been more often than not observed rather than overstepped. Because the research on collective memory has focused mostly on representations of the past, memory studies appear to have thrived mostly in those fields that do work on representations, depictions and illustrations: literature, film and cultural studies (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003: 2). Nevertheless, of all the sciences, it is history that developed the tightest link to memory, so much so as to ‘replace old favourites – nature, culture, language - as the word most commonly paired with history’ and to result in the ‘remaking of historical imagination’ (Klein 2000: 128). OUR PROJECT aims to bring together these disparate traditions, not only in a side-by-side collection but in a true dialogue that allows for the cross-fertilization of methods, sources and theoretical points between and across the humanities (history, literary and film studies, ethnography, philosophy) and social sciences (sociology, social and political psychology, cultural anthropology, political science, international relations).
Research design and methodology

The structure of our research design is illustrated below (figure 2). The project follows an abductive logic: it starts by formulating some general questions or lines of investigation based on the existing literature but selected primarily on the basis of logical fit and not for the strict testing reasons. It then proceeds by gathering a large data collection about memory actors and their goals and strategies, in various cultural and political contexts and at various levels (local, regional, national, cross-border and transnational). A large number of case studies covering almost the whole of Europe will be conducted with a focus on reconciliation/contestation and populism. The concrete cases to be studied have already been identified by our research team in the preparatory stage of this application and are described very briefly in the detailed presentation of our Work Packages. Through a comparative method and guided by existing theories, the empirical information gathered through case studies will be distilled into several more general and generalizable theoretical propositions about reconciliation and its opposite, contestation of collective memory, and their implications for integration, democracy, and populism.

Hypotheses ‘on probation’ and rules of comparison

Figure 2: Research design

The abductive method of logical inquiry, first formulated by Peirce (Peirce et al. 1960), is most suitable for a qualitative large-scale project like ours, where it would be limiting to proceed by following a closed list of available hypotheses. Instead, we propose to make use of the generative property of qualitative approaches, which aim to provide new propositions and tentative explanations to social phenomena
(LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch 1993). In accordance with this strategy, we will formulate at the beginning some ‘hypotheses on probation’ (Levin-Rozalis 2004: 6) which we will apply in our empirical investigation. In a circular fashion, after the factual check, we return to the theoretical hypotheses and reformulate them to be more in tune with the reality explored.

The advantages gained through the use of an abductive methodology are several. (1) Scientifically, it allows for the greatest amount of new information to be gathered in a systematic fashion, thus fulfilling our data collection objective and bringing a major contribution to the knowledge about memory conflicts. (2) From a scholarly point of view, the abductive method allows not only for a thorough scan of the empirical world, but also for the development of theories, systematized through identifications of patterns of behavior and general types of actors and strategies. (3) From an organizational perspective, the abductive design allows for flexibility at the level of individual research teams, while imposing the academic rigor necessary for theoretical refinements of concepts such as reconciliation or populism.

Going into more detail, the methods used in the large scale project are diverse but complementary: different tools are necessary to build a solid academic construction, and each discipline brings its own to the general project. Some of the methods used are: narrative analysis, qualitative interviews, historical and archival work, media content analysis (including new media such as web-based communication), and interpretative techniques targeting visual and architectural elements, as well as ethnographic observation. The plurality of methods allows for triangulation and gives the research results a higher validity.

The diversity of sources used is also an advantage guarding us from errors of overgeneralization. One of the innovative contributions of this research is the exploration and comparison of first hand data that were previously not put side by side: interviews with marginalized groups, a combined analysis of visual and textual communication materials found in unexpected places (graffiti, posters), as well as internet sources (from YouTube films to blogs and comments and reactions to newspaper articles published online) come together with more traditional sources such as discourse and narrative analysis, institutional process-tracing, and the hermeneutics of literary and artistic cultural production.

Our cases, described in more detail for each work package (see Table 1.3.c), cover most of Europe:

**Northern region:** Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark;

**Eastern region:** Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia;

**Southern region:** Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, Turkey, ex-Yugoslavia;

**Western region:** Ireland, France, Germany, the Netherlands; Central: Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary.

One of the explicit goals of our research program is to depart from the attention traditionally given to national elites in analyses of collective memory and of reconciliation policies. Thus, another methodological innovation is the multilevel analysis of actors. We include local government authorities
as well as local grassroots activists; sub-state, regional actors, as well as actors that spread their interests and actions across several countries (i.e. ethnic groups present in several states that coordinate their activities, transnational civil society networks, or the European Union under its various institutional guises). The multilevel analysis is important both empirically (as it gives a more accurate reflection of the complex interactions at work in the everyday communication and mobilization of European memory actors) and theoretically (as it democratizes the academic discourse and offers researchers a polyphonic memory).

**Limitations**

Though we are very inclusive in our case selection, there are nevertheless spatial limitations. We cover no cases in Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Macedonia, Portugal, Malta, and Switzerland. To our knowledge, these cases, even though certainly interesting, do not challenge our theoretical framework and do not provide unique information that could affect the general conclusions of our work.

Time-wise, our research focuses only on the period after the fall of the Berlin wall. We want to analyze the way actors dealt with the memory of the major conflicts of the 20th century once the Iron Curtain disappeared. There are numerous reasons to apply ourselves to the study of post-1989 Europe, one of the most important being that the end of communism has allowed the previously repressed voices of memory actors marginalized by the dictatorships of the Eastern bloc to become audible. 1989 is thus, a true *annus mirabilis*, a threshold in the development of democratization processes and of European integration, and a logical starting point for research dedicated to the study of memory conflicts and their impact on integration, peace and democracy.

Methodologically, we chose to consistently focus on a plural approach that accommodates the variety of expertise coming from our partners. Out of the need to remain focused while allowing for flexibility, we decided not to include quantitative research methods as part of our data analysis. Instead our consortium is formed with the aim to provide a very wide range of qualitative ways of exploring reality, which we found better suited to our purpose: not to test pre-existing theories, but to formulate working hypotheses, to investigate the complex empirical universe with open eyes and only afterwards refine the content of theoretical propositions.

Theoretically, we are interested in a multidisciplinary approach, guided by our main research questions: the investigation of actors involved in memory conflicts in a variety of contexts and at a variety of levels. At the same time, we are interested in treading on less taken paths, and in using the existing scholarship as a springboard for further elaboration rather than repetition. This is the reason why we decided to focus less on the otherwise pertinent idea of transitional justice. Of all the conflict resolution and reconciliation strategies, it was precisely this take, with roots in legal studies, that came to dominate the field. Instead of following the same route, we prefer to use the synergy effects with other ongoing FP7 projects dealing with related matters, such as the one lead by Karin Aggestam at Lund University, ‘Building Just and Durable Peace by Piece’.
Connections among work packages

The project starts off with a special Work Package, WP 1, dedicated to the creation of comparison guidelines that would be the common vector for the entire empirical phase. Because of our abductive research design, it is necessary to set from the beginning the basic strategies of comparison that would allow for the thorough investigation of our empirical universe and for a systematic evaluation and theoretical elaboration in later work packages.

On the basis of the Comparison Guidelines, the empirical work packages expand into a plurality of studies of actors involved in memory conflicts, their strategies and goals. WPs 2 – 7 are based on the research matrix developed on page 6, where every intersection of the two axes is treated in a special work package. The result translates into six empirical sets of cases where the three types of actors (local, national and transnational) are observed in the context of memories of conflicts between and within states. Throughout the empirical phase data relevant for later theoretical questions will be collected, with special attention given to the existence of transnational links connecting local and national actors across Europe, and the actors’ adaptation of populist rhetorical tools to the memory discourse.

WP 2 examines local actors in the context of memories of conflicts between states. The cases include cultural associations of minorities in border regions, county level government, and local opinion makers active in conflicts opposing Poland and Ukraine, Austria and Slovenia, Estonia and Russia, and Germany and the Czech Republic. WP 3 looks at national actors concerned with memory of conflicts such as the ones between Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, Slovakia and Hungary, Poland and Germany, Holland and its former colony Indonesia, or Slovenia and Italy. WP 4 takes a look at the transnational actor dimension of conflicts that, because of their scale, have had ramifications beyond national territories or populations: the Second World War, the Holocaust of the Jewish population across Europe, the wars of colonization and decolonization between Algeria and France. WP 5 looks at those local actors involved in memory of conflicts within states, such as internal conflict between the partisans and the nationalist militias in the former Yugoslavia during WWII, ethnic conflict in post-WWII period within Poland between the Polish majority and the ethnic minorities (e.g. Kaschubs, Schlesians, Ukrainians), the Ulster unionists versus Irish nationalist in Northern Ireland from mid-1990s to today, and the Spanish Civil War and the reaction of the local communities to the opening of mass graves in 1979-1980. The national actors implicated in memory conflicts taking place domestically will be investigated in WP 6. The cases studied there are: the Franco dictatorship in Spain, the Italian colonial heritage as used in today’s political debates, the Stasi surveillance politics in the GDR, the memory of the Holocaust in Poland and its populist and anti-Semitic uses as well as the tension between those nostalgic after the former Yugoslavia and their opponents. Finally, WP 7 examines transnational actors in the context of conflicts within states, with a special focus on European institutions: the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its policies on the uses of memory and commemoration for ethnic minorities, the role of the EU’s policies on how the memory of the Poraimos (Roma Holocaust) is treated by the Czech state, and other examples of the role of the EU as a memory policymaker in the areas of commemoration. WP7 studies also the conflict over the representation of Islam in two European-wide permanent exhibitions at the Musée de l’Europe, Brussels and Bauhaus Europa, Aachen. Other transnational actors studied are diasporas (Bosnian and Slovenian for example), ethnic minorities (the Sami of Northern Europe) and the transnational
scientific community of professional historians.

The empirical phase is concluded with WP 8 ‘Small Scale Comparisons’, which aims to provide an overview of the entire data collection, systematized along our initial variables, actors and memory conflicts. This work package is structured in six workshops, centered on a comparison theme. Three workshops take one type of actor each (local, national, transnational) as their center piece and look for commonalities and differences across the two types of memory conflicts (between and within states). The other two workshops take as a constant the conflict type and explore the points of cohesion and incongruity across the variation in actor types. A special workshop will be dedicated to the empirical manifestations of reconciliation, contestation and populism observed across all the cases studied. This will make a smooth transition to the next phase in the research program, dedicated to the refinement of concepts and theories that deal with collective memory, reconciliation, democracy and populism, as well as with transnational actors and processes, and questions related to the ethics of remembering and forgetting.

These major themes are grouped in two major work packages, each with its own set of objectives, derived from the main questions driving our investigation. WP 9 brings forward the general theme of reconciliation and memory conflicts and explores it in connection with other issues such as victimhood, trauma, ethical and transnational aspects and the impact of totalitarian regimes over the chances of coming to terms with the past. The role of collective memory to bring about mutual trust between former opponents in a conflict and the concrete strategies of remembering and forgetting will be placed in the larger context of peace and promoting good neighborly relations in Europe. At the same time, one other theoretical interest in this work package will follow the role of the European institutions in alleviating memory conflicts through the creation and implementation of norms at the international level as well as through policies of memorialization at the scale of the continent. The role of the European Parliament in marking the important dates of the European common symbolic calendar, as well as the peace and reconciliation initiatives coming out of a common external policy for the European Union will serve as stimuli for the further theorization of the transnational element of reconciliation processes dealing with memory conflicts.

WP 10 engages with the other conceptual pillar of our work, populism, and its relationship with democracy and the heritage of the totalitarian past. Themes of investigation are: the possibility of a transnational history of communism, the populist uses of the colonial past in Italy and of WWII in Denmark, the perception of the relationship between national pasts and populist discourses in the European Parliament. The ambition of theoretical work packages 9 and 10 is to lift the earlier findings to a higher level of abstraction and to relate the vast amount of information about concrete examples of memory conflicts and memory actors gathered during the empirical phase to the conceptual debates in the field of memory, populism, democracy and reconciliation.

This theoretical work will be made concrete in two separate reports on each of the two principal themes of the two work packages (reconciliation and populism) and in the final report of the project, ‘European Integration, Democracy and Memory Conflicts’. The theoretical reports will take stock of the experience and findings accumulated during the project and will provide a springboard for further
thoughts on related issues. With foresight activities such as elaborating possible scenarios for future developments, our project sees itself not as a once-and-for-all occurrence, but as part of a continuous effort to make sense of the social world. The final report reserves space in particular for the suggestion of new avenues of investigation opened by the results of our research.

Bibliography


