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Policies of Memory, Politics of Forgetting: A Comparative Study of Social Memory and Cultural Heritage in Brazil and the United States

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Author

Pereira Ferreira, Samila

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Abstract

The comparative study proposed in this research between German-Pomeranians / Brazil and Native Americans Tiguas / USA, despite the differences in the historic and geographic trajectories, highlights similarities in the effects that contemporary public policies may exert in processes of social memory projection and selection of what will and what will not be recognized as cultural heritage. In fact, as current discussions in the fields of Anthropology, memory and cultural heritage suggest, remembering and forgetting are two faces of the same coin. Therefore, processes of identity claims, particularly those fostered in the context of tourism globalization and mass culture, may present the risk of oblivion to other less empowered social groups, therefore constituting a threat to the very tenets of diversity. In this theoretical context social memory and the preservation of heritage references are dependent on contemporary social and political contexts in which remembering and forgetting are negotiated practices, part of heritage and identity strategies of a people. It is from this perspective that I seek to observe the importance of heritage public policies and their effects in the construction of collective memories opposed to the risk of social oblivion.

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Subject

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Kleist discusses academic approaches to social memory and migration while offering a novel concept of political memories for the analysis of the memory and migration nexus. He explores some of the connections and challenges that link the two areas by focussing on belonging and integration, and the political, historical, and social dimensions thereof. Memories establish a connection between a collective and individual past, between origins, heritage, and history. A groundbreaking contribution to an emerging field of study, *Memory and Migration* provides valuable insight into the connections between memory, place, and displacement. [View. Show abstract.](#)

Comparative politics frequently entailed not making comparisons but studying the politics of a foreign country. This methodological choice came hand in hand with an epistemological one. Accordingly, comparative politics has also considered the ideological dimensions of state formation and of intrastate identity conflict.² Research on the ideological underpinnings of the modern state has focused on the formation of national identities. Although the debate on the sources, structure, and dimensions of national adscription and nationalism is far from settled, the scholarly community now sees nations as mostly “modern constructs,” i.e. as separate communities to whom individuals perceive themselves as belonging with particular moral attachments and political obligations.