

Preface

In the context of the ongoing negotiations about how the past should be remembered in Europe, we present a volume which concerns the Europeanization of heritage and memories in Poland and Sweden. The interest in these countries stems from the fact that they are both located along the periphery of Europe in terms of their relation to the historical and geographical heartland of European integration (France and Germany) and both of them became members of the EU relatively late (Sweden 1995, Poland 2004). It raises the question about the impact of these circumstances on the pace of integration of both countries within the EU and how much these factors matter in relation to other elements that constitute differences between the countries, especially since these disparities are manifold. Thus, Poland and Sweden diverge in terms of ethnic composition – a strongly monocultural country on the one hand and a multicultural country on the other, as a result of ongoing immigration since the Second World War. They also differ religiously (Catholicism vs. Protestantism) and economically (a state with revenues befitting a transformational economy vs. a wealthy state with social security). When highlighting the disparities, it is also necessary to mention the different status and profile of Poland and Sweden amongst the member countries of the EU, the Polish membership of NATO and Swedish neutrality. Furthermore, it is important to point out the radical discrepancy between the countries' experiences of the Second World War, totalitarianism and the fallout from the Yalta Conference.

The volume presents results from a research project financed by the National Science Centre (Poland) entitled "The Europeanization of realms of memory and the invention of a common European heritage." Furthermore, the book reflects the objectives of this project: to describe and understand the

processes which are at work in the Polish and Swedish context and lead to the construction of a new, Europeanized representations of the past. We ask how the ongoing process of European, political integration influences local, regional, national and transnational interpretations of the past in these two countries.

As an outcome of a multidisciplinary effort on the part of Polish and Swedish researchers working in the fields of ethnology and cultural anthropology, the sociology of culture, history, memory and heritage studies, this volume has emerged. While the book demonstrates a variety of cases and approaches, it is at the same time firmly anchored in the common abovementioned research question and the authors' common understandings of the key concepts used.¹

This volume reflects attempts undertaken by our research team to grasp the sometimes fluid and elusive aspects of the Europeanization of heritage and memories in Poland and Sweden. The selection of cases analyzed not only allows us to attempt to comprehend the essence and diverse directions of the processes of Europeanization but also its dynamics in places which differ in terms of their axiology. The co-authors thus investigated its influence in places connected with contemporary museum narration (Łucja Piekarska-Duraj), transnational initiatives (Lars-Eric Jönsson), regional/transnational idylls (Eleonora Narvselius), national pride (Krzysztof Kowalski), with dark memory from the period of the Second World War (Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Björn Magnusson Staaf, Elisabeth Büttner) and new forms of heroism (Ulf Zander, Katarzyna Suszkiewicz).

The fact that the last five chapters of our volume deal with the Second World War and the Holocaust is not a coincidence. It mirrors the importance of these subjects in the European politics of memory. From the beginning of the process of European integration (Schumans's declaration in 1951) an idea of a united Europe was constructed against the backdrop of wars in Europe in 20th century. Additionally, the memory of Holocaust rose to prominence in the EU's politics of memory in the 1990s. It became a symbol of universal, ultimate evil and a sort of founding myth for Europe after the Cold War. Thus, memories of wars and Holocaust function as tools used to define the identity of European liberal democratic societies. It is expected that they can help to

¹ For the key concepts see "Heritage and Memory in a Changing Europe. Introductory Remarks" by Krzysztof Kowalski, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa in this volume.

fulfil one of the main goals of European integration – the prevention of wars and genocide in Europe.

The examples of the Europeanization of heritage and memory provided in this volume show that its efficacy varies, with some places easily being linked to the European context and others resisting it. In other words, it does not follow the same course everywhere nor does it lead to the same redefinition of the past. The Polish and Swedish examples are excellent proof of this, as evidenced and explored in the *Conclusion* (Zdzisław Mach).