

## SUMMARIES OF THE PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE COMPETITION (in reverse chronological order)

### I. BOOKS

#### **A. Monograph**

1. *Памет и справедливост. Лични спомени и публични разкази за комунизма*. София: ИИБМ/Сиела 2020 [*Memory and Justice: Personal Reminiscences and Public Narratives of Communism*] ISBN: 978-954-28-3219-5

**Abstract:** The book deals with the memory of the communist past: the ‘official’ memory established by the institutions; the public memory shaped by media, commemorations, urban space, etc.; and the everyday (vernacular) memory – the memory of individuals, families and generational communities, as well as local memory as part of the local publicity in certain places. The question that I seek to answer is how the recent past is remembered and which circumstances condition this remembrance; how communism is constructed as cultural/public and biographical/vernacular memory. The question invites a constructivist perspective on memory as a set of dynamic and polemically tense cultural practices offering ways of understanding the past. Therefore, I had to consider concepts capturing the plural and processual nature of memory, such as memory sites, politics of memory, cultures of memory. They are discussed in Ch. 1.

In Part One I map out the policies of memory in the broad sense: from transitional justice to institutions of memory (archives, museums, historical commissions). I first outline the European context: transnational networks, alliances and discussions; the efforts to construct common memory and the mnemopolitical regionalization of contemporary Europe. Then I change the scale to explore the coping with the communist past at a national level, starting with legislature, through the archival revolution to memorialization and the emergence of memory cultures. Here, the approach is comparative: the Bulgarian case is in the centre but it is discussed against the backdrop of the parallel processes in the other East European countries. The comparison shows that in relation to transitional justice Bulgaria is more or less in line with the common trends. The ambivalence is more visible in the field of memory cultures: the Bulgarian state has all too soon and willingly left the politics of memory in the hands of activists and civil society organisations collaborating with local authorities. Thus the production, shaping and sustenance of the memory of the recent past has migrated from the field of politics to that of culture, turning into a kind of cultural production and risking to remain limited to this narrower and ‘elitist’ field. While this is not an anomaly, cultural (research, artistic) discourses, when they lack the support of a public and political debate, remain outside the reach of great shares of the population.

In Part Two, I switch from memory (i.e. the narratives of the past as cultural and political products) to reminiscences (i.e. narratives of one’s own life). The choice of this perspective is the result of my long-term commitment to oral history research. The hypothesis is that there is a continuous interplay between memory and memories/reminiscences: the ‘grand’ narratives, mediated by public memory, set the social frames of biographical memories. The biographical narrative is not only a testimony of the narrator’s life experiences, but also reveals their belonging to one or another culture of memory. This hypothesis determines the focus on the traumatic and the nostalgic narrative of communism as ideological metanarratives to which the witnesses refer when they tell about their lives under communism. The two metanarratives integrate specific biographical contents in their schematisms and thus contribute to the coherence of the individual life stories. The two cases singled out – of a local community (ch. 5) and of a generational one (ch. 6) – illuminate the questions about the formation, the sustenance and the dynamics of vernacular memory, which inform the study. With the passing away of the generation of direct witnesses, mnemonic communities increasingly turn into interpretative communities. The Traumatic narrative is increasingly ‘carried’ and reproduced by witnesses of the testimonies, rather than by witnesses of the events. The change of generations affects the nostalgic narrative as well, transforming it by the newly opened possibilities for ironic distancing. It can be hypothesized that the secondary, or ‘ironic’, nostalgia will be increasingly present not only in popular culture (as is the case now) but also in everyday attitudes.

## **B. Edited volumes**

2. *Възрастта при социализма: поколения в семейството и обществото.* (съст.)  
София: Рива/ЦАИ 2019. ISBN 978-954-320-682-7 [*Age(ing) Under Socialism:  
Generations in Family and Society*]

**Abstract:** This collective volume is the result of the last of a series of CAS workshops titled “Existential Politics under Socialism”. Starting from the fact that different generations have different life courses depending on societal change, the authors ask about the specificities of life course and age/ageing under the communist regime. The points of interest are primarily ideological and institutional, i.e. imposed ‘from above’, while their adaptation and renegotiation in the everyday life and individual life courses is less spelled out, and limited to retrospective thematisations of the past. The chapters of the first part explore the legal, ideological and institutional frameworks of the construction of old age and the vernacular appropriation of the ‘official’ discourses. The next group of chapters discusses the theme of age and generations in theatre, visual arts and monumental sculpture. Lastly, generations are viewed from another perspective as communities of memory. Albeit diverse in their approach and theme, the book chapters are united by a common idea: the notion of age/ageing in a social-historical and cultural perspective, i.e. the construction of young and old age in the model life course constructed by the ideology and the institutions of the communist state.

3. *Тялото при социализма. Режи́ми и репрезентации.* (съст.) София: Рива/ЦАИ 2016.  
ISBN 978-954-320-581-3 [*The Body Under Socialism: Regimes and Representations*]

**Abstract:** This collective volume is the result of an interdisciplinary CAS workshop aiming to understand how ideological scripts were adapted and renegotiated by individual actors in their everyday lives. Although they look like a biological constant, bodies are actually historical, culturally situated and mediated. Therefore it is legitimate to ask questions about the body and corporeality, and about their regimes and representations under socialism. What are the entanglements and interplays between the social and the corporeal, how does the symbolic order transpose into a somatic one? The authors in the book approach this topic through different aspects of the biopolitical imaginary: from scientific theorisations and the ensuing medical and educational practices, via legal and institutional discourses of health and reproduction, to efforts to shape consumption and bodily metaphors in the memorial landscape of the regime. They ask about the agendas that introduced the model and the regimes of socialist corporeality, about the changes of that model and those regimes over the years; about the reasons and the ways to ensure the disciplining, the normalization and the stylisations of the body. In their complementarity, the studies prove that the body does not have a political affiliation per se, therefore it can effectively carry various political and ideological messages.

4. *Любовта при социализма. Образи, образи, табу̀та.* (съст.) София: ЦАИ 2015.  
ISBN 978-954-320-494-6 [*Love Under Socialism: Models, Images, Taboos*]

**Abstract:** This collective volume is the result of the second of a series of CAS workshops titled “Existential Politics under Socialism”. Is it possible that love under socialism could have some specificities distinguishing this feeling from its manifestations in other historical circumstances? In fact, this is a question about how societies mold, shape, encourage or limit certain emotions, how they permit or exclude their expressions. How do feelings – or at least their articulations that can be observed – depend on the ideologies, languages, cultural practices, expectations and the moral norms of a society/group. The texts collected in this volume examine the generation of ideologically sanctioned models and of widely circulating popular-cultural images of love. A separate section of the book deals with the ambivalent situation of erotic love between stigmatization and euphemisation. The authors are interested in specific strategies and specific circumstances modifying the ‘psychological engineering’ efforts of the regime. Thus ‘the system’ is broken down into different agents with their interests and priorities, who create the complex reality of the actually existing socialism and the ambivalent situatedness of feelings in it. This focus prioritises the everyday, the informal and the private while keeping an eye on the forms of its political legitimization, its social and moral meanings.

5. *Смъртта при социализма. Героика и постгероика.* (съст.) София: ЦАИ 2013. ISBN 978-954-320-444-1 [*Death Under Socialism: Heroics and Postheroics*]

**Abstract:** This collective volume is the result of the first of a series of CAS workshops titled “Existential Politics under Socialism”, which combine approaches ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ to understand how ideological scripts were acted out by individual actors in their everyday lives. The starting assumption of this volume is that death is a biological fact laden with conventions, ideologies, normative ideas, rituals, symbols, which – unlike the biological fact itself – considerably change with time. Death is different for different social groups. Moreover, it constantly is subject to ideological uses for the sake of various ‘this-worldly’ causes. Notwithstanding differences between such causes, the role of death is the same – to sacralise, to establish exemplarity and to legitimize. The studies in the book discuss various conceptualizations of the end of life: from ‘heroic death for freedom’ to banal deaths of ordinary people. They ask if and how religious ideas about death offer resources for resistance to the dominant communist ideology; if and how atheism gives a new meaning to death; they discuss communist and religious death rituals and the corresponding politics of memory; personal and collective ideologies of death.

6. *Ageing, Ritual and Social Change: Comparing the Secular and Religious in Eastern and Western Europe.* (ed. with Peter Coleman and Joanna Bornat). Ashgate AHRC/ESRC religion and society series, 2013. ISBN 9781409452140 (hbk), ISBN 9781409452157 (pbk), ISBN 9781409452164 (ebk-pdf), ISBN 9781409470830 (ebk-ePUB)

**Abstract:** This collective volume presents the results of an international and interdisciplinary comparative project exploring the role of religious and secular rituals in the life course, and particularly in old age. Based on oral history and comparing three country cases in Eastern and Western Europe (Bulgaria, Romania and UK), the book provides a deeper understanding of the impacts of social change on personal identity and adaptation across the life course. The chapters draw on biographical narrative interviews with women and men aged 75+ to address themes such as religious and secular rituals, community and belonging, social normativity, personal ideologies of death, the therapeutic value of religion and ritual in situations of bereavement, gendered aspects of ageing. Last but not least, some chapters contribute to the methodology of oral history in terms of its potential for comparative research and the related challenges.

7. *Negotiating Normality: Everyday Lives in Socialist Institutions.* (ed.) New Brunswick and London: Transaction 2012. ISBN 978-1-4128-4601-1  
re-published by Routledge 2015, ISBN 9781412855839

**Abstract:** This collective volume offers a perspective on socialism not as a political system but as a kind of ‘ecosystem’, a dense fabric of dynamic, albeit unbalanced, relations between institutional regulations and people regulated. The assumption is that socialism in its ‘normal state’ can be understood not so much through its events history, as by the major tropes whereby the regime theorised itself and its goals, and their translation into motives guiding people’s actions. The volume is a study of everyday lives and individuals’ experiences seeking to reveal how socialism, an alien utopia at the beginning, was turned into reality in the sense that citizens accepted, albeit sometimes unwillingly, the roles assigned to them by ideology and institutions. At the same time, performing their roles, they changed the script. The case studies try to capture the translation of the major ideological principles of real socialism into motives guiding people’s lives. They track down minute deviations from the norms that have eventually led to re-negotiation of the norms themselves. The cases are grouped around three key themes: socialist labor, the new socialist man, and the socialist way of life. Focusing on routines, rather than extremes, they seek to understand socialism in its “normal” state. Based mostly on narrative interviews and personal documents, the studies in the book capture behavior and speech that are seldom reflected or articulated in the stories people tell. Thus they reach beyond the commonsense knowledge of the actors and try to understand not only the constraints people stumbled upon when they strived to implement their life projects, but also the circumstances that limited the very inception of those projects.

8. *20 Years after the Collapse of Communism: Expectations, achievements and disillusion of 1989.* (ed. with Nicolas Hayoz and Leszek Jesien). Bern-Berlin-Bruxelles-Frankfurt/M.-New York-Oxford-Wien: Peter Lang, 2011. ISBN 978-3-0343-0538-9

**Abstract:** The volume seeks to assess the meanings of 1989, in particular the multiple transformation processes and their effects in Eastern Europe. The authors aim to understand the intricacies of various aspects of the postcommunist transition looking at a broad array of countries that have followed different paths. The studies combine approached from different disciplines: political science, history, anthropology, literary and cultural studies. Insider perspectives are juxtaposed with external assessments. This comparative and problem oriented approach brings into focus the ambiguities of the unfinished transformations as well as their broader cultural contexts: the politics of history and the battles for memory, the re-signification of the past and present. The chapters are grouped into three parts: 1) covering ambiguities of unfinished transformations; 2) making sense of the past and its implications for the present and 3) discussing values and meanings in changing contexts. I am responsible for putting together and editing the second and partly the third part of the book.

## II. СТАТИИ И СТУДИИ

1. “(Re)mapping national space: The one hundred tourist sites of Bulgaria and their metamorphoses”, in: Thomas Lahusen and Schamma Schahadat (eds.) *Postsocialist Landscapes: Real and Imaginary Spaces from Stalinist to Pyongyang*, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2020, pp. 235-251. ISBN 978-3-8376-5124-9

<https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839451243> – разширен и преработен вариант на:

**1а.** “Наследство, туризъм, възпитание. 100-те национални туристически обекта и техните метаморфози” – *Семинар-БГ*, 2015, кн. 12: *Култура за продан*: [http://www.seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy12/item/445-100\\_obekta.html](http://www.seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy12/item/445-100_obekta.html) ISSN 1313-9932

**Abstract:** Drawing on A. Assmann’s idea of cultural memory as canon and archive, the article focuses on a major attempt of the communist regime to instrumentalize tourism for ideological education – the 100 tourist sites movement. The 100 sites are seen as a heritage canon, and its changes during the socialist and postsocialist period are analysed. While there was a tendency towards the ‘nationalization’ of the canon already during the last decade of socialism, which continued with the postsocialist revision of the 100 sites in the early 2000s, the last few years have seen the start of another important change: the appearance of local communities as a key actor in the heritage field. This leads to the hypothesis that the production of place for tourist consumption has become as important as (in some cases maybe even more important than) the ‘production of nation’.

The conclusion of the English version develops further the changes and continuities of the spatial semiosis.

2. “За бригадирската младост на Михаил Х. и за поколенческия обществен договор”, в: Д. Колева (съст.). *Възрастта при социализма: поколения в семейството и обществото*. София: Рива/ЦАИ 2019, 7-34. [“On the work-brigade years of Mihail H. and the generational social contract”, in D. Koleva (ed.) *Age(ing) Under Socialism: Generations in Family and Society*]

**Abstract:** The text is an introduction to the collective volume *Age(ing) under Socialism: Generations in Family and Society*. It introduces the concepts of life course, age and ageing in a sociological and social-historical perspective. The theoretical model of life course as a social institution serves as a starting point to conceive age as both a characteristic of the individual, and a constituent of social stratification, thus leading to the notion of generation as mediator between the micro and the macro level, and between the ‘vertical’ (diachronic) and the ‘horizontal’ (synchronic) dimension. This model, developed for modernity in general, is then applied to the situation of communist Bulgaria to make sense of the specificities of the life course and the social, cultural and political aspects of ageing under communism. The focus is on the ideological construction of young and old age, as well as the institutional context of ageing.

3. “Социализмът като биографичен проект: наративни ресурси и стратегии на разказване”, в: Александър Къосев и Даниела Колева (съст.) *Трудният разказ*.

*Модел на автобиографично разказване за социализма между устното и писменото.* София: ИИБМ/Сиела 2017, 53-79, преработен вариант на:

**3а.** “Negotiating Socialist Lives after the Fall. Narrative Resources and Strategies of the First Socialist Generation in Bulgaria” – *Südosteuropa*, vol. 64, no 3, 2016, pp. 344-364. ISSN 0722-480X. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2016-0029>

**Abstract:** The article tests the hypothesis about the ‘anxiety’ in postsocialist autobiographical narratives based on an oral archive of c. 100 biographical interviews archived at the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past in Sofia. According to this hypothesis, as a result of the demise of the previous ideological-administrative biographical pattern, autobiographers would face difficulties to make sense of their lives as meaningful (rather than only temporal) sequences of events and achievements. The study offers an analysis of the narrative resources (tropes, references, images) and strategies (forms of emplotment) used by the interviewees to lend a coherence of meaning to their biographical narratives. Four such strategies are discussed: sameness (unbroken loyalty to the former regime); biographical revisionism (distancing the self from the regime but retaining loyalty to the ideology); reversed temporality (privileging the past); and steering away (focusing on private life while ignoring its context). The conclusion is that oral autobiographical accounts demonstrate a solid and steadfast narrative identity without clear signs of problematisation or re-conceptualisation. Anxiety is deliberately hidden or unconsciously suppressed, and only some ‘symptoms’ of it can be seen to surface in the life stories: rhetorical gestures of defiance or reconciliation, contradictory statements, silences or avoidance of topics that generate uncertainties, etc. The Bulgarian version is contextualized within the collective volume presenting the results of a research project.

4. “On the (In)convertibility of National Memory into European Legitimacy: The Bulgarian Case”, in: Oto Luthar (ed.) *Of Red Dragons and Evil Spirits. Post-Communist Historiography Between Democratization and New Politics of History*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press 2017, pp. 11-31.

**Abstract:** The article takes as a starting point the reworking and the institutionalization of the memory of WWII after the demise of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe under the influence of the European mnemonic ‘canon’ centred on the Holocaust. In this context, the transitional justice and the broader policies of memory in postcommunist Bulgaria are discussed. The main thesis is that the hesitant coping actions and the unfinished debates about the Bulgarian communist past have resulted in ambivalent attitudes towards a number of aspects of the recent past, including the fate of Bulgarian Jews during WWII. This thesis is supported by a scrutiny of the debate on the ‘rescue’ and its uses by various political actors. The conclusion is that the outcome of the Europeanisation of memory is contradictory, revealing both the potential of the ‘rescue’ for the country’s international image, and its dark side, the deportation, not succeeding to integrate them into a more elaborate and thoroughgoing narrative.

5. “Въведение. Мнемозина с двойно гражданство”, в: *България – Израел. Разкази за две страни и две епохи.* (съст. Д. Колева) София: ИИБМ/Сиела 2017, с. 9-24.  
[“Introduction. Mnemosyne with dual citizenship”, in *Bulgaria – Israel. Stories of two countries and two epochs*]

**Abstract:** The text is an Introduction to the volume *Bulgaria–Israel: Stories of two countries and two epochs*, containing narrative interviews with 38 Bulgarian Jews born before the start of WWII. While some of them stayed in Bulgaria after the war, others moved to Israel to start a new life in a new country. How do they remember their lives, spent on both sides of the Iron Curtain, although belonging to the same ethnic community and the same generation? How did they keep close kinship and friendship ties at a great distance, both physical and political? How do the same event look, when seen ‘from here’ and ‘from the other side’? How do different ideologies and different memory cultures shape personal stories? Does the changing present change the perspective on the past? The text seeks to answer these questions based on observations on the life stories collected in the volume and relating them to the current memory debates in Bulgaria.

6. “Нашите герои и техните паметници: два казуса от Югозападна България” – Семинар-БГ, 2017, кн. 15: Как (и какво) помнят паметниците? Героично изкуство и социалистически реализъм <http://www.seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy15.html> [Our heroes and their monuments: two cases from Southwest Bulgaria]

**Abstract:** The article focuses on two cases of local memory activism in the late 1990s and in the mid-2000s in the village of Zhilentsi (Kyustendil region) and the town of Sandanski. In both cases the issues of contention concern the period of state socialism. The stakes are the same – monuments to local heroes. In both cases family members as well as other actors from the respective community are involved. In both cases, local institutions give their consent. Yet, there are intriguing differences, which invite further contemplation on the politics of memory, mnemonic activism and mnemonic entrepreneurship, on local identity and consensus on the past.

7. “"По сто кило мъже!" Конструиране на мъжественост в едно наративно интервю” – *Балканистичен форум*, год. XXIV, кн. 1, 2015, 136-152. [“Men of a hundred kilos each!” Constructing masculinity in a narrative interview]

**Abstract:** Based on Butler’s theory of the performativity of gender, Goffman’s dramaturgical approach and Connell’s idea of the multiplicity and hierarchy of masculinities, the article adopts a discursive approach to the life-story interview of a retired miner. The focus of interest are the rhetorical resources for the construction of masculinity. The analysis aims to show the working of social conventions and gender stereotypes at the level of the personal narrative. The narrative performance of masculinity is centred around work understood as hard and risky physical labour. The topics of male solidarity in the mine, body and embodied knowledge, and operation of machines supplement the main theme of work. By contrast, family relations and fatherhood are significantly understated, presumably in conformity with the local hegemonic masculinity. At the level of the interaction, working-class masculinity is negotiated with the interlocutors (female intellectuals) by means of a rhetoric drawing on humour and (self-)irony.

8. “Изследвайки вярата: предизвикателства и поуки от един сравнителен проект” (с Джоана Борнат) – *Социологически проблеми*, кн. 1-2, 2014, 176-195, разширен и преработен вариант на:

**8a.** Bornat, Joanna and Daniela Koleva, “Working across boundaries with oral history”, *Oral History Journal*, vol. 42 (2), Autumn 2014, pp. 29-40.

**Abstract:** With colleagues in Romania, Bulgaria and the UK, we crossed boundaries, which were conceptual, geographical, linguistic, disciplinary and historical, as well as belief-based. Here, we summarise what has been learned from a multidisciplinary approach to a comparative oral history in the area of religion and ageing. In a project such as our own, crossing national boundaries, which encompass very different histories and cultures, it was inevitable that we would be researching and writing with many voices, as well as languages. Drawing on oral history material generated during the project and on the reflections of our co-researchers, we address the difficult issue of competing interpretations of interview material; and especially in regard to conducting research on religion, reconciling the sometimes diverse perspectives of religious and non-religious researchers.

The Bulgarian version situates the project in the context of international comparative social-science research using oral history and biographical methods.

9. “Saints Cyril and Methodius: From Christian sanctity to (trans)national memory”, in Agnieszka Gasior, Agnieszka Halemba and Stefan Troebst (Hg.) *Gebrochene Kontinuitäten: Transnationalität in den Erinnerungskulturen Ostmitteleuropas im 20. Jahrhundert*. Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau Verlag 2014, S. 75-87. ISBN 978-3-412-22256-7

**Abstract:** The article explores the constructions of SS Cyrill and Methodius as a Bulgarian lieu de mémoire in a socialist and a post-socialist context, looking for the attempts at ‘Europeanization’ in the

latter. The analysis is based on the most widely used ‘instruments’ for the institutionalization of memory and for the production of consensus: textbooks, commemorative texts and practices, images, monuments. SS Cyril and Methodius have been appropriated by the communist regime and have served for decades as a central topos of the official memory in Bulgaria and an important resource for celebrating national identity. From this starting point, the pre-1989 commemorative discourses proceeded to celebrating socialist cultural progress, while the post-1989 focus shifted towards positioning Bulgarian culture in a broader European and Christian context. These efforts are in line with the tendencies to highlight both national uniqueness and European belonging, as well as with the revival of religion after 1989.

10. “Performing social normativity: religious rituals in secular lives”, in Peter Coleman, Daniela Koleva and Joanna Bornat (eds.) *Ageing, Ritual and Social Change: Comparing the Secular and Religious in Eastern and Western Europe*. Ashgate AHRC/ESRC religion and society series, 2013, pp. 111-132. ISBN 978-1-4094-5215-7, преработен вариант на български:

**10a.** “Променят ли се ритуалите и за какво са ни изобщо?”, Семинар-БГ, кн. 9, 2013 <http://www.seminar-bg.eu/spisanie-seminar-bg/broy9/item/392-promenyat-li-se-ritualite-i-za-kakvo-sa-ni-izobshto.html>

**Abstract:** The European Values Study (2008) arrived at a paradoxical finding: while levels of religious belief were not particularly high in most European countries, and church attendance was irregular, the share of the respondents who considered religious ceremonies important at life passages (birth, marriage, death) was rather high. The article is an attempt to make sense of this discrepancy based on the results of a recent comparative study in Bulgaria, Romania and UK with oral history methods. The focus is on the enactment of religious rituals by individuals who define themselves as non-believers. Why do church rituals turn out to be necessary (or at least attractive) for them? The hypothesis is that their motives are related to a kind of social normativity, which takes on different, overlapping forms: unarticulated and unreflected conformist ethos; an ethic of solidarity and responsibility for family/peers; an identification with a broader community based on an ideology that connects religious experience with the cultural memory of that community.

The Bulgarian version is less detailed but more closely linked to the EVS findings, while the English version is contextualized in the collective volume resulting from an international project.

11. “Номо sacer от Белене: Конструкти на смъртта в лагера на остров Персин”. В: Даниела Колева (съст.) *Смъртта при социализма. Героика и постгероика*. София: ЦАИ 2013, 129-148. [Номо sacer from Belene: Constructs of death in the labour camp on Persin island]

**Abstract:** This article explores the theme of death in communist camps and its role in the construction of the memory of communism. How are stories about death in the labour camp on the island of Persin influenced by public memory and how do they contribute to it? This question has emerged in the course of fieldwork in Belene in 2008–9, which showed that, surprisingly, there was no local collective memory of the camp in the town. At the same time, biographical interviews with elderly Beleners revealed that the camp was very much present in their personal memory, and the theme of dying and murder was quite central. The article enquires into the relations of public and personal memory and the consequences of the membership in different communities of memory.

12. “Rural, Urban and Rurban: Everyday Perceptions and Practices”. In: Ger Duijzings (ed.) *Global Villages: Rural and Urban Transformations in Contemporary Bulgaria*. Anthem Series on Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. London-New York: Anthem 2013, pp. 137-152 ISBN 978-0-85728-073-2

**Abstract:** The article is based on short-term fieldwork in a few villages of different size and location, and on a nation-wide survey conducted for the 2003 UNDP Human Development Report dedicated to the rural regions in Bulgaria. I focus on the attitudes towards the ‘rural’ and the ‘urban’ in the survey, and on the

constructions of ‘rurality’ and ‘urbanity’ among rural residents and first generation rural-urban migrants with whom I have talked during my fieldwork in the village of Bela Rechka, Montana region. Thereby, I try to identify a variety of nuances and local meanings in the counterposition of ‘rural’ and ‘urban’, as well as in people’s self-positionings in the framework of this dichotomy. Following G. Creed and B. Ching, I start from the experiential significance of the urban–rural divide to emphasize the social construction of place, based on power relations and cultural hierarchies similar to those underlying orientalism.

13. “Надежда за миналото? Соцносталгията 20 години по-късно”. В: Михаил Груев и Диана Мишкова (съст.) *Българският комунизъм: дебати и интерпретации*. София: ЦАИ/Рива, 2013, 105-124 ISBN 978-954-320-434-2 – български вариант на:

**13a.** “Hope for the Past? Postsocialist Nostalgia 20 years after”. In: Nicolas Hayoz, Leszek Jesien and Daniela Koleva (eds.) *20 Years after the Collapse of Communism: Expectations, achievements and disillusion of 1989*. Series: Interdisciplinary Studies on Central and Eastern Europe, vol. 9. Bern-Berlin-Bruxelles-Frankfurt/M.-New York-Oxford-Wien: Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 417-434

**Abstract:** The article deals with socialist nostalgia not as part of contemporary popular culture but rather as a biographical and life-world phenomenon. The argument is based on c. 90 narrative interviews conducted in five places in Bulgaria during 2006-08 in the course of two oral history projects focused on the memory of socialism ‘from below’. From a constructivist perspective, I view nostalgia as a backward looking utopia, i.e. a longing for an idealized past pointing to the deficits of the present. However, in contrast to views of nostalgia as an escapist stance, or at best a compensatory and sentimental critique of the present, I stress its potential for symbolic coping with post-socialist changes.

14. “Remembering Socialism, Living Postsocialism: Gender, Generation and Ethnicity”. In: Elisabeth Boesen, Fabienne Lentz, Michel Margue, Denis Scuto, Renée Wagener (eds.) *Peripheral Memories: Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag 2012 ISBN 978-3-8376-2116-7, pp. 219-237.

**Abstract:** The article results from an oral history project in Bulgaria including life-story interviewing of women from two generations where the mothers’ active lives coincided with the period of the communist regime while the daughters came of age during the last decade of socialism and its aftermath. This study focusses on the case of a Turkish family in Northeast Bulgaria. The analysis follows the interplay of personal and group memories, the latter being defined by the simultaneous belonging to different mnemonic communities: family, generation and ethnic group. Special attention is paid to the gendered character of memories as well as to the ways the interviewees negotiate their double marginality – as women and as members of a minority group. The juxtaposition of two successive generations permits the researcher to capture the dynamics of change and the ways family time relates to historical time. In the last section, the case is placed in a broader context provided by interview material collected in the same region in the course of another project focussing on the construction of ethnic identity and on everyday inter-ethnic relations and social distances.

15. “Introduction. Socialist normality: euphemization of power or profanation of power?”. In: Daniela Koleva (ed.) *Negotiating Normality: Everyday Lives in Socialist Institutions*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction 2012, pp. vii-xxxiv.

**Abstract:** The text is the Introduction to the collective volume *Negotiating Normality: Everyday Lives in Socialist Institutions*, which offers a perspective on socialism not as a political system but as a kind of ‘ecosystem’, a dense fabric of dynamic, albeit unbalanced, relations between institutional regulations and people regulated. The assumption is that socialism in its ‘normal stste’ can be understood not so much through its events history, as by the major tropes whereby the regime theorised itself and its goals, and thier translation into motives guiding people’s actions. The chapter discusses the key concept of normality in its fruitful ambivalence as both euphemisation and profanation of power. The notion of euphemisation as subtle ways of exercising power, which are unrecognisable as such, is borrowed from Bourdieu and is



used in this case to make sense of the institutional control wielded by the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Although their heavy-handed social engineering efforts did not always reach the intended impact, they did determine (intentionally or not) the possible kinds of actions people could take and the possible kinds of lives they could lead. In a next step, the argument turns from the institutionally designed to the socially valid normality, i.e. to how institutionally scripted roles were acted out by concrete agents. The thesis, drawing on M. De Certeau and J. Scott, is that individuals not only accept and interiorise the models and categories imposed on them, but they also often relativise, renegotiate and even overturn them, albeit unwittingly. Thus the everyday ‘infrapolitics’ gives grounds to view the socially valid normality also as profanation of power.

16. “Belene: remembering the labour camp and the history of memory”, *Social History*, vol. 37, no 1, February 2012, pp. 1-18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071022.2011.651581>

**Abstract:** The article is based on an oral-history project in a small Bulgarian town near which the largest communist concentration camp was located (1949-59). After decades of silence, most local people however are still reluctant to talk about the camp and do not like their town to be associated with it. I examine personal testimonies of the camp and what it felt like living ‘next door’ to it, focusing in particular on the complex interplay of personal reminiscences, local ‘amnesia’ and broader public cultures of remembrance that have emerged since 1990. The latter were to a large extent formed by the published memoirs and the personal recollections of former inmates spread by the media. Thus, offering a glimpse into examples of negotiation between broader meanings and ‘half-remembered’ individual experience, the case offers an opportunity to grasp the relations between personal narratives and public discourses.

17. “Homo sovieticus surviving democracy? Post-socialist nostalgia in Bulgaria”. In: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa & Krzysztof Stala (eds.) *Cultural Transformations after Communism: Central and Eastern Europe in Focus*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011, pp. 149-164  
Republished in: Graham Smith (ed.) *Oral History. Critical Concepts in Historical Studies series*, vol. 4, Routledge, 2017.

**Abstract:** The article discusses aspects of what has been widely recognized as postsocialist nostalgia. While the public discourses about the communist past are marginal in present-day Bulgarian society and virtually non-existent at the level of the institutions, there is an undertow of positive recollections and references to the past by groups and individuals. The results of two polls carried in 2002 and 2008 testify to this, doubtlessly pointing to an idealisation of the recent past. I correlate these findings with the perceptions articulated in biographical interviews with elderly people carried in the course of two oral history projects in 2006-08 to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, nostalgia as an existential and biographical phenomenon is juxtaposed with ‘neostalgia’ (Velikonja), an eclectic and exuberant, often ironic use of elements of the past in present-day popular culture. The argument leads to the conclusion that if post-socialist nostalgia transforms from a life-worldly into a cultural and political phenomenon, if it migrates unproblematically from communicative memory into the cultural memory – as the case seems to be – there is a danger of obscuring the politics of memory and consequent mystification of the past so as to make it look innocent and idyllic.

18. “Устната история и архивната революция: изучаването на близкото минало като научна задача, политически жест и морален дълг”. В: Ивайло Знеполски (съст.) *История на Народна Република България. Режимът и обществото*. София: ИИБМ/Сиела 2009, 646-660. [Oral history and the archival revolution: Studies of the recent past as a scientific task, a political gesture and a moral duty]

**Abstract:** The study demonstrates the relevance of oral history in postcommunist contexts – not only for the reconstruction of the complexity of the past, not only for the discovery of new research themes, but also for the change of the social remit of historiography and its democratization. Making it possible to hear the voice of those who have been deprived of the right and the chance to speak, oral history is committed to a political (in the broad sense) cause as well: to return experience to the individuals, to grant recognition to what has been important to them as important for all. Not least, this is a gesture of doing justice by ‘giving the floor’ to those who had to remain silent for the decades of communism and whose

only form of resistance was memory. The thesis is that if the archival revolution (the opening of the archives) reveals new opportunities for the historians of the recent past as serious and critical researchers, the study of memory turns researchers into engaged citizens who share the responsibility for the political and moral choices of the present.

19. “Daughters’ Stories: Family Memory and Generational Amnesia”, *The Oral History Review*, vol. 36, 2009, 2, pp. 188-206

**Abstract:** After World War II, most Bulgarian Jews emigrated legally to Israel. Those who stayed had to take part in the building of socialism and integrate in a monolithic “socialist nation.” Thereby they had to “forget” their ethnic identity (“aided” by the state in various ways) and to become *Homo politicus* rather than *Homo ethnicus*. Since 1990, a revival of Jewish identity has begun in Bulgaria. I explore how the women of three generations from the same family reinvent their Jewish identity in their life stories. Drawing on this particular case, I suggest an approach to the question of the interplay of individual and collective memory. I focus on family and generation as different types of collectivities influencing individual memories and self-actualizations.

20. “Опит, разказ, метод (един казус и три тези). – Балканистичен форум, 1-2, 2008, 19-26. [Experience, narrative, method (one case and three theses)]

**Abstract:** In this article, I discuss a narrative interview where the interviewee omitted an important event of her life in her otherwise very detailed and eloquent narrative. Based on this problematic case, I discuss three key concepts: experience, narrative and method. From the point of view of oral history, experience is not just what happens to us but also the meaning we invest in it. Biographical experience is only accessible through narrative. Each of these levels of mediation introduces non-transparency: in the first case it is due to the actualization of the past in a present moment, in the second case – to the genre, stylistic and cultural conventions of the narrative. My thesis is that such non-transparencies are not just a background noise but they can turn into a resource for the understanding of the broader sociocultural context. Thus the silences in the problematic interview do tell something important about this context.

21. “‘My life has mostly been spent working’: Notions and patterns of work in socialist Bulgaria”. In: *Anthropological Notebooks*, XIV, no 1, 2008, pp. 27-48

**Abstract:** The article is an attempt to look at socialism as a cultural code rather than a political system. Different notions of work and symbolic hierarchies of work are examined: the ones spread by the official ideology of communism and the unofficial ones shared by elderly informants in their life stories. A major part of the text is focused on miners’ work as a symbol of ‘socialist labour’, emblematic of its nature, goals and organization. The official media discourse and imagery of the first two decades of the communist regime are then counterbalanced by the story of a miner about his work life to find out how the everyday perceptions of that vocation by its practitioners related to its propaganda representations. The last part of the text expands on the notions of work expressed in the life stories – the ‘traditional’ one and the ‘modern’ work ethic. It is argued that they can be related to generational, occupational and other aspects of the social position of the interviewees rather than to the ideological imaginary of communism.

22. “Telling Women’s Lives: Ideology and Practice”. In: *L’Homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft*, 2007, 18. Jg., Heft 2, S. 77-90.  
<https://doi.org/10.7767/lhomme.2007.18.2.77>

**Abstract:** The article is an attempt at a gender-sensitive approach to oral history material collected for archival purposes (i.e. not guided by a feminist research programme). It is based on my work with about 200 life stories of elderly women and men collected since the mid-1990s in Bulgaria. In the first part I make some observations on women’s narratives looking at their content, language, style and structure. Then I examine in some detail two women’s stories included in a published collection of 26 autobiographical interviews. They were singled out because of the way the interviewees edited their stories for the publication, which seemed to be at odds with their self-presentation throughout the

interviews. This type of editing has prompted some questions related, on the one hand, to narrative conventions, i.e. the ways in which life stories are guided by the ‘rules of genre’, that is by ideas of what constitutes a good story. On the other hand, the questions pertain to social conventions and offer an opportunity to juxtapose the ideology (normative ideas of femininity, i.e. of what is normal or appropriate for a woman) and the practice (actual life strategies) of women’s lives.

23. “The Memory of Socialist Public Holidays: Between Colonization and Autonomy”. In: Ulf Brunnbauer, Stefan Troebst (Hg.) *Zwischen Amnesie und Nostalgie. Die Erinnerung an den Kommunismus in Südosteuropa*. Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 2007, 185-198.

**Abstract:** The article discusses public holidays in socialist Bulgaria as remembered by contemporaries, seeking to answer whether socialist holidays express (and augment) a unity around the values embedded in their rituals and symbols. The leading assumption is that holidays arrange the world in a certain way for the individual by privileging some views about the society and marginalizing or totally excluding others. On the one hand, the enormous ideological apparatus put into service by the communist regime could not have left the consciousness of the contemporaries intact. On the other hand however, the political imaginary produced by that apparatus obviously did not reach the desired impact, especially in the later decades of the regime. Hence the relevance of the questions about the degree of its influence and about the resources people had to resist or to renegotiate its meanings.

24. Социализмът като житейски път. В: Колева, Д. (съст.) *Върху храстите не падат мълнии. Комунизмът – житейски съдби*. София: ИИБМ 2007, 9-20. [Socialism as life path]

**Abstract:** The text is an introduction to the collection of life stories entitled *Lightnings do not Strike Bushes: Communism – Life Stories*, resulting from the project of the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past “Awakened memory: Voices from below”. I argue for the necessity to reinstate the connection with the ‘anonymous’ carriers of the memory of communism, who are usually absent from the public debates. I also defend the choice of the biographical approach implemented through narrative interviewing and I discuss its potential to explicate ‘prototypes’ of possible experience (rather than aiming at statistical representativity); to capture the meanings of past events for those who witnessed them (rather than only collect facts); to privilege subjectivity; to understand the work of memory as reconstruction of the past from the point of view of the present. The text summarises some observations on the biographical material collected in the book, which would become key themes of my work in the following years: the ‘before–now’ opposition articulating a nostalgic idealisation of the past; the reduction of socialism to popular culture, everyday life and ‘warm’ communities; the interplay of personal and collective memory through the identification with a group (i.e. speaking ‘on behalf’ of a group); the legitimization of personal reminiscences through their anchoring in a collective narrative, etc. I also sketch a typology of the life stories according to the way they make sense of the past, which is developed in my later work.

25. Memories of the War and the War of Memories in Post-communist Bulgaria. – *Oral History*, vol. 34, no 2, autumn 2006, pp. 44-55, разширен и преработен вариант на:  
**25a.** Спомен и памет в устните разкази за 9 септември 1944 г. – В: Колева, Д., М. Грекова (съст.) *Културата: граници и съседства. В чест на проф. Иван Стефанов*. София: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски” 2005, 348-373.

**Abstract:** The article focuses on the memories of a major event during WWII, the take over of power in Bulgaria by a communist-dominated coalition on 9 September 1944. This event has been a significant ‘lieu de memoir’, but one whose meaning has changed dramatically in recent years. Personal memories are examined according to their inclusion in or exclusion from what could be considered ‘socially legitimate currencies of memory’. Attention is drawn to cases of conditioning personal memories by ‘official’ public memory (commemorations, textbooks, public scholarly debates) and of their seeking to contest it. Thus the article sets out to explore the relation of personal memories to dominant discourses in a period when the latter have been revised.

The English version offers a typology of the stories according to the employment of the event.