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Religious Memory in a Changing Society: The Case of India and Papua New Guinea

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzes the place of religion in the national collective memory and the changes that have taken place in the field of religion in connection with the modernization and emergence of modern nation-states in India and Papua New Guinea (PNG). In the case of PNG, we look at the place of Christianization in the process of modernization, while in the case of India, we analyze the use of Hinduism in the process of forming national identity. Both cases are analyzed with the use of selected cases of material culture in specific localities and they show the ongoing struggle for the incorporation or segregation of original religious tradition into national identity. Both cases are analyzed on the basis of field research. In the case of India, we look at Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar, and in the case of Papua New Guinea, the *tambaran* building in the village of Kambot in East Sepik Province. While Bharat Mata Mandir demonstrates the modernization of tradition and the incorporation of religion into modern (originally secular) nationalism, the decline in *tambaran* houses is a result of Christianization and the modernization of PNG. The study shows that if there is a connection between religious memory and national memory (or national identity), the religious tradition is maintained or strengthened, whereas when religious memory and national memory are disconnected, religious memory is weakened in a modernizing society.

Introduction

South and Southeast Asia is an area that has undergone significant, fundamental and also dramatic changes over the last century. In the period after World War II, the process of decolonization and the associated formation of nation-states culminated there (cf. e.g. Berger, 2004). Some states gained independence earlier (e.g. Bhutan in 1885, Mongolia in 1911, Afghanistan in 1919), but mostly it did not occur until after the end of World War II (Indonesia in 1945 or rather 1949, India in 1947, China in 1948). The process of decolonization and the independence of the new nation-states continued, so that Papua New Guinea, for example, did not gain independence until 1975, twenty-eight years after India.

At the same time, these newly created states became involved (to varying degrees) in the world economy system, which often led to significant socio-cultural change and also to a relative increase in the wealth of these countries. Many countries underwent rapid economic growth (Japan, North Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, followed by Thailand, Vietnam and especially China), which was so significant that East Asia became a distinct global region (Arrighi, Hamashita, & Selden, 2003). Economic growth went hand in hand with other changes that affected all areas of life – from work to leisure. Above all, new forms of consumption became widespread (especially with the growth of the middle class), the demographic character of individual countries changed significantly and countries underwent significant urbanization (resulting in the emergence of huge cities). Some countries became global powers (India, China, Japan), and others regional powers (Indonesia). As a result of these megatrends (Biswas, 2016), there was also a change in security, both at the international and national levels (international conflicts, terrorism) as well as local (crime). The speed of these changes was very dramatic, so some regions underwent dramatic changes over just a few generations. What had taken centuries in the European environment (or even several centuries) happened in these countries often over one human lifespan.

These processes of social and cultural transition took place (and continue to take place) in certain historical and socio-cultural conditions that frame them, and at the same time the transition processes and their consequences transform this framework retrospectively. One of the components that frames social and cultural transition is the collective identity of the community. It is then further subdivided, although with regard to the national character of modern states, national identity is the most important. As Brubaker claims: "'Nation' is so central, and protean, a category of modern political and cultural thought, discourse, and practice that it is hard indeed to imagine a world without nationalism" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 10). In many Asian countries, however, there is still a strong communal identity that is tied to a particular locality or a narrower community. In India, for example, community identity plays an important role, connecting individuals with a caste or religious community. In PNG, there is a strong ethnic identity as well as a clan identity. The basic part and necessary precondition of all these collective identities is the collective memory, which integrates individuals, local groups and the wider national community in a lasting timeline – it connects the present with the past and also with the potential future.

Memory and the Nation State

Memory studies is now a relatively developed discipline with a clear intellectual tradition (cf. e.g. Assmann, 2006; Assmann, 2008; Boyer & Wertsch, 2009; Erll & Nünning, 2008; Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Misztal, 2003; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Roediger & Wertsch, 2008; Wang, 2008; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). Memory as an analytical category began to be used in the social sciences only in the second half of the twentieth century in connection with the changing nature of developed western societies. Memory appears as a topic as well as a concept in situations where it is itself problematised and where there is talk of memory loss, forgetting and amnesia. It appears, therefore, as part of social, economic and cultural changes that make the collective identity of communities uncertain, as it often finds its foundations in the past. The theme of collective memory is thus closely linked both to the theme of cultural or national identity (e.g. Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Hewer & Kut, 2010; Hilton & Liu, 2017; Verovšek, 2016; Yamashiro, van Engen, & Roediger, 2019) and to the theme of socio-cultural changes.

The theme of memory appeared intensively in the countries of Western Europe in connection with the efforts to deal with the traumatic experiences of the Second World War, which represented a significant discontinuity in the development of individual national communities. The tragic events of the war and the roles that individual nations and their members played in the war (such as collaborating with the occupiers and leaning towards fascism) seriously called into question their collective identity. In the post-war period, the individual national memories were reconfigured. At the same time, some European countries had to deal with their colonial past. In the 1980s, memory reappeared as a topic related to the search for ethnic and national identities and the identities of individual social (state) structures as a result of the fall of communism.

In Europe, this mainly concerned the division of Yugoslavia and of Czechoslovakia, i.e. the formation of new states and the structuring of individual societies. In the post-Soviet region, there was an emergence of a number of states whose territory was formerly part of the Soviet Union. In other parts of the world, the topic of collective memory previously appeared in connection with the emergence of new states as a result of the disintegration of colonial rule. The emergence of new states in Asia and Africa led to a new look at history, which would allow the legitimization of new state sovereignty. One of the essentials for the creation and legitimacy of the new states was the need to enforce the idea of a nation that united previously isolated social units (e.g. tribes). However, creating the idea of a nation (as an imagined community, cf. Anderson, 2006) required a new conception of the past, i.e. the creation of a (new) collective (national) memory. Part of these processes was the new framing of history, which included the formation of new collective identities (including the formation of the continuity of these identities) and new legitimizations of these collective identities.

It is obvious that "memory" becomes a topic when it becomes a problem, i.e. when the previous understanding of the past is questioned in some way and when

there are strong efforts to reinterpret the past. This thematization takes place both in the social reality itself (e.g. as a result of political upheavals and transitions) and in the social sciences (or in both of these areas).

Memory in the Social Sciences and Humanities

At least three internal discourses can be identified in the social sciences, the development of which has led to a boom in the study of memory – multiculturalism and decolonization, postmodernism and conflict theory (Jakobs & Hanrahan, 2005, pp. 255–256). The basic principle of multiculturalism – equal rights of all cultures and attributing the same value to all forms of culture, or rather rejection of the evaluation of any culture – leads to the discovery of various (especially concealed) notions of superiority and their historical roots. This approach necessarily leads to a discussion about the reproduction of the historically conditioned domination of the West, about the formation of stereotypes about other cultures and their use in the power dominance of "Western" culture and the subordination of all other cultures. In this respect, multiculturalism is close to the critique of Orientalism and postcolonial criticism, which reveals, among other things, the role of the social sciences and humanities in the control (symbolic and power-related) of other cultures (including Asian).

In this, multiculturalism approaches postmodernism, the constitutive foundations of which include questioning the legitimacy of so-called great narratives (Lyotard). From our point of view, we can understand it as certain parts or forms of collective memory, or rather as an essential part of the social frameworks of memory and the highest forms of legitimacy, from which the individual elements of collective memory are derived and embedded in the continuity of the past and present. By questioning great narratives, the collective memory is questioned and the need to reconstruct, restructure or re-create the past is established.

Both of these approaches illustrate that the past is not seen as something immutable, but as an area that is created and that needs to be fought for. Memory is thus a component of power and also of conflicts. According to multiculturalism, memory also includes hitherto neglected and marginalized cultural memories, i.e. the cultural memories of marginalized groups (e.g. the memory of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans or other groups from different parts of the planet, but also people of different sexual or gender identity. Postmodernism then questions the existing power that framed memory (cultural and individual) and proclaims that it is open to any innovation and recombination of cultural memory. To this is added the theory of conflict (or interpretive models of conflict), which examines collective memory as an expression of power interests of the privileged and as a tool for control. Collective memory can thus be seen as an ideology expressing the hidden interests of the ruling class. In other words, multiculturalism (and decolonization), postmodernism, and conflict theory show cultural memory as an expression and a tool of power: whoever controls memory controls society, and whoever controls the past controls the present.

The basic foundations for using the category of memory as a tool for social analysis are the following:

- Memory is a social construct. Memory, or rather the specific content of memory and its organisation, is the product of a particular historical moment. "Remembrance" or "remembering" (at the level of the individual and the community) always takes place within predetermined social frameworks and is always a social matter (Halbwachs, 1925/1992).
- Memory (content of memory) is a time-dependent image of the past that is created to explain the present. Remembering does not come from the will of individuals, but is a reaction to a specific need of the time.
- Collective memory is always objectified (embodied) in some material entities and transferred to a space (e.g. Bergson, 1896/1990), or in the digital age it can take on a virtual form (e.g. Reading, 2011; Reaging & Notley, 2015). There is always a memory space, which serves as a tool for reminding, or rather for memory transfer and reconstruction. It is always possible to identify "realms of memory" (Nora, 1984/1996) or "landscapes of memory" (Assmann, 2008).
- At the same time, however, in addition to maintaining memory, there is a strong tendency to forget (e.g. Connerton, 2009). A separation of the connection between the memory storage tools or stored memory contents and current parties may happen. They can stop using the memory space, or they can fill it with other content, i.e. redefine the content of the memory space.
- Memory is always associated with identity and power. There is control over the spread and maintenance of memory (Assmann, 2008).
- Memory is a tool for maintaining the cohesion of the group and has an integrative function. Memory provides a basic interpretive framework legitimizing the very existence of a given group and it strengthens both group and individual identity. It provides not only interpretive frameworks, but also symbols of the group's identity.
- "News of origin" or founding narratives, by which the group's existence is firmly integrated in the world and in a wider cosmogony, play a major role in this (cf. e.g. Smith, 1999).
- Memory not only integrates, but also creates differences and borders. It defines group boundaries, thus distinguishing those who find themselves behind them.
- Memory can be maintained, innovated, but also newly invented (cf. e.g. Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

From the point of view of our topic, it is necessary to mention two important facts in this context: in modern society (and thus also in transforming societies) "invented" traditions are closely related to nationalism and the effort to gain the support of a mass democratic society, or with an effort to create new social cohesion and group (in this case national) identity. Related to this is the second factor, which is the weakening of religion as an integrating force or tradition. The need to "invent" traditions may be due to the fact that existing traditions and memory no longer have enough power to integrate society – the decline of religion and the need for newly invented traditions go hand in hand, as religion (as part of a wider cultural memory) no longer provides

enough integrative elements (cf. Hervieu-Léger, 1993/2000). However, it can be used to some extent by newly invented traditions (new collective memory).

Conceptual Framework: the Religious Memory as a Part of Collective (Cultural) Memory

This research is built on the broad research field of memory studies; it studies on the interconnection of collective memory and collective identity (Assmann, 2006; Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Boyer & Wertsch, 2009; Erll & Nünning, 2008; Halbwachs, 1925/1992; Hewer & Kut, 2010; Hilton & Liu, 2017; Misztal, 2003; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Pušnik, 2019; Roediger & Wertsch, 2008; Verovšek, 2016; Wang, 2008; Yamashiro, van Engen, & Roediger, 2019), while focusing on a specific part of collective memory, namely religious memory. It primarily deals with Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory and his distinction between cultural and communicative memory (e.g. Assmann, 2008). We understand cultural memory as externalized, objectified and sedimented symbolic forms that speak of the past. Cultural memory is fixed (e.g. in elements of material culture) and thus stable, which means that it tends to decelerate socio-cultural changes. Cultural memory is an established and sedimented structure of thought, notions, values and attitudes that is transmitted intergenerationally and that structures our perception of the present. It is a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group. However, despite its cultural conservatism, it serves the interests of contemporary actors, so it becomes part of the struggle for control of the interpretive framework that legitimizes the present by referring to the past.

In addition, an important part of cultural memory is religious memory, because religion is a part not only of individual identity, but also of collective identity, including national identity. In the sociology of religion, the most commonly mentioned work in this context is that of Danièle Hervieu-Léger (1993/2000) and Grace Davie (2000), who use the concept of religious memory, or rather the concept of religion as memory, as a metaphor suitable for a better understanding of the process of secularization within European countries. Our study is based more on Gerald O'Collins and David Braithwaite's concept of religious memory, which was used for the analysis of Christian (or rather Catholic) memory, as well as the theoretical work of Guy G. Stroumsa, and Harvey Whitehouse's concept of modes of religiosity (based on different forms of memory), based on research in Papua New Guinea.

Gerald O'Collins and David Braithwaite (2015) suggest viewing the whole Christian tradition as collective memory, the core of which is Jesus (remembering Jesus) and the "primary actor" is the Holy Spirit (who maintains and directs the Christian tradition). In addition to these "actors", the Christian memory contains a number of other characters who serve as role models and lead to the strengthening of the individual's commitment to a group, or rather a tradition. Christian memory (like any group memory) is a tool for finding meaning and strengthening group (in this case, Christian) identity. This is done by a number of elements of memory, including key rites of remembrance such as baptism and the Eucharist, but also various physical

activities such as prayer, making the sign of the cross, gestures before the sacraments, reading liturgical texts, singing songs, or celebrating and commemorating holidays (such as Christmas or Easter) or pilgrimages. These are associated with significant places that recall important moments in the past of the religion – Bethlehem, Lake Galilee, Jerusalem, Rome, etc. An integral part of Christian memory is also various buildings (churches, basilicas, pilgrimage crosses, etc.).

In this regard, the approach of these authors gets closer to the concept of religious memory as introduced by Guy G. Stroumsa (2016). His text is a unique attempt to explicitly conceptualize religious memory, for which he not only uses the approach of history and cognitive anthropology, but also the material of early Christianity. According to him, it was the work of the first generations of Christians transforming their oral memory into texts which was a fundamental (paradigmatic) shift in the organization of memory. Of course, texts existed before, but it was Christianity that strengthened the importance of reading (progressively in the direction of silent reading, which strengthened the privatization and internalization of selected texts). Thus, two systems of religious memory functioned side by side – a system of implicit religious memory, based on oral religious traditions (dominated by myths, mysteries, proverbs, fables and stories), and a system of explicit religious memory, based on written texts that are read and interpreted. Thus, religious memory has shifted from ritualism and orality to hermeneutics and textuality (Stroumsa, 2016, p. 338). These types of memory correspond to two types of declarative memory (semantic and episodic) and two modes of religiosity, as introduced by the cognitive anthropologist Harvey Whitehouse (2002). He distinguishes between the imagistic type and the doctrinal type. Importantly, these two systems of memory are not opposed, but work together (one memory strengthens the other) – "religious memory, initially essentially ritual, or pictorial and intuitive, becomes stabilized as theological, or doctrinal, and discursive" (Stroumsa, 2016, p. 338), and thus sedimented, e.g. in elements of material culture.

Our study analyzes specific examples of material culture (religious buildings and places) as elements of cultural memory which are religious in nature (they are therefore part of religious memory) and tries to show their (growing or weakening) link to collective (national) identity in selected societies. These societies underwent a rapid development, which included fundamental socio-cultural changes associated with the process of decolonization and the creation of a new (i.e. national) identity. These two examples illustrate two forms of transformation of religious memory (places of religion in cultural and national memory) in two selected postcolonial societies of Asia.

The methodology used is also related to this conceptual framework. The basis was fieldwork, or rather ethnography (Fife, 2005; Jackson, 1987; Robben & Sluka, 2007; Scheyvens & Storey, 2003; Spradley, 1980), which included many data creation techniques, from participatory observation and interviews through material studies to various methods of documentation (especially audiovisual) and field notes. During time spent in India (between 1998–2019), data were created for Bharat Matar Mandir in Haridwar (most recently during November 2019); for the village of Kambot (PNG) –

for the period 2018–2019. In this text, with regard to the chosen topic (in connection to visual anthropology, e.g. Collier & Collier, 1986; Hockings, 1995; Pauwels, 2015), primarily audiovisual data and documents were analyzed (while taking into account other types of generated data). The descriptions of the selected religious sites which we address in this text are based on repeated visits to them.

Concept as a Project – the Use of Concept in Research in Countries in South and Southeast Asia

It is certainly disproportionate to try to express common elements in the development of contemporary Asian societies, as the variability of the historical development of individual Asian countries is wide. However, we can identify the potential benefits of using the concept of collective memory in Asian countries and regions.

The most significant benefit can be seen in the connection between the concept of collective memory and the processes of cultural change. The vast majority of Asian countries have undergone and continue to undergo processes of cultural change, which are related both to the disintegration of colonial rule, or to the disintegration of the bipolar world order and the weakening of communism, and to the process of modernization and nation-state formation. In many countries, these changes have long been associated with a change in worldviews, especially in the field of religion.

Let us now look in general terms at two changes in collective memory. The first is the emergence of national memory, when as a result of the global spread of the Western conception of the state, which is based on the principle of nationalism, and the strengthening of emancipatory efforts in the regions, efforts to create their own new state units arose and intensified. These units had to be based on the idea of a collectively shared (national) identity, which, however, required a new conception of the history (and thus the past) of the newly created political entities (nations). Thus, for example, the idea of one Indian nation was created (internally, however, considerably differentiated linguistically, ethnically and socially), which could thus become a hegemon and the basis of a new state.

The basis of the national mythology of the Indian nation was the declaration of belonging to a long tradition of several thousands of years dating back to the period of Harappa culture, or the Vedic "golden age" (Bhatt, 2001; Hansen, 1999; Jaffrelot, 1996). The idea of one nation was created in a similar way, for example, in Papua New Guinea (Chauvel, 2005; Kavanamur, Yala, & Clements, 2003), even though the vast majority of the island's or rather islands' population, lives their daily lives in isolation from each other in small settlements whose social organization is based on local and clan identities (cf. May, 2004, pp. 48–106). We could continue with similar examples, but it always happened that local and group identities were overlaid or covered by a common national identity, based on a collectively shared idea of a common past, i.e. a shared collective memory.

The second change is a change in religious memory, which is associated with Christianization in many Asian countries. This, of course, went hand in hand with colonialization, but the individual regions differed significantly in terms of the success of

Christianization. While in India, for example, Christianity remained marginal and is more or less limited to certain localities (e.g. Goa on the west coast), in Papua New Guinea it became dominant (more than 90% of the population professes its various forms).

Christianization (in itself, regardless of the above-mentioned nationalism) meant a completely different perception of one's own past, which had to be rejected as pagan. However, in reality, hybrid states which coexist and in which the original past and traditions are sometimes mixed with new traditions always arise. This is illustrated, for example, by the appearance of the basic exhibition at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby (capital of PNG), which predominantly contains exhibits from pre-colonial times, which are complemented by World War II weapons – right next to wooden boats, bows and arrows there is a machine gun and an automatic rifle (in front of the museum are the remains of combat aircraft). There is not a single mention of Christianity in the National Museum. The hybrid coexistence of the original past and today's modernity is evidenced by the building of the National Parliament, which is in close proximity to the National Museum and whose architectural form is tied to the houses of men (*tambaran*), which used to be at the centre of life in every village and which are almost non-existent today as a result of Christianization.

We are going to look at specific cases of analytical application of the concept of religious memory (as a part of collective memory) in two culturally and socially different regions of Asia, namely Papua New Guinea and India. As we will see, they are examples of a hybridization that mixes various collective memories and of the tension between the continuity and discontinuity of time and changes in collective identity in a postcolonial context. However, both selected cases illustrate different ways of coping with social and political change.

The First Case – Tambaran and Religious Forgetting in the Village of Kambot (PNG)

An integral part of the original cultural traditions throughout PNG were the sacred *tambaran* houses, which were located in each village and formed a central place in them (Sillitoe, 2000, p. 250). They were richly coloured and decorated houses with a distinctive high gable. Inside on the columns, walls, but especially by the gable ceiling there were drawings or wooden figures, ancient ancestors, animal spirits and deities. Massive garamut drums were also there. The houses served as places for men to be initiated (Dougoud, 2005, p. 239). Today, these houses no longer exist, or there are only ruins of them. This is due to the work of Christian missionaries who managed to convert the majority of the population to Christianity and remove most elements of the original collective memory. The collective memory thus lost its carriers, or its places of memory and commemoration.

The practical impact of Christian missions on daily life varied, and there were also differences depending on the type of mission. Although Catholic and Protestant missionaries pursued the same goal, that of converting all the inhabitants to the "true and only faith," Catholic missionaries were more conciliatory to the original traditions than Protestants, who clearly associated the original traditions with belief in Satan and sought their total extinction. Perhaps that is why the village of Kambot on the Keram

River (a tributary of the Sepik) kept its carving tradition. In this village we find both a relatively large Catholic church (built of iron and sheet metal) [Figure 1] and a small Protestant prayer house (a building in its traditional form built of wood and bamboo, or reeds and dry grass) [Figure 2] [Figure 3] as well as a traditional tambaran house [Figure 4]. However, this no longer serves its original purpose, but functions as a kind of "cultural place" where a local carver offers his products. In addition, there is still
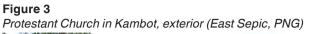
Figure 1
Catholic Church in Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 2
Protestant Church in Kambot, interior (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 3
Protestant Church in Kambot, exterior (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 4
Tambaran House in Kambot, (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

an initiation house for young men, which is, however, considerably dilapidated and nobody takes care of it. In this house we can find colourfully painted columns and rafters, as well as a large wooden statue mounted by the ceiling. The material that covers the genitals of the statue indicates that some attention is paid to this building or rather to this statue. The colours are faded, but you can still sense the impact of the original appearance of the house. In other villages on this river, however, tambaran houses can no longer be found at all. Often there are only empty spaces in them with a few remnants of load-bearing columns, without decorations [Figure 5]. However, the fact that the places where the tambarans stood are not used in any way (e.g. that they are not built up with residential houses) indicates that they still exist in the collective memory and that these spaces are still associated with some cultural or religious meanings. In addition, in the surrounding houses there are sometimes some objects (e.g. large drums), which are no longer used for worship, but are, like the empty spaces where the tambarans used to be, shown to tourists.

We see that the original religious memory is weakening, as are the places that are supposed to maintain it. On the other hand, it is also clear that the original (pre-Christian) memory still persists, although with less strength.

Of the pre-Christian forms of religion, i.e. ancestor cults, cults related to plant growing, male cults and cults of sacred flutes (Lawrence & Meggitt, 1965; Sillitoe, 1998), magic has maintained its strongest position. Religion in PNG, as in the whole of Melanesia, is characterized by a tendency towards syncretism, in which both the original religious tradition and the new religion (in this case Christianity) are innovatively transformed. Religions in PNG (also elsewhere) are a synthesis of stability and change, past and present, as well as diachonicity and synchronicity (cf. Sahlins, 1985, p. 144).

Figure 5
Ruins of Traditional Tambaran House (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

In specific forms of lived religion, religious and non-religious elements are mixed, as are original and new religions. Regina Knapp, who studied religious syncretism in the Papuan group of Bene, says that culture can be understood as the processual and continuous synthesis of different elements and categories (and their meanings) that encounter and interact with each other, acquire a new functional value that again affects other related categories, and leads to transformations in their meanings, use, and structure (Knapp, 2017, p. 9).

Nonetheless, dilapidated (or missing) sacred houses are evidence of forgetting rather than maintaining memory. However, even in Kambot, there are parties who help maintain memory. The concept of collective memory presupposes the existence of "guardians" of memory. There are two types of activity in Kambot. The first is an old man who in his house draws parts of scenes from sacred houses on bark. He redraws sacred scenes on paper and then paints them on relatively large sheets of bark [Figure 6]. He also acts as a local expert on the meanings of paintings, so he serves as their guardian. However, due to the fact that the locals do not use the drawings and mostly do not perform the original group rituals, his role is different to that which he would have played in the original community. So why does he draw visual elements from sacred houses?

Here we come to another significant factor that affected the functioning of religious memory. In addition to Christian missionaries, tourism also contributed to the transformation of the maintenance of the collective memory of this village (as well as of the entire area of East Sepik). It was based on the operation of luxury cruise ships, which brought tourists, who were attracted by the idea of visiting savages and cannibals, to this relatively inaccessible area several times a month (mostly Australians, Americans and Europeans). For thirty years, these boats carried rich tourists to Kambot and other villages, where they bought items cheaply that were tied to the original local

Figure 6
Man Re-Drawing the Motives from the Traditional Tambaran House in Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

traditions (masks, shields, drawings, etc.). The activities of tourists and missionaries there connected and caused the disappearance of virtually all elements of the original material culture. With some exaggeration we can say that what the missionaries did not physically destroy was taken away by the tourists. The villagers were left with only their houses, boats and paddles. And, of course, their skills in procuring food, especially fishing and taro cultivation (Silverman, 2018). It is very likely that the man who reproduces drawings from sacred houses does so primarily with respect to tourists.

Related to this is the second type of activity of maintaining collective memory, or rather its transformation. It is a phenomenon that is very specific and is associated only with this area, where there is a long tradition of carving. In the 1970s, a new tradition was created in connection with the development of tourism. To meet the demand of tourists for local souvenirs, the local woodcarvers created a new element of local material culture – storyboards (Dougoud, 2005; Soukup & Lužný, 2019). These are wooden carved boards containing various motifs, where, in addition to scenes from the lives of the natives (crocodile hunting, taro cultivation, fishing, etc.), elements from the decoration of tambarans appear. It is mainly a depiction of various mythological characters and animals [Figure 7].

Destruction of key elements of religious memory in the form of sacred tambaran houses and modification of the carving tradition, or the emergence of a new tradition of storyboard production are all evidence of the dynamic development of the local community, which has become part of global processes, three of which are the most important: Christianization, modernization and international tourism. At the same time, we can understand the current state as a specific form of cultural adaptation or as part of the mechanisms of cultural exchange (Knapp, 2017). However, we believe that the consequence of all these processes is a state of cultural forgetting (Connerton, 2008).

Figure 7
Storyboard from Kambot (East Sepic, PNG)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Case Two – The Temple of Mother India in Haridwar (India) and the Consolidation of Religious-National Identity

One form of modernization of the Indian cultural tradition is the emergence of Indian nationalism, without which it would not have been possible to achieve the full independence of India and enforce the establishment of an independent Indian state (which took place in 1947). This nationalism takes many forms, two of which are the most important: secular (represented, for example, by Jawaharlal Nehru, creator of Indian secularism, first prime minister and prominent leader of the Indian National Congress) and cultural-religious (i.e. Hindu, represented by V. D. Savarkar, author of the concept of "Hindutva" and leader of Hindu Mahasabha) (e.g. Andersen & Damle, 2019; Graham, 1990; Hansen, 1999; Jaffrelot, 2005; Jaffrelot, 2007; Sharma, 2015). Nationalism represents a specific form of collective memory, as it creates an idea of a national cultural tradition that forms the basis of the collective, that is, national identity (Anderson, 2006; Brubaker, 1996; Brubaker, 2012; Silverman, 2011; Yamashiro, van Engen & Roediger, 2019). Two forms of Indian nationalism find their expression in two temples of Mother India: (a) a secular version of Indian nationalism (the basic principle of which is cultural and political inclusiveness, as evidenced by the fact that the opening ceremony was attended by about 25,000 members of various religious communities, i.e. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Parsees, Buddhists and also "Untouchables" (Ramaswamy, 2006, p. 177) is associated with the religiously neutral Mother India Temple in Varanasi (opened in 1936 by Mahatma Gandhi), which is set apart from Hindu religious memory; (b) the religious version of Indian nationalism (based on the idea of "Hindutva" and religious exclusivity) is associated with the Hindu Mother India Temple in Haridwar (built in 1983 by the leading organization of Hindu nationalism, Vishwa Hindu Parishad), which is part of modernized Hindu religious memory. Interestingly, both temples have the same name: Bharat Mata Mandir. In this text, we do not focus on the secular temple in Varanasi (see Ramaswamy, 2010, pp. 151–169; for a portrayal of Mother India see Ramaswamy, 2014), but exclusively on the Temple of Mother India in Haridwar, which is part of a strong (and growing) stream of religious (in this case, Hindu) nationalism.

The Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar is conceived in an unusual way, namely as a museum, or an educational centre where statues of deities are placed; these do not serve as part of complex religious rituals, but as a reminder (revival and consolidation of collective memory). This temple is located in the area of Sapt Sarovar (about 5 km from the centre of Haridwar), where a large number of ashrams and temples are located, and on the street leading to it we can find other similarly designed religious-educational temples [Figure 8] [Figure 9]. These temples are markedly different from other Hindu temples in that their primary purpose is not to be sacred places associated with the worship of specific gods and deities, but places that resemble the great and noble entirety of India's religious culture. The interior spaces are also adapted to this – there is a winding "path" (corridor, with adjoining spaces), which guides the visitor through mythological scenes and altars, dedicated to various gods and goddesses.

Figure 8
Mandir Mata Lal Devi Ji Bharat Darshan in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 9
India Temple in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Most "classical" Hindu temples are dedicated to a specific god or goddess who is central to the temple, although we can find a number of other gods and goddesses (e.g. if it is a Shiva temple, we will certainly find a lingam, another depiction of the god Shiva, a statue of the white bull Nandin, Shiva's trident, Shiva's wife in various forms, Shiva's son Ganesha, but also probably the Vishnuist Hanuman, or other deities from both the Shivaist and Vishnuist or Shaktic traditions). However, all these gods, goddesses and deities are worshipped and offered sacrifices (e.g. Klostermaier, 1994; Smith, 2003).

The Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar is different at first glance – it has a different appearance and overall composition. It is a relatively tall building that rises above other buildings in the area and looks more like a tall administrative or residential building [Figure 10]. It is a white (formerly red and white) eight-storey building with a rectangular floor plan and a small dome on the roof, or rather on the eighth floor. As in other Hindu temples, it is not possible to step into the building wearing shoes, which indicates the sacred character of the building.

On the 1st floor visitors enter a large room, in which on the opposite side (in relation to the entrance) there is (behind glass) a large figure of the goddess Bharat Matar with loose black hair and ears of grain in one hand and a bowl with a lotus bud in the other [Figure 11]. Visitors take the elevator to the 7th floor and can then go up one floor (to the dome on the roof), which is dedicated to Shiva, whose standing figure with a trident (also the lower sitting figure of Shiva as a yogi) has a view of the landscape with the river Ganges [Figure 12]. All other floors (except the 5th floor) have a different composition – they are circular rooms with a number of glazed alcoves, in which are placed figures of gods, goddesses and heroes.

However, each floor is dedicated to different figures – the 7th floor shows various forms of the god Vishnu, including avatars and their wives (e.g. Krishna and Radha, Narayama and Lakshmi, Rama and Sita; but also the deity Dattatreya, which symbolizes the Trimurti, i.e. the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in one figure); the 6th floor is dedicated to goddesses, collectively understood as forms of the goddess Shakti (such as Skandhamata and Abhaji); the 4th floor is called "Sant Mandir" and is dedicated to figures of various religious traditions of India (there are statues of Buddha, Mahavira – the

Figure 10
Bharat Matar Mandir in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

founder of Jainism, the mythological poet Tulsidas, Guru Nanak – the founder of Sikhism, and modern figures such as Swami Vivekananda, and even contemporary ones e.g. Sai Baba); the 3rd floor is called "Matru Mandir" and is dedicated to female warriors, and many of the characters depicted, in the spirit of the official doctrine of conservative Hinduism and Hindu nationalism, were burned together with their deceased husbands (all are labelled as Sati along with other names), a specific exception is two figures from the West – theosophist Annie Besant, and also a disciple of Swami Vivekananda Sister Nivedit; however, both were highly active in the Indian independence movement and are thus integrated into Hindu nationalism; and the 2nd floor called "Shoor Mandir" is dedicated to male heroes who were instrumental in Indian independence (we find here the figures of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhimrao Ambedkar, and Savarkar, but also the figures of real or legendary kings such as Maharana Pratap, Shivaji Maharaj and Maharaja Agrasen), although this series of male figures also includes female figures such as Jhansi Ki Rani, a 19th century Indian queen who, as the leading figure of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, became a symbol of resistance to British rule for Hindu nationalists.

While most floors represent prominent figures in Indian history, including gods and goddesses, the 5th floor is designed differently. It is called the Assembly Hall and represents the coexistence of all the traditions and places in India. On this floor are presented the individual Indian states, or rather based on the depiction of the local

Figure 11
Statue of Mother India – Ground Floor of the Bharat Matar Mandir in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

Figure 12
The Top Floor of the Shiva Shrine Within the Bharat Matar Mandir in Sapt Sarovar, Haridwar (India)

Photography: Dušan Lužný

landmarks of these states, the richness of India's cultural traditions is emphasized. Each state (e.g. Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Gundarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, etc.) is given a "bulletin board" with several pictures and an explanatory label in English and Hindi. Significant monuments are shown here, which are mostly religious buildings and temples (Khajuraho Temple, Jagannath Temple in Orissa, the Golden Temple in Amritsar) and other monuments (drawings and other pictures from the rock temples in Ajanta and Ellora), as well as typical local crafts, costumes or festivals, natural features and also prominent figures (such as Rabindharath Thakur and Gandhi). Overall, this floor gives the impression of a "tourist catalogue", i.e. a presentation of local attractions that need to be visited or seen. It is a kind of pictorial publication about India, or rather about its regions and attractions. This floor disrupts, or rather complements, the otherwise dominant religious (mythological) plane of the whole building. The floor is a specific form of "tourist guide", which gives brief information about a particular place and selects the most significant sights or significant places that the visitor should see or know about.

The temple was founded by Swami Satyamitranand Giri (1932–2019) and was ceremonially opened on 15 May 1983 by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is primarily aimed at Indian visitors, because in addition to descriptions in English (which is one of the official languages of India), there are descriptions only in Hindi, in the Devanagari script. The whole temple is a form of national "exhibition", i.e. a presentation in which the most significant "objects" are presented, which, however, are meant to demonstrate the richness (internal diversity) of the unified cultural tradition of India. The temple therefore presents the cultural unity of the nation and is actually a specific form of "national museum". And because every unity must be protected and fought for, an integral part of the exhibition is shown by the heroes and heroines who have contributed to the preservation of this unity. Bharat Mata Mandir is thus an example of the effort to create, or retain, collective (national) memory. It is an institution whose goal is the education and strengthening of national consciousness, which is based on religious tradition. It is also no coincidence that this temple was built in Haridwar, as it is a significant place of pilgrimage, where not only the kumbh mela takes place, but also every evening thousands of pilgrims take part in the ritual of worshipping Mother Ganges. Undoubtedly, Haridwar plays a key role in India's religious topography.

Comparison of Cases – Partial Conclusion

The examples of the tambaran house in the village of Kambot in PNG and the Bharat Mata Mandir temple in Haridwar in India demonstrate different strategies for dealing with collective memory. While Bharat Mata Mandir is an example of the active formation and strengthening of the collective religious memory associated with the newly formed Indian nation, the demise of traditional tambaran houses in PNG is evidence of the active destruction of traditional cultural memory associated with pre-Christian tribal forms of religious life.

Bharat Mata Mandir seeks to document the unified continuous tradition of the Indian nation and the patronage of this tradition by religious authorities (gods and

deities). It connects religious mythology (gods, goddesses, deities and related mythological narratives) with national mythology (prominent figures of modern Indian history, who are associated with the effort to achieve Indian independence) and thus creates the appearance of internally non-conflicting national tradition (under one roof are statues of Gandhi and Savarkar, who was imprisoned in connection with the organization of the assassination of Gandhi).

It is an expression of the strong position of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics, in which the Bharytiya Janata Party political party is finding increasing strength. The Bharytiya Janata Party is one of the two dominant Indian political parties (alongside the Indian National Congress), has been the main government party four times since 1998 and won 37.5% in the 2019 elections. This party is based on the ideology of Hindutva and builds on the religious and political activities of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organization, which, among other things, built Bharat Mata Mandir in Haridwar. The temple can thus be seen as an official expression of contemporary government ideology, but the idea of building temples associated with Hindu nationalism is older – as early as 1924, Swami Shraddhanand, leader of the Arya Samaj (another neo-Hindu organization), advocated that in every Indian city a "Hindu Rashtra Mandir," a temple consecrated to India (Smith, 2003, p. 192) be built.

If the Bharat Mata Mandir Temple in Haridwar can be seen as a demonstration of the winning collective memory in India, then the ruins of the tambaran house in Kambot (but also elsewhere in PNG) can be seen as a picture of the destruction of the original collective memory and evidence of the loss of the original cultural and religious traditions of PNG. The original tribal religions, of which the tambaran houses were an integral part and material basis, were relatively quickly replaced by Christianity in its various forms. Robust and forceful Christian missions (Catholic and Protestant) effectively disrupted the existing forms of religious life, resulting in a situation where the vast majority of the population professes Christianity (according to the 2011 census 96% of inhabitants identified as Christian) (Aerts, 1998a, p. 1). So we can say that, like some other countries in South and Southeast Asia (such as the Philippines), PNG is a country dominated by Christianity.

However, this does not mean that the original religious ideas have completely disappeared. Despite the dominance of Christianity, in many places, for example, the tradition of magic or healing has been maintained, while some original religious concepts (such as ideas of mana life force) have taken a different form and been brought into line with Christian doctrine. In PNG, the original religious traditions and the new religion (i.e., Christianity) that was imported were quite specifically sychronised (Aerts, 1998b; Gibbs, 2015; Knapp, 2017; Nehrbass, 2012; Rio, MacCarthy, & Blanes, 2017; Robbins, 2004; Shaw, 2018). Although it might seem that the original religious traditions have completely disappeared, and with them the tambaran houses, the fact that some tambaran houses are still standing (i.e., they were not immediately destroyed) and that some new buildings (such as the National Parliament building in the capital city, Port Moresby) use elements or even the overall architectural concept of tambaran houses proves that the original collective memory has not been destroyed and that there are some parties who protect or at least commemorate this memory.

This is clearly evidenced by the appearance of the current paper notes, as the front sides of the Papuan banknotes all contain a depiction of the National Parliament building with distinctive ornaments from tambaran houses.

Although both examples point to a different treatment of collective religious memory, they illustrate some of the above-mentioned theoretical postulates. Above all, they show that collective memory is materialized and stored in a space. Both examples are (albeit in different forms) an example of a mnemotype, as they represent certain places of memory that either serve to maintain and share memory or are evidence of collective forgetting. They also demonstrate the integrative function of memory, as the function of Brahat Mata Mandir (in Haridwar) is to strengthen national, cultural, and religious identities, while the ruins of the tambaran are evidence of the reconfiguration of collective consciousness and the creation of a new collective and individual identity. Both examples also clearly demonstrate the connection of collective memory with power, i.e. with power that actively shapes or changes collective memory.

Conclusion and Discussion – Religion and National Identity in a Changing Society

One of the constitutive elements of global modernity is the nation state. The development of global modernity at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century has clearly shown the one-sidedness of the false generalization of European cultural experience, which unambiguously links modernity (and the modern state) with secularity. Global developments have shown that the modern state in different parts of the world and in different cultural contexts can coexist with religion, or rather that religion can be an important systemic part of it. However, this does not mean that religion does not change in the context of modernity. The coexistence of religion and modern society leads to changes in religion. The process of modernization in individual states brings about a radical transformation of society as a whole, as well as its parts (collectives and individuals).

Both India and Papua New Guinea underwent a radical change in the last century, based on a broad process of modernization that has affected all areas of life for the people of the two countries. Part of the creation of new (national) states was also the creation of a new national identity. A comparison of the two selected examples showed the important role of religion in maintaining a collective identity. Although the original traditions were weakened in both countries, the need for national unification (creation of a unified nation) revived some elements of the religious tradition and incorporated them into the structure of national identity. India is a case where the new national identity was built on the idea of a unified (albeit internally diverse) long religious and cultural tradition. The basis of collective identity and collective memory is the idea of continuity, where all discontinuous elements are either included (and thus lose their discontinuous character, e.g. Buddhism or Sikhism) or are excluded from this tradition (e.g. Islam). The PNG case illustrates a different situation, based on discontinuity (Christianization, or overall religious change), which has not yet been overcome and which creates a schizophrenic situation where official collective identity and memory work with elements of the original culture and the new religious and cultural character of

the new nation is not emphasised much, but at the same time the country is undergoing a radical social change associated with modernization, which does not correspond in any way with the original traditions. Our study shows that if there is a connection between religious memory and national memory (or national identity), religious tradition is maintained or strengthened, whereas when religious memory and national memory are disconnected, religious memory is weakened in a modernizing society.

For the social sciences and humanities, both examples show the need for openness both in the field of theory and in the field of methodology. Reality seldom corresponds to theoretical concepts or textbook methodological procedures. If we study the forms of social and cultural change, the social sciences and humanities must also be open to change and to theoretical and methodological innovations.

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