

Remembering the anti-Soviet partisan war in Lithuania, 1944–1953: The effects of heroization at different levels of remembrance

Memory Studies

1–16

© The Author(s) 2023



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/17506980231184577

journals.sagepub.com/home/mss**Liucija Vervečkienė** 

Vilnius University, Lithuania

Abstract

The collective-level heroisation of the armed resistance (1944–1953) against the Soviet occupation in Lithuania faces various challenges, which initially address the threat posed by foreign propaganda or the legacy of Soviet period narratives. However, in this article, I argue that the difficulties in constructing a hero-freedom fighter from the partisan past lie in the exaltation of the ‘right’ type of behaviour at the ‘wrong’ time of occupation. As collective (political)-level memory portrays heroic resistance, the ‘memory consumers’ within families of different generational experiences mediate meanings and react to them with certain strategies. This reveals rather painful aspects of remembering collaboration and being on the ‘wrong side’, although the heroic image of the partisan aims to foster pride in the conflictual past. The Lithuanian case illustrates more general challenges in the intersection of individual, communicative and structural (political) memory in a country that experienced transformational regime change and commemorates the difficult past.

Keywords

armed resistance, communicative memory, family, generation, heroisation

A country having experienced turbulent changes, such as post-Soviet transformations, deals with the questions of how to remember the previous regime. Remembering the post-war partisan war (1944–1953) is no longer only about victimhood under the occupying regimes of the twentieth century, despite the encompassing victim-based narrative in countries such as Lithuania (Nikžentaitis and Štutiniene, 2011; Assmann, 2020: 222). It tends to be ever more about active and heroic resistance against the occupier that took place in the immediate post-war period and was gradually suppressed by the Soviet regime. However, the structural level attempts to raise pride in heroic partisans – the resistance fighters of the post-war period – meets challenges that in various public debates are immediately related to two factors. Partisan memory as the target of Russian propaganda and bits of narratives from the Soviet period are officially perceived as the key

Corresponding author:

Liucija Vervečkienė, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, 10 Vokiecių St., Vilnius LT-01130, Lithuania.

Email: lmazylyte@yahoo.com

challenges for the symbolic image of a freedom fighter. Public attempts to contradict the heroic narrative are attributed to foreign propaganda and information wars (Vaišnys et al., 2017: 60). It reflects the processes of 'securitising' the collective memory in the region (Budryte et al., 2020) and more recently the increased 'sovereign uncertainty' after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 (Klumbytė, 2019). The terms 'bandit' or 'criminality', which are antonyms of the heroic partisan, are directly addressed to the legacy of the Soviet period narratives that circulated until 1990 (Budryte, 2016; Jurkutė, 2016; Klumbys, 2020). From the theoretical point of view, commemorating armed resistance against one of the twentieth century's repressive regimes outlines the intersection of individual, social (communicative) and collective memory (Assmann, 2012). Furthermore, at the conceptual level, it also touches upon the question of what the partisan is and unavoidably refers to the seminal Schmittian (1963) theory and current discussions on its limits (see Kirn, 2019).

The current policies honouring post-war partisans as freedom fighters who symbolise the nation's struggle for independence touch upon more general issues of the 'right' behaviour at the 'wrong' time. It represents a puzzle because the post-war period is part of the active communicative memory (Assmann, 1995) within families. The specific generational leaning in Lithuanian society means that the oldest family members might recall the difficult post-war period whereas their grandchildren represent the post-Soviet generation. They were educated with a strong emphasis on the Soviet period as repressive. Finally, the parents' generation represents those who were born and came of age in the Soviet period and had to adapt to the transformation process after the collapse of the Soviet regime, including the major shifts in how to remember the previous regime. Thus, the 'memory consumers' (Kansteiner, 2002) provide grounds for a more general discussion on what it means to construct the heroic narrative of the heroic partisan struggle when the oldest generations of a family might still have autobiographical memories of the given period. At the individual level, it indirectly encourages re-examination of one's own or a family member's role in the period of this 'difficult past'.

A number of studies investigate the memory of 'difficult pasts' in groups such as families from the sociological (Halbwachs, 1992; Rosenthal, 2002; Zerubavel, 1996), psychological (Cordonnier et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2014; Welzer, 2010) and communication (Keightly and Pickering, 2012) perspectives. The way the younger generations deal with their family experiences during the socialist past is gaining increased scholarly attention (Haag 2020; Nugin, 2021; Vuckovic Juros 2018). In this article, applying induction-based interpretive analysis, I focus on the challenges the official heroic armed resistance narrative meets from the memory consumers' (Kansteiner, 2002) side. The way different family generations react and adjust to the meanings given to conflictual periods in the past provide insights into how both levels of memory – structural (political) and communicative – interact in a post-Soviet society. I argue that the heroic narrative insists on the examination of the role one's own family took during the difficult period of the past. This examination requires certain mnemonic strategies, especially when collaboration casts a shadow on the symbolic image of the heroic freedom fighter. Ieva Zake (2017) notes that, in the Baltics, the question of collaboration with the communist regime confronts at least two complex issues: first, the victimhood and resistance perception: the communist past was imposed, widely resisted and never fully accepted by the public; second, collaboration questions address the collectively neglected involvement in the Holocaust during the Nazi occupation (Assmann, 2016; Davoliūtė, 2021; Krawatzek, 2022; Subotić, 2019).

The empirical data derive from my research (2018-2020) on the formation of the post-Soviet generation memory in Lithuania. This combines biographical methods (Kleining, 1999; Rosenthal, 2004) – life history narration and re-narration (Welzer, 2010) – and semi-structured interviews (16 families, 46 narratives in total). The analysis illustrates the difficulties of constructing a hero from

a partisan fighter in a country after post-Soviet transformations. This article is situated within the interdisciplinary scope of research on remembering resistance, as well as on collaboration under one of the twentieth century's repressive regimes in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (Ciobanu, 2021; Kirn, 2020; Dureinovic, 2020; Pušnik, 2019; Zake, 2017).

The object of remembrance and the construction of the heroic partisan past

A brief overview of the historical events provides a deeper understanding of the historical and political context in which remembering happens. The Lithuanian partisan war is currently gaining more attention from historians: new studies provide an in-depth analysis of its aims, trajectories and structure (Streikus, 2022) or present the Lithuanian case within the broader context of post-war resistance to communist rule (Gehler and Schriffl, 2020). This article only briefly outlines the historical context of the partisan struggle in Lithuania for it deals with the broader question of the current intersection of different memory levels in the state after transformative regime change.

Armed resistance started in 1944 during the second Soviet occupation of Lithuania and covered three periods: 1944–1946, 1946–1948 and 1949–1953. According to the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, the institution responsible for investigating Soviet crimes, about 50,000 people participated in the active struggle whereas about 100,000 provided support and were members of underground organisations. The principal motive of the partisans was restoring the independent Lithuanian state; some joined to avoid conscription in the Soviet army or deportation. Soviet-occupied Lithuania was divided into nine districts, each led by a partisan military leader (the most famous were Žemaitis-Vytautas, Ramanauskas-Vanagas, Vitkus-Kazimieraitis and Lukša-Daumantas) who upheld a strict code of conduct. Partisans organised attacks against the NKVD (abbreviation for People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), or regular Soviet forces and took over small towns or government buildings; some of the members were sent for training to Germany (Gailius, 2006). Their 'punitive actions' against suspected collaborators or supporters of Soviet rule remain a controversial issue (Pocius, 2009). On 16 February 1949, partisan leaders issued a joint declaration stating that the re-establishment of the independent state of Lithuania was their goal. Throughout all three periods, the Soviet authorities took various means to suppress the movement: repression of the supporters' families, agent infiltration, torture, activities of the so-called *stribai* (from the Russian *istrebiteli* – special forces to destroy the partisans), various means of intimidation such as the display of partisan corpses in public places (Gailius, 2006; Jurkutė, 2016). The forced collectivisation of agriculture and the mass deportations of 1949 resulted in ever-decreasing support from the local people (Budryte, 2016) and led to the final suppression of armed resistance in 1953. In 1990, the re-established state identified and honoured the victims of the repressions, including armed resistance fighters and their supporters. The traumatic effects of Soviet repression were acknowledged and families were able to freely communicate and also develop pride in their predecessors' past (Bieliauskaitė et al., 2015).

The gradual construction of the heroic narrative of resisting the various occupiers throughout history provides a symbolic unifying background for the collectivity after the turbulent transformation processes from the communist past to a democratic regime. The partisan-hero in military uniform, as a contributor to re-established independence more than 40 years later, embodies the general idea of the national struggle for freedom, representing what Aleida Assmann (2016: 56) refers to as the heroic perception of the victim: martyrdom and sacrifice for the good of the succeeding generations. However, the symbolism of partisan activities went through a gradual shift from martyrdom in the 1990s (Petrauskienė, 2017) to a more struggle-oriented non-compliance

with the occupying regime in the first decades of the 2000s. Lithuanians did not include partisan leaders in the ‘pantheon of heroes’ in 1991–2007 (Štutinienė, 2009). However, in 2010, public interest in the partisan topic increased (Jurkute, 2015).

The Parliamentary decision of 16 November 2017 dedicating the year 2018 to the partisan leader Ramanauskas-Vanagas, and the declaration of 20 November 2018 acknowledging him as the highest Lithuanian state official fighting the occupation from 1954 to 1957, marks the political will to clearly state that the partisans were the only legitimate authority. The state funeral of Ramanauskas-Vanagas in 2018 after a long search for his remains was a symbolic gesture honouring all partisans whose bodies were never found. State, or privately co-sponsored, festivals, documentaries and films, partisan songs on popular TV shows and music contests are other types of memory media (Erlil, 2011) aimed at raising public interest and pride in the partisan past.

The heroic narrative of the armed resistance fighter is not of a fixed nature or solely predominant. The novel *Žali* by the new generation author Marius Ivaškevičius (2002) represents a literary attempt to challenge the image of the heroic freedom fighter. It ‘violated the ongoing formation of historic partisan memory equilibrium’ and therefore generated a wave of resentment (Šimeliūnas, 2019). The historical study by Pocius (2009) revealed the scope of partisan methods for dealing with collaborators, including killing their families. Public accusations followed and opened up a debate on the moral and immoral ways of the partisan war. In 2017, the Lithuanian journalist Rūta Vanagaitė publicly raised concerns about the involvement of partisan leaders in the Holocaust and their relations with the Soviet security structures. The subsequent controversy resulted in the sale of Vanagaitė’s books being banned by the publisher. Finally, historians of the young generation and public figures are calling for critical thinking and education (Černiauskas, 2018) regarding the methods of the partisan war especially towards its end in 1953. However, the term ‘critical’ is in some ways an empty signifier in Laclau’s (2005) terms. It is difficult to pin down exactly what there is to be critical about: the activities of the partisans during 1944–1953? The current heroic image? These examples might seem random; however, they rather coherently represent the ‘sensitive’ parts of the heroic partisan narrative: the diverse motives of those who joined the ‘forest brothers’ (the name used by the partisans), the scope of the partisan war and its tactics as well as the general repression imposed by the regime on those directly or indirectly associated with the war.

Theoretical assumptions and empirical insights: remembrance in families

To analyse the complexity of remembering armed resistance to the Soviet occupation following WWII in Lithuania, we should keep in mind Assmann’s distinction regarding political, cultural and social, and individual memory (Assmann, 2010). Whereas the decisions to emphasise the heroic past lie within the scope of political memory, they reflect symbolic meanings (including the victimhood narrative) deeply embedded in various forms of cultural memory. The victim – the Lithuanian nation – is exposed to the other, the Soviet occupier under which the nation suffered for about 50 years. Finally, the third type, communicative memory (I prefer to use this term, which is also used by Assmann 1995) also applies to inter-generational remembrance among members of a group such as a family. The way post-war period memory is transmitted and negotiated in these specific groups needs a complex conceptual framework to address the family as both a place where members remember and a medium where communicative memory occurs (Welzer et al., 2002; Welzer 2010).

A number of studies look at the transmission of memories of atrocities during WWII, foremost the Holocaust (Hirsch, 2012; Rosenthal, 1998, 2002; Welzer et al., 2002). Hirsch (1992) proposes

the concept of *postmemory* to conceptualise the way (traumatic itself) the second generation deals with the traumatic experiences of their parents. Pickering and Keightley's term *mnemonic imagination* (2012) also applies to younger generations encountering and dealing with their traumatic family past. However, the case of remembering the post-war partisan war within families is not only about victimhood. The partisan war involved traumatic experiences for those directly affected as participants and supporters and also for those *others*, including those who (in)directly contributed to suppressing the movement. Therefore, the way the meanings of the difficult past are transmitted or negotiated in families involves other categories that exceed the official victim/perpetrator categorization. The diverse experiences during the post-war period fall under the scope of what Rothberg calls 'implicated subject' (Rothberg, 2019). The term 'implication' seems to address the diverse experiences of those who were not directly involved as active resistance fighters yet lived and witnessed the context of the struggle.

Welzer (2010) emphasises the emotional attachment, or closeness, among family members that impacts the memory processes within families with regard to both the memories of the older generations and the official narratives of the state. Some authors such as Rosenthal (1998, 2002) or Lohl (2012) also draw attention to power-based relations within families: loyalty imposed by pressure coming from the conscious or unconscious involvement of the offspring in dealing with their parents' difficult past. The latter approach rather focuses on memories in perpetrators families. However, the question of what stimulates or hinders remembering in a family is also applicable in the context of the memory of armed resistance. It mostly concerns the parents' generation. To some extent, this differentiates the second generation from what Hirsch (2012: 1) calls the generation of *postmemory* – their 'guardianship' of their parents' experiences during the post-war period resulted in silence rather than in active 'memory work' (Kuhn, 1995: 5). I prefer the term 'generation of confessions' that briefly appears in Assmann's work (2006: 164) to those whose parents were witnesses of the partisan war.

Having acknowledged the family as a specific group, application of the term 'family generation' involves both family leaning and different 'critical years' experiences. Members of a generation share the same 'location' within certain historical circumstances: a social and historical context unique to their formation as a group with common experience and discursive practices (Corsten, 1999; Mannheim, 1952; Pilcher, 1994). The experience of adolescence and early youth constitutes a certain framework that to some extent determines the way a generation perceives the social world in later years. However, members of a generation react to social structures differently, leading to the coexistence of several generational units within the same generation (Mannheim, 1952; Pilcher, 1994). This provides an incentive to talk about the 'generational effect' also mentioned by Schuman and Corning (2014) in their longitudinal studies of collective memories. Members of a certain generation have a common interpretive framework to deal with past questions due to the experiences of their 'critical years' – the period of adolescence and early adulthood, extended to some 30–35 years (Schuman and Corning, 2012, 2014). Taking this into account, I assume that differences in the memories of the partisans within Lithuanian family conversations reflect generational patterns.

The oldest generation, the grandparents or great-grandparents, is made up of those who spent their formative years of adolescence or early adulthood during the post-war period. The post-war circumstances, including the years of armed resistance (1944–1953), mark the social and political context when their personality developed, including the traumatising impact of the experiences of WWII. Although there might be discussion on the boundaries of the generations born in the second half of the twentieth century, in my research they fall within the scope of the family generation of 'parents'. Born in the Soviet period, their formative years were marked by means of ideological orientation, planned economy policies and more educational opportunities (Kraniauskienė, 2004;

Leinartė et al., 2014; Žilinskienė et al., 2016). Their behaviour and attitudes to the Soviet regime influenced their life scenarios (Žilinskienė and Ilic, 2020). During their ‘critical years’, they were exposed to the Soviet narrative of the partisans as nationalists and their movement as a ‘class struggle’ and civil conflict (Girnias, 1990: 65; Gailius, 2006). However, Jurkute (2015) questions the coherence and the actual effect of Soviet memory policies. Therefore, the depth of their actual knowledge about the armed resistance gained in their ‘critical years’ might be questioned. We may expect a difference in the narration of those born in the late 1960s or 1970s: formed shortly before and during the changes in the Soviet regime (*perestroika*) and its collapse, their life course is marked by the challenges of adaptation (Žilinskienė and Ilic, 2020). The particular focus is on the third – ‘post-Soviet’ generation – those born during or after the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1990. As Nugin (2021) notes in the case of Estonia, they are confronted by memories within families and current official narratives about the Soviet past.

Methodology and guidelines for analysing the narratives

Keeping in mind the contextual differences of both the Nazi and communist regimes and the moral categories ancestors apply to their family members’ experiences, I apply, with certain modifications, the methodological principles of narration and re-narration from the studies of Welzer Welzer and Lenz (2007) and Welzer (2007) to the case of remembering partisan activities. The data (46 narratives) was gathered in the following steps:

1. In a family gathering, the oldest members narrate their life story covering the post-war period as well. Family members were free to ask questions or comment.
2. Members of the second generation shared their Soviet-period memories and reacted to their parents’ stories. A spontaneous family discussion regarding partisans followed in F2, F7, F11, F16.
3. On a separate occasion, members of the grandchildren generation re-narrated their grandparents’ story. A semi-structured interview¹ followed.

During the family gatherings, in addition to the spoken narration itself, gestures, mimics and voice expressions are recorded to better understand non-verbal communication in the narration process. The 16 respondents from the oldest generation vary in their Soviet life trajectories (from those who held privileged positions to those who were repressed, including deportees), and also in their occupation, education levels and age (born in 1925–1946). The post-war period memories are an integral part of the life histories of the grandparents born between 1926 and the end of World War II. They are all treated as *witnesses* of the armed resistance. However, there are significant differences in their experiences: some of them, or members of their family, encountered partisan activities (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F10, F11, F12), the rest were aware of partisan activities from other sources, such as relatives in the countryside (F8, F9, F13, F16). One respondent presents herself as the daughter of a partisan signaller (F6) and another narrates her family’s initial support to the partisans, father’s killing by *stribai* and the following conflictual break with the armed resistance (F1). The parents’ generation was not specifically asked about partisans and their spontaneous involvement in the conversation provides valuable information. The 14 respondents from the parents’ generation were born between 1951 and 1970. They come from various educational backgrounds (vocational school training to university graduate) and geographic locations. The respondents from the youngest generations were born between 1983 and 2003. The majority hold a university degree or are near graduation, one has completed secondary education, and two are still in high school. The families were chosen starting with a personal network and applying the ‘snow-ball’ principle,

seeking greater variance in grandparents' life trajectories. As regards the personal data protection, the written permissions by the informants to use their narratives for research purposes were collected after the family meetings.

The interpretive analysis has two parts: looking at meanings within a single-family context and tracing generational patterns crossing the narratives of different families. When grandchildren re-narrate their grandparents' life history, I follow how they 'edit' the narratives: omitting or elaborating/developing further the meanings given to the past by the grandparents and other family members. The second part of the analysis explores meanings beyond the single-family context: it refers to what Kleining (1999) calls 'looking for similarities in differing narratives'. I see the remembering process within families and their narratives as a construct of the present (Assmann, 2010; Welzer, 2010). Generalisations are made with regard to the limits of qualitative analysis and self-reflection about the interpretation.

Generational and family meanings of the armed resistance

Grandparents: discussing and neglecting

The following aspects of the partisan past structure the grandparents' narratives. The quotes illustrate a more general pattern found in the stories. The elderly who were directly affected by partisan activities employ the strategy of periodisation. There is a reported difference between the organised and supervised actions of the partisans when they 'went to the forest', and those 'at the end'. The two stages named by the oldest generation refer to the three periods of armed resistance in historiography (Gailius, 2006). The discussants remain in a 'safe' position: they justify the negative actions of the partisans in the second period and remain 'objective' about the first period:

There were different people who went to the forests – there were people we knew, there were patriots, a teacher from our region, there were patriots. And then there were bandits, robbers. And yes, those partisans – they were called bandits (G14, 81, Varėna mncp).

The periodisation revealed in the narratives is related to two groups of partisans: the 'good' and the 'bad'. There is no precise time indication as to when partisan activities turned towards criminality. The oldest informants indicate a more general type of harm caused by the partisans: danger for the *local people*. This term *harm* may encompass the threat of Soviet repression of local people for non-compliance and support for the partisans. On the other hand, it refers to actions by the partisans that threatened locals for non-compliance and reveals how the locals were caught between the two sides. The narrators employ the terms *scary* and *bad times*:

It was very scary. Those were bad times when I was growing up. The days and nights were not calm (G7,93, Elektrėnai mncp).

Recollections of killing and execution have a tragic tone: they are narrated either through general reference to 'inhuman behaviour' or through a more detailed description of the injustice towards those who did not comply. In the case of killing suspected collaborators or innocent people, structural-level meanings come into play. Grandparents question the humanity of 'those partisans'. However, subjective periodisation prevents feeling completely distanced from the heroic narrative:

This was another generation of partisans, not that of soldiers led by Ramanauskas, but of those from the countryside. Those girls remember the local men who killed their parents (G15, 84, m. Lazdijai mncp).

In grandparents' narratives, the motifs of *sacrifice* and *hiding* present two lines of reasoning. *Pointless sacrifice* is a broader term that appears in the narratives and involves compassion for the partisans and people around them. The image of *pointlessness* also represents blame for the suffering of the locals:

And then, later, after the war there were those partisans. Young man, God. They had a radio – ‘hold on, Lithuanians, we are coming’ (allusion to the Western allies) And nobody ever came . . . They deported innocent people who gave the partisans food (G11, 85, Kaunas).

The geographical (spatial) area of partisan activities in the narratives of the oldest is somewhere between the home and the forest, between here and there. Entering people's homes, a figure found in most of the narratives of the grandparents' generation, symbolises unwanted intrusion. The image of home, the family house, is of a tragic nature. A safe place (already shattered by the traumatic experiences of war) becomes itself a frontline. In less tragic memories, the family home is seen as a place of passage for those who were going into the forest and the others who were pursuing them. A variety of emotions arise when grandparents narrate intrusions, including the incoherence of the narration (F1, F6, F11), pauses and caution (F3, F5, F12, F14), sorrow (F1) and anger (F2, F11):

Partisans . . . come in the night and tap on the window. Give them food, clothes, shoes. My dad had shoes and used to hide them (G2, 91, Ignalina mncp).

The narrative of an F1 grandmother illustrates a rather distinct case. An incoherent narrative suggests the family became suspects of both the Soviet regime and the partisans. This complicates the attachment to *any* meaning of armed resistance:

He broke our window and ran when I saw that our yard was full of Russians. My uncle was shot and my dad was crying . . . Later, me and mum, we saw a man lying in the field. We approached and recognized my father . . . Later one of them [a partisan] accused my mother of reporting to the NKVD, she denied it . . . I was allowed to work as a teacher but threatened by the NKVD to never talk about the past of my family (G1, 88 m., Elektrėnai mncp).

The category 'us' is either a smaller group (the family or the village) or a broader 'us' (people from the countryside or local people in general). Partisans do not fall within the scope of 'us', even in generally positive attitudes.

There was this village Karkučiai, they were from there (S7, 93 m. Elektrėnai mncp).

The geographical and emotional distance from the partisans reflect other experiences of this generation in their 'critical years' (Mannheim, 1952): the need to be not associated with the partisans to avoid persecutions in their later life trajectories.

The occupiers are also there, referred to as the 'Russians', the 'Soviets' or the 'NKVD'. The very specific group of *stribai* appear in the narratives referring to those who were pursuing the partisans and confronting local people as well. The meanings given to all those groups mix and overlap: there were people they knew on both the partisan side and among local supporters of the *stribai*. Clear identification would lead to uncomfortable accusations on the one hand, and self-questioning about where one's family stood, on the other.

If some people the oldest narrators knew (or were even close to) were possibly associated with ‘the occupier’ or ‘the Russians’, the relationship to the heroic freedom fighter becomes more complicated. Although collaboration as such is a term found in the youth narratives, its roots go back to the oldest generation’s stories where much remains silent. The uncomfortable or even painful aspect of collaboration unavoidably evolves in the grandparents’ narratives:

There was a different opinion about this in the towns and in the countryside. We saw people who we knew killed, so we think about this differently . . . In the cities they saw ‘patriotism’, we saw reality (G12 90 m., Šiauliai mncp).

The official heroic narrative leaves little room for the role of ‘others’. The grey zone between directly supporting the partisans and reporting or denouncing them is incorporated into the general meaning of ‘difficult times’ and not knowing *how* to remember. Not knowing *how* might be attributed to the traumatising re-living of the past: it is still hard to recall the events after suppressing them for decades during the soviet period. So does the limited nature of the term *victim* in the official armed resistance narrative: the clear-cut image encompasses only those who actively resisted and leaves all the other potentially traumatic experiences of local people outside the picture of the heroic fight.

Grandchildren: re-narrating the story, questioning the meaning

Re-narrating their grandparents’ stories, grandchildren refer to the structural level, discuss its meanings and make their own judgements. They identify with the independent state and refer to the knowledge gained in the education system of a democratic regime. Within re-narrations of their grandparents’ stories, they ‘check’ the structural-level meanings against the grandparents’ testimonies in particular ways.

Grandchildren do not ‘edit’ their grandparents’ stories about partisan threats or taking food or other goods from local people. They do not question the accuracy of their grandparents’ narrations: it is the testimony of a witness. The trust placed in a witness of the past, including in close relatives, is reflected in Rosenzweig and Thelen’s (1998) study. However, the re-narrations suggest that witnesses might be wrong in addressing further *meaning* to partisan war. This is where the structural level (official memory) intervenes with its power of recall. As in this case, re-narrators add some details, such as a grandmother’s understanding of the necessity of the partisan’s actions:

My grandma, for instance – they came and took things from the farm. And I can’t say she was angry at them, she understood, it was necessary. But many people don’t think so (A5,27, Vilnius).

Joining the partisans is seen as a personal choice for various reasons, including ideational motivation or hiding from conscription. This *personalisation* could reflect the accessibility of archival data, the digitalised personal testimonies of partisans, the publication of their memoirs, as well as increasing publicity on previously marginalised topics, such as male–female relationships in the movement (Kripienė, 2020) or the role of female partisans (Ēmužis, 2020).

The geographical distance from the partisans found in their grandparents’ stories gains additional meaning in the youth narratives. They visualise maps of partisan activities, indicating districts and their leaders. This ‘external’ knowledge contributes to ‘objective’ navigation between the structural level meanings and their grandparents’ memories:

They acted differently in different parts of the country. I know that in Kupiškis district they were less organized, had a weaker and less strict structure and therefore those negative aspects evolved (A12, 28, Šiauliai mnpc).

I can understand that when you are in the forest, you get hungry. I imagine, if you are suffering, hiding in the forest, being active – not in the late period – then you can also get angry (A17,26, Vilnius).

The image of the suffering of local people represents the collision between the partisans, their supporters and ‘the other’. The extension of the meaning of the *victim* found in grandchildren narratives allows for inclusion of a variety of experiences of *the locals*. Many people have suffered, including those who simply wanted to survive the difficult period:

I understand when there is a military conflict . . . there is always this negative atmosphere, those negative outcomes . . . I think that nobody focused much on them [partisans] during that time, people wanted to survive and kept their attitudes silent (A2, 35 m., Vilnius).

The difficult position of the locals tends to be disconnected from the source of the aggression, which could be either the occupation forces or the partisans. To some extent, it reflects what Welzer and Lenz call ‘universalisation’ – seeing the episodes of the past in the broader terms of human rights, violence and war (Welzer and Lenz, 2007: 32). Understanding as a ‘strategy’ helps to overcome the collision between the meanings of family and the collective level. When it comes to their grandparents’ stories about bloody attacks against those who did not obey the partisans, or those who were suspected of helping the occupier in other ways, the uncomfortable tone persists. Grandchildren look for factual evidence to prove that their grandparents remember correctly. They also scrutinise the morality of the means of fighting the occupier:

And I really believe that the partisans could have robbed or killed. It is partially understandable that if someone from a family gets involved, collaborates with the Soviets, revenge follows. Of course, sometimes the revenge is inadequate (A12, 28 m., Šiauliai mnpc).

One of my great-grandma’s brothers was asked to go to the forest. He refused and they shot his dog as a first warning. Then he himself was shot. This was narrated widely in the family and formed my negative attitude to the partisans. My history teacher’s view wasn’t one-sided either. My attitude changed later (A11, 33 m., Vilnius).

This and other examples represent an uneasy acceptance of the heroic fighter killing someone other than the occupier. In general, the third family generation supports the fight for independence when they refer to fighting ‘for ideals’. On the other hand, deaths or suffering among the locals in the context of armed resistance create some caution in their narratives. The structural level memory points to the occupying forces as ‘the other’. The either/or tendency of the heroic narrative is non-inclusive: those who might have been against the partisans indirectly fall under the category of *the occupier*. The shadow of collaboration enters the narratives of the grandchildren’s generation: what if their family members were among those who supported the wrong side? This draws a parallel with Welzer’s findings (2002, 2010) of transmission in German families – the structural level narratives about what was the right behaviour in Nazi times makes the ancestors of the victims construct a picture of the ‘good grandparent’. However, in the Lithuanian case, they do not ‘invent’ the correct behaviour for a grandparent in the post-war period. Rather, they seek to understand and justify the negative memories. They remain rather silent on the actual attitude of their grandparents, often referring to ‘people’ instead:

In the personal stories one can find things where people were hurt. And I fully understand that there could be people who feel offended (A2, 35 m., Vilnius).

Many people are angry [at the partisans] and they have a right to be angry (A5, 27 m., Vilnius).

Regarding emotional closeness (Welzer, 2010) or strong hierarchy/hidden power-based relationships (Lohl, 2012; Rosenthal, 2002), the general tone of the conversations represented a safe and open arena for constructing different meanings for the conflictual past. However, certain moments of recalling the generation of the great-grandparents (especially the male line) raised images of extreme strictness as well as reticence. On the one hand, the traumatic experiences of the war had an impact on the way family members communicated or kept silence about the atrocities committed during WWII and the post-war period (Gailienė, 2008). On the other hand, it may question the extent to which families whose traumatic experiences do not fall under the scope of *victims of repressions* discuss their past. In the case of F1 and F7, the grandchildren told of the silence, distance and strictness of the great-grandparents. Their role in implementing collectivisation and later positions in the regional governing system are briefly mentioned by the grandparents. Grandchildren either ignore (A1, 35, Elektrėnai mncp.) or mention their great-grandparents' work as 'some kind of public service' (A7, 28, Vilnius).

The youngest tends to avoid traces of possible collaboration in their family history, especially concerning the difficult post-war period. To some extent, this reflects aggregate-level findings in current studies: the collaboration of societies under repressive regimes in the twentieth century remains ignored or neglected (Krawatzek, 2022). It is 'safe' to mention the support for the occupiers only in case it was temporal. In the case of F11, a granddaughter reveals her great-grandfather's initial support for the communists and the fundamental later switch:

So, my great-grandpa, he supported the communists. But when the soldiers destroyed his beehives, then his attitude changed drastically (A11, 33 m., Vilnius).

Parents: transmitting silence or ignorance

While constructing their narrative of the partisan past, the parents' generation refers to 'secrecy' and the distinction between what was told in 'public' and at 'home'. Regarding family composition, they are somewhere in-between the two generations that had direct experience or extensively learned about the period of the difficult past: their parents who were witnesses and their own children with their knowledge formed in the re-established Lithuanian state. Some differences apply in the meaning-making of the post-war past between those parents born in the 1950s and early 1960s and those born later in the 1960s or 1970s. The former involve themselves in the conversation and discuss the 'silence' in various ways, whereas the latter are less interested and more distant from the topic.

The meaning of *secrecy* navigates among different narratives from their childhood-adolescence and what is recalled in the present. Furthermore, parents in the family conversations neither strongly attach to nor directly neglect any of them. They accept the 'good' and 'bad' meanings attributed to the partisans by their grandparents and claim limited knowledge of 'who was who'. This neutrality is twofold. First, they were actually close to the area where the partisans operated and knew local people:

And about the partisans they didn't talk much either. I knew there were those from the forest, but I couldn't get which ones were good which ones were bad (P11 59 m., Kaunas).

Second, the unwillingness to express a more elaborate view – being in a neutral position – does not interfere with the structural-level meanings of the Soviet past. This indirectly refers to Connerton's (2008) rationale that forgetting is constitutive of the new identity of today. The current heroic image points to parents' knowledge formed during the wrong time about a bad regime. Therefore, it is better to assert limited knowledge in their youth:

We knew nothing, nothing from family or school (P15, 61, Lazdijai mnep.).

This quote also to some extent challenges the impact that the Soviet regime's narrative against the armed resistance had on the youth or on society as a whole. Jurkute (2015) states that partisan memory during the Soviet period should not be explained solely by the official policies regarding memory. It may represent the general nature of the aftermath of the partisan war: the difficulties of narrating the war within the closer circle of the family, especially the negative actions of the partisans. Not knowing 'who was who' refers to the fuzzy boundaries between the roles of fighter/perpetrator/witness/betrayer within the stories of family members.

The transmission of the memory of the partisan past across three family generations does not result in a united family 'script' (Thompson, 2017: 34) – a coherent set of meanings – that witnesses transfer and later generations employ. However, there are some important intersections: they rather agree on the traumatic experiences of all people involved in the partisan struggle, including the *locals*. The generational patterns apply, regarding both what their members recall and how they construct their relationship to the heroic narrative. However, in families such as F3 different generations emphasise the importance of patriotism, the underlying motif of non-conformity resulting in a more coherent family line:

. . . somehow, I had an impression that sympathies were on the partisans' side, not on the authorities' side . . . I spent three summers in Kupiškis district and my cousin in secret showed me a small bunker (G3, 82 m. Vilnius).

Even in this Soviet period, as children, we knew that Lithuania was occupied (P3, 48 m., Vilnius).

I can't imagine how brave they [the partisans] were to confront authorities that kill. Some people were not active and they were deported. And the partisans were actively opposing the authorities (A3, 20, Vilnius).

The other, to some extent extreme, case (F1) is when narration and re-narration present armed resistance as a family tragedy, resulting in a high level of resentment in the third generation: 'they are bandits, not heroes for me' (A1, 35, Elektrėnai mnep.). They are somewhere in-between narratives. By indirectly identifying themselves as victims of the partisan war, they neither fall within the category of *victim of repression by the occupier* nor identify with the side of the occupier. The relationship to the hero-partisan narrative has a tragic tone.

Conclusion

A hero constructed from the partisan, or armed resistance fighter, touches the deepest layers of being on the wrong side vis-à-vis the narrative embedded at the structural/collective level when active support for the partisans is not recalled in the family remembering processes. The witnesses confront the need to reconstruct their role, or that of the family, in the shadow of collaboration, especially when bloodshed appears in the recollections at the communicative memory level. At the structural level, the traumas and losses of those who resisted the occupier are recognised and

honoured, whereas other roles, including those who might fall under the scope of ‘implicated subject’ (Rothberg, 2019) remain in a ‘grey zone’.

The heroic narrative of the heroic partisan – freedom fighter – encourages family members to build ‘strategies’ for incorporating meanings from communicative and structural/political memory levels. In the heroic narrative the ‘other side’ beyond the victim is fuzzy: the occupier is the ultimate aggressor, yet other possible roles are invisible. The young generation employs a strategy of understanding that allows them to extend the concept of the victim to the local people who suffered. However, different ‘strategies’ leave little room for a hero one can ultimately be proud of.

The either/or collision, the good partisan and the aggressive occupier, leaves no place in the heroic collective-level narrative for those who might have been close to both. They are left with an open question of what else to identify with and how else to see one’s family experience throughout the conflictual past. The way the armed resistance is narrated within families is just one piece of the more general puzzle of dealing with the Soviet past. It exceeds the need to ‘give voice to those who were silenced’ (Viritzky-Seroussi and Teeger, 2010). The memory policies of the post-Soviet period imply new ways in which ‘memory consumers’ (Kansteiner, 2002) might feel unheard. The categories of victimhood of the twentieth-century occupations and heroic resistance to the aggressors provide them with a set of meanings of the right behaviour and the need to ‘adjust’ or silence their memories.

On the other hand, rethinking the core of the hero-freedom fighter grand narrative at the structural level, it would be difficult to construct it in a more inclusive way. This is especially so in cases like that of Lithuania, where the partisan war did not result in eliminating the aggressor and the Soviet regime lasted for decades. Regarding the current security situation in the region, the need to remember the active struggle against the occupier is relevant, yet the memory consumer side needs to be taken into account.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Liucija Vervečkienė  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9572-1809>

Note

1. Some questions very specifically related to the narrated grandparents’ story and other aspects of family conversations: what interested them most, and whether the topics were previously discussed or new to them. Additional questions covered issues related to various sources for learning about the past, including history education, general discussions with relatives or friends about the past, knowledge of current films about the partisans and the Soviet past in general, visiting exhibitions about the Soviet past and participation in commemorative practices on memorial days.

References

- Assmann A (2012) Re-framing memory. Between individual and collective forms of constructing the past. In: Tilmans K, van Vree F and Winter J (eds) *Performing the Past. Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 35–51.
- Assmann A (2016) *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Assmann A (2020) *Is Time Out of Joint? On the Rise and Fall of the Modern Time Regime*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Assmann J and Czaplicka J (1995) Collective memory and cultural identity. *New German Critique* 65: 125–133.
- Bieliauskaitė R, Grigienė D, Eimontas J, et al. (2015) Nepriklausomybės porykių vertinimas: trys kartos Lietuvoje. In: Gailienė D (ed.) *Gyvenimas po lūžio. Kultūrinių traumų psichologiniai padaliniai*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Eugrimas, pp. 48–85.
- Budryte D (2016) From partisan warfare to memory battlefields: two women's stories about the second world war and its aftermath in Lithuania. *Gender & History* 28(3): 757–774.
- Budryte D, Resende E and Becker D (2020) 'Defending memory': exploring the relationship between mnemonic in/security and crisis in global politics. *Interdisciplinary Political Studies* 6(1): 5–19.
- Ciobanu M (2021) *Repressions, Resistance and Collaboration in Stalinist Romania 1944–1964*. New York: Routledge.
- Connerton P (2008) Seven types of forgetting. *Memory Studies* 1(1): 59–71.
- Cordonnier A, Bouchat P, Hirst W, et al. (2021) Intergenerational transmission of World War II family historical memories of the resistance. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 24(3): 302–314.
- Corsten M (1999) The time of generations. *Time and Society* 8(2): 252–253.
- Černiauskas N (2018) Laiškas redaktoriui: Vanaginės ir partizanų atmintis. *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai* 7. <https://nzidiny.lt/norbertas-cerniauskas-laiskas-redaktoriui-vanagines-ir-partizanu-atmintis-nza-nr-7/> (accessed 26 June 2023).
- Davoliūtė V (2021) Genealogical Writing and Memory of the Holocaust in Lithuania. *East European Jewish Affairs* 51(3): 70–85.
- Ėmužis M (2020) *Partizanė. Monika Alūzaitė – Moteris Laisvės Kovose*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Baltos lankos.
- Erl A (2011) *Memory in Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gailienė D (2008) *Ką jie mums padarė Lietuvos gyvenimas traumų psichologijos žvilgsniu*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Tyto alba.
- Gailius B (2006) *Partizanai tada ir šiandien*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Versus Aureus. <http://www.partizanai.org/bernardas-gailius-partizanai-tada-ir-siandien>
- Gehler M and Schriffl D (eds) (2020) *Violent Resistance: From the Baltics to Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 1944–1956*. Paderborn: Schöningh.
- Girnius KK (1990) *Partizanų Kovos Lietuvoje*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Mokslo leidykla. <http://www.partizanai.org/k-girnius-partizanu-kovos-lietuvoje>
- Halbwachs M (1992) *On Collective Memory*. Edited, translated, and with an Introduction by Coser LA. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hirsch M (1992) Family pictures: Maus, mourning, and post-memory. *Discourse* 15(2 Winter): 3–29.
- Hirsch M (2012) *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ivaškevičius M (2002) *Žali*. Vilnius: Tyto Alba.
- Jurkute M (2015) Soviet manipulation of the memory of the Lithuanian Guerilla War. *Polish Political Science Review* 3(1): 4–16.
- Jurkutė M (2016) *Lietuvos Partizanų Karo Atmintis: Sovietinis, Vietinis Ir Išeivijos Pasakojimai*. Doctoral dissertation, Vilnius University, Lithuania. Available at: <http://talpykla.elaba.lt/elaba-fedora/objects/elaba:18863876/datastreams/MAIN/content> (accessed 25 June 2023).
- Kansteiner W (2002) Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies. *History and Theory* 41: 179–197.
- Keightley E and Pickering M (2012) *The Mnemonic Imagination. Remembering as Creative Practise*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kim G (2019) *Partisan Ruptures: Self-management, Market Reform and the Spectre of Socialist Yugoslavia*. London: Pluto Press.
- Kim G (2020) *The Partisan Counter-archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.
- Kleining G (1999) Heuristik zur Erforschung von Biographien und Generation. In: Juettemann G and Thomae H (eds) *Biographische Methoden in den Humanwissenschaften*. Weinheim: Beltz, pp. 175–210.

- Klumbys V (2020) Laiškas redaktorei. *Naujasis židinys – Aidai*, 7. Available at: <https://nzidiny.lt/valde-maras-klumbys-laiskas-redaktorei-nz-a-nr-7/> (accessed 26 June 2023).
- Klumbytė N (2019) Sovereign uncertainty and the dangers to liberalism at the Baltic frontier. *Slavic Review* 78(2): 336–347.
- Kraniauskienė S (2004) Identiteto turinio metmenys: kartų identiteto paieška XX a. lietuvių autobiografijose. *Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas* 2: 40–52.
- Krawatzek F (2022) Remembering a contentious past: Resistance and collaboration in the former Soviet Union. *East European Politics and Societies* 36 (1): 298–327.
- Kripienė E (2020) Vyrų ir moterų santykiai Lietuvos partizanų gretose. *Genocidas ir Rezistencija* 1(47): 81–96.
- Kuhn A (1995) *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*. London and New York: Verso.
- Laclau E (2005) *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.
- Leinartė D, Žilinskienė L, Kraniauskienė S, et al. (2014) *Sovietmečio atmintis gyvenimo istorijose*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla.
- Lohl J (2012) ‘Totally average families’? Thoughts on the emotional dimension in the intergenerational transmission of the perspectives on national socialism. In: Boesen E, et al. (eds) *Peripheral Memories: Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, pp. 33–49.
- Mannheim K (1952, republished 1972) The problem of generations. In: Kecskemeti P (ed.) *Karl Mannheim: Essays*. London: Routledge, pp. 276–322.
- Nikžentaitis A and Štiniene I (2011) Baltijos kelio dvidešimtmetis: eilinis jubiliejus ar kultūrinės atminties transformacijos pradžia? *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* [Yearbook of Lithuanian History] 2010/1: 71–83.
- Nugin R (2021) Rejecting, re-shaping, rearranging: ways of negotiating the past in family narratives. *Memory Studies* 14(1): 197–213.
- Petrauskienė A (2017) *Partizaninio karo vietos: įamžinimas ir įpaveldinimas Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje*. Doctoral dissertation, Vilnius University, Lithuania.
- Pilcher J (1994) Mannheim’s sociology of generations: an undervalued legacy. *British Journal of Sociology* 45(3): 481–495.
- Pocius M (2009) *Kita mėnulio pusė: Lietuvos Partizanų Kova Su Kolaboravimu 1944–1953 m.* Vilnius, Lithuania: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla.
- Pušnik M (2019) Media memorial discourses and memory struggles in Slovenia: transforming memories of the Second World War and Yugoslavia. *Memory Studies* 12(4): 433–450.
- Rosenthal G (1998) (ed.) *The Holocaust in Three Generations: Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Rosenthal G (2002) Veiling and denying the past: the dialogue in families of Holocaust survivors and families of Nazi perpetrators. *History of the Family* 7: 225–238.
- Rosenthal G (2004) Biographical research. In: Seale C, Gobo G, Gubrium JF, et al. (eds) *Qualitative Research Practise*. London: Sage, pp. 48–64.
- Rosenzweig R and Thelen D (1998) *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 91–97.
- Rothberg M (2019) The Implicated Subject. *Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*. Stanford University Press, pp. 1–28.
- Schmitt C (1963) *The Theory of the Partisan: A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot (transl. by A. C. Goodson, Michigan State University Press, 2004).
- Schuman H and Corning A (2012) Generational memory and the critical period: evidence for national and world events. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(1): 1–31.
- Schuman H and Corning A (2014) *Generations and Collective Memory*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Šimeliūnas J (2019) Mariaus Ivaškevičiaus „Žali“ – apie pieną, meilę ir šautuvą. *Kultūros eskizai*. Šiaurės Atėnai. Available at: <http://www.satėnai.lt/2019/03/05/mariaus-ivaskeviciaus-zali-apie-piena-meile-ir-sautuva/> (accessed 26 June 2023).

- Stone CB, van der Haegen A, Lumine O, et al. (2014) Personally relevant vs. nationally relevant memories: an intergenerational examination of World War II memories across and within Belgian French-speaking families. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 3(4): 280–286.
- Streikus A (ed.) (2022) *The Unknown War: Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance in Lithuania and its Legacies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Subotić J (2019) *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Rememberance after Communism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Štutinienė I (2009) Tautos istorijos simboliai gyventojų tautinėje vaizduotėje: herojų įvaizdžiai ir jų kaita. *Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas* 1(24): 48–50.
- Thompson P (2017) Family myth, models and denials in the shaping of individual life paths. In: Bertaux D and Thompson P (eds) *Between Generations. Family Models, Myths & Memories*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Vaišnys A, Kasčiūnas L, Jastramskis M, et al (2017) *Rusijos propaganda: analizė, įvertinimas, rekomendacijos*. Research report, Rytų Europos studijų centras, Lithuania. Available at: http://www3002.vu.lt/uploads/news/id987/RESC%20monografija_propaganda.pdf (accessed 26 June 2023)
- Viritzky-Seroussi V and Teeger C (2010) Unpacking the unspoken: silence in collective memory and forgetting. *Social Forces* 88(3): 1103–1122.
- Vuckovic Juros T (2018) “Things were good during Tito’s times, my parents say”: How young Croatian generations negotiated the socially mediated frames of the recent Yugoslav past. *Memory Studies* 13(4):932–951.
- Welzer H (2002) *Das kommunikative Gedächtniss. Eine Theorie der Erinnerung*. München: Beck.
- Welzer H (2010) Re-narrations: how pasts change in conversational remembering. *Memory Studies* 3(1): 5–17.
- Welzer H and Lenz C (2007) Opa in Europa. Erste Befunde einer vergleichenden Tradierungsforschung. In: Welzer H (ed.) *Der Krieg der Erinnerung. Holocaust, Kollaboration und Widerstand im europäischen Gedächtnis*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, pp. 7–41.
- Welzer H, Moller S and Tschuggnall K (2002) “Opa war kein Nazi”. Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch.
- Zake I (2017) The exempt nation: memory of collaboration in contemporary Latvia. In: Apor P, Horvth S and Mark J (eds) *Secret Agents and the Memory of Everyday Collaboration in Communist Eastern Europe*. London: Anthem Press.
- Zerubavel E (1996) Social memories: steps to a sociology of the past. *Qualitative Sociology* 19: 283–299.
- Žilinskienė L and Ilic M (2020) Changing family values across the generations in twentieth-century Lithuania. *Contemporary Social Science: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences* 15: 316–329.
- Žilinskienė L, Kraniauskienė S and Štutinienė I (2016) *Gimę socializme: pirmoji sovietmečio karta*. Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla.

Author biography

Liucija Vervečkienė, PhD is an Assistant Professor and Researcher at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University. Her areas of interest include collective and generational memory, memory politics and methodologies of memory studies.