

## Memory and Methodological Cosmopolitanism: A Figurative Approach

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### Memory Studies and its Trajectories

When the authors of this volume were asked ‘to reflect on (y)our own work through the prism of (y)our companions’ I was somewhat apprehensive. The social sciences never had the kind of personal awakening like say ‘new journalism’ or some of the humanities driven by a more subjective approach to writing. Even if most of the research questions we pose involve some form of subjectivity and their intellectual sublimation. Yet this rarely detracts from the ‘scientific’ expectations heeded by most academics, to refrain from inserting themselves into their narratives. Detachment, *Wertfreiheit* and other tales from the scientific crib remain the standards that confer legitimacy to our work. So how to go about this unfamiliar genre without giving in to the temptations to unleash one’s narcissistic *homo academicus*? I do not claim to have a satisfactory answer to this conundrum. What I will say though is that having to address the topic of memory (or any other substantive intellectual engagement for that matter) from this personal perspective carries the potential yield of an increase in reflexivity. So I hope that the following comments will generate productive insights on memory and its study. Accordingly, I want to take the chronology of my memory work as a trigger for some broader reflections on the field of memory studies.

I would like to map my deliberations onto the tripartite division Astrid Erll (2011) recently proposed in her essay ‘Travelling Memory’. She distinguishes three periods in the study of (cultural) memory. Her starting point are the claims and impulses that the works of Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs 1992; 1980) and Aby Warburg (Gombrich 1986) generated

since the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> This initial phase is marked by a focus on how memory works in society and culture, followed by the memory boom of the 1980s. ‘The focus thus shifted from the dynamics of memory in culture to the specific memories of (allegedly stable and clearly demarcated) cultures – the most popular social unit being the nation-state, which was then swiftly seen as isomorphic with national culture and a national cultural memory. Memory studies thus entered the stage of ‘national memory studies’, which characterized much of the work done in the 1990s’ (Erlil 2011: 6). As globalization processes came into sharper relief, the pervasive and persistent explanatory power of ‘methodological nationalism’ in the social sciences in general, and memory studies in particular, appeared if not anachronistic certainly limited. Thus a third phase, trying to escape the national container, emerged. Erlil labels this latest shift ‘transcultural memory studies’ suggesting that ‘for memory studies, the old-fashioned container-culture approach is not only somewhat ideologically suspect. It is also epistemologically flawed, because there are too many mnemonic phenomena that do not come into our field of vision with the ‘default’ combination of territorial, ethnic and national collectivity as the main framework of cultural memory – but which may be seen with the transcultural lens’ (Erlil 2011: 8).

It is this last and on-going phase in the development of memory studies, which this essay will be focused on. There are numerous rationales for this. For one, despite constructive moves during this third phase, sifting through the countless case studies on memory reveals that the national remains the empirical and conceptual focus of most scholars. Plus, asked to reflect on my intellectual undercurrents, my own scholarly efforts of the last fifteen years

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<sup>1</sup> The reception story, that is the diffusion of these French thinkers into the English-speaking realm is a crucial aspect of the development of the memory field. For a good overview see *The Collective Memory Reader* (Jeffrey K Olick et al. 2011). Suffice to point out here the delayed yet successful introduction of Halbwachs during the 1990s in the Anglo-Saxon context was crucial (earlier attempts during the 1950s remained largely without any resonance). The work of Aby Warburg has yet to assume Halbwachs’ status for memory scholars outside of Europe.

have revolved around and contributed to situating the study of memory in an interdependent global world.

Before addressing the global-memory nexus, I must mention Jeffrey Olick who introduced me to memory studies in the mid nineties. I was fortunate to meet him at a time when interest in memory was still somewhat of a rarefied topic in mainstream sociology (some would contend that it still is). It was our shared interest in the political culture of West Germany that set the foundations for an on-going conversation. His near encyclopaedic command over the literature coupled with a sharp analytic mind and a passion for theory made him a formidable companion. We quickly delved into a series of discussions. Before long we started our first research project, resulting in a joint publication in 1997 about the ways in which different modalities of collective memory (distinguishing between taboos and prohibitions) constrain political claim-making (Olick & Levy 1997).

Aside from the case specific findings, our main conceptual point centred on the processual quality of memory making and the importance of historical trajectories in general. We argued that ‘conceiving of collective memory as part of a political-cultural process thus remedies the presuppositional tendency to view it either as an unchanging and definitive past or as pure strategy, always malleable in the present’ (Olick & Levy 1997: 923). Our endeavour was squarely situated within the national container characteristic of the second phase. It also underscored the path-dependent and historicizing approach to memory. This processual approach is also evidenced in our latest joint publication, namely the conceptualization and introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader* where we (together with Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi) put forward a somewhat revisionist view of the genealogy of memory studies (Olick et al. 2011). After nearly two decades, Olick remains my interlocutor on all matters mnemonic.

## **Cosmopolitan Memories and the Critique of Methodological Nationalism**

It is my decade long collaboration with Natan Sznaider, however, which carries the greatest impact on my recent scholarly trajectory. His originality, historical sensibilities and deep knowledge of social and political theory have left indelible traces on my intellectual biography. Since the late 1990s we have been discussing and developing our thoughts on memory in the global age. We started exploring the impact of globalization on memory cultures, which were hitherto examined within the context of bounded structures, primarily the nation. We asked: What happens when the self-understanding of an increasing number of people, primarily (but not solely) in the West, is no longer determined exclusively through references to the nation? How do memory practices shape collective orientations outside national boundaries? What role do emerging forms of memory have for the reconfiguration of national sovereignty?

The pursuit of these questions culminated in our first joint monograph in 2001 *Die Erinnerung im Globalen Zeitalter: Der Holocaust*.<sup>2</sup> The book explores the historical and theoretical foundations for the emergence of what we refer to as *cosmopolitan memories*. The national container, we contend, has been in the process of being slowly cracked resulting in the emergence of cosmopolitan memory-scapes. Processes of ‘internal globalization’ during the last three decades suggest that issues of global concern are able to become part and parcel of everyday local experiences and moral life worlds of an increasing number of people. National and ethnic memories are transformed in the age of globalization rather than erased. They continue to exist, of course, but globalization processes also imply that different

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<sup>2</sup> The book was conceived during the late nineties. A revised English version *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* was published in 2006. To the best of my knowledge, and in a bit of shameless self-promotion, we were among the conceptual progenitors of this third (memory) wave. Jeffrey Alexander’s 2002 article ‘On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The “Holocaust” from War Crime to Trauma Drama’ added valuable insights to this emerging field. Another contributor to this initial interest in the impact of globalization on memory was Andreas Huyssen. His *Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia* (2000) is an important contribution as were his expanded thoughts in a later book (Huyssen 2003). Together we were at the forefront criticizing the nation-centric fallacy of memory studies. Our respective critiques were conceived around the same time and set the stage for ensuing and ongoing discussions about transnational, transcultural and related global manifestation of mnemonic practices.

national memories are subjected to a common patterning. They begin to develop in accord with common rhythms and periodizations. But in each case, the common elements combine with pre-existing elements to form something new. In each case, the new, global narrative has to be reconciled with the old, national narratives, and the result is always distinctive (Levy & Sznajder 2002: 89).

Since then the critique of nation-centric assumptions has spread and numerous scholars have made important contributions to studying memory beyond the exclusive purview of the nation-state.<sup>3</sup> By now the concept of cosmopolitan memories has become a standard reference and has been applied productively to different contexts, both western and non-western.<sup>4</sup> We also observed how the proliferation of cosmopolitan norms has resulted in the re-nationalization of memory discourses. These findings have misled some to reproduce the binary suggesting that the cosmopolitan contradicts the national. I will address this misperception in the next section.

### **Cosmopolitanism and its Discontents**

Reservations about the impact of globalization and the concomitant ‘cosmopolitan turn’ involve the aforementioned juxtaposition of the national and the cosmopolitan. As indicated above, some also tend to misinterpret the cosmopolitan analysis of memory cultures as a quasi-teleological instance of linearity and related charges of a homogenizing universalism.<sup>5</sup>

What these critics share is a resilient methodological nationalism, marked by a lack of

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<sup>3</sup> Among the theoretically most generative are Michael Rothberg’s concept of ‘multidirectionality’ (Rothberg 2009). Astrid Erll’s notion of ‘traveling memory’ and earlier elaborations (Erll & Nünning 2008). The work of Richard Crownshaw (Crownshaw et al., 2010). Ann Rigney also takes a decisively global turn (Rigney 2012). Alison Landsberg’s master concept of ‘prosthetic memories’ (Landsberg 2004) was another earlier entry. To name but a few whose work implies a forceful critique of a prevailing methodological nationalism.

<sup>4</sup> The corpus of memory related works including globalized modes of memory practices is by now vast. To get a sense of its extent please visit the bibliographic ‘Memory Studies Bank’ which contains over 3,000 memory related references and is growing rapidly at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mid/msb/about.html>.

<sup>5</sup> A representative example for this kind of “universalistic (mis)reading” of our arguments can be found in a 2010 volume edited by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad entitled *Memory in a Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*.

reflexivity toward established conceptual categories. In the following I will demonstrate that cosmopolitan figurations are characterized by non-linear contingent manifestations and the validation of particularism. And that methodological cosmopolitanism is no longer related to the normative Kantian vision of cosmopolitanism, but refers to an analytical tool kit exploring processes of cosmopolitanization, including the transformation but not the transcendence of the nation.

The conventional concept of collective memory remains embedded within the container of the nation-state assuming that memory community and geographical proximity, belong together. Some consider globalization as something that dissolves collective memory and sets up inauthentic and rootless substitutes in its stead. Anthony Smith typifies this view. ‘A timeless global culture answers to no living needs and conjures no memories. If memory is central to identity, we can discern no global identity in the making’ (Smith 1995: 24). Why can it conjure no memories? Because timelessness is of its essence: ‘This artificial and standardized universal culture has no historical background, no developmental rhythm, no sense of time and sequence. [...] alien to all ideas of “roots,” the genuine global culture is fluid, ubiquitous, formless and historically shallow’ (Ibid: 22). Smith’s statement is emblematic of two fallacies: the restriction of memory to the symbolic boundaries of the nation; and a view that juxtaposes real lived experiences and inauthentic mediated representations.

Pierre Nora (1996), the doyen of the memory boom is perhaps the most influential exponent of this view. His book *Les lieux de mémoire* is a touchstone in the literature.<sup>6</sup> Nora

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<sup>6</sup> Nora’s influence on American memory studies can be dated to the publication of his 1989 article in *Representations*. Followed by the English publication of the multi-volume work *Realms of Memory* in 1996. This magnum opus was not merely translated into many languages but also applied to numerous countries documenting key national memorial sites. Paradoxically, though probably not unintended considering Nora’s stern Republicanism, the scholarly production of the monumental *Realms of Memory* itself was a factor for the reproduction of the memory-nation link. It sought to reinforce the solidity and meaningfulness of national sites of memory. And indeed, one of the reasons that Nora was so adamant about the project was his realization that the centrality of the nation had diminished.

distinguishes between the social environments, or milieu of memory, and the sites that have been set up to preserve the memory of events. He sees the latter as a substitute for living traditions. ‘Memorial sites exist because the social environment of memory exists no longer, the surroundings in which memory is an essential component of everyday experience.’ (1996: 1) Echoing Smith’s distinction between authentic memories and their substitutes. Implied here is the assumption that impersonal representations are mere ersatz and not connected to our ‘real’ emotions and identities. The actual history of the nation-state and its formation is instructive for debunking this essentialized argumentation. Nora’s view essentially restates the sentimental 19<sup>th</sup> century antagonism between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, which opposed the new, nation-wide structures to those of local communities. It claimed that larger structures were soulless. And part of this soullessness lay in their impersonal means of communications, like newspapers. But the argument turned out to be a romantic and nostalgic one. Mechanical representations did not stand in the way of strong identifications but facilitated them. The centrality of collective means and modes of communication for the nascent nation-state was already addressed by Karl Deutsch and Richard Merritt (1953). Two pivotal works during the so-called constructivist turn during the 1980s confirmed this. Benedict Anderson’s ‘Imagined Communities (1983) and Eric Hobsbawm’s and Terence Ranger’s (1984) equally influential notion of ‘invented traditions’. Together they pretty much quelled attempts at essentializing the nation and attendant conceptions of groupness.<sup>7</sup>

Our critique of methodological nationalists like Nora is thus directed against their implied normative claims and the (static) fixation on the nation-state as the sole possible (and imaginable) source for the articulation of collective memories. The ideological tenor of Nora’s national conceptual vocabulary is accentuated by the fact that he recognizes and regrets the impact of global transformations and the de-coupling of state and society along

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<sup>7</sup> For a poignant critique of categorical and a-historical group attributions see Rogers Brubaker’s *Nationalism Reframed* (Brubaker 1996).

with the diminishing returns of the national. Hence he laments that ‘the acceleration of history, then, confronts us with the brutal realization of the difference between real memory and history, which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past’ (Nora 1989: 8). Along with this transformation, Nora notes that the transmission of memory has expanded to social forces outside the realm of the state. ‘The coupling of state and nation was gradually replaced by the coupling of state and society’ (Ibid: 11). No longer is the nation-state the uncontested privileged site for the articulation of collective memories. Nora points to and deplores the erosion of the state’s ability to impose a unitary and unifying framework of memory. He constructs an opposition that is reminiscent of the ‘fin de siècle syndrom’, based on the abstract assumption that modernity destroyed tradition. While Nora bemoans the demise of nation-state dominance, we are exploring the significance these changes have empirically and for our conceptual tool kits.

Let me briefly return to some bones of contention for the critics of cosmopolitan analysis. They view it as being teleological, too optimistic, and underwritten by a universalistic Kantian understanding of cosmopolitanism. This cartoonish straw-man version is counterproductive. Especially since the field of cosmopolitan studies is increasingly characterized by its attentiveness to contingency, path-dependent validations of the particular and transformations (and not transcendence) of nationhood. All of these components are already manifest in our early work on Holocaust memory.

In *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* we illustrate some of these transformative dynamics through an examination of how the Holocaust has been remembered in Germany, Israel and the U.S.A. during five decades between the 1940s and the late 1990s. Our central argument is that ‘the Holocaust has been confronted by various forces, which have attempted to universalize it, to particularize it, and to nationalize it. But recently this memory has continued to exist on a global level. Its strength as a global collective memory



has been powered and maintained precisely through the fiery interaction between the local and the global. We argue that this dual process of particularization and universalization has produced a symbol of transnational solidarity that is based on a cosmopolitanized memory – one that does not replace national collective memories but exists as their horizon.’ (Levy & Sznajder 2002: 93) The cosmopolitanization of memories then should not be situated in the context of either universal or particular orientations.

Instead of reducing these terms to their ideological assumptions, we treat them as an important object in our investigation. We historicize notions of particularism and universalism, thereby de-moralizing them while retaining them as valuable sociological tools. Our primary objective is to disentangle these terms from their conventional ‘either–or’ perspective and understand them in terms of ‘as well as’ options. [...] Consequently speaking about the cosmopolitization of Holocaust memory does not imply some progressive universalism subject to a unified interpretation. The Holocaust does not become one totalizing signifier containing the same meanings for everyone. Rather its meanings evolve from the encounter of global interpretations and local sensibilities... The cosmopolitanization of memory does not mean the end of national perspectives so much as their transformation into more complex entities where different social groups have different relations to globalization. (Levy & Sznajder 2002: 92)

In other words, it is the very encounter between the global and the local, and the universal and the particular (whereby the latter pairing does not necessarily map onto the former) that is reflective of and contributes to cosmopolitanization. On this view, the West might be dominant in terms of its capacity to diffuse world cultural models but it does so neither inevitably nor in a homogenizing fashion. Gerard Delanty (2012) puts it succinctly: ‘Despite the western genealogy of the word cosmopolitanism, the term is used today in a “post-western” register of meaning. Cosmopolitanism, as used here, does not assume the generalizability of western historical experiences and instead takes experiences that are relevant to all societies and for which there may be different conceptual genealogies. In this

sense, cosmopolitanism is a ‘post-western’ orientation that is located neither on the national nor global level, but at the interface of the local and the global.’ (Delanty 2012: 335-336)

Staking out the broader theoretical and methodological agenda of cosmopolitan studies, Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider (2006) seek ‘to overcome the naive universalism of early Western sociology. Methodological cosmopolitanism implies becoming sensitive and open to the many universalisms, the conflicting contextual universalisms’ (Beck & Sznaider 2006: 13).<sup>8</sup> Delanty (2012) refers to this as post-universal, in the sense of a relativization of universalism that the epistemological framework of cosmopolitanism is a post-universalism since it stands for a universalism that does not demand universal assent or that everyone identifies with a single interpretation. Depending on the social context or historical situation, social actors will interpret universal rules differently and put them to different use [...] By this is simply meant that statements of truth and justice etc. are not absolute, immutable or derivable from an objective order of universal values, but nonetheless it is still possible to make judgments and evaluations, the universalistic strength of which will vary depending on the context of application. (Delanty 2012: 337)

It would be easy to dismiss these positions as relativistic, but as the empirical works of neo-institutionalists show there is broad consensus on world cultural models (e.g. rationality, education). At the same time they identify significant discrepancies among countries, that is a de-coupling of intended goals and actual applications (Meyer et al., 1997). I will address both trajectories, that is, the global diffusion of cosmopolitan values and practices, on the one, and the local appropriation of these scripts, on the other. Cosmopolitan scales are a crucial characteristic of methodological cosmopolitanism stressing processual, relational and situational dimensions.

This scaled approach also stands at the centre of our second monograph addressing the intersection of *Human Rights and Memory* (Levy & Sznaider 2010). We examine how memories of the Holocaust have evolved into a universal code synonymous with an

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<sup>8</sup> An excellent historical-sociological case study for the pertinence of the particular within the universal is Natan Sznaider’s *Jewish Memory and the Cosmopolitan Order* (Sznaider 2011).

imperative to address past injustices (both legally as well as in commemorative terms). Although the ‘memory imperative’ originated with the centrality of Holocaust memories during the 1990s, it has become a decontextualized code for human rights abuses as such. Nation-states engage (or are expected to) with their own history in a sceptical fashion. This dynamic, we argue, explains both the importance of human rights norms as a globally available repertoire of legitimate claim making and the differential appropriation of this universal script.

We demonstrate how, at different historical junctures and through the proliferation of memories of past injustices, the discourse of human rights and memories of past human right abuses have developed into a powerful idiom vested with legitimacy. The discourse of human rights and its legal inscriptions has grown into a cultural and political force substantially re-configuring the basis of legitimate sovereignty the scope of political responsibility, and forms of belonging. The accretion of political, cultural, and institutional capital through the human rights regime has resulted in a substantial reconfiguration of state sovereignty (Levy & Sznajder 2006), an extension of political responsibilities, and new forms of cosmopolitan solidarity (Beck & Levy 2013). Rather than start from an abstract notion of political interests we probe how, once institutionalized, human rights idioms themselves constitute political interests. Memory politics of human rights have become a new form of political rationality and a prerequisite for state legitimacy. Sovereign rhetoric is increasingly evaluated by the extent to which it is related to the legal recognition of human rights. Memory clashes abound and provide ample evidence that the prominence of human rights does not imply the end of the national. And at times even raises the spectre of exclusionary renationalization or re-tribalization. We are thus not suggesting that this global context implies any end of the nation. On the contrary, perceptions of globalization are frequently the main trigger for nationalistic rhetoric. And clearly the identification with non-national realms is nothing new.

However, the contemporary intensity, extensity and volatility of these processes is unparalleled and has become part of a self-conscious reflexive approach among many political elites around the world as their legitimacy frequently depends on their commitment to such cosmopolitan tropes.

### **Cosmopolitan Memory Studies**

Let us now move from this defensive terrain (on which scholars pursuing epistemological correctives frequently find themselves) and advance a cosmopolitan framework. This brings me to Ulrich Beck, my third companion, who has coined the term ‘methodological cosmopolitanism.’ We have collaborated for over a decade and his theoretical ingenuity has been nothing short of inspirational. Together we are systematizing the conditions for such a cosmopolitan methodology.

What is at (empirical and conceptual) stake is not the transcendence of the nation-state but its transformation. As indicated above, the cosmopolitan memory thesis has frequently been misunderstood as a description in which the nation-state is overcome. Two presuppositions inform this misperception: one views cosmopolitanism in a Kantian fashion and conflates the aspirational language of a normative cosmopolitanism with the sociological approach towards cosmopolitanization; the other refers to the binarism that views nationalism and cosmopolitanism as anti-thetical.

The difference between the propagation of cosmopolitanism as an ideal and the study of cosmopolitan realities is quite telling. Reflected in the renewed interest political theorists have shown in the concept since the 1990s, the initial focus revolved around its normative potential in a global age. It was Martha Nussbaum’s (1994) revival of a universalistic Kantian understanding of the term, which triggered a wide range of critical response. For the most part, the ensuing debates have centred, around the question of whether it is possible to expand solidaristic fellow-feelings beyond the national. Potential scenarios range from utopian

notions of world citizenship to visions in which universal orientations and particular attachments co-exist (Appiah 1997). While these debates have no doubt contributed to the burgeoning field of cosmopolitan studies, they also have reinforced the misperception that cosmopolitanism is primarily a normative stance and an elite phenomenon. This limited purview is further compounded by the fact that cosmopolitanism is frequently treated as a concept with categorical qualities reflected in a static *ism* (Fine 2003).

Scholars have responded by attempting to ground cosmopolitanism sociologically. At the forefront of these efforts, Beck has redirected attention to a process-oriented notion of cosmopolitanization and its attendant realities.<sup>9</sup> Whereas cosmopolitanism refers to a philosophical-normative theory, cosmopolitanization is a factum and a social-scientific research program beyond the confines of methodological nationalism (Beck 2002; Beck, 2006; Beck & Sznaider 2006). Unlike older philosophical engagements with cosmopolitanism as a universalistic principle, the sociological dynamics of cosmopolitanization imply an interactive relationship between the global and the local. It is a ‘non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles’ (Beck 2006: 72-73)

The proliferation of cosmopolitan studies among social scientists has shifted the focus away from normative approaches. Instead explorations of cosmopolitan realities and practices have taken center stage. This is not the place for a literature review, suffice to say, that much of this research has been driven by a common perception about the crisis of the hitherto hegemonic national mode of belonging. And indeed, the concept of the national is often perceived, both in public and academic discourse, as the central obstacle for the realization of cosmopolitan belonging. Consequently, debates about the nation misleadingly revolve around

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<sup>9</sup> The list of conceptual works tackling issues of methodological cosmopolitanism is too long to be captured in this essay. For good overviews see (Beck & Sznaider 2006; Delanty 2012; Skrbiš & Woodward 2013).

its persistence or its demise, and not only among those who adhere to methodological nationalism.<sup>10</sup> ‘Regardless of their understanding that the nation is a constructed category, most cosmopolitan scholars accept that it is or was the natural and rational form of socio-political organization in the modern age, i.e. that it is or was the organizing principle of political modernity. This curiously re-natured view of the nation-state mirrors the modernism it opposes’ (Fine and Chernilo 2004: 36). The presuppositions of nationhood and statehood, as well as, the histories through which both have been linked (as the composite noun ‘nation-state’ suggests), remain largely untouched. Cosmopolitanism too is often articulated in opposition to this conventional (i.e. naturalized) and inevitable version of the nation.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, nationalism and cosmopolitanism are frequently conceptualized as part of an unchanging zero-sum game.

Some scholars have moved away from this ‘either–or’ perspective and emphasized how cosmopolitan orientations can complement the national (Skrbiš & Woodward 2013). ‘In the contemporary world, human beings often combine profound local, ethnic, religious or national attachments with a commitment to cosmopolitan values and principles that transcend those more local boundaries’ (Kymlicka & Walker 2012). This view of cosmopolitanism as complementary to nationalism represents an important step forward. However, it does not sufficiently focus on how cosmopolitan processes are intersecting and potentially transforming the idea of the national itself. After all, ‘because nationhood – both conceptually and in practice – is malleable, there is no reason to believe that nations will not be perpetually

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<sup>10</sup> Incidentally, this binary fallacy epitomizes the a-historical bias among scholars failing to distinguish between earlier processes of nationalization and later manifestations of nationalism. As Eugene Weber (1976) has shown for the French case, while nationalism eventually became a potent idea and basis for solidarity, much time and ideological labor was required until real existing national structures trickled down and became dominant. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are witnessing several (partly concentric) circles of real existing cosmopolitanization, which may or may not, culminate in the internalization and emergence of cosmopolitanism. Conversely, and continuing the historical analogy with the national, cosmopolitanization may spur strong anti-cosmopolitanism – as much as nationalism initially triggered strong resistance (e.g. early 20<sup>th</sup> century cosmopolitanism).

<sup>11</sup> A notable exception can be found in the work of Gerard Delanty (2006). He suggests that cosmopolitanism and nationalism, while in tension, are nevertheless linked, producing nations without nationalism in the contemporary global environment (Delanty 2006: 358).

imagined, even though such imaginings will change in content and form' (Croucher 2003: 2). It is therefore not sufficient to recognize that the nation is a historically constructed category, but essential to explore how this malleability and contingency of nationhood evolves in a global context. Whereas the constructed nature of nationalism is widely recognized, the national is now naturalized in the sense that the future of nationhood is too often no longer addressed from a constructivist perspective. Beck & Levy (2013), therefore, caution that 'rather than deploying cosmopolitanism as a normative desideratum, or as antithesis to an essentialized version of the national, [we contend that] cosmopolitanization is a constitutive feature for the reconfiguration of nationhood itself and emerging features of orientation, identification and belonging' (Beck & Levy, 2013: 5).

To understand how past and present narratives of nationhood are related to each other and how the universal and the particular are crystallized into processes of cosmopolitanization, I propose to think about cosmo-national imaginaries in Norbert Elias's figurative terms of a 'continuum of changes' (1992). Meaningful political and cultural premises are informed by significant pasts, presents that are being transformed and different horizons of future expectations.<sup>12</sup> On this view, collective modes of identification and memory that are perceived as legitimate may change over time; however, their respective meanings remain linked 'by a long continuum of changes.' Elias's methodological deliberations on historical processes seem particularly beneficial for the study of epochal changes and emerging mnemonic figurations, which form by way of mixing old and new elements. Hence the persistence of older structures (and norms) cannot be interpreted as a mere anachronism – as modernization theorists did with religion and ethnicity. Rejecting any kind of self-sustaining logic of development, Elias instead focuses on the historical and

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<sup>12</sup> A shared sense of the past becomes a meaning-making repository, which helps define aspirations for the future. In his historical analysis of times and temporalities Reinhart Koselleck (1985) points out that the present is situated between past experiences which is 'present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered' and a horizon of expectations which refers to 'the future made present, it points to the not-yet, to that which has not been experienced, to that which can only be discovered' (Koselleck 1985: 272).

institutional conditions through which cultural and political claims are established and inscribed as foundational meaning systems. Their respective dominance is largely a function of changing figurations.

Among scholars who are attentive to the processual and relational requirements of a thorough methodological cosmopolitanism, Delanty's views are of particular value for our understanding of the cosmopolitanization of memory cultures. Delanty describes 'four main kinds of cosmopolitan relationships, which together constitute the social ontology of cosmopolitanism. These are the relativization of identity, the positive recognition of the other, the mutual evaluation of cultures, and the creation of a normative world culture' (Delanty 2012: 333). He develops a framework 'that distinguishes between the preconditions of cosmopolitanism, its social mechanisms and processes (of which three are specified: generative, transformational and institutionalizing) and trajectories of historical change' (Ibid: 333).

This framework has numerous virtues. For one it pre-empts the kind of universalistic (and at times linear) assumptions that have guided methodological nationalism. Early forms of modernization theory are perhaps the most flagrant example for this. For a variety of reasons, a processual-relational perspective underwriting methodological cosmopolitanism is less susceptible to accusations of ethno-centrism and universalism. To be sure, early articulations of cosmopolitan sociology were drawn largely from the Western and even more limited European experience. There is, of course, nothing wrong with that historically, considering the origins of the term and its diffusion. Yet it has become apparent that the conditions of possibility for the spread and expressions of cosmopolitanism reveal a great degree of variety. While the contemporary origins of cosmopolitanism are European, research about non-European settings cannot assume a universalized cosmopolitan model, implying a



particular developmental path and presupposing political and cultural flows from the center to the periphery.<sup>13</sup>

Another important analytic move to avoid the categorical fallacy of a homogenous and static notion of cosmopolitanism refers to the significance of the *situational* properties of cosmopolitanization. Needless to say this situational dimension is not unique to cosmopolitanism but also applies to the historical trajectories of nationalism. Both operate on a continuum that involves strong, weak and no less important self-contradictory manifestations. The incorporation of a situational perspective is indispensable when we consider that cosmopolitan practices are circumscribed by temporal, spatial and material structures (Woodward & Skrbiš 2013). Thus instead of categorizing cosmopolitan memories as ideal-typical formations, we concur with Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš (2013) who theorize cosmopolitanism ‘as flexible, available set of cultural practices and outlooks which are selectively mobilized depending on social and cultural contexts’ (Ibid: 129). This approach looks not for ‘fixed and stable attributes, but to the performative, situational and accomplished dimensions of being cosmopolitan. That is, it understands cosmopolitanism as an expression in particular social contexts and settings’ (Ibid: 129). Woodward and Skrbiš suggest that ‘cosmopolitanism is never an absolute or fixed category that resides simply within some individuals more than others, but a dimension of social life that must be actively constructed through practices of meaning making in social situations [...] While claiming to be a universal position of cultural inclusiveness and generosity, it is in fact a culturally located and environmentally enabled viewpoint, which is itself based in a regime of value-

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<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere I have shown how the relationship between core and periphery itself is subject to a recursive relationship (Levy 2010). To capture the tension of ‘synchronicity’ and ‘path-dependency’ I have introduced the notion of recursive cosmopolitanization. The concept refers to an open ended process in which center and periphery stand in a recursive relationship that is reflected, among other things, in the intercrossings of global normative expectations and their local appropriations. Moreover, recursive cosmopolitanization also reveals how local articulations are inscribed into global norms. By unpacking a variety of cosmopolitan iterations, Beck and Edgar Grande too are providing a corrective for teleological temptations, which tend to generalize a western path. ‘The idea of cosmopolitan modernity must be developed out of the variety of modernities, out of the inner wealth of variants of modernity’ (Beck & Grande 2010: 409–443).

attribution' (Ibid: 132). This situational dimension then is a crucial component underscoring how, depending on the situation, people can weave in and out of particular memory constellations.

## **Outlook**

In conclusion, studying memory from a cosmopolitan perspective then is part of a larger epistemological project. Reflecting on our critique of methodological nationalism underscores how the resilience of national-methodological categories is obfuscating our grasp of the cosmopolitanization of global mnemonics. It also sheds light on the propensity for how both observers (scholars) and actors are prone to engage in reductionism by way of reification. While the actor's attempts at naturalizing collective identities are valuable data, the observer's tendencies to essentialize categories should be treated as preventable professional deformations. Despite the fact that it is common-place to recognize the constructivist aspects of concepts, de-naturalize the categories we use as observers and recognize the malleability characterizing how people ascribe meanings to their memory practices, reification remains a potential hazard for our analysis. Put differently, there is a tendency (driven partly by a lack of reflexivity as well as practical considerations of deploying familiar – i.e. non-controversial terms) among scholars to reify and ultimately ossify the categories they use. Which is one of the reasons for methodological nationalism to remain the privileged taken-for-granted perspective. No doubt, it owes some of its scholarly success (or longevity) to turning the malleable process of nationalism into variable-oriented categories and other practices privileging static over process. Unless we explicitly address these traps common to knowledge production, methodological cosmopolitanism too might fall prey to this kind of categorical thinking and attending modalities of essentializing.

A case in point illustrating these predicaments and the opportunities that a more reflexive-cosmopolitan approach affords is Halbwachs' key concept of 'social frameworks.' Enabling and restraining collective memories, the historical, relational and situational facets of social frameworks themselves must be part of our analytic and empirical focus. Put differently: the salience and composition of particular social cadres and their normative validation is in flux before becoming a stable mnemonic framework of reference. Halbwachs, for instance, referred to professional organizations as powerful sources for collective memory production. Clearly this institution has been profoundly transformed since, raising questions about its mnemonic impact. Membership in a guild encompassed sentiments of trust, loyalty and other aspects transcending the mere functionality of a 'job'. This cannot be said of the tenuous professional environments most people are embedded in today.

Neither cosmopolitanism nor nationalism provides an adequate interpretive framework when treated in isolation. This is also evident when we interrogate the alleged stability of 'cultural memory' as defined by Jan Assmann.

Just as the communicative memory is characterized by its proximity to the everyday, cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). (Assmann 1995: 128-129)

While this might hold true for religious practices (and even here 'fixed points' are subject to contestation), arguably this can be applied to, say, 'national myth' which are subject to different generational experiences, to name but one aspect of non-fixity. To be sure, I am not questioning the potency some events have for collective memory, but I do not see any compelling conceptual reason to transform them into a fixed point. That, after all, remains the contested terrain on which memory entrepreneurs seek to privilege their respective frameworks.

A cosmopolitan perspective, I hope to have shown, provides a more appropriate analytic perspective for a globally interconnected world in tune with processual, relational and situational dynamics. Supported by, among others, the proliferation of travelling transnational, transcultural and multidirectional approaches to the study of memory. My point here then is not (only) to challenge the accepted (conceptual) wisdom of our fields of knowledge, but rather to issue a call for a continuous reflexive engagement with our vocabulary of motives (frequently masquerading as timeless theories). If methodological nationalism had its merits in the context of post-feudal and post-imperial nation-state formation, methodological cosmopolitanism provides the appropriate heuristic for the global age.

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