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## COLLECTIVE MEMORY TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST TO FORM THE FUTURE

**Plamena Yovchevska**

Institute of agricultural economics – Sofia, Agricultural academy, Bulgaria, yovchevska@abv.bg

**Mihaela Mihailova**

Institute of agricultural economics – Sofia, Agricultural academy, Bulgaria, m.mihailova92@gmail.com

**Abstract:** "Collective memory" contributes to the development of economic activity in any field of the material production. The aim of the present study is to learn about the impact of the psychological and social phenomenon "Collective Memory" on Bulgarian agriculture and economy. What changes are applied in the agricultural sector because of this phenomenon had been a long-standing question for researchers, because of the role of the sector for expansion of local communities, prosperity of the regional economy and for strengthening the national economy. The focus of this study is to reveal how collective memory is changing the shape of Bulgarian agriculture. The study of this phenomenon uses interdisciplinary knowledge and skills to apply an appropriate methodological framework. Using the scientific method, the authors approve appropriate methodological solutions, including desk research, interviews, and fieldwork in mountainous and valley areas in Bulgaria. We share other authors idea, that the created collective memory, no matter real or imposed affects the translate to behavior of the individuals and nations. Collective memory is built under the influence of several factors, one of which is the state presentation of events to society. Collective events are most likely to contribute to a long-term collective memory or be the factor for social perception of the past, when they influence long-term social change, are emotionally charged, provide an abundance of social and emotional enterprises, are often perform / rehearse through the media, connect with collective introduction and commemorative rituals, which can be recognized by institutions and individuals. To take a closer look at "Collective Memory" in Bulgaria, we have presented various components / factors in the formation of collective memory and added a "case study" to present relational effects on the phenomenon / process in agriculture by applying theoretical framework that includes: Socio Historical Theory and Dynamic Theory. An example in this filed we are interested in, is the state of land relations after the development of the planned economy, the sale of land in natural restitution that cause problems in Bulgarian agriculture, which is a direct manifestation of collective memory. This is evident from the analysis of the narratives in conducting field work. The importance of the process of memory restoration is shown, in which memory is a factor, that strengthens the evidence of the past and the opportunities for transportation to the present active introduction at individual, local, regional, and national levels.

**Keywords:** collective memory, agriculture, knowledge transfer

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The French author and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) is considered to be the first author to study how a memory was born, built, developed and synthesized / defined in Collective memory. Halbwachs, is the one who concludes that all memories are formed and organized in a collective context. There are studies that show that those who spoke the most and had the most negative emotions associated with an event, after two and a half years have the weakest memories of the real event and accept it only from an emotional point of view. The process of forming a Collective memory is influenced by several factors. Main among them is the intervention of the state and its presentation of the events to the public.

In this article we consider "Collective memory" as a social theory that has reflections in Bulgarian agriculture and agricultural economy. The impact of the phenomenon of collective memory on the primary sector in our country is part of a socio-economic model for studying land relations, developed within the project "Land relations and European policy: synergy and prospects for Bulgarian agriculture." In the scientific publication "Collective memory of political events: social psychological perspectives", published in 1997, a group of researchers (Pennebacer et al. 1997) analyzed the processes related to the influence of collective memory created over time on the behavior of nations and individuals. The scientific approach to the implementation of the study presents how the collective memory is preserved and developed and how exactly it is determined which of the memories are stored / preserved and become part of it over time. Among the main factors for preserving a memory is whether it has affected the behavior of a large number of people. Has it significantly changed some of their life plans, has it been the subject of numerous discussions in the public space, etc. Studies show that the stronger the emotions of a social event, the more likely individuals are to discuss it with a relative one. This expands the impact of the event and carries it over time. Ideas found in certain / appropriate environments develop faster and better. Moments of turmoil and major changes in social patterns are just such an environment. Collective memory thus transcends simple reminiscences of

the past, and encompasses tastes, values, and social mores of a community (Bilsel, C., 2017). In Bulgarian agriculture all the prerequisites for studying the phenomenon of "Collective memory" are available. Society and the individual go through complex changes in the social model of societies in our country, which at the macro, meso and micro level forms a reservoir of events that shape the sustainability of the process of creating common memory and model its "transfer" to individual consciousness. In the course of the research of Collective memory and the transfer of knowledge from past to future, active processes of transfer of elements of memory in economic processes and activities in the present are registered. At the same time, processes of formation of new elements for modeling the phenomenon are registered, which are caused by dynamic changes in the socio-economic environment in agriculture. Memories are formed, which are a prerequisite for organizing in a collective context, given the scale and influence of a set of socially significant phenomena. Among them is the impact of the global pandemic situation, and the experience in implementing the Community's agricultural policy and rediscovering the land-man-nature relationship with all its "readings". Hence the relevance of the present study.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

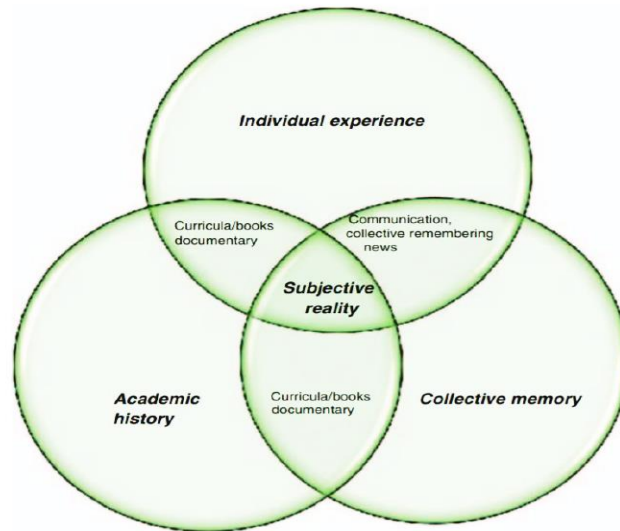
Karl Mannheim (1928-1952) was the author who most thoroughly analyzed this type of sociological research, where the collective "mind" rather than individual behavior comes to the fore. Maurice Nalbachs (1950-1992) presents his ideas about collective memories and their transference through the generations. According to James W. Pennebaker and Backy L.Banasik, social memory is formed by things that are preserved over time. People who are directly affected by socio-economic changes keep and discuss the topic and thus prolong its life and importance in society. Zelizer emphasized that the study of collective memory "represents a graph of the past as it is woven into the present and the future" (Zelizer, B., 2000).

*Socio Historical Theory* (Wertsch, J. 2002): Theorize "James Wertsch" in 2002, the theory focused on the characteristics of the physical and social reminder context, most experiences take place in social frameworks and share with others, and it focused on the process of social interaction that occurs within these frameworks, as well as emphasizes the stereotyping that exists within the self-formation of events and narratives, and the interactive relationships between representations and their decisive impact on collective action ( Wertsch, J., 2009).

*Dynamic Theory*: Theorize Hewer & Roberts in 2012, the theory focused on the characteristics of the remembrance context (the dynamics of the social environment) by giving representations of the cognitive social processes that individuals use to give meaning to their environment. The impact of collective memory is reflected in the collective action. The theory focused the interaction between three sources of knowledge: academic history, collective memory, and individual experience, producing a personal view of reality, concepts of the past, present, and future, identity and values, truth and falsehood, and the results of the collective's narratives (Figure 1).

In the course of the field work during the implementation of the research, realized in the period 2019-2020, the Case study method is applied, in a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Case analysis is complemented by desk research, observations, in-depth interviews, secondary data analysis, content analysis. Different combinations of these methods are used in the study. Each case in the application of this method is placed in context - economic, social, educational, environmental, socio-cultural, etc. Thanks to this methodological approach, the Interaction of sources of knowledge producing collective memory is captured (fig. 1). Collective events are most likely to lead to long-term collective memory or a set of social notions of the past when (1) they affect social change in the long run, (2) they are emotionally charged, (3) they cause abundance (4) they are socially rehearsed by the media and (5) are associated with collective behavior and commemorative rituals that can be explained in concert by institutions and individuals.

*Figure 1. Interaction of sources of knowledge producing collective memory.*



*Source: S. M. Hamza, Ibrahim, Al-Y., Salman, A. (2021)*

### 3. RESULTS

In Bulgaria there are rich natural resources for the development of agriculture, which is why it is traditionally defined as an agrarian country. In the different agro-climatic regions of the country are observed / registered specifics, which are a prerequisite for the establishment of a specific context when applying the method of Case study. In the course of the field work carried out within the project POZESIN "Land Relations and European Policy: Synergy and Prospects for Bulgarian Agriculture", subjects from both plains and semi-mountainous regions of the country were observed. This allows researchers to enrich the study of knowledge-collective memory relations in different contexts, some of which are determined by the regional specifics in decoding collective memory as a reservoir of national memory.

In June 2020, during a fieldwork carried out within the project POZESIN, a study was conducted using the Case study method in the region of Central South Bulgaria. This is a plain region with monopoly good natural resources for the production of quality products from intensive crops - fruits and vegetables. The study is positioned in an agricultural holding of a producer with extensive life experience and high expertise in the field of economic activity in agriculture in Bulgaria. With high agronomy education and innovative thinking, emotionally connected with agricultural activity for decades. Active actor in the management of the largest apple orchard in the Balkans in the 80s. His bias towards agriculture dates back to long before the choice of educational platform. The motivation to dedicate oneself to the land and its fruits is rooted in interests related to economy, technology, human relationships, social capital, socio-cultural traditions, a desire to benefit the region in which one was born. This conglomerate of motives is also fueled by the fact that the farmer is a direct participant in many national and regional forums on agricultural issues dating back to the time of the planned farm, as well as in the decades after the transformation. He also participates in some of the prepared program documents in both periods of the social development of the agricultural sector. As a charismatic and authoritative person, the respondent is a reference example for an active participant in explanatory campaigns of new documents and the resulting innovations / changes in the organization of economic activity during both models of society, as an economically engaged and socially active person. The narrative is replete with examples of how Collective memory is a source of motivation for sustainable practices and an ambition for the region's successful farmer to help and support small local producers who have difficulty accessing the market due to weak supply chain positions. He is happy to share his experience from "before the market economy", when there were also difficulties in the sale of the products and his initiative and expertise to overcome them. The social image of the past is emotionally charged with satisfaction and Collective memory is transformed into a determination to use the old knowledge, skills and expertise in the new social environment. The activity and the motivation of the respondent to maintain the economic activity in the family farm attract not only ten new small producers from the region, but also incorporate both sons of the agricultural producer. With their university education and the father's knowledge and life experience, they already take on a large part of the responsibilities for the development of the farm and have become a positive example for the other family farms in

the region. It is also an emanation of the potential of Collective memory to transfer knowledge from past events to the present and the future. The renaissance spirit of the respondent builds on the collective memory above the basic economic coordinates and transfers the individual associations of wide-format knowledge to the social and cultural connotations of the phenomenon.

Several case studies conducted in settlements in the semi-mountainous regions of the country also provide valuable empirical material in exploring the importance of Collective memory. Given the region and its natural specifics, there is a slip and overlap of memories of the past for events experienced and recreated as a result of regulatory decisions and life cases. Due to the difficult terrain and poor productive soils, the harsh living conditions have probably made the Collective memory more fine-tuned. The energy of the people's memory is rooted in the consciousness and the generational life experience is passed on as a gift from generation to generation. Probably a role in this is played by the specific feature that people are in a distant relationship. Collective memory absorbs in the individual consciousness and the motive for economic activity in the court farms or in the application of a particular technological solution, the answer is surprisingly the same for all respondents: "that's what I heard", "that's what my grandfather did". Fieldwork in this region also highlights the connotative importance of Collective memory, secondary to context. Its manifestation is in direct connection with the life experience of the individual and the strong two-way connection of influence between the individual and the collective. The narrative is a kind of construction that supports and transmits the memory from the past to the present and models it to survive in the future. Almost hyperbolically, the symbol of a century-old pear in the yard of one of the respondents can be highlighted, who in his narrative equated it to the family memory, experienced and influenced by two changes of the social models in Bulgaria. At the same time, the reflection / influence of Collective memory transfers to the future constructive knowledge and a positive message from the information array of memory. The memory of events and experienced regulated economic activities in the planned and market economy filters those patterns of behavior that are carriers of security and sustainability, which ensure the preservation of the heritage from the ancestors. Whether this legacy is the pear planted more than a century ago, which is "multifunctional". It gives very tasty and durable pears without missing a year. Pears are with high sugar content and easy to dry. Good brandy can be made from pears, but they no longer brew brandy. The shade is tempting for the hosts and neighbors on summer days, communication under the tree restores old memories and is an occasion to transfer "life experience" of how plant species and animal breeds had been grown in private and in former Labor Cooperative Agricultural Farm. Although the co-operation leads to the unification of activities, one of the respondents shared a valuable memory of how during the co-operation he had shared individual experience, which was ancillary to all the "top-down" decrees that regulated the labor process. Some of the knowledge learned from shared work in the public farm is now applied in the respondents' court farms. The interpenetration of individual and collective memory is a living example of how Collective memory can transfer knowledge and promote sustainability in the behavioral practices of different generations. The answer "I know this from my grandfather" sounds like a paradigm and contains the memorial signs through which the communities, individuals and nature survive, nature in harmony of which live the people from the semi-mountainous and mountainous regions in Bulgaria.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

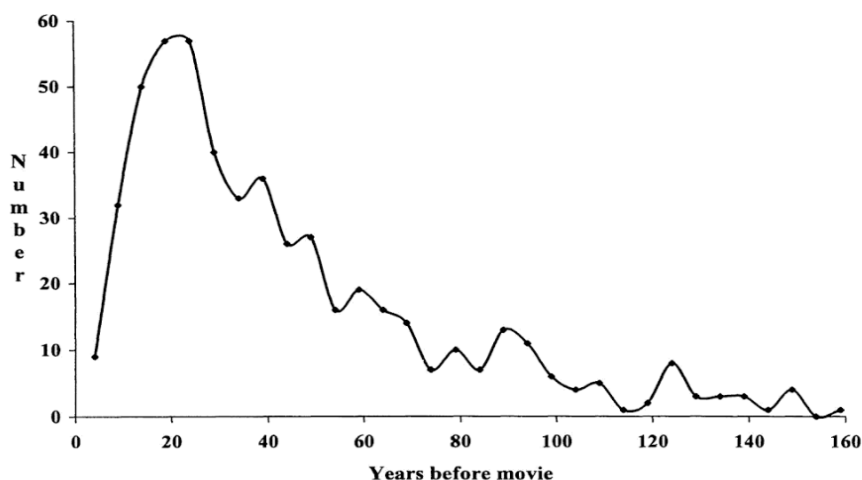
The discussion of land relations after the dismantling of the planned economy in Bulgaria, the fragmentation of land and the ensuing problems in the sector are directly influenced by the collective memory of the past. There are rich natural resources for the development of agriculture in Bulgaria, country traditionally defined as an agrarian one. The influence of the connection with the land is an unavoidable factor in the society, the region and the family. The attitude towards land resources is a powerful platform for analyzing collective memory. In the different agro-climatic regions of the country are observed / registered specifics, which are a prerequisite for the establishment of a specific context when applying the method of Case study. In the course of the field work, subjects from a semi-mountainous region and from a plain region of the country were observed. This enables researchers to enrich the study of knowledge-collective memory relations in different contexts, which determine the regional specifics in decoding collective memory as a reservoir of national memory.

An essential element of "Collective Memory" is the "silent event". With silent event, the society avoids talking about an important event, in most cases it is because of political, moral, etc. limits. Wegner (2002) concludes that the more an event is suppressed, the more it is imprinted in people's memories, similar to the phenomenon when someone tells you not to think about something, and this immediately leads you to think about that thing. The effect of a "silent event" is registered in all Case studies conducted within the project. Due to the socialization of the land for a long period the normative environment suppressed the connection with the land and the land relations were in a latent state. Collective memory is supported by narratives in the family and by generational communication. Symbolism of these relations is acquired by the "century-old pear", whose toughness corresponds to the memories,

which renew the knowledge of past practices and are a bridge to the modern reading of the role and importance of autochthony. The rediscovery of the local corresponds to a number of modern paradigms for rethinking the value of preserved nature for local communities in ecological, socio-cultural, economic and economic context. Collective memory is the transfer channel through which knowledge from the past feeds future knowledge, through which the benefits of existing old knowledge are assimilated / stored by renovating knowledge from the past and transposing it to the new needs of society and the individual.

The graph in Figure 2 shows how often after an event the topic discussed by the media is stored in the collective memory and even reinforces it. Twenty years after the dismantling of the planned economy, the media are stepping up coverage of events from that time. This is the reason why the planned economy is permanently associated in the collective memory, both as a national memory and in the memories of individuals. The collective memory of the planned economy and the real production of the agricultural sector is an element of social capital with a possible positive future influence both in the Bulgarian agriculture and in the economy of the rural areas of the country. This is confirmed by the empirical work carried out in the family farm in the region of Central South Bulgaria, as well as by the field work in the court gardens of residents of the semi-mountainous settlement systems.

*Figure 2. Saving an event in the collective memory*



Source: Wegner 2002

In a study of collective memories, some authors (Suchman and Scott 1989) found that when examining the memories of people of different ages, the memories that are most important are those that are received from 15 to 30 years of age. This leads to the interesting fact that in Bulgaria this is the main working generation, which is an active part of modern political and economic life. Memories of the social representations of the past are mobilized by today's problems. The past is often appropriated to serve current attitudes and needs Dario Paez (2010). We reach these conclusions in the course of studying the social model of land relations and studying the effect of Collective memory in today's social relations.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The influence of the connection with earth is an unavoidable factor in the society, the region and the family. The attitude towards land resources is a powerful platform for analyzing collective memory. The discussion of land relations after the dismantling of the planned economy in Bulgaria, the fragmentation of land and the ensuing problems in the industry are directly influenced by the collective memory of the past. The model in Figure 1 is a mirror image of the maintenance of Collective memory in the cycle between individual experiences and shared memory, the explanation and study of which is the subject of activity by this research. The study reveals not only the importance of CM for knowledge transfer and the transfer of memory from the past to the present, but also the multilayered specificity of the phenomenon, determined by individual, regional and community characteristics of the individual and society. Society models are also a kind of filter that often dominates and amplifies or weakens the momentary "reading" of SM. The research suggests that the intersection of the modern reading of memory, modeled by the layers of SM provokes the manifestation of economic, social, cultural dimensions of this complex social phenomenon.

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