

Report on the outcomes of a Short-Term Scientific Mission¹

Action number: CA20105

Grantee name: Vjieran Pavlaković

Details of the STSM

Title: Post-conflict, post-industrial, and post-socialist remembrance: Slow memory in Croatia and Poland
Start and end date: 25/10/2022 to 31/10/2022

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

Description of the activities carried out during the STSM. Any deviations from the initial working plan shall also be described in this section.

(max. 500 words)

I attended the Genealogies of Memory: History and Memory in International Relations Conference held at the University of Warsaw Library, organized by ENRS. I presented my paper “The Muralization of War Memories: Bilateral Relations and Memory Politics in the Yugoslav Successor States”, parts of which were a result of the COST Action meeting in Portland, where I had a chance to receive feedback on some ideas. The paper presentation was well-received and I received many questions to continue this research path. I also introduced Slow Memory to the participants and recruited a potential MC member for Georgia. Several of the other papers presented useful concepts that can be useful for our Action – ethics of commemoration, suppressed memories, and dark/remembrance tourism.

The second activity was discussing intersections of WG1 (Labor) and WG4 (Conflict), especially through a comparative approach of case studies between Poland and Croatia (and the ex-Yugoslav countries more broadly). Joanna Wawrzyniak (WG1), my host, and I had a fruitful exchange regarding how the post-industrial, post-socialist, and even the post-conflict memories in these two countries are remembered, commemorated, mediated, and represented in various media, from monuments and murals to museums and tours. We also discussed models for the most effective kind of conference (Joanna was one of the academic advisors of the Genealogies of Memory conference) and planned for the April leadership meeting on Cres.

¹ This report is submitted by the grantee to the Action MC for approval and for claiming payment of the awarded grant. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation of this report on behalf of the Action MC and instructs the GH for payment of the Grant.

The final activity was the fieldwork in Krakow, which consisted of three parts. The first part was a visit to the AK (Home Army) Museum, which represented a suppressed memory during the communist period, but is now part of active memory (similar to repressed memories of the Bleiburg massacres in Croatia). The museum presented the narrative of the AK in a very traditional manner, but in great detail, in contrast to Croatia where this memory remains in the realm of commemorative politics, monuments, and right-wing publications, but no official museums. The second part was locating “historical murals”, which were primarily associated with the Jewish heritage of Krakow (in the Kazimierz district). There were similarities to murals in Arizona, but very different than official murals to the Warsaw Uprising around Warsaw or dedicated to the Homeland War in Croatia. A smaller number of murals were recorded in Warsaw during this trip, adding to previous material gathered in Poland. The final part was the tour of Nowa Huta, symbolizing both the memory of communism as well as resistance, labor, and the industrial heritage. The tour guide, born a decade after communism, was incredibly knowledgeable about everyday life in Nowa Huta, and the administration of the steelworks. Earlier in the day he had given a tour to 50 miners from Silesia, who had organized their own trip to Nowa Huta to learn about the past. There was quite the dichotomy in what we saw, between resistance to the communist regime as a godless, Russian-imposed system, and the support/pride of the modernization project of the steelworks - worker identity, industrialization, the creation of a workers’ city in contrast to bourgeois Krakow, and the transformation of Poland from an agricultural to an urban state. This memory tourism differs from Croatia, for example, where narratives of the war dominate the memoryscape and there is little memorialization of the collapse of the economic system with its worker privileges, etc.

Description of the STSM main achievements and planned follow-up activities

Description and assessment of whether the STSM achieved its planned goals and expected outcomes, including specific contribution to Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the STSM. Agreed plans for future follow-up collaborations shall also be described in this section.

(max. 500 words)

The STSM visit was quite successful and will contribute to future deliverables for the Slow Memory COST Action, improve communication and coordination across WGs, strengthen preparation for leadership events, and expand the number of countries participating in the Action.

- Presentation of Slow Memory research at the Genealogies of Memory: History and Memory in International Relations Conference
- Introducing COST Action Slow Memory to conference participants, recruitment of potential MC member for Georgia
- Coordination of core leadership members (Joanna Wawrzyniak, Vjeran Pavlaković)
- Planning for April meeting in Cres, Croatia
- Discussion of Slow Memory concepts across WGs (WG1 – Labor and WG4 – Conflict)
- Comparative research of Slow Memory concepts (post-industrial, post-socialist, post-conflict) in Croatia and Poland
- Fieldwork on conflict/suppressed memories (AK Museum in Krakow)
- Fieldwork on murals in Warsaw and Krakow
- Fieldwork on remembrance tourism at Nowa Huta (post-socialist and post-industrial narratives)
- Future deliverable – working paper on comparative Slow Memory case studies in Croatia and Poland