

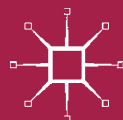


Migration,
Diasporas and
Citizenship

MEMORIES ON THE MOVE

Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past

Edited by Monika Palmberger
and Jelena Tošić



Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

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Memories on the Move

Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past

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‘Contesting common assumptions about the rootedness of memory in nation, space and place, *Memories on the Move* explores the mobility of memory in our age of political change, migration and refugeehood. Through a series of excellent essays focusing on the mobility of people, objects, sites and paradigms, this volume uses concrete ethnographic analyses of memory practices in different parts of the globe to offer theoretical reflections on how memory shapes and is shaped by mobility in time and space.’

– Marianne Hirsch,
Columbia University, USA

‘*Memories on the Move* is a brilliant edited volume that fills an important gap in the field of memory studies as it weaves together issues of mobility and remembering. Drawing on fine-grained ethnographical cases, it offers a rich and complex portrait of mnemonic constructions in the context of forced migration, exile and transnationalism. It is clearly a must-read for anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political scientists as well as for all scholars interested in the contemporary dynamics of memory, identity and mobility.’

– David Berliner,
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

‘This thought-provoking volume disentangles, ethnographically, the complexity of meaning-making practices of memory/forgetting in various contexts of (im)mobility. By doing so, it brings into scholarly dialogue, in a very productive and engaging way, two virtually disconnected fields of study.’

– Noel B. Salazar,
University of Leuven, Belgium

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1

Introduction: Memories on the Move— Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past

Jelena Tošić and Monika Palmberger

Movement and memory are closely intertwined. Memories connect places, and preserve and establish new forms of social relations. The past takes a particularly prominent role in times of mobility and biographical rupture. Already, when setting off for another place, in the process of moving, hopes and imaginaries become reminiscences of lives lived before or in between. When stuck in a place or within a pattern of movement—as immobility represents a crucial dimension of mobility—we tend to dwell

We wish to acknowledge that the phrase ‘Memory on the Move’ has already been used in memory studies (see for example Assmann and Conrad [2010](#); Rigney [2012](#)).

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on memories of our former ways of life. In diasporic contexts, mnemonic images of ‘home’ prove to be especially pervasive, often implying a longing for—possibly never visited and virtual—faraway places. We could go on showing the myriad ways in which (im)mobility and memory are interrelated. Especially under today’s conditions of not only enhanced but also diversified mobility (see Vertovec 2007)—being not merely a manifestation of free ‘flows’ in an interconnected world, but also an expression of growing constraints, immobilities and inequalities (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013)—the interplay of movement and memory calls for closer inspection. The present volume takes up this task by assembling differing, yet pervasive, examples of how diverse patterns of (im)mobility (Salazar and Smart 2011) inform individual and collective mnemonic practices and how the latter in turn frame the ways in which (im)mobility is experienced. The different forms of lived and imagined (im)mobility with which the present volume engages include refugees remembering and ‘recreating’ in their settlements or during return journeys to homes from which they were expelled; post-socialist political elites glorifying and even embodying a foundational-nationalist past of nomadism in order to earn political points; and work migrants anticipating and framing their future ‘memory work’¹ by carefully choosing mnemonic objects to accompany their uncertain journeys. We show in this volume that remembering—as well as forgetting or even ‘amnesia’—is actually a constitutive part of movement. Rather than conceptualizing memory or memories as being temporally located ‘before’ and ‘after’ mobility, we are interested in the mutual constitution of remembering and movement.

While going beyond methodological nationalism (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) and the related ‘sedentary bias’ (Malkki 1992)—but still acknowledging the nation state’s persistent impact on movement and representations of the past—the book focuses on concrete mnemonic social practices and is built around the following main questions: What impact do different patterns of mobility have on memory practices and how do they possibly contribute to the emergence of new forms of remembering? When does memory become a resource and when a potential burden in situations of (im)mobility? How does mobility particularly frame—strengthen or unsettle—hegemonic national memories? In what ways do memories serve to re-establish old and create new (forms of) transnational social relations and identifications?

Memory and Mobility: A Retrospection and Outlook

Memory (as well as its counterpart, forgetting) has been primarily explored on a macro level in relation to hegemonic and static national history narratives (see Kidron 2009). Considerable scholarly interest has been directed at the political instrumentalization of the past, but this has neglected the quieter, everyday mnemonic practices that constitute the ‘living presence of the past’ (Kidron 2009, 8). Thus it is no surprise that the focus of much literature has been on exploring memory as bound to particular ‘places’—such as memorials or works of art—that figure as essential reference points for national narratives, as captured by Nora’s seminal concept of the *lieu de mémoire* (see Nora 1989). Nora argues that the linking of memory to places enables individuals to remember, since *lieux de mémoire* ‘are fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age’ (12). Memory, we could say, has been tacitly thought of as bound to commemorative places and territories in general—in other words, as narratives conveying significant events and processes as well as identity or territorial claims. This understanding of memory, however, crucially occludes the fact that memory is also, if not even more so, provoked precisely by mobility (see Creet 2011, 5).²

Explorations of memory—even when ‘decoupled’ from the materiality of particular places—have seldom been concerned with movement and mobility, and as such can be seen as an expression of a sedentarist bias. Speaking with Creet, ‘contemporary theories of memory have mostly considered memory in situ, and place itself as a stable, unchanging environment’ (Creet 2011, 4). Hence it is not surprising that memory studies and migration/mobility studies have generally remained two separate research fields with very little, if any, conversation between them. Migration and other forms of mobility have been peripheral in memory studies in a similar way to how memory has been a neglected topic in migration research.

As already indicated, memory has been studied first and foremost in the context of nation states and rarely in the context of migration, multilocality and transnationalism (for exceptions see, for example, Auchter 2013; Ballinger 2003; Bendix 2002; Berg and Eckstein 2015;

Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004). A further notable exception in this regard has been the field of diaspora studies, which has significantly engaged with temporality, and the insight that collective memories of common origin and ‘homeland’ play a decisive role in constituting a diaspora in the first place (see Armbruster 2013; Cohen 2008; Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013).

Scholars have only recently started exploring transnational and transcultural dimensions of mnemonic processes; however, often their primary interest has been in the mobility of commemorative objects, practices and media (see Assmann and Conrad 2010; Bond and Rapson 2014), rather than the mnemonic agency of people whose lives are substantially marked by changing mobility regimes (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), such as labour migrants, refugees or members of diasporas. This focus on mobility in connection with commemorative objects and practices is also central in the special issue edited by Crownshow (2011), which deals with ‘transcultural memories’, particularly from a cultural studies perspective. Erll therein understands transcultural memory as a research perspective that is ‘directed towards mnemonic processes unfolding *across* and *beyond* cultures’ (2011, 9). She defines transcultural memory as ‘the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms and practices of memory, their continual “travels” and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders’ (11). In Crownshow’s collection, however, the focus remains on the mobility of artefacts and discourses, rather than on actual memory practices by mobile people ‘carrying’, creating and sharing memories across borders.

The edited volume *History, Memory and Migration: Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation* by Glynn and Kleist (2012) is another recent attempt to come to terms with the interrelation of memory and migration. It focuses on the link between narratives of the past and state (im)migration policies and discourses of (non-)belonging. It deals with the question of whether and in what way immigration has the potential to change hegemonic (state) narratives of history and demography, as well as how migrants themselves ‘navigate’ different mnemonic arenas (see also Hintermann and Johansson 2010). It highlights the fact that state narratives often evoke the image of the autochthonous and homogeneous—or at least ‘completed’ multicultural—nation and thereby

exclude migrants' 'incorporation' into the state narrative. While Glynn and Kleist (2012) focus on the important link between memory and (im) migration policies, their volume to a certain degree reproduces the binary of the society of origin and host society, which implies an image of migration as a one-way process and neglects the diversification and complexity of mobility patterns.

With the publication of the interdisciplinary volume by Creet and Kitzmann (2011), *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies*, the debate on memory and migration received an important impetus. On the ground of a thorough theoretical-historical assessment of why 'place' figures so prominently as the main 'locus' of memory in the seminal approaches—not only by Pierre Nora as already elaborated, but also in the works of Paul Ricoeur (2006) and Maurice Halbwachs (1980)—Creet (2011) primarily focuses on the ways in which we can explore 'memory that has migrated or has been exiled from its local habitations' (Creet 2011, 3). She argues that 'migration rather than location is the condition of memory', since 'displacement intensifies our investments in memory' (Creet 2011, 9–10).

In the present volume we take the exploration of the mutual constitution of memory and migration important steps further. Without neglecting the fate of 'exiled memories' in the terms of Creet (2011), we are primarily interested in how individuals and collectives act as mnemonic agents by engaging in memory practices in a context of (im)mobility and/or transnationalism. Hence, our engagement with memory and mobility here proceeds beyond the binary between objects/media and agents of memory often implicit in approaches to transnational memory (see Bond and Rapson 2014).

The chapters in this volume offer ethnographic insights into the ways in which memory practices using different mnemonic media enable us to make sense of and integrate experiences of (im)mobility across different times and places. Be it through photographs (see Lems and Alonso-Ray) or film (see Six-Hohenbalken), reinhabiting pre-exilic homes (see Üllen and Eastmond), through pseudo-historical performances (see Kürti), transgenerational mnemonic travels and gatherings (see Dąbrowska), by 'domesticating space' (see Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska) as well as transnational political activism (see Mapril), the case studies in this collection

show how remembering—or anticipating the remembrance of—movement is an essential way in which we make sense of our lives and act as political subjects. By being particularly attentive to these agentive dimensions of mnemonic practice/‘memory work’, this volume engages in the actual ways of how, when and by which means individuals remember and communicate memories in contexts of various forms of (im)mobility.

By conceptually focusing on mobility instead of migration, which is the focus not only in Creer’s and Kitzmann’s (2011) volume but also in most of the literature already mentioned, we include a wide range of different types of movements such as forced mobility, labour migration, diaspora and transmigration as well as ideologies of historical mobility. While acknowledging the importance of the ‘mobility’ and ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (see Cresswell 2010; Scheller and Urry 2006) in the social sciences in general and anthropology in particular, we join the anthropological critique of a simplifying ‘celebratory’ and ‘normalizing’ stance towards mobility (see Salazar and Smart 2011). As already mentioned, in this volume we aim to go beyond the binary of mobility and stasis and explore ways in which precisely immobility is also an essential aspect of contemporary mobility regimes (see Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Salazar and Smart 2011).

Finally, the prism of mobility allows for a more substantial engagement with temporality. Mobility specifically can be uniquely illuminating for exploring how individuals produce continuities and ruptures between different life periods (past, present and future) and historical periods, as well as between different localities through ‘memory work’. In this vein, a focus on mobility can also help to illuminate the mutual constitution of ‘temporality’ and ‘spatiality’. Resonating with Massey’s (1992) seminal critique of an often tacit static and a-temporal (and a-political) conceptualization of space and Cresswell’s insight that ‘mobilities are key constituents in the production of senses of place’ (2015, 84), the contributions in this volume explore different ways in which space is at once a condition, result and medium of memory as well as itself ever transforming under changing mobility regimes.

While the authors in this volume draw on a wide range of transdisciplinary research and theory, all are trained anthropologists offering a specific anthropological approach to the discussion of memory, mobility and

social practice.³ Even if the authors of this edited volume work with different disciplinary strands, they have in common that they all draw their theories and conclusions from concrete ethnographic accounts. Thereby they offer a specific anthropological approach that puts memory practices carried out by individuals as well as groups at the centre of attention. The focus thus lies on the actual carriers and creators of memory, navigating structural constraints and possibilities composed of the legal, political and socio-economic aspects of different mobility regimes.

Book Outline

Part I: Mnemonic Dimensions of Exile

Prolonged exile and/or building a new life away from (although transnationally tied to) one's (former) 'home' strongly marks the lives and memory practices of an ever-increasing number of people worldwide. The former figure of the 'uprooted' and 'culture-less' refugee (see Malkki 1992) has today become a key mnemonic agent for whom memory forms one of the essential modes of reconstituting oneself in the face of an often traumatic past, a radically new present and an uncertain future: remembering the existential rupture of flight that often included a threat to life itself, as well as the loss of objects vital for an individual's or a family's sense of identity and belonging; wanting to forget or not being able to remember traumatic experiences of flight and exile; longing for and realizing the impossibility of return; and finding different ways of reinhabiting pre-exilic 'homes'. Beyond the steady increase of forced migration on a global scale, the diversification of patterns of displacement (Vertovec 2007) and multilocality crucially frame forms of 'memory work' in exile.

Exploring the particular constellations of exile 'illuminates the complexity of the ways in which people construct, remember, and lay claim to particular places as "homelands" or "nations"' (Malkki 1992, 25). The chapters in this part explore how the different facets of the entanglement of forced movement and memory show that, rather than tacitly implying a simple temporal framing of 'before' and 'after', the mnemonic practices of exile imply a complex 'everydayness' of shifting temporalities in

the course of negotiating pasts, presents and futures between and across generations.

The chapter ‘Shifting Sites: Memories of War and Exile across Time and Place’ by Marita Eastmond focuses on an extended Bosnian refugee family living in Sweden, and on generational differences among the family members in dealing with their post-war lives and experiences of displacement and the multiple mnemonic practices in which they engage. These practices include different means of active remembering as well as forgetting, gaps and silences that seem essential in restoring continuity in individuals’ biographies endangered by the rupture that war caused to their lives. By drawing on two decades of multisited fieldwork, Eastmond unpacks the interplay of mnemonic processes (in which forgetting takes a prominent position), movement and placemaking in the case of this Bosnian refugee family. Her chapter vividly shows how a focus on memory and migrants’ lives can ‘yield important insights into how migrants creatively engage, or disengage, their memories in constructing meaningful selves and the sites of attachment that they call “home”’ (this volume, p. 20). The chapter demonstrates how processes of homemaking and ‘memory work’ within and beyond national borders vary along generational lines related to the generations’ different historical experiences.

Both in the popular imagination and in academic literature, refugees’ growing attachment to their place of residence in exile is understood to occur at the cost of their commitment to their place of origin. In her contribution ‘Refugee Camp as Mediating Locality: Memory and Place in Protracted Exile’, Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska shows how the experience of prolonged exile challenges the transitional character commonly attributed to refugee status. Based on a case study of Al-Am‘ari, a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank, she conceptualizes the refugee camp as a ‘mediating locality’ where the two seemingly conflicting spatial loyalties can be reconciled. In that sense, Al-Am‘ari expresses the mutual constitution of time and space that can be captured by Foucault’s heterotopia—being ‘a place defined by its relations with other spaces, a place that represents different, and at times conflicting, political struggles and functions on different temporal registers’ (this volume, p. 68). In her ethnographic account, Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska analyses how residents’ efforts to preserve the refugee character of the camp community

amid a prolonged exile have allowed the site to maintain its symbolism, and have framed the refugees' attachment to the camp as an expression of their commitment to their place of origin.

The chapter 'Ambivalent Sites of Memories: The Meaning of Family Homes for Transnational Families' by Sanda Üllen explores the meaning of houses for former Bosnian refugees—now citizens of Denmark—as sites of negotiating memories and of 'the interconnectedness of past and future in the present' (this volume, p. 94). Through her multisited ethnography of a Bosnian family and their regular visits to their reclaimed house in Bosnia, Üllen shows how in post-war times the family house is both a physical location for family gatherings and reunions and a mnemonic space, since it serves as a site for negotiating memories between the different generations in regard to the past as well as the future. However, at the same time as being 'a place where one makes one's memories and can be private' (this volume, p. 75), the revisited house is also an ambivalent space. The traces of 'the other'—be it the memory of having been served 'coffee in one's own coffee cups', or of a former piggery and smoke-house—generate complex affects: 'often pain, combined with rejection and confusion' (this volume, p. 88). Furthermore, while for the young generations the house in Bosnia represents both a place of relaxation and the burden of being exposed to their parents 'living in the past', the latter try to bind their children to the house through regular visits and pre-war memories, and thus save the past from being forgotten.

Part II: Mediating Memories on the Move

As already mentioned, one of the aims of this volume is to go beyond the often implicit gap between the mnemonic agency of objects and media on the one hand and people as 'the actual' mnemonic agents on the other, by highlighting their necessary mutual constitution in the course of 'memory work'. In doing this, the chapters in this part highlight the 'agentive' and mediating potential of photography and film. Embodying possible 'relief' by carrying the burden of (painful) memories as well as having the potential to frame and support our process of remembering by reminding us of specific moments and encounters,

photographs represent one of the most common mnemonic media accompanying mobility. As narratives of forced migrants reveal, it is often photographs—in addition to money, documents and other necessities as well as personal objects—that find their way into limited luggage space. Furthermore, photographs often play a crucial role in the placemaking practices of labour migrants, who are trying to establish a sense of ‘home’ in their often provisional initial living quarters. Films, on the other hand, although today equally portable due to their ‘parallel’ and ‘real-time’ temporality, by representing a ‘stage’ on which different actors can meet and interact, enable the viewer to ‘step out’ of her everyday into a mediated mnemonic space. Moreover, art and documentary films in particular have the potential to convey and politicize traumatic memories across generations and diasporic spaces.

In her chapter ‘Memory in Motion: Photographs in Suitcases’, Natalia Alonso Rey explores the relationship between memory and mobility by analysing the role of photographs in the case of four Uruguayan female migrants living in Catalonia, Spain. Adapting the choice of photographs as mnemonic objects to fit the ‘tourist habitus’ and thus not revealing the ‘irregular’ character of their migratory intentions, the Uruguayan female migrants’ emotional and temporal management of photographs takes into account restrictive border regimes. Alonso Ray also analyses the practice of anticipating memory by photographically capturing the ‘real-time’ process of departure, travel and arrival, which creates a continuity in the course of emigration—an event commonly experienced as one of the crucial ruptures of one’s biography. The potential for the ‘condensation’ of memories by means of a specific selection of photographs—according to particular events, the number of close people ‘captured’ by the camera or the photograph’s uniqueness—reveals another dimension of the specific temporal management enabled by photographs as mnemonic media in the context of constrained and ‘irregular’ mobility. Alonso Ray’s contribution also demonstrates the mutual constitution of memory and space. Having left the suitcases, photographs as mnemonic media on the move have a crucial function in the process of migrant placemaking: inhabiting new ‘homes’ through remembering old ones.

In her chapter ‘Mobile Temporalities: Place, Ruination and the Dialectics of Time’, Annika Lems provides insights into the memory practices of two Somalis who left their hometown, Mogadishu, at the outbreak of the war in the 1990s. While they choose two different paths to engage with the past—one through visual storytelling around photos of present-day Mogadishu marked by war and the other through detailed storytelling—they were both ‘struggling to make sense of the intense destruction that has transformed their former hometown into a landscape of ruins, they produced an assemblage of memories—snapshots of the past that weave into a mosaic of unfinished story fragments, murmurs and silences’ (this volume, p. 134). Lems introduces the concept of ‘mobile temporalities’ to capture the ‘ceaseless processes of temporal switching in everyday life’ (this volume, p. 136). She makes a case for how places and memories of them are tightly entangled with individuals’ present lives, regardless of geographical distances or the radical transformation of these places. Photos therefore are an essential medium for reconnecting with the past and the places that characterized it, even if the photos are proof of the brutal transformation of those places. Similar to Alonso Ray, Lems shows how photos become tools for migrants to enter the past and to link it to their present lives, and they thus offer mobility through time and across geographical distances.

The chapter by Maria Six-Hohenbalken, “‘We Do Really Need Hollywood’”—‘Filmmaking and Remembrance of Acts of Genocide in the Kurdish Transnation’, focuses on the role of artistic and documentary films in dealing with the violence experienced by the Kurdish transnation in the past by paying particular attention to the young generation. Those who experienced the crimes against humanity committed by the Baath regime as children now struggle with the limited information that older generations are willing or able to share about these traumatic events. Six-Hohenbalken identifies the transnational cinematographic memoryscape as a mediator between the generations that has the potential to develop ‘more diversified and less homogenized (trans)national narratives, thus strengthening the victims’ voice and agency’ (this volume, p. 164). Furthermore, film as a mnemonic medium makes accessible what are often verbally inexpressible experi-

ences of extreme violence by working with survivors' 'involuntary memories, forms of tacit knowledge, or bodily habits' (this volume, p. 179). At the same time, however, 'Kurdish cinema' as an essential element within the diasporic memoryscape carries the danger of fuelling feelings of 'dispossession and abuse' (this volume, p. 178), as survivors are expected to share their traumatic memories repeatedly in order to make genocidal processes tangible for others.

Part III: Legacies and Politics of Memory

This part highlights the colonial, socialist and national socialist 'legacies' of memory and the way in which memory interrelates with the complex realm of politics. Taking into account political-ideological legacies (see Rothberg 2009) enables both individual and collective (for example of families, communities in exile) mnemonic agency to be situated in wider historical and political-economic contexts, thus better understanding its specificities in the present. From this perspective, the narratives of both the hegemonic state and (transnational) individuals—and their entanglements and tensions—do not appear as synchronic processes 'out of time'. Rather, they represent aspects of political-economic formations and their continuities, shifts and ruptures—such as the collapse of real-socialism and the rise of nationalism (see Kürti) and the 'opening' of post-socialist countries' borders (see Dąbrowska), post-colonial migration and the related immigration into South European countries from the 1970s onwards (see Mapril).

In her contribution 'Remembering the Unfulfilled Dream of Jewish Life in Post-War Communist Poland', Kamila Dąbrowska explores the mnemonic practices that take place during collective gatherings of Polish Jewish emigrants and their return journeys to their former home country that allow a Jewish presence to re-emerge in the post-socialist era. Focusing on the immediate post-Second World War generation of Polish Jews, Dąbrowska analyses two parallel ongoing processes: first, the active community building in a diasporic context around shared childhood memories; and second, the creation of a counter-memory/alternative history to the established Polish national narrative that has for a long

time silenced the presence of Jews in Poland. For both mnemonic processes, movement across geographical and temporal distances is vital. In her analysis Dąbrowska pays close attention to the agency of key actors' rituals of performing the past. She thereby shows how the silenced Jewish past that already seemed lost for its witnesses has been 're-enacted' in places as distant as Israel, North America and Scandinavia.

In his chapter 'Nomadism and Nostalgia in Hungary', László Kürti explores a late socialist ideology that could be referred to as a foundational and idealized mobility. Grounded in a bricolage of prehistoric legends, neo-shamanism and medieval Christian symbols (such as the Holy Crown), the 'nomadist movement' in Hungary puts forward an alternative version of history. Interestingly, in this case a nationalist (and beyond that racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic) ideology is not based on a sedentarist image serving as a 'foundational' repository. Rather, it is precisely a glorified image of a nomadic social order and way of life, which grounds the claim to a superior collective identity. By offering a constructive critique of the theoretical usage of 'nostalgia' in the works on post-socialism, Kürti shows how nomadism exhibits a politics of memory, which is primarily future oriented and serves as a discursive and performative resource for enhancing political power.

Although the Portuguese colonial legacy in Bangladesh (15th–17th centuries) is a less significant register than British colonial rule (from the 18th century onwards) for present-day Bangladeshis, the post-colonial migration regime that they have encountered in Portugal has been crucial in the process of framing their transnational mnemonic practices. José Mapril's chapter, 'A Past That Hurts: Memory, Politics and Transnationalism between Bangladesh and Portugal', explores the politics of memory among Bangladeshi migrants who in the 1980s joined a number of post-colonial migrant communities in neighbourhoods close to Lisbon city centre, and managed to establish themselves as 'ethnic entrepreneurs' in this 'multicultural' urban space. Focusing on the debates among Bangladeshis about the role played by a political party and its main leaders during the Bangladeshi liberation war in 1971, the aim is to reveal how the struggles for a dominant/hegemonic narrative about the past are fought out in a transnational context. The chapter concludes

that due to mobility, in this case migration, the convergence of past and present in everyday and political life is enhanced.

Notes

1. We understand 'memory work' in a broader sense of everyday active engagement with the past that exceeds common understandings of memory work in terms of civil engagement and activism (see Till 2008).
2. Furthermore, we do not subscribe to Nora's strict conceptual differentiation between history and memory. Rather, speaking with Lambek (2003), we see both history and memory as mnemonic practices characterized by different modes and grades of institutionalization and power.
3. At different moments and from different perspectives, anthropologists have been intrigued by the issue of memory and so contributed to the interdisciplinary field of memory studies. Still, it is difficult to redraw a genealogy of the anthropological engagement with memory. This has to do with a certain 'implicitness' of memory in any anthropological endeavour and hence its potential fusion with the notion of 'culture' (Berliner 2005).

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Part I

Mnemonic Dimensions of Exile

2

Shifting Sites: Memories of War and Exile across Time and Place

Marita Eastmond

Studies of forced migration and memory have often been concerned with the collective forms in which displaced people remember and maintain their commitment to a particular place as home. Refugee diasporas nurture the memory of the homeland and a dream of return, sometimes over generations (Pattie 1997; Slyomovics 1998). As Malkki (1995) has shown for Hutu refugees, clustered in camps or dispersed into cities, the context of settlement also matters for how displaced groups use memory to construe themselves and their history. For political movements in exile, the obligation ‘never forget’ is often seen as a vital continuation of collective resistance, part of a struggle to return and reclaim a place in the home country (Eastmond 1989; Orjuela 2012). For individuals as well as collectives, memory is vulnerable to new prospects for defining oneself and one’s allegiances, and returning to one’s place of origin does not always entail ‘coming home’. The tensions inherent in forced migrants’ experiences and the dramas that tend to surround issues of belonging, identity and nationhood (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004) bring out

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and make more explicit the constant dialectic between memory and self, between rupture and continuity. Seen in the context of the power relations that enable and frame people's relation to place, a focus on the dynamics of memory and migrant life can therefore yield important insights into how migrants creatively engage, or disengage, their memories in constructing meaningful selves and the sites of attachment that they call 'home'.

This chapter addresses the memories of Bosnians forced to flee their homes during the war 1992–1995 in former Yugoslavia. It focuses on the experience of war, displacement and return, as lived and told by three generations of an extended Bosniak family, who spent years of exile in Sweden and later returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina (henceforth Bosnia). The analytical focus is on the interplay of memories and individuals' migratory experience, seen through their movements, forced as well as voluntary, made in search of viable homes and identities during and after the war. Of particular interest is the way in which members of different generations, in response to such turbulent experiences, remember and make sense of their past and imagine their future. In this post-war memory work, how are continuities and ruptures (re)construed across time and place?

A theoretical point of departure is the dynamic interplay between lived experience, memory and expression, relying here on a somewhat extended version of Bruner's point that experience gives rise and form to narrative, but narrative also organizes and gives meaning to experience (Bruner 1986, 249; Eastmond 1996). Memory can be seen as an active component in this process of generating meaningful narratives, and so can silence and forgetting as responses to the lived experience of those who have suffered dramatic and emotional upheavals. The focus here on a close-knit family network and the ways in which memories are reflected on and made sense of underscores memory not only as an individual capacity within the mind, but as inherently intersubjective and dialogical, part of an active engagement between people (Lambek 1996, 239). For instance, gaps and silences in individual accounts relating to sensitive topics could sometimes be subdued in the management of family life or for the protection of personal relationships. This indicates that individuals are not normally the victims of their memories, but can be aware of them

and seek to control them for the benefit of self and others (Sorabji 2006, 3). While such silences in victims of war and violence today are often understood in a psycho-medical idiom, they are sometimes better understood in more complex and social terms, forming part of what Lambek refers to as a 'moral practice' or 'a practical wisdom' (Lambek 1996, 239).

Family memory work is also seen in relation to the hegemonic memory as it was established in former Yugoslavia, and to the competing narratives of the past generated by the recent war. In today's Bosnia, memories of the interethnic violence during the Second World War are highly contentious, related to nationalist claims that such memories, suppressed by state socialism, unleashed the violent war after Tito's death (see Bougarel et al. 2007). As will be shown, such probings are also made within families, where differences between the generations come into play. The memories and meanings that the older generation in this study attached to violent war in their past were questioned and reinterpreted by their adult children as they saw this past in the light of renewed violence and forced flight in their own present. Remembering, then, is as much about the present and the prospects for the future as it is about the actual past. Such prospects, for refugees in particular, are also connected to what particular places are seen to offer, even if their relevance and meaning may change over time. For the Bosnian refugees in this study, the experiences of war and the homes lost were remembered and imagined somewhat differently from the perspective of exile than after their return to post-war Bosnia years later. Such memories and meanings of exile and return also differed between family members, depending on the possibilities that each place was seen to hold, given their generation and position in the life cycle at the time. Thus, across time and shifting sites, remembering and forgetting have interplayed with movement and placemaking, reflecting the dynamic nature of negotiating problematized homes and identities.

This chapter is based on ethnographic data collected over the past twenty years with an extended Bosniak family, followed closely from their arrival in Sweden and during the recent war to their current lives after their return to Bosnia years later. The data build on narratives, informal interviews and observations made in Sweden and in Bosnia with family members, individually and in different constellations, constituting three generations and three separate households.

‘Generation’ will serve as the analytical prism through which to examine the experiences and memories of family members in relation to social and political changes over time. Here, Palmberger’s (2016) typology of different generations living in post-war Mostar will be very useful: ‘First Yugoslavs’, ‘Last Yugoslavs’ and ‘Post-Yugoslavs’. The typology seeks to capture not only how different generations are characterized by their different memories of crucial historical periods and events, but also by their different life situations in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina due to their position in the life cycle. The first generation in this study, the elderly couple Fikret and Saliha, as the ‘First Yugoslavs’, were adolescents at the time of the Second World War and saw from the outset the social transformation that followed with socialist Yugoslavia. Their daughters Amra and Amila and their husbands, as the ‘Last Yugoslavs’, all grew up in socialist Yugoslavia, but also saw it come to an end with the recent war. The third generation, the five grandchildren, are the ‘Post-Yugoslavs’; they have fewer memories of those days, having been small children at the outbreak of war and adolescents at the time of their return to post-war Bosnia.

‘Generation’ will also serve to elucidate family members’ different interpretations and reworkings of their past and visions of the future in relation to movement and shifting emplacements. For instance, in the country of exile, and given their different positions in the life cycle, the elderly would emphasize continuity while their grandchildren would embrace change and the incorporation of new identities. Memories and meanings of Swedish exile for these young adults after their return to Bosnia entailed a new cosmopolitan outlook and a more secure belonging as transnational citizens in an uncertain future.

Mobility and the Socialist Modernization Project in Former Yugoslavia

The two sisters Amina and Alma, born in the late 1950s, grew up in a small provincial town in eastern Bosnia, their father’s birthplace. It is today part of the Serb Republic (Republika Srpska), one of the two entities of post-war Bosnia. Their leaving their rural home to gain higher education elsewhere reflected the ongoing social transformation in

Yugoslavia of the 1950s and 1960s and the Titoist modernization ideology. Industrialization, large-scale internal migration and urbanization formed part of this project, offering education, social mobility, welfare and new lifestyles. For the ‘Last Yugoslavs’, this ideology framed their perception of the kind of society in which they lived as well as their expectations for the future. Thus, Amina went to Mostar to study economics, where she later met and married Samir. They moved in with his parents, who ran a small family business in their house, and Amina was employed in a local company. Alma moved to Sarajevo to study literature and languages, where she met Edin, a young law student. After marrying, they moved to his hometown, Banja Luka, where his family, as one of the ‘good old families’, had a long history and a solid reputation. These were times of change, remembered as a venture that opened new possibilities for future lives, filled with excitement and hope. The two young women had been raised in a Muslim family; as religion was part of the private sphere in Tito’s Yugoslavia, they had attended Koran school on Saturdays. Alma, as a young student at a teachers’ college, remembered feeling rather ashamed of being religious when she arrived in Sarajevo, and toned it down to avoid being seen as rural and backward. These memories took on a new significance after the war. Given their history as an actively religious family, they could disclaim being ‘neo-Muslims’; that is, having become dedicated to Islam as a result of the war (Macek 2007). This first move, however, meant greater distance from provincial lives and religious practice. Their new homes represented a modern and attractive lifestyle, with access to valued cultural capital as urban and cultured (Stefansson 2007). For their generation as Yugoslavs, it marked the beginning of social mobility into secure professional positions and comfortable lives.

Reluctant Memories: War and Displacement

Many years later, the family were refugees in Sweden, like thousands of others who had escaped a violent war fought along nationalist lines. While the ongoing war was a constant topic of conversation among Bosnian refugees arriving at the time, there was a compact silence when it came their own experiences of war, even if their places of origin in

many cases spoke of the traumas suffered. Not until years later, after having returned to Bosnia, did Alma tell me about the dramatic events of her family's flight to Sweden. Perhaps the distance of time and different, secure circumstances made these memories less sensitive; also, the two of us travelling alone to Mostar by car created a situation 'conducive to confidence' (Sorabji 2006, 10). Just before, we had been speaking of the hopes the family had nurtured for post-war Bosnia on their return, but now she voiced her concerns about the future. To illustrate, she related a heated conversation she had just had with a friend who was running a small business and who refused to pay either social insurance costs or proper wages. Now, Alma complained, corruption and economic mismanagement were everywhere, and with the continued nationalist politics, she had few hopes for Bosnia as a democratic and fair society. What had really been achieved during the twenty years since the war? In that disillusioned mood, she told me about their flight.

When the war broke out in April 1992, the sisters, with five children and ageing parents, found a safe haven with an international aid organization in Croatia. All Muslims had been driven out of Banja Luka and in the area where her parents had lived. Their husbands were in the Army of BiH (consisting mainly of Bosniaks), at the time allied with Croat forces (HVO) in Mostar, to push back the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army. Later, as the conflict arose between the Army of BiH and Croatian forces, the two men were detained. Alma recalls:

One morning in Mostar, the Croats began arresting all the Muslims and took them to the football stadium. First, a man from the Croat army came with soldiers to pick them up. When he saw Samir, his friend he said 'I cannot take you, someone else must do that.' The men were all imprisoned... many were shot. Edin managed to send us a letter through a man in the HVO in which he said good-bye. It was terrible, and we cried, we cried. [Alma in tears] At the end, he wrote, 'Alma, if you can do anything at all to help me, you must do it *now*.' My sister and I began frantic visits to international organizations, knocking on all doors, but to no avail.

She then recounted in detail the two men's several attempts to escape, each a dangerous and nerve-wracking venture. Eventually, through bribes and contacts of Samir's on the Croatian side, they managed to join their families in

Croatia. From there, they all set off on a risky journey to Zagreb, hiding there with a family friend until they could catch a bus to northern Europe.

In stark contrast, the memories held by the youngest generation reflect little of these dramas. Today, they have no recollection of feeling afraid, but more of being plagued by boredom ‘with nothing to do at the refugee center’ (Sehad, then 8). The most distinct memory was told, in the present tense, by the eldest of the five children, Amra, then 17, about the flight out of Croatia:

When the bus from Zagreb crosses the border into Hungary and makes its first stop, we get out and dad takes his first smoke; I can *see* how his whole person changes: ‘Finally away from that fascist country!’¹ And after that, he was completely calm. Not knowing where he was going, but absolutely calm! [laughs]

Today 38, Amra reflects on how little she understood of the seriousness of the situation. The experiential gap between children and adults is a consistent feature in how they remember war and flight; the young were not actively involved by the adults. On this occasion, for example, they seemed to have been told very little about the great risks involved in their unauthorized flight in the midst of war, with very little money or other resources. She attests to the important role of the extended family, not only for the children, throughout their displacement:

Being part of a close-knit family, moving together, was the most important thing of those years... Alone one could not have made it. We were a big family and these family relationships helped us through even the hardest times.

Assuming such a protective role, the family became a particularly productive site not only for the children’s management of fear and insecurity in disruptive times, but also more broadly for ‘the moral and interpersonal aspect of memory management’ (Sorabji 2006, 3). Today, in an idiom typical of her time and generation, Amra maintains her distance from the war:

I would never endanger our lives today with the bad memories of the past; I am a positive person, want to draw positive energy from life and the universe; it is very depressing to think about those days.

Amra now has small children of her own to protect, but distancing herself from the war is also a more categorical refusal to be involved ('it was not our war'), shared by many other 'Post-Yugoslavs' in Bosnia today (see Palmberger 2016).

Exile and Emplacement

The family managed to catch the penultimate ferry to Sweden before the border was closed to asylum seekers from Bosnia. Only a few days later, in June 1993, the Swedish government provided all Bosnian asylum seekers in Sweden with permanent residence status, while imposing a visa restriction for Bosnia following a European Union (EU) directive. Settling the more than 50,000 Bosnian refugees admitted was a slow process and the first year meant frequent moves between reception centres and makeshift camps in different parts of the country, with a strict regime and controlled mobility.

After a month at the port of arrival, we were taken to a camp; there we lived in containers... but we were surprisingly happy. 'We are safe, we have all our family, someone else takes responsibility now.' We had a huge trust in the Swedish system... the only way perhaps, we could not go back.

Amra recalls creative ways of earning some money in the camps, including her grandmother making *burek* (pasties) to sell to other Bosnians there. For the adults, however, conditions in the temporary camps and not knowing where they would eventually be settled became increasingly strenuous. Comic stories of those turbulent times are still told and highlight the family coping strategy at the time:

We remember these things today, not as *trauma*... more like tragic comedy. There were situations during that life trip that were so sad... but we saw them as comic, making fun at all that happened to us; at every opportunity we brought things up to laugh at, like 'Do you remember when we were so poor and had nothing, and had to...' [starts laughing].

A year later, granted permanent residence status, they were finally settled in a small town in south-western Sweden. Their new legal status provided the formal requirement for emplacement and entitled them to roughly the same social resources as other residents. Refugee families were also provided with a rental flat and a start-up loan. Whether their new place would become 'home' also in a cultural sense would rely on the chances of recreating what Bosnians referred to as 'normal life' (*normalan život*). For them, everyday life in pre-war Bosnia had been based on family, work and economic security, and a social network of relatives and friends where class and urban lifestyle mattered more than ethno-national identity. Now the children entered Swedish schools; the adults began a two-year Introductory Programme to learn the language, but also followed closely the developments in Bosnia. The elderly parents were determined to return, while their adult children, like many other Bosnian refugees of their generation, kept options open in both places. Their ambivalence was also illustrated by the thrill of moving into their new flats, and filling them with nice brand new things of their own choice. A relief from months of refugee encampments, the new apartment was 'home' in Mary Douglas's sense (1991), a space brought under their own control. Their small son's remark on moving in, 'but I thought we were going home?!', quickly ended the celebratory atmosphere and Alma remembers breaking down crying. A family joke today, at the time it reflected the parental generation's tormenting uncertainty about the future. They were also hoping to recover their property and return to Bosnia, although the prospects were poor: the conflict between Bosniak and Croat forces in Mostar had escalated into brutal war and divided the city between a western Croat side and a Muslim east side. The family house, located right on the dividing line, was badly damaged and they worried about Samir's ageing parents left alone during the long siege of the city. For the others, there seemed to be much less hope for recovering their homes, now under firm Serb control of the area. In these years, the loss of their homes and all their belongings was never openly touched on, and their hometowns were strangely absent in their reminiscing about Bosnia.

However, making new lives in Sweden, as they saw it, would depend on the possibilities that the new country could offer them professionally. The restructuring of the Swedish economy and soaring unemployment throughout the 1990s placed the many refugees at a disadvantage, irrespective of professional skills (Eastmond 2011). After years of Swedish classes, taking tests and doing occasional work as ‘trainees’, it became obvious for Alma and Edin that professional recognition and employment were still a long way off. Having nothing to do, being nobody, was a stark contrast to life before the war. The children, in contrast, thrived in their new environment, learning Swedish and making friends, and seemed remarkably confident. Their most distressing memories of that time seemed to be the helplessness and humiliations of their parents, who struggled to find their bearings in the new environment. Sehad remembers his dad, a well-reputed professional in Bosnia, standing in front of the local hot-dog stand begging the owner to give him a job, ‘if only for a short time’. Today turned into funny anecdotes, these memories serve as tragicomic reflections of exile as life out of ‘normal’ time and place.

The elderly couple, Fikret and Saliha, in their early 60s, took a more distanced view of the new place. Getting on in age, they felt little motivation to settle in Sweden and found the idea of dying far from home a painful one. They spent most days with their family, talking about the past, and seemed to make sense of the new environment by comparing it—foodstuffs, prices and so on—to Bosnia. Missing their garden, they obtained a small plot of community land near their flat and busied themselves with growing flowers and vegetables. They sought a sense of continuity by ‘wrapping a cloak of familiarity around a new landscape; imagining a new surrounding through the memory of their homeland’ (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, 12). They, like their daughters, missed the socializing with neighbours and friends in which pre-war life had been embedded, but they idealized, in their daughters’ view, the Yugoslavia destroyed by the war.

Making Sense of War: Memories of Pre-War Bosnia

As refugees, reviewing their past, their personal memories intersected with Yugoslav national memory (see also Jansen 2002; Palmberger 2016; Sorabji 2006). From their different generational perspectives, the adults took radically different positions; the young children were not involved in the discussions. The ‘First Yugoslavs’ had been adolescents in the first years of Tito’s Yugoslavia. As Palmberger noted in her study of post-war Mostar (2016), they perceived themselves as those who built Yugoslavia, while their children saw themselves as its beneficiaries. For the latter, such as Alma and Amina, given their strong identification with the modernization project of Tito’s Yugoslavia, its violent dissolution in the middle of their lives had constituted a major biographical rupture. The elders had already lived through one war, while ‘the “Last Yugoslavs” simply could not imagine that war would break out in Yugoslavia’ (Palmberger 2013a, 17). At the height of their lives and careers as the war began, they felt robbed of the dreams and hard work they had invested in life there. Now refugees, uncertain about home and return, they were searching their memories of life and politics of the past also as a way of seeking directions for the future. Thus, memories of ethnic violence and mass killings during the Second World War, previously a taboo subject in Tito’s Yugoslavia in the creation of a common Yugoslav identity, were now being questioned by this generation. Their parents, however, had believed in and remained faithful to the ideals of the Titoist Yugoslavia. They felt that it was a duty to forget the conflicts and violence that had taken place between nationalist groups during the Second World War and to live up to the Yugoslav ethos of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’. In this spirit, ethno-religious identities had been deemed (and indeed, over time, for many had become) socially irrelevant in the new socialist order. Fikret often spoke about the friendly neighbourly relations he had enjoyed in his hometown, a Serb majority area: ‘this is how we lived, irrespective of religion’. His small mechanical workshop in eastern Bosnia served the farmers in the area, most of them Serbs like the rest of the population, but he ‘had had no problems with them’. ‘In fact’, he said, smiling when remembering, ‘if someone came in

to my shop and greeted me “*Merhaba*”, I knew he [was a Muslim and] wanted a special favour’. Now, however, his children and their spouses were taking a much less conciliatory stance at the time. Like many others of their generation, they had been told very little about the violence of the previous war and felt angry (Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic 2012; Palmberger 2013b). Fikret’s daughters claimed to have been told only that he had witnessed his own father being murdered:

His father had been killed in front of his eyes... Dad said to us: ‘Now, with this war, the same thing happened again.’ But then he told us to forgive, repeating ‘we are people who can forgive’.

Fikret’s memories, and the ‘forgive and forget’ position of his contemporaries, reflected and aligned with the political memory of Tito’s Yugoslavia after the Second World War. He seemed to embrace a form of active forgetting similar to that described by Rosalind Shaw for post-war Sierra Leoneans. She refers to Kirkegaard’s distinction between ‘the art of forgetting’ and ‘forgetfulness’. While the latter is the involuntary disappearance of memories, ‘forgetting is the shears with which one clips away what one cannot use—though, mind you, under the overall supervision of memory’ (Kirkegaard 1992, quoted in Shaw 2007, 194). For post-war Sierra Leoneans, this active form of forgetting did not mean erasing personal memories of violence, but the ability to contain them. For Fikret and his generation in Yugoslavia under the new socialist regime, this had meant placing the violent experiences behind one, in order to move on with life. However, Shaw notes that for most Sierra Leoneans, such forgetting and moving on depended on the ability to build a future. For Fikret and Saliha and their generation at that time, their management of violent memories was not only heeding the new regime’s political-ideological calls to forget the violence of the Second World War, but was also building a future for themselves and their children, made possible by the dynamic development of Yugoslav society that followed. Still true to his beliefs, Fikret seemed to have no problems imagining return to Bosnia after exile, maintaining that he had had a good life with his Serb neighbours: ‘I lived with them before and I know we can live together again.’ However, his conviction also spoke

from his position in the life cycle and his desire to live his remaining years in Bosnia. He probably knew that he had few realistic chances of returning to live in his original home, which would be as an unwanted member of the minority in what was now Republika Srpska.

His daughters Alma and Amina, however, were angry about having been told so little about this violent past, as a warning that it might happen again. The aggressive nationalist war had ruptured their secure and comfortable lives and undermined the trust they had learnt to take for granted during their formative years. The generational difference in evaluating the past given the recent conflicts was also grounded in the different images of the future and what it had to offer. While making new homes and lives in Sweden was an option for their children and grandchildren, for the elderly couple life in exile had little meaning other than as a transition to their 'real home' in Bosnia.

At the time, the adult daughters found their parents' conciliatory stance naïve, insisting that after the war they understood certain childhood memories in a new light. As an example of ways in which 'Muslims' as a category had not counted, even been suppressed, Alma explained:

We always felt ashamed of our /Muslim/ names [at school], the marked 'h' of our language,² and for other things specific to us. The text books of those days never had one single Turkish-sounding name—it would have produced ridicule, and everybody would have laughed!

Now, in exile, these memories came to the fore, challenging Socialist Yugoslavia's collective memory, and were given a more portentous interpretation of Muslims as victims. However, as others have noted, the 'Last Yugoslavs' were ambivalent (Huttunen 2005; Palmberger 2013a). They raged against parents' 'forgive and forget' position as the ideological precept, which they felt had left Muslims at a disadvantage in the war. At the same time, they were aware that the social transformation over fifty years of Tito's socialism in which their parents' conciliatory position had been embedded had made their own social mobility possible. Moreover, ethno-national co-existence had been part of everyday life before the war. This, however, had not meant the blurring of a sense of ethno-national belonging; such belonging had been more fluid and

contextual, and also co-varied with other social affinities such as those of class and status, rural and urban origin (Sorabji 1993, quoted in Bougarel et al. 2007). In the Mostar family, Samir, despite his internment by Croat forces and their violent attacks on the city, maintained the importance of distinguishing between Croats as ‘the decent people [*posteni ljudi*], those who were our friends’, and ‘those who betrayed us’. He remembered those within the HVO forces who had helped him out in detention, while ‘those who destroyed our city were not our friends’. Similarly, his wife spoke with warmth about her former Croat friends and colleagues, certain that ‘one will always have one’s friends’. Thus, through ‘memories important in countering the ethnicized logic of the war’ (Huttunen 2005, 183), they established a sense of continuity with a vital aspect of ‘normal life’ before the war, separating it from the political/military. Similar distinctions between different moral realms were observed by Kolind in Stolac (Kolind 2007). Thus, there was a difference drawn between the political realm of nationalist identities and the ability in daily interaction to be a civil, normal person to others irrespective of their identity (see also Macek 2007). For Samir and Amina, this position also reflected their hope for return and continued solidarity with hometown friends, despite the rupture of relations caused by leaving Mostar during the war.

Although the two sisters did not share their father’s benevolent position towards the Serbs at the time, the war seemed to have made them more aware and appreciative of their parents’ religious faith, in their own search for a clearer grasp of their identity. Here, their childhood memories of Koran school served them well. Their parents’ consistent stance as pious Muslims earned them renewed respect and relevance. In exile, the sisters were resolved to teach their own children to be proud of being Muslims, including regularly taking them over to their grandfather living nearby, ‘so that he can teach them about their religion. We want them to know their traditions.’ Alma, a teacher of language and literature, also explored their past in other ways:

Today, we read up about our history, our people; recently I found an anthology of Bosniak writers—we did not even know our own writers in former Yugoslavia. We were forced to read [at school] what ‘they’ decided.

These initial years in Swedish exile entailed a search for such clues that could help them deal with the dramatic ruptures the war had entailed and recover a sense of identity and social community. The local collective of exiled Bosnians, mostly young and middle-aged Muslim families and a few accompanying elders, offered an opportunity to explore and find expressions of themselves as Muslims and Bosniaks. Exile was a safe space, but also a new and challenging context, in which to do so.

Searching the Past: Commemorating Identity in Exile

Remembering the past and scrutinizing history seemed to take on particular significance in the search for identity and to make sense of the war. Following Gillis, ‘the core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering, and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity’ (Gillis 1996, cited in Finney 2002, 3). Both memory and identity, as part of social process, are nevertheless selective and serve particular interests. For those displaced by a war fought in the name of identities, there was a need to assert this identity in order to demonstrate its legitimacy, and perhaps also to create a sense of continuity of selves. Forming an association was also a presentation of self to the host society; the latter knew little more about ‘Bosnians’ than media images of ethnic conflict and ‘traumatized war refugees’ (Eastmond 1998). In Sweden, earlier labour migrants had been ‘Yugoslavs’, while ‘Muslims’ was a category mainly associated with Turkish or other Middle Eastern immigrants. In 1993, ‘Bosnian Muslims’ was the category used by the Swedish authorities to refer to the newcomers. In encounters with the host population, reflecting the logic of ‘nesting orientalism’ (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992), the refugees distanced themselves from the Orientalized others in the present context, proclaiming a more prestigious identity position for themselves. Thus, referring to themselves as *European* Muslims, they emphasized a ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ background, contrasting themselves to ‘Middle Eastern Muslims’ or ‘Turks’.³ With the Dayton Peace

Agreement in 1995, Bosniak was recognized as one of three constituent peoples of BiH. In contrast to the more ambiguous Muslim denomination that referred both to nation and to faith, the term 'Bosniak' emphasized the historical connection between people and the territory central to all nationalist discourse.

The local association acted as a commemorative site, in which members reimagined themselves and their traditions across the ruptures and uncertainties of post-war existence. Asserting their legitimate place in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, through selecting and reinterpreting parts of their history and culture, they sought to shape and articulate a distinct ethno-national identity as Bosniaks. Popular songs and poems, in well-known nationalist imagery, celebrated the nature of Bosnia; others featured Muslim heroes and religious martyrs. The latter (*šehidi*) had been introduced into Bosniak political discourse (SDA) during the war, while losing much of its religious connotation in favour of a national symbolic one, referring to the fallen Muslim soldiers (Bougarel 2007, 170). Folk music and dances were interspersed with religious songs (*ilahije*) as well as readings of post-war poetry, performed by young women alluding to innocence and the nation's moral purity (see Helms 2007). Images of victimization were also communicated through new and popular poetry, presented by children and youths. In contrast to the way in which heroic martyrs were publicly celebrated, the stories of those members who had suffered extreme violence, such as rape and camp imprisonment, were never broached in everyday conversations in the community.

A folk dance group engaging youngsters was organized to teach traditional dances, mainly folkloristic expressions of peasant culture as the well-known representations of the 'old' and 'genuine' and performed at events for representatives of the Swedish local community. While the youngsters enjoyed performing, they took little interest in the ethnopolitics involved. During Ramadan, Fikret and a few other men invited a *hodža* (imam) from a nearby city and organized religious gatherings. Thus, Bosniaks enacted themselves as a nation, invoking and reinventing their traditions in the process. While the association claimed to cater to all refugees from Bosnia, underlining ethnic co-existence, it soon failed to sustain the interest of local Serbs, Croats and mixed couples, who

were alienated by what they felt was an exclusive Bosniak political focus. This, again, reflected the ambivalent position of the generation of 'Last Yugoslavs' after the war.

Engaging their memories in this work to portray 'a sense of sameness across time and place' as Bosniaks, the category nevertheless reflected not only a changing Muslim national identity (Bougarel 2007), but also its great internal diversity, thus revealing the nature of national identity as a social fiction. As refugees, the locals were people thrown together more by the needs of the host reception system than by their own choice and social affinity. In Malkki's terms, the refugee collective was an 'accidental community of memory', a constellation 'powerfully formed and transformed in transitory circumstances shared by persons who might be strangers' (1997, 92). The Bosniak collective was cross-cut by differences in class, urban–rural lifestyles and different memories of the war. Families of rural background, farmers or industrial workers from villages in eastern Bosnia, some of them having been prisoners in concentration camps, and members of the well-educated, secular, urban middle class were people who, before the war, would not have crossed one another's path or felt that they had much in common. For this reason, few social relationships were sustained outside of the association, often invoking socio-cultural stereotypes in the hierarchy of 'culturedness mentalities' (Stefansson 2007). Instead, some refugees preferred to reconnect with friends from Bosnia settled elsewhere in Sweden. For instance, funerals often drew more refugees from the deceased's hometown in Bosnia than from the local community in Sweden.

Returning to Bosnia: Memories in Transnational Space

Following the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) at the end of 1995, and given the poor prospects for resuming careers and 'normal life' in Sweden without a considerable investment of time, Alma and her husband decided to return to Bosnia. Aware of the negative sentiments among Bosnians at home concerning those who had left, they explained:

We want to return before it's too late in the eyes of those back home. We are no traitors. We are returning to help rebuild the country, to participate in the most crucial period. And before our children sink their roots in Swedish soil, before they become 'too comfortable' here and forget their homeland.

However, they also realized that recreating a home for themselves in the changed political geography of Bosnia was a risky process and required negotiating one's position in new contexts of power and inequality. Property restitution and the return of ethnic minorities to their former homes had been written into the DPA, although it did not engage with how this return was to happen. There was little realistic chance of returning for those who, as a result of the war, now constituted an ethnic minority in their former hometown, such as Muslims in Banja Luka, as in many other parts of Republika Srpska at the time; such reintegration was effectively blocked through a combination of lack of political will and intimidation (Stefansson 2006; 2010). Thus, returning to Republika Srpska was not an option, because it would mean being strangers again, this time in their former home. For them, as for many other returnees to post-war Bosnia, finding a viable place after the war thus required yet another move, another displacement.

The uncertainties of return required an open-ended strategy, avoiding burning one's bridges (Eastmond 2006). In a series of investigative visits to Bosnia to prepare for return, Samir worked on rebuilding his house and repairing what was left of his old network in Mostar, and Edin looked for contacts and work in Sarajevo. During this period, they relied on careful management of memory and silence about their comings and goings. Absences were carefully timed or kept tacit, so as not to jeopardize their Swedish residence status, or their right to draw economic assistance. Residency for a sustained period over five years was required to qualify for Swedish citizenship; with the acceptance of dual citizenship adopted in Sweden at this time, it became the most important safeguard for the prospective returnees. Given the unstable political situation of Bosnia, citizenship was the long-term security measure; it ensured a long-term link to Sweden of unlimited entry and continued opportunity in the future, including access to children's higher education and future

careers, not only in Sweden but within the entire EU. Having secured Swedish passports, they all moved back to Bosnia, except one daughter who remained to finish her university studies.

As Alma and the children joined her husband in Sarajevo, she finally closed the chapter of her life as a refugee and swore never to move again. Nevertheless, returning with no savings, in contrast to what relatives at home had imagined, Alma's family came back possibly poorer than when they left, given that they now had loans to repay in Sweden. Alma was later hired as a teacher at a Sarajevo school and her husband took a position as legal adviser to a new company. The children re-entered the Bosnian education system, now providing separate national curricula. Eventually, three years after their return in 2002, they obtained property rights to the house in Banja Luka. Selling it to a Serb family enabled them to buy a small flat in Sarajevo. Property restitution thus emplaced them more firmly in Bosnia; it was also symbolically significant as a moral victory against the forces that had evicted them and marked an end to their many displacements. As Alma described their new home, 'It is small but it is *ours*', a small space in Sarajevo now brought under their control (Douglas 1991). At the same time, she was disheartened by the election in which 'the nationalist parties won again', providing 'little hope for ordinary people'. Old Fikret and Saliha, with the assistance of Swedish local authorities, returned to a small town in the Bosnian Federation. They moved in with a relative, who helped Fikret set up a small workshop to resume his old work. In reappropriating 'home' in Bosnia, the elders again sought out the familiar, reconstructing continuity by imitating life as they once knew it, thus closing the circle.

For all, returning to Bosnia meant coming back to a profoundly changed society, transformed by war and nationalist division, and in the midst of a post-socialist transformation characterized by neo-liberal capitalism. For the Banja Luka family, post-war Sarajevo was not the vibrant centre of culture and ethnic mix of their youth. Many of the old Sarajevans had departed, and an influx of displaced people from other parts of the country was turning post-war Sarajevo into a predominantly Bosniak city. Many newcomers were from rural areas and as such were often rejected by original Sarajevans (see Stefansson 2007; 2010). Alma and her husband did not consider themselves to be newcomers, with

their many memories of Sarajevo attesting to their one-time presence and fulfilling the criteria of cultural refinement (see Macek 2007). They also became more actively Muslim with time (although their children did not), but in contrast to the politics of the exile years, it was now more as a marker of culture and belonging in Sarajevo. In Mostar, continued division in many areas of life, public as well as private, complicated life in various ways. Amina found that close friendships with women now living 'on the other side' of her city were difficult to restore with the same intimacy and trust. Ruptured by war and exile, such relationships now relied on a consensual silence about the war (Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic 2012). At the same time, the history and memorabilia of war, ironically, were attracting more tourists to Mostar and their business began expanding. Amina's daughters never returned to Mostar to settle; distancing themselves from a city marked by war and division, they sought better prospects in Sarajevo.

Today, the main problem, according to the returnees, apart from the persistence of nationalist politics, is the ineffective and corrupt economic system and public administration. Even so, they consider themselves lucky in comparison with the majority of the population. After returning to Bosnia some fifteen years ago, Amina and Alma have indeed been able to approximate pre-war 'normal life' in its components of work, family and friends, although with much less of an ethnic mix today, and without the sense of stability and prospects for their children's generation that had characterized their lives before the war. Their children, now adult, are less secure, in a society of high unemployment and corrupt hiring policies. Having established themselves in Sarajevo, now with families of their own, they struggle to make ends meet. Two of them work in the tourist sector, making use of the social and cultural capital gained in Sweden. For all of them, their transnational strategy of dual citizenship has allowed them to keep options open in several places. They keep up with Bosniak networks in Sweden and Alma has arranged several exchange visits with Swedish teachers. Her oldest daughter has moved to Sweden, after marrying a Bosniak settled there, and her parents often visit her.

Saliha, now widowed, lives in Sarajevo close to her loved ones. She enjoys hearing her grandchildren tell her that their best childhood memories are from summer holidays spent at their grandparents' place, but she

herself rarely speaks about the house and garden in which she invested so much of her adult life. Perhaps, like her husband in his day, she has chosen to disregard memories that serve no practical purpose in her present life.

Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the ways in which a Bosniak refugee family, consisting of an elderly couple, their two daughters and husbands as well as their five grandchildren, engaged and disengaged their memories in dealing with displacement and seeking viable homes and identities after the war. This memory work was investigated not only in connection to temporality and shifting times, but also in connection to movement and shifting sites. It pointed to the differences between the generations in terms of the tensions inherent in the experiences of war and forced migration and the strategies used in dealing with post-war lives, reflecting their social experience in a specific period and political context, as well as their stage in the life cycle.

The elderly couple of the first generation, Fikret and Saliha, with their lived experience of the formation of Tito's Yugoslavia, remained faithful to its political project and prescriptive forgetting of ethnic violence and loss after the Second World War. To them, silence about ethnic violence had represented a form of containment of memories, perceived, and politically prescribed, as a morally and politically responsible strategy for building Yugoslavia as a multiethnic society and creating a more secure place for their children. This experience served as the mnemonic frame that helped them interpret the new war and their own losses in it, advocating the same reconciliatory position that they had once learnt to take. This position, 'we can live with them again', also reflected the desire of an ageing couple who wanted to return to Bosnia for their remaining years. In exile, they engaged their memories of life at home before the war in dealing with the new and unfamiliar environment. Their original home in Bosnia, where they had spent most of their lives, became an idealized construct that helped them adjust to life in a new context, imitating life by imagining being there when 'here' (Hage 1997 in Jansen

and Löfving 2009, 16). At the same time, the gaps and silences in narrating this past, never mentioning ethnic cleansing and loss of home, were, to them, a familiar means of dealing with rupture and promoted their dream of return. Thus, selective memory and imitation formed a resource with which they strove to reconstrue continuity across time and place. If active forgetting was a means to deal with the painful ruptures of war and displacement, active remembering helped them reconstrue their lives after exile and return.

The second generation, represented by the two daughters and their husbands, took a more ambivalent position, not only towards their historical experience of former Yugoslavia, but also towards migration and exile. Multiethnic Yugoslavia, the taken-for-granted reality of Amra and Amina, had been destroyed by the war. Searching their own memories of that past and contesting the silences of their parents, childhood experiences were reinterpreted in the light of war and nationalist aggression. However, this sense of victimhood as Muslims in the war co-existed with nostalgic remembrance of the good multiethnic past. While more strongly marking their Muslim identity today in the post-war contexts of Mostar and Sarajevo, they remain strong supporters of non-nationalist political alternatives for a democratic, multiethnic Bosnia. For this generation, displacement and exile had also entailed a rupture with professional identities, loss of social recognition and economic independence, conflicting with their self-image as well educated and cultured. While rather shattering at the time, the exile experience had been bracketed after return to Bosnia as an insignificant period in transition to home, a time 'not worth remembering'. Reinterpreting this experience, individuals seemed to restore a sense of continuity in their life course and in their identification with Bosnia. They also then found themselves close to the position of their parents, who, in their hearts and minds, had never really left Bosnia. By undercommunicating exile and the years abroad on their return, they also facilitated relations with those who had remained in Bosnia during the war and who were not always tolerant of people who had left. They hoped that reconnecting with memories of student years in Sarajevo would help boost their claims of belonging and also re-establish them there as professionals. The Mostaris, reinstalled in their hometown and pre-war family house, still found that return does not always entail com-

ing home. Old friends who stayed during the war now often lived on ‘the other side’ of the ethnically divided city; even if the returnees could still trust them as ‘decent people’, resuming such relationships often relied on both parties creating an a-historical ‘present’: relying on memories of a time in the pre-war past and suspending the realities of war and exile (see Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic 2012).

Some ten years after their return, the sense of failure in exile has softened for this second generation, giving way to a renewed sense of belonging, now more on their own terms. Re-emplaced in Bosnia and feeling relatively secure, visits to Sweden have become more frequent and acquired a new meaning. Importantly, whether visiting with a daughter’s family or attending reunions of Bosnian hometown associations in Sweden, they now enter as Swedish citizens, not as dependent refugees. They now also more easily acknowledge the positive outcome of their exile years, not only for themselves. The transnational belonging and security of citizenship now extended also to the fourth generation, the children born after the return to Bosnia, indicate a continued concern about the future and the need for a long-term assurance of place.

The third generation, represented by Fikret’s and Saliha’s five grandchildren, have few memories of life in socialist Yugoslavia. Protected by the family from details of the more brutal realities of war and exile, they also seem to have suffered less rupture in their lives compared to their elders. They take little interest in Bosnian politics today and, like many of their peers who stayed in Bosnia during the war, they maintain a distance to this violent remaking of society. They do not share their parents’ ambivalence nor their grand-parents’ faith in a return to pre-war ethno-national co-existence. Like many others of their age, they struggle to find their bearings in today’s Bosnian society; their gaze is set on the future and includes imagining themselves in other places. However, a critical difference to their peers in Bosnia lies in their long experience of life abroad and the more extensive networks and sense of security that it has implied. As members of the post-exile generation, their orientation is more cosmopolitan; friends and relatives in the diaspora have taken on greater significance and they see their lives as naturally and continuously interlinked with those of others abroad. Furthermore, although identifying themselves as Bosniaks, their Swedishness in terms of language and

cultural competence nevertheless forms an integral part of them as social persons. Thus, maintaining contact with friends and kin in Sweden and further afield, they have plans and hopes to live and work in other countries, also relying on the security of dual citizenship providing access to a range of European countries. In these global networks, plans and images of future possibilities of different kinds are continuously negotiated, being shared, confirmed or contested between relatives and friends in different places. While they do not engage with their lives in Sweden in the past, they seem actively to entertain the connection with a view to the future. Through maintaining and securing their transnational connections, also by extending Swedish citizenship to their own small children and teaching them Swedish, they are construing continuity between these sites and beyond, also for the next generation.

While there were generational differences in engaging with war and displacement, there were also collective strategies in making sense of them. Some relied on symbolic forms of conversion and portraying a macabre twisting of reality. Joking is well known in anthropology as a way of managing social tensions and dispelling apprehension in tightly confined social contexts with uncertain outcomes (Parkin 1993). The family members often referred to 'tragicomedy': that is, self-deprecatory narratives highlighting the absurdity of their own powerlessness, in particular situations of uncertainty and humiliation, during flight or in camps; laughing at such situations at the time helped to create distance and ease their tragic import. The narrative reworking of reality, as Jackson points out, may, at least symbolically, alter the balance between actor and those being acted on (2002, 16–17). Similarly, many exile memories today, many years after the return to Bosnia, focus on anecdotes of things gone wrong. Kept alive in the family circle, and always producing laughter, such recounted absurdities depicting themselves as hapless victims also seem to act as a reminder that 'back in Bosnia, life is better', thus re-emplacing them more firmly at home.

However, this chapter has also suggested that silence and forgetting can be important as mnemonic strategies for moving beyond painful ruptures or bridging dissonant experiences in the building of new lives. Some individual memories may be silenced, as a protection of close relationships; others may defy articulation or cannot easily be integrated into a

cohesive conception of self or family. As a collective strategy, both silence and forgetting can be constitutive in the formation of new identities and life plans. In silencing memories of lost pre-war homes, the Bosniak returnees seemed to make room for new attachments. Forgetting is not necessarily loss, as Connerton reminds us: ‘What is allowed to be forgotten provides living space for present projects’, referring to ‘the gain that accrues to those who know how to discard memories that serve no practicable purpose in the management of one’s current identity and ongoing purposes’ (Connerton 2008, 63). In getting on with new lives in post-war Bosnia after turbulent change, many other Bosnians also found that ‘too much memory’ can be a liability (Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic 2012). Forgetting through collusive silence, leaving certain things in the shadows, the families described here opened up new ways of being at home and made space for new identities, including those as transnational citizens.

Notes

1. In the Bosniak nationalist discourse, the Bosniak–Croat war was presented as ‘a war of Bosniaks liberating Mostar from Croat fascists’ (Palmerberger 2013b, 549).
2. This phoneme *h* is an interesting example of the subtle means by which difference can be created and charged with meaning as a national boundary marker, now reintroduced into spelling. The new grammar of the Bosnian language ascribes this phoneme particular significance as an old Bosnian pronunciation retained by Muslims (see Eastmond 1998). Similarly, the new textbooks on Bosnian literature exclude non-Muslim and especially Serbian authors (Macek 1997).
3. In the past, ‘Bosnjak’ shifted between an inclusive use, encompassing all Bosnian identities, and a more exclusive one, referring to Muslims only, echoing both historical and contemporary controversy (Bringa 1995).

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3

Refugee Camp as Mediating Locality: Memory and Place in Protracted Exile

Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska

Both in academic scholarship and popular imagination, ‘forced migrants, cut off from their homeland and thus deracinated, were regarded as lacking some of the qualities that made the rest of us human’ (Chatty 2010, 37), deprived of identity and culture by the very fact of losing their homeland. A growing body of literature has shown, however, that refugees in various socio-cultural contexts strive to maintain continuity with their pre-exilic past (see, for example, Hammond 2004; Malkki 1995; Parkin

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1999; Zetter 1994; in the Palestinian context: Chatty 2010; Gambiam 2012; Peteet 2005). Numerous studies have demonstrated that refugees' nostalgia for their place of origin, understood as a feeling of yearning for what is thought to have been lost (Angé and Berliner 2014), can be mournful and past oriented, but can also form an integral and functional part of refugees' contemporary identities directed towards the future (Palmberger 2008; Radstone 2010). Recent anthropological studies on nostalgia discussed its capacity for mediating group identities (Angé and Berliner 2014). Particularly in times of rupture and change, nostalgia can reflect the 'longing for a clear and secure representation of oneself' (Bryant 2014, 172) and one's community. The condition of forced displacement is perhaps one of the most extreme examples of rupture and accelerated social change, one that triggers investments in memory work aimed at redrawing continuities, providing anchorage (see Creet 2011) and reconstituting communities through processes of social incorporation and exclusion (Glynn and Kleist 2012). In addition to creating a sense of security and continuity, such efforts to foster memories of home and recreate some of its elements in exile can also carry political meanings and serve as a daily means of challenging the refugee predicament (Caneffe 2011).

In protracted refugee situations, the attachment to places of origin has commonly been understood to fade away systematically and become superseded by a gradual habituation to life in exile. Consequently, refugees' attachments to places of origin and residence in exile were often portrayed as mutually exclusive (Zetter 1999). This zero-sum game logic has been questioned by numerous studies that revealed the complexity of relations between identity and place in protracted exile (Agier 2011; Feldman 2008; Gambiam 2012; Peteet 2005). Particularly for refugees who inhabit city-camps—that is, quasi-permanent sites of prolonged residence that nevertheless remain physical embodiments of exile—territorialization of identity evades common conceptualizations. The experience of prolonged exile challenges the transitional character commonly attributed to refugee status; the very notions of 'home' and 'being at home' become troubled, particularly in the case of generations born into encampment, for whom the camp becomes a place of belonging—their 'home-camp', to use the term coined by Elena Fiddian-Qasimiyeh (2013).

While the question of refugees' relation to their place of origin has been widely addressed in the literature on the subject, the problem of their relation to the camp as a refugee community has received less attention (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013). In this chapter I combine these two research interests by exploring how the elements of a pre-exilic past are used to form refugees' relation to their camp in contexts of protracted exile. My aim is to show mechanisms through which a refugee camp can become a mediating locality where the seemingly exclusive spatial loyalties—to places of origin and residence—can be reconciled. After Appadurai (1996), I understand locality as a phenomenological quality that expresses itself in a structure of relatively stable associations, mutual obligations and shared experiences that bind the local community together and constitute a specific life-world territorialized within a particular socially meaningful space, where individuals are guided by certain local conventions that facilitate daily interaction (see Mayol 1998). Given that locality, so defined, encompasses both the relations people form to space and to other community members (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997), I am interested in how memories of An-Nakba¹ and refugees' place of origin are inscribed in a camp's space, how they are lived by refugees in their daily lives, as well as how they become incorporated into camp residents' individual and group identities. Although, as Berliner (2005) notes, the main focus of anthropological studies on memory has traditionally been on matters of cultural persistence and people's experiences of their own history, my study looks at how memory and processes of commemoration are used to transform a site founded to shelter people fleeing danger into a distinct local community of persons with refugee backgrounds.

The article is based on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between January 2010 and August 2012 in Al-Am'ari refugee camp in the West Bank, where I conducted fifty in-depth interviews, carried out participant observation on a daily basis and obtained various kinds of statistical, textual and visual data. Al-Am'ari is one of nineteen refugee camps in the West Bank recognized by the United Nations (UN). The camp was established in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross; the following year the UN agency dedicated to Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, assumed control, providing health, educational and relief services to its residents. Nowadays Al-Am'ari is home to approximately 6000 people, the majority

of whom are refugees (or their descendants),² who fled the cities of Al-Ludd, Ar-Ramla and Jaffa and the surrounding villages during the 1948 war.³ The camp is located in the urban complex of Ramallah and Al-Bireh within the so-called Area A, which means that, formally at least, it is under the sole control of the Palestinian authorities.⁴ In the course of its sixty-five-year existence, the camp has changed significantly from a site dotted with tents and inhabited by destitute refugees to a poor urban neighbourhood characterized by strong community bonds and a distinct local identity. Since its establishment, Al-Am'ari has shared in the turbulent history of the West Bank, with its outbursts of violence and dramatic geopolitical shifts.⁵ During the decades of Israeli occupation, the camp has emerged as a local centre of resistance and consequently attracted harsh counter-insurgency measures from the hands of Israeli military forces. Within the West Bank, Al-Am'ari is renowned for its football team, its well-developed network of home-grown non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide activities to the local community and its ability to engage foreign activists and aid.

Theoretical Grounding

The dominant conceptualizations of refugee camps are informed by a powerful rhetoric of exclusion and incompleteness. Such is Giorgio Agamben's (1998) influential reading of the camp as a site of exception, designed to strip individuals of their rights and reduce them to 'bare life'. Here, the camp dweller becomes the subject of biopolitics that 'bypasses the legal subject and operates directly on the body' (Diken and Laustsen 2005, 56). According to Bauman (2002), the condition of 'social nakedness', in both the sense of being uprooted from one's pre-exilic social world and that of camp politics, leaves individuals without social status, responsibilities or rights. The camps themselves are often portrayed as incomplete urban settlements, for example by De Montclos and Kagwanja (2000, 206), who speak of long-term refugees as 'urban dwellers in the making' and their camps as a 'preliminary step towards urbanization', or Agier, who calls them the 'cities-to-be' (2011, 189), set 'outside of the places and outside of the time of a common, ordinary, predictable world' (2002, 323). Within this framework, the camps are places produced by

specific historical events but not capable of generating a context of their own or forming new localized subjects (see Appadurai 1996).

These conceptualizations approach the camp from the top-down perspective, aiming to grasp its nature and describe what the camp is in relation to other spaces and what it does to the individual. My approach focuses instead on camp residents, not first and foremost as subjects of 'camp politics', but as actors forming networks of relations with one another and transforming the very place of their residence through both altering its physical appearance and endowing it with meaning through various aspects of memory work. I agree with Catherine Degnen (2005) that the latter effort cannot be reduced to layering symbolic and emotional content onto an unchanging space, but that, through mnemonic practices, people establish complex relationships with space, on both individual and community levels. Place is then not simply a stage for social action that reflects the prevailing social order—it is a social construct that represents its users, while simultaneously exercising influence on them (see Rodman 1992). In analysing Al-Am'ari's residents' relation to space, I am interested in both these dimensions; that is, how the refugees construct the space of the camp to represent their predicament and how the camp—as a highly symbolic, localized and politicized community—shapes their personal and collective identities. Such a perspective seems particularly appropriate for understanding the complex spatial attachments and placemaking projects of long-term camp refugees, whose relations with both their home country and home-camp become problematized in the course of exile.

Even in ordinary circumstances, efforts to familiarize space and develop a local community face various obstacles, with the locality being 'an inherently fragile social achievement' that allows the containment of 'the endemic sense of anxiety and instability' (Appadurai 1996, 179). For refugees, whose lives are often marked by trauma, uncertainty and insecurity, this effort seems to be considerably harder. If the permanent solution to their plight fails to materialize, they are left with little choice but to organize themselves in the camp and produce a place of their own. Establishing a home involves bringing space under control and arranging it according to some imagined order, as 'home is the realization of ideas' (Douglas 1991, 290). For Al-Am'ari refugees, the process of

‘domesticating’ the camp’s space has involved the reproduction of previously held ideas of home; in this process, elements of pre-exilic heritage, such as local accents, customs, food and dress, were incorporated into the camp’s particular localities and thereby shaped these communities’ character and self-perceptions (see Feldman 2008). In other words, re-establishing continuities with pre-exilic homes has played an important role in the formation of Al-Am‘ari as a home-camp for its residents (see Parmenter McKean 1994). Following Mary Douglas’s observation that ‘home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space’ (Douglas 1991, 289), I would argue that it may also be situated in the relationship between sites. The camp becomes then a mediating locality that shares with Foucault’s heterotopia the capacity to juxtapose ‘in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible’ (Foucault 1986, 25).

Even if no longer extant, as in the case of many Palestinian villages destroyed in the 1948 war and its aftermath, places of origin continue to hold symbolic meaning for camp dwellers. Degnen’s (2005, 740) observation that ‘remembering by evoking absences is still to engage with the object’ of the past reflects the memory struggles of many refugees, as well as those of younger generations who did not have the chance to know these places at first hand. In understanding their experience, it seems useful to explore Marianne Hirsch’s concept of post-memory, which captures the second generation’s relationship to the traumatic events endured by their family or community members. Although indirectly, these inherited traumas and memories have a powerful impact on the lives of the second generation, to the extent of potentially overshadowing their own life histories (Hirsch 2008, 107). This is particularly so, I would argue, if the second generation grows up in a place that serves as the very embodiment of these experiences of trauma and loss. Thus, the symbolic function of the camp is ‘to *reactivate* and *reembody* more distant... memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression’ (Hirsch 2008, 111). In this way, by growing attached to the camp—in its capacity as a mediating locality—the subsequent generations of refugees retain a symbolic connection with the lands left by their forebears, to which they often lack a more tangible connection. It is through this memory work that the camp acquires its

heterotopic character, as a site functioning in relation to the geographies of origin.

In order to develop the proposed conceptualization of a refugee camp as a mediating locality, I first turn to discussing the efforts through which the residents of Al-Am‘ari have fostered the refugee character of their community, and then move to analyze how the commemorative capacity of the camp has changed over the years and what it is, in the eyes of inhabitants, that makes Al-Am‘ari a refugee camp after the passage of sixty-three years. This brings me to discuss the meanings of attachment to the camp as their home community and a symbolic representation of their places of origin that Al-Am‘ari’s inhabitants have developed.

Fostering the Refugee Character of Camp Community

Thanks to residents’ efforts, the refugee component of Al-Am‘ari’s locality has remained strong throughout the six decades of exile, with the matters of An-Nakba, place of origin and right to return holding deep symbolic meaning for the inhabitants. The camp emerged as a site where people who shared traumas of war and exile gathered and gradually developed shared frameworks of remembering. As Assmann (1995, 127) argues, remembering is a communicative process whereby individuals interact with particular sets of people ‘who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past’. Accordingly, the individual and collective memories of Al-Am‘ari residents have been shaped in daily interactions with fellow refugees and by commemorative practices performed at family and community levels. This section explores how the camp inhabitants have fostered the refugee character of their community through (1) recreating in Al-Am‘ari their social and physical worlds of origin; and (2) developing shared frameworks of remembering and commemorating An-Nakba and their places of origin.

During the first decades of life in exile, refugees of shared origin tended to live in both physical and social proximity. On establishment of the camp, family members and former neighbours usually settled near each

other, forming small neighbourhoods that reflected their pre-exilic localities and were named accordingly. To this day in Al-Am'ari there are two neighbourhoods named for their inhabitants' places of origin: An-Na'anī and Al-Mālḥa quarters. Even if their present social composition is more mixed (due to residents' movements out and in), the names are still commonly used in navigating Al-Am'ari. In this sense, places of origin have been recreated in the camp's space, in terms of both social composition and place names. With the passage of time, however, the pre-exilic social networks gave way to broader camp solidarity. Especially for generations born in exile, their social world went far beyond their community of shared origin. Younger residents in their 30s and 40s often recall their parents and grandparents having lively contacts with former co-villagers or fellow townspeople, while they agreed that these were harder to sustain when the older generations faded away. A similar situation can be observed in regard to marriage choices. My interviewees explained the initial tendency to marry within communities of shared origin as a natural consequence of traditional arranged marriages, where possible candidates were often picked from one's extended family. This scheme continued in exile, so that older family members searched for potential spouses either within the extended family, who in pre-1948 Palestine often lived in the same village or city, or among unrelated former neighbours. In the eyes of older research participants, this marriage pattern began to fade away in the middle of the 1960s, and it was certainly much less popular in the case of the second generation born in exile.⁶

Despite the passage of time and the widespread pattern of intermarriages between people of different origins, some local pre-exilic traditions continue to be upheld by the respective communities residing in the camp. Though most Al-Am'arians realize that these are increasingly merging into one Palestinian national tradition, some internal diversity remains, especially relating to wedding customs, traditional local cuisine and accents. Interestingly, most Al-Am'arians I talked to (even among the youngest generation) could distinguish between dialects and identify a person's origin based on that distinction.⁷ However, as many research participants observed, local dialects undergo a variety of modifications, with some elements simply fading away in subsequent generations. This

is particularly the case with village dialects, which are often perceived as less prestigious. As the transmission of the original dialects to younger generations is generally regarded as a family task, the increasing occurrence of intermarriage has certainly contributed to the emergence of a greater level of hybridization in the dialects that are spoken in Al-Am‘ari today.

Weddings seem to be the social occasion when local traditions are most likely to be observed. The popular custom of henna, for example, originates from Palestinian village areas. Henna precedes the actual wedding (usually by one day) and is organized by the bride for her female friends. There are several traditional elements of this ceremony, the most crucial being the handing over of gold and jewellery to the bride (often dressed in the traditional Palestinian *thūb*⁸) by female members of the groom’s family, as well as future spouses drawing their initials with henna on each other’s hands. As it is considered to be a farmers’ tradition, in Al-Am‘ari people of urban origin are not expected to practise it, though nowadays there are some exceptions to this rule. In addition, the traditional dishes served on the wedding day vary between different regions; for instance, whereas the people of An-Na‘anī cook *maqlūba* and dishes with couscous, former residents of Abū Shūsha present their guests with *uzi*⁹ and meat with strained yoghurt.¹⁰

Another variation among the traditions nurtured by various communities within Al-Am‘ari is local cuisine. There are some local specialities that originate from places in pre-1948 Palestine, which Al-Am‘arians continue to cook to the present day. For example, according to Muhammad,¹¹ an engineer from Al-Am‘ari in his mid-30s, Al-Ludd was famous for its *rummāniyya*, *ḥamāšīš* and *shishbarak*. When I asked him whether his family continue to cook those dishes, he confirmed, but mentioned a considerable obstacle in the case of *ḥamāšīš* soup:

We used to cook it. But nowadays no, the *ḥamāšīš* no, because there is no *ḥamāšīš*. In the past my mother, may Allah have mercy on her, when someone was going to Al-Ludd, she asked him to bring the *ḥamāšīš* with him. Now there is no *ḥamāšīš* so we cook pomegranate, the taste of pomegranate is like the one of *ḥamāšīš*.

The refugees' flight from their places of origin, followed by their settlement in the camp, marked a profound change in their lifestyles and eating habits. If at the very beginning of life in exile Al-Am'arians' diet was largely dependent on the content of international aid, it soon became reliant on the availability of certain products on the local market. As in the case of Muhammad's family, it often meant a need to adapt one's eating preferences or traditional dishes to the realities of exile.

After more than six decades, Al-Am'arians have kept the memories of the 1948 war and their places of origin very much alive on an individual, group and national level. Their efforts to commemorate An-Nakba take a variety of forms: from participation in official events organized by both state and local actors for An-Nakba Day on 15 May to daily acts of commemoration and the inscription of symbolic images, such as that of the key, on the walls of the camp. The Women Centre of Al-Am'ari, for example, organizes an exhibition for An-Nakba Day under the title 'Scent of the country', displaying artefacts, such as clothing, kitchen utensils and the like, that date back to pre-1948 Palestine and have been kept ever since by refugees from Al-Am'ari. This local exhibition is one of the occasions on which the community celebrates its refugee identity by commemorating a shared historical experience. Each year the local sports club, Al-Am'ari Youth Centre, organizes a football competition to commemorate An-Nakba, to which it invites football teams from all West Bank refugee camps. Commemorative activities are also organized by three heritage societies that operate in Al-Am'ari (Society of Al-Ludd, An-Na'ānī and 'Annāba) that aim to promote knowledge of local traditions and histories and serve as networks of social support.

Many Al-Am'arians continue to perceive their place of origin in pre-1948 Palestine as their homeland, whose idealized image is often presented in contrast to the unfavourable living conditions in the camp. Even children from Al-Am'ari, a third generation born in exile, are generally aware of their place of origin and, often, that of their friends. The origin-based stereotypes are a common subject of popular humour in the camp, but—to my knowledge—are not grounds for discrimination. Information on people's origins is also often mentioned during occasions marking life cycles, such as marriages or funerals (see Fig. 3.1).¹²



Fig. 3.1 The tomb of a 7-year-old refugee from Al-Am'ari who was killed during the second *intifada*. The information about the child's city of origin, Al-Ludd, is given directly below the deceased boy's name. Photograph taken by the author

According to research participants, the two most important sources of knowledge about one's place of origin have been (1) oral accounts of the elderly; and (2) the 'return journeys' to respective sites located in present-day Israel. The social practice of storytelling holds an important position in the Palestinian and, more broadly, Arab tradition (Muhawi and Kanaana 1989) and, according to research participants, has been the main tool of intergenerational transmission of memories about An-Nakba and the places of origin. Some research participants explicitly expressed their concern about the future, since this practice of remembering relies on the eldest generation, whose stories are endowed with the aura of authenticity as first-hand accounts. Now that the generation who remember pre-1948 times fades away, it is a matter of doubt and concern whether storytelling as a vehicle of collective memory remains equally powerful for the next generations. Particularly for young Al-Am'arians, whose parents were already born in exile, personalized accounts of family life before An-Nakba are often not available.

The experience of return journeys was quite common among people in their 40s and older, but much less so among members of the younger generations due to the gradual tightening of Israeli closure policies in the past twenty years, particularly after the erection of the Separation Wall and the exacerbation of the permits regime in the early 2000s. Even if return journeys often did not involve going to the actual lands or houses of one's forefathers (particularly in the case of villages that were completely destroyed during 1948 or later), they allowed the participants to establish a more tangible relation to their lost homeland. Especially before 1994, many Al-Am'arians worked in Israel and spent their free time there. Ahmad, a 38-year-old Al-Am'arian who works in a blue-collar position in the local municipality, thought the policies of closure led to further deprivation of the lost homeland:

There is no freedom here; we can't visit our homeland. We were deprived of it by these checkpoints. Before 1994 we were suffering, but we were not deprived of it, from the inside [from within present-day Israel] we were going there and most people were working there.¹³

Though many people described the experience of visiting their place of origin as sad and disturbing, having the possibility to do so seems to have given them some consolation. In many cases, families arranged return journeys, with an elderly family member showing respective sites and narrating their history. Omar, for example, now 46 years old, used to visit his home city of Ar-Ramla every year with his father, who showed him the location of the lost properties and described their characteristics in detail. However, due to the Israeli closure of the West Bank, Omar could not provide his son with the same experience:

But the new generation, my son and those smaller or bigger than him, they don't reach this level. They have never seen it with their own eyes, they haven't grown such a strong attachment to the land, like we—the generation that came before them—did. This is politics, I tell you Israel won in trying to make people forget a thing called homeland.

Many of my research participants emphasized the importance of passing down memories of An-Nakba and the places of origin to the younger generations. When I asked Ahmad what values he would like to pass down to his children, he first mentioned the importance of education and self-development and then added:

We also want them to cling to their homeland, so that they don't forget their homeland. This is our homeland and we need to think about it. Even if it is just about commemorating our homeland, [even if] we can't liberate it, it is important that we know our homeland. [The child must know] that he has a homeland, he has grandparents, he has land, and he owns rights. Not that he is an ignorant person [Arab. *tāfīh*] in this land. No, he has land; one day he meant something in this world. If he had lost it, all right, but he needs to know about it.

For Ahmad, the refugees' traumatic legacy forms an integral part of their contemporary identities and should not be a source of negative self-esteem, but rather pride and dignity. He stressed the need to keep children aware of their family histories and homelands (even if the latter are difficult to retrieve), so that the pre-exilic past remains an integral part of their personal identities and they do not grow up as 'ignorant'

people 'without history'. Some of my interviewees considered the task of instilling a 'refugee consciousness' and passing political commitments to successive generations more likely to be fulfilled within the highly symbolic and politicized context of the camp, where the references to An-Nakba and places of origin are more present than elsewhere. Both family and community efforts in that regard were seen to be crucial for the future of the Palestinian refugee cause. Such has been the preservation of Al-Am'ari's camp status and character in the protracted exile, to which I now turn.

The Changing Meanings of Space: What Makes a Refugee Camp in Protracted Exile?

The political and symbolic significance of the camp has been recognized by Al-Am'arians from the beginning. It was a basic belief that camp residents were generally more likely to fulfil their aspirations of return, if such an opportunity materialized, than refugees residing elsewhere. Based on this calculation, some families decided to settle in Al-Am'ari and, over the following decades, to remain in the camp. Many of my interviewees attributed the symbolic significance of the camps to their internationally recognized status, sanctioned by UNRWA's presence and the poor living conditions prevailing there. When asked whether they would prefer another organization to replace UNRWA in providing services for the camp (for example, the Palestinian Authority, PA), all research participants strongly disagreed by expressing their fear that it could threaten their refugee status. Despite the diminishing services provided in the camp, which is a frequent subject of the Agency's criticism among Al-Am'arians, UNRWA is seen to play an important role in the 'symbolic authorization' of the camp.

In the context of the contemporary humanitarian regime, the camps' physical appearance, as provisional arrangements provided with only basic facilities, is an important vehicle for the visibility of the refugees' cause, and one that has to be carefully managed (Feldman 2008). Particularly in protracted exile, refugees face the challenge of constantly proving their

'refugee credentials' if they are to secure rights and funding (see Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2010; Malkki 1996). Accordingly, in the Palestinian national discourse there was a certain emphasis on maintaining the provisional appearance of camps, since the bad living conditions prevailing there were seen to enhance refugees' political claims (Tamari 1999). Following this logic, in many Palestinian refugee camps UNRWA's development plans were initially opposed by the refugees, who feared that infrastructural improvements would hamper their chances of return (Feldman 2008; Gambiam 2012; Peteet 2005). Similar objections were raised in Al-Am'ari, particularly when in the mid-1950s the Agency began to replace tents, widely regarded as an epitome of the refugee predicament, with cement and *zinkū* structures.¹⁴ According to the director of the local UNRWA office, it was a very difficult moment for camp residents, understood to signal the more permanent character of their predicament (see Feldman 2008).¹⁵ Despite the fears and initial opposition, in the late 1970s and early 1980s Al-Am'arians gradually began to improve housing conditions by themselves, facing the reality of an ever-extending exile and considerable population growth. These efforts were strictly controlled by UNRWA, which officially prohibited the building of houses higher than one floor. Trying to explain the dynamics of housing development in Al-Am'ari, my 55-year-old interviewee, who grew up in Al-Am'ari, spent seven years in the USA and later came back to open a popular wedding hall in the vicinity of the camp, said:

Interviewee: Before, the people were scared, they were scared of the UN [UNRWA]. They [UNRWA employees] told them, the director [of UNRWA]: 'if you build I will cut your card'. But when they [UNRWA] cut the card, people moved on, they didn't care [any more].

Me: But why, why did they say 'if you build I will cut' before?

Interviewee: Why? I don't know, they didn't let us make buildings high, because it is a camp, if someone sees that [in] the camp it is like [buildings with] two, three floors, he will say: 'this is not a camp'. Only when he sees one floor and *zinkū*..., he thinks OK, like this, this is very poor, they live in a

camp. Anybody can live in these buildings [the buildings that are in Al-Am'ari today].

According to the interviewee, UNRWA's ban on building higher structures was informed by a concern to maintain the character of Al-Am'ari as a camp—one that, in the popular understanding, is based on the site's provisional appearance and poor living conditions. As a main service provider to the camp, UNRWA had strong means of leverage to enforce its regulations (in the quotation referred to as 'cutting the card', that is reducing the level of benefits). In the opinion of many research participants, it was the reduction of UNRWA-offered services in the aftermath of the first *intifada* that encouraged people to bypass the ban. Following the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the PA, the Agency adjusted to the situation on the ground by allowing the construction of houses up to two floors tall. However, according to UNRWA, in 2008 60 % of houses in Al-Am'ari had more than two floors (UNRWA 2009). The physical appearance of Al-Am'ari thus lost its provisional character, and



Fig. 3.2 Bird's-eye view of Al-Am'ari. Photograph taken by the author

the camp now resembles an impoverished neighbourhood, with cement houses, paved streets and numerous shops (see Fig. 3.2).

According to my findings, the improvements in Al-Am'ari's physical infrastructure were followed by conceptual changes in the understanding of the defining features that make up a refugee camp. The initial emphasis on physical appearance was superseded by a conceptualization based on the fact that the site is inhabited by refugees. Whereas the former definition was dependent on external judgement and required the reproduction of the site's provisional character, the latter gave greater agency to the refugees, whose presence became conceived as a guarantee of the character of Al-Am'ari as a refugee camp. This guarantee allowed for the reconciliation of infrastructural improvements to the symbolic utterance of the camp. When asked what infrastructural improvements she would introduce to the camp, given sufficient power and resources, my 28-year-old interviewee, who was born in Al-Am'ari and moved out only recently after getting married, replied:

- Interviewee: I would develop the school, improve the streets, streets, there are a lot of things wrong in the camp, I would widen the streets.
- Research assistant: But why, even if you changed the buildings, would it [Al-Am'ari] stay a camp? What makes the camp different?
- Interviewee: Because we are people of the camp.
- Research assistant: In what way are you 'people of the camp'?
- Interviewee: Because we are refugees, because it is not our country, because for everyone there is a country, everyone should be in his place, in his country. Because of that we will remain a camp: wherever we went, wherever we came from we will remain a camp.

The interviewee attributed Al-Am'ari's camp status to refugees' continued residence at the site and therefore believed it would retain its camp status until the refugees are allowed to return. In this way, the capacity of the camp to serve as a space of commemoration is dependent on refugees' steadfastness and commitment to both the pre-exilic past and the camp

community. Many research participants saw the experience of encampment as a 'natural extension' of suffering caused by exile. Constructing this continuity of suffering has been yet another mechanism, aside from commemorative practices and efforts to incorporate elements of the pre-illic past into the social reality of Al-Am'ari discussed earlier, through which the camp is produced as a space of commemoration and symbolic representation of the refugees' homelands.

Although my research participants generally differed in their attitudes towards the idea of moving out of Al-Am'ari, the vast majority did not treat leaving the camp as a sign of lack of commitment to the Palestinian refugee cause, but rather as a natural consequence of the scarcity of space in a camp that can no longer accommodate its growing population. Some could not imagine living outside; others hoped to live in better conditions, but thought it would be difficult to leave the community; still others were eager to move out if given the opportunity. Very few research participants had a determined dislike for the camp or wished to leave it without reservation. They were usually young women, who were often disturbed by the strong social control prevailing in the camp, or people who had moved into Al-Am'ari but remained distanced from its social life. It was more common to meet someone who felt a sense of attachment to the camp community, but wanted to improve his or her living conditions, particularly for the sake of providing children with a better environment for growth. Although a strong attachment to the camp was more pronounced among the middle-aged and older residents, many young people of both sexes also expressed a sense of belonging to the community. Even if younger people were generally more likely to consider moving out, many declared they would 'only sleep outside' but continue to live their lives in Al-Am'ari.

Those who declared their will to stay in Al-Am'ari often pointed to their sense of belonging, familiarity with the community or established social position. When I asked my 31-year-old interviewee—a father of three, who originally came from the village of Salama but has lived his entire life in Al-Am'ari—if he thought that he would move out of the camp one day, he replied:

- Interviewee: In the conditions we are living in? I don't think so. I don't think so. Israelis don't take any steps, [they are] not thinking about it. If we left Al-Am'ari, where would we go? [Would] we come back to our place [of origin]? Very hard, very hard.
- Interviewee's friend: But maybe if you had the money you would like to live in Umm ash-Sharāyit?
- Interviewee: No, the money will not be there.
- Me: But if there was such a possibility, would you like [to move]?
- Interviewee: No, I would not leave Al-Am'ari.
- Me: Why?
- Interviewee: I will tell you why... Al-Am'ari, I was born here, I organized my life here, my friends are here, all the associations I worked in when I was young. My life is settled. How should I tell you? A lot of people left Al-Am'ari, but now they just sleep outside there, but all their lives are here, they come to drink coffee [in the camp].
- Me: And why do you think that is?
- Interviewee: Belonging, that is it, belonging. It means in my life I got used to camp life, and that's it, the camp became my city, my village. And what is more, Al-Am'ari, it is all about coming back to our country. As long as we are living in the camps our cause will continue to be heard and seen. But if we went, went out of the camps, we would wipe out any rights for ourselves.

First, the interviewee is quite sceptical about his chances of moving outside the camp, either through exercising the right to return or buying an apartment outside. Even if given the chance to enjoy better living conditions in a nearby residential neighbourhood called Umm ash-Sharāyit, the interviewee thought that he would prefer to stay in Al-Am'ari, where he feels at home. He explains his feeling of belonging to the camp by reference both to his personal history there and to the site's symbolic and

political meaning; that is, of being ‘all about coming back’. Al-Am‘ari is at once his home and the symbolic representation of the home and country that his family lost in 1948. Here, the feeling of belonging to the camp is not seen to have developed at the cost of commitment to the place of origin, but is rather understood to form this commitment’s extension. The camp is thus what I call a mediating locality, namely a site defined through its symbolic and political connections to refugees’ pre-exilic locations.

Attachment to the camp is then seen to be a form of political statement, an expression of the commitment to the Palestinian refugee cause. In the words of the camp leader who moved out from Al-Am‘ari to live in a villa in the village of Jifna, but continues to spend the majority of his time in the camp as a director of Al-Am‘ari Youth Centre:

If I belong to the camp it means that... the camp is the symbol of refugeedom. If I wanted to develop a sense of belonging to—you saw my house—to Jifna for example, if I belonged to Jifna, if I belonged to this house, that would mean that I forgot [the refugee cause] because I live [a comfortable] life. But as long as I belong to the camp it means that I continue to cling to the political identity of it as a camp, [and to my] identity as a refugee.

For him, the camp is a political space, a space where the refugee identity is territorialized and fostered, unlike other places of residence in exile. Even though he moved out of Al-Am‘ari and lives a comfortable life in one of the Ramallah villages, he still feels that he is part of this political space through his continuous engagement in camp affairs and sense of belonging to the camp community. Being part of this political space is thus a way of retaining the refugee identity despite the passage of time and efforts to improve one’s living conditions in exile, whether by introducing infrastructural developments to the camp or by moving out of Al-Am‘ari.

Conclusions

In the course of exile and encampment, refugees who shared traumas of war and flight gradually developed common frameworks of remembering An-Nakba and their places of origin. These collectively shared

memories and perceptions strongly influenced the formation of a camp community. Efforts by refugees to make their camp space more familiar and retain continuity with their pre-exilic past involved reproduction of their social and physical worlds of origin in Al-Am'ari, including by maintaining local traditions, accents and cuisine. Research participants recognized, however, that a gradual integration and intermixing of the camp community have taken place, leading to a more hybrid locality for Al-Am'ari. While they emphasized the need to pass down the memories of An-Nakba and their place of origin to younger generations, many thought it to be an increasingly difficult task, with the older generations fading away and the tightening of the Israeli closure regime that denied the younger generations a more tangible relation with the lost lands. In this context, the camp became an important symbolic link between the geographies of origin and life in exile, the strength of which is seen to depend on the ability to preserve the character of Al-Am'ari as a distinct political space of refugeedom.

While the symbolic power of the refugee camp as a site of commemoration of the refugees' cause has been recognized by Al-Am'arians from the beginning, the production and understanding of its means of utterance changed over time. The understanding of what makes Al-Am'ari a refugee camp shifted from a focus on provisional appearance and poor living conditions to an emphasis on the very fact of refugees' presence at the site. This change gave more room to refugees' agency and made it possible to frame their steadfastness within the camp as an extension of their commitment to their place of origin. Defining the character of Al-Am'ari as a refugee camp by reference to its capacity to serve as a home to the refugee community also helped reconcile the necessity for infrastructural development and the will to improve living conditions with the determination to retain refugee rights and status. For the residents, it may also have been a means of defying the commonly held conception of the condition of protracted exile that assumes its gradual transformation into resettlement. Instead, retaining the character of Al-Am'ari as a refugee camp, and the refugee character of the camp community, allowed those generations born in exile to maintain a symbolic continuity in their identities by cultivating an attachment to their home-camp, where the post-memory of An-Nakba and places of origin is territorialized and fostered.

Al-Am‘arians’ narratives and practices demonstrate how complex spatial attachments are likely to be in the context of protracted exile and encampment. They also challenge the commonly used model of refugees’ integration, according to which refugees’ adaptation to life in exile necessarily occurs at the cost of attachment to the places of origin and commitment to reclaim them. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the camp may instead become a symbolic representation of refugees’ places of origin, a mediating locality, where the pre-exilic past is remembered and reproduced and where residents’ refugee identities are nurtured. In its capacity as a mediating locality, the camp resembles Foucault’s heterotopia: it is a place defined by its relations with other spaces, a place that represents different, and at times conflicting, political struggles and functions on different temporal registers. Spatially, the camp is constructed not only in relation to its inhabitants’ place of origin, but also through its exceptionality within the Palestinian national space. During more than six decades of exile, Al-Am‘ari has not become yet another urban neighborhood of Al-Bireh, but rather consolidated itself as a distinct local community of refugee character. It has developed into a political space, where the different Palestinian struggles—for independence, right to return or social revolution—are represented and contested. Finally, the temporal constitution of the camp has been heterochronic in the Foucauldian sense, stuck between temporariness and permanency, but nevertheless having the capacity to bridge the potentially irreconcilable temporal registers of nostalgia for a pre-exilic past, emplacement and steadfastness of the present and visions of liberation and return in the future.

Notes

1. An-Nakba (Arabic: catastrophe, disaster) is popularly used to designate the 1948 Arab defeat that resulted in the flight of approximately 780,000 Arab residents of Mandatory Palestine from the areas of the newly established state of Israel.
2. Source: *Al-Am‘ari Refugee Camp Profile*, UNRWA, Department of External Relations and Communications, 2009.

3. As noted by Shlaim (2009), what is commonly referred to as the first Arab–Israeli War or the 1948 Arab–Israeli War consisted of two distinctive phases. The first phase, lasting from the UN’s adoption of the resolution partitioning Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states to the termination of the British Mandate, involved the Arab and Jewish communities of Palestine (Shlaim 2009). The second phase began after the proclamation of the State of Israel, which met with opposition from many Arab states and led to a joint attack on the newly established state by Arab forces (Tessler 1994); this phase lasted until January 1949. In the course of both phases of the conflict, 418 Arab villages were destroyed and approximately 780,000 Arabs of Palestine displaced (Sharoni and Abu-Nimer 2008). According to UNRWA, at present approximately 5 million refugees are eligible for the Agency’s services, out of whom 1.5 million live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Lebanon. Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>, retrieved on 17 December 2014.
4. Pursuant to the Interim Agreement, signed in 1995 and known as Oslo II, the full responsibility of Palestinian civic institutions was ceded to the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Occupied Territories were divided into three respective zones—Areas A, B and C—that differed in regard to power-sharing arrangements between the PA and Israeli authorities on policing and security matters (Gordon 2008).
5. The recent history of the West Bank has been divided into seven distinct periods (Gordon 2008): Jordanian administration (1948–1967); the military government following Israeli occupation of the West Bank in the 1967 war (1967–1980); the shift towards Israeli civil administration of the Occupied Territories (1981–1987); the first *intifada* concluded by the signing of Oslo Accords (1988–1993); the Oslo years with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and division of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C (1994–2000); the second *intifada* (2000–2006); and the present (2006–).
6. Nowadays, a shared place of origin is not considered a condition to be met by a potential spouse, though because of the still prevailing practice of traditional marriage some percentage of marriages are contracted within the extended family, so that they could be counted as marriages within the community of shared origin.
7. The main variation reported by the Al-Am‘arians is between village and urban dialects, with one of the biggest differences being the realization of

the consonant phoneme ‘q’, which is preserved in rural dialects, whereas in urban ones it is pronounced as a glottal stop known as ‘hamza’ (see Shahin 2008).

8. *Thūb*—traditional Palestinian village dress adorned with locally specific embroidery.
9. *Uzī*—Arabic dish composed of rice, butter ghee, nuts and meat (often chicken).
10. The majority of my data on local traditions contemporarily cultivated in Al-Am‘ari comes from female interviewees, who were most knowledgeable about that matter. This likely results from gender divisions characteristic to the local community, where women generally play a leading role in organizing weddings, preparing food and practising related customs.
11. In order to protect the anonymity of research participants, all names appearing in the text are fictitious.
12. The inscription on the grave starts with a passage from sura Āl-‘Imrān, a passage that is usually put on the graves of people who died as martyrs (in the Palestinian context: from the hands of Israeli military or settlers), followed by information on the deceased boy. Starting from the top:

Al-Fatīḥa
 In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
 And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of God as dead.
 Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.
 God Almighty has spoken the truth.
 [Image of the Dome of the Rock]
 The heroic martyr
 Ahmad Abu Raddaha
 from Al-Ludd
 became a martyr on 17/07/2002 AD
 equivalent to the 8th of Jumādà Al-Ūlā 1423 AH
 born on 28/12/1995 AD
 May God bestow His mercy on him and make him live in His vastest
 paradise
13. All quotes translated from Arabic to English by the author.
14. *Zīnkū* (Arab.)—corrugated sheet.
15. In the Palestinian case, the other symbolic element of the refugees’ predicament was the UNRWA ration card and food assistance in general (Feldman 2008; Gambian 2012). During an interview with an UNRWA employee

in the regional Agency headquarters in Jerusalem, she emphasized the refugees' attachment to food rations as an important designator of refugee status, expressed for instance by their fierce opposition to UNRWA's decision to limit food assistance to special hardship cases.

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4

Ambivalent Sites of Memories: The Meaning of Family Homes for Transnational Families

Sanda Üllen

In the literature on migration and the transformations of home, meanings of ‘home’ are often linked to belonging and identity (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Armbruster 2002; Olwig 2005; Stefansson 2004). ‘Home’ is furthermore characterized as having a double dimension: first of all it is an actual, concrete place of lived experiences, but it is also a ‘metaphorical space of personal attachment’ (Armbruster 2002, 20), a ‘mythic place of desire’ (Brah 1996, 192) or, as I was told during my fieldwork: ‘It is a place where one makes one’s memories and can be private.’ However, home may also be a place that no longer belongs to us or to which we cannot return (Abu-Lughod and Sa’adi 2007; Massey 1992, 14). During the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter referred to as ‘Bosnia’), almost 2.2 million people had to flee their homes, some of them moving to other parts of Bosnia, others abroad. After the end of the war and the implementation of the Dayton Agreement,¹ all refugees were given the right to return. Yet, as other studies have also shown, for many

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people permanent return to Bosnia was not possible, as homecoming 'is not merely the physical journey back to familiar sociocultural habitat of the homeland' (Stefansson 2004, 69). Instead, while many reclaimed their house, they remained in their countries of exile, thus revealing the open-ended character of return projects (Eastmond 2006).

This chapter explores the meaning of houses for former Bosnian refugees as sites of memories. Referring to Bachelard and his notion that the house is the 'topography of our intimate being', Carsten and Hugh-Jones argue that the house plays a central role in the social life of people, sharing a 'common life history' with those who constructed it (Bachelard 1964, xxxi, quoted in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995, 3). Morton further emphasizes the role of the house as a 'container of both families and memories' (2007, 159), whereas Bahloul speaks of houses as 'inhabited' by memories, where 'remembrance is moulded into the material and physical structures of the domestic space' (1996, 29). Memories themselves, as in current scholarship, are perceived as a discursive and narrative construction that integrates past, present and future and, in doing so, help to shape personal and group identities (Climo and Cattell 2002). Consequently, memory is not simply a matter of recalling past experiences. Rather, it is 'a complex and continuing process of selection, negotiation, and struggle over what will be remembered and what forgotten' (Natzmer 2002, 164). In this context, it becomes obvious that space and place as 'sites of memories' play a significant role in understanding which memories are kept in place and how, how memories are made visible through places, and which meaning is ascribed to those places that hold memories.

In addition to other anthropological studies in the Balkans, which concentrated on landscape and memory and their role in national identity and collective memory (Ballinger 2003; Halilovich 2013; Schäuble 2011), this chapter focuses on the house as a private memory site, where the past is negotiated within the family. As Frances Pine shows in her work on kinship, memory and place in Poland, places and spaces are inscribed with memories, which are always complex, as they mix up different layers (national, individual and family memories), but are also dependent on the age and gender of those involved (Pine 2007). For Abu-Lughod, the family home is not simply a site of memory, but in some cases also a symbol of all that has been lost or a site of longing

to which people cannot or do not aspire to return (Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi 2007, 13).

Through ethnographic work with one transnational family, this chapter will explore the role of the family house in memory work. Transnational families are described as those living simultaneously in two or more different states, but who maintain familial links across national borders (Al-Ali 2002; Fahy Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Studying transnational families helps in going beyond the picture of migration as a 'one-way movement'. It also helps in understanding the ambiguous attitude that people may have towards places and thus challenges sedentarist approaches, which emphasize the natural link between people and place (Jansen and Löfving 2008; Malkki 1992). When considering multiple and ambiguous attachments to places, the interesting question is: What role does the existing house play in the migration process? What happens to the house after the family members leave? Why do the family keep the house and not want to sell it? What stories does the house tell? How is it perceived as a site of memory and by whom?

The family was chosen as a unit of analysis because it can be seen as an interface and intermediary between personal and collective memory and as a social framework within which memory is communicated (Boesen 2012; Halbwachs 1992). Pine suggests adding family memories, 'which pass from generation to generation, changing over time but maintaining a continuous sense of who "we", as opposed to other families, were and are', as a further type of remembering (2007, 123). She also emphasizes that the different types of remembering should not be analysed separately, but that we should look at how those layers of memories interact in everyday life, and how they (re)form each other (Pine 2007). Within families, memories thus can serve as a source of negotiation and conflict. In a post-conflict and forced migration context in particular, they have a strong emotional dynamic (Svašek 2005) where they are open to revision (Argenti and Schramm 2012) and leave space for counter-narratives. Adding the transnational perspective to the analysis of memory and family can offer important insights into how family members keep and exchange memories over distance, how and which memories 'move' with the people and why. Through the ethnographic examples collected during fieldwork in north Bosnia and Denmark between 2010 and 2015, I argue that the family house can be seen as a site of memory characterized

by multiple layers of ambivalences. Instead of being a place to which one belongs, home has lost its territoriality (Armbruster 2008; Üllen 2006) and, especially when analysed within transnational families, the family home challenges the sedentarist approach of essentialized links between identity and place of origin (Eastmond 2006; Jansen 2008; Stefansson 2004).

Living Here and There: The Transnational Family in Context

According to the UNHCR, the local Muslim population in the region of Banja Luka has decreased by some 90 %, while the local Croat population has shrunk by some 85 % since the beginning of the war in 1992 (Galijaš 2011). Zijad, his wife Samira, their two children and Samira's sister, brother and mother left Gradiška, a city in the Banja Luka district, lying on the Bosnian–Croatian border, in November 1992, at first without even knowing where to go. After six days of travelling through Croatia, Hungary and Poland, they arrived in Denmark, where they were granted temporary protection, as Bosnian refugees were not recognized as such according to the Geneva Convention (Kjær 2000). Zijad's mother and father fled to Croatia, where they stayed until the end of the war, when they joined him in Denmark. For the first three years Zijad, his wife and their two children lived in a refugee camp, all four in one room. However, as Zijad recalled, 'the situation was that you hoped to get a room with electricity, where you can go to bed and sleep without fear that somebody would come into your house and kill you and your family'. What was most important at the beginning was to be safe. After they were granted asylum in 1995, they moved to their own flat, the children went to school, Zijad started working and Samira enrolled at the university.

Today, Zijad and his wife live in a rented flat in Copenhagen. He works as an electrician, his former profession in Bosnia. Before the war, Samira worked as a tailor in her parents' tailoring business. After gaining asylum status and learning Danish, she started studying special needs

pedagogy and today she works at different schools as a consultant in the field of integration. She describes her work as challenging but fulfilling, as her experience as a former refugee and migrant in Denmark provides her with knowledge and empathy. Damir, Samira and Zijad's son, is 30 years old and came to Denmark at the age of 7. His sister Amira is three years younger. Both are married and live with their spouses in the suburbs of Copenhagen. Damir studied engineering and has been working for an information technology (IT) company for several years. He met his wife, a dentist from Bosnia living in Århus, four years ago through a Bosnian–Danish internet platform. In 2013, they celebrated their wedding in Bosnia. Two years later, they both moved to the suburbs of Copenhagen, where they bought a house with financial help from their parents. Amira and her Danish husband married in 2014 in Copenhagen. They have a 1-year-old daughter and have bought a house in a suburb of Copenhagen. Before investing in property in Denmark, Damir and Amira visited Bosnia almost every year during the summer months, together with their parents. Nowadays, they cannot afford to travel so often and also their desire to visit their parents' house has decreased as they have grown older. Their parents continue to travel to Bosnia every year. They are both thinking about spending more time in Bosnia once they are retired; meanwhile, they visit their city of origin once or twice per year. All of the family members have dual citizenship, although not all of them have a Bosnian passport. Zijad and Samira did not want to give up Bosnian citizenship, because of its emotional value, but also because it is important when it comes to questions of property and land ownership.

Visiting One's Own House or the Ambivalence of 'Return'

Zijad and Samira's first trip to former Yugoslavia was in 1996, when they visited Zijad's parents in Croatia; however, they did not go to Gradiška because the bridge over the river Sava had not been rebuilt since its destruction during the war. The Sava river forms a natural border between Croatia and Bosnia, and as Gradiška is situated right on it, they went

swimming in the river on the Croatian side and were able to explain to the children what was on the other side. They visited Bosnia for the first time in 1998, staying at a relative's house. As Samira and Zijad's own house had been bombed at the beginning of the war and Samira's mother's house was occupied by a Serbian family, coming to Bosnia literally meant 'visiting your own house'.

Samira first visited her mother's house with her mother and recalled, while shaking her head, 'It was horrible.' She remembers coming into the yard and seeing the yellow, cottage-style house where she grew up and the neglected backyard. The woman living in the house called them in and offered them a coffee. Samira recalls the situation: 'She served us coffee in our own coffee cups, sitting on our own sofa, we were treated as guests! My mother asked if she could look around, she asked for permission in her own house. But the woman was kind.' In other situations people were not allowed to visit their houses or yards, so they were grateful to be given permission to go inside. However, after Samira's mother mentioned that she wanted to get her house back, the atmosphere grew tense. The Serbian family were reluctant to leave the house, as they themselves had had to flee south Bosnia. For this family, return to the city, which was now part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and where they now were part of the ethnic minority, was not an option.

Reclaiming the property turned out to be a long and expensive procedure, lasting for several years, even though according to Annex 7 of the Dayton Agreement everybody expelled from their home had the right to return. After four years the family retrieved their property. Instead of feeling relieved and happy, they were plagued by fear and insecurity from the beginning. First, the Serbian family organized a demonstration in front of the house, gathering their friends and protesting against the move. Then, they emptied the house, taking everything they could when they left. Finally, for Samira's family the feeling of being a guest in their own house did not disappear.

Researchers working with Bosnian refugees have already problematized persisting conceptualizations of 'return' as 'permanent and place-bound' (Eastmond 2006, 144; see also Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Jansen 2008; Stefansson 2004). In the transnational context in particular, research-

ers point out the ambiguities in negotiating the meaning of ‘home’ and challenge the sedentarist perception of territorialized home and belonging (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Armbruster 2002; Eastmond 2006; Jansen 2008). Although many describe people’s strong wish to ‘return back home’, ‘return’ is being reconceptualized as ‘an open-ended process’, including movements between the country of exile and Bosnia as well as ‘periods of dual residence’ (Eastmond 2006, 144). Asked if they could imagine a return to Gradiška, both Zijad and Samira are hesitant and reveal contradictory feelings. Samira’s goal is to keep living in the village and her husband was even offered a job there two years ago, but nevertheless return—as conceptualized by the Dayton Agreement—is not an option for them. Samira expresses her ambiguity towards ‘return’:

You can’t return to a place where you don’t have even a slight feeling of belonging. Everything has changed a lot here; the people have changed; we have changed. This is not the place we left, absolutely not. When we left, we had so many friends, neighbours here. We were like one soul. Now this doesn’t exist any more.

Notwithstanding the demographic changes, they continue visiting Samira’s mother’s house, and investing much effort and money into it. The wish is, once retired, to spend the summer months in Bosnia and the rest of the year in Denmark, as some other elderly people already do. Thus, they always pass all their holidays spending time in their home city, and they prefer to go to Bosnia during July for two reasons: on the one hand, owing to the timing of the school holidays; and on the other, during the summer months other people who were expelled are also there. As Zijad says:

When I come in July, almost everybody else also comes, we meet, we talk, go drink a coffee. We talk a lot, exchange information, renew our contacts and so on. That is the reason why I come here in July, because I see people I haven’t seen for a long time. Old neighbours get together and it’s a bit like life before the war. After August, nobody’s there any more. Once I was here in December and I saw almost no one! The only Serb I saw was not even a local Serb!

In describing his reasons for coming to Gradiška in July, Zijad makes strong reference to the present demographic situation in the city and remembers how it was ‘before the war’. As Jansen and Löfving (2008) indicate, those who fled their homes in violent circumstances left home not only in space, but also in time. Thus, ‘return’ is not an option for Samira and Zijad because, as already noted, the demographic constitution has changed, but also because of the overall devastating economic situation in Bosnia. For Samira, Bosnia is no longer her home:

I feel more at home in Denmark, because my children are there. Home means feeling fulfilled, and this is where my family is. When my children and my family are here in Bosnia, I also have this feeling, but when I’m alone in this house then I don’t have this feeling of being fulfilled, that satisfaction; here are no people here and I thus don’t have the feeling that this is my home, something which is warm, pleasant.

For Samira, the house is important as it reminds her of her parents and her childhood, but she no longer considers it home. Nevertheless, she does not deny that she has some feelings of belonging in her city of origin, as she emphasizes the importance of the family house for the history of her family and her identity. However, her feelings of belonging go beyond this: it is also the family who constitute this feeling of belonging and being at home (see also Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004). This accords with the observation made by Jansen and Löfving that ‘home emerges through political and social histories of inclusion and exclusion’, which is not only framed by place, but also by people ‘through whom we “feel-at-home”’ (Jansen and Löfving 2008, 7). The sedentarist approach, which suggests that people feel most happy when they are in the place where they were born, can be challenged through the analysis of Samira’s narrative. Her attitude towards the house and the place where she was born is characterized by ambivalence. Although she emphasizes that ‘this is the place where I have my history’, she rejects the idea of having a single-sited, rooted identity: ‘My roots link me to this, if you can say it like this. Although it’s not the roots; I have roots in Denmark as well. It is the history which links me to this, the history of my family.’ That is the reason why she does not sell the house and keeps going there every year.

The Ambivalence of the Family House: Between Joy and Sadness

When approaching Samira's house, one can see the walnut trees that form a natural fence towards the street. Once in the yard, if one turns to the left one can see what used to be a cornfield, but now serves as a children's playground. On the right, just in front of the house, there are three big spruces, planted by Samira's parents, one at the birth of each of their children. Behind the spruces is the yellow, cottage-style house, built by Samira's parents in the 1960s. In front of the house there is the yard, and Samira loves to sit there, under the Čingilingi—her favourite place (Fig. 4.1). The Čingilingi is a fictitious name for a roofed lounge created by her mother, so that one can sit outside even if it rains.

One day, when Samira and I were sitting outside, a white car with Czech number plates pulled up. When she saw the car, Samira cried out and stood up, smiling: these were relatives living in Prague who had also come to Bosnia for few days. After exchanging hugs, kisses and the obligatory 'welcome questions'—'When did you arrive?' 'How long are you



Fig. 4.1 Outside view of the house, including the yard and the Čingilingi, located behind the spruce on the left. Photograph taken by the author, 2016

staying?’—Bosnian coffee was served under the Čingilingi. Sitting next to each other, their husbands on the other side of the table, Samira and Aida first talked about their families, their health and the good weather this summer. The atmosphere was relaxed, when suddenly Samira asked: ‘Why do we do this? Why do we come here every summer and invest our time and money here?’ Aida looked at her, then she gestured towards the house and the yard: ‘It is because we live our memories. You know our parents built those houses, we spent our childhood here, your parents planted these trees for you. How could we give this up?’ Samira looked at her and the house and agreed:

Yes, you are right. It does cost a lot of time and money, but I could never sell this house. I don’t want to sell my memories. I’d only sell it if somebody’s health depended on it.

Through this episode the function of family reunions as ‘mnemonic stimuli’ (Bahloul 1996, 3) can be observed, where mere presence and conversations in the courtyard stimulate remembering. The trees, the yard and the house figure as a material link to absent persons and past events (Morton 2007).

On another occasion, Samira told me that the reason she invests so much effort and time into the house is that she feels that her family are part of the place. They have been there for several decades and she does not want this history to end. Selling the house would also mean that those who expelled them would have won. This indicates that their own life history is strongly connected to the house and the yard. Samira uses the house and the image of it to construct the narrative of her family and herself (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004; Pine 2007). At the same time the house has a meaning as a symbol of resistance: it reminds her family, as well as the neighbourhood, that they defied the expulsion and are still there.

After the coffee had been drunk, Samira invited Aida and her husband to come back for lunch in the afternoon. When they left, we started thinking about what to cook and Samira suggested making *sataras*, a stew made of vegetables served with rice, and a roast chicken. She then went to a neighbour who had a vegetable garden and she picked some eggplants,

green and red peppers and onions. She gave me the vegetables and told me to cut them the way I do it. I had started cutting the green pepper when Samira stopped me: 'No, you have to make narrow slices; that's the way my mum did it and I always want to make it like she does.' Remembering her mother was transformed into the action of cutting the vegetables in the 'right way'. For her, standing in her mother's kitchen and cooking like she did is almost a form of ritual aimed at rebuilding the imagination of the pre-war home. Since her mother passed away, Samira has felt a strong need to adapt to her role, making the house a place to make and remake kinship (Pine 2007). This is also expressed through her wish to bind her children to the place.

Samira also invited her mother-in-law, Ajša, to come for lunch. As noted earlier, during the war Ajša and her husband lived in Croatia, and then moved to Copenhagen, where she has lived alone now since her husband died in 2010. Every summer she spends a few months in Bosnia in her house in the town and then returns to Denmark over the winter. When the food was brought to the table, everybody first praised how good it looked. Shortly after we started eating, Samira said: 'Is it just me or do the potatoes taste better here?' Almost everybody at the table agreed, adding other examples of food that has a 'better taste' in Bosnia, such as eggs, beans or maize meal. For this reason, when travelling back to Copenhagen by bus, Ajša always takes with her bags of food ordered by the family. As Werbner points out: 'It is this traffic in objects [which] creates an illusion of spatial contiguity, a lack of spatial separation' (1999, 26). People use nostalgia not only to grieve for past things, but also to compare the past with the present and to criticize it (Angé and Berliner 2014; Haukanes and Trnka 2013; Palmberger 2008). Thus most of the time, people talk about pleasant things, and war is not mentioned at family gatherings. As expressed in interviews, one reason is that they do not want to remember bad and traumatic experiences. The other reason is that talking about the war can cause tensions within families, especially between those who fled and those who stayed behind, as Stefansson showed in his study on Bosnian families in Banja Luka (2010).

This does not mean that war is never mentioned at all. In Bosnia as well as in Denmark, there are objects, such as photos, ruins and graveyards, that may remind people of the period. However, talking about it happens

on a more abstract or generalized level, as the following episode will show. As already noted, Zijad and Samira live in Copenhagen. All other family members—Samira's older sister Nasiha and her younger brother Amer, as well as Zijad's mother—live nearby and they meet almost every Sunday for lunch or a coffee. During one family lunch in Copenhagen at Nasiha's apartment, I saw a photo of a newspaper article in the dining room. It showed the whole family shortly after their arrival in Denmark and in the article their situation as refugees was explained. Because of its very prominent position in the dining room, I asked how they felt when they looked at it. Amer, Samira's and Nasiha's younger brother, looked at it, thought a little and then said: 'Success. I think about our success and how we made it here.' The others only nodded. 'But', I insisted, confused, 'do you talk about how you felt when you came to Denmark, how the journey was?' Samira hurriedly answered, 'Yes, we have talked about it with our children.' Amer interrupted her, saying, 'Yes, we talked about the flight, about the war, and all the facts, but we actually never have talked about how we felt.' Pointing at Samira he added, 'I don't know how you and your children felt when you came here, because we have never talked about it.' The short moment of silence that followed was interrupted by Nasiha bringing in the dessert. After that, the issue was not mentioned again.

Almost as a rule during my fieldwork, mentioning the war elicited a distant and generalized response, something that did not change during the stay in Bosnia. Yet even without talking about it, the war remained present, as in Carol Kindron's study of Holocaust survivors and their descendants (Kidron 2009). Kidron strongly criticizes the widespread pathologization of silence after traumatic experiences. She found that although there was no explicit verbal mention of the Holocaust, the latter was still very present in all the households she researched. Knowledge about it was transmitted through gestures and objects, or the descendants used different sources of information and media to learn about their parents' history (Kidron 2009). As seen earlier, Samira does not like to talk about the war; she does not want to remember painful situations, such as when she and her children were threatened and she did not know whether they would survive. In this context the family house reveals another ambivalence: the mere fact that they visit their own house and

meet relatives there who live dispersed all over the world reminds them of the reason why they live somewhere else. Furthermore, the house and the yard in Bosnia express the story of the war in its own way: through traces and missing objects.

The Ambivalence of Lost Objects and Traces: The Family House between Renovation and Musealization

Almost every time I sat with Samira in her courtyard, under a walnut tree and drinking Bosnian coffee, she looked at her mother's house, the courtyard, another house at the back of the courtyard that they started building before the war and is still unfinished, and sighed:

On the day I've left the town, I swore I would never bring my children back to this place. You see, I forget that, but you have to recall that again. Every fifty years, there was a war here. My parents were refugees from western Bosnia; they just started their life and they had to leave. Me and my family have just built our house and had to leave.

At the same time, she invests a great deal of effort and money in restoring the house, sometimes in discussion with her husband. 'For whom?' she asked herself. 'I don't know, for the children, maybe' is her often-expressed desire. Samira has a strong wish to bind the children to the house and, through it, to retell the story of the family. According to Parkin, the question of 'how to tell the story of oneself' is not something that becomes evident only after flight and resettlement, it starts at the moment of departure, 'when decisions have to be made about where to go, what to take and what to leave behind' (1999, 308). Samira and her husband left Bosnia in November 1992. As they were convinced that the war would not last for long, they took only a few basic things with them: their passports, the money they had, some clothes, some toys the children loved to play with, two blankets and some children's books written in Cyrillic letters. She still has the books and points out the paradox that 'today, my children cannot read the books, because they don't know

Cyrillic, but back then, we didn't even think about it. We just wanted to have some books for the kids.' Today, Samira uses these books to 're-articulate the socio-cultural identity' (Parkin 1999, 314) as a 'Bosnian before the war'. Besides, they are used as nostalgic reminders of the peaceful pre-war times in contrast to the present-day situation in Bosnia.²

Believing that the war would stop soon, the family had left almost all their possessions in the house. As already noted, during the war Samira's mother's house was occupied by a Serbian refugee family from South Bosnia, and regaining the property was a long and difficult procedure. When the Serbian family left the house, they took everything with them, leaving nothing behind but traces. One of those traces is a piggery and the smokehouse in the unfinished house. Before the war, the house was intended to be a home for the youngest of the family, the son Amer. Today, traces of smoke are still visible where the Serbian family had their smokehouse. Other traces are the missing trees. Before the war, Samira's parents had a fruit orchard with mainly plum and apple trees behind the house and Samira used to play there with her brother and sister. All but two of the apple trees were either cut down during the war by the Serbian family for heating or had to be removed after the war because of disease. Today, on one of the apple trees a rocking chair hangs. It is used when Samira's and Nasiha's grandchildren are there.

In her work on Turkish Cypriots who appropriated houses, land and objects from Greek Cypriots during the war in 1974, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009) suggests studying spaces and the non-human environment in order to understand what sort of affect is exuded by spaces abandoned by another community and how people perceive them. In Navaro-Yashin's case, objects have been left behind that remind the newcomers of another community. In the Bosnian case, almost no objects were left behind—the houses were empty and in many cases derelict when the families got them back. There were no concrete things that embodied the 'other'; rather, it was the absence of their own as well as foreign objects, the changed environment and the traces within, that recalled the 'other' and the fact that somebody else had been living in the house for years. The affects generated by remembering that the other family had lived in the house are manifold: there is often pain combined with rejection and confusion.

Samira cannot understand how the Serbian family could take everything with them—all Samira’s family’s private belongings, such as photographs and videos. She also often recalls how painful it was for her mother and her to come to the house for the first time and be greeted as guests ‘in our own house!’ The recollection of how the Serbian family acted then is used to construct a boundary, a moralizing difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’: ‘I never would have been able to live with other people’s things or to steal.’ On the other hand, getting the house back and being able to visit it once a year are also perceived as a form of resistance. Moreover, the house is a place of joy, where for one month the yard gate is open and one can meet friends and relatives, and a place where ‘life resembles that before the war’, as expressed by Zijad. ‘Living in the past’ during these three or four weeks in Bosnia, according to Samira’s son Damir, seems to be a strategy for overcoming the frictions in time and space caused by the war and the forced mobility of people.

Miller calls objects in the home ‘mementoes and reminders of the past’ through which people can actively manage their ‘externalized memory’ by deciding what can be thrown away and what not (Miller 2001, 8). Because she had been deprived of this active management during the war, Samira now tries to rebuild the house of her childhood. This is a difficult and contested task, as she cannot replace objects and furniture that are no longer there. The only things that she, her sister and her brother found when they were cleaning the house were some clothes, the plate with the house number on it and a small billboard advertising their parents’ tailoring business. These objects were brought to Denmark and Amer has placed the plate and the billboard just beside his piano, which is his workplace. Samira has kept all of her mother’s dresses she found, because ‘then I have her smell and can go through my memories’. In Denmark, the objects function as ‘ancestral memorials’, constructing a feeling of continuity between generations (Parkin 1999, 318). Even if the objects have moved in relation to the place, they represent stability and connectedness to the ‘original’ place through their mnemonic function (Marcoux 2001).

Other things used by the Serbian family were replaced, such as the kitchen or the bathroom. On the one hand the original things were old

and needed renovation, but on the other these new objects were associated with the Serbian family and were therefore discarded. As she explains during a walk through the yard, for Samira, looking after the house means active memory work. She shows me the concrete bases surrounding the house and the moss, which can be seen in different areas. Every summer she tries to clean these concrete bases, although it seems to be a Sisyphean task:

People look at me as if I am a complete idiot, but, for me, this is a way of keeping the memories alive, because I know how my father built these concrete bases, how everything was done, and now should I let the moss to destroy it all, let it disappear? Not me!

According to Morton, houses also 'represent the social obligations of memory, since neglect is a conspicuous dishonouring of memory and renewal is an actively respectful aspect of memory-work' (2007, 173). For Samira, keeping the house clean and proper also means keeping the memories of her parents alive. The effort she invests in the house, in trying to make it look like it was during her childhood, also contains an essence of loss and time gone by. At the same time, many things that Samira brings into the house are from Denmark, because she likes Danish design and finds it functional. In this case, mobile objects highlight further ambivalences, namely that between the pre-war and the post-war house, or between trying to restore the family house as it was before and trying to adapt it to the present. Although Samira stresses that when she is in Denmark, Bosnia does not play a role in her life, when entering her apartment in Copenhagen it is hard to ignore the items brought from Bosnia. Besides personal objects, such as photos, there are carpets and side tables from Bosnia combined with Danish furniture. The same is true when entering the house in Bosnia. On the one hand, these mobile objects create a certain kind of continuity and bring together the two countries in which she now lives. On the other hand, the mobile objects in some situations may aggravate a feeling of discontinuity, of being an 'eternal traveller' as Samira expresses it, one who lives neither here nor there.

The Ambivalence of Generations

How are social and material transitions negotiated among generations through the medium of the house? What happens to houses over generations? After their mother passed away, Amer, the only son of the family, inherited the house, but on his wish his two sisters were also entered on the land register as owners. After a few years Amer and Nasiha decided to sell their shares of the house to Samira, as the financial burden of keeping the house in Bosnia and maintaining households in Denmark was too much for them. At first this was a shock for Samira, until she realized that signing the house over to her did not mean that Amer and Nasiha were cutting their ties with Bosnia. Amer still owns the corner field in front of the house and Nasiha owns the unfinished house in the backyard. Thus they still come to Bosnia and stay in the house and are also involved in all decision-making processes concerning the renovation of the house.

For Samira, it is obvious that her children are going to inherit the house, a fact that is very important to her:

I actively work to bind my children to this place. That is why we brought them here every year: now they also have their own memories of this place. Both of them are already very much bound to this place and it is important that the history of our family continues here.

Samira's strong desire to bind her children to the house is not uncontested or free of contradiction. As mentioned earlier, she is aware of the fact that her children do not want to return to Bosnia, and neither does she want them to: both of her children, Damir and Almira, are married and each bought a house in the suburbs of Copenhagen with their parents' help.

These days Damir and Amira come to Bosnia every two to three years, as they like to travel abroad during their time off. Damir enjoys staying in Bosnia, because for him it is like being on holiday: he can break out of his daily routine and relax. At the same time he complains about boredom, because all they do is 'sit around all day and do nothing'. However, Damir does not feel the same way about the house as his mother does; he is ambivalent: 'it is very difficult for me, because it is nice there and it makes my parents happy. But I'm not as bound to it as they are, that's

clear. I'm more attached to Denmark.' While being aware of the fact that his mother wants him to continue taking care of the house, he seems reluctant to think about inheriting it because this reminds him of his parents' mortality. To a large extent the house indicates uncertainty and ambivalence within the family, as nobody really knows what is going to happen to it in the future.

When in Bosnia, Damir and Almira are affected by the stories they hear about life before the war. According to Damir, family gatherings in Denmark differ from those in Bosnia. The family meet regularly in both places, but in Denmark they discuss everyday issues, such as work, the children, their plans for the future and so on, while in Bosnia:

They constantly talk about the past. How it was before the war. I have the feeling that when here they somehow get stuck in 1992... as if life had not moved on; they stay caught in the remembrance of how it was before; that is my feeling.

Damir's uncle Amer in particular likes to retell stories of his childhood when in Bosnia. He runs to the balcony, showing how he and his sisters jumped from it with an umbrella in their hands. Or he recalls how he and Samira followed Nasiha when she went on her first date and had to hide behind the trees. Samira also states that when in Denmark she and her husband do not talk about their childhood memories with their children, but in Bosnia this happens automatically, because, as she says, 'when you see the place, you remember'. Being there, sitting in the yard or in the house, triggers memories of past experiences.

Furthermore, because Damir and his sister do not have similar memories of this place, Damir does not feel such a strong emotional connection to it. This can be characterized as a 'generational difference' that Abu-Lughod and Sa'adi describe in the case of Palestine as an 'unbridgeable gap between two qualitatively different periods: pre- and post-Nakba' (2007, 19). Also in the Bosnian case, parents and relatives constantly talk about the pre-war house in order to transfer their memories to the next generation, to let them know where their parents come from and how they lived before the war. Marianne Hirsch uses the concept of 'postmemory' to describe the transmission of memories to the next generation, as an

‘experience of having one’s everyday reality overshadowed by the memory of a much more significant past that one’s parents lived through’ (2012, 22–24). Postmemory reflects people’s positionality towards the past, the way they oscillate between continuity and friction (Hirsch 2008). For Damir and Almira’s parents, the past has not passed yet. As Abu-Lughod describes for Palestinians, the mere fact that people are not able to restore their pre-war lives and live with its consequences (such as the impossibility of return) indicates that the past is still present. During their visits to Bosnia, Damir and Almira’s parents create imaginations of an idealized past, a past their children cannot share with them, but are influenced by. The question of what happens to the house over generations remains an ambivalent and contested one.

Conclusions

As memories are linked to many mnemonic practices including objects, language, bodily practices and place (Climo and Cattell 2002), this chapter discussed the meaning of the family house as a site of memories for one transnational family. Speaking with Morton, ‘houses have particular connections with the way people locate memories, activate them, and make them meaningful’ (2007, 177). I have argued that it is precisely the memories and the wish ‘not to lose one’s own history and the history of the family’ that motivate Samira not to sell the house and to continue visiting it on regular basis. Yet, as shown, the visits to Bosnia are not free of ambivalences and uncertainties. First of all, Samira and Zijad do not conceptualize their visits to Bosnia as ‘return’. As Jansen (2008) has argued, ‘homecoming’ is not just about returning to the physical space; it is also a search for a ‘cool ground’, a place where one feels safe and accepted. For Samira and Zijad, returning to Bosnia permanently is not an option. The reasons include the emotional experience of war, the changed demographic and the poor economic situation. Another reason is that their children and siblings live in Denmark and have no aspirations to return to Bosnia. Samira’s perception of ‘home’ has also changed across the years, emphasizing that the place in Bosnia is no longer her ‘home’, because the people who inhabited this ‘home’ are no longer there. At the

same time, this attitude is contested and contradicted by her wish to bind her children to the house. In this context, the house is an expression of the interconnectedness of past and future in the present. Through practices like taking care of the concrete bases that her father built or cooking like her mother did, Samira actively embodies and keeps the memories and the history of her family alive in order to 'encode continuity between and across generations' (Parkin 1999, 318). As her children are not as attached to the place as she is and do not have the same memories of it, they are faced with difficulties when thinking about the future of the house.

In Denmark, Bosnia is present through objects, food, music and language. Although the objects function as 'mnemonic stimuli' (Bahloul 1996, 3) and as links establishing a feeling of continuity and connectedness between the two countries, talking about the past does not dominate life in Denmark. When the family members meet, they mostly talk about their everyday life in Denmark. This changes when in Bosnia. There, the house and the yard function as mnemonic triggers and evoke childhood and pre-war times. These are the memories articulated and shared with the children. Talking about the war is consciously silenced. However, as Navaro-Yashin (2009) emphasizes, certain affects are projected onto the ruins by people who make them or live in their midst and ruins also exude their own affects. As described earlier, some traces, such as the black traces from the former smokehouse, are still there, reminding Samira and her family of the fact that, for some years, another family lived there and they themselves were expelled. Thus, although a place where the family meet and reject memories of the violence, the house and the yard recall the expulsion and affects of loss and discontinuity.

Analysing the family house as an active agent in people's lives forces us to look more closely at the role the house plays in people's strategies of (re)making 'homes' in changed political contexts. Through conceptualizing the family house as a 'site of memory' in a transnational context, we can get a more balanced understanding of why houses are sustained and not given up, which meanings they have and the roles they play within different generations.

Notes

1. After the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, the country was divided into two entities and one special district (Brcko). The entities are the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51 % of the territory) and the Serbian Republic (49 % of the territory).
2. Before the war, both alphabets were common in schools: during one week the Latin and during the other the Cyrillic alphabet was used.

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Part II

Mediating Memories on the Move

5

Memory in Motion: Photographs in Suitcases

Natalia Alonso Rey

In this chapter¹ the relationship between memory and mobility is explored by discussing the role of photographs in the case of four Uruguayan female migrants living in Catalonia, Spain. By exploring the selection, transportation and placement of photographs carried on their first migratory trip, I analyse how these women—together with their photographs—strive to maintain individual and family memories in a context where their free movement is constrained and can be seen as a possible impediment to biographical continuity.

Objects confront us, among other things, with the question of time: they can outlive us, which implies that they may have been received by our ancestors or will be conserved and passed on to younger generations. They shape memory and help to give content to memories, as they connect us with the past as well as with the present and the future. Emotional engagement with photographs and their capacity to refer to people, places and memories assume crucial roles in the process of migration.

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Discussing the role of photographs in migration helps to provide insight into the roles that stability and mobility play in memory building.

I concentrate on women, although I encountered both men and women from Uruguay during my fieldwork, in which I dealt with objects in a broader sense than is addressed here. Photographs were more strongly emphasized by women. Not only had women taken more photographs and referred to them more frequently than men, but also their content differed: while men usually carried photographs that depicted themselves and others (family members and friends), women also carried photographs that belonged to ancestors, from times when they were not yet born, suggesting a more direct intention to secure family memories and trace their genealogy and heritage (Ortiz García 2005, 195). They seemed to be complying with a gendered role as curators of family memories (see for instance Ortiz García 2005; Rose 2003, 2010), a socially expected role of caring for family, maintaining family bonds and preserving family memories. Their narration and photographs clearly express a will to maintain personal and family memory across time and space, as well as feelings of belonging, and point to how memory comes to the fore in migration and can be dealt with beyond borders. Their choice therefore included not only moments of their own lives, but moments of older family members; in other words, not only 'lived and experienced memories' but collages of narratives of 'others' (Tolia-Kelly 2004, 321).

I argue that the photographs are key allies in memory work that started before the actual migratory trip: choosing photographs to carry is to ensure the possibility of remembering in the future (see Marcoux 2001). Mobility triggers memory work and can be affirmed to be constitutive of memory. Memories extend beyond national borders and defy a mobility regime perceived as a menace to the continuity of memories. Emotional bonds between photographs and subjects are key aspects to understanding how photographs configure narratives and participate in creating a sense of belonging and of place in destination, interweaving bonds that extend transnationally.

Photographs in Suitcases

The investigation of the relationship between memory and migration requires the integration of mobility into a field that has long been associated with ideas of stability and fixity and discussed within national

contexts. This integration can help to gain insight into the manner of remembering as well as the content of memories (Creet in Creet and Kitzmann 2011, see also Burrell and Panayi 2006), as well as helping to conceptualize temporality and spaciality in connection to memory (see also the Introduction to this volume). This chapter focuses on the role that objects play in building individual and family memories. In particular, it explores how the moment of migration can precipitate memory work, when the imminence of loss and distance makes objects—such as photographs—important allies to knit together places, people and events in order to preserve continuity and deal with loss and discontinuities.

The objects on which I focus are primarily photographs carried in the course of the first migratory journey. Insight into this particular moment of selection of photographs and memories allows an engagement with the issue of temporality, as it implies not only the question of remembering the past, but also anticipating what is to come, what will be remembered in the future and how. It is the moment of packing a ‘suitcase’, with all its connections to memory, identities, feelings of loss and anticipation. Suitcases’ journeys ‘facilitate and contain the emotional work of migration and transnationalism’, according to Burrell (2008a, 367). Following the trajectory of these suitcase photographs illuminates how meanings and emotional engagements change through mobility, incorporating not only family and biographical memories but also memories of migration, and a quest for a certain kind of stability understood not in terms of a fixed place of origin, but as the continuity of individual and family narratives.

Studies that have dealt with objects ‘from home’ or objects’ mobility have analysed their connection to emotions, belongings, memories, changing meanings and their role in ‘homing’ processes (see for instance Burrell 2008a, b; Parrott 2012; Povrzanovic 2009; Povrzanovic and Humbracht 2013; Svasek 2012; Tolia-Kelly 2004a, b; Vanni 2013; Vilar-Rosales 2009). David Parkin has pointed to the importance of the role played by *mementoes* in displacement in keeping a continuity of selfhood and shaping the future. These mementoes ‘provide the material markers of templates, inscribed with narrative and sentiment, which may later re-articulate the shifting boundaries of a socio-cultural identity’ (Parkin 1999, 313). Objects carried by migrants help to make vis-

ible what is no longer present, build bonds to people who are no longer near and transport certain practices into new contexts. Therefore they might involve loss and absence (Basu and Coleman 2011, 324; Christian 2009) and they may also defy absence or alienation by producing feelings of belonging or well-being (Gronseth 2012) or even 'unexpected effects' (Parrott 2012); for this reason, approaching the materiality of objects gives an insight into the frequently contradictory emotional life of migrants (Svasek 2008, 216). Finally, analysing objects from 'home' (a concept whose links to a fixed and/or given single location have been contested, see for instance Ahmed 1999; Parkin 1999; Rapport and Dawson 1998) involves dealing with translation and changes, as shifting contexts imply changes in meanings, values, practices and emotional engagements (which is related to Kopytoff's concept of the 'biographies' of objects).

In this context, photographs might be viewed as a 'special' kind of object, if we consider their visual content and their clear connection to mnemonic practices (Edwards 2012; Lepoutre and Cannoodt 2005; Ortiz García 2005). However, incorporating a material approach in addition to analysing their visual content is helpful to understand their importance in the context of migration, and to understand the meanings, feelings and practices associated with photographs. With this approach I am following scholars who emphasize the importance of going beyond their visual character to include multisensory and emotional dimensions, as well as the manner in which photographs (as objects) are involved with and act in social relations (Drazin and Frohlich 2007; Edwards 2010, 2012; Edwards and Hart 2004; Gell 1998; Rose 2003, 2010; Wright 2004).

Photographs will be considered in this chapter as objects of memory in line with studies that have considered the role of objects and/or photographs in connection not only with memory, but also with identities, belongings and biography (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989; Hoskins 1998; Marcoux 2001; Ortiz García 2005; Otto and Pedersen 1998; Rowlands 1993, among others). There is a will to transcend time when a picture is taken, hence the association to memory seems inevitable. This chapter deals with mobility as a trigger for memories that will extend beyond national borders and involve origin and destiny and new belongings. It also deals with securing the possibility of being a subject

with memory, as the mobility regime in which these women's migration is embedded was perceived by them as a barrier to their mobility and the continuity of memories. Therefore, the photographs presented here involve memories that are shaped beyond national borders, and are continuously shaped in connection to what is left and what is to come, in the light of new contexts, new audiences and new places. Photographs, therefore, relate to the past as well as the future, since they secure the possibility of remembering as well as the possibility of creating emotional bonds to new places and bringing near those people who are far away.

Photographs, then, can be considered as objects that possess agency in the sense that they can produce effects in the context of their relation to subjects and the social relations they connect. They actively participate in producing memory: in terms of not only their narration, but also the manner in which they are remembered, the atmosphere they help to create and the emotional responses they produce (Edwards 2012).

It is agreed that in their content, family photographs are strikingly similar. It is this similarity that Bourdieu stresses as one of the main characteristics of photography as a family practice: out of all the possible photos, family albums are made of similar 'takes' of family life, especially those that stress happy times, celebrations and moments of union (Bourdieu 2003). Therefore it is not a surprise that photographs find their way into migrants' suitcases, because migration might be a moment that endangers the family union (see for instance Ortiz García 2005; Sontag 2010) and photographs might help to actualize familiar and affective bonds (Carrillo 2010; Rose 2010) and in their circulation be constitutive of transnational connections (Carrillo 2010; Fedyuk 2012). Emotional engagement with photographs involves participating in the co-creation of the meaning of the visual content of photographs, a characteristic that is inseparably connected to family photographs, as with them family memories are narrated, modified and updated. Barthes's concept of the 'punctum' refers to the moving capacity of photographs, understood by those who can share or read certain intimate contents (Barthes 1990, 64–65, see also Hirsch and Spitzer 2006). Yet emotional engagements do not only involve what is depicted in photographs, but also what can be done with them (Rose 2010). As Edwards puts it: 'The stories told with and around photographs, the image held in the hand, features delin-

eated through the touch of the finger, an object passed around, a digital image printed and put in a frame and carefully placed, dusted, and cared for, are key registers through which photographic meanings are negotiated' (Edwards 2012, 224). Understanding photographs' meanings calls for a focus on their visual content but also on what is done with them, and what they make possible (Edwards 2012; Rose 2003). Photographs, therefore, are not analysed as passive elements in connection to memory, but as actively constituting it. They contribute to creating the setting, contents and ways in which memory is negotiated, narrated, placed and felt.

In the next section, the roles of photographs in the moment of preparation for the first migratory journey will be analysed. This is a moment that calls for memory work, and my analysis is carried out from the premise that the characteristics of these particular mobilities shaped this process.

(Un)Desired Mobilities

Migrants' journeys offer an important insight into the experience of migration. Burrell emphasizes the significance of journeys and borders, as 'they are the axes on which migration turns. For migrants, border spaces and journey times are heavily imbued with all the emotions of moving. They can be familiar, frightening, unsettling or exciting, heralding the promise of a new life, or reminding the loss of an old one' (Burrell 2008a, 354). In this chapter, I will not concentrate on the account of the passage across borders, but rather on how borders and border crossings were anticipated before undertaking the actual journey.

When dealing with the moment of preparation for the first migratory journey, we need to engage with its complexity and how it is embedded in global processes that shape the experience of migration. We need to understand, as Glick-Schiller and Salazar (2013) point out, migrants' position in a mobility regime that permeates human mobility and immobility, that implies legal constraints and power relations that shape an order that promotes and facilitates the movements of some people while

it restricts or impedes the mobility of others. As Brah states: 'The question is not simply about who travels, but when, how, and under what circumstances?' (quoted in Ahmed 1999, 332). Therefore, we must take into account that movement is not unconstrained, but is shaped by legal dispositions and discourses that are interconnected with how people imagine, act, narrate and experience this process.

While the four women I will introduce did migrate, their mobility was both produced and impeded by this mobility regime. Being unable to enter through established channels, they entered the country as tourists but with the intention of staying to live there, which consequently meant that their situation was 'irregular' in relation to legal regulations. Their preparation and intentions were shaped by the anticipation and fear of border crossing, since it presented a possible barrier to their migratory intentions.

In this context, it might be useful to think of borders and migratory laws using Foucault's concept of dispositive (Agamben 2011) to understand how the border was present even before the journey began for these women. Their migratory trajectories were shaped by this dispositive, and more specifically by the anticipation of what might occur when crossing borders, an anticipation that directly affected not only their migratory intentions but also the continuity of memories. In this case, it is not only mobility that triggers memory work, but also the understanding that their migratory journeys are incompatible with transportation of objects of memory. Attention will be paid to the effects of borders in memories: the four women feared that carrying photos (and objects of memory) with them could jeopardize their migratory intentions. In spite of this fear, strategies were displayed to try to contest and avoid the possible effects they anticipated. Strategies to remember and secure their photographs, while potentially jeopardizing their migratory purposes, allowed the women to guarantee the possibility of continuity in family and personal memories, and, ultimately, the emotional aspect of belonging. In this chapter, I show how migration control shapes remembering, memory and the migratory experience in the case of four women from Uruguay who migrated to Spain.

Memories in Suitcases

Viviana, Graciela, Roxana and Susana migrated from Uruguay to Spain in the 2000s.² Their migration must be understood together with the effects of the deepest economic crisis in Uruguay's history at the beginning of that decade, as well as the 'emigratory culture' present in the country, meaning that emigration is present as a possible solution to a crisis (in Moraes 2008, n/d). The search for a new beginning, an improvement of living conditions and 'starting over' were repeatedly named by the four women as motivations to emigrate.

As I have already explained, none of these women could migrate using the legal channels that were available at the time. The first 'direct encounter' with 'legal constraint' was experienced when crossing the border. Anticipation of this moment was very much a factor when selecting objects to migrate; anticipation and fear shaped selection as well as the will to carry along objects that, although conceived as potentially dangerous, were valued for their affective and mnemonic value.

This fear was related to the possibility of being searched at border control at the airport or at the border itself and being sent back to Uruguay. Therefore, prior to their trip, the women had prepared themselves for the possibility of being questioned at the border, which included the possibility of surrendering control of their suitcases. They anticipated that their suitcases should not look like a 'migrant's suitcase'. A migrant's suitcase would include many photographs, they assumed, expressing a shared public understanding of photographs as objects of memory. This could result in their migratory plans being compromised since, if the authorities found photographs, they would presume they were entering the country to live there, which could result in them being sent back. Following this line, we can say that the women assumed that a non-migrant (for example, a tourist) would enter without memories (in the form of photographs), a 'regular' migrant would take some memories, and an 'irregular' migrant who wanted to be successful could not take their memories and should resemble a tourist. In other words, we can see how migration and migratory regulations presented a menace to memories and how this was anticipated and contested before the actual journey

took place. Moreover, this fear was fed by the fact that all of them had heard or read stories of Uruguayan citizens who had been ‘deported’ at the Spanish border at the airport and were therefore advised by friends and acquaintances to consider carefully what to pack in their suitcases.

Graciela especially recalled this, as she and her husband had sold all their possessions in order to migrate, so that their attempt could not fail by any means:

we were afraid, because we had sold *everything*, we had *nothing* left.... We were very much afraid of taking things, of carrying mementoes, we would have but it was that... we were afraid of being stopped and sent back. (Graciela)

The reference to fear was present in all narrations, as was the association of material hints of memories with the possibility of migratory intentions being compromised:

there was this uncertainty if they search your suitcase and look at all you bring you couldn’t be obvious. I was paranoid about photos ‘don’t take photos, because of this and that’ ‘you have to take money’. (Viviana)

I took few photos just in case too. Always thinking that I was coming for 15 days to know the city and returning, so I had to carry just few things, even the *recuerdos* [memories]... (Susana)

In the last part of this quotation Susana uses the word *recuerdos*, which can be translated as ‘mementoes’ but also as ‘memories’, since it derives from the word to remember, but in this case she is referring to the material form of memory. Her preparation for entering Spain obliged her to prepare carefully all the details concerning her entry, including the possibility of carrying objects that had a sentimental value.

This fear of inspection of luggage was anticipated, but did not take place in any of the cases. Despite this, an intensity of fear and an anticipation of border control were present in all the narratives, as well as a will to elude this control by selection and careful placement of photographs inside suitcases and other containers, and leaving photos behind and asking relatives to send them at a later stage.

In their careful selection of photos, the women took advantage of the possibility of condensation allowed by photographs: one picture could depict those people with whom the women wanted to maintain bonds while also allowing them to feel part of the family, despite being separated by distance. It also implied the possibility of selecting biographical moments considered to be landmarks of life trajectories. 'Formal' photographs that depict ritual, important moments of the family or of the individual's biography, as well as more everyday, intimate shots, are typical components of family albums (Ortiz García 2005, 198). Family and friends explicitly participated in this process, by providing photographs, asking for photos or hiding others so that they could not be taken away from home.

The connection of memory and selection is clear, as the moment of choosing is the moment of actualizing memories, giving shape and content to memories. J.S. Marcoux (2001), when analysing people moving house in Montreal, stated that we can consider the moment of 'sorting' as one when memory is 'refurbished', since it obliges people to go through objects and select them as they select the memories built around them. Selecting the objects is choosing what to remember, Marcoux reminds us: '[W]e could say that the things that people take with them, those "aide-mémoires" (Rowlands 1993), help preserve a certain consistency and continuity. Going further we could also say that memory may be constituted in motion through the displacement of objects. Bringing things with oneself, then, is to make the choice of remembering' (Marcoux 2001, 73). Marcoux refers to the anticipation of memory: selecting photos is anticipating what memory work will be done in the future, what materials, meanings and emotional engagements will be involved. Objects and memory practices then are considered as future oriented, and part of a process in which changes are produced in objects as they are the ones that are selected, making them more important in the process.

Not all the pictures could be taken along, so it is important to elucidate in the first place why, among all possible things, family photographs were selected, and secondly why, among all the pictures, those particular ones. The content of photos is useful in this task. Many of the photos that my informants selected showed times when the women had not yet been born: they were photographs of grandparents' or parents' childhoods,

honeymoons, anniversaries or weddings, a few shots that would allow the history of the family to be told:

And I brought photographs, photographs that even... [smiles] I remember that I took without my parents and brothers realizing, I took them from boxes that were in my house, where we had photographs... I made a pre-selection of very old photos of my parents, photos of birthdays of my brothers, of friends of mine, of my grandparents, super... Those photographs in black and white that nobody even had found I'd taken until mother came here for the first time! [laughs] (Roxana)

In Roxana's case, selection took time and involved going through hidden boxes, looking at photographs, and pre-selecting and finally choosing the photographs that would be carried with her that contain 'the basics' of her family history. These few snapshots refer to a longer period of time. According to Dornier, photographs can evoke an instant as well as a period of time, and the older a photograph is, the longer the period of time it seems to stand for; even 'losing sight' of photos in hidden boxes can increase this capacity (Garrat quoted in Dornier-Agbodjan 2004, 126). A selection of a few, old, hidden family shots could mean taking the whole family history along with her. This selection was done in secret, behind the family's back, especially behind her mother's back. Viviana emphasized that her selection of photographs involved fighting with her mother over the right to keep certain family pictures. Both Viviana and Roxana were living with their families at the time of leaving, which explains why this dispute could take place. Yet it is also interesting to stress that what is being fought over in these cases is the right to keep a family album, a right to which perhaps they were still not entitled (see Ortiz García 2005; Parkin 1999; Rose 2010).

Photographs of birthdays and celebrations or portraits of close friends and relatives were selected, which in the case of Susana also included photographs of her children when they were little. This 'condensation' was one of the most important elements that helped to reduce the number of important photographs. Selection also allowed the women to take photographs that marked important moments in one's biography, such as fifteenth birthdays or graduation, which were present especially in

Viviana's and Roxana's suitcases. There was a place for distant events, as well as for more recent ones, as Susana claims to have taken the picture of the last birthday she celebrated in Uruguay (since it shows her entire family) and Roxana, as we will see, made sure to document her last days in Uruguay. We can see how this selection anticipated the protagonists of the narrations to come, shaping the manner and the contents of memory work. There is also a quest for continuity and stability: the content of the memories is given shape by choosing members of the family whom the women want to remember, and therefore leaving behind those who are no longer emotionally close. Family narration is actualized, and memories are given stability in motion.

Apart from the visual traces, there were material traces that were important. Preference was for those pictures that 'had always been there'.³ Objects, and photographs, that had always been in the house, a silent part of every day, gained importance in a moment like migration, when the invisibility—or the humility (Miller 1987)—of things might be suspended (Marcoux 2001; Tolia Kelly 2004a). This is clearly seen in the case of Viviana, who brought a picture that had always been on her mother's night table, which still conserves the imprints of the frames in which it was displayed. This particular picture was important and could not be replaced by any other, since it was the one that had been *there*. This picture bore 'the physical traces of usage and time' (Edwards and Hart 2004, 3), it had been appreciated by her mother and herself, and had been a part of the family. So it is not only the content of photographs but specific photographs that played a role in specific places and in shared emotions. Edward's idea of *placing* as 'the work of a photographic object in social space through which questions of materiality, adjacency, assemblage, and embodied relations frame the meaning of the image' is useful in order to understand why these pictures were prioritized and selected over others, and how 'through practices of adjacency and exchange' photographs 'are used to cohere both kin and other relations' (Edwards 2012, 226).

After selection, placement inside suitcases was important to take the photographs safely through customs. They were scattered around suitcases,⁴ not placed all together, for fear of the photos being seen as a group

or album, and therefore 'out of place' in a non-migrant's suitcase. They had to be discreet, concealed.

Not only were suitcases used as containers but also other objects, especially books. Viviana scattered some photographs inside her suitcase and placed some inside her diary, which she carried with her in her hand luggage. This diary was part of her 'travelling look', which included good clothes, make-up and a diary in her hand in which photographs were placed.

Susana put her photographs inside a bible. It was not any bible, but a family heirloom that had been passed on to her from her grandmother's sister. She confessed to me that she does not usually read it, but, since it had been in her family for so long and because she has a special 'feeling' for 'old things', she chose to take it. This feeling is also a sensuous feeling: she likes to touch the old, thin bible paper, which she says is not made nowadays. Inside the bible, photographs could be seen as a 'slip', an incidental event, as it is common practice to place pictures inside bibles, especially pictures of loved ones:

I brought these, that's my grandfather and my mother when she was little. This picture is ancient... And the three kids. And this is my grandson... And I brought... no, not these, this of my daughter. And my mother and father in my last birthday there, they were sitting at the table and I took that picture. I couldn't take many either, I chose one for each but I couldn't bring many because it was like a slip, like they were inside the bible. A slip.
(Susana)

By placing photographs inside the bible, Susana was performing the common practice of placing pictures of loved ones inside a sacred book. At the same time, this practice could help to take along photographs that had been purportedly been put there. Although she did not explicitly state this, she may have assumed that a sacred book could better 'resist' possible investigation at the airport.

Roxana found a method of increasing the number of photographs she took by carrying with her a disposable camera that her parents had given her and her brother before leaving. Although she migrated with her brother (who stayed in a different country), it was she who took care of

and conserved the camera. She photographed what she named ‘the transition’, which included farewell parties with family and friends in Uruguay, the aeroplane, landing in Europe and, finally, Barcelona. She saved the last picture to be taken as the first thing to be done inside her new shared flat. This shot did not come out well, she said, but it somehow marked the end of her migratory journey and the start of a new life:

Roxana: And then my parents in the... in the previous days to our trip had given us a camera, because we didn't have, a disposable camera, with the purpose of... Since I didn't want to take a lot of photographs of current times because if they got you at customs and they asked you ‘why you take so many mementoos’, it was not convenient, so bringing that camera was... I brought the camera to develop here the photos of the farewell parties we had had in the previous days to our trip, of the plane and when I arrived here in Barcelona. Well, Germany first and then here in Barcelona.

Natalia: So you didn't take the photos here but they were...

Roxana: of the transition, they were photos of the transition. That you even look at them, because I still have them, and for example in the reunions with my friends we are all with our eyes very red, the noses really bad for all the crying and that...

The photographic documentation of this ‘transition’ can be thought of as an anticipation of temporality, spaciality and memory work. Photos were chosen in order to facilitate the process of remembering, to overcome distance and not least to keep bonds. They also tell us of Roxana's evaluation of those moments and people as *memorable*.

These pictures were anticipated objects of memory to be remembered once in Roxana's destination. It is not only anticipation of time, but anticipation of distance, anticipation of *loss* and absence (Christian 2009; Sayad 2010; Skrbis 2008) and the will to overcome these with the help of photographs. Loss and absence are visually evident in the details that she pointed out: the red noses and eyes from crying visually accompanied her narration of these painful moments. I want to stress the ambiguous characteristic of these pictures of farewell parties, since although they comply

with the general characteristic of family and amateur photographs of picturing happy times of union and avoiding painful moments, the pain of imminent loss is being pictured as well, although it is not clearly evident without the narration of these events.

As a conclusion of this transition, the last shot was saved for the last phase of this trip, arriving at the new home:

I remember I took the last photo the day I entered to that flat, the first impression... It's as if I had in my mind very specific things, that the first impressions would leave a mark on me. And I remember I took the last photo of that camera before I left my suitcase on the floor, a photo that... A view that was the living room of that flat with the balcony and a beautiful sun was entering and I took a photo that came out really bad! [laughs] But that was the last photo and the following day, one of the investments I made with that money I had brought was developing the photos. They surprised me because I didn't remember them, because I had spent days and days without sleeping. (Roxana)

This last photograph stresses the kind of anticipation and memory work I want to highlight—the agency by both the women and their photographs. This last picture is both an ending and a beginning, the finalization of her documentation of the transition that made those films—to be developed—allies for memory work. The people and places depicted were no longer near when the pictures were developed. When taken, they were soon to be part of a past in terms of time and space, and a future in the sense of new ways of telling her personal and familiar memories that were envisioned. Each shot, then, was a presence and a soon-to-be absence, and this loss could be anticipated and at the same time overcome with photographs. It is also important to stress that this last photo taken at the flat in Barcelona is kept not because it is visually clear, but for its biographical importance (Ortiz García 2005, 194) and, even more so, for its emotional appeal. As Edwards reminds us, the meaning of photographs implies ‘a confluence of sensory experience, in which the visual is only a part of the efficacy of the image’ (Edwards 2012, 230). The meaning and importance of this picture imply the confluence of biographies (of subjects, of objects), emotions and sensory effects.

It is important to point out that social networks like Facebook were referred to by these women as a change in the manner they now relate to photographs, and the way they can be visually and emotionally ‘in touch’ with their loved ones. Although this technology was not as present in their lives when they migrated as it is now, there is another difference between digital pictures and printed ones that helps to understand the selection of the latter. Printed pictures were the *original* photos that contained, in their material and in their content, the kind of memories that the women wanted to maintain. They contained traces of the places where these photographs had been, where they had been cherished, displayed, narrated before, and it was in the material and also visual traces that their value resided.

Continuity and Change in Places and Memories

What has become of the photographs once they arrived at their destination? To understand changes and continuities in the meanings of and the relationship with these pictures, I have concentrated on analysing the moment that photographs were taken out of suitcases, the places where they have been located, new photographs that have been received and the relationship towards photographs now.

Once in Spain, these pictures were involved in creating attachment to new places, new homes. Roxana waited to place the photographs, even to take them out of a suitcase, until she had arrived at a place she could call ‘home’, which did not happen right away. She explained to me how her most treasured objects were kept inside a small suitcase until she went to live in an apartment she could consider ‘her own’, until she could give them a *place*. She referred to this suitcase that contained her ‘important’ objects as ‘her identity’, one that she could not lose and would not open until she was able to give its contents a proper place. Roxana was resisting not so much the further mobility of her photographs, as the risk of being lost that this implied. They were to be taken out of the suitcase once there was a place to which she could relate. As Drazin reminds us, photographs demand to be ‘treated right’ (2007, 51), and in Roxana’s

case a certain sense of fixity was sought, an attachment that was built together with photographs and memories. This interplay of movement and fixity reconfigures 'here' and 'there', and photographs are immersed in this reconfiguration of place and especially in their emotional content. As Easthope states, places should not be understood as static but as continuously renegotiated 'nodes in networks of relations' (Easthope 2009, 77) that involve emotional attachments. Both stability and fluidity play simultaneous and important roles in migrants' narratives and identities.

Graciela explained to me that her pictures, together with a few other important objects, were always with her on display. When she was living with her husband at a room in a friend's house, the pictures were displayed on the headboard of her bed. She separated from her husband suddenly and when she left that house, she managed to take the photos and letters she had received during her first months in Spain among the few things she could carry with her, which included new photographs:

I always had them there [in display], in the other houses too. I had other [things] but the pictures, always [in display]. I had a bed with a backboard and I had them there. After a while I had everything because they started to send me letters and photos and they would send a picture of my father and... I left my dog, for example, I had a dog before coming and I left it with my father. Then he would send me a picture of him with the dog, you know? Then a letter with a picture would arrive and it didn't take me long to have pictures of them [her parents]. (Graciela)

In spite of being sent more pictures, the ones that are on display in her current living room are the same four photographs she carried with her on her first trip. They preside over the most important piece of furniture in the living room, next to another object that she took in her first suitcase. New objects are also placed on that furniture,⁵ but it is worth emphasizing that the central part is reserved for these photos. Carrying photos, then, was a manner of carrying memories and also helped to create bonds and organize space in future houses, which implies emotional attachments both to her current place and to Uruguay.

Susana has received photographs too, and she has asked for the same frames she had left in Uruguay to be sent to her. Some of the pictures

taken on her first journey are on display in these frames sent by her mother, the same ones she had in her house in Uruguay and had not brought along. They were part of her everyday life in Uruguay, and were remembered and called for once she settled in Spain, 'rediscovered' with migration. As Tolia-Kelly states, these objects are created anew: 'The diasporic journey imbues them [objects] with a heightened significance. After the move they are created anew, in the process of their circulation' (2004a, 325). They are now objects that bond past time and places and new ones; moreover, Susana's reliance on her mother to send the frames is also a manner of keeping bonds across distance through the circulation of objects.

As we can see, photographs are to be found kept inside containers or on display in living rooms. Viviana and Roxana kept pictures inside containers. In the case of Viviana, she has a box where she keeps her most treasured memories and souvenirs, from Uruguay and from the years she has been living in Spain with her husband. Keeping pictures inside containers but not on display seems to be a way of preserving them like treasured objects but not having to deal with them on a daily basis, since the feelings they provoke are sometimes overwhelming (for meanings of 'hidden objects', see Attan 2006).

Viviana stressed that leaving photographs behind really upset her and if she 'had had the opportunity to bring more things it would have been photographs'. By the time I met Viviana she was preparing for her first trip back to Uruguay, a time when she planned to obtain the photographs she had been asking her mother to send to her, but her mother had silently refused. Again, the kind of photographs Viviana was claiming were photographs where both her and her mother were depicted, as well as with other members of the family. Her mother did send photographs, but those that depicted only Viviana and not family times. Viviana explains this silent dispute by making reference to whose photos they are:⁶

When I was leaving there were a lot of photographs that automatically disappeared. She kept them! She hid them! [She did this] so I wouldn't take them. And when I asked her to send me more photos, there are many here that she sent me. She sent me my photos but I told her I don't want my photos!... But I want you to send OUR photos! And no... I will have to take them myself. (Viviana)

We can see how this sort of fight over memories concentrates on those photographs that best depict family times and family union. Viviana's mother is silently refusing to let this kind of picture go, fighting over with whom and where these kind of photographs should be, an ongoing process of negotiation of memories through objects.

As could be expected, while introducing photographs, relationships, events, fights, reconciliations and expectations were explained. Changes in family life also change the importance of family pictures, and this is done together with the placement of photos in the house and family albums, adding to the argument that when dealing with photographs it is not only important to see what photographs depict, but what is done with them. Memory is narrated and often stimulated by pictures, and keeping them also means keeping the possibility of remembering. Receiving photographs, placing them, talking about/with them is a way of keeping in touch, of claiming a role within the family, claiming still to be part of it (Rose 2010). By exchanging pictures family bonds are actualized and their role in what could be thought now to be a transnational family can be negotiated through participation in the elaboration of a collective family memory (Carrillo 2010; Fedjuk 2012).

It is also important to consider what role gender and age play in keeping memories. It cannot be ignored that securing, keeping and caring for family memories is a gendered practice. These women's practices need to be understood in connection to the role attributed to women in their families as curators of the family album. We have seen how their selection of objects was sometimes disputed by other women as well, especially in the case of the two youngest women who were perhaps in no position yet to curate these family photographs, and we see here how gender can intersect with age. These four women were not only worried about securing their personal memory, their personal biography, but also in taking along family memories to be able to do 'family work' and claiming their place inside the family (Drazin and Frohlich 2007; Rose 2010). In dealing with family photographs, the women were also performing gender.

As previously highlighted, the moment of introducing me to pictures was a moment when the narration of family memories was actualized. It was an emotionally intense time, when feelings of tenderness, nostalgia and loss were also present. Talking, seeing, handling and introducing

pictures make clear that the struggle to keep these photographs was one for continuity, and one for emotional attachments in mobility. It was belonging and continuity that were at stake when choosing photographs to migrate with, as they opened up the possibility of keeping a family and personal narrative in the future. At the same time, they made it possible to feel proximity and distance, and express the contradictory character of a migrant's emotional life (Skrbis 2008; Svasek 2008). They also speak to changes over the course of time: ruptures in family life can be explained and recounted while looking at the photos.

However, we should note as well that these photographs equally allowed the memories of migration to be told. The biographies (Kopytoff 2009) of these pictures have now incorporated their migratory journeys and with them it is possible to narrate how migration was anticipated, experienced and imagined, how border crossing was feared, while they also participate in giving shape and content to personal and family memories.

Conclusions

Family photographs are important in creating a sense of union and belonging to family, while migration seems to disrupt this union, this stability. However, it is not mobility *per se* that poses a threat to the continuity of these women's memories, but rather their perceived position in a mobility regime. Constraints on their free movement and perceived risks at border crossings shaped their memory practices. For these women, mobility implied securing the possibility of maintaining memory practices in the future. Moreover, mobility is presented here as constitutive of memory: it takes memory to the fore as it is actualized and rebuilt in a process that involves collective remembering and material surroundings.

Photographs actively participated in keeping family and personal memories in motion and their importance resided in their visual content as well as in their material aspect. Not only did their materiality bear 'traces' of soon-to-be distant places, it also made strategies possible for contesting a mobility regime that was perceived as a barrier to memories. Keeping photographs was also keeping familiar

attachments, doing family and memory work, keeping a place in the family and overcoming loss and absence, while experiencing them. Those family pictures are placed now in new surroundings; they help to build and extend the social space of affective bonds that are knitted together with the changing threads of visual images, narrations and emotions. They are part not only of migrants' memories, but of memories of migration, as they help now to tell the story of migratory trajectories. With the photographs it is not only a familiar narrative or a biography that can be recounted, they also help to narrate the experience of their migratory journeys.

Mobility triggers memory work and sheds light on objects of memory that have long been kept and are refound and/or that have always been treasured as such. However, keeping these photographs as objects of memory is not about keeping intact the stories and images of times gone past. It is about keeping the possibility of remembering, of securing photographs' role as agents in the constitution of a family narrative and a personal life story, and emotional bonds to new places that photographs also help to constitute. Photographs in migration could be conceived in this double axis: as a look to what is left behind with an eye on what is to come. This implies emotions configured in the interplay of absences and presences in the transnational space, which are part of the migratory process.

Notes

1. I would like to thank all the participants in the panel 'Contested History on the Move: Rethinking Memory through Mobility and Agency', held at the EASA Conference (Tallinn, Estonia, 2014), for their comments on the manuscript that preceded this chapter. Moreover, I am grateful to the convenors and editors of this volume, Monika Palmberger and Jelena Tošić, for their thorough reading and comments. I also thank my supervisors Dr Montserrat Soronellas Masdeu and Dr Jordi Roca Girona, as well as my colleagues María Offenhenden and Javier Eiris.
2. Both Viviana and Ana migrated in 2008, Roxana and Graciela in 2002. Both Susana and Graciela are in their 50s, while Viviana is in her early 30s and

- Roxana is in her mid-30s. They were living in Catalonia by the time I encountered them.
3. This has been also stressed by Marcoux (2001) as well as Dornier when referring to the accumulation of time as accumulation of memories in pictures, and also Radley (1990).
 4. The importance of the suitcase as a container that designates an 'inside' and an 'outside' is highlighted by Burrell (following Warnier 2006) with two containing functions: 'containing things, and transporting them across the large "containers" which are national borders' (2008a, 363).
 5. I analysed this in more detail in Alonso Rey (2014).
 6. The role of photographs for transmission of memory to children growing up in the new country is not discussed here. See for instance Stiliou and Siotou (2007), Lepoutre and Cannoodt (2005), Parrott (2012), Attan (2006).

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6

Mobile Temporalities: Place, Ruination and the Dialectics of Time

Annika Lems

Prologue

One late afternoon at the end of winter 2011, I met Mohamed in a coffee shop on the campus of Melbourne University. He had just returned to Australia, and as usual after his long travels abroad he had texted, asking me whether I had time to catch up for a cup of tea. As advisor to the Somali government Mohamed was constantly on the move: from country to country, from United Nations (UN) conference to UN conference, from one international meeting to the next. Whenever he returned to Melbourne we met to talk about his latest travel experiences and look at the photos and videos he had taken. This time, he announced as we met in the small campus coffee shop, he had something very special to show me. I immediately knew what he was aiming at: he had returned to Mogadishu for the first time after his migration to Australia more than thirty years ago. As with all his travels, Mohamed had depicted his movements through the city. Sitting in the café, surrounded by the soundscape

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Fig. 6.1 Driving through Mogadishu. Photograph taken by M.I., 2011

of students chattering away, he pulled out his laptop and began flicking through the images he had taken¹.

At first glance, the photos seemed to show a ravaged, devastated and utterly ruined city: the skeleton of an old church, the cows having made the ruins their home; dusty roads and broken-down houses; the signs of war and destruction everywhere. Many of the images had been taken out of a car window, the fleetingness adding to the sense of displacement they transported. Because of the dangers inherent in walking through Mogadishu, Mohamed could only move through the city in a car protected by heavily armed bodyguards. And yet, despite all the sadness and sense of loss that spoke through Mohamed's images, this was not his way of seeing the place. As he was flicking through the photographs, he began telling me stories. While these stories acknowledged Mogadishu's current state, the chaos and destruction that mark it, there were moments when the past broke through with such force that it managed to overwrite the present, transforming the ruined landscape into something beautiful and dear. Showing an image depicting a dusty square with people rushing past piles of rubble, Mohamed smiled (Fig. 6.2). 'This is on Makka Al-Mukaramah Road, near to where you turn off to the airport', he said.



Fig. 6.2 A square in the centre Mogadishu. Photograph taken by M.I., 2011

Pointing at the remnants of what used to be the heart of a vibrant and cosmopolitan city, the past felt so present that it seemed as if Mohamed began to move within it, walking out of the picture's frame and straight into the place's former spatial ordering. As he was looking at the photograph he was literally moving about, giving me directions as if he were indicating a route to a stranger who was asking for the way: 'You can't see it on the photo, but from a bit further up you can see the sea. It's near a place called Equatore Cinema. It's a very well-known part of Mogadishu.' Pointing ahead into the distance he gave me the directions to the Labour House in 26 June Street, another (now ruined) landmark in Mogadishu. 'Walking' through the street, he suddenly remembered another place. 'Oh, the sweets shop', he exclaimed. 'It's opposite of the Labour House. Opposite there was a sweets shop. People from Mogadishu would recognize it, it was very famous.' The minute he had walked with me through a past Mogadishu, however, its present state of ruination came charging in again. Moving within the frame of the photograph, Mohamed was back at the large square with its current signs of war and destruction. 'Of course, now you can't recognize any of this,' he said. 'And also there are new buildings. But when I was standing there I knew the place. It has an arch, and the base of the arch is still there, it's still standing.'

Introduction

While it could easily be discarded as banal, the short moment of lived, storied remembrance I shared with Mohamed is telling: it has much to say about the power of the brief, fragmentary instants when the past enters everyday lives, thereby touching, moulding, remodelling our being-in-the-present. Almost taking us by surprise, in such moments the past does not appear like a ‘foreign country’ (Lowenthal 1985), like something that is disconnected from the lives we are leading today. Even if only for a split second, the past is experienced as present, as if it were an intimate part of the here and now. As Mohamed was (mind-)walking through his ‘memory place’ (Ricoeur 2004, 41), the boundaries between past, present and future completely disappeared. The past was present, while the present was loaded with pastness and future. Even within the framework of one and the same sentence, Mohamed switched between past and present tense several times. Manoeuvring back and forth between times, he was at once moving through a landscape of ruination and a place of grace and beauty, a place whose inner workings he knew by heart. The square depicted in the photograph might have been completely destroyed, but its past was still present in a ghostly way, for *when I was standing there I knew the place*. As short-lived and flimsy as Mohamed’s brief encounter with the past might be, it has the ability to shed light on the interplay of memory, self and place. It suggests that the past does not appear as a coherent whole, but like a flash, a brief moment that is loaded with sensory, embodied, affective, material and storied layers of experience.

In this chapter I want to focus on the ambiguous, contradictory and often transient ways in which the past enters into our lives. Moving towards an existential understanding of mnemonic practices, I will approach memory from the mundane moments of its appearance in individuals’ life-worlds. Instead of looking for grand historical narratives, I will search for meaning within the seemingly banal, ‘minor’ (Piette 1992, 2015a, b) modes of existence when the past makes itself felt. Albert Piette coined the notion of the minor mode to capture the small gestures, behaviours and attitudes that appear when individuals are engaged in a situation. These fragmented and incomplete expressions often go unnoticed or

are treated as unimportant since they cannot be ordered and quantified. However, as Piette (2015b, 39) points out, these details are important exactly because they are deemed not relevant and are inextricably linked to individual life-worlds. Despite their banality, they make up such an intimate part of our daily interactions that they reveal something intricate about being-in-the-world. In a similar vein, I will turn to specific moments in my collaboration with Mohamed and Omar, two Somalis who left Mogadishu with the outbreak of the war in the 1990s, to carve out the interplay of memory and mobility in everyday life. Looking into the ways in which they actively make sense of Mogadishu as a crucial memory place, alternative understandings of memory and historical narrative will emerge.

The memories that have attached themselves to Mogadishu form an interesting starting point for such an undertaking. Once a stunningly beautiful port town with buildings that dated back to the 13th century, the place is now marked by ruination and decay. With the outbreak of the civil war in the 1990s and the decades of conflict, Mogadishu has been utterly ravaged, turning it into a symbol for the breakdown of social and national order. Given that memories often attach themselves to places, the question arises of what happens to mnemonic practices in a place like Mogadishu that has completely and utterly lost its bearings. Paying attention to Mohamed and Omar's engagements with Mogadishu's ruins through photography and storytelling, the common association of memory as a means of creating temporal continuity and narrative unity will be questioned. Instead of producing a continuum between here and there, and now and then, the stories and photographs discussed in this chapter form 'dialectical images' (Benjamin 1999; Buck-Morss 1991)—images that refuse to be woven into a coherent picture of the past. By looking into the dialectical ways in which these two individuals make sense of the place they left behind many years ago and that has fallen apart ever since, I am following Walter Benjamin's cue to rethink deeply modern analytical categories such as history, memory and temporality by highlighting the brief, fragmented moments of their appearance in everyday life. I will suggest that exactly because many modes of mobility are accompanied by a heightened sense of rupture, an anthropological focus on the memory

practices of people whose life-worlds are marked by movement can lead to radically new understandings of memory, temporality and history.

Being-in-Time

I first met Mohamed and Omar in 2010 when I was looking for Somalis living in Melbourne who were interested in working with me on their life stories. Both of them were in their mid-50s and had spent crucial years of their lives in Mogadishu, socialized within a generation of educated, middle-class, progressive Somalis who were driven by a 'desire to be modern' (Kapteijns 2010, 39). Linda Kapteijns (2010, 39) points out that for many Somalis growing up during the 1960s and 1970s, Mogadishu came to embody an ideal modernity, 'both in the sense of an easy cosmopolitanism in the form of a mingling of Somalis and non-Somalis of different backgrounds, and in terms of a sensual, carefree and, in many ways, quite innocent youth culture'. The time leading up to the outbreak of the civil war in the 1990s shattered many of these ideals for Omar and Mohamed, finally forcing them to leave Mogadishu. Different paths, personal histories and coincidences brought both of them to Melbourne, where they had made different corners of the city their home. Omar and Mohamed chose distinctive means or genres for telling their stories. Rather than framing their stories as one uniform and uninterrupted life story, they told me many stories through a multitude of different forms, including autobiographical accounts as well as anecdotes, poetry or photography. While the different narratives were propelled by the vague idea of portraying 'a life', or prompted by my suggestion to focus on a specific episode in their lives, they jumped between different lifetimes, places, people and events. The non-linearity of the stories they told me confronted me with the necessity to move my focus beyond the boundaries of the setting of the recorded life storytelling into the realm of everyday life. This entailed a shift from the constructed nature of the story to the social process of storytelling, thereby putting the spotlight on everyday acts of meaning-making (Jackson 2002, 18). Rather than looking for meaning in the autobiographical account, I turned my attention towards the many *existential* questions to which storytelling relates. This shift in focus is

linked to current developments in the emerging field of existential anthropology (Jackson 2013; Jackson and Piette 2015; Piette 2015b). Moving away from social scientists' longstanding focus on the collective, existential anthropology seeks to 'capture the human presence in its manifold and elusive modes of engagement' (Jackson and Piette 2015, 19). Such a perspective actively works with the ambiguities of lived sociality: while individuals are intimately involved in collective issues, there are other layers of being that lie outside of what could be captured through static concepts, such as 'the social', 'the historical' or 'the cultural'. Existential anthropologists therefore emphasize the microcosm over the macrocosm. This does not mean that they deny the powers that often govern our lives. Instead, they 'wish to restore to the anthropological worldview a sense of the small and tangible things that make life viable and negotiable despite the forces that elude our comprehension and control' (5). In my research this shift in perspective turned small, seemingly banal moments in everyday life into crucial entry points into the nuances of human existence. Not dissimilar to Albert Piette's (2015a, 185–186) focus on the 'minor modes' of being, I came to see the inconsistencies, interruptions, fragments and silences, the 'small bits and pieces' that made up Mohamed's and Omar's everyday engagements with their surroundings, as essential gateways to a deeper understanding of the lived experience of time.

In recent years many writers have become critical of the macro perspective on mnemonic practices that has dominated memory studies for a long time and has led to a strong emphasis on national and collective memories. Interestingly, this critique of the large scale was not encompassed by a shift towards the smaller scale or experiential. Instead, it propelled scholars to zoom out even further. By putting the focus on globalized and deterritorialized memory practices, they attempt to acknowledge the importance of movement within memory processes (for example Assmann and Conrad 2010; Creet and Kitzmann 2011; Erll 2011; Glynn and Kleist 2012; Rothberg 2009). Although I agree with the proponents of the transcultural turn in memory studies that mobile or 'travelling' memories (Erll 2011) have the ability to open up new avenues for approaching memory, I believe that we need at the same time to take a step back and go a step further than the current framework suggests: taking a step back from conceptualizing memories as

free-floating, deterritorialized entities and a step further in the critique of the macro perspective on memory. This would entail a move towards a radically *grounded* understanding of how memories and mobilities overlap. By zooming in on the small, instantaneous moments when memories appear in the lives of particular human beings and in particular places, we can bring memories ‘back down to earth’ (Radstone 2011, 111) and shed light on the temporality of being-in-the-world. Rather than getting lost in culturalist explanations of memorial practices, such an existential perspective on memories allows us to emphasize the fluidity and changeability of lived experience ‘as it makes its appearance in real time, in specific moments, in actual situations’ (Jackson and Piette 2015, 3–4).

Mobile Temporalities

Driven by an attempt to approach the interplay of memory and mobility from an existential point of view, I will focus on two specific moments when Mohamed and Omar actively made sense of Mogadishu’s ruination. Mirroring the variability of the ways in which memories enter into people’s everyday lives, these two instants are the outcome of very different engagements with the past. While Mohamed chose photography as a means to speak of the memories that stubbornly attach themselves to the ruins of Mogadishu, Omar tried to make sense of the ruination of people and places through storytelling. What both instants have in common is that they produce memories of Mogadishu that are discontinuous rather than coherent—narratively as well as temporally. As Omar and Mohamed were struggling to make sense of the intense destruction that has transformed their former hometown into a landscape of ruins, they produced an assemblage of memories—snapshots of the past that weave into a mosaic of unfinished story fragments, murmurs and silences. In their flimsiness, vacillation and indeterminacy, these snapshots put into question the often-reproduced equation of memory with narrative continuity. Mohamed and Omar’s acts of remembering produce a set of dialectical images that allow an understanding of the past beyond grand national narratives.

In working with these minimal modes of lived temporality, I am in close conversation with Walter Benjamin's attempts to rethink history by looking for its brief, uncanny appearances in everyday life (Benjamin 1999, 2007a). Rather than producing totalizing portrayals of history, Benjamin (2007a, 255) was convinced that the past could only be approached from the short-lived moments when it 'flashes up' and forces its way into our lives. In his unfinished *Passagen Werk (Arcades Project)*, he attempted to develop a radically new materialist critical historiography. Susan Buck-Morss (1991, 3–4), who has spent years fleshing out the philosophical contours of the fragments that make up *The Arcades Project*, argues that Benjamin's aim was to 'take materialism so seriously that the historical phenomena themselves were brought to speech'. In order to develop alternative understandings of history and temporality, Benjamin was convinced that we needed to move away from the linearity and coherence of historical narratives. Instead, he developed the method of the 'dialectical image' as a critical response to available modes of historical interpretation (Pensky 2004, 178, 191). While Benjamin was strongly influenced by Marxist thought, he was critical of the way in which historical materialists reproduced ideas of progress and history as a sequence of events. His notion of dialectics formed a departure from Hegel's use of the term. Where Hegel's historical dialectics remained firmly rooted in ideas of time as a steady flow, Benjamin promoted the development of a radically discontinuous understanding of temporality. His principle of the dialectical image can be linked to the technique of the surrealist montage that pieces together disparate elements to create a collage of juxtapositions that disrupt conventional ways of seeing (Wolin 1997). Walking through abandoned spaces and rummaging through archives in Paris, Benjamin meticulously collected story fragments, old photographs and discarded objects. In Shannon Lee Dawdy's (2010, 768) words, Benjamin's objective was to understand 'how material culture pulsed with meaning long after the moment of production'. The task of the historian, then, was to look beyond the surface of the present and recognize subversive elements from an otherwise forgotten material culture (Pensky 2004, 181). In working with materials, objects and images, Benjamin aimed to destabilize the perceived continuum between past and present. Rather than looking for stable and fixed meanings, approaching the past through

dialectical images enabled him to create a discontinuous representation of history (Buck-Morss 1991, 55).

I share with Benjamin the conviction that the past becomes recognizable only by looking at the specific moments of its appearance. Such moments become particularly apparent in the context of displacement when the supposed unity of self, place and time is unsettled. In this vein, Benjamin (2007a) argued that dialectical images often surface at points of crisis, when we lose the capacity to create temporal and narrative coherence. As Mohamed's and Omar's engagements with the ruins of Mogadishu will suggest, in everyday life past, present and future can appear as so closely intertwined that it becomes hard to speak of three distinguishable tenses. The two instances will show the continuous overlapping of different temporalities, the ways in which the tenses endlessly push and shove into each other. To describe these ceaseless processes of temporal switching in everyday life, the quick movements that throw us back and forth in time, we could indeed speak of *mobile temporalities*. In putting the spotlight on memory's temporality, the idea of mobile temporalities can be linked to current debates that have called for a third—more empirically grounded—wave in memory studies (Feindt et al. 2014).

The ruins of Mogadishu offer a crucial material entry point into these dynamics, since ruins embody a deep sense of temporal ambiguity. As Brian Dillon (2011, 11) puts it, the ruin 'is a remnant of and portal into the past, its decay is a concrete reminder of the passage of time'. Yet the ruin does not just represent pastness. It also 'casts us forward in time', speaking of a future 'in which our present will slump into similar disrepair'. In the ruin, past, present and future engage with each other in dialectical ways. Exactly because of these temporal paradoxes, the ruin offers an interesting starting point to flesh out the notion of mobile temporalities. Caitlin DeSilvey (2006, 320) highlights the importance of finding approaches that do not attempt to defuse the sense of ambiguity that marks ruins, but that actively work with its tension. She argues for the validation of decay as a different approach to remembrance. Decay allows for a materially, bodily and affectively loaded form of recollection that fosters 'an acknowledgement of agencies usually excluded from the work of interpretation' (328). As is shown in the ever-growing body of

ethnographic research on ruins, they form crucial breeding grounds for the production of counter-memories (Edensor 2008), alternative histories (Stoler 2008) and new meanings (Navaro-Yashin 2009). Because of the temporal ambiguity they represent, ruins themselves can be approached as dialectical images that have the capacity to ‘lay bare the historical contradictions of social life’ (Dawdy 2010, 776). Putting the spotlight on a very concrete physical place (Mogadishu) to which memories attach themselves—a place, however, that disaster has turned into an ‘architecture of disappearance’ (Trigg 2009, 99)—allows me to approach memory from a grounded perspective that does not lose sight of the dynamic, versatile and open character of place. Emphasizing the appearance of the past in specific moments in the life-worlds of two individuals, I will now turn towards an ethnographic discussion of the ways in which place, mobility and temporality intersect in everyday life.



Fig. 6.3 Remnants of a church in Mogadishu. Photograph taken by M.I., 2011

Visual Storytelling

I first met Mohamed in 2009, when I had just moved from Austria to Australia to write my PhD on Somali refugees. During our first meeting we discovered that we shared an interest in photography and film. This common enthusiasm created a bridge between us: it allowed Mohamed to show and discuss his images, while it enabled me to gain intimate insights into his very mobile life.

Mohamed had migrated to Melbourne in 1981, partly because he had met an Australian woman, a young nurse who had come to Somalia as a member of a health team assisting refugees, and partly because he sensed the upcoming civil war. In the thirty years that followed he married the Australian woman he had fallen in love with, had four children with her, studied, became a successful telecommunications expert and made Melbourne his home. During this time, with the war uprooting his elderly parents and his brothers and sisters and bringing many of them to Melbourne, Somalia had slipped away into a hidden area in the back of his mind. Mohamed often told me that during these years he somehow ‘forgot’ about Somalia. Around 2009, however, just before I got to know him, something changed. Somalia began crawling back into Mohamed’s thoughts. Its aches and pains began to preoccupy him with such force that he looked for ways to become involved in ongoing attempts to rebuild the country. He gave up his job in Melbourne in exchange for the (financial and personal) insecurity that came with the role of an advisor to the Somali transitional government. This government was in desperate need of educated people like Mohamed, driven by the motivation to rebuild Somalia and holding a passport from a country that allowed them to travel, connect and negotiate with other countries. At the heart of Mohamed’s decision to become involved with the government was a strong desire to find ways out of the chaos and destruction that had held Mogadishu in its grip for more than two decades. Mohamed had a strong emotional connection to the city. While he had grown up in the countryside, he considered the years he had spent in Mogadishu as a student to be the most formative period of his life. He was 19 when he had last seen the city. ‘And look at my age now,’ Mohamed said. ‘I was not even half of my age now, so it was not significant—but it is because it still is home.’

Initially his government position did not require him to return physically to Mogadishu. In 2011, however, he was overcome by an urge to go there and see with his own eyes what had become of the city. Despite the dangers of travelling in such a lawless place, and despite the continuing threat of attacks by Islamist al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam rebels, Mohamed decided to embark on this return journey. Walking through the devastated streets and buildings, he took photos—images he would take back with him to Melbourne.

When I first saw the photographs that Mohamed had taken in Mogadishu, I was struck by their narrative power. The photos showed skeletons of bombed-out houses, gusts of dust in deserted streets, sheep grazing in the middle of the city and people rushing through the remnants of destroyed buildings. Going beyond the places' bleak and sad surface, however, Mohamed began telling me stories of their former grace and beauty, and of moments from the past that his images evoked. Through the photos, Mohamed was able to tell stories *visually* that were otherwise hard to find words for. This was a crucial insight for me that changed the shape of my methodological approach. While Mohamed had been keen to contribute to my research project from the beginning on, he was struggling with the life storytelling setting. As we met for the recorded storytelling sessions, it turned out that he found it hard to think of his life in terms of a set of stories. As a result, I dropped the idea of working on Mohamed's experiences in terms of a life story. Months later, however, when I first saw the photos he had taken in Mogadishu, I was struck by their ability to shed light on the ways in which Mohamed actively made sense of the past. I came to realize that he had been giving me profound insights into his life-world through his photographs all along. These insights were more than purely visual. Rather, the images he showed me and the conversations we had around them involved visual, sensory, embodied and narrative dimensions of experience. The photos and short video clips of his journeys that he began to share with me during his stays in Melbourne, or in email or Skype conversations, formed a link between us. Ultimately, the photographs and our conversations about them came to shape some of the main themes that would come to preoccupy me in my research.



Fig. 6.4 ‘Bullet on a stony path’. Photograph taken by M.I., Mogadishu 2011

A Bullet on a Stony Path

In what follows I will zoom in on one specific moment that occurred when I met Mohamed one afternoon, a few months after he had first shown me the images of his return trip to Mogadishu. He had asked me to help him go through the photographs again to sort out a selection that he wanted to exhibit in a Somali shop in Melbourne’s western suburbs. As many Mogadishians living in Australia had not been able to return for decades, Mohamed’s images stirred much interest within the community. Desperate for the latest news from ‘Moga’, many people closely followed the reports and photos that returnees uploaded onto blogs and websites.

As we went through the photographs together, Mohamed suddenly paused and pointed (Fig. 6.4). ‘Look!’ he said. ‘I really like this one.’ I was surprised that he said he *liked* the photo. It depicted one of the many bullets that, as he told me, cover the ground in the city. Against the backdrop of a grey gravel road, the bullet looks tiny, almost lost and innocent. Laughing, he explained that because of their whistling noise, people in Mogadishu have come to call them ‘Yusuf’. Ssuf, ssuf, ssuf they go...

However, for Mohamed the bullet was not what moved him about the picture. ‘Look at the ground it lies on,’ he told me and pointed at the road. ‘These rocks, they are so special, so specific for this part of Mogadishu, that even if I hadn’t been the one to take this photo, I would have recognized it.’ ‘And the bullet?’ I asked. ‘They are everywhere,’ Mohamed said. ‘Even if you are not looking for them, you will find them everywhere.’ While I had read the photo as another testimony to the destruction of Mogadishu, Mohamed was preoccupied with the sense of place that it depicted. The stones that moved him to take the picture are the stones that cover a road leading from the city to the ocean. That road stands for the light and easy times that Mohamed experienced in Mogadishu as a teenager, a time before the Barre regime’s violence against dissident clans broke out, and a time that he remembers in terms of the city’s beauty and cosmopolitan flair. It was the road along which he promenaded with friends on warm evenings, when people flocked towards the beach for picnics and games. Because the beach was such a popular place for all inhabitants of Mogadishu to meet and spend time together, and the road the best way to walk there from the city, Mohamed told me that anyone who has lived there will recognize the stones as part of the road that leads towards the Indian Ocean. Far from being another sad document of the breakdown of Somalia, Mohamed had taken the photo to evoke a sense of past unity, of the days when people from all clans literally walked down the same path. It calls on the memories of all Mogadishians, those who still live there and those whom the war has displaced, and it does so through *place*.

It would not take much effort to discard Mohamed’s engagement with the past through the bullet photograph as nostalgia, as a form of being stuck in the past. Yet his search for aesthetics in a bullet on the road of a completely ravaged city should not be written off as a refusal to see the real-life consequences of war and destruction too quickly. As I explain elsewhere, the nostalgic experience itself is not merely a sign of conservatism, but an active and dynamic interplay of self, time and world (Lems 2016). Rather than trying to work against the temporal ambiguity in Mohamed’s photograph, I believe that we can take the sense of instability and antinomy inherent in the image and the stories it evokes as a starting point for a more nuanced understanding of people’s dialectical

experiences of temporality. For Mohamed, who, on returning to a place he had left so many years ago, was confronted with another Mogadishu, walking through the ruins and taking photographs of them formed an active engagement with both place and time. Tim Edensor (2008, 129) points out that the act of walking through ruins creates strange and disruptive bodily experiences. The decaying, broken or strangely deformed materialities that are encountered in ruins provoke unfamiliar movements, sounds and sensibilities. He argues that ruins violate ‘the usual, common-sense boundaries that inform us about the nature of a place—between inside and outside, past and present, rural and urban, natural and cultural’ (129). While Edensor particularly focuses on urban ruins, the dynamics that he describes were fortified in Mohamed’s case: walking through war-torn Mogadishu, the ruins at once represented the absence and uncanny presence of the place’s former order.

Returning from Mogadishu, Mohamed often talked about how strange it was that everyday life seemed to continue as normal, that in the midst of all the conflict, the chaos and the fear, people still inhabited the place. This became particularly clear when he showed me a photograph depicting a small market place (Fig. 6.5). ‘I was interested in this, because with



Fig. 6.5 Small market in Mogadishu. Photograph taken by M.I., 2011

all the chaos and destruction, this still goes on,' Mohamed explained. 'People are still buying and selling.' Although the traders had to make do with the limited number of things they could find to sell, the sight of the few humble stalls gave Mohamed the impression that at least in some corners of the city, life went on as normal. Pointing at the children gathering around the table on the left-hand side of the image, he noted: 'For someone like this kid, for all these kids in fact, probably this is all they know. Because they were born at a time when all they experienced was this. So to them it's normal. But to me it's abnormal because I remember what this place was like.' To Mohamed, who had left the place so many years ago, this corroded Mogadishu and its inner workings felt alien. What had become normal to its inhabitants was abnormal to him. What had become normal to Mohamed was out of reach of the normality of those living in Mogadishu. Still, coming past the little market place, seeing people setting up stalls, selling the few things they could find, let some of the habits of the place that he remembered shine through. The photograph of the bullet captures similar dynamics: confronted with the ruins of Mogadishu, the place as Mohamed had known it was irrevocably gone. Over the years of war, the once unified city had disintegrated into a series of embattled clan enclaves, and as he was moving through the place with his camera, remembering the past, he was constantly brought back into this ruinous present. Mohamed told me that every step in the wrong direction, every crossing of an invisible boundary, every word to the wrong person was potentially dangerous. The bullet in the photograph is an unmistakable reminder of these dynamics. At the same time, however, the contours of the city's past were still spectrally present, for Mohamed carried with him the memories of what the place had been like.

The interplay of walking, remembering and taking photographs created a peculiar perspective through which Mohamed could make sense of the ambiguous landscape through which he was moving—not in terms of the smoothness of a story, but in terms of dialectical snapshots that represented past, present and future all at once. That he used the camera as a tool for this was perhaps not a coincidence. As Susan Sontag (2008, 9) writes in her essays *On Photography*, while photographs give people an imaginary possession of the past, they also help them to take possession of spaces in which they are insecure. She points out that the tourist

often takes photos, as the very activity of taking photographs is soothing and assuages the feeling of disorientation that is part of travelling. That Mohamed, travelling through the ruins of Mogadishu, decided to take a photo of a bullet on a stony path while thinking away the bullet was perhaps propelled by similar dynamics. By putting the camera between himself and Mogadishu, he distanced himself from the things that he was seeing while at the same time never losing sight of the place through which he was moving. Rather than writing off his photograph as a reactionary act of blotting out the real-life consequences of destruction, I agree with Pora Pétursdóttir and Bjørnar Olsen's (2014, 16) suggestion that the act of taking an image needs to be seen as a dialogical activity that is grounded in an intersubjective relationship between the photographer and his or her environment. As such, seeing 'does not take place in front of things, but always among them'. As Mohamed was moving among things in Mogadishu, he was actively making sense of this important memory place, while at the same time using the camera as a means to mediate this engagement.

Temporal Snapshots

Mohamed's image of the bullet on a stony path and his story behind it speak of a complex sense of time. Rather than seeing the past as something long gone, his photograph questions the absoluteness of the past. The image speaks of a sense of 'temporal disorder' (Edensor 2008, 137), a temporality that breaks through the divisions between past and present. It brings to the fore an essentially dialectical experience of time. For Mohamed, the rubble and ruins of Mogadishu do not simply represent pastness. Instead, they are loaded with different and overlapping layers of time and meaning. Mohamed's 'temporal snapshots' of Mogadishu bear a close resemblance to the dynamics that Gaston Gordillo describes in the context of his illuminating work on the experiences of people living among ruins at the Gran Chaco plain at the foothills of the Argentinian Andes. When he asked locals about the ruins that were scattered around the area, Gordillo (2014, 6) found that they struggled to understand the term 'ruin', particularly the spatial and temporal sensibility that it carried. People did not use the term to describe the decaying old buildings by

which they were surrounded. They could not connect to the homogenizing and abstract dimension of the concept of the ruin because their everyday engagement with ruined objects and places was sensual, habitual and bodily (7). Faced with people's affective relationships with ruins, Gordillo became critical of the common use of ruins as metaphors for pastness: 'I arrived there looking for debris from a distant past, and residents taught me that those nodes of rubble, recent and old, were part of the affective and social configurations of the present' (20).

In a similar vein, the ruins across which Mohamed walked in Mogadishu were not simply symbols of a pastness that had no links to the present. As the photograph of the bullet on the stony path so poignantly captures, the temporality with which Mohamed was confronted did not appear like a steady flow. For while the photograph evoked stories of Mogadishu's purified past, its present state of ruination never ceased to leak through. This ruinous present, however, refused narrative ordering. It appeared in short-lived, seemingly banal expressions that made their way into our conversations, such as through sighs, sudden moments of silence or abrupt expressions of desperation. 'It's a mess, isn't it?' Mohamed said in one such instance, interrupting his reminiscences about the houses of the wealthy that used to give the city a modern flair. 'We went backwards, I guess. I don't know how you can rebuild this. One way might be to just demolish it and start all over again. Probably it costs more to renovate. Because, you know, the power, the water, none of these things are functioning.'

Instead of fixing time, Mohamed's engagement with Mogadishu through photography unsettles ideas of a 'mummified past' (Baer 2002, 2), giving rise to highly mobile temporalities. Ulrich Baer (2002, 6) points out that while photography has often been linked to nostalgic attempts of freezing a moment in time, it should be looked at for its ability to move theories away from narrative models of experienced time. Against the notion of time as a steady flow, he notes that many people do not experience time as a sequence, but as 'explosive bursts' of events. He argues that photography has tremendous potential to capture such experiences without integrating them into a cohesive narrative. Photographs provide access to lived experiences that

are ‘explosive, instantaneous, distinct’ (6). Mohamed’s photograph speaks of such an experience of temporality. Just like the dialectical image in Benjamin’s work, the image of the bullet on the stony path is loaded with multiple temporalities: while it speaks of Mogadishu’s past ordering, it does not attempt to divert the gaze from the bullet, the ultimate sign of the city’s current ruinous state. For the photographer, the returnee who positions himself strangely within and yet outside the time and place of the image, the place depicted becomes something at once alienating and touching. Although the photograph reminded Mohamed of the unstoppable passing of time, it simultaneously brought layers from the past back to life. Rather than experiencing time like a succession of events into which the past can seamlessly weave itself, Mohamed switched back and forth between different temporalities. While Mohamed’s memories were firmly attached to the materiality and specificity of place, this place was not static or frozen in time. Instead, his dialectical image of Mogadishu sheds light on the ambiguous interplay of place, movement and time in everyday life.



Fig. 6.6 Armed bodyguards. Photograph taken by M.I., Mogadishu 2011

Storied Past

In the remainder of the chapter I will focus on one specific moment that happened as I was working with Omar on his life story. Unlike Mohamed's photograph, which grew from a visual engagement with the past and did not strive for narrative ordering, this instance was rooted in Omar's attempt to story his life. In laying the focus on the dynamics of storytelling, it allows us to have a closer look at the interplay of narrative and memory in everyday life. In doing so, this second dialectical image will intensify the contours of the notion of mobile temporalities.

From when I first met him in 2010, Omar was keen to participate in my project. I had received his phone number from a community worker who had told me that Omar was an important spokesperson for Somalis living in Melbourne and that he might be able to help me find participants for my project. At our first meeting I explained that I was planning to work with only a small group of people, that I wanted to get to know them well and focus on the particularity of their stories. 'All right,' he said, when I had finished my project outline, 'do you want to start now?' Having arrived with the expectation that Omar would help me find others to interview, I was surprised that he himself was interested in telling me his life story. Noticing my surprise, he laughed. 'I have lots of stories to tell,' he said.

Omar was a passionate storyteller. Throughout the two years we worked together on his life story, he captivated me with the elegance and poetry of his words. In line with many of the world's great storytellers, he embodied the characters that appeared and used the story to make the listener travel with him between places, countries and lifetimes. His stories focused on his childhood as the son of a respected trader in the Puntland region of Somalia, his student years in Mogadishu, his decision to leave Somalia shortly before the outbreak of the civil war, the coincidences that brought him to Melbourne in 1989, as well as his struggles for acceptance. In Australia, Omar studied international development and married a Somali woman from Mogadishu. Together with their five children, they lived in an outer suburb about thirty kilometres south-west of Melbourne's centre. With the outbreak of the war in Somalia, Omar

managed to resettle some of his family members through the Australian government's humanitarian programme. When I got to know him, his elderly mother, his sister and his brother's children were all living in close proximity to his house in Melbourne.

Throughout the many months we spent working on his life story, Omar created a detailed portrayal of the different stages of his life and the most crucial events that had shaped him. The main theme that ran through all of his stories, however, was an urge to understand the social, political and emotional downfall of his country. In telling me his life story, he was not only telling me his own story, but the story of the Somali community in Melbourne and the fate of his people in Puntland. In formulating such a comprehensive portrayal, Omar was careful to create a balanced view, one that did not feed into the poisonous interclan dynamics that have created so much friction among Somalis—in Somalia as well as in Melbourne. That Omar's stories were so self-confident and often evolved around core political questions concerning Somalia's condition can partly be explained by his position as a spokesperson and elder within the community of Somalis from the Puntland area in Melbourne. It is in this position that he regularly publishes articles disseminated through Somali websites that describe, analyse and comment on current political developments in Somalia and in the Somali diaspora. Like the most serious and politically loaded form of Somali poetry, the *gabay*, which is only performed by men and representatives of a clan, his stories reflect a persuasive effort to create political stability and harmonious relationships (Kapteijns 2010, 31). Within these dynamics the coherence of the narrative plays an important role: the storyteller has to follow strict rules, reproducing the historical events mentioned in the story as precisely as possible (Andrzejewski 2011). While Omar's storytelling efforts were driven by the desire to create such a balanced, aesthetically pleasing account, some memories simply refused to be integrated into the orderliness of this plot. As I turn to the second dialectical image, it will become clear that it is exactly from such moments when the temporal wholeness of a narrative collapses that we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which memories and narratives intersect.

Storying a Dust-State

The moment on which I will focus occurred during one of our recorded life storytelling sessions, as Omar was just telling me about his student years in Mogadishu. Before he decided to leave Somalia, he had spent crucial years of his life there as a student. Like Mohamed, he first talked about the city's former beauty and sophistication, about its cosmopolitan flair, about the carefree and fun times he had there as a young student, strolling through the bustling streets and making new friends wherever he went:

Mogadishu was a very peaceful city, it was a very green city, it was very clean. I remember, in 1982 or '83 Mogadishu was given the award for being the cleanest city in Africa. It used to have a very long beach, a very nice beach that you could spend time at during the hot months. The people were very social. Like in Italy, in Mogadishu you used go out in the nighttime, I never left my home before 8pm. The people used to sit peacefully in the streets, and the city was absolutely busy until midnight. Everything was opened. Schools, hospitals, any infrastructure you can think of. Anything that any city in the world has was there, in Mogadishu.

Yet this image from the past did not persist for long. Omar could not look back to the past and ignore what had happened afterwards. As he was remembering his student years, the present constantly came charging in with such force that it blocked all his efforts to create a coherent storyline. Contrary to Mohamed's experience, where the past interrupted the present, in Omar's case the present burst into the past. As a result, his story constantly jumped back and forth in time, creating a dialectical image of Mogadishu that refused to be interwoven into a narrative whole. In Omar's story fragments Mogadishu's ruinous state played a crucial role. The Mogadishu that Omar described was characterized by chaos, loss and displacement. It was a place that had become emptied of itself and its inner meanings to such a degree that he described it as literally dissolving into nothing but dust:

Mogadishu used to be very nice. And when I see the documentaries from Mogadishu now, I really cry. If you watch Mogadishu and really know

Mogadishu, you say: Actually, this is a dust-state. It really is a dust-state. Because all the streets that you knew are gone, all the buildings that you knew are just rubbish, broken, the windows are taken, the roof has been taken. The nice roads that used to run through the middle of the city have become abandoned—trees have grown there. Instead of two ways, one on the right and one on the left, there's nothing left. The cars go their way, they just drive wherever they can find some space, because the trees are growing here or there. Hopeless! I cannot understand it.

While listening to Omar's distressed story fragments, the difficulty and pain of telling stories of a place disintegrating into dust were palpable. How can we story such a place, where human habits and rules have made way for wilderness; where beauty has been replaced by piles of rubbish; where roofs, built to protect and shelter people, have fallen down on them; and where there is no right or left any more, for *there is nothing left*? The place that Omar pictures, a place that ceases to have loveable habits, refuses narration. If, as Walter Benjamin (2007b, 83–84) has suggested, stories grow from experience, the experience of being in a place like Mogadishu, a place where violence and destruction mark people's everyday life, cannot be shared. Rather than seeing the lack of narrative continuity marking Omar's memories of Mogadishu as a shortcoming, I believe that it has something profound to say about the essentially mobile character of lived time.

Many recent publications on ruins value them because of their capability to produce alternative approaches to memory that do not solely rely on coherent narrative representations of the past. One of the most outspoken critics of such approaches is Alfredo Gonzalez-Ruibal (2008, 250), who questions scholars' obsession with stories. While he recognizes the importance of storytelling for creating alternative understandings of the past, he notes that the strong emphasis on narratives in the last decade has been to the disadvantage of other modes of engagement, particularly the materiality of the past. He argues that 'there is a risk of saturating memory with a proliferation of narratives and details, which may eventually neutralize and trivialize the past'. He therefore suggests that there is a need for new approaches that are not restricted to the sense of completeness towards which many narratives work, but that are open to the

partial, fragmentary and uncanny. While I agree with Gonzalez-Ruibal that a focus on the materiality of ruins has the capability to lay open the dialectics of time, I believe that we need to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. While Gonzalez-Ruibal reverts to questioning the usefulness of storytelling as a method *per se*, I believe that we need to question romantic notions of storytelling that erase the often fragmented, incoherent moments of the telling. As Omar's attempts to story a 'dust-state' show, such instances are not just part and parcel of the process of storytelling, but have the capability to create a nuanced picture of people's meaning-making processes. In a similar vein, Brian Neville and Johanne Villeneuve (2002, 17) describe the accounts growing from people's active engagement with ruination and decay as 'waste-site' stories—stories that do not follow the linearity of a narrative thread that is often associated with memory: "Waste" produces stories inchoately—stories both multiple and singular, stories not without form, not without plot or puzzle, if often only the puzzle of an impossible story. The relationship between waste and stories becomes metonymical, stories emerge out of traces and refuse' (17).

Omar found it difficult to find words for a place that had been struck by such violent events—so difficult, indeed, that he refrained from indulging in reminiscences of Mogadishu's past beauty. He told me that he and his Somali friends often reminded each other not to get lost in memories of the old Mogadishu, the Mogadishu that they had loved so much and that, for so many Somalis, represents the hope of a unified nation:

People are telling me: 'Look, the Mogadishu that you have in mind is not there anymore.' It's gone. Dead and buried. Unfortunately the people who took over Mogadishu forcefully from Siyaad Barre did nothing except for physically burying the Somalis' name and reputation, putting it in a grave and then leaving it. Now anything and everything bad can be related to Somalia, anything and everything that you can think of. Why? Somalia used to be a well-respected country in the international community. Where is it now?

Omar's back-and-forth movements between stories of Mogadishu's glorious times and his refusal to indulge in such narratives highlight the

difficulties of embedding his memories in a coherent storyline that interweaves past, present and future. While stemming from an entirely different medium of remembering than Mohamed's photograph, this moment again highlights the disruptive, non-linear and frantic ways in which the different tenses constantly push and shove against each other. In a Somalia that is *dead and buried*, any attempt to bring in moments from the past to alleviate the pain has to collide forcefully with the insurmountable horrors of a present in which Somalia has been turned into an abandoned graveyard. Omar's dialectical image of Mogadishu does not just struggle to include the past. In literally speaking of the city's death, it also frustrates any attempt to imagine its future. Rather than interweaving the past into a coherent storyline, the second moment of lived remembering on which I zoomed in shows how the present can interrupt acts of remembering, leading to the breakdown of narrative continuity. Omar's description of Mogadishu as dead and buried suggests that such temporal interruptions do not only affect our personal histories, but have the power to challenge collective and institutionalized forms of remembrance.

Epilogue

I will end this chapter the way it started: with the snippet of a moment that illuminates the complex and incoherent ways in which memories make their ways into people's life-worlds. As Omar wrapped up that day's storytelling, he ended on an anecdote, a small side note that appeared out of the blue and had no real beginning or end. While Mohamed's photographs tell stories about a former resident's actual return to Mogadishu, this story fragment imagines such a return, leading to a completely different image of the place. It is a place that has been so severely ruined that the past has been completely wiped out. While people like him, who have left the country, had the means to keep memories from Mogadishu's past, the people who still live there have forgotten. The story fragment shows how the decay that has befallen Mogadishu has not produced merely material, but also human or social ruins (Navaro-Yashin 2009, 5; Stoler 2008, 204), leading to the impossibility of creating a coherent national narrative:

I was talking to a friend the other day, he told me a very interesting story. He told me about a lady who came back from Canada to Mogadishu, and someone who used to live with her in Ottawa was in Mogadishu at that time. She asked him to take her around. So he got a driver and a bodyguard to help them in case they were attacked. The friend took her to all the landmarks—the hotels, the restaurants, the main roads, the government buildings and whenever he showed her something she was crying. The security guard asked: ‘Why is she crying?’ And the friend said: ‘She is crying because she remembers. She’s crying whenever she sees the places that she used to know.’ The guard said: ‘I don’t understand what you’re talking about. I have been here for the last fifteen years and it has always been like this.’ You know what I mean? For him Mogadishu is like this. He cannot understand why she is crying because he came to Mogadishu and it was like this. So what my friend was saying to me was: ‘Omar, the people who are now in Mogadishu are not you and I, they don’t know Mogadishu, for them Mogadishu is like this one.’

Omar’s anecdote adds another layer to the dialectics of lived time: it suggests that the incoherence and non-linearity inherent in individual acts of remembering need to be extended to wider national or collective memories. This becomes particularly apparent in a place like Mogadishu, where the ruination of the city has come to represent the ruination of an entire country. Omar’s story fragment speaks of the impossibility of shared memories when there is such discrepancy between those who remained in Mogadishu and those who had the means to be mobile and move on. The mobility of some is mirrored by the stuckness of others, creating a breach that becomes impossible to bridge. Omar’s and Mohamed’s experiences have shown that the sense of rupture inherent in places like Mogadishu that are marked by chronic crisis actively provoke the dialectical, non-linear and explosive forms of memory for which Walter Benjamin was searching in his *Arcades Project*. Certain forms of mobility (such as displacement) can therefore form an important entry point into alternative understandings of memory, temporality and history.

Focusing on two brief, mundane moments of remembering, I have used this chapter to move towards a phenomenology of lived time. Turning the spotlight on minor modes of existence has highlighted the ways in which time enters everyday lives and shapes engagements with

the world. It has shown that time is often not experienced like a flow, a seamless succession of events that can be ordered into a story plot. Omar's and Mohamed's experiences suggest that interruptions and breaks, paradoxes and silences, as well as the constant back and forth in time, form an essential part of acts of remembering. Because of this continuous overlapping of the tenses, I have argued that rather than placing the focus on the mobility of the people who remember, we should turn our attention to the mobile character of temporalities. While dialectical images of the past are particularly apparent in the lives of people who have experienced temporal, spatial and emotional rupture, I do not believe that the production of such images is unique to mobile people. As the examples in this chapter suggest, the lived reality is more complex. Despite leading lives that are marked by a heightened sense of mobility, Mohamed and Omar's memories do not turn into free-floating, fully deterritorialized entities. Their dialectical engagement with Mogadishu's ruination shows that memories and places remain intimately interwoven, even in the face of displacement. As such, this chapter has created a somewhat paradoxical picture of the interplay of movement and time: while lived temporalities are hyper-mobile, mobile people and their memories remain firmly attached to the specificity of place.

Note

1. Because of the dangers linked to Mohamed's involvement in Somali politics, I have refrained from mentioning his full name and have left out details that could compromise his safety. After discussing this issue with him, we decided to credit his photographs with an abbreviation that he found appropriate.

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7

'We Do Really Need Hollywood': Filmmaking and Remembrance of Acts of Genocide in the Kurdish Transnation

Maria Six-Hohenbalken

This chapter deals with the challenges of commemorialization for the subsequent generations in a post-genocide society.¹ Today, 25 years after the genocidal processes in Iraqi Kurdistan,² the next generation is confronted with international efforts to acknowledge the genocide and the challenge of engaging in just and appropriate memory work, as well as the shared objective of shaping national narratives.

Owing to various political and socio-economic constraints, young people have come to see Kurdish film as a good means of overcoming obstacles to shaping national narratives and elaborating on an appropriate memory. Films dedicated to genocidal processes are an essential means of documenting and conveying witness accounts, establishing knowledge, tackling sensitive topics and opening up transnational discursive spaces.

The key aim of this chapter is to explore the interconnectedness between memory and mobility by examining transnational dynamics of the memory work of and for young people. The interlinkage between

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mobility and memory addresses various layers: the desired international recognition of crimes against humanity committed by the Baath regime, questions of (national) narratives—in the Kurdish case—related to the shaping of transnational ‘memoryscapes’, and the role of the victims and their families in both Iraqi Kurdistan and in the Kurdish diaspora.

From the very beginning, the development of Kurdish film has been an extraordinary example of transnational entanglements. Political and organizational obstacles at home made it impossible for critical film-making to take place anywhere but in exile. Documentaries and films about genocidal processes were initially made abroad and have only been produced within Iraqi Kurdistan since about 2005. Today, Kurdish film festivals in Kurdistan and in the diaspora have become essential spaces to shape a (trans)national memoryscape.

The empirical material on which I draw in scrutinizing film as a mnemonic medium is based on fieldwork in Iraqi Kurdistan and in the Kurdish diaspora, including interviews with the younger generation as well as participation in film events in diasporic settings.³

Genocidal Processes and Their Aftermath

During the Second Gulf War (1990–1991), the Iraqi regime initiated a genocidal campaign against the Kurds, which included policies for expulsions, deportations and mass executions. Named after the eighth Sura in the Koran, al-Anfal (the spoil), this policy was called ‘Operation Anfal’. In the course of the eight campaigns of ‘Operation Anfal’ in Iraq in 1987–1988, it is estimated that the Iraqi regime murdered 182,000 Kurds and 4500 villages were destroyed. Human Rights Watch (1993) and academics (e.g. van Bruinessen 1994) have argued that ‘Operation Anfal’ was an act of genocide carried out by the Baath regime under the guise of military operations; however, internationally, only a few states (e.g. Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom) have recognized al-Anfal as genocide. Al-Anfal included expulsions, mass deportations, detention of the civilian population in camps and the ‘disappearance’ of a large number of civilians, most of whom were assassinated in mass executions in southern Iraq (Hardi 2011; Human Rights Watch 1993). Hardly any information about ‘Operation Anfal’ was available abroad at

that time, but this policy attracted worldwide attention when chemical weapons were used in attacks against the region and specifically in the town of Halabja, where it is estimated that 5000 civilians were killed and 7000 injured on a single day in March 1988.

Owing to political instability following the Gulf War, it took several years for the Kurds and the international community to reveal the facts of these acts of genocide.⁴ Similarly, it took several years for the fate of those who disappeared to be uncovered (Mlodoch 2014). After 'Operation Anfal', the Kurdish population faced economic hardship, political insecurity and the ongoing threat of the Baath regime until a UN Protection Zone was established in northern Iraq. Economic deprivation and insecurity continued during the subsequent civil war between the two leading Kurdish parties until 1999. The first years of autonomy thereafter saw various challenges: the devastation of local economies, agriculture and the housing sector; the lack of infrastructure and transport; as well as damage to health, social and educational systems. At the same time, people were suffering from the long-term effects not only of poison gas attacks—chronic disease, cancer, infertility and congenital abnormalities, among others—but also of persecution, living in detention camps and the disappearance of family members whose fate is still unknown. In this post-genocide phase, it was not possible to tackle questions of reconciliation, recompense and commemoration.

Andrea Fischer-Tahir argues that for several years the acts of genocide within al-Anfal were hardly addressed in national Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdish public discourse. At the same time, however, the poison gas attacks against the town of Halabja formed a fundamental reference point for collective remembrance and identity. In contrast to al-Anfal in general, in which the Iraqi regime exploited intra-Kurdish rivalries in its persecution of Kurds, Halabja in particular became synonymous with Kurdish suffering, because on that occasion the Iraqi regime did not differentiate between opposition Kurds and those loyal to the government (Fischer-Tahir 2003, 2012). However, considering that several high-ranking Kurdish collaborators in the Iraqi army have not been convicted and still live better than many of the victims, the question of complicity has yet to be resolved.

The shaping of (Kurdish) national narratives in the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan has been almost impossible due to the specific

political situation. When amnesty was declared,⁵ not all perpetrators were prosecuted for their crimes. Furthermore, overarching questions of transitional justice were not addressed and concrete reconciliation initiatives were not implemented.

Evidence from other post-genocidal societies reveals that developing canonical memories is challenging, because it entails trying to convey and mediate experiences of such extreme violence that they can hardly be expressed. Caruth (1995) and Das (2007) state that traumatic experiences cannot be witnessed in a straightforward way—such experiences need to be voiced in a language that is somehow literary and that cannot be reduced to the thematic content of texts. Violent experiences can become muted or find expression in subtle signs and metaphorical language (Das 2007). Post-genocidal court proceedings have shown that victims often cannot express their experiences to meet the expectations of judges and persecutors, for example by narrating their testimony along a linear timeline. Therefore, we need to consider whether other forms of expression, such as artwork, literature or media, might offer an alternative way to communicate victims' experiences more perceptively and comprehensibly.

By the mid-2000s, Iraqi Kurdistan had become a relatively stable and prosperous region; that is, until 2014, when terrorist groups associated with the so-called Islamic State began to attack Kurdish territory. Institutions dedicated to the fateful past have only begun to be set up in the last decade: the Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs⁶ and memorials and information centres, for instance those in Halabja or Chemchamal established by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Nevertheless, there are still no specific academic institutions, such as a politically independent central archive or a museum—often called for by activists and scientists for storing existing evidence of the genocide—on a national level.⁷ Parts of the archival evidence documenting the mass murder carried out by the Iraqi regime were found by Kurdish Peshmerga,⁸ but were handed over to US forces for safety reasons in the early 1990s. These documents were restored in digital form and handed over to the Iraqi Kurdistan authorities only as recently as October 2014. This digitized archive comprises the contents of '18 metric tons of documents stored in 2500 cardboard boxes containing approximately 5.5 million pages of files from the former Security Torture Center of the Saddam Hussein

Regime' (Hennerbichler 2014, 503). As this material is now available in Iraqi Kurdistan, academics and institutions have expressed an interest in undertaking research that could contribute to a more comprehensive and less fragmented (Kurdish and Iraqi) discourse.

Acknowledging al-Anfal as an act of genocide on an international level is still an open issue, as exemplified in 2011 when an international conference to discuss the legal recognition of crimes of genocide against Iraqi Kurds was organized at the United Nations in Geneva.⁹ This longing for international recognition implies the expectation of effects on the national level, including the shaping of hegemonic narratives and tackling sensitive topics, such as the question of violence against women.¹⁰

Furthermore, the dynamics within the (heterogeneous) Kurdish transnation¹¹—that is, Kurds in neighboring nation states in Turkey, Iran and Syria as well as the diaspora (Cohen 2008)—need to be considered. In general, exiled Kurdish communities and the Kurdish diaspora in Europe and North America have been crucial in shaping national ideologies, establishing media production (television and radio stations, satellite channels) and setting up academic institutions—especially in times when the countries of origin repressed almost all scientific, political or cultural work related to Kurdish issues. Therefore, diasporic networks and transnational flows play a significant role in the memory work of the Kurdish transnation.

Transnational Memoryscapes and the Specific Concerns of the Young Generation

Applying Argenti's term 'memoryscape' (Argenti and Schramm 2011) to capture the complexity of memory-building in the Kurdish transnation, with all the (dis)junctions, fractures and flows inherent in different historiographies, ideologies and discourses, allows for processes to be examined at the macro level while dealing with the local effects and transnational entanglements of violence, suffering and remembrance. Exploring the interrelation between memory and mobility, we have to ask whether and how transnational commitments in general and transnational media production in particular potentially contribute to the development of more diversified and less homogenized (trans)national narratives, thus

strengthening victims' voice and agency. Furthermore, we need to take a closer look at transnational entanglements in the context of film production, and examine the role of its international consumption in crossing boundaries within an ethnic group and shaping a memoryscape in both the Kurdish transnation and beyond.

In the course of my ongoing fieldwork on the intergenerational transmission of details of traumatic events and the knowledge of subsequent generations in Iraqi Kurdistan and the Kurdish diaspora in Germany and Austria,¹² I interviewed several activists and members of the second generation. A number of them referred to documentaries and films when discussing the processes of genocide. This was also the case in group interviews and discussions¹³ with university students in Iraqi Kurdistan in April 2014. When I asked about the challenges of memorialization and their remembrance of genocidal processes, one crucial statement in one of these group interviews was: 'We do really need Hollywood.' The term 'Hollywood film' refers to a feature film instead of a documentary, such as *Schindler's List* rather than documentaries on the Shoah.

Almost all of the students interviewed in Iraqi Kurdistan complained about their lack of knowledge and argued that the contemporary history of Iraqi Kurdistan and 'Operation Anfal' was not taught in school; in 2014 the Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs was working on incorporating this into the curriculum. Most of the students agreed that factual knowledge in general and their personal knowledge in particular were rather limited. Several interviewees in Kurdistan and in the diaspora confirmed that documentaries and films are important sources for acquiring and improving knowledge. Consequently, they rely on documentaries, films and websites rather than books or written documentation. What they do know is partly shaped by incidents that they did not experience themselves, transmitted in the form of narrations and witness accounts as well as tacit knowledge; that is, experiences that are not explicitly verbalized but are communicated via lived memories (Kidron 2003), bodily habits, gestures and muted signs (Bendix 1996). It was, therefore, hardly surprising that when I asked about the challenges of remembering these events and their social repercussions, my interview partners could hardly verbalize the 'muted' or 'metaphorical' expressions they experienced, but often recalled film scenes that had most touched them. In terms of

the difficulties of remembering how, what, when and how to bring the acknowledgement of al-Anfal as an act of genocide to an international public, they shared the opinion that international film production in general and the 'Hollywood' genre in particular could help to address the issue of genocide as well as mediate it to a wider public.

Herein a crucial question relates to how knowledge, experience and memory processes are interlinked (Connerton 1989, 2009). In terms of conveying the parental generation's experience of lifelong suffering, the question was how to find the appropriate words to express the unconceivable experiences of which they had learned through metaphorical language or bodily expressions. University students in Sulaymaniyah (Iraqi Kurdistan) referred to survivor testimonies they had watched in documentaries. To a lesser extent, they made reference to testimonies and experiences they had heard or read from survivors, and only some conceded that they are from 'Anfal families' without further elaborating the family fate.

Conveying the long-term effects of genocide, lifelong suffering and specifically the topic of 'involuntary memories' (in reference to Marcel Proust's literary work), various participants in group discussions explained, for example, a scene from a documentary that most of them had watched the day before. 'Involuntary memories' are understood as events that are unintentionally recalled; these memories or parts of them come up when cues, such as objects, tastes or smells, are encountered. The students told me the story of a mother who could no longer eat cucumber. Being forced to live in a detention camp without adequate food, her small child longed for cucumber to quench his thirst. The mother could not find any cucumber and gave him a piece of a green plastic she found in the garbage to chew—the child died in her arms some hours later. When recalling such film scenes or narratives, the participants paradigmatically expressed the suffering of the older generation and simultaneously conveyed their helplessness.

In recent years, films have focused increasingly on testimonies highlighting the suffering and coping strategies of female survivors and children.¹⁴ My young interviewees critically addressed the fate of those people, who have for a long time been disadvantaged in national narratives, namely, widows raising their children alone or girls who have been

abducted; then they recalled a documentary about young girls sold to nightclubs in Arab countries or children who disappeared and are still missing.

Although national and international conferences in Kurdistan (e.g. 2012 and 2013) addressed the issue of how families coped with al-Anfal, the specific burdens of the young generation received no special attention. This is not only a question of time and memory in a post-genocide society,¹⁵ but is also connected to an ideological challenge that the young generation faces. As descendants of Anfal families,¹⁶ their suffering and attempts to cope with their childhood are overshadowed by the general notion that the young generation is the hope of the nation and its struggle.¹⁷ According to the logic of this notion, their parents and grandparents were active in the Kurdish resistance and suffered for them, so young Kurds should be proud, strong and appreciative.¹⁸ As a result, the young generation found itself confronted with the ascribed role of maintaining the national image of victimhood and pride, while having only a limited voice in the memory work itself.

Therefore, the 'Hollywood' argument raised in group discussions is also associated with feelings of helplessness, disappointment and constraints concerning their agency. It is precisely this complex and ambiguous situation that makes young people look for 'input from outside'—in the shape of international films symbolically referred to as 'Hollywood'—to better cope with the 'national mnemonic burden' and claim an active role in the commemoration process. The combination of international attention and mediation within the Kurdish transnation should make it possible to connect the coping process of al-Anfal to international discourses on human rights violations and legal recognition, and thus have an impact on the regional level. Aside from documentaries, film as a mnemonic medium is seen as having the potential to address the various layers of both individual and collective suffering.

In the next section, I start with the key elements of transnational film production before analysing two films, made as Kurdish transnational films.

'Kurdish Cinema': From Accented Cinema to (Trans)national Filmmaking

Hassanpour (1996) sees the beginnings of 'Kurdish cinema' in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, with the exile and diaspora assuming a key role. Characteristic therefore are the 'imaginary geography', exilic narratives and nostalgic pasts (Naficy 1991, 289). Political developments in the nation states of western Asia where Kurds live led to various policies repressing the Kurdish identity and national movement. Writers, journalists, filmmakers and activists were obstructed and often forbidden to elaborate on 'Kurdish' topics or publish in the Kurdish language.¹⁹ Printing houses, initiatives for language development and a rather critical press were short-lived, and could only be established in the European diaspora. Thus, this development in Kurdish societies shows the close interconnection between migratory contexts and 'mnemonic production' from the very beginning.²⁰

The development of 'Kurdish cinema' in exile was above all limited by lack of funding. Iraqi and Syrian Kurds who had studied at film academies in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia or Germany in the 1960s were forced to take refuge in Europe, where they produced reports and documentaries (Shawi 1993). In 1992, Nizammetin Ariç entered the international stage with *A Song for Beko* (Kurdish: *Klamek ji bo Beko*). His public performances of Kurdish songs in Turkey had led to accusations of separatism and he sought refuge in Berlin where he wrote the script to *A Song for Beko*, which is considered to be the world's first movie in Kurdish. It was also the first to deal with the persecution of Kurds in Iraq and the poison gas attack at Halabja, thus laying the foundation for a tradition that several Kurdish films have followed since. Aside from sometimes fictitious storylines, Kurdish films had a documentary character in the first decades—an approach called 'accented cinema'—and they applied an encoded, aesthetic visual language. Several films about the genocidal persecution of Kurds in Iraq still embody a synthesis between documentaries and movies with a fictional narrative character.²¹

Documentaries about al-Anfal show some of the characteristics that Felman has discussed in her article on *Shoah* (1995), Lanzmann's *magnum*

opus. They apply an oral approach with a focus on conversation to learn and communicate the truth; their temporality intentionally disrupts a historically chronological order—that is, a linear temporality—that makes it possible to go into ever-deepening levels of detail. This approach resembles a kind of psychoanalytic model of disentangling diverse mnemonic layers. It works at the limit of understanding, as a refusal of understanding is considered inherent to remembering.

Since the proclamation of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in 2005, the production of films became possible²² and was even financially supported by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Consequently, ‘Kurdish cinema’ experienced a shift from ‘accented cinema’ to nationally promoted film production. Iraqi-Kurdish filmmakers outlined the challenges of documenting al-Anfal in terms of national remembrance as follows: the Baath regime made sure that there was very little filmed evidence of the Anfal operations and hardly any original material to reconstruct relevant scenes.²³ Moreover, the regime went to considerable effort to deny the Anfal operations and produced films of faked everyday life in Kurdish villages.

Working on or including film documents that testify to the genocidal ‘Operation Anfal’ meant establishing a ‘counter-history’ to the national history of Iraq. The Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs has recently planned to promote the production of at least two long documentaries for an international audience. Indeed, since 2003 we can detect a rather fast pace of development: three new film academies; an international film festival at Dohuk; internationally renowned filmmaker Bahman Gobadi settling in Iraqi Kurdistan; and a growing number of documentaries and films produced in Iraqi Kurdistan.²⁴ Furthermore, films about the genocidal persecution either in Kurdistan or in the diaspora open up a transnational discursive space. Produced by Kurds from abroad or in Iraqi Kurdistan and presented at various international film festivals and Kurdish film weeks in the diaspora, they contribute to a transnational discursive space in which these memories are mediated. In the next section, I will discuss outcomes based on two documentary films. The filmmakers are Kurds from Iran and Syria. Both filmmakers, who were children during al-Anfal, are eager to bring the topic to an international public and to contribute to a Kurdish transnational memoryscape. In

both films presented here, issues are explored that were often raised and discussed very emotionally in my interviews. After elaborating on the films' messages and aesthetics, I will give an insight into the discussions that these films evoke in diasporic settings.

Films Dedicated to al-Anfal

1001 sîv/1001 Apples

1001 sîv/1001 Apples was directed by Kurdish filmmaker Taha Karimi²⁵ and is dedicated to the obstacles to remembering as well as the challenges of forgiving and reconciling. Transcending the character of a documentary, the multilayered aesthetics of this film develop around the testimonies of five survivors of mass killings in the course of al-Anfal, during which an estimated 182,000 individuals 'disappeared' and were targets of mass killings. Only ten men escaped the mass graves and they were taken by Human Rights Watch to the United States to protect their lives. An email message stating 'We were supposed to be killed so many years ago' is shown in one of the first scenes that brings the witnesses together.²⁶ Five of the survivors—Faraj Mohamad Asiz, Qahar Khalil Mohammad, Hashem Mohammad Rashid, Abdolkarim Nife Hassan and Ababaker Ali Saeid—gave their testimonies, parts of which are integrated in alternating scenes. Knowledge about al-Anfal is mediated in various ways based on email correspondence and Skype chats between the survivors—also symbolizing the transnational nature of the memoryscape—as well as by integrating original film material from detention camps or recordings made during the exhumation of mass graves.

In the first scene of the film, the viewer looks down onto a truck full of red apples. Men in traditional dress are driving through the amazing landscape and distribute apples and cloves to villagers from the back of a lorry. They are looking for those who have lost family members during al-Anfal and offer an apple for each lost person. The cloves are meant to decorate the apples. They visit the elderly, those alone and parents with children, while always asking just one question: 'How many have you lost?' Then the decorated apples are recollected. The protagonists

cross the Zab river, which leads to the Tigris in Kurdish northern Iraq, passes through Baghdad and continues to the Shatt al-Arab in southern Iraq. This symbolizes the route to the centre of the planned destruction and to the south, where most of the mass graves with victims are still located. This symbolic approach implies questions of responsibility, reconciliation, recompense, the open case of the disappeared and unearthed mass graves. Sharing the apples symbolizes traditional and even ancient meanings of forgiveness and reconciliation, as Fazil Moradi²⁷ stresses, and the mourning and remembrance of every single person. Furthermore, in today's Kurdistan apples are symbols not only of nature and well-being but also of destruction. Several survivors recall the poison gas attacks and emphasize how the toxic chemical mixture smelled of apples.²⁸ Historical facts, survivor testimonies, accounts of individual loss and social suffering are arranged around the symbolic acts of bringing apples and cloves to survivors and recollecting them. The conversation between the protagonists and several survivors is rather short, sometimes only in muted signs.

Taha Karimi uses a strong artistic language, which transcends documentary cinema and leads the viewer into a hyper-realistic sphere. This style is not intended to exaggerate, but instead is typical of hyper-realistic art production and reveals a sphere behind the realistic—the sphere of suffering, of timelessness, of the impossibility of both sharing and narrating the victims' experiences. Using this aesthetic language, he transcends national or cultural boundaries to share the message that dealing with acts of genocide cannot remain a national issue, but must become an issue for all of humanity. These interpolations of a cinematic art language should transmit the incomprehensible and intangible nature of such experiences, which can hardly be mediated in an ordinary language but need a somewhat literary language (Caruth 1995; Das 2007). In terms of temporality, a circular rather than a linear concept of time is used, jumping forwards and backwards to show the past in the present, thereby also taking a scientific approach and revealing the Janus-like character of memory work, of looking forwards and looking back simultaneously. The protagonists are members of the Iraqi Mass Graves Survivors Group and keep in constant email contact with a survivor in the United States who reports on his endeavour to bring the case to the attention of the United Nations and the international public. This underpins the director's inten-

tion to contribute to international recognition of the genocide. The film was produced in Iraqi Kurdistan, but its crew crosses national boundaries: Karimi is a Kurd born in Iran who worked in Iraqi Kurdistan; and the film music was produced by Mikail Aslan, a famous Kurdish musician from Turkey who lives in Germany. The film has received several awards at international film festivals.²⁹

Taha Karimi died at the age of 37 in a car accident just after the film was released. Following the director's fatal accident, the film team decided to honour his work by putting together the raw material for *1001 Apples* in a documentary realized in five parts and organized by the filmmaker Ako Kurdistani.³⁰ These documentary films of about thirty minutes each are also available online. They provide a more detailed insight than *1001 Apples* into how the genocide was planned and achieved. Original film material, thus footage of killings undertaken by the Baath regime, is integrated and the role of Kurdish collaborators is more precisely addressed. In the absence of a national archive of survivors' testimonies,³¹ Karimi's film and the five-part documentary series serve as a memory resource by offering both information on the genocide and an artistic mediation of grief, silence and commemoration.

Other privately organized, individual initiatives counteract the absence of public archives and collect witness accounts, thus contributing to the mediated (trans)national memoryscape. Arif Qurbany, a well-known researcher on al-Anfal in Kurdistan, collected and published the accounts of Anfal witnesses (e.g. 2014) and conducted an interview with Taimur, a protagonist in *1001 Apples*. Taimur was a young boy of 12 years old when he was imprisoned at a camp in southern Iraq. He is the only child survivor of the mass killings.³²

In my interviews with students, Taimur's written and filmed testimony figured as the voice and representative for the suffering of this generation. Often they relied on Taimur's accounts, they renarrated his story, reflected on his experiences, often without referring to him explicitly. His claims seemed to be their claims and they shared his critique on the current handling of the issue. He was, furthermore, the voice who narrated these experiences, made these claims to the public in America (where he stayed for several years) and then brought them to an international public. At several points in his narrations, my interview partners could hack

in and raise their own arguments. His enduring emotional relationship with his Arab foster family is a symbol of resistance against the purely nationalist, one-dimensional search for good and evil. Taimur seemed to be untouchable in his criticism of current political developments because he is not only widely known, but also holds a position as the only witness to the mass murder of women and children. His testimony in documentaries and books reflects a certain authority for conveying the traumatic experiences and stressing the claims of child survivors. In the group interviews, it became clear that those students whose parents did not speak about or whose parents had not experienced genocidal persecution themselves relied on the information transmitted in documentaries and films, of which Taimur's narratives were a prime example.

Halabja, the Lost Children

Another example of the transnational mediation of memory work through film is the documentary *Halabja, the Lost Children* by Akram Hidou,³³ a member of the Kurdish diaspora born in Syria who lives in Germany. When Halabja was attacked with chemical weapons in March 1988, 5000 people died and more than 7000 were injured. Iranian soldiers and journalists entering the town days after the attack were the first witnesses to the mass murder. While the journalists documented the destruction, the military units took seriously injured victims to Iran. People were suffering from severe burns and the poison gas had damaged both their respiratory systems and their eyes. Due to the initial chaos and ongoing confusion, some of those who lost their loved ones were only able to find them years later, while others are still waiting. Soldiers took unattended babies and infants to Iran, where they were adopted by Iranian families. Some children still do not know who their parents are, because the Iranian government is reluctant to open up all the cases. Therefore, families whose children disappeared still cannot be sure whether they survived the catastrophe, and thus keep waiting for their son or daughter to return. In trying to grasp the multiple layers of long-term effects of the poison gas attack on Halabja, Akram Hidou approaches the topic from different angles and documents the suffering, the hope and the coping mechanisms of several victims in their daily lives. He thus succeeds in

showing the deep impact of the catastrophe and how it has affected both the town of Halabja and the society as a whole.

The main protagonists are 'Ali' Simnako Mohammed Ahmed, one of the missing children of Halabja who grew up in Iran, and the family of Mamosta Fakhradin, who lost a daughter and a son. Their lives and suffering are presented as paradigmatic for all the inhabitants of Halabja. When 'Ali' learned from his foster parents that he had been adopted as a baby after Iranian forces had found him unattended two days after the poison gas attack, he decided to return to Halabja. The teacher Mamosta Fakhradin actively champions an initiative to return the 'lost children' to Iraqi Kurdistan.³⁴ As several families are still searching for their sons of a similar age to Ali, finding his parents turned out to be an issue that involved the whole town. A DNA test finally brought certainty and Ali found his mother.

Hidou interviewed and accompanied survivors during these difficult processes and recorded their horrible experiences, their search, sorrow and grief for the missing children as well as their longing for certainty and their incredible ways of coping with the catastrophe from one day to the next. The interviews with survivors are not only witness accounts but also show their daily suffering and habits, the long-term effects on society and the transnational entanglements of the poison gas attack. Habits often mentioned in my interviews include mothers still preparing beds for their lost children or hoping for their return whenever they hear a knock at the door.

The documentary begins with street scenes in Halabja today and the viewer learns of the omnipresence of remembrance in the city. Ali visits the cemetery and stands in front of a gravestone where one name is crossed out. 'Here is the grave of Simnako Mohammed Ahmed, until two months ago this was my grave, I was a martyr. When it was clear that I had survived, my name was deleted,' Ali recounts. At the same time, scenes of Fakhradin's daily family life are shown, with the mother preparing food and the father, Mamosta Fakhradin, leaving for a stroll. He collects small, colourful pebbles and explains, 'Every piece of this soil tells a story about a victim. Here lay my daughter when her soul left her body. This place is sacred to me.' He turns the collected pebbles to powder and uses them in his artwork. The documentary unfolds in the time after Ali's

initial visit to Halabja. Akram Hidou follows Ali on his way through the city, encountering people who refer to him as 'the son of Halabja'. The interviews in the film are complemented by original recordings by Iranian journalists in 1988. The latter are still the only documentation of the massacre (aside from Iraqi recordings of the bombings of Halabja and other villages from afar). Thus, finding lost children as well as evidence and memory work is in essence a cross-border issue with Iran.

The camera swings back and forth between street conversations from which we learn of the fate of several people, their endless waiting and hoping that the missing children will return, and close-up interviews with survivors realized almost like testimonies. The director built a close, intimate and trustful relationship with his interlocutors. As Hidou has stressed in public discussions, he was mainly concerned with whether he had been able to reflect the feelings, the suffering and the various dimensions of the catastrophe with empathy and sensitivity. The dramaturgic approach resembles a mosaic-like, discontinuous narrative, culminating at the societal level by documenting the procedure for detecting biological family connections. The release of the results of Ali's DNA test was arranged as a public event by the Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs at which five families hoped to find evidence that Ali was their lost son and brother. The revelation of Ali's fate brought back hope to the society and, while it strengthened the determination of those waiting for their children to return, it also opened up old wounds. Similarly, Hidou raises questions of reconciliation, compensation from the Iraqi government and the complicity of Kurdish collaborators. The film brings together various factional traces, mediates the agency of the survivors in recollection and representation and, although the documentary is exclusively shot in the town of Halabja, it reveals various transnational spaces. The director addresses the issue of international acknowledgement of the poison gas attack on Halabja (which was concurrent with the al-Anfal operations) as genocide. Mamosta Fahkradin raises the crucial question: 'Iraq in that time could not produce a needle. How could it produce poison gas?' Needless to say, the involvement of Western companies in providing the Baath regime with the equipment, chemicals and know-how to attack its own population remains unresolved. After the public screenings of the documentary, several discussions also voiced the need to take these international companies to court.³⁵

In an interview, Akram Hidou told me about his working method and his intention to show the fate and history of individuals in order to reach the widest possible audience in ethnic and national terms. The film was shown in various nation states in western Asia where Kurds live and was subtitled in English, Persian, Turkish, German and French, thus reaching an international audience as well as the Kurdish transnation. Ciwan Haco and Mikail Aslan, two well-known Kurdish musicians both living in Germany, were responsible for the film's music.

As for the film's reception in Halabja itself, Hidou mentioned the audience's reserved reaction due to the fact that people are sensitive to each other's fate and suffering. Aside from the testimonies, he also tried to capture everyday life and the omnipresence of the poison gas attack.

Nevertheless, the circulation of the film demonstrates not only the very specific transnational space, but also the pitfalls of mediated memory in transnation. The film was not only screened at several international film festivals and received various awards,³⁶ but in addition the survivors, including some of the activists in Halabja today and the filmmaker himself, were invited to a memory project at the Columbus School of Law, at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. This project focused on collective memory as a repository, the pain of individual remembering and the work of trauma experts in this field and was captured in a short film.³⁷ At first, it seemed as if Hidou's documentary had opened up a transnational social and media sphere beyond ethnicity for the agency of survivors and activists. However, when I asked Hidou about this endeavour in the United States, he was rather surprised about the outcomes of the project in which he participated. What this project actually shows is the dispossession of agency on the part of the protagonists and the memory work around the film.

Opening Discursive Spaces and the Agency of Survivors

In the case of the Kurds, owing to their statelessness, the elaboration of counter-histories has become an integral component of (transnational) Kurdish media production. An important point here is to handle the language issue (two main Kurdish dialects, translation, subtitling).

Specifically challenging are the few research institutions for Kurdish studies abroad and the absence of dedicated academic institutions for documenting al-Anfal. Reference to current academic research and political debate and also the documentation done in and for these films are both important for the memory work. 'Kurdish film weeks' organized in the last decade in Kurdistan and across the diasporic communities seem to be focal points and groundbreaking discursive and mnemonic spaces. Having attended presentations and discussions at Kurdish film weeks in Berlin and Vienna and interviewed young Kurds in diaspora about the challenges for the subsequent generation, I will analyse some topics relating to the dynamics of shaping (inter)national awareness, (counter-) memories and the interrelation with transnational mobility.

Several interview partners in the diaspora mentioned movies such as *Turtles Can Fly* (Bahman Gobadi, 2004), *Son of Babylon* (Mohammed Al-Daradji, 2009) or *Bekas* (Karzan Kader, 2012) as examples illustrating the difficulties in coming of age in a post-genocide society. Even though highly contested because they raised sensitive issues, these movies are an important reference for young people because they offer narratives for sharing barely communicable topics.

One Kurdish woman and activist who had been a minor during al-Anfal and whose family had sought refuge in the 1990s in Austria was struck by the questions of reconciliation raised in *Son of Babylon*. She was confronted with what she called a 'shit storm' in a public film talk, when she shared the opinion that a reconciliation process would have been necessary in Iraq. In the diasporic sphere, such public film discussions are highly emotional and my interview partners have vivid memories of them. The same woman, herself a social scientist and in her late 20s, was shocked by the fact that some documentaries on al-Anfal were criticized as being 'too soft' because they presented only a limited and specific part of the story of the persecutions. As the audience in the diaspora often expects a comprehensive, hegemonic and thus uncontested representation, discussions of highly sensitive topics such as sexual violence and questions of forgiveness, which are central to the next generation, are not appreciated. After attending several commemoration events and carrying out interviews, it became obvious to me that the young generation is particularly eager to learn more, including on sensitive topics, and is

interested in more nuanced memory work in order to create a less homogeneous narrative, while the elder generation expects a more hegemonic narrative.

When female Kurdish survivors from the village of Sumud/Rizgari were invited by the German non-governmental organization (NGO) Haukari to attend the 'Anfal Memory Days' in Berlin, they participated in a conference where they conveyed their experiences and their agency. Beside several possibilities for an exchange, a screening of the documentary *Soil of Germian* was organized. This is a documentary directed by Jamal Ibrahim (2013) about the women's ambitious, self-governed memory project, the 'Anfal Memorial Forum'.³⁸ This discursive space in Berlin enabled them to present their activism and strengthen their agency. Women who have lost their husbands and survive on their own remind Kurdish society of its vulnerability and of the 'open cases', since the fate of most disappeared men is still unknown. In their campaigns, these women want the government to investigate the disappearances and help to give the dead a dignified burial by unearthing the numerous mass graves located mostly in southern Iraq. The women of Sumud/Rizgari fought for the recognition of female remembering; they do not want to be seen as 'victims' but as survivors, thus acknowledging their agency and coping efforts (Mlodoch 2014). The Anfal Memorial Forum, a specific bottom-up memory project and a transnational endeavour,³⁹ helps women to gain agency, enabling the integration of their memories, suffering and claims into the development of narratives with a broader consensus. Nevertheless, the female protagonists of the film present at the discussions in Berlin had to endure accusations by (male) filmmakers from Iraqi Kurdistan that their 'stories' were not all-encompassing and thus not representative.

On this occasion, the female survivors and activists from Kurdistan decided to participate in the public viewings of *Halabja*, *the Lost Children* and *1001 Apples*, which they had not watched before. They recognized some of the protagonists because of the networks of female activists with whom they had participated in mourning, memorial days and funerals when the remains of victims were brought back to Kurdistan. A crucial factor for one of them was whether the films reflected her emotions. Watching these films in the diasporic setting was virtually unbearable, as

it evoked painful memories. These events in Berlin, comprising several forms of exchange (with academics and NGOs, the wider public and Kurdish filmmakers), provided a space for discussions with an international audience as well as an exchange of experiences, in which female survivors were not reduced to witnessing the past but were instead actively involved in 'memory work' as present and future projects were discussed.

In Kurdish diasporic settings, commemoration events often last several days (around the annual commemoration days in Kurdistan) and include speeches, lectures, musical performances and sometimes film presentations. The organizers occasionally invite survivors and expect them to share their testimonies. While their intentions shift between wanting to acknowledge the survivors' fate and to grant them an honoured position within this space, at the same time political demands for a homogenized narrative are perceptible. In an interview with me, one survivor, who was a minor during the poison gas attack and who had lost contact with his parents for many years, stressed his dissatisfaction with some of these events. He explained that sometimes, such as in political diasporic settings with semi-official national narratives, he is expected to relate his experiences as a victim without raising taboo topics, for example the role of Kurdish collaborators. In other settings, such as a remembrance day organized by the Green Party in Germany, people were interested in him as a person and a witness, and there he *could* raise sensitive questions. At a film debate after screening the film *Halabja, the lost Children* in Vienna in 2014, he was asked to join the panelists as one of the lost children, but he self-confidently refused to tell his 'story'. He argued that it was too painful for him to tear open his wounds again and again at such annual events. Particularly in national political settings, the lack of empathy and awareness of the pain of recalling can often fuel feelings of dispossession and abuse. During a commemoration event in Germany, a Kurdish woman said to him, 'Ah, you are the one the movie was made about.' He was quite puzzled until he was told that a movie had been made in Iran with exactly his story, the events being so similar that they were unmistakably those of his personal life. During his visit to Halabja, he had told his story several times to a number of groups of people, journalists and activists. Neither he nor his family had been contacted for permission, nor had he ever seen the movie.

Conclusions

The cinematographic endeavour concerning al-Anfal has many advantages for establishing memoryscapes: it contributes to authorizing survivors' experiences, transcends ethnic boundaries, promotes discussion on a global stage, and encourages international acknowledgement of al-Anfal as a crime against humanity.

Film production opens up a space for 'memory work' by serving as an archive for the testimonies of survivors, and it is an important mnemonic reference in the national as well as transnational realms. It can help to overcome (national/ethnic) obstacles, to discuss sensitive issues, to give the survivors a voice and to promote engagement on an international level.

Marc Augé (2011) outlines how the duty to remember falls on the descendants and not on the victims and survivors. The transnational cinematographic memoryscape allows the next generation to appropriate more knowledge, to find ways to address barely expressible topics and to integrate silenced or critical voices. In this specific context, the transnationalization of 'memory work' and its impact helps the young generation to formulate their concerns and establish agency at the politicized national level. With the internationalization of survivors' narratives, their testimonies are authorized at least for the young generation and are incorporated in their narratives.

Long-term consequences, for example involuntary memories, forms of tacit knowledge or bodily habits that several of the survivors experience but cannot be expressed easily, are thus renarrated and communicated with reference to scenes in films. The mechanisms of the longlasting consequences of mass violence are defined, approached and dealt with in academic ways, but their incorporation into general knowledge requires the elaboration of terms in the native language and the shaping of narratives for it. For survivors it is almost impossible to find ways to communicate their seemingly inexpressible experiences. Memory studies in recent years have paid increasing attention to the transgenerational transmission of experiences of extreme violence (e.g. Argenti and Schramm 2011; Hirsch 2008; Palmberger 2016). There has been little investigation of the process of conveying vicarious memories or secondhand experiences. Thus

the next generation's intention to come to terms with their obligation to remember, and to transmit their own experiences by insisting on films as the most suitable mnemonic medium with its own aesthetics, opens up new pathways for dealing with a fateful past.

Particularly important for the Kurdish case discussed here is the concurrence of memory work conveyed by various types of media within transnational spaces. The fact that Kurdish film from the beginning has been an undertaking of exile and diaspora, mobility and migration was and continues to be an essential resource for Kurdish national endeavours. This also strengthens memory work and shows the potential for agency, but is not without ambiguity. The lack of (national) institutional frameworks in these mnemonic processes, for example an archive for the testimonies of survivors, is a crucial disadvantage, since the survivors' testimonies are not sufficiently (legally) secured. This lack of institutionalization has an adverse impact on the agency of survivors as well as on the shaping of a collective memory and a national historiography. The vulnerability of survivors and protagonists on the national level often implies their instrumentalization for national interests as well as the silencing of their claims. The transnational memoryspace with its filmic outcomes inherits this risk of dispossession. As the examples in this chapter have shown, survivors and protagonists do not have the power, the means or the backing of governmental/state institutions to control or oversee transnational dynamics and effects.

Notes

1. This research project was undertaken with the support of the Elise Richter Programme of the Austrian Science Funds. I would like to thank the editors of this volume, Jelena Tošič and Monika Palmberger, for the critical discussion and their helpful comments, and Julene Knox for the linguistic revision.
2. Iraqi Kurdistan, officially known as the Kurdistan Region, is an autonomous region in federal Iraq and is located in the north of the country in the provinces of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniya. It borders the Kurdish inhab-

ited regions in Iran, Turkey and Syria. The Kurdistan Region has been governed by the Kurdistan Regional Government since 2005. The term 'Kurdish transnation' refers to the Kurds in the different nation states in western Asia (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria), as well as the exiled, diasporic and transnational communities.

3. I will explore the experiences of the young generation, which means all those born during and after the al-Anfal processes and who have now reached maturity, and I will tackle some specific challenges for the so-called 1.5 generation or 'child survivors' (Suleiman 2002).
4. Kanan Makiya was among the first to bring the topic to an international audience (1993). One of the first systematic attempts at documentation was organized by Human Rights Watch in 1993 and 1994. For an overview of the current state of research, see Mlodoch (2014).
5. Already in 1991, the united Kurdish forces (Kurdistan Front) had given amnesty to the Jash units (Kurdish collaborators with the Baath regime; Aziz 2011, 82). The general amnesty in Iraq was declared in 2008. Concerning the impunity of the Jash, see the discussion in Fischer-Tahir (2012, 240 ff.).
6. This ministry was founded by the Kurdish Regional Government in 2007, based on precursor institutions. It oversees the provision of reparations to the survivors of al-Anfal, works for international recognition as an act of genocide, erects memorial sites and so on. According to its legal basis, the survivors and relatives of martyrs are entitled to government benefits (see Hardi 2011, 147).
7. In terms of both the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan as well as Iraq, there is still no archive to store the testimonies of the victims and evidence of the actions of the Saddam regime.
8. Peshmerga is the term for the guerrilla fighters in the Kurdish resistance movements since the 1940s. Loosely translated it means 'those who face death'. Now they are the military force in the Kurdish Autonomous Region.
9. See the article by Kurdocide Watch CHAK <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2011/4/state4957.htm> [accessed: 10.05.2015].
10. First addressed for example by Hardi (2011).
11. Kurdish diasporic organizations reflect intra-ethnic heterogeneity in terms of, for instance, language/dialect, religion or socialization in various national regimes.
12. Starting in 2010, I conducted narrative and problem-centred interviews with activists, organized group discussions with students and participated

- in various commemorations in the Kurdish transnation. The main issue in the first part of this ongoing fieldwork was the challenges of and participation in commemoration.
13. Participants were between 20 and 28 years old, balanced in terms of gender, and from families that both were and were not affected by the genocidal processes of the al-Anfal operations.
 14. The first feminist feature film was directed by Shirin Jihani in Kurdistan in 2008. In *Stars Are Hueless by Day*, she addressed violence against women prisoners during the Baath regime.
 15. Alexander (2009) states that the narration and memory of mass murder can only be grasped after two or three decades.
 16. 'Anfal families' or 'anfalized' are common terms in Kurdistan today, used to describe the victims of genocidal persecution.
 17. For comparable developments in Bosnia, see Palmberger (2010).
 18. Interviews with members of a women's organization in Iraqi Kurdistan in 2014.
 19. In the late 1990s, however, the first movies addressing specifically Kurdish issues were produced in Iran and gained international recognition: *A Time for Drunken Horses* (Bahman Gobadi, 2000) and *Takhte Siyah* (Semira Makhmalbaf, 2000).
 20. 'Kurdish' (films) refers mainly to the issues highlighted and not to ethnic affiliation.
 21. For example, Anfal 2.0 Trailer; von Fernando Vargas Corbacho.
 22. So the first films shot in the autonomous region in Iraq were initially produced in countries of the former Soviet Union for technical and financial reasons since the 1990s.
 23. At the NGO-organized Berlin 'Anfal Memory Days' in 2013, a 'film event' with Masoud Arif (Dohuk), Jamal Ibrahim (Sulaymaniyah/Mam Pola), Ako Sirini (Sulaymaniyah), Dana Karim (Sulaymaniyah) and Kawa Qadir (Sulaymaniyah).
 24. In 2003, films on Anfal partly made in the Autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq were first shown at international film festivals, including the London Kurdish Film Festival. Growing from only two films in 2003 to as many as ten in 2009 (documentaries and movies) and eight in 2013, these contributions focus on acts of genocide during the Baath regime.
 25. http://www.watchdocs.pl/2013/f/1001_apples-film-114-en.html [accessed: 10.05.2015].

26. Sedqi Abdo-Qader, Taimoor Abdollah Ehm, Wahed Mahmood Saeid, Ramadan Ali Soleiman, Ozir Vahab Mohamad Solaiman, Faraj Mohamad Asiz, Qahar Khalil Mohammad, Hashem Mohammad Rashid, Abdolkarim Nife Hassan and Ababaker Ali Saeid.
27. <http://rudaw.net/english/culture/17042014> [accessed: 10.12.2015].
28. During the remembrance events in 2014 at the memorial in Chemchamal (Iraqi Kurdistan), the community of survivors also used the apple as a strong symbol.
29. For example, Documentary Feature Film at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2014.
30. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyIM4Uil3Zk> [accessed: 10.05.2015].
31. Including the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute.
32. Just before *1001 Apples* was finished, the documentary *Kulajo: My Heart Is Darkened* was released. It presents the testimonies of women and children from Taimur's hometown of Kulajo. (Kurdistan Memory Programme initiated by Gwynn Roberts and Sadie Wykeham, produced by Helena Appio and Jowl Wykeham), <http://www.rfwworld.com/company/> [accessed: 10.05.2015].
33. See http://halabja-film.com/akram_hidou.html [accessed: 10.05.2015].
34. Mamosta means 'teacher' in Kurdish. It is a title that is always used in speaking with and about the person.
35. There has only been one legal process: in the Netherlands against businessman Frans van Anraat. So far he has been charged with complicity in war crimes and genocide. In 2014, the first European memorial for the victims of the chemical attack was organized by the Kurdish diasporic community and erected in The Hague.
36. Film Festival United Arab Emirates 2012, best documentary about Halabja at the Documentary Film Festival 2011, Special Jury Prize at the 8th Dubai International Film Festival 2011, to mention only a few.
37. *Surviving the Kurdish Genocide: Story from Halabja*, 1988, by Adam Evans, <http://vimeo.com/66652349>
38. <http://anfalmemorialforum.org/de/entwicklung.htm> [accessed: 10.05.2015].
39. As intended and co-financed by a German NGO and realized by foreign artists.

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Part III

Legacies and Politics of Memory

8

Remembering the Unfulfilled Dream of Jewish Life in Post-War Communist Poland

Kamila Dąbrowska

Pre-Second World War Poland was a multicultural country, with one-third of its population composed of ethnic minorities. As an outcome of the war and the ensuing territorial and political changes, Poland underwent a swift transformation, becoming an almost homogeneous nation state in ethnic terms. The new order embraced the vision of a homogeneous one-nation Polish state, and the polyphony that characterized the multiethnic pre-war society was erased from public discourse and official history. Alternative histories, which presented different images of past lives, were suppressed. After the Holocaust and the almost total extermination of Polish Jews, the thousand-year history of Jewish presence on Polish lands was forgotten for more than forty years. In the 1980s, ‘memory work’ began and themes relating to Jewish life in Poland were reintroduced to public discourse by grassroots initiatives led by the Catholic intelligentsia, young Polish Jews and the underground Solidarity movement (Orla-Bukowska 2004). Only then was Polish public opinion confronted with the counter-memory of Poles: not martyrs, but passive bystanders and

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active perpetrators involved in the Holocaust. The real shift in studies dedicated to the Jewish past began with the collapse of communism. In the 1990s, the freedom granted to researchers and the increasing attention paid to previously repressed voices enabled the emergence of counter-histories and counter-memories, thus demonstrating the inherent plurality of history in Europe. Repressed narratives reappeared, providing an impulse to restore, preserve and commemorate forgotten pasts, in turn prompting wider revisionism and even political outrage. The process of integrating previously repressed narratives into the national historiography was initiated, even though it is a painful one. Vivid discussions of the Polish-Jewish past became an integral part of turbulent public debates. Diverse interpretations of Polish and Jewish past experiences caused highly emotional disputes, as they interfered with Polish national taboos.

The integration of these two narratives was followed by a number of new laws that subsequent post-communist governments gradually introduced and implemented in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Those new laws protect members of minorities against discrimination and guarantee communal rights, enabling minorities to sustain linguistic, religious and cultural differences. However, the legal system has not prevented the increase of populist right-wing movements in Poland. In post-transition Poland, anti-Semitism as an ideology remains present. As Winiewski and Bilewicz write, 'Although the influence of extremist groups in society is quite limited, there is an observable silent approval of anti-Semitic statements and hate speech in public debate and media' (Winiewski and Bilewicz 2014, 190).

In this chapter I refer to the past through a double lens: as part of the previously excluded counter-history and as the counter-memory of the Jewish presence in post-war Poland. In both cases, I analyse the past as a tool to reinforce present goals. As Paul Connerton underlines, 'We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects.... Present factors tend to influence... our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present' (1989, 2). In what follows, I set different stories against one another and confront the 'big' histories (such as those of the nation) by referring to more intimate ones, such as private life stories.

Voices from the past come from two sources in this chapter. The first one, which presents the counter-history, is based on documents from the period as well as more recent interpretations by historians. In order to confront the dominating scheme, I describe a period of over twenty post-war years (1945–1968) as a time of collective efforts to rebuild Jewish community life in Poland. This period is presented in reference to my second source, the life stories of the post-war generation of Polish Jews.¹ I follow the narratives that individuals created to explain their present, built on the past but always filtered through the lens of subsequent experiences. My interviewees bring into play their private and collective memories, which I in turn examine as interpretative models. By undertaking an anthropological investigation of ‘collective remembering’, I present the agency of those actually performing the past through rituals. I perceive memory and awareness of the past as crucial elements of identity, whether personal or collective.

In this chapter I will shortly discuss the persisting myth of Jews as the threatening Others in Polish national rhetoric. I then describe how the myth was reinvented in the twenty years that followed the war, effectively obstructing the reconstruction of a Jewish community in Poland. Thereafter, I present how the past is currently used to build the transnational diasporic group of Polish Jews living today. With reference to return journeys and gatherings, I highlight the collective rituals that are performed in order to restore past bonds among the post-war generation of Polish Jews.

The Threatening ‘Other’

In the years that followed the war, authorities in Poland changed their attitude towards minorities several times within a short period of two decades (for more, see Zaremba 2001). In theory, the communist regime preached the Marxist ideology of internationalism, working-class brotherhood and friendship. Official narratives declared that the system favoured ‘the restoration of all democratic liberties and equality of all citizens, regardless of race, creed or nationality’ (The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Poland, 1952). The universal values of communism seemed

to provide sufficient grounds to introduce a new system. However, the new order was not easily accepted by Polish society and its implementation met many obstacles. Nationalist ideology was perceived by the ruling elites of Poland as an adequate argument to prevent the rejection of the communist power as a foreign one, imposed by the Soviet Union. So as to legitimize themselves, the authorities chose nationalist rhetoric, which underlined the ethnic character of the Polish state as a tool to create a unifying order. Ethnicity, national traditions, sentiments and myths of the 'dominant nation' were all used to constitute the new authority (for more, see Michlic 2006; Zaremba 2001). This strategy led the communist system to transition from a regime dedicated to advancing the interests of the part of the population defined constitutionally as 'the working class and all working people' to a regime dedicated to advancing the interests of the part of the population defined as the ethno-national majority. The moral discourse of equality of all citizens faded away as the system evolved. New classifications were invented to describe citizens as well as those who did not deserve to be called such. National identity came to mean a single, pure national identity of the Polish majority, while minorities became an obstacle to 'national purity'. Polish national identity became a 'predatory identity whose social construction and mobilization require the extinction of other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as a we' (Appadurai 2006, 51). Backward-looking ethno-nationalism, intolerant of multiethnic and multicultural diversity, played an important role in the discussion and treatment of minorities. Consolidation of the idea of a purely 'Polish character' of the state led to 'bureaucratic ethnic cleansing', as Robert Hayden calls the removal of specific kinds of human matter from particular places by providing legal means to exclude them from citizenship on ethnic grounds (1996, 784). Meanwhile, periodic crises threatened the stability of the regime. Social incertitude was directed towards minorities presented as enemies of the nation, spies and traitors, responsible for the nation's misery, turning into what Arjun Appadurai calls 'the fear of small numbers' (2006).

In Poland, the ethno-nationalization of communism with anti-Jewish elements began to crystallize in the early post-war period (1945–1949).

At the end of the 1940s, the new–old enemy was rediscovered using the clichés of longstanding stereotypes: the image of the Jew as the threatening Other was revived, confirming the persistence and adaptability of this myth to different historical, political and social contexts. Jews reappeared in public discourse to underline the eternal menace they had symbolized to Poland for ages (for more, see Michlic 2006; Zaremba 2001). The myth of ‘Judeo-Communism’ (*żydokomuna*) became the most frequently propagated theme of the Jew as the threatening Other in the post-war period. Ethno-nationalists were able to intensify the spread of the notion of ‘Judeo-Communism’ because of the visibility of some Polish Jews who had survived the war, identified as communists and who held visible, prominent positions in the state apparatus. They perceived Jewish communists as double enemies: as Jews and as servants of a foreign, hostile power, the Soviet Union, whose goal was to lead to the destruction of Poles. The vitality of this myth prevented the dream of restoring a vivid Jewish community from coming true.

Three Episodes of the Historical Landscape

Not only popular knowledge but also elaborated studies of Polish Jewry refer to post-war Poland as a land of ashes, where the formerly flourishing Jewish life ceased to exist after the Holocaust. The collective Jewish memory preserves pictures of ruins, complete vacuum and total destruction. Images of ‘dead cities’ dominate in literature and detailed studies.

In reference to the three ways of defining the post-war Jewish presence in Poland, I illustrate the struggles of Polish Jews to sustain their collective identity, emerging from the abiding history and cultural heritage in the new socio-political context of post-war Poland. For those Jews who remained in Poland after the war, the full civic rights that were promised by the communist state seemed to guarantee the foundation necessary in order to recreate the nation. Yet the dream of restoring a vivid Jewish community eroded gradually with changes in policy and consecutive periods of anti-Semitism, up to the final collapse in 1968.

Autonomy (1945–1949)

As an outcome of the territorial and political changes after the Second World War, Poland underwent a transformation, which resulted in border shifts as well as a series of forced migrations, transfers and repatriations. Communists began to consolidate their power under the control of the Soviet Union. By 1947, after both legal and illegal political opposition had been crushed, communist authority was established in the country and Poland existed under the overwhelming influence of the Soviet Union.

The Second World War inflicted great costs on Polish society in terms of human losses: 90 % of Polish Jews were murdered during the Holocaust and approximately 7–10 % of ethnic Poles were killed during the war (Michlic 2006, 196). In the early post-war period the Jewish community was a ‘community on the move’, constantly deciding whether to remain in or to leave Poland. Those who envisioned their future in Poland decided to build new lives in the very landscape of their losses, but with great hope and energy. Many Jews expected communism to create a just society. They regarded the new order as a promise of support and encouragement to a lonely and despairing people. Moreover, communists seemed to favour Jews. In the first official document of the new communist government, Jews were the only minority explicitly mentioned: ‘Jews who were subjected to inhuman tortures by the Nazi occupier are guaranteed full rehabilitation as well as legal and actual equal rights’ (Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, July 22, 1944). On the issue of citizenship, the Manifesto declared that it favoured ‘the restoration of all democratic liberties, equality of all citizens, regardless of race, creed or nationality’ (ibid.). The new regime also released Jews from the pre-war constraints regarding access to professions. The new Poland seemed to provide stable ground for people to rebuild a life ‘where Jews would be treated like Poles’, as Fryderyk² recalls.

Jews who survived the war in the Soviet Union had heard some reports, but no details of the calamities.³ Repatriates were gradually confronted with the tragic reality, as Benek⁴ remembers: ‘My mother told me they knew hardly anything while being in the Soviet Union. Only in Poland did they get to know the fate of their family.’ The unbearable pain, despair

and feelings of remorse shaped the collective identity of survivors. Primo Levi writes about the shame of those who survived:

The shame which the just man experiences when confronted by a crime committed by another, and he feels remorse because of its existence, because of its having been irrevocably introduced into the world of living things and because his will has proven nonexistent or feeble and was incapable of putting up a good defense. (Levi 1989)

Possessed by trauma, they would be ‘acting out’ by compulsively repeating past events, trying to reconstruct the fate of their families. Poldek⁵ remembers adults ‘constantly talking about the war. How one survived, how relatives were killed. When an old acquaintance appeared, they kept on asking: “Tell us, how did you manage to get through?”’

Despite all the pain and trauma, the new reality required energy and involvement. The Polish authorities decided to grant Jews recognizable autonomy, allowing them to establish the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce, CKŻP) as their political representation. The Committee was an umbrella institution that included different Jewish parties. Nevertheless, the liberty given to the rebirth of Jewish organizations was ideologically monitored by the state. Between 1945 and 1950, the Central Committee presided over an extensive network of local and provincial Jewish committees that oversaw a range of social welfare initiatives, as well as educational and cultural institutions.

Repatriates from the Soviet Union were particularly likely to delude themselves that perhaps the destruction was not so great or so total. Their first desire was to track the fate of their family members and friends. Dawid⁶ calls up spontaneous meetings and information exchanges: ‘People were coming back from camps and from hiding. They were constantly asking about their families.’ Many did not believe eyewitness accounts, hoping that someone was still alive. Surrounded by the ashes of destroyed cities and ruined landscapes, lonely Jewish travellers wondered through the country. In the course of their return journeys they were confronted with the knowledge of the horrifying past and tried to reconstruct the fate of their relatives out of snippets of information.

The return journeys took place amid total indifference, if not hostility, from Polish society. The belongings and homes of Jewish families had been taken over by others, who watched Jewish returnees with mistrust or even hostility. Between 1944 and 1946 surviving Jews were attacked in a series of pogroms, the most devastating of which occurred in July 1946 in the city of Kielce, where more than forty Jews were killed. The Kielce pogrom alarmed Jews throughout Poland, and mass emigration picked up its pace. In the early aftermath of the war, the old prejudices against Jews mingled with new ones.⁷ The image of the Jew as a physical threat to the Polish nation served as a trigger for spontaneous violence against members of the Jewish community. These violent anti-Jewish manifestations that occurred in Poland were never approved of by the Communist Party, even though its official position was quite ambiguous and full of contradictions. Nonetheless, the violence dampened the hopes that Jews might safely rebuild their lives, and more than 70,000 Jews left Poland in the months following the Kielce pogrom (Szaynok 2000, 96).⁸

With the imposition of communism, and especially in the late 1940s under Stalinism, all Jewish political parties were dissolved and independent political life was stifled. The slightest suspicion of Jews having affiliations to a homeland other than Poland was viewed as a sign of their willingness to abandon the country. For Zionists, the emergence of the independent Jewish state in 1948, together with the drastic transformation of political views on Jewish autonomy in Poland and accusations of disloyalty towards the Polish nation and the state, became the ultimate factors that induced them to leave Poland (for more, see Aleksion 2002; Szaynok 2007). For religious people, the imposition of communism indicated restrictions of religious freedom. Zionists and religious Jews, together with private business owners, were identified as unwanted within the borders of the Polish state. One of the official documents listed the undesirable groups: 'the amenities of departure are mainly planned for Zionists, clericalists and private businessmen. Those elements have a nationalist character—they are intrinsically incapable, they do not want and cannot be involved in the process of building socialist Poland.'⁹ Jews who declared their choice of another homeland were allowed to leave. As Kichlewsky claims, in the eyes of the regime the aim was to get rid of 'Zionists' while giving the Western world and the Jewish diaspora the

impression that Poland was allowing its citizens to choose their place of residence (Kichlewsky 2011). Between 1949 and 1950, a total of 28,000 Polish Jews left for Israel (Stankowski 2000).

The memories of the short post-war period of Jewish autonomy were suppressed by recollections of fear caused by the eruption of violence. The elimination of the Jewish organizational infrastructure came as a great shock, although its five-year presence is now interpreted as having been condemned to failure right from the beginning. Analysed in retrospect, the dream of rebuilding an independent Jewish life was unrealistic, as summed up by Renia¹⁰: ‘We were naïve. We thought that we might create a Jewish world, and they would let us.’

In between (1950–1956)

The time of Stalinist repressions that soon ensued turned out to be the time of living in between: between emigration and staying in Poland; between private life, which provided a protective cocoon, and the terrifying life behind the Iron Curtain. The omnipresent surveillance by the secret services was intended to control all spheres of citizens’ lives in the People’s Republic of Poland. In order to avoid imprisonment, it was strictly required to stay alert and keep one’s own opinions behind the doors of private apartments.

The Jewish Cultural-Social Association in Poland (Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce, TSKŻ) emerged in 1950 from the chaos of painful changes, which irretrievably transformed Jewish life in Poland. The statutes of this new association were written according to instructions given by the Communist Party. Its content underlined not only the importance of closer bonds between Poles and Jews, but also of ‘Jews’ adaptation of progressive Polish culture’ (Association Statutes, Berendt 2006, 350–351). The association, treated by the ruling system as representative of the Jewish minority, was not enthusiastically accepted by the 70,000 Jews remaining in Poland. Instead of expressing their commitment to an organization totally subject to the authorities, Jews sought refuge in social networks. In many cases, traces of a shared Jewish background remained confined to their home and to friendships with

other Jews. The community turned inwards, while the streetscape outside remained devoid of Jewish presence, as few attended secular events organized by the Association or religious services at the synagogues. Those who remained in Poland tried to 'live in Jewish agglomerations' (Hurwic-Nowakowska 1986, 26–27), which were supposed to provide support during the dark times of the Stalinist period. The foundations of one's identity were built on other family members. However, the family was rarely rebuilt on the basis of blood relationships, as 'we had no grandparents, no cousins, no uncles', remembers Szymek.¹¹ 'Invented families', based on friendship, common fate and a shared wartime past, substituted for the dead multigenerational families. It was inside such extended social circles that Jews led their family lives, brought up their children and discussed reactions to shifts in politics. They also shared identity ambivalence because the old patterns were gone, erased by the Holocaust, and the new ones were still unclear, in the process of being constructed within the new reality of post-war, communist Poland. The aftermath of the Holocaust, together with the policies of the post-war communist government, accelerated transformations. The definition of a Jew was more opaque than ever. The range of possible options varied from decisions to assimilate, thus neglecting any traces of Jewishness, to persistent attempts to create the new Polish Jew, who would maintain their Jewish identity together with that of a Pole. The world of Yiddish culture vanished, and everyday lives were marked by identity loss and the destruction of the dense Jewish settlement together with the decline of the social functions of the Jewish religion (Hurwic-Nowakowska 1986, 93–107).¹² Parents wanted their children to identify mainly, sometimes solely, with Poland, with little or no connection to their Jewish background. Victor's¹³ words give an example of parents' attitudes: 'In official documents, I always wrote: "Citizenship: Polish, Nationality: Polish". My parents told me to do so. But in their own documents they always wrote: "Citizenship: Polish, Nationality: Jewish".' Jews lived on the borderline of identities, often never fully reconciling their policies with their desire for acceptance as Poles or with the ambiguous role of Jewishness in their post-war homes. Even though social life secularized quickly, the scope of decisions taken by particular Jewish families varied. In order to protect the family, many people celebrated traditional Jewish holidays without

openly naming the festivals. Jewish private life was closed behind the sheltering fence of doors, which provided 'a protective cocoon of basic trust' that 'locks off most otherwise potentially disturbing happenings which impinge on the individual's life' (Giddens 1991, 126). Outside the home, parents' attitudes reflected subordination to the obligatory official rules, as Szymek¹⁴ describes: 'My parents did not really support the system. But they came to lectures, in order not to be accused of disloyalty.'

Even though anti-Semitism was condemned and considered a crime, the political changes of 1956 were accompanied by the return of anti-Jewish incidents. Old stereotypes reappeared with extraordinary strength, accompanied by new ones, expressed in a new context. The 'Judeo-Communist' rhetoric was taken to a new level: the crimes of Stalinism were attributed solely to Jewish supporters of the regime. Those incidents did not reach the degree of direct violence, but triggered the decision of many Jews to leave the country. Between 1956 and 1957 about 39,000 Jews left Poland (Stankowski 2000, 129).

The Young Generation (1957–1969)

The Polish Thaw in the mid-1950s initiated the liberalization of the political system, enlarging the scope of freedom granted to citizens. Western capitalist culture became part of communist culture to a limited degree. Dynamic migrant movements affected the everyday reality of the shrunken community of 34,000 Jews.¹⁵ Children born in the post-war years represented almost half of the Jewish population (Berendt 2006, 99; Bronzstejn 1963, 66). There were significant distinctions between the pre- and post-war generations as a result of the different historical periods that shaped their identities. The post-war generation grew up in the new world, separated from the one that had perished. Parents 'decided we should not know' (Wiktor¹⁶) and thus avoided any reference to their life before or during the Second World War. The lack of an intergenerational transfer of family knowledge, the absence of a broader family, coupled with parents' silence, created a continuous sense of fragmented and incoherent life stories among the post-war generation. They did not understand the fears and traumas of their parents. The younger members

of those families felt that they were '100 % Polish', sharing the passions and sorrows of their Polish peers, 'because we were like everyone else' (Szymek¹⁷).

After the nationalization of Jewish organizations in 1949, young Jews could still remain in the Jewish circle, as the system of state-run minority schools with the Yiddish language¹⁸ and cultural clubs run by the Jewish Cultural-Social Association in Poland were established. The official structures of education and childcare had to follow the ideological guidelines of upbringing, which required them to build a positive attitude towards communist Poland and the Soviet Union, together with a sense of national dignity. Jewish children were brought up as committed and loyal Polish citizens.

Jewish ideologists chose Yiddish culture to be the point of reference for the post-war Jewish identity of the young generation. In 1959, one of the youth leaders, Józek Sobelman, wrote an article accusing the Jewish Cultural-Social Association of passing on Jewish culture in a fake and lifeless form to the younger generation: 'We want to get to know the Jewish culture not during lectures, like we learn about the culture of ancient Greece or the Roman Empire. Our Jewish culture has to be alive because we are the ones who create it' (Sobelman 1959, 1). His words resonated among the young generation. They began to criticize the concept of restoring Yiddish culture in its artificial post-war version without any connection to the living Jewish culture. As they were significant in number, their voices could not be hushed up and programmes dedicated to youth had to emerge. With financial support from the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), an American charity, youth clubs were opened in local branches of the Association. The JDC subventions made it possible to organize summer and winter camps for youths from all over Poland. Those unique 'gathering platforms' had a significant influence on group identity. The young generation received their own space, which enabled them to create social networks. This was constantly underlined by my interviewees: 'You can't imagine what it was like! We could meet with the others from all over Poland! We sang songs, we had fun! For many, especially the ones from assimilated families and small towns, it was the first time they ever met other Jews!' (Poldek¹⁹). Rather than by

means of intergenerational transmission, the Jewish identity of children was instilled by constructing a sense of belonging to a group.

The whole process of defining the borders of the complex Polish-Jewish identity of young Jews had a drastic end. Only ten years after teenagers claimed their rights, their dual Polish-Jewish identity was challenged with brutal virulence and cruelty. Although in the 1960s Jews were such a small part of the population as to be almost invisible,²⁰ the image of the Jew as the threatening Other persisted, with the Six-Day War in Israel in 1967 proving to be vital in its vicious existence. In 1968 the 'Anti-Zionist' campaign had to 'invent' Jews, masking them as 'Zionists' in order to denounce enemies of the regime. The propaganda accused Zionists/Polish Jews of being a menace to society, to its resources, its good functioning and its members. For young Jews, this was the first brutal confrontation with exclusion and stigmatization. The turmoil following the March 1968 events triggered a wave of emigration comprising more than 13,000 Jews (Stankowski 2000, 143) who left for Israel, Denmark, Sweden, the United States and many other countries.

Those who left Poland had their Polish citizenship revoked. As the borders of Poland remained closed to them for many years, they became exile-refugees. The emigration waves from Poland and the accompanying anti-Semitic turmoil in 1945–1969 led to a situation in which the Jewish minority became almost entirely absent from Polish society.

Making the Past Alive: Remembering and (Re) Building a Collective

The concept of generation has been elaborated widely by Karl Mannheim, who describes it as an empirically observable phenomenon where people are born into a particular historical moment, which influences specific experience and consciousness among such people (1952, 291). He points out that the acceleration of a social and cultural transformation influences the emergence of binding ties among group members (1952, 310). He writes that 'crucial group experiences can act in this way as "crystalizing agents"' (ibid.) of the formative processes to the generation. He highlights that we might speak of generation only 'where a concrete bond

is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization' (1952, 303).

The post-war generation of Polish Jews created a separate collective with its own identity. Members of this generation were born within a period of few years (between the middle and end of the 1940s), spent the formative years of their youth in a similar social milieu and shared comparable traumatic experiences of exclusion at the end of the 1960s, while in their 20s. Emigration from Poland launched a period of radical break from previous lives. The dramatic, historical changes and the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968 forced identity transformation. Directly after their arrival in the new host countries, they established local diasporic groups.²¹ A network of friends from the old country provided a framework for social interactions and served as a source of support for the emigrants. Włodek²² remembers the importance of those initial meetings: 'I was in shock. I don't know what I would've done if I hadn't had that group from Poland. I wouldn't have been able to deal with everything all by myself.' The never-ending discussions about identity quests and the demands of the new reality were inscribed into the emigrants' meetings, as Zosia²³ recalls: 'We constantly discussed who we were and why. Identity issues were always present. No matter what we started to talk about, we ended up analysing who we were: Jews, Poles and what it all meant.' The Polish state refused them entry to visit their dying parents, calling emigrants 'unwanted criminals' (*Der Spiegel* 1978). The images of places left behind were coupled with longing for a world that had disappeared, and an aggravating sense of bitterness towards the old country. The traumatic memory of forcible dispersion and the overwhelming experience of victimhood (Cohen 2008) became an important part of the group narratives.

Local immigration policies in the host countries also shaped the diasporic communities, providing possibilities for them to form organizational structures or discouraging immigrants from building any such structures.²⁴ Dispersed all over the world, emigrants nevertheless maintained their private contacts based on the social networks created in Poland. Changes within migrant networks emerged towards the end of the 1980s. Robin Cohen extends the canonic term of diaspora, elaborated

by William Safran (1991), by analyzing the issue of transnational bonds that ‘mobilize a collective identity, not only a place of settlement..., but also in solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries’ (2008, 7). Twenty years after the emigration, well settled in host countries, Jewish emigrants from communist Poland did not articulate the claims to return to Poland. The disturbing need to explore one’s past and to create a coherent biographical narrative induced Polish Jews to confront their memories with the memory of others. This sort of biographical engagement was enabled by a particular moment in many life trajectories, at a moment when they reached middle age and had secured their careers. It was the right moment ‘to remember your childhood’ (Szymek²⁵), ‘to think about your lost youth’ (Zofia²⁶), ‘to catch up with time and to see your old friends because soon it might be too late’ (Leon²⁷). Group remembering was not only filled with the memory of experienced events but also with, as Pierre Nora indicates, the ‘memory’ of non-experienced events (Nora 1996, 525) that could have been but instead were brutally interrupted by emigration. A never-ending fantasy unified the collective more strongly than different biographical trajectories. As the reasons were diverse, I suggest analysing the transnational community as an instance in the mobilization process and as a piece that contributed to inventing a shared identity. Polish-Jewish migrants evolved into a transnational diaspora by developing a new imagination of community, and did so almost twenty years after their emigration from Poland took place. The formative process, initiated by emigration and the post-migration processes, was governed by three issues: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and practices, and framing (Sökefeld 2006).

Political opportunities were enabled by the collapse of communism. The return journeys began, prompting encounters with the past and with former identities. Individuals were confronted with the fact that their own memory contained many blank spaces, which could only be filled with the help of other ‘witnesses’. Filling gaps in individual life stories was seen as essential to creating integrity in biographical narratives.

In order to find others, the creation of mobilizing structures was initiated. The mobilizing structures, understood as ‘networks of people that are bound to the same issue’ (Sökefeld 2006, 269), were invented initially by a group of old friends from the Polish town of Łódź, who met in

Denmark in 1987 (Gryniewicz 2007, 3). ‘That week was incredible for us. Many thought that it was the greatest thing that happened to us after we left Poland,’ remembers Jacek Zylber, who was in charge of organizing and sponsoring the event (*ibid.*). Then an idea emerged to organize a reunion of former pupils of Jewish schools in Poland and participants of TSKŻ camps. The reunion committee chose Israel as the place for the future meeting. The first ‘Reunion of Polish Jews’ took place in the Israeli town of Ashkelon in July 1989. That meeting served as a constitutive act for the transnational group of Polish–Jewish immigrants. It was the founding moment in the history of the group. The subsequent six meetings were organized regularly in Ashkelon, with the last taking place in 2014.²⁸ This Israeli town, close to the border with Gaza, is the symbol of a recreated collective.²⁹ The informal organization responsible for the gatherings of Polish Jews was called ‘Reunion ’68’.

‘The summer camps in Poland... It was one of the most beautiful things that happened to us. I think it is also the main and the most important thing which binds us together,’ recalled Zofia.³⁰ Reunions elaborate shared memories in order to legitimize the existence of the group. Images of the past and the recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by performances (Connerton 1989, 4). Migrants’ reunions are interpreted as commemorative ceremonies (*ibid.*) during which collective rituals are performed. Reunions repeat rituals from before the time of emigration. They enable participants to return to the social roles and identities from the time before the traumatic destruction of the now-mythologized collectivity. Polish names are used as an identity shift to the abandoned self-identification: ‘I left Poland as Lusiek. Then I was Eliahu in Israel and in [the] States I became Allen. And during this evening and the whole next week I am Lusiek again’ (Lusiek).³¹ The daily routine of reunions is similar to that of the summer camps organized by the TSKŻ. The programmes are a combination of lectures and discussions, sport classes and social gatherings (evening dances, singing old Polish songs, quizzes on Polish–Jewish history). The collectively accepted symbols resemble the ones from Poland. During the summer camps in Poland, ‘We began our days with an assembly and we sang “Kolonistn zajnen mir”,’³² says Szymek. Nowadays, new anthems are written. One of the songs contains words about the process of returning to the past and

to past rituals: ‘Even though we are now famous doctors, dentists, engineers, we came back here as kids and we gobbled up “krówki”.’³³ This is a return to the non-existent world of youth and the times of ‘gossiping, joy and carefreeness’ (Szymek³⁴).

Since commemoration ceremonies are repetitive, they imply continuity with the past. They enable the community to recall its identity by creating a collective autobiography. The reunions become part of the collective history.

Reference to Multiple Pasts: External Negative Memory and Internal Positive Memory

Complex factors motivate Polish Jews to return to the place that they once called home. They blend affirmation, sorrow and curiosity with the desire to restore continuity to their life stories. Emigrants return to places and to people they know from the time before destruction in order to connect the past with the present, as ‘fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future’ (Boym 2001, xvi). When on site, memories gain dimensionality, texture, colour and smell. Return journeys come in three varieties: solitary ones made by individuals after the collapse of communism; journeys made with family members; as well as collective trips with groups of former pupils from Jewish schools or inhabitants of particular towns.

Solitary journeys started at the end of the 1980s when Poland’s borders opened up. The need to see the place they were rooted in induced emigrants ‘to confront dreams with reality’, as Julia³⁵ describes her first trip to Poland. It was not only a return to a concrete, physical place, to that ‘small square in Dzierżoniów’, but, above all, a return ‘to the heart of my life’ (Halina³⁶). The first impression after arriving in the towns and cities of childhood was overwhelming. Everything was preserved but looked different: devastated, neglected and no longer beautiful. Phantoms of familiar faces and the smells of Polish meals touched returning emigrants deeply, as Mati³⁷ remembers: ‘I shivered. I was deeply stirred. Poland seemed so grey.’ Returnees found themselves leaving those towns with the notion that the past was irrevocably gone. However, the desire to return

in order to find the lost traces of the past motivated them to come back in the presence of meaningful others.

Family trips followed those undertaken in solitude. The protective cocoon provided by relatives strengthened the emigrants, helping them to overcome the inherited fear of violence towards Jews, as Wilek³⁸ points out: 'People are afraid of coming alone because they are Jewish. It is a heritage they received from their parents—they are especially scared of small towns.' In order to fill in the gaps in incomplete family stories, the post-memory comes into play. The returning emigrants want to learn more about the world that has ceased to exist. These desires derive from 'the Holocaust post-memory, the memory of the survivors' children', who need not only to feel and know but also 'to remember, to re-build, to re-incarnate, to replace and to repair', as Marianne Hirsch writes (1997, 243). This drives the post-war generation to gather snippets of information, to recognize non-existent Jewish life in towns and districts that were once inhabited by a significant Jewish population, to search for the homes of their relatives, old synagogues or any material remnants of past Jewish life. The post-war generation visits Jewish cemeteries, local archives and the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. They hire local guides in order to grasp the fading image of the pre-war past. Those journeys are also made to fulfil the moral duties towards exterminated family members and to all the other Jews who became victims of the Holocaust. By going to concentration camps they pay a symbolic visit to the only graveyards their ancestors have. Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka or Majdanek become the only places where one can mourn. Anna³⁹ explains her visit to a concentration camp: 'I decided to go to Birkenau because it is the grave of my mother. I wanted to say a symbolic good-bye to her.' Reflecting on the inherited memories of tragic events and the vanished world that existed before the war strengthens group unity by underlining the social or political effects of the Holocaust on survivors and their offspring: 'During our meeting, I met a woman I didn't know before. We talked for six hours about the fate of our families during the Holocaust and how all of that changed us and our lives' (Włodek⁴⁰). Pickering and Keightley stress the role of imagination in the transmission of inherited memories in the second generation—the children of Holocaust survivors (2013, 122–125). The absent past is recombined with ideas, objects, practices

and (un)experiences, integrated into individual mnemonic narratives transmitted during gatherings (*ibid.*). The common experience of loss and the process of sharing past experiences and the attempt to make sense and understand what happened form the basis of a sense of mnemonic community.

Collective return journeys are initiated by former schoolmates and inhabitants of the same towns. They serve as a tool to confront individuals and the collective with images of the past, to reconnect the idea of the town and their past collective life in their mind with the ideas harboured by others. The first trips were organized in the late 1990s, after successful reunions in Ashkelon, which prompted the emergence of internal sub-groups within the wide transnational diaspora group. Initially amorphous, the structure of the transnational collective underwent internal divisions representing past and present classifications. New host country affiliations mingle with those from past lives in Poland, as Szymek pointed out:⁴¹ ‘They [from Warsaw] stick together all the time. Lower Silesia also sticks together because we went to summer camps together. Now, we stick together by towns and schools. And, of course, by the countries we now live in.’ The bonds that emerged were based on the presumption of a commonly shared past and identity, as Zeew indicated:⁴² ‘I really wanted to find them all and organize a meeting. Then, years ago in Poland, we didn’t even know one another. But they were Jews and they were from the same town. They started to feel close to me because we met.’ The snowball effect generated the ‘process of searching for long-time unseen friends from schools, from our towns’ (Marek⁴³), ‘to see ourselves the way we were in the past, the people we dreamt of, those we were in love with’ (Zofia⁴⁴). The place of origin serves as an axis to build a group. During the visits, the present intrudes on the past as the Jewish returnees jointly identify places that had been important to their Jewish past, such as Jewish schools, TSKŻ clubs and synagogues. They became the *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989), with collectively approved meanings inscribed on a particular place. Pictures of the past are negotiated and resettled by the more recent ones, performed together (Figs. 8.1 and 8.2).

Memories conceive of and present the past in complex ways. Like others violently displaced from their homes, my interviewees’ memories were in many ways negative and bitter. A positively tinged nostalgia for the



Fig. 8.1 Participants of reunion in Israel recognizing their friends. Photograph taken by the author



Fig. 8.2 Participants of return journey in Poland (Dzierżoniów) looking at old photographs. Photograph taken by the author

past was also present, however. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (2002) refer to two kinds of recollections: positive ones related to childhood and youth, and negative ones that bring back memories of the Holocaust. The authors underline that the memory split that separates nostalgic memory from traumatic memory is characteristic of ambivalent nostalgia (*ibid.*, 260). I observed a similar process of ambivalent remembrance involving the mechanism of splitting among Polish-Jewish emigrants. The ambivalent remembrance of past experiences consists of two elements: the traumatic memory of the gradual failure of the equality dream and the mythologized, affirmative memory of the uniqueness of Jewish life in Poland. These two narratives of the past, repeated during the commemoration ceremonies, are collectively approved.

The traumatic memories of times when they had suffered virulent discrimination and oppression create an external memory. The collective nature of the memory-sharing process has helped to ensure the veracity of images from the past. The description of events seems to have been subject to careful examination by the group as it is presented to the outside world. The narrative about exclusion is repeated in front of contemporary Poland, represented by Polish officials and researchers, during public speeches and in articles on March 1968 events published in the Polish press. Former Polish Jews bitterly evoke memories of exclusion, as a testimony of their motherland's betrayal. This traumatic memory refers to the chain of events that excluded Jews from the national entity. Wounds in the collective memory appear as a result of the home country providing no protection and questioning Jewish citizens' loyalty. The social indifference experienced during the anti-Semitic turmoil is another ingredient. The travel document⁴⁵ that they once received to leave the country remains a symbol of humiliation and unfulfilled commitments between the motherland and its citizens.⁴⁶ The desire to recall negative experiences publicly and to share them with Polish listeners transfers the responsibility of guilt to the country that once harmed the storytellers, to contemporary Poland and its Polish citizens. Memory of the traumatic past leads to the development of a shared generational consciousness and collective ideology presented to the external world (Keightley and Pickering 2013, 118).

Positive memory is intimately preserved only for the group members. It is based on the nostalgic perception of past events and, as Boym writes, 'It is yearning for a different time of our childhood, the slower rhythm of our dreams' (2001, xv). The positive, joyful memories of daily Jewish life fill daily conversations during the reunions. An important role is played here by external points of reference or memory aids, to use Paul Ricoeur's term for photographs (2004, 38). They capture a distant past as an idyllic time spent among Jewish family members and friends. The narratives present the Jewish past from a nostalgic perspective of a safe enclave, separated from threatening external reality. It is the same nostalgia that Boym describes: 'for the unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that become obsolete' (ibid., xvi). Those timid memories present a yearning for the lost collective and a sense of belonging. The memory of past Jewish life is thus the internal memory of the group, rarely shared with the external world.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have referred to the voices from the past that shape the collective narratives of post-war Jewish life in Poland. I presented the mnemonic practices that take place during collective gatherings of Jewish emigrants. I analysed how the past re-emerges in fractured spaces overburdened by traumas, in tension and interaction, with positive narratives. Conflicting memories co-exist in individual and collective narratives of a vanished past. The past social and cultural experiences can shape individual life histories and their narration, and form historical consciousness. This in turn reinforces the collective through the attribution of shared memory. Conflicting memories thus co-exist without being reconciled in order to provide points of reference for diverse layers of collective identity. Commemoration ceremonies and return journeys serve as tools for recreating the landscape of memory. Moreover, they recreate the collective identity of the group. New connections that are built on past networks create 'transnational social bonds' (Glick-Schiller 1997, 163) that exist daily in the virtual reality of the globalized world.

During the last twenty years Poland has undergone an intensive process of memory work. The life stories of the post-war generation of Polish Jews have been brought back to the wider public historical consciousness of Poles. However, the image of Jews as the threatening Others has proven to be very resistant.⁴⁷ One still observes an outburst of intense anti-Jewish beliefs and attitudes emerging in public discourse. Even though the contemporary Jewish community in Poland is small, it became ‘a “handy”, convenient symbol representing those responsible for the difficulties experienced by millions of Polish citizens’ (Winiewski and Bilewicz 2014, 211). The myth of ‘Judeo-Communism’ has reappeared, with Jews being blamed for Poland’s decline during the communist period. The ethno-nationalist vision of Poland is still competing with the pluralistic model, the latter acknowledging the memory of ‘Others’ and giving them a voice. The failure of the dream to rebuild Jewish life in post-war communist Poland, much like the wrongdoing of the Polish majority against their Jewish compatriots, remains an area affected by social amnesia.

Notes

1. My PhD thesis *From Autobiography to History—Constructing Individual and Group Memory among Jews Living in the Lower Silesia Region after World War II* (2013, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw) is based on life stories of the post-war generation of Polish Jews and their parents. Most of my interviewees grew up in Jewish families that decided not to assimilate, and thus kept on living within the borders of the Jewish social circle. Most of them emigrated from Poland by the end of the 1960s.
2. 92-year-old retired chemist, living in Israel (Fryderyk Zylberszyc, Interview by author. Rishon Le Zion, IL, May 30, 2008).
3. Most Polish Jews, about 250,000, survived the war in the Soviet Union.
4. 63-year-old academic, living in Sweden (Benek Vogel, Interview by author. Ashkelon, IL, May 27, 2008).
5. 63-year-old journalist, living in England (Poldek Sobel, Interview by author. Warsaw, PL, November 15, 2009).
6. 87-year-old retired craftsman, living in Poland (Dawid Ringel, Interview by author. Wrocław, PL, October 27, 2007).

7. Anti-Jewish violence has been the subject of many studies. Researchers vary mostly on how much importance is to be granted to the context in which such violence occurred. For some, Jews were not killed because they were Jewish but because of economic circumstances (criminals attacked the weak and/or those supposedly wealthy), political circumstances (belief in the 'Jewish Communism' myth that framed Jews as the enemy that needed to be destroyed) or, finally, social circumstances (the war brutalized human behaviour and diminished morality).
8. Jan Tomasz Gross's book *Fear. Anti-semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: an essay in historical interpretation* (2006), a sociological and historical essay on post-war anti-Semitic violence, published in Poland six years later after his book *Neighbors: The destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2001), reignited public debate on Polish-Jewish relations. Once more Poles were neither victims nor heroes nor innocent bystanders, but perpetrators. Poles began to debate the book's contents by means of mass media. The discussions did not reach the same level of intensity as those that had followed *Neighbors*, but the book did inspire the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) and its leading historians to publish a book called *On the Pogrom in Kielce (Wokół pogromu kieleckiego, 2006)*, in which they claimed to have found methodological inaccuracy in Gross's analysis.
9. State Archive Wrocław, KW PZPR, Wydział Organizacyjny, 74, VI/115, p. 72.
10. 91-year-old woman, retired, living in Israel (Renia Kontorski, Interview by author. Kfar Saba, IL, May 27, 2008).
11. 64-year-old man, employed in information technology (IT), living in Denmark (Szymon Fisz, Interview by author. Aabenra, DK, July 27, 2008).
12. In the national census from 1931, most of the Jewish population (almost 2.5 million) declared Yiddish as their mother tongue. Even though it was the folk language, used on an everyday basis by the majority of Jews, the Yiddishists strove also to instil the unique Yiddish culture through an educational system, press and science (Nalewajko-Kulikow 2012).
13. 55-year-old man, psychologist, living in Poland (Victor Wekselberg, Interview by author. Warsaw, PL, February 10, 2007).
14. See endnote 10.
15. In between 1955–1959 about 18,000 Polish Jews returned to Poland from the Soviet Union. Most of them left Poland to Israel.
16. See endnote 12.

17. See endnote 10.
18. They existed until 1969.
19. See endnote 5.
20. After the mass migration of the 1950s, the Jewish minority in Poland numbered about 35,000 (Berendt 2005).
21. Diasporic groups were formed in the United States, Israel and two Scandinavian countries: Sweden and Denmark.
22. 64-year-old man, university professor, living in Sweden (Włodzimierz Klamra, Interview with author, Warsaw, PL, March 13, 2007).
23. 64-year-old woman, retired nurse, living in Sweden (Zofia Zorska, Interview with author, Aabenraa, DK, July 30, 2008).
24. In Israel, the national Zionist ethos undermined the previous diasporic identities, forcing them to assimilate fully into the Israeli identity (Lomsky-Feder, Rapaport 2001). Immigration policies in Scandinavia, instead of imposing assimilation, introduced 'cultural pluralism' (Schierup and Alexandra 1987).
25. See endnote 12.
26. See endnote 23.
27. 64-year-old man, engineer, living in Canada (Leon Cukierman, Interview with author, Warsaw, PL, April 3, 2007).
28. New technologies addressed migrants' expectations, providing them with tools to improve communication. Internet and emails are highly instrumental in finding former friends from Jewish schools and summer camps in Poland.
29. After the big success of Ashkelon's reunions, ideas of reunions organized in local contexts appeared. Starting from 1993, Polish Jews, mainly from Scandinavia, have been meeting each summer in Mullsjö, a small Swedish town.
30. See endnote 24.
31. Part of the movie *Reunion* by Mieczysława Kaut i Abraham Kopenhagen, 2007.
32. 'Kolonistn zajnen mir' ('We are the campers'), a Yiddish song and youth anthem sung in the Jewish camps.
33. I recorded the song lyrics in Mullsjö (Sweden) in 2010. 'Krówki' are traditional Polish fudge candies.
34. See endnote 12.
35. 57-year-old woman, university professor, living in Israel (Jula Gil, Interview with author, Warsaw, PL, September 10, 2009).

36. 68-year-old woman, retired, living in Israel (Halina Katz, Interview with author, Beit Shemesh, IL, August 3, 2009).
37. 69-year-old man, retired technician, living in Israel (Mati Granot, Interview with author, Holon, IL, May 5, 2009).
38. 59-year-old man, businessman, living in Denmark (Wilek Rechtman, Interview with author, Warsaw, PL, April 15, 2007).
39. 62-year-old woman, chemist, living in Germany (Anna Winkler, Interview with author, Aabenraa, DK, July 3, 2009).
40. See endnote 20.
41. See endnote 12.
42. 65-year-old man, retired engineer, living in Israel (Zew Krawczyk, Interview with author, Carmiel, IL, June 3, 2008).
43. 63-year-old man, university professor, living in Israel (Marek Eyal, Interview with author, Tel Aviv, IL, June 3, 2009).
44. See endnote 23.
45. In order to leave Poland after the anti-Semitic purge in 1968, Polish Jews had to sign a declaration and give up Polish citizenship. Deprived of citizenship, they received a one-way travel document out of the country.
46. Emigrants follow traces of anti-Semitism in the reality of modern-day Poland. They collect evidence in order to sustain their interpretation of the past, which condemns Poland for its negative attitude towards Jews.
47. After 1989 two large surveys were conducted that analyse the forms and patterns of anti-Semitism after 1989 (for more, see Krzemiński 1996, 2004) and proved the persistence of anti-Semitic myths.

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9

Nomadism and Nostalgia in Hungary

László Kürti

There has been a great interest in memory and nostalgia since the publication of *The Future of Nostalgia* by Svetlana Boym (2001), prompting some scholars to write about the ‘memory boom’ or polemic in anthropology concerning these terms (Berliner 2005).¹ However, Boym’s imagining of the city as a ‘crossroads’ of ‘memory and freedom, nostalgia and modernity’ (Boym 2001, 76) in relation to the fundamental link between memory and the urban space may be just too limited to include the variety of nostalgic practices now observable around the post-communist world. My point is that nostalgic events, such as commemorations and rituals, deviate from context to context depending on who is producing and acting them out in what time period. Ekman and Linde (2005, 44), for example, claim that post-communist nostalgia is more closely related to dissatisfaction with the present system’s ability to produce output than to genuine non-democratic values. In a similar vein, Miltja Velikonja argues that post-communist nostalgia embodies utopian hopes about a future perfect

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society transcending the present (2012). While comparing East German and Polish nostalgia, Dominik Bartmanski stresses that nostalgic icons are successful because they play the cultural role of mnemonic bridges to rather than tokens of longing for the failed communist past and, as such, they forge a communal sense of continuity in times of rapid transformation (2011, 42). A few observers on Hungary—I have in mind for example Anna Szemere and Maya Nadkarni, both publishing in Todorova, and Gille's *Post-Communist Nostalgia* (2010)—discuss nostalgia as related to the recent communist/state socialist period. For Nadkarni, nostalgia in Hungary is 'less concerned with reviving the Socialist past than with making sense of the post-socialist present' (2010, 192).

While I agree with some of these observations, I tend to see several unique elements missing in the assertion of a post-socialist 'nostalgia industry'. My main objection is that commemoration of past events is not connected solely to the socialist past, for there is a fundamental correlation to a more remote medieval and pagan history, an area unfortunately not tackled adequately by scholars studying East-Central Europe, with the exception of Chris Hann (1990, 2012). Moreover, a glaring hiatus has occurred, since none of the observers of Hungary already mentioned remarks on the lack of a native word for nostalgia. Since that word (*nostalgia*) was only created in the 19th century in Hungarian by clumsily translating *nostalgia/nostalgie*, its nationalistic history and various uses should have been investigated and critically evaluated for scholarly utility. It was during the rise of anti-Habsburg sentiments in the *reformkor*, as the age of reforms is referred to in Hungarian history, when the word *nostalgia* (from English and French) was directly borrowed as *honvágy* (actually the Hungarian was *honkór* or *honvágykór*, compounding three concepts—home, desire and sickness). For the past 200 years, the term *nosztalgia* in popular usage has surfaced simply as a referent to one's nostalgic or melancholic remembrance of one's childhood or past. The fall of the socialist states throughout the region dramatically altered the elites' conception of remembering past glories and national longevity, and for an entire generation recollections about that period's final decades of 'goulash' socialism are truly a nostalgic trip down memory lane (Kornai 2012, 430–431).

However, nostalgically remembering something of one's childhood or youth and participating in a social movement that attempts to revive and

re-live certain aspects of a distant past are clearly not the same. Moreover, such a mirror translation of a concept and a word does not correspond to the turbulent age of nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian world, where nationality and home were anchored to fierce debates on Hungarian autonomy versus Habsburg imperialism (Kürti 2012a, 105–106). Anthropologists know too well that history, memory and national identities are contested and negotiated and thus remain in a state of flux (Glynn and Kleist 2012; Hodgkin and Radstone 2003). The contestation over the interrelationship between homelands, past greatness and suffering has never been more important than today, when migrants, diaspora populations and memory industries—ranging from films depicting what real socialisms were, such as the 2006 German *The Lives of Others*, to nostalgic musicals of the 1832 Paris Uprising as commemorated by one of the longest-running musicals, *Les Misérables*—resituate the meanings to their own histories. Erecting monuments and staging history for mass consumption ostensibly point to the fact that themes of national identity, remembrance and the past are omnipresent within political agendas of post-communist states. Rather than calling them simply nostalgic—and there are many cultural variants, ranging from ‘Ostalgie’, ‘post-socialist’ and ‘red’ to ‘Yugo-nostalgie’ (Bach 2002; Bartmanski 2011, Berdahl 1999; Boyer 2006; Ekman and Linde 2005, Ghodsee 2004; Klumbyté 2009; Palmberger 2008; Platt 2013; Volcic 2007)—we should aim to discover their political undercurrents if we want to understand the contested nature of reconstituted history’s divergent public appeal. My purpose in this chapter is to describe a special Hungarian cultural practice that I term nomadism, a phenomenon that grew out of the late socialist period when, in rejecting official views about memory and history, intellectuals have begun to construct a new, alternative version of history and culture. In his work on ritual mumming in Bulgaria, Gerald Creed suggests that we are able to learn a great deal about post-socialist life simply ‘by looking through the lens of this seemingly esoteric cultural practice’ (2011, 2). In a somewhat similar vein, I describe and analyse here how a seemingly marginal mnemonic social movement about national history from the 1980s turned into a major transformation coalescing with governmental policy by the first decades of the 21st century. Thus, far from being a simple nostalgic trip down memory lane, the resilient nomadist

movement sheds light on important aspects of the interconnectedness of state, national identity and religious revivalism conspicuous at present.

Remaking Memory and Nostalgia

Twenty-five years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Hungarian history is being rewritten in order to forge a new national Christian as well as prehistoric (i.e. nomadic) identity to replace communist symbols, street names and culture in general.² To connect the present to the past, throughout the countryside names of towns now are written in a runic alphabet (*rovásírás*), a prehistoric writing form purportedly practised by the conquering Hungarians before the 10th century AD, but one that was used by many from the Far East to the Far North during medieval times, which were far from dark. Not simply memory-through-forgetting but an actual memory-through-making is being fuelled by both a popular obsession with selective notions of the past and governmental policies. Its most visible symbols are the newly erected statues—often with the mythical totemic falcon or eagle, known in Hungarian as *turul*—dotting the national landscape and, interestingly, regions inhabited by the Hungarian diaspora in neighbouring states (Hann 2015; Mannova 2009).³ In some instances they celebrate interwar politicians, in others the former glories of the pre-First World War monarchy, or royalty from the house of Árpád and its mythical tribal ancestors. One of the most controversial uses of the eagle (*turul*) symbolism is the ‘Nazi occupation memorial’ erected to commemorate the country’s occupation in 1944, a new statue that now stands in front of the parliament (Arató 2014).⁴ The 7.5-metre-high statue depicts the German imperial eagle attacking Archangel Gabriel, symbolizing innocent Hungary.⁵ The fact that this expensive monument was never officially unveiled testifies to its contested and troublesome nature.

The ruling right-wing governmental, media and popular culture projects all attest to the vitality of such a backward-looking ideology in recreating a new national history. A brief look at the related theatrical and musical productions that have multiplied during the past decades will serve to illustrate this. The pattern was set in 1896, when

for several months nationwide celebrations—exhibitions, conferences, processions, monuments, construction projects, sport events and even a musical premiere (Ferenc Erkel's opera *King Stephen*)—took place to commemorate the Conquest in 896 AD, a pompous event with Franz Joseph, the nobility and high clergy at its midst.⁶ Only in 1938 was it followed by another event, though on a lesser scale, when the nation celebrated Saint Stephen's death. For the next half-century large celebrations were not allowed, and during socialist times other state holidays took centre stage.

Levente Szörényi, leader of the famous rock band Illés in the late 1960s and 1970s, is credited with being the composer of *Stephen the King (István a király)* in 1983–1984, a play followed by *Attila, the Scourge of God* in 1993, and several more musicals about tribal Hungarian chiefs during the Conquest period (*Veled uram*, 2000; *Ének a csodaszarvasról*, 2003; *Árpád népe*, 2006).⁷ The success of Szörényi's up-to-date historicizing as well as mythologizing of Hungarian prehistory paid off: numerous similar productions ensued (Kürti 1991, 511). Géza Gárdonyi's romantic novel *Stars of Eger (Egri Csillagok)*, published originally in 1901 and telling of the heroic defence of the Eger fortress against the mighty Ottoman army during the fall of 1552, was made into a feature film in 1968 and in 1997 a rock musical. The show has been continuously on the programme of various theatres around Hungary ever since, and is also regularly staged in Romanian settlements with a sizable Hungarian minority. Other historical figures have also been immortalized by the sounds of the world music type of rock operas: the peasant leader of the 1514 uprising, György Dózsa, in 2012; King Matthias Corvinus in 2014; and the 11th-century pagan chief Vazul, the cousin of Saint Stephen, in 2015. In Hungary, interest in prehistoric tribal life has never subsided: *The Conquest (Honfoglalás)* rock opera and horse show reopened to enormous popularity in 2014, the loosely woven storyline hailing the Hungarian tribes' entrance to the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century.⁸ Elites of the Hungarian diaspora in Romania have also been active: in 2011 a rock opera, *Prince Csaba (Csaba királyfi)*, told the story of the mythical (purportedly Hun) Prince Csaba leading the Hungarian Szekler settlers to their present homeland in Transylvania, a region of Romania since the end of the First World War.⁹

These staged productions not only rekindle memories about past greatness peppered with a good dose of national unity, but offer easy and ready-made pictures of Hungarian nomadic heritage. The invention of the noble steppe nomads reveals a continuing effort on the part of elites to keep certain aspects of Hungarian culture unique by extending Hungarian history into an age where rulers of east and west alike feared Scythian, Hun, Avar and Magyar warriors. The enormous popularity of such staged productions among all social classes ensures financial successes as well as involving hundreds of actors, musicians, dancers and technicians and requiring careful planning, especially when the show takes place in a regional city or, as has been the case, abroad in a minority setting. Finally, the socialization aspect of such historical pageants—based on the patterns set by the first *Stephen the King* rock opera combining dance, folk music and rock music with a historical theme—has enormous influence over the generations, thereby assisting in and even surpassing official pedagogy.¹⁰

Reappraisal of the past in Hungary is integral to constructing a new post-communist identity, a process legitimated by a conscious rejection of the communist version of history by rejuvenating interwar alternative interpretations—which themselves were duly rejected by the communist authorities. This alternative history industry is as ideologically driven as the production of Marxist-Leninist history by former communist governments. The period of the late 1980s and early 1990s was not only about a transition to a multiparty system, free elections and a market economy, but a time of genuine social fermentation and experimentation that allowed the genie out of the bottle. The first cultural undercurrent resisting official history and national identity was the populist dance-house (*táncház*) youth movement of the 1970s. With the help of revived folk music, dance clubs and trips to Hungarian settlements in neighbouring Romania, young people became aware of their ‘real’ and ‘untainted’ folk traditions together with some little-known pre-war history (Kürti 2001a). The composer and musical educator Zoltán Kodály already called for learning musical heritage only from the ‘purest spring’, which was authentic old folk music, an aspect of folklore still readily available in minority communities in Transylvania, Romania. As the movement intensified in rejecting governmental propaganda, especially socialist

internationalism, leading advocates—among them most specifically the populist writer Sándor Csoóri, himself an instigator of the *táncház* culture—identified the youth movement as the popular culture of the new ‘nomadic generation’ (Bodor 1981).¹¹ To be sure, the rise of alternative cultural, religious and nomadist groups was anchored to the folkloristic revival that swept from west to the east (Kürti 1997, 2001b). Importantly, what made Hungarian populism so different from other return-to-the-roots movements familiar elsewhere is that, first, it contributed to the way in which the transformation of the state occurred during the late 1980s. Moreover, it has not remained in isolation, existing as a fringe sub-culture of a few. Contrarily, and this is my point, Hungarian nomadism has grown into a fundamentalist political movement that can also be seen as a backlash against globalization, modernism and European Union (EU) expansionism by the second decade of the 21st century.¹² Thus, this new memory-in-the-making connects the present with the past through the ideology of nomadism¹³ as an expression of national history and culture.

Nomadism on the Move

As the Marxist-Leninist system slowly faded away, alternative groups in Hungary managed to create their own space of metamorphosis by elevating Hungarian prehistory and nomadism into mainstream political culture. The existence of two separate, official and alternative histories dates to the time of mature or what is sometimes referred to as window or goulash communism, actually the last decade of Kadarist rule. Marxist-Leninist cultural propaganda and with it official historiography (*történelem* in Hungarian means something did happen), especially those relating to the 1956 revolution, the peace treaties following the First World War and prehistory, were under serious attack. If a single event should be identified from that period as having a major transformational role in undermining official historiography, then the rock opera *Stephen the King* from 1983 stands out as the most important. The play’s importance cannot be underestimated, for it celebrated for the first time since the 1938–1941 nationwide cult of Stephen—a date referring to the 900th anniversary celebrations of the saint king’s

death—the victory of Stephen's 10th-century arch-enemy, the pagan chieftain Koppány (Hann 1990; Milun 1991).¹⁴ In the rock musical Stephen is hailed as the Saint King—hence his name, Saint Stephen King (*Szent István Király*)—not only for silencing pagan rebels but especially for introducing Christianity and Western-style statehood to Hungary.¹⁵ In this rekindling of the cult of Stephen, John Armstrong's original suggestion gains more ground, that the Hungarians have continued to make use of a double legitimating myth: 'alongside Stephen they have also needed to stress the distinctiveness of their origins, as nomads, in comparison to their neighbours who became settled agriculturalists much earlier in history' (Armstrong 1982, 47). As strange as it sounds, the figure of the Catholic saint king together with the nomadic heritage have provided the real prototype of the 'civic foundation myth' for Hungary (Smith 2009, 97).

For both the nomadists and the government elites, this foundation myth now stands for the preferred official history, as specified in the preamble of the 2011 Constitution that states: 'We are proud that our king Saint Stephen built the Hungarian State on solid ground and made our country a part of Christian Europe one thousand years ago... We recognize the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood. We value the various religious traditions of our country.'¹⁶ With this, the civic notion of nation and history has been overridden by a religious-mythical one, whose mission is to provide an alternative to socialist history.¹⁷ The carriers of this foundation myth are true primordialists in the sense of John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith, who would certainly reject the more constructivist group of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and their followers who opt for the 18th-century origin of nations and nationalism. Nomadists espouse the view that the Hungarian nation dates not only to the first royal house of Hungary (the house of Árpád) but to earlier eras, to the nomadic chieftains of Hunnish, Avar and Scythian empires. Especially noticeable in their ideology is the elevation of pagan religiosity, in particular New Age shamanism and its close association with the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state in the 11th century. This provides for a standard mythomoteur or constitutive political myth of descent, a shared history and culture with a specific territory, all providing a sense of mechanical solidarity.

The road since 1983 has been rather straightforward: nomadism has become crucial in legitimating a newly invented post-communist heritage, extolling the myth of redemption and suffering as virtues attached to the uniqueness of Hungarians' Asiatic nomadic heritage.¹⁸ Nomadists' concern for anamnesis recalls Ricoeur's formulation that the 'problem is not so much to invent as to rediscover what we have forgotten' (Ricoeur 1986, 307). Naturally, in the process of remembering tremendous intellectualizing as well as invention has to be done. Magyar nomadic sentiments have been reinforced by the ethno-regional awakening of the historic Jász-kun—from Kun (Cumanian) and Jász (Jazygian)—settlements in central Hungary, whose mediated localities deserve a brief scrutiny. The Cumanian and Jász ethnic groups, warriors and pastoralists from the Central Asian steppes, settled in Hungary during the late 13th century. Existing virtually side by side with Hungarian (Magyar) populations, they maintained an independent status under the leadership of noble chiefs known as 'captains'. Wholly Christianized by the 15th century, together with losing their original languages—Kipchak for the Cumanians, Osset-Alan for the Jász—they were assimilated into the Hungarian peasantry even though they managed to uphold some of their feudal privileges until 1877, a date signalling the incorporation of their privileged regional status fully into the Hungarian county system (Berend et al. 2013). In 1939, the Jász and Kun towns celebrated their 700th anniversary of migrating to Hungary, a scholarly conference undermined by the presence of the extreme right-wing politician László Endre, later executed for crimes against humanity during the Second World War. While nomadic heritage has been a continual obsession of Hungarian scholars during the 19th and 20th centuries, resulting in fierce competition between the Finno-Ugrian and the Central Asian or Turanian hypotheses—the former adhering to the northern Siberian, the latter to the more southern Turkic genetic relationship—local politicians and cultural workers of the Kun and Jász settlements never gave up their search for their long-lost Asiatic heritage.¹⁹ In 1995, for instance, the town of Karcag in central Hungary erected the first nomad warrior statues, fashioned after the Cuman stone statues known in southern Russia and Ukraine, the 'kamennaia baba' (Szilágyi 1996, 44). The erection of Statues of Kun Remembrance was followed in 1996 by the initiative of

Kisújszállás to elect modern-day Cumanian captains (*kun kapitány*), a title of symbolic significance only.²⁰ Today, all three historical regions celebrate annually their new-found identities by holding parades under the watchful eyes of their elected 'captains'. All these events were nicely incorporated into the nationwide millennial celebrations in 1996, when official programmes, conferences and a host of publications centred—though once again on a much lesser scale—on the period of Conquest and the foundation of the Árpád dynasty.

A few individuals have been elevated to celebrity status to act as spiritual and 'scientific' leaders of the alternative but steadily growing nomadist movement. Among these bricoleurs are Gábor Pap, an art historian by profession, whose adamant views in rejecting official historiography have been published in numerous books; his long lectures can be viewed on the internet.²¹ His followers—among them István Somodi, Lajos Szántai and József V. Molnár—are well known as providers of 'novel' explanations about Hungarian culture, both present and historical. There are others of equal fame whose essential contribution to the nomadist way of life is well known. For example, Lajos Pap is a retired heart surgeon, and Zsolt András Bíró is a former physical anthropologist, now a self-proclaimed leader of the large mass pageantry (known as *Kurultaj*). Other self-made artisans specialize in fabricating traditional clothing and weaponry fashioned after present Central Asian as well as archaeological precedents. Two men (Csaba Grózer and László Kassai) have achieved fame for reconstructing Central Asian bows and arrows and organizing national and international competitions in horseback archery and distance shooting (the latter is well known in international circles for his own mounted archery school).²² There are several organizations specializing in fighting methods: Baranta (National Association of Traditional Hungarian Fighting Methods) is led by a former military officer, Ferenc Vukics; and the Outlaw Army (*Betyársereg*) has been known for combining 19th-century romanticism with an extreme form of xenophobia and anti-Roma actions.²³ During the meetings—the two most important are the Hungarian National Assembly (*Magyarok Országos Gyűlése*), and the *Ősök napja* or *Kurultáj*—parades and competitions for children and adults have been organized with horseback riding, fighting methods and neo-shamanic drumming. The nomadic movement is made

up of a core membership divided according to members' residence in a given county. The corporate aspect of the movement is secured by the Magyar-Turan Foundation (Magyar-Turán Alapítvány), a registered non-profit cultural organization with the stated goal of 'preserving Hungarian cultural heritage'.²⁴ In its definition, cultural heritage refers strictly to a rekindled prehistoric Hungarianness, a notion flexible enough to allow activities ranging from conferences to neo-shamanic performances. Aside from the international Kurultaj (Ősök Napja) celebration, other regularly held events are organized during the summer and winter solstices (Karacsun).²⁵ Families who are part of the alternative scene follow these across the country, celebrating their new-found heritage.²⁶ Meeting at regular intervals, these nomadists do not think nostalgically like elders of 'remember when', but rather profess 'we'll show you how it was'. The costumes, music, collective performance and food all function to build reality, to share a common past, to see the continuity with it and to point to a better future.

The Holy Crown, Neo-Shamanism and Nomadism

Since the 1990s, the spiritual aspect of nomadism has experienced perhaps the most vital rejuvenation through the central role given to neo-shamanism (Kürti 2005). Research on Siberian and Central Asian shamanism has been on the mind of Hungarian researchers since the early 20th century, a preoccupation confined mostly to a small intellectual circle connected to the name of Vilmos Diószegi (1923–1972), an ethnographer at the ethnographic research institution of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. After his death, his disciple Mihály Hoppál took the lead in carrying out more fieldwork in various tribal communities in the Soviet Union, areas that have been identified by ethnographers and linguists as related to either the Hungarian language or Hungarian prehistory. By the late 1980s, through diverse publications, conferences and lectures, shamanism and its related Hungarian folklore complexes, the legacy of Diószegi, had received remarkable attention in popular culture. There are at least four areas that can be identified as Hungarian

neo-shamanism's basic pillars: (1) the revitalization and reconceptualization of the Hungarian folkloric *táltos* belief; (2) a much sought-after Siberian and Central Asian connection; (3) reliance on Hungarian medieval tribal and royal symbolism, connected especially to the Holy Crown, exuding a sense of nationalistic paganism with its popular but highly contested theory; and (4) incorporation of elements borrowed from Christianity, Hinduism and other world religions, including Native American beliefs.²⁷

By the middle to late 1990s, several new neo-shamanic groups emerged in Hungary, most led by well-known male neo-shamans, or better *táltos*, initiated by either elder or well-known international neo-shamans such as Michael Harner. The Church of Ancient Hungarian Táltos (Ősmagyar Táltos Egyház) was formed together with Yotengrit, both creating a large group of followers and novices. There are other lesser-known groups all emphasizing various aspects of Hungarian prehistory with a good dose of nationalistic, New Age and neo-pagan elements. Following in the steps of Diószegi and most recently Hoppál, whose many Siberian trips resulted in countless articles, newspaper reports, videos and public lectures, urban intellectuals have been flocking to neo-shamanic events that include collective invocations, singing, drumming and dancing. A few participants have embarked on trips to Siberia or even the Far East to witness modern-day shamanic performances. These intellectual travels are not without influence, as migrations bring tremendous change in personalities and worldviews; in addition, modern neo-shamans easily mix fire walking, sweat lodges and group drumming with Christian or Buddhist tenets. There is one fundamental difference, however, in the ways in which these international migrations are taking place from those of previous scholarly travels. For these new nomads the 'ancestral' Hungarian land is no longer located in Siberia, where the linguistically related Khanty and Mansy tribal speakers live, but further south and the east, the Central Asian frontier among Turkic-speaking populations, the proud pastoralist nomads of the steppes. In the nomadic mentality, these once fierce warriors are trustees of a prehistoric high civilization boasting the empire of the Huns, Avars and Mongols.²⁸ Eager mythologizers rushed to search for Hungarian elements in several of these tribal cultures and, not sur-

prisingly, they received more than they bargained for: they even found a lost Hungarian tribe in Kazakhstan purported to be close relatives of the Kun people who settled in Hungary.²⁹

Strange as it may sound at first, this kind of time-travel nomadism, connecting as it does prehistoric populations with present Hungarians as well as shamanic ideology to 20th-century folklore, successfully incorporates the first Christian Hungarian royal house (the dynasty of Árpád) and the jewellery known as the sacred crown of Stephen (Holy Crown or *Szentkorona*; Péter 2003). The crown associated with Saint Stephen is not the only symbolic relic important in nomadist philosophy: the holy right hand (*Szentjobb*), purported to belong to Stephen and now housed at Saint Stephen's Basilica in Budapest, is a similarly politicized mythomoteur of Hungarian Catholicism and statehood (Hann 1990, 9). Undoubtedly, while the holy right hand remained a religious historical icon, the Holy Crown was elevated as the paramount symbol of the Hungarian republic, a position that can be seen from the fact that it continues to be depicted on the official coat of arms. In Hungarian ecclesiastical and popular culture, the Holy Crown is perhaps the single most important historical symbol, an idea fostered by the overwhelming Roman Catholic influence in political culture at present. True as it may be, the crown jewels are imbued with symbolic significance that has much to do with medieval Hungary, but also with the modern historical period during and following the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

During the conservative right-wing governments in 1990–1994 and 1998–2002, there was a constant shift to give increasing power to Christian values together with national traditions to counter the lingering socialist legacy. Continuing this symbolic mobility of the Holy Crown, the executive branch proposed to place it in the central lobby of parliament, which instantly provoked debates. Amid great pomp and ceremony, on 1 January 2000 the crown was removed from the national museum and placed in parliament (Kürti 2006, 57, 2015, 47). According to Hungarian popular legend, fed by many in alternative circles as well as neo-shamanic practitioners, Saint Stephen was born with a magical sixth finger. This provides ample proof that despite being christened (his pagan name was Vajk) and crowned by the blessing of Pope Sylvester II

and Otto III, the Holy Roman Emperor, he remained true to his ancestral pagan religion as a shaman king entrusted with phenomenal psychic power, leading his people to statehood and to rule the Carpathian Basin. All this fits well with most of the neo-shamanic believers, for whom the Holy Crown is sacred for more than one reason. For them, it is not only sacred regalia from the time of Saint Stephen, it testifies to the longevity and power of the Árpád dynasty (c. 895–1301), with an ancestral lineage that includes fictitious Avar and Hunnic chiefs and princes (Pap 2013).³⁰ To most followers of the Turanian faith (as they call this orientation, after the Turan lowland in Central Asia), the Holy Crown is a unique shamanic crown exuding a sacred, high-level energy, an energy force responsible for the survival of the Hungarian nation throughout the calamitous centuries.

With the placement of the Holy Crown in parliament, however, the ritualization process did not end. The relic's mystification was further reinforced when forty-seven members of the far-right Jobbik Party took a historic oath in front of the Holy Crown before the official oath ceremony. Similarly, government officials have not shied away from extolling the newly discovered nomadic heritage and embarking on fostering new international connections with Asian states. In the summer of 2010, State Secretary for Culture Géza Szócs visited the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan and said: 'We should not wish to be secondary in Europe, we should promote ourselves in Asia.'³¹ In August the Speaker of the House became patron-in-charge of a historical reconstruction of the Hungarian Tribal Assembly (Kurultáj—Ősök Napja) in Bugac, an event sponsored annually by the government and the eager Kun settlements.³²

The selection for the pompous meeting in Bugac was no accident. The prairie-like flatland (*puszta* in Hungarian) near the regional city of Kecskemét was one of the last areas, aside from the Hortobágy region to the east, where animal husbandry survived well into the middle of the 20th century. The romanticized grassland of the *puszta*, home of outlaws and symbol of freedom and lawlessness, has long played an important role in the national and touristic imaginary. Organizing the Kurultáj in this area has as much to do with wish fulfilment as with repopulating the landscape, which suffered tremendously during the forty years of socialist agricultural policy. At present, the Kurultáj is advertised as a modern

tribal assembly to relive prehistory by commemorating two—largely fictitious—historical figures: Árpád, who was supposedly the Hungarian chief leading the conquest of the Carpathian Basin in 895–896 AD; and Attila the Hunnish prince, who is seen as one of the ancestors of the House of Árpád. The Bugac events of horsemen, archers and nomadic craft makers are truly cross-cultural extravaganzas: thousands dressed in reconstructed prehistoric and Asiatic outfits flock to play prehistoric war games, sing and dance to shamanic drumming and enjoy intertribal unity together with distinguished representatives invited from Siberia and Central Asia.³³ The organizers are very selective, though: only representatives with a special ‘Hunnic and Turanic mentality’ have been invited to attend the Kurultájs.³⁴ The 2014 Kurultáj, lasting for four days, was the largest so far: more than 200,000 people attended and—according to the organizers—142 yurts (felt tents) were erected for those staying overnight and in the final mounted show 362 horsemen participated.³⁵ One year later, the organizers still proudly declared success even though attendance was much more modest.³⁶ Aside from other historical games (horseback archery, wrestling, stick fighting, falconry etc.), one speciality concerns cuisine and the preparation of dishes—oven-baked bread, for example—thought to be enjoyed by nomadic warriors of the Central Asian steppes. On the one hand, ‘home-made’ food is also anchored to generating an embodied memory (Hage 2010); on the other, it provides a basis to relate present-day nomadist gathering to a mythical homeland(s) by bonding with strangers and individuals distanced by both space and language. While this cross-cultural migration homogenizes and essentializes nationality and tribal identities, it also divides and separates; neighbouring populations (namely Slavs, Romanians and Germanic speakers) and internal minorities (Jews and Gypsies in particular) are kept at arms’ length. They have no place, they have no role to play, in the ancestral gatherings; the Kurultáj is not something they could relate to or enjoy. On the contrary, the celebratory nature of the ancestral gathering actually may remind them of the oppression and cruelty suffered at the hands of medieval Hungarian aristocracy, or more recently, at the height of Magyar nationalism, forced assimilation and language policies.

By the first decade of the 21st century, this rejuvenated nomadic-national identity had generated its own momentum, connecting the Holy

Crown with high politics and neo-shamanism. In 2012 a Hungarian folk singer, Éva Kanalas, and a Tuvan-Siberian shaman, Adigzi, performed a neo-shamanic ritual in the Hungarian parliament in front of the crown of Saint Stephen (Kürti 2015, 10). On 21 March, they were admitted to the parliament building to perform a cleansing ceremony in front of the Holy Crown.³⁷ Since shamanistic songs are not known in Hungary—only distant folkloristic fragments have been collected, but their real meaning is still hotly debated—the singer resorted to lines of Catholic songs, many of her own rendition. Adigzi expressed his views concerning his performance as honouring the relic with a ‘cleansing ritual for the betterment of the country so it can strengthen itself via the sacralisation of the Holy Crown’.

No doubt this performance, obviously cleared by the highest echelon of the government, found support among intellectuals and the main figures of the ruling party. It is a well-known fact that Kanalas’s trip to Tuva a year before was financed with the help of no lesser potentate than the Minister of National Resources, Miklós Réthelyi, who also obviously sanctioned the shamanic performance in the parliament building.³⁸ The connection of alternative religious organizations to high-ranking members of right-wing political parties holding governmental office is easy to decipher, as some leaders regularly attend the largest gatherings and the Fidesz-monitored Echo-TV regularly features neo-shamanic themes, topics frequently presented by other television channels as well (for example, Lékek-TV, HÍR-TV). Standard in their programmes are references to the idea of a ‘chosen nation’, ‘sacred land’ and ‘ancient past’, expressions that contain the seeds of a ‘political religion’. The 2014 Kurultáj, to give another glaring example of governmental involvement, was opened by the state secretary Bence Rétvári. To reinforce the Asiatic connection, the other international dignitary was the Minister of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Aristanbek Mukhamediuly.³⁹

The legitimizing of the nomadist memory industry has come via the highest office holder in Hungary, the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whose speeches provide ample proof of his belief in the connection between Christianity, neo-shamanism and Hungarian nomadist history. In a speech to audiences at the erection of the Monument of National Unity at Ópusztaszer in 2012, a location where a thousand years ago the

feudal tribal chieftains purportedly met to form the Hungarian state, he mixed mythological references to a falcon-like bird (*turul* in Hungarian) with passages quoted from the New Testament in order to connect prehistoric tribalism to Christianity and Hungarian nationhood.⁴⁰ Citing from the book of Revelation (12:7)—‘And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels’—the Prime Minister not only showed a deep belief in Hungarian prehistory, but was equally millennial about the positive future for a new Hungarian state. Orbán had already revealed a similar connection in 2005, when he referred to a popular legend concerning the supernatural shamanistic power of the Hungarian kings of the Árpád dynasty (namely Béla IV), most notably the reference to the extra fingers of the first kings.⁴¹ With such a powerful political thinker as leader, the transmogrifying of the new state has been legitimized by the 2011 Constitution (called the Fundamental Law of Hungary), which states: ‘We honour the achievements of our historical constitution and we honour the Holy Crown, which embodies the constitutional continuity of Hungary’s statehood and the unity of the nation.’ Thus, as the historian László Péter has affirmed, ‘the Holy Crown, like that fabled Egyptian bird, the phoenix, miraculously came forth with new life’ (2003, 422).

With a majority in the Hungarian parliament, the ruling Conservative Party has not only embraced religious fundamentalism and with it a cultic sense of Hungarian prehistory and mythology—centred on the empire of Saint Stephen and the tribal past—it has wholeheartedly welcomed co-eval neo-shamanism as well. At the moment we are witnessing not only a process of secularization of the sacred, but—from the perspective of nomadists—the sacralization of secular society. For the right-wing government, Christian and nomadic symbolism does not simply mask the growing political and economic difficulties of the Hungarian state, it embodies a new tribalist heritage as well as civil religion with neo-shamanism at its core.⁴² For nomadists, both elites and adherents alike, all this makes perfect sense and they would certainly agree with Anthony Smith’s formulation emphasizing the double historicity of nations: ‘their embeddedness in very specific historical contexts and situations, and their rootedness in the memories and traditions of their members’ (2009, 30).

Conclusions

Mirroring, or rather caricaturing, the current majority lifestyle, nomadic practices have been viewed as nationalistic and selectively anti-Semitic, racist, anti-Roma and xenophobic (Kovács 2012; Kürti 2011). Undoubtedly, the movement provides enthusiasts with a vibrant and meaningful identity that not only entails communal and spiritual face-to-face experience, but offers a harmonious existence with nature while dynamically serving to rejuvenate Hungarian identity in the face of globalization. In this light, this New Age nomadic life cannot be dismissed simply as a conservative and backward-looking existence, for it has plenty of inner energy based on social criticism, often bordering not on utopian withdrawal from society but on an adamant effort to create a better one. Through their prehistoric ritualism, nomadists emphasize ecological issues such as the destruction of the natural environment or fighting pollution, advocating less materialistic consumption and a healthy diet. And while some fans opt for mud-brick houses and yurts to live in, most readily admit the benefits of mobile phones, the internet and consumerist desires. Instead of nostalgia, the duality proposed by Karl Mannheim decades ago—utopia and ideology—serves us better to understand this seeming contradiction. For Mannheim, utopia is ‘incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs’ (Mannheim 2000, 173). Moreover, it has to not only ‘transcend reality’ but break the ‘bonds of the existing social order’, for otherwise it remains only ideology. Strangely but not unexpectedly, while the nomadist movement does transcend everyday reality with its orientation towards a mythical and artificial existence, it nevertheless is ‘harmoniously integrated into the world-view characteristic of the period’ (Mannheim 2000, 174). While many of the invented rituals, costumes and events—what Mannheim called the ‘wish-images’—may seem ‘revolutionary’ in opposing the dominant international popular culture, at the same time they are successfully integrated within the prevailing far-right political culture.

Nomadic practice, as the Hungarian case suggests, is not really about a certain place in the past but a colourfully crafted historical imaginary based on a New Age *hic et nunc* philosophy. Nomadist nostalgia lends

credence to Kathleen Stewart's apt observation that 'nostalgia is an essential, narrative, function of language that orders events temporarily and dramatizes them in the mode of "things that happened", that "could happen", that "threaten to erupt at any moment"' (1988, 227). Nomadic practitioners are truly 'mnemonic warriors', as Agnes Seleny calls those who craft 'a credible and exclusive narrative of irreconcilable antagonism along the communist/anti-communist divide' (2014, 38–39). Their world is not simply a romantic yearning for the past but a contestation to forge an alternative identity and communitas, one that transcends previous imagery and (socialist) historiography.⁴³ Not just film, fiction or art, as for example Boym emphasizes with regard to nostalgia (2001), the nomadist's way of life embodies real action, practice and consciousness. When the *Stephen the King* rock opera was popularized in the mid-1980s, it was only that: an artistic musical to undermine communist official history and ideology. At the time, the production was certainly counter-hegemonic, to say the least. For nomadists today life is not a stage; although many of the rituals and assemblies are well staged, they are not actors in a rock opera, though music—especially neo-shamanic incantation, folk music and drumming—plays key roles in their rituals; and their life is far from fictional, although the constituting elements derive meaning from fictionalized historical (even prehistoric) accounts. Elites, followers and enthusiasts—and there are many more who do not practise but jubilantly agree with the main tenets of nomadism—take for granted that this new world is made by them for them in order to explain and celebrate their place in it. This world is congruent with the current government's so-called Eastern Opening agenda, encompassing the rejection of EU control over matters considered national.⁴⁴ In the past fifty years or so, the geopolitical understanding of this part of the world has changed fundamentally three times. During the last decades of state socialism, dissident intellectuals such as Milan Kundera, György Konrád and Czesław Miłosz called for a return to 'Central Europe' (Mitteleuropa) to counter the hegemony of state socialism.⁴⁵ By the early 1990s, most politicians, both left and right, were concerned with joining the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). They all had their dreams come true. However, in the past decade, as the architecture of the Hungarian state has been rebuilt, nomadists have sounded wholly antithetical to that

ideal—returning to a fictional Asiatic nomadic heritage by distancing the country from liberal Europe.

Unlike the 1960s counter-culture hippie communes' withdrawal from mainstream society, nomadists today are openly deterministic: adherents hail their mainstream status, relegating everyone else to remnants of an earlier era, those who cannot change but only nostalgically remember the achievement of a political system known as either window or goulash socialism. The radical nomadists know that political truth lies not in the present but in the distant past and for that they are willing to fight. In their pursuit they find a common ideological platform with far-right politicians and members of the national rock musical sub-culture (Kürti 2012b). As one member of the Motorcycle Clan of the Outlaw Army (Betyársereg) admits: 'Every army has a cavalry, in the Outlaw Army we the bikers fill that role symbolically; naturally, if there is fighting we leave our "horses" and will beat up the enemy together with the infantry.'⁴⁶ The nomadist movement illustrates how nations and nation states have been changed fundamentally from what they were when they were invented in the 18th and 19th centuries (Machin 2015). To the nomadist mnemonic warriors, the 21st century only makes sense in a transnational world of their own making with a constant flow of people, goods and ideas between Hungary and Asia (whatever that entails), a heterotopia in which a desired time and place are defined from within and from the past. For them, riding on horseback after driving a four-wheeler while conversing with fellow participants via Android tablets is not antithetical with the nomadist world-view. Looking at their longing for positive memories from the distant past recalls Ernest Gellner and Northrop Frye before him: this is an ironic age indeed!

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Notes

1. For an early introduction to nostalgia by an anthropologist, see Stewart (1988).
2. For insights on the post-1990 landscape in Hungary, see Esbenshade (1995) and Nadkarni (2003). One reason I do not wish to discuss it here is that it

is surprising how many studies exist, for example about the Budapest Statue Park museum, housing examples of socialist realist artwork. The sheer number of scholars writing about it in the past ten years is overwhelming, to name a few without citing their works: P. Clements, T. Döring, B. James, D. Light, A-M. Losonczy, M. M. Metro-Roland, E. Palonen, R. Robin, H. Turai, K. Verdery, K. Virag, P. Williams. To be fair, the Budapest Statue Park is one of the sightseeing highlights advertised by tourist agencies for Western tourists, and schoolchildren are also taken there.

3. The *turul* is a mythical falcon or eagle-like (*Falco cherrug*) bird that appears in a Hungarian legend. It was this bird that impregnated Emese, a princess credited with starting the Árpád dynasty. In Budapest alone there are thirteen statues representing the *turul*.
4. In popular parlance, the monument has been termed the ‘Monument of National Obsession’ (*Nemzeti megszállottsági emlékmű*), a play on the words occupation (*megszállás*) and obsession (*megszállottság*). The monument’s official name is *A német megszállás áldozatainak emlékműve*.
5. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and subsequently the Soviet empire, erecting statues, monuments and opening new historical sites in tandem with changing street names and relegating socialist art to warehouses have been standard features across the Eastern European landscape. For example, another statue—about 400 kilometres south of Hungary in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo—was erected to hail Gavrilo Princip, who exactly one hundred years ago shot the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia, triggering the First World War.
6. For an interesting contemporary account of the millennial celebrations and their consequences for the country’s interethnic relations, see Kőváry (1897). Quelling Magyar nationalistic sentiment, during the opening ball the Hungarian national dance (*csárdás*) was only played for six minutes, an interlude that pleased Franz Joseph very much. However, after the exit of the royal couple from the ballroom, that dance was repeated exactly twelve times in a row (Kőváry 1897, 17).
7. According to widely accepted theory, the Conquest (in Hungarian *honfoglalás*, better translated as occupation of home, or even homesteading) of the Carpathian Basin took place around the last decades of the 9th century AD. There are plenty of alternative views. For example, the historian Gyula László offered his much-criticized thesis about the dual conquest suggesting that certain Hungarian tribes entered the Carpathian Basin 200 years before the 9th century. More extreme are those ideas that propose a mixed Hungarian, Hunnic and Avar entry hundreds of years before the Conquest;

- some even suppose that Hungarians were already there with the Scythians. For a succinct summary of this history and surrounding debates in English, see Berend et al. 2013, 61–81).
8. This production was based on the 1996 film with the same title, with Franco Nero in the lead role, directed by Gábor Koltay. The horse-show version was produced by Gergely Koltay, son of the film director Koltay.
 9. There are no historical sources to identify Csaba, the prince of the Szeklers; only legends and folk tales collected in Transylvania tell about his deeds. A song, called today the Szekler anthem (*Székely himnusz*) and written in 1921, can be credited with rejuvenating the legend about Csaba. I have described the importance of the Szekler population of Transylvania, Romani, for Hungarian historiography and ethnography in my book *The Remote Borderland: Transylvania in the Hungarian Imagination*, see especially Kürti (2001a, 113–116).
 10. The Hungarian film industry was not immune to such mythologizing either. However, the 1996 feature film *The Conquest (Honfoglalás)* by Gábor Koltay—in which the main protagonist was played by the Italian Franco Nero—was a total flop. On the contrary, Gábor Herendi's *Hungarian Wanderer (Magyar Vándor)* caricatures the seven mythical tribal leaders as they are caught in a time warp and meander through history, even meeting English soccer players on their way into Hungary. Obviously the production was made as a humorous response to Koltay's feeble attempt at historical cinematography; it worked, as the film was a critical and popular success.
 11. Rereading pertinent essays of Csoóri, I found one from 1969—years before the dance-house movement started—in which he analyses the renowned Hungarian folk ballad ('Kelemen Kőműves'), known because of its horrific story generally as 'The Walled-Up Wife' (East European variants by the name of the master builder). In it the poet writes a rather fiery phrase: 'Is the wall crumbling? Kelemen Kőműves must step forward' (Csoóri 2015). This is an obvious reference to the instability of the Soviet system and the necessity of sacrificial action to combat the regime. On the story of this fascinating ballad and its many international variants, see Dundes (1996).
 12. In fact, this is one of the aspects of nomadism about which Deleuze and Guattari write (Bogue 2007, 123–136).
 13. I do not use the term neo-nomadism, for there was no nomadism in Hungary to begin with. Medievalists have used the term 'semi-

- nomadism' to describe the Hungarian period of the Conquest (Györfly 1983). For a classical anthropological treatment of nomadism, see Khazanov (1984).
14. To commemorate the 900th anniversary of Stephen's death, 1938 was renamed Holy Year by the parliament and the Hungarian Bishops Council. The Holy Right Hand of Stephen was put on a special train (Golden Train) travelling around the countryside. The practice lasted until 1941. One more event in 1938 also helped put Hungary on the map: the 34th International Eucharistic Congress was held in Budapest, which over 100,000 people from all over the world attended.
 15. For the record, King Saint Stephen of Hungary (c. 975–1038) should not be confused with the protomartyr Saint Stephen of the first century AD.
 16. English, French and German versions of the new Constitution are on the official home page of the Hungarian government: <http://www.kormany.hu/download/e/02/00000/The%20New%20Fundamental%20Law%20of%20Hungary.pdf> (last accessed 14 September 2016).
 17. For example, House of Terror, Public Foundation for Habsburg Studies, Holocaust Memorial Centre, Veritas Historical Research Institute (amusingly the motto of the latter is 'it is illegal to lie').
 18. There are some parallels between the Hungarian scene and what some Romanians have done during the past decades to reassert their own history with reference to the Dacian-Roman foundation myth. Just like in Hungary, there are two competing paradigms, the Latinist (the Roman) and the autochthonous (Gaeto-Dacian; Boia 2001). To provide another glaring example, the Slovenian elites have also found their Gellnerian Ruritania in the so-called Venetic theory, suggesting a prehistoric ethno-genesis dating back to the sea-faring Veneti (Celtic) tribe to undermine previous notions about a south Slavic origin (Bajt 2011).
 19. Briefly, for those not familiar with these two terms, the Finno-Ugric origin concerns the origin of the Hungarians and their language as related to the Siberian Khanty and Mansy tribes from whom they separated about 3–4000 years ago. In contrast, the Turanian hypothesis regards this as a fabrication of Habsburg imperialist ideology, and claims a Central Asian heritage and prehistory for the Hungarians. This debate is not unique to Hungary: in Russia Eurasianism and Pan-Turanism have a similar ring (Shalepntokh 2007). On the Hungarian 'Finno-Turkic' language war in the 19th century, see Gal (2009).

20. The commemorative statues at Karcag are monumental copies of the medieval Cuman anthropomorphic stone figures, known as ‘kurgan stelae’, or in Russian *kammenaia baba* (stone grandfather), found in southern Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia, the original homeland of the Kipchak-Cuman tribes.
21. His lectures are available on youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IUNNhiS15Y> (last accessed 3 December 2016).
22. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mounted_archery (last accessed 1 December 2016).
23. See the home pages for both associations, <http://www.baranta.org/> and <http://betyarsereg.hu/> (last accessed 9 December 2016).
24. From the 2013 official report, http://kurultaj.hu/wp-content/uploads/Kozhasznosagi_jelentes_2013.pdf (last accessed 5 December 2016). The foundation’s president is 42-year-old Zsolt András Bíró.
25. Christmas in Hungarian is *karácsony*, a proto-Slavic loan word. Nomadists, however, refuse this etymology, inventing instead a Turkic origin from *kara*, meaning black, and *chun*, turning. I have not been able to ascertain any such language bending. For New Agers such a contradiction is meaningless: they are firmly entrenched in believing their own linguistic etymology.
26. One aspect of family life centring around this newly invented Hungarianness concerns selecting Hungarian names for children. To balance the overwhelming and well-known Christian surnames, for girls among others Csenge, Csilla, Csillag, Kincső, Tünde and Virág are common, for boys Álmos, Ákos, Buda, Kende, Levente, Magor, Tas and Zsombor are pervasive.
27. On neo-shamanism in its Central and East European form, see for example Kocku (2003), Kürti (44).
28. On the difficulties concerning the prehistoric ethnicities of the Avars and Huns, see the informative studies of Maenchen-Helfen (1976) and Pohl (1998).
29. The ensuing controversy has been analysed by Baski (2010–2011).
30. In the author’s rather esoteric world-view, the Holy Crown and the treasure of Nagyszentmiklós—twenty-three gold vessels found in 1799 in Transylvania, Romania—belonged to Attila, an ancestor of Álmos, founder of the Hungarian Árpád dynasty. Actual ownership of the gold hoard of Nagyszentmiklós, now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, is con-

- tested by Romanian historians, to whom it was simply part of Dacian treasures, <http://romanianhistoryandculture.webs.com/romaniantreasures.htm> (last accessed 8 December 2016).
31. See the interview in *Index*, 11 June 2010, http://index.hu/kultur/pol/2010/06/11/felulvizsgalna_a_finnugor-elmeletet_a_kulturalis_vezetes/ (last accessed 6 December 2016).
 32. The recently borrowed Hungarian Kurultaj has its origin in Central Asia: the Crimean Tatar national congress is called *qurultay*; during the Mongol Empire the imperial or tribal *kurultai* served to elect khans or decide on military campaigns or other intertribal affairs. On the various historical uses of Kurultai, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurultai> (last accessed 1 December 2016).
 33. During the 2014 Kurultaj celebration twenty-seven tribes were invited, among them were delegates for example from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Dagestan, Mongolia, Turkestan, Uzbekistan and Yakutia; others represented the Bashkir, Chuvash and Uyghur nations.
 34. In Hungarian, the Kurultaj is described as a meeting for the ‘Hun—*türk tudatú népek*’.
 35. Figures are from the report published by the organization Magyar Turán Alapítvány, see <http://kurultaj.hu/2014/08/hatalmas-sikerrel-zarult-a-2014-es-kurultaj/> (last accessed 9 December 2016).
 36. ‘Sikerrel zárult a harmadik Ősök Napja’ (Successful Closing of the Third Ancestor’s Day), <http://kurultaj.hu/2015/08/sikerrel-zarult-a-harmadik-osok-napja/> (last accessed 26 November 2016).
 37. The nine-and-a-half-minute performance can be viewed on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqpMPdXGxdo> (last accessed 9 December 2016).
 38. Miklós Réthelyi, former rector of the Semmelweis School of Medicine, was Minister of National Resources between 2010 and 2012. After that, he was nominated to be director of the National Hungarian Committee of UNESCO, a position in which he served until 2016.
 39. Visual documentation of the 2014 Kurultaj events can be viewed on the organization’s home page, <http://kurultaj.hu/2014/08/kurultaj-2014-kepvalogatás/> (last accessed 8 December 2016).
 40. The entire speech is on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLDjpsqaTbA> (last accessed 9 December 2016).
 41. The Prime Minister referred to a popular novel written by the Transylvanian Protestant bishop Sándor Makkai in 1934. See the speech on the Prime

- Minister's home page, http://2001-2006.orbanviktor.hu/hir.php?aktmenu=3_3&id=2227&printing=1 (last accessed 7 December 2016).
42. In 2012, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was instructed to initiate a new prehistory research programme with the stated aim to redress the hiatuses of Hungarian medieval history. The programme's home page is at: <http://www.arpad.btk.mta.hu/> (last accessed 6 December 2016).
 43. This view has not gone unnoticed by the critical elite. Two films in particular should be highlighted that counter such nationalistic views. In 2004, the famed Miklós Jancsó directed his abstract modernized version of the fatal 1524 battle at Mohács (*Mohácsi vész*). The other is Gábor Herendi's parody of the conquest (*Magyar vándor*), which opened in theatres the same year. Accidentally, this latter film was the most successful at the box office the following year.
 44. The government of Viktor Orbán has stepped up its external relations with China: the Hungarian consulate opened in Hong Kong, a Hungarian Technology Centre in Beijing, the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) recently established the Confucian Institute and in December 2014 the Bank of China opened an office in Budapest. Other trade and business agreements have been in the making with several Central Asian states. The relations with Azerbaijan are especially vigorous (Herczeg 2013).
 45. For an earlier account on the contested nature of this geopolitical terrain, see Sinnhuber (1954); for a more recent anthropological perspective, see Kürti (47).
 46. The interview can be read in its entirety on the right-wing group's home page: <http://betyarsereg.hu/a-motoros-klan-a-betyar-csalad-megbonthatatlan-resze-interju/> (last accessed 21 November 2016).

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10

A Past That Hurts: Memory, Politics and Transnationalism between Bangladesh and Portugal

José Mapril

This chapter ethnographically explores the relation between mobility and the politics of memory (Hacking 1995) in a transnational migration context. In the past years, the relation between memory and migration has been approached by several authors and from different perspectives (see Burrell and Panayi 2006; Creet and Kitzmann 2011; Glynn and Kleist 2012; Hintermann and Johanson 2012). Creet and Kitzmann (2011), for instance, show the relation between memory and places (or sites) and migration as relational and a body-centred process. As the authors suggest, ‘migration rather than location is the condition of memory. Between times, places, generations, and media, from individuals to communities and vice versa, movement is what produces memory—and our anxieties about pinning it to place’ (Creet and Kitzmann 2011, 9). This dynamic between memory, mobility and place is clearly visible in the work of Glynn and Kleist (2012) about the relation between memories and immigrant incorporation. On the one hand, they illuminate the way in which perceptions of the past are linked to immigrants’ negotiation of a place in

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the new setting. On the other, they focus on the importance of memory for debates on and shaping of immigration policies in the receiving societies (Glynn and Kleist 2012). In their approach, the politics of memory is intimately tied to the importance of the past in the production, contentions and debates of belonging in the course of immigrant incorporation.

This chapter will show how through memory work individuals produce continuities between different historical periods as well as between different localities (see also Introduction to this volume, pp. ##) by focusing on competing ideas about homeland and the place of origin. In this case we can see how *home*—that is, an ‘abstract entity of belonging expressed through various types of narratives and other forms of symbolic interchange’ (Fog-Olwig 2007, 216)—is a field of struggle for hegemonic representation, in this case of the past, in the public domain, between different actors (see Hall 1990). More specifically, the objective is to reveal how the struggles for a dominant narrative of the political past of the country of origin are fought out in a transnational setting. As Van der Veer (1995), Bayart (2004) and Cohen (2008) argue, national memories are frequently, and to a certain extent paradoxically, (re)produced in contexts marked by mobility. The transnational political activism between Bangladesh and Portugal is a revealing example.

The existing literature on Bangladeshi transnationalism has grown significantly in the last few years and, among other themes, it has focused on the political activities of Bangladeshi immigrants and their descendants in the United Kingdom and in the United States (Alexander 2013; Eade 1989; Eade and Garbin 2006; Glynn 2006; Kibria 2011; *inter alia*). The UK and the USA are two of the most important long-term migration destinations for Bangladeshis (see Gardner 1993; Kibria 2011; Visram 1986) and it is in these countries that their transnational political activism has become increasingly visible and researched.¹

With the diversification of Bangladeshi migration, however, this political transnationalism includes other locations, actors and dynamics that have so far been left out of the relevant debates. For instance, Bangladeshi migration to Southern Europe—Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece—began in the late 1980s and has grown steadily due to labour migration and family reunification in the past decades (Knights 1996; Mapril 2011, 2014; Zeitlyn 2006). These new destinations were not necessarily transit locations for more afflu-

ent and desirable destinations. Many *probashis* (migrants in Bengali) settled in Lisbon, Madrid and Rome, invested in properties, in their children's education, in businesses and, in some cases, in the creation of religious spaces.

In spite of this, there is a continuous investment in transnational ways of being—practices—and transnational ways of belonging—consciousness and imagination (Glick-Schiller 2004)—with Bangladesh and other countries where kinship and friendship networks are located. Some of the examples that reveal such transnational engagements happen at the level of the household and include participation in the management of household resources, sponsorship of household rituals and ceremonies, entrepreneurial investments and the buying of land, social and cultural remittances and caring for the elderly and children (in the last case, this is especially visible during the holiday breaks when the children spend some time with their grandparents in Bangladesh). In this sense, most of the Bangladeshi households that are now in Portugal are part of transnational domestic units that link this Southern European country to Bangladesh and other third spaces in Europe or elsewhere.

An important dimension of such transnational ways of belonging is the participation in homeland politics (Vertovec 2009); that is, the continuous participation in a Bangladeshi political space either through lobbying, informal political activities, campaigning or different forms of what is known as long-distance nationalism (Anderson 1998; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001).² The objective of this chapter is to explore ethnographically the political dimensions of this recently developed transnational social field (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992)³ between Portugal and Bangladesh.⁴ It reveals that Bangladeshi political activism in Portugal implies distinct long-distance nationalism projects, which compete for legitimacy through a politics of memory. As Ian Hacking (1995) argues, the politics of memory, or memoro-politics, manifests itself in 'communal' forms, such as the celebration of founding events, but also in personal accounts that individually trace the past:

The politics of personal memory is a politics of a certain type. It is a power struggle built around knowledge, or claims to knowledge. It takes for granted that a certain sort of knowledge is possible. Individual factual claims are batted back and forth.... Underlying these competing claims to

surface knowledge there is depth knowledge; that is, a knowledge that there are facts out there about memory, truth-or-falsehoods to get a fix on.... Power struggles are fought out on the basis of surface knowledge, where opponents take the depth knowledge as common ground. Each side opposes the other, claiming it has better, more exact, surface knowledge, drawing on superior evidence and methodology. That is exactly the form of the confrontations between those who recover memory of trauma and those who question it. (Hacking 1995, 211)

This case shows not only how contested memories of events directly figure as a factor in present political battles in a migratory context, it also reveals that it is precisely due to mobility that the convergence of past and present in everyday and political life is enhanced.

Migration is part and parcel of a larger strategy of accumulation of wealth and prestige that is to be shared with those who have not migrated, and these redistributive logics imply that migrants have a significant influence on their relatives back home (see Gardner 1993 for a similar argument). This influence, which is visible in the management of the extended households or in the uses of remittances, to mention just two examples, can also be political in the sense that migrants can influence the political support of their non-migrant relatives and friends. Thus, the debates about the past and the imaginaries of the nation in Europe are part of a larger arena where several groups try to gather new supporters and reinforce their position.

In order to present this argument, I will first introduce some of the histories of migration between Bangladesh and Portugal. Secondly, I will show how the celebration described earlier reveals the existence of three competing long-distance nationalisms in Portugal and their relation with competing notions of the past. Finally, I offer some concluding notes.⁵

Modernities, Deportability and Transnationalism: Bangladeshis in Portugal

The histories of migration between Bangladesh and Portugal date back to the late 1980s; today, according to official registrations from the Bangladesh consular office in Oporto, there are 4500 Bangladeshis living

in the country (this includes naturalized Portuguese and those who requested Portuguese nationality after being born in the country or residing there legally for five or more years).

The majority of these Bangladeshis come from intermediate social groups, those who in Bangladesh are commonly classified as the ‘new’ and ‘affluent middle classes’, urbanized and with high levels of educational capital (Mapril 2011, 2014; for a comparative analysis with Spain and Italy, see Knights 1996 and Zeitlyn 2006, respectively). For these social strata, *bidesh* (the Bengali word for foreign lands, see Gardner 1993) in general and continental Europe in particular are associated with ‘modern’ ways of life, access to educational capital and adulthood (Mapril 2014) and a way of escaping an uncertain future (Bal 2012).⁶

To access *bidesh*, my interlocutors followed several routes. Some migrated directly from Bangladesh to continental Europe, while others migrated in steps. For those who moved in steps, many went first to the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries and some time later remigrated to continental Europe. Once in Europe, they travelled between countries searching for employment and legalization opportunities, following previously established networks of relatives and friends. Thus, most of my research associates were already in continental Europe—Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy and France, to mention just a few countries—and arrived in Portugal during the regularization programmes in the 1990s and 2000s.⁷

Substantial economic and social change in Southern European countries in terms of European integration not only improved standards of living, but also changed their position regarding the international division of labour and global migrations (King et al. 2000). In the early 1960s, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal experienced high economic growth rates. The opening up of their economies (membership of the European Economic Community, EEC), together with changes in the means of production, including rising investment in modernization, an expanding service sector and the growing mobility of capital, meant that these countries saw a change in their position in relation to global migration flows (King et al. 2000).

These structural changes slowed down intra-European migrations and, in the short run, led to an increase in the arrival of immigrants from

Portuguese colonial spaces and from locations with no previous historical links with Portugal. Facing increasing immigration flows, Portugal, like other Mediterranean countries, developed legislation and special regularization programmes in the 1990s and 2000s.

For many Bangladeshis, the decision to move to Portugal was partly a way to escape deportability through a search for citizenship rights within the European Union (EU); what Arendt (1951) has called the 'right to have rights'. In several European countries, and as de Genova (2002) and Calavita (2005) theorized, they were produced as 'illegal' or 'undocumented' third-country nationals, vulnerable to processes of deportation and economic exploitation. Migrating to Portugal, as well as to other Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain, even if initially seen as a temporary move, was perceived as a way of accessing rights and thus protection from deportation (see also Knights 1996 and Zeitlyn 2006 for similar cases).

Deportation was seen as a major risk, especially because most of these migratory projects were part of family investments (and not just individual endeavours) that often involved selling properties or borrowing money. As a result, being deported to Bangladesh without reciprocating some of these investments was not only seen as a failure and shameful for the migrant himself, but also to his family (in certain cases, failure in *Bidesh* might mean downward social mobility for the household).

After regularization, many migrants decided to settle in Portugal, working in the lower ranks of the economy: in construction, street peddling and cleaning services. This initial period was perceived ambiguously by most of my interlocutors because, according to their view, migration to Europe in general, and to Portugal in particular, had been accompanied by a downward social mobility. This feeling was quite succinctly summarized by one of my interlocutors when he asked me, with a mix of anger and frustration, 'here we're poor, right?'

Soon, though, personal savings and loans from relatives (in some cases, this also included the selling of plots of land in Bangladesh) and friends were invested in small commercial activities mainly in and around Martim Moniz Square and Mouraria neighbourhood, next to the city centre. This is an area of Lisbon where it is possible to find *lisboetas* (Lisboners) coming from China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau,

Mozambique and Senegal, among others. This presence, which began in the late 1970s and has transformed itself in the past twenty years, is not only commercial but also residential and is intimately related to the post-colonial migrations from former Portuguese colonial spaces and the changing position of Portugal in terms of global migration flows. The presence of migrants from several countries led to the emergence of discourses, produced by mainstream media and politicians, that associate this area of Lisbon with ‘immigration’, ‘ethnic businesses’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘interculturalism’ and a ‘modern’ Portugal. At the same time, numerous initiatives developed by the city hall and non-governmental institutions, such as the Todos (all together) festival or the Fusion Market, aestheticize difference in order to be consumed by certain Lisbon residents.

Today, in central Lisbon alone there are more than 200 Bangladeshi businesses, including neighbourhood groceries, convenience stores, ready-to-wear shops, handicraft shops, Indian and Bangladeshi restaurants, Bangladeshi sweet shops, travel agencies, internet cafés, döner kebab sellers and newspaper kiosks. These cater to a very diverse market that ranges from Bangladeshi consumers of gastronomic nostalgia (Mankekar 2005) to peddlers who buy cheap clothes to resell in the open-air markets all around the country.

Initially this was a migration flow of single young male adults, but today most have married in Bangladesh and their wives and children are now in Portugal. This has not only led to the formation of a new direct migration flow between Bangladesh and Portugal, this time centred on processes of family reunification, but has also created a significant change in the characteristics of this population. Several hundred Bangladeshi families have reunited in Lisbon, the majority of which are nuclear families along with another family member, typically either the husband’s or wife’s brother (usually, who comes to Europe depends their assumed capacity to deal with this new context, so for instance, according to some of my research associates, ‘you would not bring someone who has lived all their lives in the village [*gram*] and does not know how to speak English’). Members of this community have also invested significantly in their children’s education in both the private and public school systems.

Those who set up businesses, reunited their families, invested in their children’s education and accumulated economic capital (a large number

are now Portuguese nationals) are seen as the successful *probashis*—frequently called *patrão* (the Portuguese word for boss). Besides their family and economic success, they also occupy political roles in certain Bangladeshi arenas: in the Bangladeshi mosque, named after Dhaka central mosque, Baitul Mukarram; and in the Luso-Bangladeshi Association.⁸ The Bangladeshi mosque is entirely financed by Bangladeshis themselves—the pioneers are the most important investors and see investing as a *waqf* (good deed) and a redistribution of their wealth for the ‘community’—and caters to a congregation of 500–600 Muslims, the majority of whom are Bangladeshis and their children.

Another significant characteristic of this migration is the diversity of regional origins in Bangladesh. In Portugal it is possible to find Bangladeshis from at least twelve different districts: Dhaka, Faridpur, Noakhali, Sylhet, Chittagong, Comilla, Rangpur, Chandpur, Khulna, Shatkira, Tangail and Gopalgong (similar to Bangladeshis in Italy and Spain; see Knights 1996 and Zeitlyn 2006). Dhaka is the most strongly represented region and Chandpur the least. With the formation of migration chains and family reunification processes, regional diversity led to the emergence of several informal regional associations that provide services to their members, such as loans and repatriation of bodies, and organizing developmental initiatives in their region of origin.

Thus, in spite of the significant investments in Portugal, these Bangladeshis forge continuous transnational ties with Bangladesh. Whether buying properties, sending money to their kin, sending their children to spend time with their grandparents, sponsoring rituals—such as Qurbani (the sacrificial ceremony performed on the Id-ul-Ad’ha at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca), marriages in Bangladesh or burying the deceased in family plots, among others—Portuguese Bangladeshis continue to sustain transnational ways of being and transnational ways of belonging (Glick-Schiller 2004). Even the households in Portugal are perceived as part of extended or joint households (*jouthko poribar*) that are continuously morally responsible for each other, even though they are spread between Bangladesh and Portugal.⁹ Another example of transnational ways of belonging is the engagement in homeland politics and the political imagination of Bangladesh. Thus, besides migration, generation

and regional background, other lines of fragmentation are centred on transnational political activism.

Factionalism and a Transnational *Desh*

There are three organized political factions in Portugal: the Awami League Portugal, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party Portugal and the Islamic Forum, which includes supporters of the Bangladeshi political party Jama'at-i-Islami alongside followers of other groups.¹⁰

This factionalism, which is partially organized according to the main political parties in Bangladesh, is intimately associated with the pioneers and the most successful *probashis* and it frequently hides deep personal animosities between its leaders and factional supporters. The leaders and some members of each faction were already engaged in the student and youth wings of each party in Bangladesh before migration. The Islamic Forum, however, includes not only supporters of the Jama'at-i-Islami already in Bangladesh, but also younger generations that are only now beginning to participate politically. Most children of Bangladeshi immigrants,¹¹ either born in Portugal or living in the country from an early age, are generally disinterested in this political scenario and engagement (in both Bangladesh and Portugal). Those who are interested are only now beginning to participate politically and on a regular basis in Islamic parties such as the Forum, which, quite like other cases in Europe (Alexander 2013), appeals more to a specific segment of young European Muslims (especially in a context marked by global Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism). Thus, political engagement continues to be an arena dominated by the pioneers and the migrants themselves, for whom the personal and collective memory of the independence war is vivid and emotionally charged. Many remember the violence of the war and how it affected their families, either because they experienced it directly or because they grew up hearing about it from relatives, party youth leagues or other segments and institutions. For their children, though, the political and emotional links to Bangladesh are assuming new forms and themes, and thus their relation with Bangladeshi politics is quite distant.

More recently arrived Bangladeshis in Portugal, on the other hand, seem to move away from these diasporic politics. Many came to Europe precisely to escape such debates and struggles in Bangladesh (which many see as a problem in the country and a cause for instability), while others interpret these debates and struggles as intimately associated with previously established *probashis* and they just do not want to get involved. Thus, overall it is possible to argue that this political activism is associated with a specific segment of Portuguese Bangladeshis, namely the pioneers.

In any case, each faction usually organizes separate celebrations of the main dates of the Bangladeshi civil calendar—Language Day or Shahid Dibosh (21 February), Independence Day (26 March), Victory Day (16 December) and Bengali New Year’s Day (14 April)—and in some cases it includes the organization of special events commemorating the history of each political party (e.g. the Jail Killing Day by Awami supporters)¹² (Fig. 10.1).



Fig. 10.1 Celebrations of the Mother Language Day, União Cultural Bangladesh Portugal, Lisbon 2006. Photograph taken by the author

In the case of the Islamic Forum, the only date in the Bangladeshi calendar celebrated so far is Language Day, although some of its members are quite critical about the celebration of Bangladeshi secular holidays, because these are seen as celebrating ‘artificial’ divisions of Muslims.

Faruk¹³ was born in 1990 in Dhaka and arrived in Portugal together with his mother and three brothers in 2002 when he was 12 years old. They came to join his father, Anwar, who had migrated to Portugal in 1996. Faruk studied until the eleventh grade, but due to a complex family situation he began working in a restaurant in downtown Lisbon. In spite of coming from a household of supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, in recent years he has become closer to the Islamic Forum in Portugal. His political position is clearly visible in his criticism of the celebrations of Language Day in Lisbon. For Faruk, as well as other members of the Islamic Forum, the celebrations of holidays centred on the Bangladeshi civil calendar are perceived as a way of dividing Muslims. According to such discourses, those who organize the celebrations of 21 February and other occasions intimately related to the independence of Bangladesh are accused of thinking too much about the past while being reckless about the future.

Among those who celebrate occasions such as Sahid Dibosh, these events are announced in Bangladeshi shops, usually indicating the political affiliations of the owners. For instance, if a shop announces the celebration of Language Day organized by the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party), it is not usual to announce the same celebration organized by the Awami League.

These ceremonies are frequently held on hotel premises, in prayer rooms or in restaurants, and are organized as political rallies with invited guests from the same political faction but from other countries. For instance, during the Language Day celebrations in 2005, organized by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party Portugal and held in the conference room of the hotel Mundial in downtown Lisbon, a representative of the BNP in Belgium was the special guest and main speaker at the event. Thus, political factions in Portugal are intimately connected with the same factions in other European countries, frequently organizing and participating in the same events throughout Europe.

All these activities are part of a transnational political arena, a transnational *desh* (the Bengali word for homeland), which includes not only similar movements in other parts of Europe but also the political parties in Bangladesh and the representatives of the Bangladesh government. As several authors have shown (Eade and Garbin 2006; Kabeer 2000; Siddiqui 2004), the UK is a frequent place for political activities by Bangladeshi politicians due to the economic and political importance of Bangladeshi migration and British Bangladeshis. But in the past years, other European contexts have also gained prominence and visibility. For instance, in 2003 the Awami League Portugal organized a meeting of all the representatives of the League in European countries, including the main representatives of the party in the European Union. On 5 August 2003, Delwar Hussain Saydee visited Lisbon as a member of parliament (MP) and member of the BNP/Jama'at-e-Islami coalition (the Four Party Alliance)¹⁴ government, and was received by Jama'at-e-Islami supporters at a function held in a Lisbon mosque. On 10 October 2010, Dipu Moni, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Portugal on an official visit and was received by the members of the Awami League Portugal at a public event.

All these events are not simply occasions to celebrate Bangladesh and its important historical dates, they can also be interpreted as events that reveal competing versions of long-distance nationalism (Anderson 1998; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001), including Bengali nationalism, Bangladeshi nationalism and political Islam.

Bengali nationalism was the central political ideology in the formation of Bangladesh in 1971 and continues to be the main political message of the Awami league. It is a discursive formation based on a linguistic nationalism, namely Bengaliness, and secularism. For its supporters, Bengaliness is the most important form of belonging in the region and this was one of the key symbols of the liberation war (the other was internal colonialism) fought against West Pakistan. Although it is possible to find significant diversity among its supporters, many still consider Islam an important aspect, but one that should be practised privately and not in the public space. They consider themselves Bengalis first and only afterwards Muslims.

Bangladeshi nationalism is another discursive formation of national identity that proposes an articulation between Bengaliness and Islam. Bangladeshi national identity is, according to its supporters, equally Muslim and Bengali and thus both ends of this identity deserve the same visibility and status.

Political Islam is a form of religious nationalism that emphasizes Islam and Muslimness as the central aspect of Bangladeshi national identity. This discursive formation argues for a moral politics, and that to do so it is important to direct Bangladeshi society to the 'proper' Islamic behaviour. The main proponent of such a project has been Jama'at-I-Islami, a political party formed by Mawlana Mawdudi in 1940 that subsequently created a branch in East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. For a complete history of this political party, see Nasr (1994; for further developments see Jahan 2000; Lewis 2011; Van Schendel 2009).

The debate in Portugal, so far, has been not so much about the ideological underpinnings of each competing notion of home, but mainly about its legitimacy based on its role in the past, and this every so often leads to tense moments between supporters.

Long-Distance Nationalism and the Politics of Memory

Through a dispute about the role of several political actors in the political history of Bangladesh, each faction questions the legitimacy of the respective projects. In order to do so the past is continuously reinterpreted to support the ideological position of each faction.

This is illustrated by two events, one that occurred in 2003 and the other in early 2013. The first was the visit of Delwar Hussain Saydee to Lisbon in the summer of 2003; Delwar Hussain Saydee was a member of the national assembly of Bangladesh (Jatyio Sangshad) elected by the Four Party Alliance.¹⁵ The initial idea was for the MP to visit the Bangladeshi mosque and Bangladeshi businesses in Martim Moniz, but this had to be cancelled due to protests by secular groups. The main arguments against this visit were related with his and his party's argument that

Muslims (from Pakistan and Bangladesh) should not have stayed separate in the first place:

we were talking about the visit of the MP when Mutiur argued that as a member of an Islamic party he frequently says some right things but politically, namely in relation to Bangladesh and Pakistan, he is completely wrong. The truth is that in Bangladesh people speak a totally different language, eat different food and dress in different ways, so why should they be together? Simply because they share the same religion? But even in this they are different. Thus the argument that the Jama'at-e-Islami sustains—that Muslims should not be separated—is absolutely false. (Fieldnotes, 5 August 2003)

For my interlocutor, the situation in Bangladesh was so different, when compared to Pakistan, that there was no reason whatsoever for them to stay together as one nation state. On the contrary, it was these differences precisely that created the need for an independent Bangladesh back at the beginning of the 1970s.

A second argument against the visit of this MP was his and his party's role during the independence war of 1971. According to Amin, one of my interlocutors from Dhaka district, who arrived in Portugal in 2002:

Many don't want this MP in Portugal. According to what they say, namely the Awami League supporters, Saydee is a traitor because during the independence war he defended that Bangladesh shouldn't be independent from Pakistan. Furthermore, he argued: although they are an Islamic Party they never do what they say. (Fieldnotes, 6 August 2003)

Later on the same day, Osman, who arrived in Portugal in 2002, criticized Delwar because of his role during the liberation war. Osman finds it very difficult to accept Delwar's visit to Lisbon, since he remembers Delwar's younger paternal uncle and how he fought alongside the freedom fighters in Keraniganj, south of Dhaka. He clearly remembered the secret visit of that uncle to the house of Osman's grandmother. No one could know of his presence. Osman distinctly remembers that day and the way he was dressed, with some old rags and a rifle. He will never forget that day! (Fieldnotes, 6 August 2003.)

Osman had previously participated in the Awami League youth section (the Jubo League) in Keraniganj. He considered the presence of Delwar intolerable due to the alleged role this politician had played in the anti-independence militia (*razakar*) that fought alongside the Pakistani army against the freedom fighters (*mukti bahini* or *mukti judda*), who are said to be responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Bengalis. Furthermore, Delwar's presence evoked personal traces of the past, an embodied past (Fassin 2008, 316),¹⁶ especially concerning the role that some of his relatives, in this case his uncle, had played in the struggle for independence and all the suffering the war caused, not only to thousands of Bengalis but to Osman's own family.

The visit of this MP did eventually take place, but it was transferred to the Lisbon central mosque (which is the main mosque in Portugal and is part and parcel of the main representative institutions of Islam and Muslims in the country), those responsible for which sponsored an agreement between all parties (the agreement was that Delwar would not mention the war of independence). During the event, a group of Awami supporters recorded all the speeches in order to make sure that the agreement was respected.

The second event that reveals this politics of memory was the trial of this former MP, Delwar Hussain Saydee, by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) and the repercussions of the trial in Lisbon. Faruk, already mentioned, argued that during the process:

many witnesses that are being heard by the court [over the implication of the Jama'at-e-islami and Saydee in the Razakars] have been bought. After testifying, many recognized publicly that they were offered houses in exchange for a testimony against the Jamaat and Saydee.

Just the other day, Amin [the leader of the BNP faction in Portugal and one of the oldest Bangladeshis in the country] held a public meeting [in Lisbon] in order to explain that Jama'at-i-Islami never took an official position about the war. According to him, among Jamaat supporters certainly, there were some who supported a united Muslim country but there were others that fought side by side with the *mukthi judda*. Furthermore, Amin continued, Delwar could not have participated in the Razakars simply because he was 16 years [old] then.¹⁷ (Fieldnotes, 20 December 2012)

In the following days, a protest against the ICT and in support of Delwar was held in front of the recently opened Bangladeshi Embassy in Lisbon.

But why are there such tensions and debates? For my interlocutors, *bidesh*, as a land of plenty, is a place of accumulation of wealth and prestige. This wealth in its many forms is to be redistributed—as economic or social remittances (Levitt 1998)—to non-migrant relatives and friends in Bangladesh. This means that, to different degrees, migrants have a significant impact on their relatives back home, an influence that is visible not only in the management of collective resources in the household but also in Islam (see Gardner 1993, 1995). Another area where *probashis* might be influential, the argument continues, is precisely at the level of political allegiances. Due to their importance, migrants might convince and change the political support of their non-migrant relatives in Bangladesh. Thus, to debate the legitimacy of different projects in Europe is a first step in gathering new supporters who in turn might influence others at home. This is quite explicit in a conversation with Jalal, one of my interlocutors from Dhaka, who has been in Portugal since 2002:

Jamaatis are doing in Portugal what they do in Bangladesh. They try to convince the migrants to vote for them and thus change their political affiliations. Afterwards, when these migrants go back home, either permanently or on holidays, and since they are respected and influential because they live abroad, they try to convince their relatives to change their votes. (Fieldnotes, 4 August 2003)

Although Jalal was not formally linked to any political party, he had sympathies with the Awami league and, for him, Portugal was part of a transnational Bangladeshi political space where different political movements make multiple efforts to mobilize migrants.

Reaching out to Bangladeshi migrants, even in a peripheral (demographically or economically) context such as Portugal, as compared to the UK, is a potential space for the creation of new political influences and thus a way of transmitting certain visions of what Bangladesh should be; that is, certain nationalist imaginaries and projects. One way of doing this is via the control of certain institutions, namely mosques and representative associations.¹⁸ Through the control of these arenas it is possible

to control the messages transmitted not only in relation to religion and ceremonial practices, but also regarding issues related to long-distance nationalism, the politicization of memory and Bangladeshi contemporary public debates. Thus, these debates and struggles over the past, the present and the future of Bangladesh have to do with the participation of these *probashis* in the Bangladeshi political scenario and their influence on others around them, namely relatives and friends. What is at stake, in Lisbon, is a competition for hegemonic notions about the past and the legitimacy of different imaginaries of the nation.

Simultaneously, it is essential to acknowledge that these debates are also about the participation of Bangladeshis in the politics of immigration in Portugal. The debates over key symbols of Bengalinness and Bangladeshiness are also related to the public presence of Bangladeshi institutions in the Portuguese immigration regime and its intercultural model of citizenship (for a distinction between interculturality and multiculturalism, see Modood 2007). This model implies that migrants are supposed to participate in the public space according to their national symbols and cultural heritages, and thus the struggles over the legitimacy of each national imaginary, based on the politics of memory, is also a debate over the legitimacy of representing Bangladeshis in the Portuguese public domain. This participation in the Portuguese immigration regime is also a way of showing that home is not only in Bangladesh but also in Portugal, and thus makes claims in relation to citizenship.

In any case, by participating in these two public domains, some of the most important economic and political figures among *probashis* are seeking recognition, in Bangladesh and in Portugal, for their success, prestige and wealth, as both *probashis* and European citizens.

Conclusions: The Transnational Making of Memories

The concept of long-distance nationalism is frequently used to describe the formal political impact of immigrants in their homeland or the potential lobbying of immigrants in the receiving state in favour of a particular

party or movement in the home country (see for instance Cohen 1997; Glick-Schiller et al. 1994; Vertovec 2009; Werbner 2002; *inter alia*). In this chapter I took a different approach when I showed how long-distance nationalism is tightly entangled with the politics of memory in the general context of struggles between different political imaginaries. What this discussion reveals are disputed notions of the past and the role that actors play in what could be called, in Hacking's terms (1995), the politics of memory. These politics of memory are not only connected with collective forms of remembrance, but also with embodiments of the past. Emotional, affective and visceral are some of the keywords that could be used to describe the ways in which my interlocutors mobilize memory in order to continuously (re)interpret the present. What seems to be at stake is precisely the connections between different historical periods and different localities through mnemonic practices associated with the violence and unresolved aspects of the liberation war. Furthermore, this case study shows not only how contested memories of events directly figure as a factor of present political battles in a migratory context, but also that it is precisely due to mobility that the convergence of past and present in everyday and political life is enhanced. If migration is part of a larger strategy of accumulation of wealth that is to be shared with those who have not migrated, it also implies that migrants have a significant influence on their relatives back home. This influence is not only economic or religious, but can also be political in the sense that migrants can influence the political support of their non-migrant relatives and friends. Thus, the debates in Lisbon are part of a larger arena where several groups try to gather new supporters, reinforce their positions and search for a hegemonic representation of the past in relation to the imaginaries of Bangladesh. In a way, the past still hurts and especially so in Lisbon, because in spite of migrants being away, there is a strong will to maintain connections with those who never left.

Notes

1. The themes researched are diverse and include the struggles between Bangladeshi secular and Islamist segments for incorporation in British mainstream political parties and local politics (Eade 1989), contemporary

transnational political activism, the manipulation of Bengali cultural symbols, such as the *Boishaki mela*, and the making of an (urban and political) place for British Bangladeshis in London (Eade and Garbin 2006), the role of Bangladeshis in the UK and the support for Sheik Mujibur Rahman and the Independence War in 1971 (Glynn 2006), and the relation between (contested) memories of the Bangladeshi War of Independence, Bengali identity and contemporary racial politics in the UK (Alexander 2013). Finally, Benjamin Zeitlyn (2014) reveals the transnationalization of debates over the International Crimes Tribunal; namely, how British Bangladeshis have engaged differently with this recent polemic. Some have campaigned in support of the leaders of the Jama'at-e-Islami who were accused of crimes in 1971, while others have supported secularist claims and arguments such as those emerging from the Shahbagh movement. In several of these approaches, the importance of transnational politics is frequently revealed.

2. Long-distance nationalism is a concept initially proposed by Benedict Anderson in 1998, which was further theorized by Nina Glick Schiller and George Fouron (2001) in their research about Haitian Americans and transnational political activism. According to Schiller and Fouron (2001, 4), long-distance nationalism is 'a claim to membership in a political community that stretches beyond the territorial borders of a homeland. It generates an emotional attachment that is strong enough to compel people to political action that ranges from displaying a home country flag to deciding to "return" to fight and die in a land they may never have seen.' This kind of nationalism has five main characteristics: (1) it assumes that national borders do not exclusively delimit belonging; (2) it is not only an imaginary and emotive but also a set of concrete actions and politics; (3) the aim of long-distance nationalists is the creation of a transnational nation state; (4) its emergence and manifestations depend on the conditions in receiving and sending contexts; and finally, (5) long-distance nationalism and diasporic phenomena frequently go together but nonetheless remain distinct. This theoretical proposal implies a notion of nationalism as a discursive formation; that is, a set of symbols with multiple and frequently conflicting meanings.
3. A transnational social field or space is a concept first proposed by Glick Schiller et al. in 1992 to describe the way in which transnationalism changes people's relations with space by creating 'social spaces that connect and position some actors in more than one country' (Vertovec 2009, 12).

4. This celebration is also intimately related to the Portuguese immigration regime, but this is something that I leave for another occasion.
5. This article is based on three periods of ethnographic fieldwork. The first began in 2003 and finished in 2006 and led up to a PhD in social and cultural anthropology at the University of Lisbon. In this first case, the ethnography included Portugal and Bangladesh and a total of seventy interviews (including the life and family histories of important interlocutors). The second and third periods were from February to late May 2011 and from February to April 2012. These two latest periods of fieldwork were updates on previous data about the transnational political activities of Bangladeshis in Portugal and included twenty in-depth interviews (most of which applied to previously known contacts in order to collect longitudinal data).
6. This sense of *bidesh* as spaces of well-being, fortune and success (although morally menacing), as opposed to *desh* (the Bengali word for homeland, which ranges from one's own village to Bangladesh itself) as a land of failure, corruption and poverty (although morally and religiously upright), are tropes long associated with the migratory experience (Gardner 1993). From the experience of Sylhetis in the UK to the massive migrations to Middle Eastern countries, including the long-term migrations to North America, it is possible to find a 'culture of migration', as Massey et al. (1993) have defined it, where those who do not migrate are perceived as lazy and bad marriage deals, while those who live in *bidesh* are perceived as rich, successful and prosperous.
7. In total, three regularization programmes took place between 1993 and 2004 and were linked to Portuguese geostrategic interests (namely, the relations with Portuguese-speaking African countries) and as an answer to pressures from several sectors of the labour market (e.g. construction).
8. This association was created in 2002 and its executive committee included several important Bangladeshis, both politically and economically.
9. This predicament has also brought some tensions between kin in Portugal and in Bangladesh, especially when there are conflicting claims about channelling resources to the children's education or to support relatives in the *desh*. This becomes increasingly visible during the division of family property. In such tense moments, the redistribution of wealth by *probashis* to other relatives in the *desh* is carefully considered in the general redistribution and frequently ends in bitter conflicts between siblings and parents.
10. For a history of the Islamic Forum, see Eade and Garbin (2006).

11. In this chapter, categories such as ‘second generation’ are explicitly avoided because of their problematic assumptions regarding the place (or lack thereof) of children of immigrants in the so-called host society. For a critical appraisal of the concept, see Ali et al. (2006).
12. The day is commemorated on 3 November and is a reminder of the killing of four leaders of the Awami League in 1975 in Dhaka central jail.
13. The names of my research associates have been changed in order to maintain anonymity and protect identities.
14. The Four Party Alliance, formed in 1999, was led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and included the Jama’at-e-Islami, the Jatyo Party and the Islami Oikyajote.
15. This MP originally came from the ranks of the Jama’at-i-Islami.
16. The concept of embodied past was developed by Didier Fassin in order to explore the ‘corporeal presence of memory’ (Fassin 2008, 316); that is, ‘the way in which individual trajectories and collective histories are transcribed into individual and collective bodies, in terms of affects and emotions, dis-ease and comfort, mourning and pleasure’.
17. The following day Faruk shared a video on Facebook about Saydee.
18. For a comparative case, see Werbner (2002).

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11

Moving Memories and Memories of Moves: Some Afterthoughts

Karen Fog Olwig

On 27 January 2016, the British newspaper *The Independent* published a cartoon by Dave Brown depicting the well-known statue of ‘The Little Mermaid’ in Copenhagen Harbour as a rather mean-looking creature, with a likeness to the founder of the nationalist Danish People’s Party, holding a wallet full of money in one hand, a newly extracted golden tooth in a pair of pliers in the other and bedecked with necklaces. Below the mermaid was a plaque with the inscription: ‘Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these tempest-tost to me... I’ll lift their wallets, jewels, gold teeth and more!’ The cartoon appeared in connection with an article on a new ‘controversial law’ in Denmark giving authorities permission ‘to seize refugees’ cash and valuables, and delay them being reunited with their families’ (Dearden 2016). The article noted that the originally proposed law had been modified so that it allowed asylum

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seekers to keep jewellery of sentimental value, because it had been compared in the public debate with the way in which the Nazis abused Jews during the Holocaust.

The cartoon, and the Danish law that spurred its publication, appeared after a year of population movements, unprecedented in recent European history, caused largely by political unrest in the Middle East and northern Africa.¹ As the migrants, most of them asylum seekers, pushed north and increasing numbers reached the Danish borders, Denmark sought to curb the influx of people by introducing a number of restrictions on the treatment of asylum seekers and the rights of refugees. These efforts culminated in January in the passing of a law specifying, among other things, that asylum seekers had to pay for their upkeep in Denmark if they had the necessary assets, and that Danish authorities therefore were entitled to appropriate money and objects of great value. When the law was approved by the Danish parliament on 26 January, the day before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the international press was quick to draw historical parallels to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Seeing the little mermaid, a central figure in one of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and a national icon, cast as a nationalist politician robbing asylum seekers of all that is of any value to them was very unpleasant for the Danes, to say the least. The reference to the Nazi treatment of Jews was especially stinging because of Danes' perception of their country as liberal, humanistic and progressive—an image that is often boosted by the historical memory of the rescue of most of the Danish Jews during the Second World War, by securing them passage out of German-occupied Denmark to neutral Sweden. Mercifully, most Danes do not appear to have registered the significance of the text below the mermaid, not recognizing that it begins with the first part of the poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the plaque at the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, but ends with quite another message than the lofty pronouncement in the last stanza of Lazarus's poem: 'I lift my lamp beside the golden door!' Thus, whereas the Danish little mermaid is holding a pair of pliers with an extracted golden tooth, the Statue of Liberty holds the flame of freedom in her hand, thereby alluding to the generous and freedom-loving attitude of an American society that has received millions of immigrants,

many of them refugees from oppressive European regimes—in contrast to the unwelcoming approach of Danish society.

This cartoon—together with another one, published in *The Guardian*, depicting the Danish prime minister in a Nazi uniform—understandably created heated debate in Denmark. Most members of the Danish parliament were shocked and thought the Danish legislation had been misunderstood. Some Danes commented that the Brits ought to take a critical look at their own policy on refugees and, for example, open up the Channel Tunnel, allowing the many people waiting in France to enter Britain. However, many others thought that the cartoons were well deserved and expressed embarrassment about belonging to a country that accorded asylum seekers such treatment (<https://www.facebook.com/DRNyheder/posts/1107489519301571>).

The cartoons exemplify how contemporary migration may be interpreted through particular historical memories, arousing strong feelings and raising questions concerning established national identities grounded in the past. They are also apt illustrations of the complexity of actors, time perspectives and social values that can come into play when historical memories are evoked to support or challenge moral positions, societal orders, political conflicts and power relations in connection with population movements. This complexity is the central theme of this book, which has explored ‘how individuals produce continuities and ruptures between different life periods (past, present and future) and historical periods as well as between different localities through “memory work”’ (Tošić and Palmberger this volume, p. 6). An important aim of the book is to draw on both memory studies and migration studies, two different areas of research that there is little scholarly tradition of combining. According to the editors, this lack of cross-disciplinary work may be explained in the light of the tendency of memory studies to examine issues within the framework of the nation state, whereas migration studies have concentrated on movements crossing national borders. An important benefit of bringing both areas of research into play is thus the possibility of examining how national memory can, on the one hand, be sustained, sharpened or disputed within the context of movement across national boundaries and, on the other, be used as a resource for the (re)interpretation of movements. The British cartoons, where memories of

Nazi conduct towards Jews during the Second World War are applied to contemporary Danish policy on asylum seekers, are a case in point.

Memories on the Move explores memory work in relation to a broad spectrum of movements within varying social contexts, be they national, transnational or local communities, family relations or individual lives. From this perspective, the book can be said to grapple with a fundamental basis of our existence—movement in time and space and what we make of it as human beings. As David Lowenthal notes with a particular focus on the past, ‘To be is to have been, and to project our messy, malleable past into our unknown future’ (2015, 2). With relation to mobility one might say, ‘To live is to have been in motion, and to project our messy, malleable, mobile past into our present mobile life and the unknown future of our belonging.’

The book explores these fundamental issues by presenting a palette of ethnographic case studies, ranging from the creating of Hungarian national identity through the (re)construction of an imagined nomadic tradition linked to a distant past and place, to the development of a post–Second World War Jewish counter-history in Poland by diasporic Jewish groups, and to the ways in which Uruguayan female migrants in Spain use family photographs to sustain memories and maintain close relations in their country of origin. These cases raise many important issues, some of which I will discuss in this chapter.

Nation State, Community, Individual

The framework of analysis, as the ethnographic cases mentioned indicate, varies widely from nation states to ethnic and religious communities, to families and individuals. This makes it possible to examine the different circumstances and consequences of memory work in relation to movement. The significance of social context is clearly brought out by László Kürti in his critique of the common application of the notion of ‘nostalgia’ (also called ostalgia) in studies of contemporary Eastern European societies: ‘nostalgically remembering something of one’s childhood or youth and participating in a social movement that attempts to revive and relieve certain aspects of a distant past are clearly not the same’ (Kürti

this volume, p. 220–221). In his ethnographic analysis Kürti focuses on the latter—a social movement in contemporary Hungary that is obsessed with an imagined past of nomadism, seen to have originated in a distant part of Asia, but rooted in Hungary for centuries and foundational to the country. With its close links to the political establishment and its strong ‘anti-Semitic, racist, anti-Roma and xenophobic’ (Kürti this volume, p. 236) elements, this social movement cannot be described in terms of innocent nostalgic pining for times lost. It must rather be seen as an attempt to assert a particular construction of the Hungarian past that does not include certain segments of the population and therefore projects no future for them in the country. Despite its close connection to people in power, this movement should not be seen only as an expression of power. As Kürti suggests, it can be viewed as ‘a backlash against globalization, modernism and European Union (EU) expansionism by the second decade of the 21st century’ (Kürti this volume, p. 225); in other words as a reflection of the country’s position of relative powerlessness in relation to developments in the larger world of which it is a part.

The close association between the assertion of a particular past and the establishment and sustaining of a distinct community is also a central theme in four ethnographic analyses of ethno-religious communities: the transnational community of Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan and abroad, the Jewish Polish diaspora, Palestinian refugees on the West Bank and Bangladeshi immigrants in Portugal. Maria Six-Hohenbalken discusses Kurdish efforts at creating a ‘counter-history’ to the national history of Iraq by establishing a ‘memoryscape’ where the Kurdish history of suffering, genocide and survival is recognized. Films, drawing on the testimonies of survivors as well as available documentary material, have been the primary medium for this memory work, due to their ability to portray traumatic historical events in an empathetic and sensitive way that can capture the strong emotions aroused by memories of this past and, at the same time, point to the more general, pan-human issues that they involve. The films have been produced by Kurdish filmmakers abroad, largely because of the Kurds’ long history of statelessness, and they have attracted international attention that has helped build support for the Kurdish cause. At the same time, Six-Hohenbalken shows, it has been difficult to win acceptance within the diasporic context of more

balanced representations of Kurdish history that include controversial subjects such as sexual violence within Kurdish society, and the desire for a process of reconciliation within Iraq, which are important concerns to the younger generation of Kurds.

For the Jewish Polish diaspora, discussed by Kamila Dąbrowska, community building also involves developing a counter-history as well as establishing cultural-historical heritage sites in Poland that can create a new presence for a Jewish population that dates back more than a thousand years in the country. Similar to the Kurdish case, the construction of a Jewish Polish past has taken place primarily in the Jewish diaspora, the Jewish population in Poland having been decimated during and after the Second World War. Furthermore, the aim is not a return to Poland, but rather the (re)creation of a substantial Jewish Polish past that can offer a common anchoring point and source of identification for the transnational Jewish Polish community. With the Kurdish case fresh in mind, one wonders at the impact of the prominent role of this diaspora in the creation of a Jewish Polish memoryscape—what may have been lost in this ‘scaping’ of Jewish Polish memories by the absence of a substantial Jewish population in Poland?

For Palestinian refugees who have lived in a refugee camp for several generations, a permanent return to pre-exilic life in their place of origin seems to be an increasingly remote possibility, not only due to the political situation but also because of personal life choices. Focusing on the significance of the construction of place among these refugees, Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska shows how the younger generations, born and raised in a refugee camp, have developed an attachment to it as a ‘home-camp’. Through memory work, including oral history by elderly residents, and return visits to places of origin in Israel, these Palestinians therefore construct the camp as a ‘mediating locality’ representing both their continued ties to their original homeland and their persistent status as refugees.

Finally, José Mapril describes how different Bangladeshi migrant associations in Portugal struggle to uphold and validate their specific version of several competing political histories of Bangladesh so that they may gain the right to represent the Bangladeshis in Portugal. At the same

time, they also seek political influence in Bangladesh through relatives in the country to whom they send regular remittances.

For these groups, public displays and celebrations of particular interpretations of the past are critical in their attempts to win recognition as communities in the wider national, international and transnational arenas of power relations. Not all migrants or exiles, however, are engaged in such memory work rooted in a place of origin. As Mapril notes, many Bangladeshi migrants choose not to be active participants in migrant associations. Most second-generation Bangladeshi immigrants are not interested in Bangladeshi politics, and the Bangladeshis who have emigrated in recent years to escape from the fierce political battles in their country of origin generally have no desire to be part of migrant organizations and the political struggle that this involves. Fieldwork in organized exilic or migrant communities that cultivate a shared collective past in a country of origin may therefore generate an understanding of the relationship between movement, memory work and place that is very different from the insights gained through fieldwork focusing on memory work in the lives of individual migrants and refugees.

The four chapters that focus on individuals' and families' experiences of movement and memory suggest that, at this level of analysis, personal memories of other times and places, rather than public displays and celebrations of a collective cultural and historical heritage, are often of greater importance. Such memories, furthermore, may stir ambivalent emotions and different reactions. Natalia Alonso Rey's study of memory work among Uruguayan women in Spain shows that, after they have entered Spain on tourist visas and overstayed as undocumented labour migrants, the private home becomes a key site for these women's maintaining of ties to people and places left behind. Some of the women display family photos prominently in the home, but others find that the pain of being absent from the homeland is so strong that they prefer to keep the photos in boxes, away from sight in their everyday life. The most enthusiastic assertions of identification with a distant place of origin, through active participation in an ethnic or national organization or prominent displays of belonging, therefore do not necessarily reflect the most intensely felt memories of a homeland.

The significance of more private sites of belonging is underscored by Sanda Üllen's ethnography of the meaning of the family home left behind by refugees. Focusing on a Bosnian extended family in Denmark, she shows that for these relatives, reclaiming the family home in Bosnia that became occupied by Serbs during the war becomes a way to create a certain continuity in life through regular visits to the home villages, enabling the older generation to reminisce about the past and 'binding' the younger generation to their Bosnian place of origin. Yet repossession of the house also becomes a 'symbol of resistance' by reminding the family and the local community that these family members 'defied the expulsion and are still there' (Üllen this volume, p. 84) At the same time, however, the home arouses ambivalent and contradictory feelings in the family, as the older generation is reminded of what they have lost when they return to a place that has changed fundamentally, while the younger generation, who have few, if any, personal pre-war memories of the family home, find that it is increasingly foreign and meaningless to them.

Ambiguity and contradiction are also central themes in Annika Lems's analysis of the ways in which two Somali men living in Melbourne, Australia express their attachment to Somalia. For the Somalis it is difficult to link their fond personal memories of growing up in Somalia with the present-day, brutal, war-torn country. It therefore becomes necessary to develop 'alternative understandings of memory and historical narratives' (Lems this volume, p. 131) that can encompass 'inconsistencies, interruptions, fragments and silences' (Lems this volume, p. 133). Marita Eastmond's ethnographic study of an extended Bosnian family that fled to Sweden during the war in the 1990s also emphasizes the importance of ambiguities, silences as well as prevarication in individuals' handling of personal memories of conflict, war and flight. Indeed, she concludes that "too much memory" can be a liability' and that 'both silence and forgetting can be constitutive in the formation of new identities and life plans' (Eastmond this volume, p. 43). In the Somali and Bosnian cases, as well as among the second-generation Kurds, the desire to find ways of living with difficult memories and to move on in life thus leads individuals and families to adopt a rather conciliatory and pragmatic approach to the past, as compared, for example, to the more confrontational, ideological approach adopted by nomadist nationalists in Hungary and Bangladeshi long-distance nationalists in Spain.

The Temporality of Memory

The memory work that takes place in these widely different contexts involves rather different temporalities. At the national level, as exemplified by Hungary, a distant past may be evoked for the purpose of constructing and celebrating mythical origins. Even if, or perhaps because, its historical veracity and significance for the development of the present-day national community cannot be documented, this past can attain a powerful presence in contemporary society through its appeal to the popular imagination and its close association with the political power structure. Not only the distant but also the more recent past can be seen to be moulded for ideological purposes in the form of a dominant narrative that underwrites an established national heritage, whether or not it can be supported (fully) by the historical records. As Dąbrowska points out, in the national narrative of the Second World War the Poles portray themselves as suffering victims, rather than as complicit in the persecution of Jews. And, as I indicated earlier, in the proud Danish national narratives of the Second World War the rescue of the Jews (by some Danes) has held a prominent place in the national imagination, whereas the Danes' collaboration with the Nazis has tended to be downplayed.

For minorities, the past seems to be primarily a source of counter-versions of dominant national histories, but ironically in these versions they often use the same arguments of right to ancestral land prevalent in the histories of nation states. Thus Polish Jews and Palestinians insist on their right to a place in their homeland by reference to their long history of dwelling in that land, whether through a thousand years of history as a religious minority in Poland, or an even longer history as the inhabitants of what is now Israeli territory. Furthermore, these groups draw on oral histories gleaned from the older generation to document the more recent history of the tragic loss of their homeland. Bangladeshi migrant associations in Lisbon, similarly, seek official validation of their version of the political history of Bangladesh in order to become recognized as the only legitimate Bangladeshi community in Portugal. And the diasporic Kurdish community look for a 'hegemonic' and 'uncontested' representation of their past that can frame present-day political claims.

Another important aspect of the temporality of memory work concerns the notion of generation, primarily in the Mannheim sense of a group of people who have grown up and matured in the same socio-cultural environment of a particular historical era (Mannheim (1925) 1952). The memory politics of Bangladeshi migrants in Portugal, as noted, can be understood in terms of the different generations of migrants involved, with the older generation of immigrants, who were formed by the era of the struggle for political independence in Bangladesh, continuing their engagement in political activities abroad, and the later migrants, who have experienced a Bangladesh torn by internal political conflicts, being intent on leaving behind such political struggle. Furthermore, the children of the early migrants are not shaped by the shifting political climate of Bangladesh, but rather by being part of the generation of immigrants who have grown up in Europe in an era of increasing xenophobia, and they are therefore drawn towards Islamic parties, if they become involved in politics. The impact of generation on memories is also central to understanding changing Palestinian experiences of what it means to be a refugee. Here, these differences seem to be drawn on in a constructive way in order to find a pragmatic solution to continued life in a refugee camp, as the young generation consult the experiences of the elder generation to redefine the meaning of the camp and their associated identities as its inhabitants.

The disparate experiences of societal generations may have an important impact on relations between generations within the family—another dimension of generation as exemplified in Eastmond's analysis of the life stories of three generations of a Bosnian family. Through a narrative analysis she shows that individuals in this family structured their life stories in relation to the major historical eras that had formed them as persons. Individuals of the eldest generation thus presented themselves as shaped by the Second World War and the post-war Yugoslav socialist era in which they grew up and came of age, whereas the second generation referred to the Yugoslav socialist era and its collapse, and the third generation to their experiences of living as refugees, and settling into a more normal life, in Sweden. These different societal generations, and the memories associated with them, became apparent as family members, in the process of relating their life stories to Eastmond, gave mean-

ing to lives that had involved quite disparate trajectories of movement and settlement. Within the context of ongoing social life, however, the memories of violence and flight that had not been experienced by all the generations in the family, or were interpreted differently by them, rather tended to be subdued, or even silenced, in order to maintain amiable relations. By 'forgetting through collusive silence, leaving certain things in the shadows' (Eastmond this volume, p. 43) and by maintaining a sense of ironic humour concerning certain shared life experiences, Eastmond states that the families thus 'opened up new ways of being at home and made space for new identities' (Eastmond this volume, *ibid*). Similar processes of searching for new identities were also observed in the younger generations of Kurds and Bosnians that Six-Hohenbalken and Üllen studied. Thus, the young Kurdish filmmakers and the Bosnian refugees in Denmark, who had little personal recollection of the traumatic events experienced by the older generations, wished to engage in memory discourses that could point forward to their present and future lives, rather than backward to the losses of the past.

Memories of Mobility

In their introduction, Tošić and Palmberger emphasize that they wish to use the wide-angle lens of the notion of mobility rather than the narrower one of migration because it allows for an analysis of a broader spectrum of movements, such as flight and exile, labour migration, 'cross-border mobility' as well as immobility, social and imagined mobility. This mobility approach, the editors note, makes it possible to investigate the varying forms of remembering and forgetting that take place as 'individuals produce continuities and ruptures between different life periods and historical periods as well as between different localities' and to avoid treating the nation state as the main analytical unit. A focus on mobility clearly opens up interesting analytical possibilities, but it also raises questions concerning how to conceptualize this very broad notion of movement in such a way that it leads to a well-defined focus of research. In their discussion of anthropological approaches to (im)mobility, Salazar and Smart (2011, ii) suggest that mobility can be seen to involve 'much more than mere

movement; it is infused with meaning'. Mobility, thus, is not any kind of movement, but a (desired) change of physical and/or social place to which particular meaning is attributed. While mobility has always been a characteristic of human life, they add, in the modern world 'it needs to be framed in relation to the global political system of nation-states, who set and control the parameters of (trans)national movements and prefer relatively immobilized subject populations' (Salazar and Smart 2011, iii). Even though Tošić and Palmberger do not limit mobility to transnational movement, they thus view the crossing of political borders, and the regulatory systems that this involves, as a key aspect of contemporary mobility.

There is no doubt that since the establishment of 'the global political system of nation-states' (Salazar and Smart 2011, iii), cross-border movements have tended to comprise a very visible form of mobility, documented in statistics and images, debated in the media and regulated by laws. This is exemplified, by default, by the events in 2015, when the EU system of handling asylum seekers broke down and hundreds of thousands of people from the Middle East and Africa travelled across Europe by train, by car, by bicycle and on foot. In Denmark the media were full of images of asylum seekers walking along motorways, refusing to be stopped and registered by the Danish immigration authorities, intent on moving further north to reach family and friends in the other Scandinavian countries. Some Danes raged about police inefficiency, some were outraged by the problematic system of asylum seeking, and some decided to act on their own and gave rides to individuals and families—only to be charged with trafficking if the authorities caught them. In the end only 21,225 asylum seekers were registered in Denmark during the entire year (Udlændinge-, Integrations- og Boligministeriet 2016). Nevertheless, this cross-border mobility fueled anxiety about the future of the welfare society and resulted, as noted, in the passing of laws restricting the rights of refugees as well as immigrants. Yet this very dramatic mobility is clearly not the only kind of population movement taking place in Europe. Indeed, since the 1950s Denmark, along with most other European countries, has experienced massive internal migration from rural to urban areas. In the period from the 1950s to the 2010s close to 700,000 people left the Danish countryside for the cities, and in

the period from 2010 to 2015 more than 30,000 left (Danmarks Statistik 2015; Sørensen 2014, 11). Such population movements, often involving mainly young people full of imaginaries of social and economic opportunities in other places, have generally not been studied by migration scholars, nor has there been discussion of the threat to 'social cohesion' caused by this internal migration in comparison with transnational migration into the country.

The ethnographic studies in this volume focus mainly on movement that involves crossing the political borders of nation states, because they examine memory work in connection with exile, flight or migration that has taken place in relation to a nation state—whether contemporary transnational movements or historical movements celebrated as foundational to the present-day nation state (Hungary), or mourned as expulsion from a former land of belonging by a new country (Israel). Two of the studies, however, also examine the significance of less conspicuous kinds of movement and emphasize their key role in the memories of migrants and refugees. Eastmond's analysis of the life stories related by Bosnian refugees thus points to the significance of mobility connected with life stages. She shows that the family members who grew up during the 1960s experienced the ability to leave their home in the countryside for higher education as an opportunity for social mobility that enabled them to enjoy a modern and comfortable life. This, in turn, formed an important basis of their strong identification with the socialist Yugoslav era. Similarly, Lems, in her analysis of two Somalis' memories of pre-war Mogadishu, points to the special importance of Mogadishu to one of the Somalis, because this was the place where he had spent the formative years of his youth after he had moved away from home to study. These examples demonstrate that mobility embedded in the life trajectory of ordinary human existence can have a vital impact on the ways in which people experience the more radical or dramatic forms of mobility, such as transnational migration, flight or exile, and seek to come to terms with them in their memories, whether they actively cultivate, subdue or silence those memories.

Lems also shows that in their memories the Somalis did not dwell on the conflict and violence that had destroyed Somalia, but rather emphasized the carefree everyday movements that characterized the cosmopoli-

tan city prior to the civil war and served as a reminder of the untroubled and easygoing life, unhindered by conflicts or clan wars, that they used to lead in Mogadishu. The memories of this quotidian mobility enabled them to (re)connect with the city, at least in the fleeting moments when they were able to look beyond the reality of the destructions that had since taken place. By contrast, the lack of memories of such everyday movements made it difficult for the younger generations in the Bosnian families in Scandinavia to create meaningful ties to places of belonging in Bosnia that the older generations treasured. The power of the recollections of such ordinary movements connected with the daily life of the past sends a strong message concerning the significance of home as a 'mobile habitat' rather than 'a singular or fixed, physical structure' (Rapport and Dawson 1998, 27). A sense of home, in other words, can be experienced by individuals in the remembering and reliving of the routine movements associated with their past everyday life, as well as in the collective celebration of cultural/historical sites associated with particular national or ethnic identities. The complex, and often tensive, relationship between these two notions of home may offer a fruitful point of departure for further study of the important issues introduced by this volume.

Note

1. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 1,046,599 migrants, including asylum seekers, were reported to have arrived in Europe in 2015 (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2016).

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