



Revisiting the social organisation of national memory: a look at the calendars of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

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Revisiting the social organisation of national memory: a look at the calendars of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.¹

Abstract

This article presents a study of the social organisation of the national memories of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (the Baltic states). It draws inspiration from and expands the scope of the application of Eviatar Zerubavel's largely unexplored methodological tools for the study of calendars. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is threefold. First, this paper offers an application of the above tools to the case of the Baltic states. Second, by doing so it provides an overview of comparative patterns within Baltic calendars. Third, it is argued that by exposing the social organisation of national memory, this approach offers insight into silences, providing an entry point for an engagement with *amnesiology*, as coined by Liedeke Plate.

Key words

Baltic states, calendar, national commemogram, national memory, silence

Recovered memories have been central to the post-Soviet transformations in the Baltic states. Public commemoration was instrumental within this process in the late-1980s and early-1990s. Specifically, under the auspices of the reforms launched in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, public commemorations known as ‘calendar demonstrations’ (Lieven, 1994: 221) proliferated during this period. By the late-1980s these demonstrations gave rise to ‘the counter-calendar’, challenging the official Soviet calendrical holidays by marking prominent anniversaries of the interwar period as well as anniversaries of more traumatic events of the late-1930s and 1940s, such as the deportations of 1941 (Lieven, 1994: 221; Plakans, 2011: 390-391).

Despite the institutionalisation of the counter-calendars in the 1990s, comparative studies remain scarce within the field of Baltic Studies (e.g. O’Connor, 2006: 91-100; Eglitis and Ardava, 2014; Pettai and Pettai, 2015: 224-236). Instead, scholars tend to focus on a single country, either by taking a top-down approach or devoting attention to the bottom-up reception of said calendars (e.g. Kuznecovienė, 2008; Zepa et al, 2008; Tamm, 2013; Kõiva, 2013; Korolova et al, 2015; Senvaitytė, 2015). Within this corpus of literature, analyses under the auspices of memory studies are just one piece of the disciplinary puzzle in the study of Baltic calendars.

Within memory studies at large, Eviatar Zerubavel's (2003, 2004a) chapter 'Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory' as well as his later book *Time Maps* have intuitive appeal. Indeed, many papers that deal with calendrical matters, including entries that appeared in *Memory Studies* (David, 2014; Fridman, 2015), often reference these two titles. Despite that, scholars tend not to touch upon or merely refer to his methodological tools, even though they could help us to better navigate 'a sociomental topography of the past' (Zerubavel, 2004a: 1; e.g. Cossu, 2010: 16).

Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is threefold. First, this paper uses the calendars of the Baltic states to illustrate an application of Zerubavel's mnemonic tools - commemograms/cardiograms. Second, by doing so it aims to contribute to a comparative understanding of the mnemonic patterns within these calendars. At the same time, the presented study is not envisioned as an exhaustive treatment of comparative patterns, and the interest remains with commonality rather than difference throughout. Within this agenda, the paper is interested in the calendars of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia as of 2016/2017, seeking to provide insight into the social organisation of national memory within them (Zerubavel, 2003).

Every national calendar can be understood as consisting of marked and unmarked days. This paper recognises that marked days often operate within a hierarchical system (for example, the division between national holidays and commemorative days). The interest here, however, is in the joint primary function of the marked days, rather than the relationship between them. In other words, this paper focuses on the fact that marked days are 'specifically designed to commemorate "sacred" historical events' (Zerubavel, 2004b: 191). Eviatar Zerubavel (2003: 316; cf. Nora, 1989) even eloquently refers to the calendar as 'perhaps the most spectacular site of collective memory'.

By prescribing what we ought to remember as well as when to remember, the calendar takes part in the process of 'mnemonic socialization', at the very least theoretically, sustaining and transferring the content of collective memory (Zerubavel, 2004a: 47; cf. Etzioni, 2004). Within this process, mnemonic attention is focused on some parts of nation's history, while others are cast into irrelevance (Zerubavel, 1996: 286). Given this observation, this paper will conclude by pointing towards silences within Baltic calendars – 'spaces either beyond words or conventionally delimited as left out of what we talk about' (Winter, 2010: 4; cf. Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger, 2010). In this respect, this paper aims to

contribute to the agenda of *amnesiology*, as recently proposed by Liedeke Plate (2016: 148) on the pages of this journal.

The central elements of the social organisation of national memory, or collective memory, 'are parts of everyday speech, and as such lose any concrete meaning they may once have had', as Jay Winter (2010: 11-12) asserts. Accordingly, to define the parameters of national memory and build a foundation for analysis, the rest of the paper will proceed as follows. The first part of this article will outline conceptual *contours* and the *structure* of national memory, drawing on the works of Aleida Assmann and Eviatar Zerubavel. These sections will be followed by an outline of methodological assumptions and a modified application of Zerubavel's mnemonic cardiograms and national commemograms to the case of the Baltic states. The last section will address the main silences within Baltic calendars, providing an illustration of how Zerubavel's mnemonic tools can provide an entry point into amnesiology (Plate, 2016).

Contours of national memory

Eviatar Zerubavel's (2003: 319, emphasis in the original) approach to national memory within calendars was driven by his interest in the nation(-state), confining him to national calendars and more specifically '*national* commemorative holidays'. Moreover, his

approach was conditioned by a focus on the *structure* of national memory. Its conceptual contours are only of secondary concern: in the end, the structural approach presupposes similarities across formats, as per below. To expand the latter understanding and to further supplement the structural conception of national memory, this paper draws on the work of Aleida Assmann (2008: 55), who suggests treating ‘collective memory’ as an ‘umbrella term for different formats of memory that need to be further distinguished’. While Assmann (2004; cf. 2008: 55) speaks of four formats (individual, social, political, and cultural), the main interest of this paper is with the political-national format of memory (hereafter national memory) – institutionalised and official memory. Institutionalisation allows national memory to be extended in space and time, lending it a degree of durability as well as transgenerational character (Assmann, 2004: 25, 2016: 11).

In turn, national memory is mediated and requires durable carriers – it depends on the support of and in turn existence of governments and institutions to underline it (Assmann, 2004: 35, 2008: 55-56). Specifically, this paper is interested in calendars as products of this process, as ‘institutionalized occasions for remembering’ (Zerubavel, 2003: 317). Theoretically, it is recognised that institutionalisation implies that calendars might ‘run to the end of time’ (Zerubavel 2003: 317). Empirically, however, it is expected that their

prominence and associated meaning(s) will remain subject to variation, change and devaluation (e.g. Cressy, 1996; Spillman, 1998; Schwartz, 2008). These changes, however, are not of prime interest to this paper.

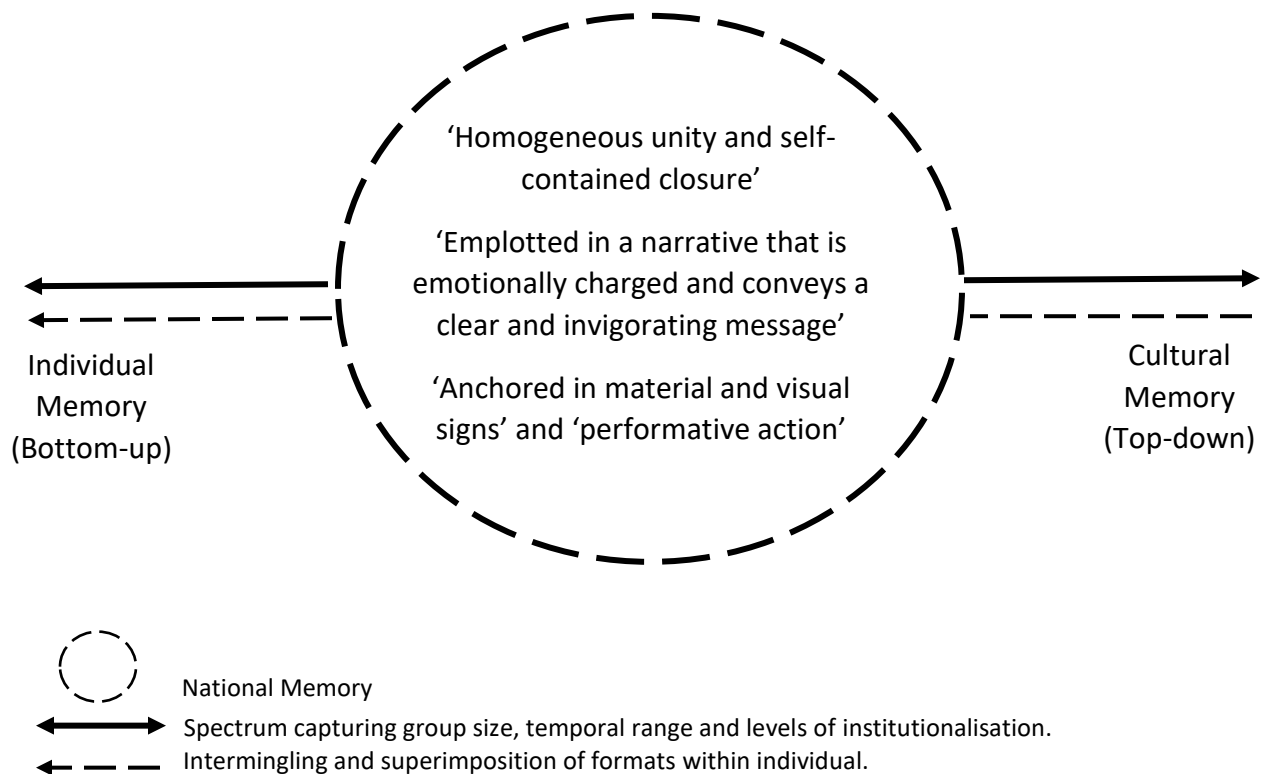


Figure 1. Contours of national memory (Source: compiled by the author, based on Assmann, 2004: 25-26; and Assmann, 2016: 11).

Importantly, Assmann (2004: 26; see Figure 1) suggests differentiating features of national memory, which this paper considers as its conceptual contours, helping to navigate *non-structural* grounds. In other words, 'we can speak of a political or a national memory when history is put to the service of identity formation, when it is appropriated by citizens and attested to by politicians' (Assmann, 2016: 23). Accordingly, national memory ends up working as a "'matrix of meaning" for nationally conscious individuals' (Müller cited in Onken, 2010: 280; see Figure 1).

Structure of national memory

In this respect, institutionalisation commits the national past to the annual calendrical cycle, which becomes a carrier of national memory (Zerubavel, 2003: 332). The structure of a national collective past within national memory is represented by '*commemorative density*' or '*mnemonic density*' that points towards what national memory magnifies to assign it significance (Zerubavel, 1995: 8, emphasis in the original; Zerubavel, 2003: 315; Zerubavel, 2004a: 26, emphasis in the original). Similarly, the calendar operates within the realm of '*commemorative time*', rather than metric historical time, creating an uneven national timeline within which a few compact and yet highly momentous episodes take prominence, while others are compressed 'to near-oblivion' (Zerubavel, 1995: 9, emphasis in the original;

Zerubavel, 2004b: 189). These compressed periods become *silent* witnesses of commemorative elevation of their historic counterparts; their ‘monumental’ punctuation of historic time (cf. Assmann cited in Casquete, 2013: 27).

At the same time, calendrical temporal monumentality remains symbolic – after all, calendars do not ‘literally embody the actual temporal profiles of the historical events’ (Zerubavel, 2003: 332). Nevertheless, drawing on the work of Liron Lavi (2013: 702), calendars play a role in ‘Chrono-Work’ that sustains national identity by assisting in assembling selected commemorative anchors into a chronological continuum. In other words, national days and calendars at large are the ‘key markers in national biography’ alongside which national narrative is constructed (McCrone and McPherson 2009: 213). The structural distribution of such markers implies that calendars ‘embody tacit cardiogram- and seismogram-like narratives that encapsulate nations’ collective histories’, providing an insight into identities of mnemonic communities (Zerubavel, 2003: 326, 319; cf. Tamm, 2008 on narrative community).

Visualising national memory: mnemonic cardiograms and commemograms

The *structure* and *homogeneity* of national memory invite a systemic analysis. Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) speaks of the ‘national commemogram’ that can assist us in conducting

such a study. In his writings, commemograms are presented on two occasions (Zerubavel, 2003: 327, 329; 2004a: 32). In constructing them, Zerubavel (2003: 326) draws inspiration from seismograms and cardiograms which are transformed for the needs of mnemonic nature. Indeed, 'national commemogram' and 'mnemonic cardiogram' become synonymous, capturing the structure of national memory. For practical reasons, this paper makes a slight distinction based on the visual appearance of the two: first, 'national commemogram' (to be read in this case as a 'commemorative programme or timeline') and second 'mnemonic cardiogram' (as per metaphor).

The two represent the methodological tools that allow us to move from a theoretical to an empirical analysis (Zerubavel, 2004b: 189). In other words, it is the process of creating mnemonic timelines by tracing chronological distribution of events within national memory that allows the capturing of its structure (Zerubavel, 2004b: 189). In turn, interest is not with *what* happened, but rather with history *as* and *how* it is remembered (Zerubavel, 2004a: 2; also see Tamm, 2008). To achieve this, two ideas within semiotics become instrumental, *differentiation* and *markedness*: the process of differentiation between marked and unmarked history 'allows us to assign the former any social significance' (Zerubavel, 2004b: 184-185, 191-192, emphasis in the original).

While the focus of this paper remains with national memory, it is worth acknowledging that 'the actual meanings engaged, digested, ignored, or rejected cannot simply be inferred from the nominally national properties of the holidays themselves' (Fox, 2006: 221). Consequently, this paper does not claim to offer answers to the reception of national calendars in the Baltic states. Equally, while this paper is inspired by Zerubavel's (2003: 320) *detached* and *synchronic* pattern analysis, it relaxes the de-contextual demands of the original framework to accommodate interest in 'nation-specific mnemonic idiosyncrasies'. Similarly, while Zerubavel's (2003: 319) approach is confined to public holidays, this paper extends the scope by including commemorative/remembrance/ memorial days (treated as synonymous in this paper).

Past to be remembered: the social organisation of Baltic national memories

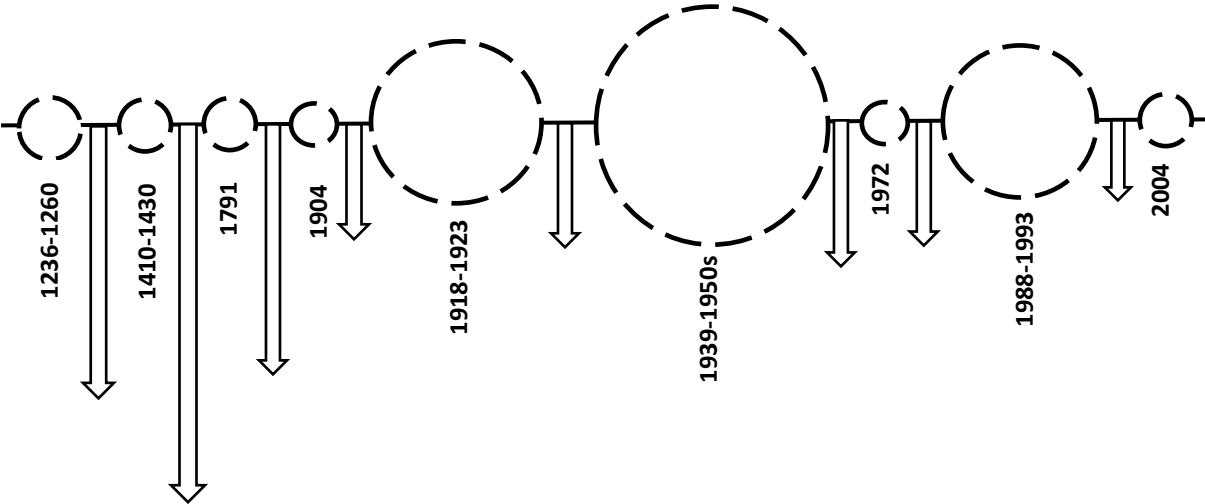
To present an application of the methodological tools outlined above this paper consulted institutionalised (law stipulated) calendars of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. To accommodate the focus of this paper and in a slight deviation from Zerubavel (2003)², only days marking a historical event or a historical period in any of the three nations' histories were considered in this work, while religious and most international and professional days were excluded. The calendars were compiled from sources available online (see

Appendices). Online as well as printed materials such as historical dictionaries and reference books were used to ascertain historical event or period behind calendrical days (e.g. Skangale, 2011)³.

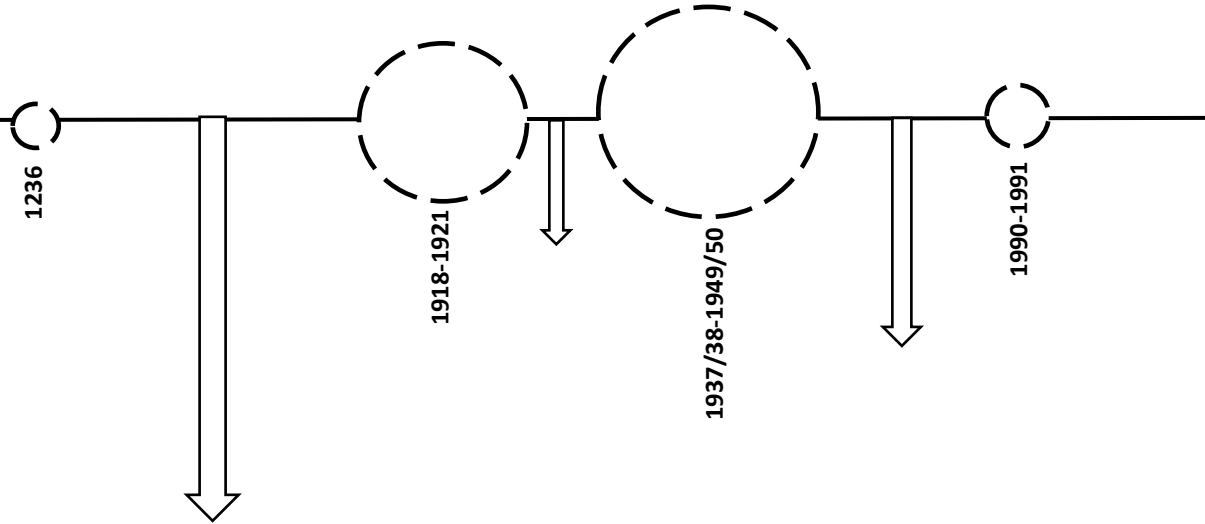
Based on the material reviewed, when it comes to mnemonic density, the Lithuanian calendar by far exceeds that of Latvia or Estonia (see Figure 2). There are two primary reasons behind this. Firstly, it is the result of ‘the time depth of “national” history invoked’ (Lentz, 2013: 214). In other words, by referencing the 13th century and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, their calendar creates a distinct depth and density of national timeline that cannot be claimed by Latvia or Estonia (see Figure 2). Secondly, less binding memorial days are the primary contributors to the Lithuanian density (holidays denoted by upper H in the Appendices). Bracketing the questions of hierarchy, many of the days within the Lithuanian calendar do not require raising of the flag or presuppose any extensive public commemoration. Thus, while still bearing mnemonic weight, the non-interruptive nature of such commemorative days to everyday life allows the Lithuanian calendar to exhibit a much greater density compared to the Latvian and Estonian calendars (see E-tar.lt, 2016). Within national commemorations themselves (see Appendices), while the general tendency towards synchronisation of calendrical and historical time is observed, a few instances of

'symbolic compression' are equally evident in the cases of the Lithuanian and Latvian calendars, which dedicate days to specific periods rather than singular events (Zerubavel, 2003: 333).

(a) Lithuanian mnemonic cardiogram



(b) Latvian mnemonic cardiogram



(c) Estonian mnemonic cardiogram

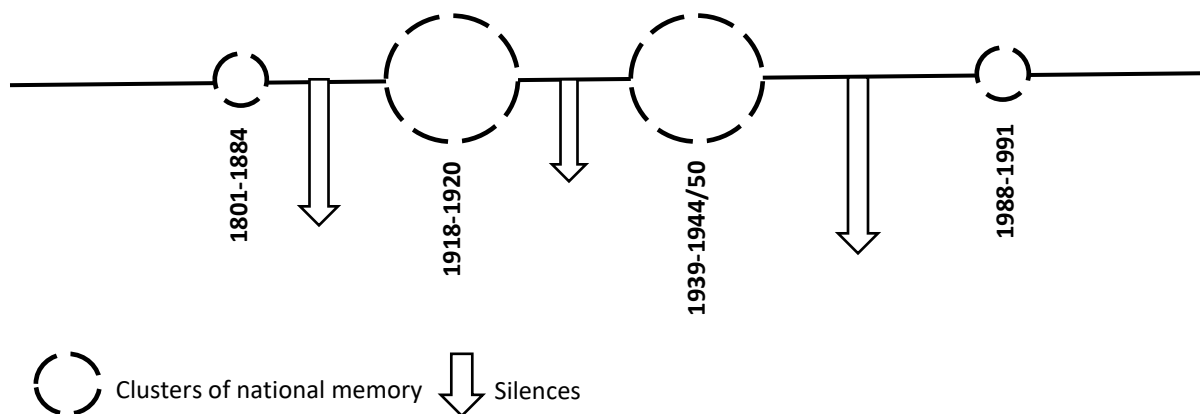


Figure 2. Mnemonic cardiograms of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (Source: compiled by the author, based on Appendices).

The compressed calendrical markers relate to the more traumatic events in Lithuanian and Latvian history and specifically encompass the actions of the Soviet regime at the onset or around the Second World War (i.e. 1937-1938; 1944-1947 and the early-1950s, see Appendix A(b) and B(a)).

The incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union at the time of the Second World War, and a degree of overlap in the larger national development of the countries, assist in the establishment of the observances by 'mnemonic communities that are larger than the

nation-state' (Zerubavel, 2003: 331). The two most prominent examples⁴ in recent years are 23 August and 9 May, commemorating signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact/Baltic Way, and the Schuman Declaration, respectively. Their prominence has arguably been driven, first and foremost, by their transnational significance.

In this respect, a tension of meaning can be observed with regards to 9 May in the Baltic states, that of 'Europe Day' and 'Victory Day' (for example, in Russia). The two mark not only different temporalities (Soviet and European/post-Soviet) but equally different mnemonic orientations within contemporary Europe (that is, of the West and East). It is in this regard, for instance, that the Latvian calendar underwent its first 'seemingly small, and yet significant' amendment in 1995 (Pettai and Pettai, 2015: 232). The Remembrance Day dedicated to the end of the Second World War was shifted from its Soviet/Russian anchor on 9 May to a Western European 8 May, signalling mnemonic reorientation and performativity of 'Europeanness' (cf. Pettai and Pettai, 2015: 232)⁵. On a symbolic level, 9 May in the Baltic states is now assigned the meaning of 'Europe Day' and can be located within the Baltic narrative of the traumatic interruption of their European development in the early twentieth century and their final return to Europe in 2004.

At the same time, the Baltic (and *East European* at large) return to Europe has prompted a recent reassessment of the common European remembrance framework. Within this process, the Baltic states were at the forefront of integrating their communist experiences into European understanding of the ramifications of the Second World War, thus in part claiming their newly recovered 'Europeanness' (Onken, 2007; Mälksoo, 2009). Importantly, this mnemonic activism resulted in the elevation of the date of signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (23 August) to the pan-European level via the institutionalisation of the 'European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism', simultaneously making its way into national calendars of Latvia and Estonia in 2009 (cf. e.g. Mälksoo, 2014).

This emphasis on the duality of totalitarianism in the twentieth century (that is, Soviet/Communist and Nazi German/Fascist) equally comes to the fore in the social organisation of Baltic national memories. Overall, however, the commemorative timeline presents several major clusters in all three Baltic countries. The pre-twentieth century clusters are scattered and deflated in comparison to other periods in all three countries, marking national 'beginnings'. In that way, the 'Day of Baltic Unity' (1236) in Latvia and Lithuania, according to the presidents of the two countries, prescribes 'to remember our roots, the rich cultures of our two nations, our shared history, and fights for freedom'

(Zatlers and Adamkus, 2007). In Lithuania, the above day is followed by the 'Statehood Day (Lithuanian King Mindaugas Coronation Day)' (1253) that essentially delineates the origins of Lithuanian nationhood. Estonia's chronological starting point is marked with the 'Native Language Day' on 14 March (1801), dedicated to the birthday of Kristjan Jaak Peterson. At the time of German dominance at the University of Tartu, Peterson's acknowledgement of his Estonian origin as well as his 'amazingly modern' for the time poetry, in later years earned him the inscription among the '*forefathers*' of Estonian poetry and as a developer of Estonian language (Taagepera, 1993: 29). Kristjan Peterson's birthday is followed by 'National Flag Day', marking the declaration of the flag as that of the Estonian Students' Society (Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts) in 1884. It provides a more concrete token of national statehood, and the symbolism of the place that unites them - the University of Tartu - lends a link between the two days.

The explicit 'personification' of memory through the wording of holidays or commemorative days, however, remains rather nominal in the Baltics and largely reflects the canon of heroes. In the case of Lithuania, Grand Dukes Mindaugas and Vytautas distinguish themselves most prominently, underlining their enduring place within the canon and the assigned role of 'founding fathers' (see Appendix A(a); cf. Šutinienė, 2009). In Latvia,

the main example is embodied within Lāčplēsis Day (11 November), alluding to the Latvian folklore hero, Lāčplēsis (Bearslayer), and thereby transforming a mere literary hero into a national one by endowing him with a historic life outside the immediate pages of the literary epic (cf. Cimdiņa, 2010). Unsurprisingly, the above introduced commemorated figures also find monumental embodiments in both countries, solidifying their heroic position. Prominently, Lāčplēsis is immortalised on the interwar built 'Freedom Monument' in Riga; the monument to 'King Mindaugas' is placed outside the National Museum of Lithuania in Vilnius, with the monument to Vytautas to be found in Kaunas. Just a short distance away in the same city, another monument is dedicated to Romas Kalanta, who committed an act of self-immolation in protest against Soviet occupation on 14 May (1972). The day, despite being institutionalised as 'Civil Resistance Day', promotes 'oneness', elevating Romas Kalanta's act above all other individual instances of resistance during the Soviet period (cf. Schwartz, 2009). The contestation of this 'oneness' and the context of his death, however, work against univocal inscription into a canon of heroes, as Amanda Swain's (2012) study of parliamentary (Seimas) debates illustrates.

When it comes to the twentieth century, the calendars become more 'synchronised' with three distinct clusters observable in all three calendars, indicating a tendency towards

'Baltic Memory' (Kõresaar, 2016: 431; see Figure 2). The first twentieth-century cluster captures the period of the Wars of Independence and early parliamentary years (\approx 1918-early 1920s), marking the beginning of Baltic statehood and underlying their democratic credentials. However, while statehood for Latvia and Estonia was indeed 'new', Lithuania, through the wording of the public holiday, appeals to the earlier recorded instances of medieval and early modern statehood. As a result, three main commemorative anchors, instead of the equivalent two in the cases of Latvia and Estonia, bracket the Lithuanian nation-state(hood): *6 July (1253)*, 16 February (1918) and 11 March (1990). According to the website dedicated to the centenary of independence ('Restored Lithuania 100')⁶, 'this date [16 February 1918] is like a bridge between the old Lithuania born on 6 July 1253 and the new independent Lithuania restored on 11 March 1990' (lietuva.lt, 2017). Interestingly, the Wars of Independence are marked explicitly in Latvia and Estonia, but not in Lithuania where the mnemonic focus seems to have been shifted to the medieval and post-Second World War independence struggles.

The second mnemonically dense cluster of national memory is dedicated to the Soviet and Nazi German occupations (\approx 1939/40-early 1950s). The Soviet occupation dominates and sets the tone of the entire cluster, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The third prominent cluster relates to the period of ‘Singing Revolution’ that led to the restoration of independence in the early 1990s (≈ late 1980s-early 1990s). This period gave the greatest impetus to the creation of the anti-Soviet resistance narrative that was one of the main pillars of post-independence nation-building. The above two clusters worked in tandem, providing legitimacy to the disassociation from the Soviet period. In that way, within the social organisation of national memory – and within twentieth-century memory specifically – occupation(s) and independence become two main organising principles.

Silences within the social organisation of national memory

By exposing the shapes of national memory, the suggested approach utilising ‘mnemonic cardiograms/commemograms’ not only provides insights into the dynamics of remembrance, but it equally allows for a study of silent parts revealed on the drawn mnemonic timelines. The preceding discussion established a pattern of three main mnemonic clusters in all three countries. At the same time, looking at their organisation (see Figure 2 and Figure 3), two prominent ‘calendro-commemorative gaps’ become apparent (Zerubavel, 2003: 329-330; Winter, 2010: 20).

The mnemonic cluster of ‘independence’ establishes itself on the background of the nineteenth century silence, during which the Baltic states were part of the Russian Empire.

This absence enforces the message of denial of ‘the full realization of their legitimacy as separate political entities’, elevating the tipping point of 1918 independence proclamations (Zerubavel, 1995: 8). Even when references are made to the imperial period (for example, 7 May 1904 in Lithuania) emphasis seems to be on the struggle for freedom and National Awakening(s) that find their climax in the (re-)establishment of the independent state. At the same time, while a ‘sudden beginning’ in 1918 and an ‘abrupt end’ in the 1940s is remembered in the Baltic states, an authoritarian ‘mid-term crisis’ of the late 1920s -1930s proves to be too controversial for a univocal inscription into national memory, resulting in a mnemonic split of the independence period (see Figure 3; Hope, 1996: 41). Similarly, the relative *stability* of these regimes works against an easy commemorative inscription in comparison to the turbulent years of 1918 to the 1920s. However, while absent within calendars⁷, this period finds representation in other formats of memory.

In Latvia for instance, the *Ulmaņlaiki* period, during which the late Kārlis Ulmanis headed an authoritarian government, remains among the most positively viewed in the country’s twentieth century history (Kaprāns and Saulītis, 2017: 9-16). The often-mythologised appropriation of this period within social memory works in tandem with the national

memory, establishing an assimilated independence period (see Figure 3(a); cf. Boldāne 2006).

The collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the Baltic states opened the stage for an emphasis on 'two' or even 'three' occupations (Soviet to Nazi German to Soviet), underlined by the notion of 'double genocide' (more prominently in Lithuania and Latvia; see Appendix A(b) and B). The afore mentioned institutionalisation of the 'European Day of Remembrance for Victims of *Stalinism* and *Nazism*' is, in turn, a reflection of the Baltic attempts at drawing equality between the two regimes. At the same time, despite their quest for demonstrating 'Europeanness' by expanding the mnemonic space, the commemorative density of Soviet occupation(s) tends to overshadow the singular commemorative date dedicated to the Holocaust (see Appendices; cf. Himka and Michlic, 2013)⁸. However, precisely this mnemonic focus, relying on the 'myth of victimhood and cult of authenticity', provided the base on which newly independent Baltic states could anchor their identity (Hackmann and Lehti, 2012). To this day it largely remains in place.

Within this base, the Soviet period of the 1940s is inflated and the late-Soviet period is cast into irrelevance, apart from the late 1980s, early 1990s, and 1972 in Lithuania, that themselves belong to the categories of martyrology and resistance⁹. This patterning or

periodisation of historical time can be interpreted through the prism of a *strategic silence* - a tool of political persuasion- as Ketil Knutsen (2016: 126) puts it.

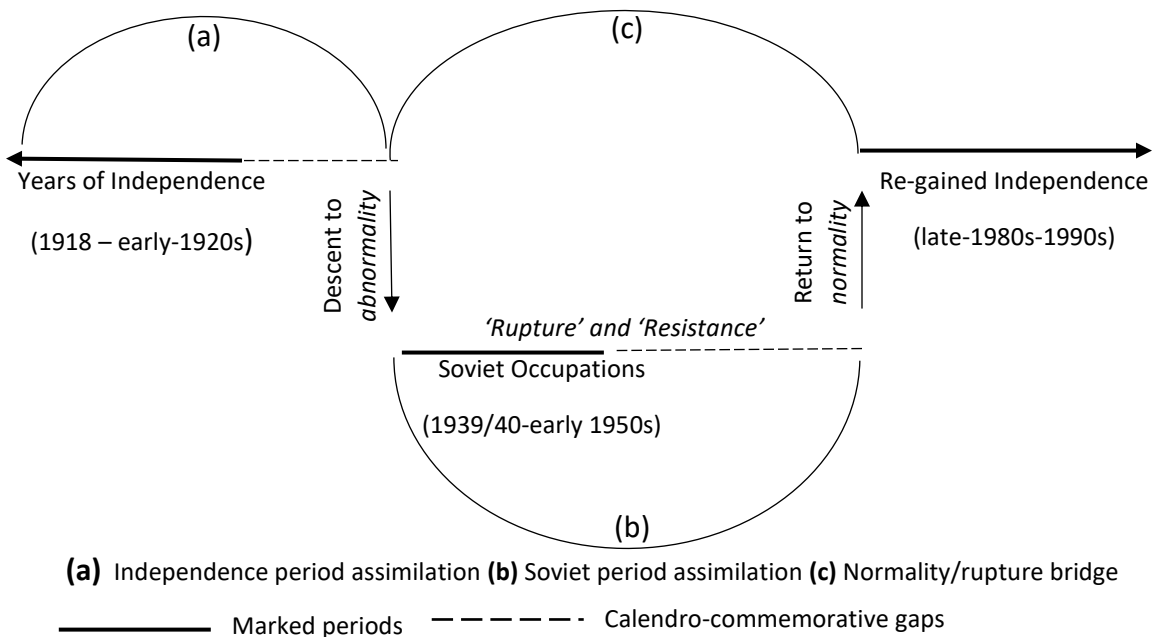


Figure 3. Connections between marked and unmarked periods (Source: compiled by the author).

In this respect, the lack of over 40 years of history in the national memory is a purposive mnemonic decision, resulting in the entire Soviet period being assigned a Stalinist identity (see Figure 3(b)). The assimilated Soviet period becomes emplotted in the narrative of

decline, imposing a specific temporal order on the flow of history (see Figure 3; cf. Zerubavel, 2004a: 16-18). It is presented as alien and interruptive of the 'normal' national progression (see Figure 3(c)). In the words of the current Lithuanian president, Dalia Grybauskaitė (2016), 'five long decades were ripped away from the one hundred years of our journey by the Soviet occupation which left us with many unhealing wounds'. In turn, within this temporal order, the Soviet occupation becomes a 'filter of meaning', operationalised through the lenses of 'rupture' and 'resistance' as illustrated by Estonian presidential speeches on a national holiday, 24 February (see Jõesalu, 2012; Jõesalu and Kõresaar, 2013: 177; Figure 3). With the whole Soviet period being represented as equally alien, the intra-Soviet differences become trivial. By the same token, the late-Soviet period falls under the mnemonic blade and is 'mnemocided' from national memory, transforming into a *Red* 'Elephant in the Room' (Zerubavel, 2010; Assmann, 2015: 26). The emphasis on rupture and decline, however, presupposes a point in time that serves as an anchor of normality.

In this respect, since the whole period from the late 1940s up to 1991 is interpreted through the prism of 'rupture' and 'resistance', it allowed for the (re-)imagining and (re-)constructing of the post-1991 republics as a continuation of early twentieth century

statehood, providing a symbolic link to the *'temporal normality'* of the interwar period (Eglitis, 2002: 17, emphasis in the original; see Figure 3(c)). As was the case with other post-communist states that could claim such continuity, the return of some of the pre-Second World War calendrical days in the Baltic states helped to solidify such symbolical temporal continuity (for example, Poland; Ochman, 2013: 27-29). Most prominently, the proclamation of independence in 1918 was drawn upon when creating calendrical continuity. Marek Tamm (2013: 662) even observed that the decision surrounding the 'upgrading' of 20 August (1991) within the Estonian calendar in the 1990s was veiled in its perceived conflict with the above date of 24 February (1918). The Estonian parliament (Riigikogu) voiced concerns that the elevation of 20 August to a public holiday 'would undermine the significance of 24 February and endanger the idea of legal continuity' (Tamm, 2013: 662). While the two days coexist in the contemporary realm of public holidays in all three countries, the above considerations of the Estonian parliament underline Eva-Clarita Onken's (2007: 38) observation that since regaining independence, the idea of continuity of statehood has been 'the central historical notion for Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians'. Nevertheless, leaving the legal underpinnings of said continuity aside, the

preceding discussion illustrates that this notion is emphasized by the created commemorative time rather than metric historical time.

At the same time, Winter (2010: 23) points out that silences have temporal expiry dates in line with the needs of the time in which they are imbedded. In a similar spirit, Kirsti Jõesalu and Ene Kõresaar (2013: 196) observe that in more recent years in Estonia ‘the negative discourse of rupture and the positive discourse that emphasizes the continuity of everyday experiences have found ways of co-existing’. Similarly, Mārtiņš Kaprāns (2016: 102) argued that while the preservation of the anti-Soviet narrative in Latvia retains its place as ‘a pivotal legitimating historical force’, it conversely coexists with the ‘alternative and emancipated discourses’. Thus, while memory of the late-Soviet period is silenced within national memory, it nevertheless finds a ‘voice’ within other formats of memory and through mediums such as ‘life writing’, theatre and newspapers (also see Onken, 2010; Kõresaar, 2016).

At the same time *the hierarchisation of memory* implies that these memories *co-exist* on different ontological levels; with the public level being assigned to the normative mnemonic framework of the national memory, and the heterogeneity of memories being contained within the social level (cf. Assmann, 2016: 171-173). In other words, ‘emancipated’

memories do not challenge the established normative framework as most of the time they do not reach the level of national memory (cf. Onken, 2010). In a similar spirit, Jõesalu and Kõresaar (2013: 196) note that the identified discourses of ‘rupture’ and ‘continuity/normality’ as applied to the late-Soviet period ‘describe the Soviet experience in different social spheres’ (that is, public versus private). In this respect, as illustrated by all Baltic calendars, national memory retains its characteristic homogeneous and self-contained contours and remains an established normative scheme. The dynamics on the social level, however, have the *potential* to loosen the grip of national memory (cf. Safronovas, 2014). Social dynamics, however, fall outside the remit of this paper.

Concluding remarks

Over the years many scholars have drawn inspiration from Eviatar Zerubavel’s writings on calendars. Concurrently, his methodological tools have remained largely untouched. In contrast to earlier scholarly work, this paper draws inspiration from Zerubavel’s methodological tools in the study of the social organisation of national memory – mnemonic cardiograms/commemograms. It was argued that Zerubavel’s approach could be supplemented by the writings of Aleida Assmann and expanded in scope by including commemorative days. In turn, Assmann’s work helps to establish guiding conceptual

contours of national memory. In this respect, it provides a complimentary function to Zerubavel's more structurally orientated understating of this format of memory.

In terms of the Baltic social organisation of national memory, two organising motifs, namely occupation(s) and independence, have been suggested. In this respect, a pattern of three mnemonic clusters is observed in all three calendars: periods of independence (\approx 1918-early 1920s), occupations (\approx 1939/40-early 1950s) and re-gained independence (\approx late 1980s-early 1990s). By studying the organisation of these clusters in relation to one another, two prominent calendro-commemorative gaps become visible – that provide an entry point into engagement with amnesiology (Plate, 2016). This paper paid closer attention to the strategic silencing of Soviet times within national memory (\approx 1950s-1980s), which provides coherence and meaning to the post-1990s states, by, in part, allowing to make an emphasis on continuity of statehood (1918 to 1990/91). At the same time, while the focus remained on national memory, it was noted that this silencing of the late-Soviet period tends to break down within other formats of memory, namely individual, social, and cultural. Nevertheless, these memories *co-exist* with the imperatives of national memory, which retains its homogeneity.

This paper was interested in the *structural* and *strategic* nature of the Baltic states' calendrical-history. While the presented analysis relaxed the de-contextual assumption of Zerubavel's approach, it retained its synchronic focus for the most part. Thus, asynchronous comparative work is required to shed further light on the Baltic calendars, taking into account their evolution, restoration, and the impact of domestic as well as international forces upon these processes. The focus on the shapes and patterns of national memory equally resulted in an aggregate treatment of comparative dynamics as well as silences within national timelines. While it provides us with a structural overview, further engagement with silences is warranted to develop a deeper understanding of these periods in the Baltic states. The presented structural skeleton of national memories could provide a guiding framework for further and closer explorations of both what is said and what is cast into irrelevance.

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Notes

1. The title of this paper alludes to Eviatar Zerubavel's (2003) chapter, 'Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory'.
2. If religious holidays were to be included in the scope of this article, a similar 'bipolar' structure noted by Zerubavel (2003: 326-327) consisting of a 'distant' religious past and politically significant anchors of the recent centuries could be expected.

3. The translations of Latvian and Lithuanian calendars were done by the author. The author, however, is fluent in Latvian, but not in Lithuanian or Estonian. In turn, the scope of the material is in part reflective of the author's linguistic abilities.

4. Other examples include: 22 September (Lithuania; Latvia); 14 June (Lithuania; Latvia; Estonia); 8 May (Lithuania; Latvia; Estonia); 22-23 June (Latvia; Estonia) and 13/20 January (Lithuania; Latvia, respectively).

5. (International) Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Second World War is not legally stipulated in Estonia, but is observed on 8 May (see Pettai and Pettai, 2015: 235). The 8/9 May tension, more prominently so in Latvia and Estonia, equally reflects the multiplicity of mnemonic communities within the countries (for example, Latvian and Russian-speaking; see, e.g. Ločmele et al, 2011; Kaprāns and Saulītis, 2017: 50-56).

6. In Lithuania, the centenary commemoration spans four years from 2017 to 2020 (see <http://www.lietuva.lt/100/en/>, accessed 5 July 2017). In a similar spirit, the Latvian centenary programme is planned to span five years (2017-2021) (see <http://lv100.lv/en/programme/>, accessed 5 July 2017). In Estonia, the celebration programme will span four years (2017-2020) (see <https://www.ev100.ee/en/commemorative-events>, accessed 5 July 2017). At this point, it

is worth noting the close resemblance of commemorative anchors within centenary programmes and the calendars.

7. The period finds an indirect representation through the limited reinstatement of the 'authoritarian period' instituted calendrical days, prominently 'Victory Day' in Estonia (see Brüggemann, 2015).

8. (International) Holocaust Remembrance Day is not legally stipulated in Estonia, but since 2003 it has been marked on 27 January (see Tamm, 2013: 665).

9. In terms of calendars, the question, however, would be that of finding a meaningful commemorative-anniversary anchor for the mid-term Soviet period. After all, arguably, even the Soviet regime had difficulties in finding such anchors. On Soviet calendars in the Baltics, see e.g. Zelče, 2004; Kreegipuu, 2011; Senvaitytė, 2015.

Appendices

(a)

Day of Baltic Unity	•	22 September 1236
Statehood Day (Lithuanian King Mindaugas Coronation Day) ^H	•	6 July 1253
The Day of the Battle of Durbe	•	13 July 1260
The Day of the Battle of Grunwald (Žalgiris)	•	15 July 1410
Coronation of Vytautas and Thanksgiving for Lithuanian Independence and Defence of Freedom Day	•	8 September 1430
1791, First Written Constitution in Europe Day	•	3 May 1791
1791, Two nations (Lithuania and Poland) Mutual Vow Proclamation Day	•	20 October 1791
Press Restoration, Language and Book Day	•	7 May 1904
Restoration of Lithuanian State Day ^H	•	16 February 1918
Lithuanian Armed Forces Day	•	23 November 1918
Lithuania Minor Accession to the Lithuania Proper Act Day	•	30 November 1918
Lithuanian Flag Day	•	1 January 1919
The Constituent Assembly Day	•	15 May 1920
The Day of Klaipeda Region	•	15 January 1923

(b)

European Remembrance Day for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism and Baltic Way Day	23 August 1939
Day of Occupation and Genocide	15 June 1940
Day of Mourning and Hope	14 June 1941
June Uprising Day	23 June 1941
Remembrance Day of Lithuanian Jewish Genocide	23 September 1943
Lithuania Minor Residents Genocide Day	1944-1947
Tuskulenai Victims Remembrance Day	1944/5-1947
Second World War Victims Remembrance Day	8 May 1945
Partisans, the Army and Public Unity Day	1940-1950's
Europe Day	9 May 1950
Civil Resistance Day	14 May 1972
Reform (Sąjūdis) Movement Day	3 June 1988
Baltic Way Day	23 August 1989
Restoration of Lithuanian Independence Day ^H	11 March 1990
Defenders of Freedom Day	13 January 1991
Constitution Day	25 October 1992
Freedom Day	31 August 1993
Lithuanian Accession to NATO Day	29 March 2004
Lithuanian Accession to the European Union Day	1 May 2004

Appendix A: Lithuanian commemogram (Source: compiled by the author, based primarily on E-tar.lt, 2016)

(a)

Day of Baltic Unity	●	22 September 1236
Latvian Republic Proclamation of Independence Day ^H	●	18 November 1918
Heroes' Remembrance Day (Battle of Cēsis Remembrance Day)	●	22 June 1919
Border Guard Day	●	7 November 1919
Lāčplēšis Day	●	11 November 1919
Day of the First Meeting of Latvian Coconstitutional Assembly ^H	●	1 May 1920
Latvian Freedom Fighters Day	●	11 August 1920
International (<i>de jure</i>) Recognition of Latvian Republic	●	26 January 1921
Remembrance Day for Victims of Genocide Directed Against Latvian People by the Totalitarian Communist Regime	●	1937-1938
Remembrance Day for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism	●	23 August 1939
Latvian Republic Occupation Day	●	17 June 1940
Remembrance Day for Victims of Communist Genocide	●	14 June 1941

(b)

Remembrance Day for Victims of Jewish Genocide	•	4 July 1941
Defeat of Nazism and Second World War Victims Remembrance Day	•	8 May 1945
Remembrance Day for Victims of Communist Genocide	•	25 March 1949
Europe Day	•	9 May 1950
Restoration of Independence Day ^H	•	4 May 1990
1991 Barricade Defenders Remembrance Day	•	20 January 1991
The Date of Passing the Constitutional Law 'On the Statehood of Latvian Republic'	•	21 August 1991

Appendix B: Latvian commemogram (Source: compiled by the author, based primarily on likumi.lv, 2015).

Native Language Day	•	14 March 1801
National Flag Day	•	4 June 1884
Independence Day; Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia ^H	•	24 February 1918
Victory Day ^H	•	23 June 1919
Day of Commemoration of the Estonian War of Independence Fighters	•	3 January 1920
Anniversary of Tartu Peace Treaty	•	2 February 1920
European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism (Communism) and Nazism	•	23 August 1939
Day of Mourning and Commemoration	•	14 June 1941
Resistance Fighting Day	•	22 September 1944
Europe Day	•	9 May 1950
Day of Declaration of Sovereignty	•	16 November 1988
Day of Restoration of Independence ^H	•	20 August 1991

Appendix C: Estonian commemogram (Source: compiled by the author, based primarily on Eesti.ee, 2017).

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