

History, memory and politics in the Berlin Republic

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Communicative and Cultural Memory

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1. Memory: Individual, Social, and Cultural

Memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level. Identity, in its turn, is related to time. A human self is a “diachronic identity,” built “of the stuff of time” (Luckmann). This synthesis of time and identity is effectuated by memory. For time, identity, and memory we may distinguish among three levels:

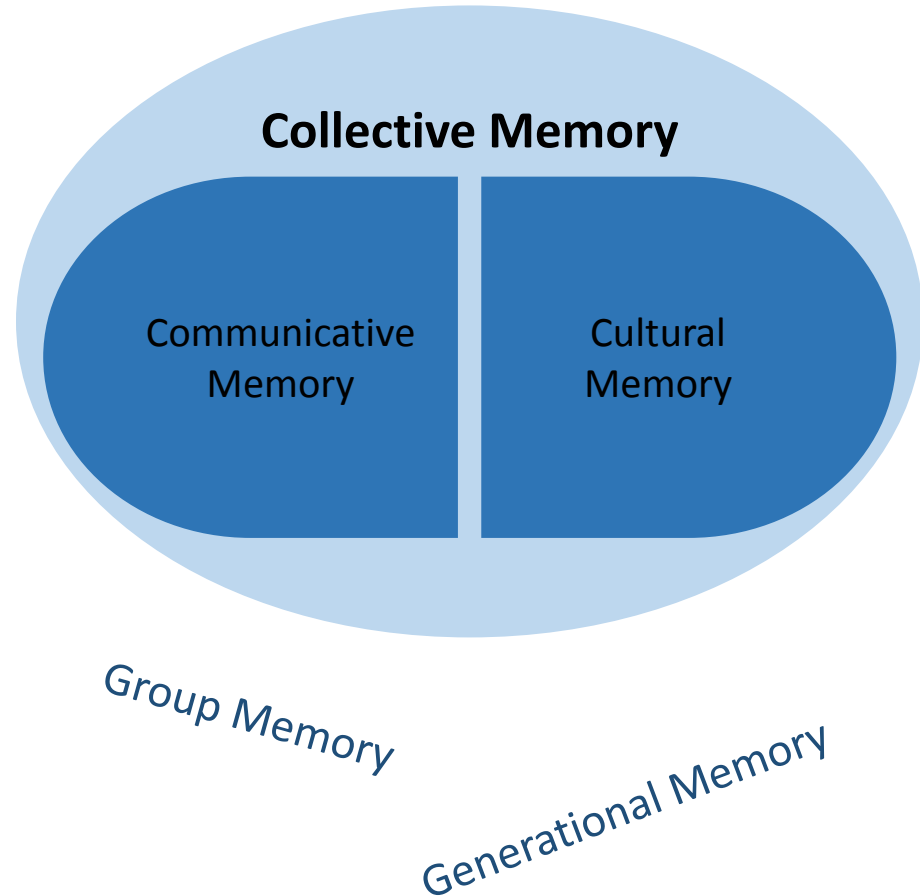
Level	Time	Identity	Memory
inner (neuro-mental)	inner, subjective time	inner self	individual memory
social	social time	social self, person as carrier of social roles	communicative memory
cultural	historical, mythical, cultural time	cultural identity	cultural memory

Figure 1

On the *inner level*, memory is a matter of our neuro-mental system. This is our personal memory, the only form of memory that had been recognized as such until the 1920s. On the *social level*, memory is a matter of communication and social interaction. It was the great achievement of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs to show that our memory depends, like consciousness in general, on socialization and communication, and that memory can be analyzed as a function of our social life (*Les cadres sociaux; La mémoire collective*). Memory enables us to live in groups and communities, and living in groups and communities enables us to build a memory. During these same years, psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung were developing theories of collective memory but still adhered to the first, the inner and personal level, looking for collective memory not in the dynamics of social life but in the unconscious depths of the human psyche (see also Straub, this volume).

0. Prologue I: Memory Culture, Historical Culture, Historical Competencies

Memory Culture



Jan Assmann, Communicative and Cultural Memory, in: Cultural Memory Studies: an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook, ed. by Astrid Erll/ Ansgar Nünning, Berlin 2008, 109-118, 109.

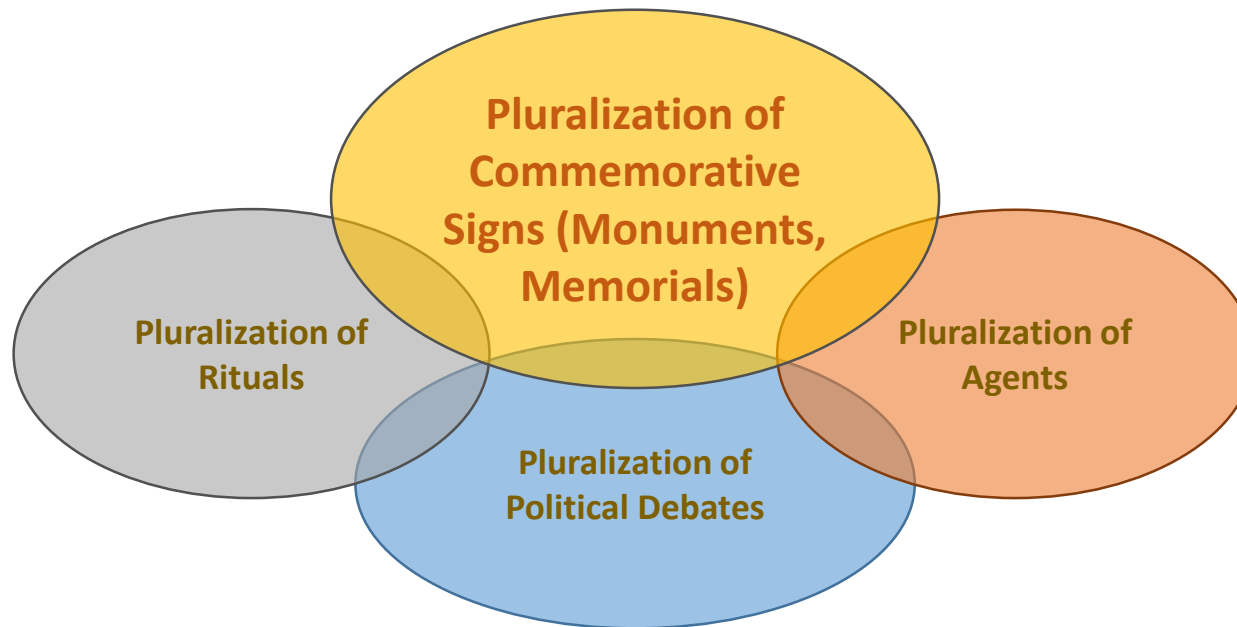
In plain sight
yet still pushed aside
by public conscience?

Memorial in Doberaner Platz, Rostock,
commemorating the 1992 Rostock riots

Photograph: Oliver Plessow.

I. The System Change of 1989/1990 and the Pluralization of Memory Culture

Transition: System Change and Change of Memory Culture





II. Changes in Memorial Culture: A Contextual Framework

The Annihilation of the German-German Border

Separation of Powers and Pluralization

The Role of the Evolving Civil Society

Commemorating the former border or a soccer club?



Former Schwanheide Border Patrol Building

Photograph: Oliver Plessow.



III. Shifts in the Memory Landscape after 1989: Monuments

Commemoration the Most Recent Past: Monuments of
Unity and Monuments Commemorating the Soviet
Occupation Zone and the German Democratic Republic

Dealing with the Heritage of the GDR: Destroying
Monuments, Preserving Monuments

The Fate of GDR-Monuments Commemorating
National Socialism

New Objects of Commemoration: Monuments for
Displaced Germans and for the Victims of War and
Violence



Rostock University: Plaque commissioned by the university in 1990 to commemorate Arno Esch, a liberal democrat who was abducted to the Soviet Union and executed in 1951

Condition in 2017 after the transfer to the „Arno Esch Auditorium“.

Foto: Oliver Plessow.

Commemorating victims of both the Nazi and the Communist regimes together?



Universität Rostock: Memorial Plaque for Hans Morak, professor of dentistry and forced into suicide in 1933 by the National Socialist regime, and for Arno Esch, executed by the Communist in 1951.

Rostock, main building of the university, (state in 2017)

Foto: Oliver Plessow



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„May 1, 1945. Liberation of the City of Rostock from Hitler Facism by the Glorious Soviet Army“
Monument Rostock-Kavelstorf. Condition in the late 1980s.

Photo: Ostseezeitung, Archiv.



Gedenkstätte der Revolutionären Matrosen

Anlegestelle Kabutzenhof

Die Gedenkstätte ist den revolutionären Arbeitern und Matrosen gewidmet, die während des 1. Weltkrieges und der Novemberrevolution 1918 einen heldenmütigen Kampf gegen den deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus, gegen den Krieg und für ein sozialistisches Vaterland führten.

Am 6. November legten Kieler Matrosen mit ihren Torpedobooten in Rostock-Warnemünde an und vereinigten sich mit den revolutionären Arbeitern der Neptunwerft, die am gleichen Tage die Arbeit niedergelegt hatten. In diesen Tagen legten am Kabutzenhof Schiffe mit roten Fahnen an, die die Arbeiter zu den Versammlungen und

Kundgebungen in der „Philharmonie“ und im „Lindenhof“ transportierten. Auf einem 20 Meter langen Betonsokkel erhebt sich die 9 Meter hohe bronzene Gruppe zweier über Trümmer vorwärtstürmender Männer von Wolfgang Eckardt. An der Längsseite des Sockels erstreckt sich ein Relief von Reinhard Dietrich, mit dem in mehreren Szenen der Kampf der Arbeiter und Soldaten unter Führung der deutschen Linken künstlerisch gestaltet ist. An der Stirnseite des Sockels trägt ein Schriftband die Worte Karl Liebknechts: „Und ob wir dann noch leben werden, wenn es erreicht wird – leben wird unser Programm; es wird die Welt der erlösten Menschheit beherrschen. Trotz alledem!“ Das Innere der Gedenkstätte (im Sockel) ist durch die Ausstellung „Das Antlitz der bewaffneten Kämpfer der Arbeiterklasse“ museal gestaltet.

„Memorial for the Revolutionary Sailors“ depicted in an East German Publication

Illustration: Gedenkstätten der Arbeiterbewegung im Bezirk Rostock, 3. Aufl., 1981, S. 6.

„Memorial for the Revolutionary Sailors“

1970/71 (Base Relief) 1977 (Statue)

Condition in January 2017

Photograph: Oliver Plessow.





Jaak Soans: Lenin Monument
Schwerin

Condition in 1996 with Graffito
„Karl Marx is alive“.

Foto: Politische Memoriale e.V.



III. Shifts in the Memory Landscape in Mecklenburg and Western Pomerania after 1989: Monuments

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Hans Stridde, Monument for the Victims of Facism, 1946

Rostock, Rosengarten. Condition 2015

Photo: Oliver Plessow



Ehrenmal für die Opfer des Faschismus

Karl-Marx-Platz

Das Ehrenmal wurde zum Gedenken an alle Kämpfer gegen den Faschismus und die Verfolgten des Naziregimes errichtet. Im Hintergrund steht das jetzige Haus der NVA, damals Ständehaus. Von 1933 bis 1945 fanden hier und in anderen Orten Mecklenburgs mehr als 100 Hochverratsprozesse statt, in denen die faschistischen Gerichte hohe Zuchthaus- und Gefängnisstrafen gegen Nazigegner verhängten. In 12 Fällen wurde das Todesurteil verkündet.

Hans Stridde, Monument for the Victims of Facism, 1946

Rostock, Rosengarten. Guard of Honor under Communist Rule.

Illustration: Gedenkstätten der Arbeiterbewegung im Bezirk Rostock, 3. ed. 1981, p. 9.



Stele Commemorating the Jewish
Congregation of the City of Stralsund.
Condition 1991.

Photo: Politische Memoriale e.V.



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Stele Commemorating the Victims and Refugees from World War II.

Photo: Oliver Plessow



IV. Shifts in the Memory Landscape after 1989: Memorials

System Transition: The Fate of East German
Memorials (Sites of Commemoration) for National
Socialist Atrocities

New Memorials Commemorating the Soviet
Occupation Zone and the German Democratic
Republic (and the Nazi Era)