

2nd PoSoCoMeS – MSA Working Group Conference

(20 – 23 September 2023, Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia)

Call for Papers: Post-Socialist Memory Cultures in Transition

The Post-Socialist and Comparative Memory Studies (PoSoCoMeS) working group is part of the Memory Studies Association. Our goal is to bring together researchers, activists, and practitioners working in and on post-socialist countries. We call for trans-regional comparative studies that connect Eastern Europe and Africa, Latin America and Asia, and result in broad conceptualizations of post-socialist memories.

The keynote speakers are:

- Erica Lehrer (Concordia University, Canada)
- Maria Mälksoo (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)
- Andrea Petö (Central European University, Austria)
- Tatiana Zhurzhenko (Centre for East European and International Studies, Germany)
- Joanna Wawrzyniak (University of Warsaw, Poland)

We aim to explore change in post-socialist memory cultures, with a particular focus on Eastern, Central and Southeastern European memory cultures that emerged/are emerging from the tensions and interactions between the transnational, the regional, the national, and the local and are further exasperated by the Russian destructive military invasion of Ukraine.

Possible topics include:

- transnational memory in the post-socialist world: vernacularisation, encapsulation
- tangled relationships between memory and human rights
- politics of memory: key agents and institutions
- the workings of memory in relation to (new) social challenges: climate crisis, migration, social inequality
- regional regimes of memory: post-socialism as a regime of memory, continuities and/or re-formations, memory traffic within post-socialist spaces
- reconfiguration of the borders between communities
- memory and translation: movement of memories across national and regional borders, forms, and templates
- media of memory (film, literature, memorial museums, commemorative practices), remediation
- new forms of digital memorialisation in the post-pandemic era
- post-socialist/post-communist memory culture in relation to the rest of the world: post-socialist comparisons with other parts of the world, which allow for trans-regional comparative studies that connect Eastern Europe and Africa, Latin America and Asia, and result in broad conceptualizations of post-socialist memories
- uses and abuses of memory in contemporary and ongoing conflicts, weaponization of the past, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine

There will be two special streams that focus on the themes of the co-organizing research projects.

1. Mnemonic Pluralism and Critical Dialogue in the Museum

Through the concept of mnemonic pluralism, which links memory to the principles of democratic pluralism, this special stream explores the ways museums deal with the complexities of the 20th century and the multiplicity of competing perceptions of the past in changing political and socio-economic contexts.

It aims to establish the factors that undermine or support mnemonic pluralism and reflexive, critical engagement with the complexities of the past: how are the politically laden periods represented in exhibitions and related public programs as well as in collecting work? How are dissonance and difference (ethnic, national, generational, gender, class) addressed? How are divergent group-specific, local, national, and transnational mnemonic discourses linked to each other? What is the relationship between the emergence of pluralistic and deliberative curatorial practices and the museum's positioning in trans/national and local memoryscapes and vis-à-vis societal challenges? How are the choices of curators, designers, and educators related to their backgrounds as members of memory communities?

2. Translating Memories: The Eastern European Past in the Global Arena

This stream focuses on interconnections between local, national, regional, and global memory cultures in post-socialist countries and their transnationalisation. It is particularly interested in aesthetic media of memory, such as literature, art, cinema, and memorial museums/monuments, that circulate globally and bring local memories to global audiences.

This stream explores the attempts in these media to make the histories of the Second World War and Socialist regimes known globally. The stream proposes to look at these movements of memory as a process of translation. What memorial forms have been used to make the Eastern European past intelligible in the global arena? How are global memory cultures vernacularised in the region? What is gained and what is lost in this translation?

Formats and Submission Guidelines:

This is an in-person conference. We will be able to accommodate only a limited number of online panels.

Paper proposals should include abstracts (no longer than 250 words) and information about the presenter(s) (affiliation and short biography).

Panel and roundtable proposals should include an abstract (no longer than 250 words) and a complete list of max 4 participants, as well as their affiliations, short biographies, and the titles of their papers.

Please mention 1) if you would like to be part of one of the two streams; 2) if you need to present online.

Please send your proposals by 1 February 2023 to the following e-mail address: posocomesconference@tlu.ee. The notifications of acceptance will be sent on 15 March 2023.

Cost and financial support:

We do not ask for any registration fee, but all participants have to be members of the Memory Studies Association. Exceptions for those in financial need are possible, but you must apply for this exception directly from the Memory Studies Association: <https://www.memorystudiesassociation.org/membership.../>

We are working towards securing funds to cover the travel and accommodation costs for our Ukrainian scholars.

Organisers:

The 2nd PoSoCoMeS conference will be organized by two major memory studies research projects in Estonia, in collaboration with PoSoCoMes: “Translating Memories: The Eastern European Past in the Global Arena”, a European Research Council Grant that has received funding under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Tallinn University, project leader Eneken Laanes, grant agreement 853385), and “Practices and Challenges of Mnemonic Pluralism in Baltic History Museums”, funded by the Estonian Research Agency (University of Tartu, project leader Ene Kõresaar).

Programme committee:

Local: Eneken Laanes, Ene Kõresaar, Kirsti Jõesalu

PoSoCoMeS: Daria Khlevnyuk, Milica Popovic, Maria Matskevich