

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
European College

Master's Thesis

Kristiina Mür

**POLITICS OF MEMORY AND JOURNALISM'S MEMORY WORK:
Changes of Commemoration Practices of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in
the Estonian and Russian Press 1989 – 2014**

Supervisor: Ene Kõresaar, PhD

Tartu 2015

I have written the Master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

..... 14.05.2015

Student's code: A73572

The defense takes place: 29.05.2015, Tartu

Opponent: Valeria Jakobson, PhD

Abstract

The current thesis set out to explore the dynamics of collective memory and identity in anniversary journalism, using the case study of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP) signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in 1939. MRP was chosen due to offering multiple layers of commemoration and also being politically relevant in the present day, and not only domestically or bilaterally but starting from 2009 also at pan-European level. The empirical material comprised newspaper articles from the Estonian (both in the Estonian and Russian language) and Russian press between 1989-2004, thus also allowing for a comparison across different mnemonic communities. The theoretical part of the thesis dealt with the key concepts of collective memory and identity, politics of memory and journalism's memory work (anniversary journalism). Content analysis was used to achieve the research aim.

The given study provides an overview of the emergence and gradual disappearance – the dynamics – of the commemoration of the MRP in the Estonian press. The results give ground to conclude that the current politics of memory behind the MRP, now mostly at European level, will keep the anniversary date of 23 August as a worthy object of research for memory scholars. However, even if the relevance of 23 August is increasing, it will most likely not be the MRP as the centrepiece. It remains to be seen to which extent it will become a commemoration day of the Baltic Way and/or for the victims of totalitarian regimes. As for Russia and the Russian press, the relevance of the MRP and 23 August will most likely depend on the role this date will become to hold in the European politics of memory, since the thesis showed the journalistic treatment of the MRP in the Russian press to be mostly of reactionary nature to others' initiatives.

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Introduction

Different communication scientists (Edy 1999; Kitch 2008; Zelizer 2008, Zelizer & Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2014) have brought attention to the tendency that the constant search for newsworthiness has led to journalism being unfairly regarded as of secondary relevance in memory studies. Past seems to be something that journalists do not have to deal with – many news stories become too old for publishing already the next day as their newsworthiness simply expires. According to popular belief, journalists might write the so-called first draft of the past but the interpretation of this “raw material” is then left for historians. However, journalists do not only create the first draft of interpreting the past but in many cases also the following ones. Thus, journalism cannot be considered as merely a carrier of collective memory but also as means of significantly impacting it.

The current research builds upon my work done so far in the field of journalism’s memory work in Estonia. In my Bachelor’s thesis (Müür 2011), I examined the dynamics of journalistic commemoration of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP) in the Estonian press during the years 1989, 1999 and 2009. The research proved fruitful in its findings that were later published (Kõresaar, Müür & Kreegipuu 2013) in the “Approaches to Culture Theory” series by the University of Tartu Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory. Nevertheless, it also underlined the potential for expanding the scope of the topic both in terms of depth and width.

The MRP provides a significant case study for mostly two reasons. Firstly, it is a rich source for studying the concept of dynamics of remembering due to the multiple layers of commemoration originating from the 1939 initial event – above all the 1979 Baltic Appeal, 1989 Baltic Way and 2009 pan-European commemoration day. Therefore it deserves further scrutiny in terms of depth. For that purpose I have extended the data sample to cover the anniversary years of 1994, 2004 and 2014. Secondly, the commemoration of the MRP still holds its political significance and not only at domestic Estonian level but since 2009 also at international, pan-European level. With the proclamation of 23 August as the Commemoration Day for Victims of Totalitarian

Regimes, it has been instrumentalised to homogenise the European memory of the 20th century history and to include the Eastern European narratives into the mainstream European narrative. Hence, I analyse the treatment of the anniversary of the pact in the Estonian press against the treatment by the “Other” – Russia – that sees the new remembrance day as an attack against the core of its collective identity by equating Communism and Nazism, two allegedly incomparable regimes. In the context of researching the Estonian and Russian press, attention is paid to how the image of the MRP conveyed in the Estonian Russian-language press relates to that in the Estonian-language and Russian press.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to scrutinise the dynamics of commemorating a past event, in this case the MRP, in the framework of anniversary journalism and map how this is linked with political realities in the international arena. This involves both the bilateral Estonian/Baltic – Russian and a broader pan-European level. Despite the empirical material of Estonian and Russian newspapers, the theoretical and empirical framework is not strictly constrained at the Estonian national level. This is due to the common past of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the 20th century justifying their treatment as one entity – the Baltic States – in the international arena (Šleivyte 2010: 1). As a result, knowledge of Estonia allows generalisations on the Baltic States and, likewise, it is often possible to infer about Estonia from information about the Baltic States more broadly.

This thesis is made up of five chapters. In the first chapter I give a historical overview of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its importance both in Estonia and Russia. The second chapter provides the theoretical framework into which this particular research on the MRP is placed. It gives an overview of the main concepts used in the thesis – collective memory and identity, politics of memory, interdependency of media and politics, and journalism’s memory work (including anniversary journalism). In the third chapter on methodology, I define the research question and describe the principles for carrying out the given research. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the research findings and the fifth chapter consists of conclusions.

1. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – Historical Overview and Importance

On 23 August 1939, Viacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Union's People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, signed a Non-Aggression Treaty between their countries, popularly known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP). The pact included a secret protocol that divided Eastern Europe into so-called spheres of influence. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Eastern Poland and Bessarabia went under the Soviet sphere of influence. Lithuania initially belonged to the German sphere of influence but with a secret protocol added to the Treaty of Friendship and Demarcation, agreed upon on 28 September 1939 between the Soviet Union and Germany, Lithuania also went to the Soviet sphere of influence. Both the Soviet Union and Germany wanted to avoid a two-front war in order to maximise their chances to realise their geopolitical ambitions. (Vizulis 1990, Lindpere 2009)

There were two different interpretations. On the one hand, Estonian and Baltic historians regard the MRP as one of the main triggers of the Second World War (WWII). The signing of the pact is also seen as laying the foundations for occupation and annexation of the Baltic States against international law. (Vizulis 1990: vii; Laar 2009: 86)

On the other hand, the official history of the Soviet Union did not include any references to the secret protocols of the MRP. According to formal narrative, the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union did not result from any kind of external pressure. Instead, it came about due to uprisings of workers and peasants who themselves wanted to be part of the Soviet Union (Wertsch 2008: 61). The pact itself was explained as serving the long-term interests of the Baltic peoples since it saved them from being absorbed into Nazi Germany (Vizulis 1990: 117).

During Soviet times, it was possible to publicly discuss the MRP only outside the Soviet Union. According to Kaarel Piirimäe & Peeter Kaasik (2007:27), a new era began with the 1979 Baltic Appeal when, for the first time, public disclosure of the secret protocol

was demanded from inside the Soviet Union. 45 Baltic dissidents (in Estonia it was signed by Mart Niklus, Enn Tarto, Endel Ratas and Erik Udam) sent an open letter to various leaders of states on either side of the Iron Curtain, including the Secretary General of the United Nations, calling for the disclosure of the secret protocols and elimination of its consequences. It was hoped that with the pact condemned legally void, the same judgement would extend to the Baltic membership in the Soviet Union. Above all, it was the MRP that was seen as the main reason for the *de facto* discontinuity of the Baltic statehoods.

Shortly after becoming the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev initiated the official policy of *glasnost* (“openness”) that called for greater openness and transparency in the political system. Although the MRP was not the only “blank spot” of the 20th century Soviet history to be publicly debated, it played the central role from the Estonian and Baltic perspectives since it was directly connected to the quest for restoring independent statehood. It was only in December 1989 that Gorbachev eventually officially acknowledged the existence of the secret protocols which had actually led to the occupation of the Baltic States (Laar 2009: 112). This became possible thanks to several years of political pressure by the Baltic States, which in Estonia began with the 23 August 1987 demonstrations in Hirvepark in Tallinn. This was the first time that public called for the disclosure and denunciation of the MRP secret protocols.

In March 1989, the elections to the USSR All-Union People’s Deputies Congress (PDC) took place. The Baltic delegates formed common goals – economic autonomy for the Baltics and the denunciation of the MRP (Laar 2009: 111). According to Mart Laar (2010: 198-199) it became clear by summer 1989 that the latter goal will not be achieved easily, so that the leaders of the popular fronts of the three republics decided to organise a large-scale event that “*neither the world nor Moscow could not ignore*” (Laar 2010: 199). On 23 August 1989, on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the pact, a 600 km long human chain that became known as the Baltic Way connected all three Baltic capitals by around 2 million people holding hands.

Even though the MRP was declared legally void by the Soviet PDC in December 1989, it did not bring about the restoration of the Baltic statehoods as had been hoped for.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* still resulted in the need to change the official Soviet discourse about the pact, more precisely - to introduce the existence of the secret protocols. According to James V. Wertsch (2008: 62), this was done in a manner of being carefully critical towards the Soviet system - the new narratives displayed passivity along the lines such as "*breaches of the law characteristic for those years of the abuse of power*". Wertsch considers this narrative rift as the first step in the post-Soviet revisionism of the pact. The second step in the post-Soviet revision - the narrative repair - used "Stalin's Difficult Choice" as the prevailing discourse (Wertsch 2008: 63). This discourse explains that even though the Soviet Union was reluctant to extend its borders, it had to do so in order to defeat the German expansionism and the threat it posed to the world. More importantly, Wertsch does not see this narrative to result from a purely defensive self-interest. Instead, he considers it as a manifestation of a deeper-rooted schematic narrative template. This can be seen as an overarching narrative, the plot of which can be applied to explain historical events from different periods of time. According to Wertsch (2008: 67), in the case of Russia and Russians the schematic narrative template takes the form of "Expulsion of Foreign Enemies". Thus, the underlying concept behind the discourse of Stalin's Difficult Choice regarding the MRP is an example of expelling the Nazis from the Soviet Union. In this light, the Baltic attempts to revise the significance of the MRP at the end of 1980s might have contributed to the temporary narrative rift, but the subsequent narrative repair was determined already by a force much stronger. Following the line of the schematic narrative template, it becomes understandable why the cornerstone of the Russian commemorative calendar is the 9 May Victory Day that marks the final expulsion of foreign enemies. The MRP, in this light, is seen as a merely pragmatic step towards the main goal, and thus of no substantial relevance in terms of shaping the Russian collective memory and identity.

As for the Estonian schematic narrative templates, Heiko Pääbo (2011: 101-105) has brought out four of them: "Period of Light vs Period of Darkness", "Persistent Move towards Independence", "Interregnum as Historical Moment for Independence", and "Heroic Survival". Elements from all these templates can be found in the Estonian 20th century historiography, including events related to the establishment, loss and restoration of the Estonian independence. While Russia sees the MRP as Stalin's

Difficult Choice, Estonia views the pact as a trigger that brought about the Period of Darkness in the form of Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. Since the war itself is a turning point between the Period of Light and the Period of Darkness - the interwar period of independent Estonia and the post-war Soviet-occupied Estonia - it is here that the MRP steps into play as a defining moment in the fate of Estonia, and hence in the Estonian collective memory.

The commemorations of the MRP in the 1990s, following the restoration of the Estonian/Baltic independence and the collapse of the Soviet Union, can be considered as a decade for stabilisation in the field of collective memory. Estonia is an independent country where the “blank spots” of the Soviet period have been disclosed, and the society has been free to draw up its anniversary calendar of past events to be commemorated. Even though at the end of the 1980s the disclosure of the MRP secret protocols was related to the quest of restoring independence – which eventually happened - the pact has not been forgotten and it has established itself well in the anniversary calendar. In Russia, the main focus lies in commemorating the victory of WWII. While Russia celebrates the eventual success of freeing its country, Estonia seeks condemnation for the injustice of losing its independence.

The 2000s, however, saw the activation and renegotiation of the meaning of the 23rd of August at a wider European level, especially after the European Union’s Eastern enlargement in 2004. By the end of the 20th century, the memory of Holocaust had secured itself as a pillar of the Western European identity (Judt 2005: 820). The 2004 enlargement was the first in the EU’s history that saw the accession of countries in whose collective memory the Holocaust did not play such a central role as did the crimes of the Communist regime (Closa Montero 2009: 119). This resulted in the question of a possible common EU politics of memory (Closa Montero 2009: 117-118). The new EU member states realised that the crimes of the Communist regime were largely also “blank spots” in the Western European collective memory and, consequently, the respective Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) took up various initiatives to raise awareness about that. What is more, this aim did not just serve a purely educational purpose – the past also served the foreign and security policy agendas. As argued by Maria Mälksoo (2006), it was especially the Baltic States and

Poland who believed that through appropriate condemnation of the Communist crimes, a “never again” approach similar to the Holocaust would also result in eliminating the perceived Russian threat to the independence of these countries.

In September 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution proclaiming 23 August as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism. The Vilnius Declaration of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly supported the initiative on 3 July 2009. Therefore, the date that had for a long time been commemorated in Estonia/Baltic States, was from then on institutionalised with the aim of homogenising the viewpoints of different EU member states on the past. Russia, on the other hand, has viewed this as placing an equation mark between Communism and Nazism, ie themselves and their greatest perceived historical enemy, and thus as an attack against the core of their collective identity.

These pan-European efforts of the Central and Eastern European countries inevitably activated Russia to take a defensive position in this “mnemonic battlefield” in order to counter the attempts to redefine its role in 20th century European history. While Russia was able to influence discussions about history and memory in the frameworks of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and OSCE because of its membership, it did not have the same political leverage anymore in the European Union (Troebst 2012). On 15 May 2009, shortly before the OSCE Vilnius Declaration, the Russian President Dmitri Medvedev signed a decree “On the Commission under the President of the Russian Federation for Countering Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia’s Interests” (President of Russia 2009). In an interview in 2010, he explained that “*those who place the role of the Red Army and those of the fascist occupiers on one and the same level are committing a moral crime*” (Abramov 2010).

In spite of the EU-level initiatives, the quest for universal condemnation of the crimes of totalitarian regimes has left the national publics of wider Europe largely indifferent (Troebst 2012: 17). Troebst (2012) shows that it is 1 September 1939 that is considered to be the starting point of WWII by most Western European countries. As a result, the date of 23 August does not exist in their calendar of mnemohistorically important events, even if these countries do condemn totalitarianism as such. It is only nine EU

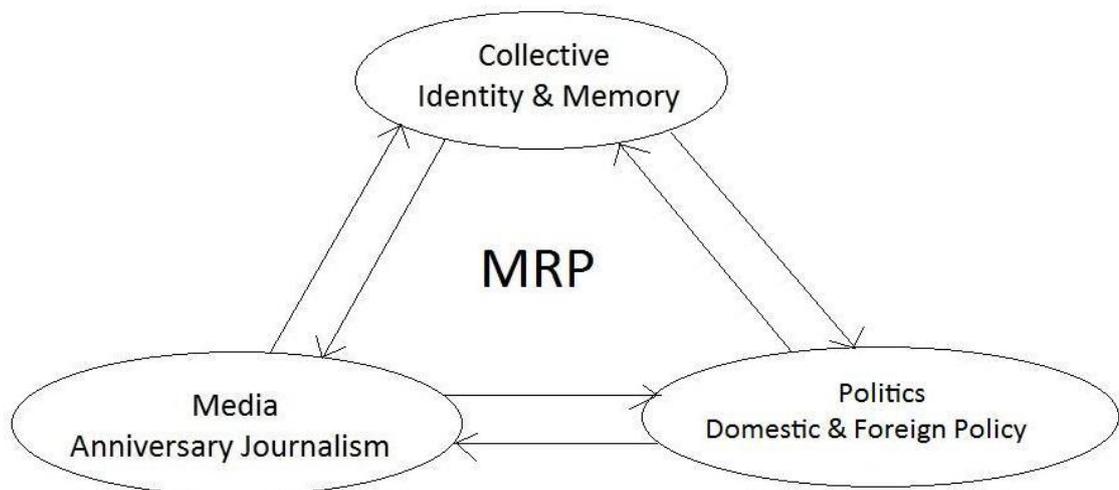
member states, mostly the former Eastern Bloc countries that have stipulated the remembrance day into their legislation – Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden. Irrespective of the extent to which the EU will eventually internalise this commemoration day and its underlying narrative, the topic of 23 August will continue to include Russia as long as no major changes will come about in the Russian collective identity and memory. According to Wertsch (2008), this seems highly unlikely to happen. In 2009, Vladislav Smirnov (2009:200), a Russian historian, claimed that despite the MRP significantly facilitating the isolation and destruction of Poland by Hitler, the pact on its own cannot be regarded as a cause for Hitler attacking Poland or the overall outbreak of WWII.

The pact has also retained its political relevance in Russia. In November 2014, the Russian President Putin claimed that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was only an example of “methods of foreign policy” practised back then and that the Soviet Union needed time to postpone the unavoidable war, while also pointing out to Poland for engaging in these same methods by seizing a part of Czechoslovakia (Dubrovskaya 2014). Therefore, the schematic narrative template of Expulsion of Foreign Enemies and the discourse of Stalin’s Difficult Choice still hold ground.

Putin repeated the same justifying viewpoint even as recently as the next day after the 9 May 2015 Victory Day commemorations in Moscow, during a joint press-conference with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Interfax 2015). Merkel stated that although the pact was signed based on equal grounds, it is still Nazi Germany to be blamed for the outbreak of WWII. The pact remains also of high relevance to historians, with, for example, Timothy Snyder arguing shortly before the 2015 Victory Day commemorations that Russia should also publicly discuss how the Soviet Union started the war as Germany’s ally (Roonemaa 2015). This recent re-actualisation of the pact, together with opposing schematic narrative templates in Russia and Estonia/Baltic States and the lack of universal appreciation among EU member states regarding the 23 August pan-European commemoration day give ground to believe that the anniversary of the MRP will maintain its relevance as an object of research in the future as well.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Framework

The aim of this chapter is to map the theoretical and empirical framework necessary to scrutinise the dynamics of journalistic commemoration of the MRP. It explores the intersection of key concepts of collective memory and identity, politics of memory and journalism's memory work (see Graph 1).



Graph 1. The conceptual framework of the given research.

2.1 History, Collective Memory and Collective Identity

In order to research the dynamics of remembering the MRP anniversary, it is first important to define the concepts often used about the past – *history* and *memory*.

The concept of collective memory is closely connected with that of collective identity. Maurice Halbwachs (1992, via Misztal 2003: 52) defines collective memory as being both “*a shared image of a past and the reflection of the social identity of the group that framed it*“. Therefore, one can view collective memory and collective identity as processes on how a given social group continues to negotiate with and define itself through its past. Even though the word “collective” as such refers to a number of

individuals, the concepts of collective memory and collective identity encompass more than simply the sums of identities and memories of different individuals because collective memory is always “*socially framed*” (Halbwachs 1992, via Mizstal 2003: 51). Individuals shape their images of the past according to how different social groups have previously defined what and how should be remembered at the collective level. This, in turn, will then be used to shape societal solidarity (Halbwachs 1992; via Mizstal 2003: 51-52). Therefore, the MRP is not merely an important past event (although to a different extent in Estonia and Russia), but its commemoration also serves to confirm its role in the making and remaking of collective identity of a given social group.

The multiplicity of collective memories also needs to be specified in the context of this research. As Barbara A. Misztal (2003: 51) brings out that in the cases of the plurality of social frameworks, there are as many memories as groups. Even though the Estonian and Russian interpretations of past events, including the MRP, are often contradicting each other, there always exists a variety of discourses even within the same country. However, it is in this context that Wertsch (2002: 26) calls for greater attention to the means of distribution of collective memory as he argues for different groups to “*share a representation of the past because they share textual resources*”. These texts can be seen to group different mnemonic communities that include individuals with shared experiences and who also place equal importance on these experiences (Irwin-Zarecka 1994, via Aarelaid-Tart 2012: 146). As journalism is one of the most prominent ways how knowledge is disseminated in society, the different newspapers used in this study can be considered to form distinct mnemonic communities around them. Since the given study revolves around the dynamics of remembering in mainstream newspapers, it allows to draw conclusions about the prevailing viewpoints shaping the ways how the past is remembered within these groups.

In order to explain why some past events turn to be remembered more than others, it is important to differentiate between the concepts of *history* and *collective memory*. Even though they both deal with past events that have once happened and cannot change anymore as such, these concepts can be distinguished by the aim and temporal focus of their treatment of the past. Both Halbwachs (1992, via Olick 1999a: 335) and Wertsch (2008: 60) consider *history* as a distanced version of the past, which we no longer

associate ourselves with (Halbwachs 1992; via Olick 1999a: 335) and which aims for objectivity even when it means acknowledging narratives inconvenient for oneself (Wertsch 2008: 60). *Collective memory*, on the other hand, can be considered as the “*active past*” (Halbwachs 1992; via Olick 1999a: 335) since it involves an “*identity project*” (Wertsch 2008: 60) important in the present. Therefore, collective memory can be considered as a social group’s present-centred understanding of past events that they consider important, together with “additional tasks” given to them. When events in the collective memory lose their significance and emotional connection with the present, they become *history*.

In this respect, a clear difference becomes apparent between Estonia and Russia. For Estonia, especially in the context of the pan-European politics of memory, the mnemopolitical aim is not to let the MRP slip into *history*, as through remembering the pact the Eastern European EU member states hope to secure the atrocities of the 20th century to never happen again. In Russia, on the other hand, the pact is mnemopolitically dealt with as something that should have already been left behind as *history* by Eastern Europeans. However, in Russia, the pact has never actually been part of *history* as Halbwachs and Wertsch have used the term. During Soviet times the existence of secret protocols was denied to be part of historiography. Nowadays, the level of openness of Russia’s archives that greatly inhibits historical research to be carried out on WWII demonstrates the country’s sensitivity towards the past. As a result, the importance of the MRP derives from the position that it holds in the *collective memories* of the respective countries and how it is *remembered*.

It is important to underline that the interpretation of past events can never be independent from present social realities. Different present realities result in different attitudes towards the past. Misztal (2003) calls this the *presentist approach* in memory studies. This approach explains how the dominant sectors of the society deliberately “invent” new traditions and rituals in order to create “*new political realities, defining nations and sustaining national communities*” (Misztal 2003: 56). When it comes to the MRP, it is also noticeable how the ruling elites have associated the pact with different meanings depending on the present-day political realities.

However, the years under scrutiny in this research – 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 – cannot be viewed as six separate present-to-past relationships independent of each other. The images of the past depend also on the ways how we have reached the present – through the “*accumulation of previous such relationships and their ongoing constitution and reconstitution*” (Olick 1999b: 382). Misztal (2003:67-74) defines it as the *dynamics of memory approach* in memory studies. Jeffrey K. Olick researched the dynamics of 8 May commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany and concluded that commemoration events “*not only reflect the commemorated event and the contemporary circumstances, but are path-dependent products of earlier commemorations*” as well as events in between these commemorations (Olick 1999b: 381). The same applies to the MRP. The commemoration of the MRP in the Estonian press can be considered three-layered – references to the signing of the pact in 1939, recollections of the 1989 Baltic Way and the implications of present-day realities (Müür 2011). The importance of the 1979 Baltic Appeal is evident to a minimal extent but still exists.

Hence, the given research relies similarly on the idea that, on the one hand, remembering is influenced by the present-day realities. On the other hand, the presents that have turned into past also have an impact on how past events will be remembered.

2.2 Memory and Politics: Role of Collective Memory and Collective Identity in Domestic and Foreign Policy

As input to journalism comes from the “real world” around us, it is crucial to scrutinise the concepts of collective memory and collective identity from the perspective of how the “real world” is created - domestic and foreign policy-making.

Marek Tamm (2013: 651) defines memory politics as „*endeavoring to shape the society’s collective memory and establish notions of what is and is not to be remembered of the past, employing to this end both legislative means and practical measures*“. However, the link between politics and memory is a two-way process. In

addition to the proactive top-down memory work, it is also important to explore how past events active in the collective memory affect policy-making.

Therefore, Jeffrey K. Olick & Daniel Levy (1997: 923) suggest viewing collective memory as part of a political-cultural process that “*remedies the presuppositional tendency to view it [collective memory – K.M.] either as an unchanging and definitive past or as pure strategy, always malleable in the present*”. By examining the role of the collective memory of Holocaust in German policy-making, they distinguish between two kinds of cultural constraints: mythical and instrumental. While mythical constraints deal with the power of the past over the present; the instrumental aspect, *vice versa*, deals with the power of the present over the past (Olick & Levy 1997: 922). Eva-Clarita Onken (2009), who researched the 9 May Victory Day commemorations, differentiates between three levels of analysing the role of memory in politics – domestic, bilateral and international. This model is also useful for the given case study of commemorations of the MRP. The domestic treatments of the past can largely be described from the aspect of political elite shaping memory (instrumental constraints), the bilateral level in Estonian/Baltic – Russian relations is largely affected by collective memory and identity (mythical constraints), and the post-2004 EU enlargement has brought instrumental constraints back into play.

2.2.1 Politics of Memory at Domestic Level

Marek Tamm (2013) distinguishes between four dimensions how memory politics (instrumental constraints) is being carried out at domestic level in Estonia: legislative, institutional, commemorative and monumental. The legislative dimension consists of different laws, resolutions and declarations of the Estonian Parliament and Government, speeches and initiatives of the President, all with the aim to assess and reassess the past – WWII and the consequent Soviet occupation, mostly from the viewpoint of those suppressed by the former regime. These initiatives started already at the end of 1980s during *glasnost* and have continued all the way into 21st century. In addition to legislative measures, the Estonian authorities have also created various institutions for gathering and analysing data about the occupations of Estonia - most notably the State

Commission for the Examination of Repressive Policies and Crimes Against Humanity, the foundation decree of which was adopted already as early as 1992 (Tamm 2013: 659). The legislative impact also concerns the commemorative dimension of politics of memory by determining the anniversary calendar to be remembered, as governed by the Public Holidays and Days of National Importance Act. For example, on 18 June 2009 the Estonian Parliament amended that act by including the 23 August pan-European commemoration day as a public holiday (Tamm 2013: 663).

In Russia, the domestic treatment of memory is largely described by securitisation of memory. Although it is not exclusively Russian and not limited to only domestic interests, Mälksoo (2015: 1) describes this phenomenon as efforts by the political elite to delegitimise or even criminalise the interpretation of certain historical narratives. Despite the 2009 Presidential Commission to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests disbanded in February 2012 (President of Russia 2012), a new federal law from as recently as May 2014 has taken the aim of that commission to another level. It adds a new article "Rehabilitation of Nazism" into the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation that specifies certain viewpoints regarding WWII to be penalised (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 2014). Ivan Kurilla (2014: 3) considers this law to facilitate the state's aim to become the sole guide of national memory, especially as the generation of war veterans is fading away.

Although politics of memory deals predominantly with the instrumental treatment of the past, the mythical constraints on domestic affairs cannot be left aside. In the case of Estonia, a number of these constraints originate from the differing viewpoints the Estonian and Russian-speaking communities have regarding the past, with the Russian-speaking minority tending to adhere to the narratives prevailing in Russia rather than those of Estonians (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2009, Mälksoo 2009a; Bonnard 2013 in the case of Latvia). Probably the highest profile example of that is the 2007 Bronze Soldier crisis over the Estonian government's decision to relocate an old Soviet war memorial. On the one hand, this decision can be seen as an example of the monumental dimension (regarding "memory spaces") of memory politics (Tamm 2013). On the other hand, it was the power of the past over the present that mobilised many Estonians to

vote for political parties who were in favour of relocating the monument, and the Russians to eventually riot against the actual relocation of the monument.

2.2.2 Politics of Memory at Bilateral and International Level

A considerable amount of research has gone into analysing the discursive battlefield between Estonia/Baltic States and Russia (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2009, Ehin & Berg 2009, Fofanova & Morozov 2009, Kattago 2009a, Kattago 2009b, Lašas & Galbreath 2013, Lehti et al 2008, Mälksoo 2009a, Mälksoo 2009b, Onken 2009, Perchoc 2013, Pääbo 2011, Šleivyte 2010, Troebst 2012, Tsygankov 2013, Wertsch 2008, Zhurzhenko 2015 – this list is by no means exhaustive). Various studies have examined the most prominent cases of these “memory clashes” – 9 May Commemoration Day (Onken 2009, Zhurzhenko 2015), “monument wars” (Mälksoo 2009a; Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2009, Lehti et al 2008, Kattago 2009b), aspects of post-communist transitional justice (Pettai & Pettai 2015, Tamm 2013). The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact has been studied by, for example, Wertsch (2008) by using history textbooks and Troebst (2012) by concentrating on the 23 August pan-European remembrance day, but not from the viewpoint of journalistic commemoration. Whether the point of departure for the aforementioned works has been politics/international relations or memory studies, the link between these two has been made evident. What is more, this is not only a matter of bilateral relations since the “memory wars” have also extended onto the international, mostly pan-European level (eg Ehin & Berg 2009, Mälksoo 2006, Mälksoo 2009b, Onken 2009, Pettai & Pettai 2015).

The Bronze Soldier provides a vivid example of mythical constraints of the “active past” affecting two countries’ bilateral relations. In this particular case, even though Russia did not have the leverage to successfully call for the Estonian government to step down, it still had the power to express its dissatisfaction by sharply decreasing trade volumes with Estonia. The mythical constraints have also had a profound impact on especially the Baltic States’ foreign and security policy thinking and decision-making. The primary example of this is the Baltic States’ determination to join NATO due to the

perceived threat of Russia's imperialist ambitions (Šleivyte 2010: 119, Lašas & Galbreath 2013: 153).

Hence, it was widely hoped, as argued by neoliberal institutionalists, that membership in the Western international organisations would help to improve the Baltic-Russian relations but empirical evidence has proven otherwise (Ehin & Berg 2009: 6-7). Morozov (2009: 3) points out quite a telling example of the Central and Eastern European leaders' open letter to the US President Obama that even in 2009 first mentions “*claims to our own historical experiences*” on their list of concerns relating to Russia, ahead of security, economics, and energy”. Instead, following the lines of social constructivists, identity must be taken as the key determinant in foreign policy-making, including to explain the difficulties in the Baltic-Russian and, consequently, the EU-Russian relations (Ehin & Berg 2009, Fofanova & Morozov 2009, Mälksoo 2009b, Tsygankov 2013).

The Estonian/Baltic - Russian “memory war” entered the international dimension after the 2004 EU enlargement. The first time the Baltic-Russian memory cleavage was brought into large-scale international attention took place before the celebrations of the 9 May 2005 commemorations in Moscow (Mälksoo 2009b, Onken 2009, Zhurzhenko 2015). In addition to serving Russia's domestic mnemopolitical needs, this event also aimed to internationally highlight Russia's vital contribution to bringing peace to Europe and thus securing Russia's place as “European” (Tsygankov 2013). As a result, the Baltic States and Russia can be considered to have a discourse competition with the aim of expanding what “Europe” means by trying to include their narratives into the mnemonic map of Europe (Mälksoo 2009a). At the same time they both try to show the other as being “false Europeans” and consequently trying to exclude the other from being considered “European” (Mälksoo 2009a, Zhurzhenko 2015).

Returning to the concept of collective identity, the Russian-Baltic “memory war” serves as an example of the notion of “Othering”. The collective identity of a given group or community is only partly about defining what the group itself is about - its “self”. In many instances, one's identity is also defined by what the given group is *not*. Therefore, an “Other” becomes necessary in order to complete the picture. In the case of Baltic-

Russian relations, both sides provide each other the reference point of what they are *not* (Fofanova & Morozov 2009, Mälksoo 2009b, Pääbo 2011, Tsygankov 2013).

It is in the context of the European politics of memory that the MRP comes back into play as an important object of research. Starting from 2009, the 70th anniversary of the signing of the MRP, this date and thus the memory of the pact, has been instrumentalised to symbolise the reunification of Europe and also to secure the place of the Eastern European memories as “European”. On the other end, this initiative has been heavily criticised by Russia as an attempt to revise history and equate two allegedly incomparable regimes. However, with only nine EU member states officially following it, this remembrance day has not yet been internalised by the EU. Therefore, this issue still continues to be of greater importance for the Eastern half of Europe and the future EU politics of memory regarding the MRP and its anniversary will most likely maintain its relevance as a research object. Likewise, the door is still open for Russia to contest the alleged revision of history.

To sum up, domestic policies resulting from specific collective memories and identities can easily, as is the case with Estonia/Baltic States and Russia, translate themselves into problematic bilateral relations. Furthermore, starting from 2004 and especially since 2009, the scope for debating bilateral memory cleavages has expanded to EU-level.

2.3 Interdependence of Media and Politics

It is crucial to understand why events, and thus also the commemoration of the MRP, on the political and media level cannot be viewed independently of each other. In the context of this research, the different levels of media freedom in Estonia and Russia¹ have to be taken into account, which then imply different kinds of relations between media and politics in the respective countries.

In countries where media can be considered an independent institution, such as Estonia, Jesper Strömbäck (2013: 368) suggests to talk about *mediatisation* of politics to give media its due credit in its relations with politics. It is a two-way process where the level

¹ Reporters without Borders „World Press Freedom Index 2014“ places Estonia 11th and Russia 148th among 180 countries. Freedom House (2014: 20-22) „Freedom of the Press 2014“ places Estonia 15th (Free) and Russia 176th (Not Free) among 197 countries.

of independence of media institutions determines the dependence of political institutions on them (Strömbäck 2013: 369). This becomes evident when political institutions and actors realise both their need for news coverage and their inability to independently determine the content of the news. As a result, one of the goals of politicians becomes to influence the news agenda which, in turn, starts to influence their actions, ie policy-making (Strömbäck 2013: 371-377, Meyen et al 2014: 271).

In countries where media is still part of and subordinated to the political system, eg Russia, it is more adequate to talk about the *politisisation of media* (Strömbäck 2013: 371). The situation in this case is reverse from the concept of mediatisation but it is nevertheless also an example of a linkage between politics and media.

As a result, the journalistic commemoration of the MRP can be determined either by the demand side of audiences in Estonia or from the supply side of policymakers in Russia. Even if the Estonian and Russian media systems have substantial differences in terms of their institutional independence, it must be taken into account that in both media systems/countries, journalists, politicians and the general public are still part of the same mnemonic community. The usage of collective memory and respective national narrative templates in conflicting issues - and the MRP also being such - can be seen as providing a framework for explaining actions to the audiences (Wertsch & Karumidze 2009).

Therefore, the scrutiny of journalistic commemoration of the MRP cannot be detached from events on the political arena.

2.4 Journalism's Memory Work

The explicitly past-oriented notion of *anniversary journalism* has to be first placed in a broader context of journalistic treatment of the past – despite the popular approach to journalism as a present-centred medium of mass information.

Barbie Zelizer (2008: 82) considers the past as one of the biggest sources that helps journalists to explain contemporary events. For example, during the process of restoring the Estonian independence, it was convenient to refer to the MRP as one of the reasons

for the *de facto* discontinuity of the Estonian statehood. When comparing the memory work of journalism with other means of communication, Jill A. Edy (1999) considers journalism to be one of the most important media because journalistic texts are created with the aim to maximise their reception in the auditorium.

The role of journalism in covering issues of the past and consequently also shaping collective memory is, similarly to politics, not unidirectional. Journalists as also parts of their mnemonic communities are not able to completely neutrally observe past events, in this case the MRP, since they are still connected with their cultural background when it comes to contextualising facts (Le 2006: 722). Therefore, according to Zelizer (1993), it is more appropriate to consider journalists as interpretive communities rather than representatives of a profession defined by objectivity and neutrality.

What is more, it is not always the journalists themselves who shape the images about the past. Eyal Zandberg (2010: 18) researched journalistic authority in telling the story about Holocaust commemoration days. He concluded that in many cases the journalists delegated their professional authority away to politicians, intellectuals, poets etc. Similarly to any other past event, the question of agency and authority is important when analysing journalism's memory work on the MRP.

There are different *ways* how past events can be dealt with in journalism (Edy 1999): historical analogies, historical contexts and commemorations, the latter often referred to as anniversary journalism. Historical analogies are used to illustrate stories focusing on the present. Past events are constructed in ways that share certain aspects with the present event, in order to facilitate drawing lessons from the past (Edy 1999: 77-79). Historical contexts are somewhat similar to historical analogies but their aim is to explain "how we got here" from certain past events (Edy 1999: 80). Chapter 2.4.1 deals with commemorations/ anniversary journalism in greater detail.

2.4.1 Anniversary Journalism

Anniversary journalism is a type of journalistic production targeted not at contemporary events but instead at commemorating anniversaries of important past events. According to Kitch (2002: 48), anniversaries are rituals through which a given community

celebrates itself and thanks to which reinforces its identity and values. In the case of an anniversary of a past event, the whole mnemonic community directs its attention to it and news media anchors its commemoration (Harro-Loit & Kõresaar 2010: 324). Since the anniversary calendar of events to be commemorated is largely drawn up by national authorities (Tamm 2013), anniversary journalism does not only invoke collective memory and identity but also creates it (Edy 1999, Harro-Loit & Kõresaar 2010, Kitch 2002).

Edy (1999: 74-75) brings out three possible manifestations of anniversary journalism:

- 1) Event-oriented commemoration. This can take the form of special commemoration events such as reenactments, wreath layings, speeches etc. On these occasions, the journalists describe both the contemporary event and the past event that is being commemorated. The best example of an event-oriented commemoration of the MRP is the 1989 Baltic Way.
- 2) Anniversary stories. As opposed to event-oriented commemoration which relies on contemporary events, the anniversary stories focus on the past. Even though the stories are primarily of informative nature, they also create an emotional link between the present and the past. In the case of the MRP, anniversary stories also form a significant part of its journalistic commemoration (Müür 2011). In 2009 *Postimees* there was even a special rubric dedicated to the anniversary of the pact.
- 3) Chance commemorations. Examples of this include obituaries in the case of a death of someone related to a past event. As the given study deals with news stories immediately around 23 August, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about commemoration of the MRP in this regard.

An important aspect of this research is the extent to which the viewpoints in the Estonian and Estonian Russian-language press coincide or differ. According to Valeria Jakobson (2013), the Estonian Russian-language media can be considered minority media since it is produced by, and for the members of, this minority group. Jakobson (2013) researched the representation of the past (different events that came up in the calendar, the MRP included) in the Estonian and Russian-language daily newspapers in 1994 and 2009. Her research findings prove valuable also for this research. Firstly, despite the “calendar” of past events represented in the Estonian and Russian-language

press approaching each other by 2009, the MRP still remained one of the points of controversy. Also, the Russian-language press can be seen to use the same discursive means about WWII as the hegemonic representations in the Soviet Union and Russia (Jakobson 2013: 77), thus in accordance with Brüggemann & Kasekamp (2009) and Mälksoo (2009a) seeing the Russian minority to a great extent adhering to the dominant narratives prevailing in Russia.

Another important study providing relevant background is by Halliki Harro-Loit & Anu Pallas (2013) who researched temporality and commemorations in Estonian dailies during 1989, 1994 and 2009. They concluded that attention to the past underwent several changes: while in 1989 *perestroika* sparked people's interest in the past; in 1994 the rapid social changes allowed the past to be only of secondary relevance; and the new "appearance" of the past took place in 2009. Therefore, the attention given to the MRP in Estonia can be expected to follow the same trends.

To sum up the theoretical and empirical framework, the given research relies on the mnemodynamical approach that, on the one hand, remembering is influenced by the present-day realities, but, on the other hand, the presents that have turned into past also have an impact on how past events will be remembered. While the dynamics of domestic treatment of the past in Estonia and Russia can greatly be described as the political elite shaping memory (instrumental constraints), the bilateral level in Estonian/Baltic – Russian relations is largely affected by collective memory and identity (mythical constraints), and the post-2004 EU enlargement has brought instrumental constraints back into play. Despite the Estonian and Russian media systems differing substantially in their level of independence from policymakers, in both cases the media and politics are mutually interlinked and the scrutiny of the journalistic commemoration of the MRP cannot thus be detached from events in the political arena. Since the Estonian/Baltic – Russian contradicting interpretations of the past, including the MRP, are to a great extent concentrated on commemorating anniversaries of different past events, it is anniversary journalism that provides a suitable framework for analysing the dynamics of commemorating the MRP in journalistic texts.

3. Research Question and Methodology

The main aim of this research is to analyse the dynamics of journalistic commemoration across different mnemonic communities, using the case study of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Estonian (including Estonian Russian-language) and Russian press. This chapter gives an overview of the research question, methodology and data sample used to reach the aim.

3.1 Research Question

Based on the research aim, the main research question is the following:

How has the journalistic commemoration of the MRP *changed* over time?

The changes under scrutiny include how the domestic and foreign (memory) *politics* have influenced the journalistic commemoration, what characterises journalism's memory work in terms of *who* shapes it and what kind of *images* are being conveyed about the MRP. This study analyses changes vertically within one mnemonic community and horizontally across different communities.

3.2 Research Method

In order to find answers to the research question, content analysis is used. This research method was first used during early decades of the last century (Kingsbury & Hart 1937; via McQuail 2010: 362), yet it has maintained its importance and continues to be widely used (Berelson 1952; via McQuail 2010: 362). Content analysis is both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative aspect of the research lies in using the statistical output regarding different characteristics of the news articles to provide understanding of the dynamics of commemoration. Due to the different sizes of data samples across the three mnemonic communities, this is best applied to the Estonian-language press. The

qualitative aspect of content analysis allows to systematise the meaning-making of the MRP into different categories.

Although content analysis can be considered “*reliable* (reproducible) *and not unique to the investigator*” (McQuail 2010: 362), the results still depend on the coding manual, the creation of which is influenced by the researcher. Similarly, it is up to the researcher to classify the data content under specific categories, which, depending on the question, can also be a matter of interpretation. Thus, Hsiu-Fang Hsieh & Sarah E. Shannon (2005: 1278) have defined qualitative content analysis as a “*subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*”. Nevertheless, content analysis offers a solid means for mapping the current research topic given its particularities.

The coding manual used for the content analysis is an adapted version of the one I used for my previous research (Müür 2011). The updates were introduced to achieve validity due to the substantial change in the research focus and data sample. While for my Bachelor’s thesis I examined only Estonian-language articles, the current research revolves greatly around the comparison of Estonian and Russian media (including the Estonian Russian-language newspapers). The new coding manual puts far greater emphasis on the meaning-making and contextualisational aspects of the MRP to accommodate the possible similarities, differences and interactions between these mnemonic communities. I carried out several test-codings to maximise reliability.

3.3 Coding Manual

To find answers to the research question, I examined the news stories against a coding manual containing more specific questions to operationalise different aspects of dynamics. The coding manual (see Appendix 4 for the full coding manual) is divided into three sets of sub-questions in the following way:

I The news value of MRP

- 1) What is the main topic of the article dealing with the MRP? The aim is to differentiate whether the articles have the MRP, the Baltic Way (the event itself, a commemoration event, recollections or analysis) or something completely different as their main topic. The greater the share of main topics related to the MRP, the more the commemoration of the MRP falls under the domain of anniversary journalism. The more the MRP is connected with present-day political debates, the greater its presence in the politically “active past”. It is also important to explore the changes in the share of articles that have the Baltic Way as the main topic while still referring to the MRP and those which do not refer to the MRP anymore. This allows to see the possible shifts in focus in the significance of 23 August as a commemoration day and to scrutinise the extent to which the Baltic Way has started to live a life of its own as an important event in the collective memory. In other questions in the coding manual the Baltic Way is considered to be related to the MRP as in those instances it is not necessary to differentiate between the Baltic Way and other commemoration events of the MRP.

II Agency and authority

- 2) Which sources are referred to when talking about the MRP? Only sources commenting on any aspects of the MRP (event itself, commemoration event, recollections etc) are coded.
- 3) Who is the speaker/author of the article, ie given the authority to tell the audience about the MRP? Both in the case of sources and speakers, several options are possible concerning participants/eyewitnesses/organisers of different relevant events, which in some cases could coincide with another option, eg “politician”, “historian” or “other expert”. In such cases the option “participant” is preferred, if the speaker talked about the respective event.

The more the journalists use their authority to tell the audiences about the MRP, the greater the prevalence of journalistic routine in telling about the past.

III Contextualisation and meaning-making of the MRP

- 4) What kind of attitudes are conveyed towards the MRP in the article? Are they positive, justifying, negative or neutrally highlighting its significance? These attitudes do not automatically constitute the viewpoints of the authors as in some cases the author might be referring to other sources that express different viewpoints, especially those expressed by the “Other”.
- 5) Does the article attempt “Othering” regarding interpretation of the MRP? The aim of this question is to determine whether the article describes only the dominant narratives in the respective country, or the article also brings out contradicting approaches about the MRP. For example, the Estonian articles are likely to be “Othering” Russia, while articles in Russia could be focusing on the opposing viewpoints in Estonia, the Baltic States or other countries affected by the MRP, eg Poland. The options under this category include all the objects and subjects of the MRP. In addition to that, a separate option is brought out for the possibility for contradicting viewpoints within the same country. Another option is for the Western countries directly not impacted by the pact but who nevertheless might have a different opinion to the pact than eg the Baltic States. This option derives from authors (Kattago 2009a, Mälksoo 2009b) who bring out the difference in dominant narratives in Eastern and Western Europe, and thus reflect articles that deal with the MRP at the pan-European level.
- 6) Historical contextualisation of the MRP. Actualisation of the MRP in other contexts such as historical research or school history textbooks gives ground to scrutinise the association of the MRP with the following past events: outbreak of WWII, occupation/annexation of Estonia/Baltic States, avoiding or postponing the possible Soviet-Nazi conflict, MRP as a consequence of the Munich Agreement, Germany’s betrayal of the pact and attack on the Soviet Union. The option of occupation/annexation of Estonia signifies more widely the events or processes during 1939 and 1940 where the articles associate the MRP with the gradual limitation of the Estonian independence until its complete loss.

- 7) What is the geopolitical scope of the discussion in the case of present-day discussions on the mnemopolitical treatment of the MRP and its anniversary? This question derives from Onken's (2009) differentiation between domestic, bilateral and international levels of memory politics. The aim is to analyse to what extent these levels are represented in the journalistic commemoration of the MRP. This, in turn, allows to draw conclusions on how the Estonian and Russian press "interact" with each other and also place it in a larger context.
- 8) In the case of 2009 and 2014, does the article mention and convey attitudes towards the 23 August European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes? This question helps to understand the extent to which the new remembrance day gets journalistic attention, and how this attention is qualitatively characterised.

3.4 Data Sample

The data sample is made up of articles mentioning the MRP or the Baltic Way in four different national daily newspapers in the Estonian and Russian media throughout 1989-2014 using the following principles.

- 1) The sample concentrates on the milestone anniversary years of the MRP – 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 as respectively the 50th, 55th, 60th, 65th, 70th and 75th anniversaries of the signing of the pact.
- 2) The common denominator for the selected newspapers is that they are all mainstream national daily newspapers. Therefore, they do not present all the possible existing discourses on the MRP in either Estonia or Russia, but instead offer an understanding of the mainstream prevailing viewpoints.
- 3) Since 25 years is a rather long period of time in order to be able to use newspapers that have been continuously published all throughout these years, a compromise had to be made by combining different outlets to cover each of the anniversary year under scrutiny. An attempt was made to maintain the same stance within the same outlet (or combination of outlets). However, it is also natural that the dominant lines within the same outlet might also change over the years. For example, when comparing *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* in 1989, it is *Izvestiya* representing a more liberal

view, while later compared to *Kommersant*, it is *Izvestiya* taking a more pro-government stance². Taking these limitations into account, the four sets of newspapers are made up as follows:

- Estonian newspaper – *Edasi* 1989; *Postimees* 1994-2014
 - Estonian Russian-language newspaper – *Molodyozh Estonii* 1989-2004; *Postimees* (in Russian) 2009-2014
 - Russia I – *Izvestiya* 1989-2014
 - Russia II – *Pravda* 1989, *Kommersant* 1994-2014
- 4) As the aim of this research is to analyse the representation of the MRP within the framework of anniversary journalism, the sample from each of the above-mentioned years is narrowed down to one week in August containing the anniversary of the MRP. Since the Internet was not used in 1989 and was not as widespread in the 1990s, I first analysed the 7 newspaper issues on paper – that of 23rd August, plus three preceding and three following issues. In case there was no issue published on 23rd, I took four issues after that date.
- 5) In addition to the articles published in print version, I also included articles mentioning the MRP or the Baltic Way that were published only in the online version of these newspapers, where available. In those cases, I stuck to the same time range as with the print version of that same newspaper.

The unit of analysis is one newspaper article – a text written in any genre together with its heading, subheading(s) and caption(s). The article qualified for analysis if it either explicitly or implicitly mentioned the MRP. In the case of the first question in the coding manual, I also counted the articles that either explicitly or implicitly referred to the Baltic Way only. Among those articles I distinguished between the ones that have the Baltic Way as their main topic and those that do not. I did not carry out any additional research into these articles since the focus of this thesis is the MRP.

Thus, the overall data sample to be analysed contains 160 articles (plus 65 articles only about the Baltic Way that will not be analysed further). Table 1 shows the exact distribution of articles among the outlets and years.

² Hereby the author wishes to thank prof. Viacheslav Morozov for his valuable advice on selecting the particular newspapers.

Table 1. Distribution of articles under scrutiny in the framework of anniversary journalism.

	Estonian	Estonian Russian-language		Russia I	Russia II	
	<i>Edasi</i> (1989), <i>Postimees</i>	<i>Molodyozh Estonii</i>	<i>Postimees in Russian</i>	<i>Izvestiya</i>	<i>Pravda</i>	<i>Kommersant</i>
1989	18	9	-	7	6	-
1994	9	3	-	0	-	2
1999	20 (+1 only Baltic Way)	6 (+3)	-	0	-	0
2004	5 (+4)	3 (+1)	-	0	-	1
2009	31 (+24)	-	6 (+4)	3	-	3
2014	21 (+24)	-	4 (+4)	0	-	3
TOTAL	104 (+53)	31 (+12)		25		

The low number of articles in Russia is the reflection of political reality where the pact is of lower relevance than in Estonia. Therefore, a side research is carried out to see in which contexts does the pact get mentioned throughout the year. I give an overview of the representation of the MRP in the respective outlets over the year. This is based on the online archives of both *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant*, which in the case of *Kommersant* covers years 1994-2014 but in the case of *Izvestiya* the availability is limited to only 2004-2014. Table 2 gives an overview of the number of articles referring to the MRP in the Russian press all throughout the anniversary years.

Table 2. Distribution of Russian articles dealing with the MRP all throughout the respective anniversary years (including in the framework of anniversary journalism).

Year	<i>Izvestiya</i>	<i>Kommersant</i>	Total
2014	6	15	21
2009	17	55	72
2004	1	6	7
1999	-	2	2
1994	-	5	5

4. Dynamics of Journalistic Commemoration of the MRP

This chapter summarises the research findings. They are divided into subchapters according to years. In each subchapter, a division line between Estonian-language, Estonian Russian-language and Russian press has been tried to maintain. Each group is then described according to the different characteristics under scrutiny. Some results, however, are presented in a more intertwined way due to the specifics of the journalistic commemoration of the MRP that year. In order to view the dynamics of a specific characteristic over the years, see Appendix 5 for tables containing all the results of content analysis. References to specific articles mentioned in this chapter are marked in brackets according to the number under which they appear in the lists of articles either in Appendix 1, Appendix 2, or Appendix 3.

4.1 Year 1989

Year 1989 differs from the later years due to *de facto* different states in the international arena. While during other years the study deals with two separate countries, Estonia and Russia, the newspapers under scrutiny in 1989 are all *de facto* domestic newspapers. While *Edasi* and *Molodyozh Estonii* are local Estonian (*de facto* Soviet Estonian) newspapers, then *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* are all-Soviet newspapers. Therefore, what is considered as Estonian-Russian bilateral level during later years analysed, is technically a domestic level in 1989 between local Estonian and all-Soviet. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, *Izvestiya* continues and *Kommersant* emerges as a Russian national daily newspaper. Despite that, the main characteristics of the 1989 articles are still due to the political realities of that year.

The biggest similarity across all three groups across all years examined is the journalistic attention that the MRP gets in 1989 due to the high level of the then

political relevance that the pact had. The public discussions taking place at the level of the USSR All-Union People's Deputies Congress were of great interest to all three groups, but the focuses differ. At the all-Soviet level, 1989 is the only year where the MRP itself is also the main topic in the articles that deal with the pact around its anniversary (see App. 5, Table 5). After 1989, the Russian articles that deal with the MRP around its anniversary have mostly something else as their main topic. On the other hand, 1989 is the only year in the Estonian-language press where other main topics figure as much (see App. 5, Table 3). This is mostly due to the MRP being integrated into other topics concerning the Estonian statehood that also needed to be disclosed and discussed in the new environment of *glasnost*. The Estonian Russian-language press has mostly the MRP and the Baltic Way as the main topics (see App. 5, Table 4). The discussions on the disclosure of the pact in the Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press place the MRP into a wider European context. As opposed to the Estonian-language press, the focus is more on the choices facing the Soviet Union at the end of 1930s in its relations with other Western European countries (see App. 5, Tables 20-22). The Baltic perspective is usually referred to as breaches from Lenin's foreign policy principles [107, 109, 137, 139]. Therefore, the Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press can be considered to also follow the narrative rift in their treatment of the MRP, as proposed by Wertsch (2008: 63). At the same time the Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press also deal with the question about the future of ethnic minorities in the Baltic States. Also, 1989 is the only year when the Baltic Way figures as the main topic in the articles in all-Soviet press as a back-then present-day mass demonstration against the Soviet regime. A difference between *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* emerges along the lines of attention paid to the MRP at the level of retrospective stories. It is *Izvestiya* with a considerably higher share of explicitly past-oriented analytical stories [137, 138, 139], while *Pravda* concentrates more on present-day political events, although the latter also involve judgements on the MRP due to historical contextualisation of present events (Edy 1999: 80). After 1989, the Russian articles that deal with the MRP do not have the pact as its main topic, therefore they do not commemorate it in the framework of anniversary journalism, and the patterns in three groups embark on different parts.

1989 is also the year when the three mnemonic communities are the most similar in having a diverse group of sources and speakers who tell the story about the MRP (see App. 5, Tables 8-13).

Firstly, the role of journalists as memory agents has certain specifics in 1989 as compared to other anniversary years. In the Estonian-language press, the year 1989 stands out as the one when half of the stories have journalists as authors, and half do not. In later years, the share of journalists as authors, as well as the share of articles focusing on the MRP, rises as the topic of the MRP moves under the domain of anniversary journalism. In 1989, the other half of speakers is made up of politicians and experts. The latter group is mostly formed of legal scientists who provide a legal perspective to the question of Estonian statehood [9, 11, 14, 18]. As for sources, Estonian-language press uses only very few of them and with no clear patterns, therefore relying on monologism. It is also in 1989, when the number of articles with no sources referred to is the highest in the Estonian-language press.

In the Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press, the journalistic authority dominates the treatment of the MRP all throughout the years, including 1989. In Estonian Russian-language press, it is only two stories in 1989 where journalists are *not* the authors of the articles. However, half of the stories in the Estonian Russian-language press are interviews where the journalist still has the possibility to impose a certain structure on framing the topic, even if delegating some of the authority in meaning-making away to the other speaker. At the all-Soviet level, similarly to Estonian Russian-language press, there are only a couple of articles where journalists are not telling the story of the MRP in 1989. However, in the case of the Russian press during later years, most of the stories do not have the anniversary of the MRP as their main topic anymore. Hence, the greater role of journalists in telling about the MRP cannot be related to anniversary journalism but instead to journalists simply having the authority to include treatments of the past in their work. The Estonian Russian-language press that also largely uses the journalists' authority can be considered to deal with the topic in the framework of anniversary journalism, although the importance of this anniversary is significantly lower than in the Estonian-language press during later years.

The instances of journalists referring to media itself (either earlier stories by the same outlet or references to other outlets, including in other countries) throughout the years are rare across all three groups and do not form any patterns that would allow generalisations.

Participants, organisers and eyewitnesses of any of the MRP commemoration events do not figure neither as speakers nor sources in the Estonian-language press, despite 1989 being the year of the Baltic Way. The Estonian-Russian language press, on the other hand, makes greater use of participants of the Baltic Way, both as speakers and sources. One third of the articles have someone connected with the Baltic Way as the author and one third of the articles refer to sources from this category. However, the extent of the participatory aspect represented in 1989 *Molodyozh Estonii*, as opposed to the absence of that in *Edasi*, can be explained as specifics of journalistic interest in present-day large-scale political demonstrations and not so much on the MRP as such. Most of the respective sources and speakers used in *Molodyozh Estonii* are ethnic Estonians, with only one reportage written by a Russian-speaking journalist participating in the Baltic Way [110]. One third of the articles in the Estonian Russian-language press also include historians as speakers. They discuss the question of the Baltic statehoods in the context of the geopolitical dilemmas facing Stalin at the wider European level at the end of 1930s, voicing both the narrative rift and Stalin's Difficult Choice [105, 107, 109].

At the all-Soviet level, participants hardly ever figure as speakers or sources all throughout the years, whether in 1989 (except for one reference to a participant in the Baltic Way [142]) or later. As for other categories of speakers and sources, the year 1989 is the only year when historians get voice as speakers, in about a third of the articles [137, 138, 139, 146]. Almost half of the articles use politicians as sources, and a third rely on different experts, mostly diplomats and high level officials in stories referring to the political realities at the end of 1930s.

All in all, regarding agency and authority, 1989 is the year with the greatest variety of different categories of sources and speakers across all three groups in contrast to later years. This can, firstly, be taken as a result of the great instrumental importance (Olick & Levy 1997) of the MRP in present-day politics – the power of present on the past.

Secondly, the present-dominated treatment of the MRP in 1989 can also be a result of traditions in dynamics of commemoration (Olick 1999b) having yet to emerge – 1989 was virtually the first milestone anniversary of the MRP when it could be publicly discussed in the media.

Contextualisation and meaning-making

When it comes to associating the MRP with other past events (eg outbreak of WWII, occupation/annexation of Estonia/Baltic States, avoiding or postponing the Soviet-German conflict, German betrayal of the pact – see App. 5, Tables 20-22), it is the Estonian-language press that in 1989 associates the pact only with the loss of independent statehood. This can be seen as an appropriate reflection of the present-day political conditions – the pact was considered as a direct cause of the Soviet occupation of Estonia and it was the initiative of the Baltic States to denounce it. The Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press also associate the pact mostly with the loss of Baltic statehoods but in addition they also offer a variety of other contexts, albeit to a smaller extent. It must be noted that a particular viewpoint in the article might not necessarily represent that of the author, it can also be a reference to someone else's viewpoint. The all-Soviet press does not link the pact with the outbreak of WWII, it only associates it with Germany – avoiding the conflict and Germany betraying the agreement. This is again an evidence of a justifying approach towards the MRP describing it as Stalin's Difficult Choice (Wertsch 2008: 63), despite the disclosure of the pact and its secret protocols in 1989. The Soviet narrative of the MRP saving the Baltic nations from being absorbed into Nazi Germany (Vizulis 1990: 117) is hardly evident, with only one historian in *Pravda* calling for the Balts not to forget about that [146]. The Estonian Russian-language press can be seen to balance between the Estonian-language and all-Soviet press in this regard. It touches briefly upon the linkages of the pact with the outbreak of WWII, avoiding or postponing the Soviet-German conflict, the German betrayal of the pact.

This association of the MRP with the above-mentioned past events also explains the prevailing attitudes towards the MRP that the articles convey. A vast majority of the Estonian-language articles only convey a negative attitude towards the MRP, with a few articles underlining its importance and one-sixth not conveying any attitudes at all (see

App. 5, Table 14). An article is considered not to convey any attitudes towards the pact when it simply states the fact of its signing or existence (and/or its secret protocols). The dominance of negative attitudes is a general characteristic of Estonian-language articles throughout the years. In 1989, the majority of articles expressing negative attitudes towards the MRP largely corresponds to the number of articles “Othering” Soviet Union (see App. 5, Table 17). In most cases this is done along the lines of referring to the Soviet Union signing the MRP that resulted in the loss of Estonian statehood and the USSR (and later Russia) subsequently trying to deny its role in that. “Othering” of Soviet Union/ Russia regarding the MRP remains an underlining characteristic of Estonian-language press all throughout the years, although it is most evident in 1989 and 1994.

Most of the articles in Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press also convey a negative image of the pact in 1989 (see App. 5, Table 15-Table 16). Although they both associate the pact with a greater variety of past events as discussed earlier, the justifying approach (Stalin’s Difficult Choice) is represented considerably stronger in Russia [136-139, 146]. Even though the MRP is an acute topic across all three groups in 1989, it is the all-Soviet level where the defensive position is most evident even if the pact was being publicly debated at the all-Soviet PDC level. This is also reflected by the great extent to which the Baltic States are seen as the “Other” (see App. 5, Table 19) by mostly opposing themselves to the Soviet Union via the anti-Soviet character of the Baltic Way and other events related to the MRP figuring in the Soviet press [141, 142, 150, 151]. Poland figures considerably less in this category, despite also being an object of the pact [148]. Articles in the Estonian Russian-language press mostly “Other” Soviet Union (see App. 5, Table 18), the underlying ideas of which are similar to the viewpoints in the Estonian-language press. It mostly takes the form of different historians admitting that as opposed to the official Soviet discourse, the MRP did play a determining role in defining the fate of the Baltic States which resulted in the Soviet Union indeed occupying Estonia/Baltic States [105, 107, 109]. However, the same historians also “Other” Estonia/Baltic States. This is not done anymore based on disagreements over interpreting the MRP, but targeted against Estonia/Baltic States in their total condemnation of the actions of the USSR at the end of 1930s.

As for present-day mnemopolitical discussions, the year 1989 is characterised by a relatively high share of respective articles across all three groups (see App. 5, Table 23-25). In later years, the countries will embark on different paths. The share of mnemopolitical discussions will decrease in Estonia (in both languages), yet maintain its importance in Russia. This can be considered as an evidence of the MRP in Estonia not only being a topic of political interest but an anniversary event that holds an important place in the collective memory. In 1989, all three groups deal with the disclosure of the MRP and its secret protocols. Estonian-language press concentrates on the question of legal continuity of the Baltic statehoods. The all-Soviet press discusses the geopolitical realities of the 1930s and the choices facing Stalin from the new perspectives provided by *glasnost*. Estonian Russian-language press offers elements of both the Estonian-language and all-Soviet press. In Estonia, both groups deal with these topics at the intra-USSR level of Estonian and all-Soviet relations. The Estonian Russian-language press also slightly brings in the local level inside Estonia [107, 110], and also reflects the viewpoints on the Baltic States from the all-Soviet level [105, 107]. At the all-Soviet level, the domestic USSR-Baltic level is clearly dominating [136, 140-142, 150, 151], with the bilateral Soviet-Polish level of secondary relevance [148, 149].

4.2 Year 1994

In the case of 1994, the commemoration of the MRP is relatively small-scale across all three groups, which is in accordance with Harro-Loit & Pallas (2013). In the Estonian-language press, half of the articles that do not have the MRP as their main topic deal with the present-day politics – the 1939 MRP is used to draw parallels between allegedly unfair Estonian-Russian agreements regarding the conditions for the Soviet/Russian troops to leave Estonia [22, 24, 26, 27]. Therefore, the actualisation of the MRP is not as much a matter of anniversary journalism but using it as a source for drawing historical analogies, as proposed by Edy (1999: 77-79). The aspect of agency and authority also reflects these conditions. While there are hardly any other speakers besides journalists (except for Enn Tarto [21], one of the co-authors of the Baltic Appeal, and politician J. Toomepuu [27]), half of the articles refer to politicians who

mostly draw parallels between 1939 MRP and 1994 Estonian-Russian agreements [21, 22, 24-26].

The Estonian Russian-language press does not commemorate the MRP but uses it only for drawing historical analogies with present-day Estonian-Russian (and Latvian-Russian) relations. Similarly, in this political context politicians get a couple of mentions as sources [114, 115].

Although both the Estonian-language and Estonian Russian-language press focus a great deal on the Estonian (Latvian) – Russian agreements, they differ in terms of historical contextualisation of the MRP. In addition to drawing parallels between the 1939 and 1994 agreements, Estonian-language articles mostly link the pact with the loss of independent statehood. Estonian Russian-language newspapers do not offer this context. This also explains why the Estonian-language press again, similarly to 1989, strongly conveys a negative image of the pact, but the Estonian-Russian language press rather does not convey attitudes towards the pact. 1994 is the year when Russia in general is “Othered” the strongest in the Estonian-language press due to the political events of 1994, and therefore also the importance of the MRP that is attached to these events. This also explains why half of the articles treat the MRP on a bilateral Estonian-Russian level. The mnemopolitical discussions in 1994 also feature the domestic level which manifests itself in criticising the Estonian government for not taking parallels with 1939 seriously enough when concluding the 1994 Estonian-Russian agreements [22, 27]. Although the articles criticise the Estonian government, they are not “Othering” it in terms of the MRP. The lower extent of articles conveying attitudes towards the MRP in the Estonian Russian-language press is in correlation with a lower level of “Othering” and present-day mnemopolitical discussions, with one article targeted against Russia [115] and the other against Latvia and its relations with Russia [114], which is done by referring to viewpoints in Russia.

It is only one of the articles in Russian *Kommersant* that offers a mnemopolitical discussion about the present-day relevance of the MRP with the hopeful hindsight that soon the MRP will move under the domain of professional historians only [152]. Another article in *Kommersant* brings in the narrative of the MRP becoming a symbol

for Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians [153], while stating that the pact allowed to postpone the Soviet-German conflict. Both articles involve the bilateral level of Russian-Baltic relations, the first one also includes the Russian-Polish level, and both of them are written by journalists. The first article considers the consequences of the pact (in the form of former Soviet troops having left or in the process of leaving Poland and the Baltic States) to be almost resettled [152]. Both articles underline the importance of the pact as such, plus also convey a negative approach towards it. The latter originates in both articles from the Balts, plus in the first article also from Poland. The same countries, respectively, also get “Othered” in the article.

Throughout all of 1994, the MRP finds little mentioning in Russia (in *Kommersant*). There are only three more articles, all of them of analytical nature discussing present-day geopolitics. The role of the MRP is explained in the recent Transnistria war³ [161]; brought up as an historical analogy when describing the fears of the Baltic States that drives them to seek protection from the US [162]; and a claim that another MRP would be theoretically impossible in present-day Europe [163]. MRP as such is not the reason that these stories exceed news threshold, therefore the pact is an example of the journalists using past as a resource to explain the present.

4.3 Year 1999

1999 can be seen as the anniversary year with least impacts from present-day political events. The Estonian-language articles offer a series of historical overviews on the MRP by historian Jüri Ant [28-29, 31, 41-42, 45, 47], a few references to the Baltic Way [30, 40, 43] and one story about the Baltic Appeal [38]. The low political importance of the pact in 1999 is also evidenced by one of the lowest share of present-day mnemopolitical discussions when compared to other years in the Estonian-language press. Nevertheless, the stance they take is not substantially different from other years – Yuri Afanasyev, the rector of the Moscow University of Humanities, claims in an interview that Russia

³ Transnistria, unlike the rest of Moldova, did not wish to separate from the Soviet Union following the latter’s collapse. This escalated into a military conflict in March 1992. Ceasefire was achieved in July 1992. The article holds the MRP responsible for drawing the borders of Moldavian SSR.

should apologise in front of the Baltic States [36]; and Jüri Luik, the Estonian Minister of Defence, states that the MRP will remain a political question as long as there exist those who question the fact that the Soviet Union occupied Estonia in the wake of WWII [33-34]. Similarly to 1994, there is also one recollection of the 1979 Baltic Appeal [38] – the only story written from a participatory point of view (and similarly to 1994, by one of its co-authors Enn Tarto). For the first time in the Estonian-language press, viewpoints of the “Other” are brought in with a few references to the prevailing narrative in Russia considering the MRP as a chance to avoid/postpone the conflict [36-37] and the German betrayal of the agreement [42]. This is done from the expert point of view, by Ant and Afanasyev. The anniversary-related retrospective stories, despite written by historian Ant, can also be taken as manifestations of anniversary journalism (Edy 1999: 75). The low level of present-day political relevance in 1999 can also be viewed in accordance with the attitudes towards the MRP in the articles, in terms of which this year remarkably stands out from the rest in Estonian-language press. Roughly only half of the articles convey a negative approach, while the other half does not convey any attitudes at all. Half of the articles also underline the importance of the pact. The low level of politisation in 1999 is also evidenced by the lowest level of “Othering”. Russia gets “Othered” in “only” less than a third of the articles with no other group being “Othered” either.

The MRP’s low level of political importance is also evident in the Estonian Russian-language press. The only article that has the MRP as its main topic refers to a statement by Oleg Rzheshchevski, a Russian historian, saying that the Soviet Union took the right step in signing the pact with Germany [119]. He admits the occupation of the Baltic States but justifies the Soviet Union needing to secure its borders to keep the Fascist army away as the Baltic States had started to politically approach Germany. Furthermore, the Soviet Union only brought back its former territories since the tsarist empire. There are two other articles that associate the pact with the occupation of Estonia, through dealing with the Baltic Way [120, 122]. Interestingly, the Estonian-Russian language press also brings in the viewpoint about the Stalin-Roosevelt

agreement⁴ having considerably greater impact on the Baltic States than the MRP [121], therefore attempting to minimise the (mnemo)political importance of the pact. It is also only in this article where “Othering” takes places, targeted at the official Estonian memory for its selectiveness. As a whole in 1999, the attitudes conveyed towards the pact are varied with no clear preference. The low political importance is also evidenced by only one article dealing with present-day mnemopolitical discussions and that is the Russian-Baltic level brought in by Rzheshovski [119]. The actualisation of the MRP in the Estonian Russian-language press lies very much in the hands of journalists. It is only Rzheshovski and a participant in the Baltic Way [122] used as sources.

In Russia, it is not only the anniversary of the MRP that is not present in the newspapers, but throughout the entire year there are only two stories involving the MRP (in *Kommersant*). One reason for that could lie in the absence of major potentially clashing events between Russia and Estonia/Baltic States that could also result in mnemopolitical contradictions and their manifestations in journalism. One of the articles in *Kommersant* deals with changes in the history education in Russia [164]. It discusses shifts in the ways how WWII is dealt with in history textbooks and how it differs from even a few years before. The author (journalist) points out to the new curriculum also including topics that had thus far been ignored, such as the MRP and Stalin’s orders to form barrier troops during WWII. Another article is an interview with the Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski who is stating that Poland’s destiny is to be a bridge between Europe and Russia [165]. The interview also involves a mnemopolitical aspect by Kwaśniewski welcoming the readiness of Russia to discuss the tragic pages of the Polish-Russian past. Nevertheless, he finds it difficult to understand why the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had recently denied the Soviet aggression on Poland, even if it is well known that the “*scenario of this drama was written in the MRP*”. Again, similarly to 1994, the MRP on its own does not exceed the news threshold in the Russian press but is one of the examples of “active past”.

⁴ A reference to the Yalta 1945 conference where Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt discussed the organisation of post-war world. Among other agreements, Stalin was given free hands in the Eastern European territories provided he would guarantee free elections there which he later did not adhere to.

4.4 Year 2004

Year 2004 is the one with the lowest relevance in terms of quantity in Estonia. On the other hand, despite the lack of any major present-day political events, the journalistic commemoration of the pact in Estonian-language press is considerably varied with topics covering different layers of the pact and its commemoration. This also includes political aspects. The only commemoration event covered in media is a conference dedicated to 25 years from the 1979 Baltic Appeal [50, 52], which clearly involves the dimension of mnemopolitical discussion. It is also in this event that Tunne Kelam, Estonian Member of the European Parliament, for the first time in journalistic discourse brings in the dimension of gaining pan-European condemnation of the Communist crimes [52]. Other articles feature a recollection of the Baltic Way [49] (linking the MRP with the loss of Estonian independence) and restoration of independence [48]. The only article that is directly related to the anniversary of the MRP is also the only one discussing bilateral politics of memory, with the Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar “Othering” Russia by stating that it should apologise for the injustice committed against the Baltic States [51]. Laar links the MRP with both the outbreak of WWII and the occupation of the Baltic States. Also, the scope of this statement is not domestic Estonian or even Europe, but the article in *Postimees* is referring to an article published in *Wall Street Journal*. Despite the various angles to cover the MRP, it is only journalists who figure as speakers in 2004 and only two references to outside sources have been made – politicians Laar and Kelam. Despite the dominance of journalists, half of the articles convey a negative image of the pact, half stay neutral.

The Estonian Russian-language press concentrates on commemorating the 1979 Baltic Appeal. One of the articles is related to the same commemoration event, the conference, mentioned also in Estonian-language press but without mentioning Tunne Kelam’s call for pan-European condemnation of Soviet crimes and not conveying any attitudes towards the pact either [124]. Year 2004 remains a passive year in terms of present-day mnemopolitical debates as a whole. In another article, though, Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts is giving its respect to the authors of the Baltic Appeal (referring to all of them as a whole) and all those who stepped up against the Soviet regime [125], thus conveying a negative image of the pact and “Othering” the Soviet regime. Both articles

relate the MRP with the loss of independent statehood. The third article in *Molodyozh Estonii* is an interview with Estonian President Arnold Rüütel who discusses Estonian-Russian relations, including history and consequently the MRP [123]. Rüütel firstly associates the pact with the outbreak of WWII, and then brings in the unique comparison (absent in all other articles under scrutiny) of the MRP as a cause for the second wave of Russian-speaking minority community in Estonia (the first group being the Old Believers). Similarly to the Prime Minister, the President also conveys a clearly negative image of the pact, but also points out that this must not be used against the Russian minority in Estonia to blame them for what happened during WWII. Rüütel does not “Other” any country in terms of treatment of the pact but does put the blame on “two totalitarian regimes” for signing the pact and dividing the Baltics. Similarly to Estonian-language press, the speakers in these articles are journalists (with the addition of Rüütel as an interviewee).

Anniversary of the MRP is virtually absent in the Russian press, with one article discussing the history of Ireland and the IRA [154] where MRP as such does not hold any significance, it is merely a past event among others. All throughout the year, the pact gets also relatively little attention (altogether 7 articles in the two outlets). MRP gets mentioned in stories about two other anniversaries – 85 years from the establishment of the Communist International [167] and 55 years from the Politbureau deciding to use radio propaganda against Yugoslavia [168]. In these two articles, the MRP is also merely a past event among others. However, the MRP receives more visibility in present-day politics with two articles dealing with Lithuania expressing its dissatisfaction over a TV programme aired by *Pervyy Baltiskiy Kanal* that gave an impression as if Lithuania had voluntarily joined the Soviet Union [170], with the Lithuanian Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis accusing the programme for “*distorting the historical truth about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its consequences*” [169]. Hence, albeit to a low extent, the political aspect of the pact in the Russian-Baltic relations is evident.

4.5 Year 2009

Year 2009 is the one by which the anniversary of the MRP has gained a newly attributed political meaning with the European Parliament and OSCE supporting the proclamation of 23 August as the pan-European Commemoration Day for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes. In other words, following the definitions of Olick & Levy (1997: 923), the commemoration of the pact had thus far mostly been constrained by mythical aspects, ie the power of the past over the present. But starting from 2009, a major instrumental constraint steps in with the aim to reinforce the power of the present over the past. What is more, the initially bilateral Baltic-Russian memory clash is taken onto European level. However, despite the coverage of the pact in the Estonian-language press achieving the highest number of articles among all the anniversary years under scrutiny, the new commemoration day gets bare 3 mentions among 31 articles (with two references carrying a positive connotation [74,75] and one being neutral [77]), let alone becoming a main topic. Therefore, the main topics of the articles continue to be connected with “old habits” – MRP, Baltic Way and other topics.

However, another important shift appears in 2009. When looking at the dynamics of commemorating the Baltic Way, interesting results fold out (see App. 5, Table 6). Years 2009 and 2014 in the Estonian-language press see the number of articles having the Baltic Way as their main topic increase by more than ten times. One of the reasons for this can be purely technical – with the onset of online media, the quantity of news stories published can be larger than what is possible within the limited number of pages in print versions⁵. However, one trend is clear – the 23 August commemoration is becoming increasingly associated with the Baltic Way due to the rising share of articles that do not associate the Baltic Way with the MRP anymore. This is also understandable since it is this event that is still in the living memory with a wide range of organisers and participants available to share their memories with the media. The Estonian Russian-language press also tends to, albeit to a substantially lower extent, see the

⁵ In my previous research (Müür 2011), when I analysed only print versions, the overall number of articles was indeed more than twice less: 16 (+5 Baltic Way only) in print, as opposed to 31(+24) when print and online news combined in 2009 *Postimees*.

Baltic Way as a separate past event (see App. 5, Table 7). In Russia, the Baltic Way does not figure as a distinct object of commemoration.

As for sources and speakers, the participatory element emerges in the Estonian-language press in 2009, despite marginally. There are altogether ten instances of participants/organisers/eyewitnesses of different events related to the MRP, with three speakers related to the Baltic Way. The category of different experts is represented very narrowly, although the share of politicians, historians and other experts altogether has increased considerably in comparison with previous years. This need for journalists to seek for external authority can be taken as a result of the increased political importance of the anniversary date.

Even if the anniversary of the MRP is regaining its political importance in the present-day politics of memory, then unlike in 1989, the year 2009 is the first in Estonian-language press to offer such a varied selection of viewpoints and historical contexts for the pact. This is mostly due to a number of articles discussing present-day politics of memory in Eastern Europe, Russia and also Western Europe [65, 67, 73, 79]. Therefore the greater number of viewpoints is not a sign of the topic becoming politically more neutral, but instead the political scope widening. Historical analogy is also drawn between the Nord Stream pipeline, by referring to a statement by the Polish Defence Minister Radosław Sikorski [65]. The wider geopolitical framework in 2009 brings, for the first time in Estonian press, also a new dimension of “Othering” – Western European countries, for being largely ignorant about the pact and its consequences for not only Estonia but half of Europe. Russia gets “Othered” less than before, only in a third of the articles. Five main articles dealing with present-day mnemopolitical discussions are part of the special rubric of “MRP 70”, thus further cementing the commemoration of the pact in a wider context. It is for the first time in Estonian-language press that the difficult choices in front of the Estonian government in 1939-1940 get discussed, therefore bringing in the discourse of seeking redemption for Estonia’s alleged “silent submission” (cf. Ilmjärv 2004) to the USSR in those years [64]. A new dimension is also brought in, but mostly in relation to the Baltic Way, that uses the narrative of the Baltic States “demonstrating to the world” their quest for independence [71, 72, 75, 76]. Year 2009 sees a clear shift in the different scopes of

mnemopolitical discussions in the Estonian-language press which is an adequate reflection of the political realities, especially the new pan-European commemoration day. Firstly, the share of articles dealing with mnemopolitical debates with Russia (one-fifth) is even lower than the politically most neutral 1999 but, on the other hand, year 2009 sees the emergence of the European level of debate (also roughly one-fifth of the articles) [65, 74, 75, 77, 79]. The inclusion of the Baltic Way into the UNESCO's list of cultural heritage [70, 71, 74, 75] adds a further dimension to the mnemopolitical importance of the pact⁶.

The similarities in viewpoints, historical context, "Othering" and mnemopolitical discussions are also apparent in Estonian Russian-language press, although the relatively great number of articles altogether is not reflected in this group. This is in accordance also with Jakobson (2013) finding that the treatment of the past in Estonian and Estonian Russian-language press had approached each other by 2009 as compared to 1994. However, the new 23 August pan-European remembrance day does not get any mentions in the Estonian Russian-language press in 2009. Despite the *Postimees* in Russian for obvious reasons having many overlappings with the Estonian version, some differences occur in accentuation. There are 6 articles altogether with the MRP, Baltic Way and other topics having an equal distribution. For example, the article giving an overview of the prevailing attitudes towards the MRP in Russia [126] is elaborating the topic into far greater detail in the Russian *Postimees* than in the Estonian version [62]. The same survey gets also briefly mentioned in *Kommersant* [157]. This is an example of the interconnection between the three groups with one topic important to all of them.

The Estonian Russian-language and Russian press in 2009 are quite similar in terms of sources and speakers – both rely mostly on journalists to tell the story with references to, above all, politicians. In Russia, two of the analytical pieces are written by different experts [143, 145].

The otherwise absent date of 23 August in the anniversary calendar of Russia gets more attention in 2009. The first and foremost reason is the new pan-European

⁶ Although the inclusion of the Baltic Way into the UNESCO's list of cultural heritage is not a subject of any controversies or debates, it was coded in the category of mnemopolitical discussions in order to take note of this aspect as well. Hence the large share of the option „other“ in App. 5, Table 23.

commemoration day which Russia sees as an attempt of equating Communism and Nazism, therefore as an attack against its prevailing narratives of the past. There are two articles dealing with this “dangerous” way of thinking. While one of them is drawing a direct link with the Baltic States equating Nazism and Communism [156], the other sees the new commemoration day as a manifestation of the “*anti-Russian part of the Western establishment*” [145], by Dmitry Orlov, head of Agency for Political and Economic Communications]. Altogether, half of the articles convey a negative attitude towards the new remembrance day [145, 156, 157]. There is also an analytical article about the wider mnemopolitics stating that the Western countries were not going to argue with the Soviet Union over the Baltic States during WWII [143], by Lev Sotskov, veteran of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. These authors bring in a positive/justifying viewpoint of the pact, with the Baltic States “Othered” the most, Western Europe and Poland to a lesser extent. The latter two articles [143, 145] also draw a direct causal link between the Munich Agreement⁷ as a case for signing the MRP. This is the only time this has been done throughout all the articles under scrutiny – despite a number of articles, especially in 1989 Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet press, mentioning the Munich Agreement simply as part of the geopolitical context at the end of 1930s. The Baltic States are seen as a buffer zone in the greater geopolitical context – to keep the Nazis further away from the Russian/Soviet borders [143, 145], therefore adhering to the discourse of Stalin’s Difficult Choice. Two other articles analysing history refer to the MRP but their main topics are the flight of Mikhail Koltsov to Mussolini⁸ and the 70th anniversary of the battles of Khalkhin-Gol⁹. As a result, the larger geopolitical context where the Russian press places the MRP becomes evident. 2009 is the first year in Russian press where noticeable differences between *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant* appear. In the case of the anniversary week in August, *Kommersant* takes a more neutral stance against those in support of the new 23 August commemoration day. This is

⁷ An attempt by UK, France and Italy in 1938 to appease Hitler and avoid war by giving him free hands in occupying Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. The articles see the Munich Agreement as posing a threat to the USSR’s security and resulting in the need to also reach agreements with Hitler.

⁸ The article [155] gives an overview of the Soviet-Italian relations as a little-known page of the prelude to the MRP. Although the article draws a direct causal link between the main topic and the MRP, it does not analyse the MRP as such almost at all.

⁹ The article [157] gives an overview of President Medvedev on an official visit to Mongolia to pay tribute to the veterans of the May-Septemebr 1939 border conflict in which Soviet Union defeated Japan. In one of the joint declarations with the Mongolian President they step up against falsifications of history, which the journalists consider as Medvedev’s original, even if indirect, answer to the OSCE declaration.

mostly done by journalists referring to official Moscow being against attempts to equate Communism and Nazism [156], whereas *Izvestiya* seeks external authority in the form of experts explicitly condemning the policies of the Baltic States/West [143, 145].

When comparing the relevance of the MRP in the Russian press all throughout 2009 and comparing it to previous anniversary years of 1994, 1999 and 2004, the number of articles has increased ten-fold. Different thematic focuses appear, some of them of present-day political relevance or drawing historical analogies with the MRP, some mnemopolitical. First up in the year is the issue of Russian-Ukrainian gas deals where Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuliya Timoshenko signing gas deals with Russia gets accused of a new Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by her adversaries in Ukraine, mostly referring to the former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko [173, 186-190, 192]. Later in the year, MRP is also contextualised within present-day EU energy politics, when the Polish Defence Minister Radosław Sikorski is quoted for comparing the Nord Stream pipeline with the MRP [213, 228], therefore drawing on historical analogies. In Estonia, this analogy was brought up around the anniversary of the MRP [65]. Second on the agenda is the Russian President Medvedev's committee against falsification of history. MRP, and its interpretation in the Baltic States and Poland, gets mentioned as one of the topics that the committee will most likely have to deal with [193-196]. Interestingly, it is only *Kommersant* that brings the MRP up in this context, as *Izvestiya* does not. The journalistic commemoration of Victory Day in Russia does not bring up any associations with the pact in either of the newspapers. In July, the event most closely related to the anniversary of the MRP appears - the OSCE resolution for supporting 23 August as a remembrance day for victims of totalitarian regimes [200-204]. The OSCE resolution is another point of divergence for *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant*. *Kommersant* presents the content of the OSCE resolution and Russia's reactions to it. Interestingly, unlike the topic of the President's committee against falsification of history, Baltic States and Poland, who were otherwise one of the strongest supporters of equal treatment of the Soviet and Nazi crimes, do not get any special attention regarding this issue. Therefore, MRP gets associated with the OSCE resolution because the new remembrance day would be on the date of the signing of the pact, but not due to the consequences of the pact for certain countries and, therefore, on the Russian-Baltic memory cleavages. *Izvestiya*, on the other hand, does not associate

the MRP with the adoption of the OSCE resolution at all. In *Izvestiya*, there is only one article in June, before the OSCE resolution, about the Estonian Parliament adopting the new remembrance day into its legislation [174]. It is then only around the anniversary of the pact that in both *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant* the Baltic States and Poland get associated with the MRP and the new remembrance day.

The biggest event, in terms of the amount of articles, actualising the MRP is the commemoration of 70 years from the beginning of WWII in Gdansk, Poland. It is there that Putin calls the pact immoral [211, 214], albeit also referring to cynicism on behalf the West, and Poland specifically, regarding their actions before WWII, such as the Munich Agreement, Poland occupying Czechoslovakia etc [179, 212, 214].

It is Poland and Ukraine that get more mnemopolitical attention in the Russian press regarding the MRP in 2009. An article neutrally quotes parts of the resolution of the Polish Parliament “condemning the “invasion” of Red Army” [184] into Western Ukraine and Western Belarus that formed parts of Poland between the world wars. MRP is included into that resolution as laying foundations for the Soviet invasion. Dmitriy Tabachnik, Member of the Ukrainian Parliament, provides a critical approach to the same event by opposing Ukrainian nationalists for trying to give an “*apocalyptic meaning*” to the Soviet troops’ invasion of Poland [183], thereby condemning their attempts to equate the Nazis and Soviets for the outbreak of WWII.

4.6 Year 2014

Year **2014** in the Estonian-language press sees the continuation of the trend of the 23 August commemoration shifting away from the MRP towards the Baltic Way. The number of articles with the Baltic Way as their main topic (11) is already twice bigger than those with the MRP (5). This is also evidenced by the fact that, while in 2009 several articles were in the special rubric of “MRP 70”, this time there was a special rubric “Baltic Way 25”. The topics of the articles deal mostly with commemoration events and recollections of the Baltic Way, plus a couple of analytical reviews of the geopolitical conditions around signing of the MRP that, similarly to 2009, include the difficult choices in front of the Estonian government in 1939-1940 [84, 85]. Similarly to

1994 when several articles made use of the MRP when assessing present-day political realities, a number of articles mention the anniversary of the MRP in the context of the 2014 Ukraine crisis [93, 95, 99, 101, 103]. The majority of articles convey a negative attitude towards the pact. However, the share of articles “Othering” any country (including Russia) is considerably lower than previously. Germany, that has generally never been “Othered” in the articles all through the years in terms of its treatment of the pact, appears now in one article as the “Other” [103]. This is due to the present-day Ukraine crisis and the author (journalist in an editorial) condemning the parallels between German-Russian interactions in 1939 and in present day. As opposed to 2009, the alternative viewpoints to MRP seen from a positive or justifying stance are not present at all. This can also be the result of the shift towards the Baltic Way that has reduced the focus from debating the MRP and the historical context around it to stressing the positive narratives about the Baltic Way such as restoration of independence and reunification of Europe. A quarter of the articles do not present any viewpoints at all. Interestingly, the bilateral level of mnemopolitical discussions, otherwise always present in Estonian-language press, has disappeared in 2014 with only the European level remaining. This further underlines the shift away from commemorating the MRP, yet it remains to be seen what kind of position will the new pan-European remembrance day be able to secure itself. In any case, compared to its presence in the 2009 articles, the new remembrance day does get twice more mentions in 2014, even if altogether still numbering small (altogether six articles). And as opposed to 2009, the positive [102] approach has been replaced largely by a neutral stance [93, 96, 97, 100].

In addition to the importance of 23 August shifting towards commemorating the Baltic Way, a shift is also evident in the usage of sources and speakers which, for the first time in the Estonian-language press, uses a significant number of participants and organisers, mostly of the Baltic Way (13 out of 15 instances altogether). In comparison with the 1989 coverage of the Baltic Way as a present-day political demonstration where the journalists retained their authority to tell the story, the agency and authority to commemorate the event is now brought to the grass-root level. The political context and importance of the Baltic Way and its commemoration is also maintained, with journalists using the support of politicians as sources. As a whole, the journalistic

commemoration of 23 August in 2014 can be viewed as not so much the journalists taking the lead in maintaining the importance of this date in the anniversary calendar, but collective memory and identity also asserting its influence on journalism.

The historical contextualisation in the Estonian-language press returns to most of the references being about the occupation/annexation of Estonia. This can be explained by the dominance of the Baltic Way as the main topic. Although the Baltic Way as such is mostly associated with positive aspects such as hope for restoration of independence, the articles that still associate the Baltic Way with the MRP bring in the negative aspect that the MRP caused.

In the Estonian Russian-language press, there are no articles anymore with the MRP as the main topic. The low number of 4 articles still comprises an interesting range of topics. In terms of present-day politics, one article gives an overview of a demonstration in support of Ukraine in front of the embassy of the Russian Federation in Tallinn [135]. Another article where Edgar Savisaar [132], the mayor of Tallinn, shares his views on the Baltic Way, draws most likely an implicit parallel with the ongoing Ukraine conflict by stating that during the times of the Baltic Way the Balts were also considered as separatists. This line of thought and Edgar Savisaar as a speaker is not present in the Estonian-language *Postimees*. The *Postimees* in Russian also offers an overview of different viewpoints prevailing in Russia about the Baltic Way [133]. In terms of historical contextualisation, there are two references to the loss of Estonia's independence [132, 135]. Similarly to the Estonian-language articles in 2009 and 2014, the Russian-language press also does not present any positive attitudes towards the MRP. This can also be viewed as a result of the commemorative shift towards the Baltic Way. Also, there is no "Othering" present, except for referring to the Baltic Way as a demonstration to the whole world [132]. And it is in 2014 that the new pan-European remembrance day enters the Estonian Russian-language press as part of the anniversary commemorations [134], despite only one reference to it (neutral).

When it comes to agency and authority, then in contrast to the Estonian-language *Postimees* the participatory aspect of commemoration is practically not at all represented in Estonian Russian-language press (except for the story by Edgar Savisaar,

one of the main organisers of the event). This can be considered an adequate representation of the significantly lower number of Russian-speakers participating in the Baltic Way 25 years ago, and therefore, the Baltic Way not being an important milestone in their collective memory (which in any case is evidenced by the significantly lower number of articles). Therefore, in comparison with Estonian-language *Postimees*, the Russian-language *Postimees* sees the date of 23 August rather as an instrumental mnemopolitical tool established by the state but not by mythical constraints on journalism as was the case with Estonian-language *Postimees*. All other articles in the Russian-language *Postimees* are written by journalists, other external sources were only used in the overview of different viewpoints prevailing in Russia.

The Russian press, as opposed to 2009, does not mention the pan-European remembrance day anymore. There is one article associating the anniversary of the MRP with mnemopolitical discussions with Poland [160]. The journalist refers to the MRP as “*difficult for our historical memory*” and thus “Others” differing viewpoints within Russia itself. The other article (by Fyodor Lukyanov, head of the Russian Council on Foreign and Defense Policy) analyses present-day politics [159]. It uses the MRP as a historical analogy with the present-day events in Ukraine and the consequent fears of the Baltic States regarding their security, but without associating the MRP with any other past events.

As for the entire year 2014 in Russian press, the number of articles (21) dealing with the MRP is more than three times less than in 2009 (72), but also three times higher than in 2004 (7), therefore still indicating a rise in its visibility. Similarly to the anniversary week, the main countries associated with the pact are Ukraine and Poland. The pact gets actualised in the context of the Ukraine crisis and Crimean referendum; including Transnistria also wishing for a similar referendum, as the article sees the MRP as one of the reasons for the forced unification of Transnistria and Bessarabia [239]. However, the pact is mostly not used to draw historical analogies, as several articles simply mention that the borders of present-day Ukraine are the result of the MRP [247, 248, 252]. Poland gets attention in an article giving a chronology of the “*difficult moments in the Russian-Polish relations*”, where the MRP is brought up as a historical analogy by Polish Defence Minister Radek Sikorski comparing the Nord Stream with the MRP

already in 2006 [249]. This analogy was also referred to in Estonian [65] and Russian [213, 228] press in 2009, despite from different viewpoints.

Similarly to 2009, *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant* can be seen to tackle their topics differently – while generally the views in the two newspapers do not fundamentally oppose each other, then *Izvestiya* can be considered “louder” in terms of voicing more extravagant statements or case studies. For example, politician and writer Eduard Limonov [242] criticises Ukrainian nationalism by saying that Lvov, the alleged cradle of Ukrainian nationalism, only became part of Ukraine due to the infamous MRP. *Izvestiya*’s example of the historical analogy between MRP and the Ukraine crisis (as compared to Lukyanov’s article during the MRP anniversary) is done by referring to Ukrainians calling the German Chancellor Angela Merkel as Frau Ribbentrop in Facebook [240]. The historical analogy is also brought out in *Postimees* [103].

Another topic prevailing regarding the MRP in the Russian press is present-day domestic politics of memory, especially concerning history education. At the beginning of the year, there is an article about Russian President Vladimir Putin being presented the work of a commission that had to come up with a universal history textbook for Russian high schools that would show “*respect to all pages of our [Russian – K.M.] history*” [244]. There is also an interview with the Russian Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinskiy on the same topic – he justifies the MRP [238] along the lines of Stalin’s Difficult Choice. The Ministry of Culture is also putting together a study material of 100 important documents about Russian history [241], including the MRP (no attitudes conveyed towards the pact itself in the article). Politics of memory also extends to the legislative dimension with one article (written by historian Askold Ivanchik) referring to a law proposal for criminalising attempts to blame the USSR for committing crimes during WWII [245]. The article places the MRP under the category of prohibiting accusations of Russia/Soviet Union for aggression against its neighbours. This is practically the only article where Baltic States get mentioned in reference to the MRP. Last but not least, domestic politics of memory is also manifested by a statement by Russian president Vladimir Putin when he calls for historians to be objective [243]. When discussing WWII and MRP, Putin justified the pact as a measure to postpone war. This statement was also echoed in Estonian press (Meister 2014).

Conclusions

The current thesis set out to explore the dynamics of collective memory and identity in anniversary journalism, using the case study of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in 1939. MRP was chosen due to offering multiple layers of commemoration and also being politically relevant in the present day, and not only domestically but starting from 2009 also at pan-European level. The empirical material comprised newspaper articles from Estonian (both in Estonian and Russian language) and Russian press between 1989-2004, thus allowing also for a comparison across different mnemonic communities. The choice of these particular countries resulted from the antagonistic role they play for each other regarding the interpretation of the pact.

The theoretical part of the thesis dealt with the key concepts of collective memory and identity, politics of memory and journalism's memory work (anniversary journalism). Content analysis was used to achieve the research aim.

The results of the media analysis can be considered to appropriately reflect the work done by memory scholars analysing the Estonian/Baltic – Russian relations and the implications that past has on them, both on domestic, bilateral and pan-European level. The MRP is of significantly higher importance in Estonia (especially the Estonian-speakers) which is reflected not only by the quantity of attention the pact gets in Estonian media but also with the date of 23 August having solidly established itself in the Estonian collective memory and anniversary calendar, therefore the journalistic commemoration of the pact also falling under the domain of anniversary journalism. The anniversary of the MRP is not important in the Russian collective memory, therefore the attention the pact gets in the Russian media derives mostly from the level of importance placed on it by present-day politics. The Estonian Russian-language media can be seen to position itself in between. On the one hand, the MRP does not hold the same level of importance in the collective memory of the Estonian Russian-speaking community. Nevertheless, the event is still present in the anniversary calendar as the news threshold of the articles was related to the anniversary of the MRP or the Baltic Way. The articles largely share the viewpoints presented also in Estonian-

language press but in addition, they present the viewpoints prevailing in Russia to a larger extent than the references in Estonian-language press.

In spite of the different reasons for the actualisation of the MRP in Estonia and Russia, the relevance of the pact in media is in both cases dependent on the present-day political contexts. It were years 1989 and 2009 when the pact was politically most actual which also resulted in the most active and politically loaded journalistic treatment of the pact. 1990s, on the other hand, were politically more neutral, which resulted in a more low-profile media presence in terms of offering contradicting viewpoints and “Othering”. Although in 1994, the Estonian-language press made use of the MRP as a historical analogy for condemning the 1994 Estonian-Russian agreements on the withdrawal of Russian troops. 1999 was commemorated very visibly, yet most neutrally in Estonia, as if the pact was indeed going to slip into a neutral repository of facts, as Halbwachs and Wertsch refer to history. In Russia, due to almost no relevance in present-day politics, the pact barely got even a few mentions throughout the entire year, with no references made to the pact in August 1999 at all. 2004 in Russia is still a year with almost no importance given to the pact. In Estonia, 2004 can be considered an interim anniversary with the Baltic Appeal given relatively lot of attention for its 25th anniversary before this layer of the MRP commemoration practically fades away for 2009. Also, 2004 in Estonia is the first time when the call for the EU-level condemnation for Communist crimes enters the journalistic discourse, which will later become an important part of the 23 August commemoration.

It is only in 2009 that the pact re-emerges in Russia. This is mostly as a reaction to the proclamation of 23 August as a pan-European Commemoration Day for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes that Russia sees as an attack against the core of its collective identity due the alleged incomparability of the Nazi and Communist regimes. Interestingly, the journalistic treatment of the OSCE resolution did not associate it with the Baltic States and Poland, although these countries were among the strongest supporters of it. It is only during that new commemoration day itself that these countries become “Othered” in this context. But the Russian press also refers to how in Poland and Ukraine the MRP is used to draw historical analogies with, respectively, the Nord Stream gas pipeline and Russian-Ukrainian gas deals. Year 2009 also sees changes in

the ways the pact is being commemorated in Estonia. First and foremost, the Baltic Way starts to take over the commemorative aspect of 23 August. Secondly, while so far the mnemopolitical discussions evident in Estonian media had mostly been on the bilateral Estonian/Baltic – Russian level, then the international (European) level emerges, although in 2009, the new commemoration day as such gets only very few mentions in the Estonian-language press and none in the Estonian Russian-language press.

Year 2014 in Estonian-language press sees the deepening of the shift away from commemorating MRP towards commemorating the Baltic Way. The share of the bilateral mnemopolitical discussions between Estonia/Baltics – Russia has also diminished and has been replaced by discussing politics of memory at the European level. Year 2014, similarly to 1994, offers also chances to use the MRP to draw historical analogies – this time with the ongoing Ukraine crisis. These viewpoints also get reflected in Russian press, mostly by “Othering” the Baltic States and Ukraine. The Estonian Russian-language press is interestingly using the Baltic Way as drawing an implicit historical analogy between the events in Ukraine, with Edgar Savisaar saying that the Balts were considered as separatists during the time of the Baltic Way. As year 2014 is mnemopolitically not as loaded as 2009, the topic of the MRP is less visible in Russia, yet still considerably more presented than in the 1990s. Although the pact is also associated with stories dealing with Ukraine crisis, they do not mostly refer to historical analogies. Instead, they mention that the present-day Ukrainian borders are the result of the MRP, thereby using the MRP as means to downgrade the essence of Ukrainian nation and statehood. Another topic in Russia, in the context of which the MRP gets actualised for the first time to such extent, is Russia’s domestic politics of memory, especially the creation of a universal history textbook for high schools.

When comparing the geopolitical contextualisation of the MRP, then from Russia’s perspective, certain dynamics fold out. While in 1989, the focus was on the Baltic States due to the Baltic Way and the question of the Baltic statehoods, then later years have seen shifts in focus. The anniversary of the MRP gets mostly associated with the Baltic States and Poland. However, throughout the entire year, it is Poland and Ukraine getting more attention than the Baltic States. This has become more evident during 2009 and 2014 when the level of attention given to the MRP has increased as a whole. The

European-Russia relations were especially prominent in the press during 2009 due to the OSCE resolution given a lot of attention. This dimension is virtually non-existent in 2014. In Estonia, on the other hand, it has been constantly Russia all throughout the years getting most attention, both in the Estonian and Russian language press. Starting from 2009, the pan-European level is also on the increase in the Estonian-language press.

The authority in telling the story about the MRP in Estonian-language press is in correlation with the pact moving under the domain of anniversary journalism. In 1989 with no journalistic commemoration traditions established, the share of journalists is the lowest. This is also due to external authority being used for explaining the numerous important issues in the present-day politics. Later, as the pact becomes routinely commemorated, the importance of journalists in upholding the tradition also rises. In Estonian Russian-language and all-Soviet/Russian press, the share of journalists is high all throughout the years. However, in the case of Russia this must be explained by specifics of its media system because the MRP is actualised mostly under other topics and therefore not in the framework of anniversary journalism. The Estonian Russian-language press can still be considered to deal with the pact from the perspective of anniversary journalism, albeit to a lower extent than in the Estonian-language press.

These results give ground to conclude that the current politics of memory, now mostly at European level, will keep the anniversary date of 23 August as a worthy object of research for memory scholars. This is evidenced by the increased attention that this date receives, at least in Estonia. However, even if the relevance of 23 August commemoration date is increasing, then it will most likely not be the MRP as the centrepiece. It remains to be seen to which extent it will become a commemoration day of the Baltic Way and/or of the victims of totalitarian regimes. Therefore, this given study can be seen to have provided an overview of the emergence and gradual disappearance – the dynamics – of the commemoration of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in Estonian press. As for Russia and the Russian press, the relevance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and 23 August will most likely depend on the role this date will become to hold in the European politics of memory, since the topic of Baltic Way on its own does not inflict any reactions from Russia.

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- 147) На пороге новой эпохи. (1989). *Правда*, 24 August.
- 148) Заявление Политбюро ЦК ПОРП. (1989). *Правда*, 25 August.
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- 153) Корецкий, А. (1994). Независимость требует жертв. *Коммерсантъ Daily*, 27 August. URL (accessed 20 February 2015) <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/88022>.

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1999

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- 164) Гриднева, Н. (1999). Война окончена. Забудьте. *Коммерсантъ*, 22 October. URL (accessed 20 February 2015) <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/218060>.
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2004

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2009

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Appendix 4. Coding Manual

1. The main topic of the article is related to:
 - 1.1 MRP (the event itself, commemoration event, recollections, analysis)
 - 1.2 Baltic Way (the event itself, commemoration event, recollections, analysis)
 - 1.3 other

2. Sources – referring to the MRP or anything related to the MRP
 - 2.1 historian
 - 2.2 politician
 - 2.3 other expert
 - 2.4 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1939 MRP
 - 2.5 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1979 Baltic Appeal
 - 2.6 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1989 Baltic Way
 - 2.7 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – MRP commemoration event during the given year (in the case of 1989 excluding the Baltic Way)
 - 2.8 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – Baltic Way commemoration event during the given year
 - 2.9 documents, archive
 - 2.10 Estonian media (in Estonian)
 - 2.11 Estonian Russian-language media
 - 2.12 Russian media
 - 2.13 other foreign media
 - 2.14 other
 - 2.15 no sources used

3. Speakers (authors)
 - 3.1 journalist, newsroom
 - 3.2 historian
 - 3.3 politician
 - 3.4 other expert
 - 3.5 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1939 MRP
 - 3.6 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1979 Baltic Appeal
 - 3.7 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – 1989 Baltic Way
 - 3.8 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – MRP commemoration event during the given year (in the case of 1989 excluding the Baltic Way)
 - 3.9 participant/ eyewitness/ organiser (including in commemorative books) – Baltic Way commemoration event during the given year
 - 3.10 other

4. Does the article associate the MRP with any of the following historical events?
 - 4.1 MRP as the cause for outbreak of World War II
 - 4.2 MRP as the cause for occupation/ annexation of Estonia/Baltic States
 - 4.3 MRP as a consequence of the Munich Agreement
 - 4.4 MRP as a chance to avoid or postpone the possible war/ Soviet-German conflict
 - 4.5 the German betrayal of the MRP and attack on the Soviet Union
 - 4.6 none of the above-mentioned associations

5. Does the article convey any judgements about the MRP?
 - 5.1 negative, criticising approach
 - 5.2 positive approach
 - 5.3 justifying approach – MRP as a difficult choice, result of pragmatic *realpolitik*

- 5.4 the article underlines the importance of MRP
- 5.5 the article does not convey any attitudes towards the MRP
6. Does the article attempt "Othering" regarding interpretation of the MRP? If yes, who is it targeted against?
- 6.1 Russia/ Soviet Union
- 6.2 Germany
- 6.3 Estonia, Estonian government
- 6.4 Baltic States (including Latvia/Lithuania separately)
- 6.5 Poland
- 6.6 any other country included in the secret protocols of the MRP
- 6.7 Western European countries
- 6.8 different groups/viewpoints within the same country
- 6.9 other
- 6.10 the article does not convey images of the "Other" regarding interpretation of the MRP
7. In the case of present-day discussions on the mnemopolitical treatment of the MRP and its anniversary, what is the geopolitical scope of the discussion?
- 7.1 domestic affairs
- 7.2 bilateral level - referring to the treatment of the pact by the "Other" – in the case of Estonian media referring to Russia/ Soviet Union, in the case of Russian media referring to Estonia
- 7.3 bilateral level – Russia/Soviet Union *vis-a-vis* another country impacted by the pact, except for Estonia, but including the Baltic States as a whole
- 7.4 international affairs – European level
- 7.5 international affairs – European/EU-Russia relations
- 7.6 other
- 7.7 the article does not discuss present-day memory politics regarding the MRP and/or its anniversary

8. In the case of 2009 and 2014 articles, does the article mention and convey attitudes towards the 23 August European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes?
 - 8.1 the article simply mentions the Remembrance Day but does not convey any attitudes
 - 8.2 the article conveys a positive, justifying approach
 - 8.3 the article conveys a negative, criticizing approach
 - 8.4 the article discusses both positive and negative viewpoints towards the Remembrance Day
 - 8.5 the article does not mention the Remembrance Day

Appendix 5. Tables

Below is a statistical overview of the research findings. Tables are arranged according to topics in the order as they appeared in the coding manual. Hence they provide a complimentary perspective to the way how results were presented according to year groups in Chapter 4. Blank cells signify the respective category not being represented during that year (number of relevant articles equalled zero). The 1999 Russian articles are marked with “-“ since there were no articles dealing with the MRP during the anniversary week.

Table 3. Main topic of the article – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	MRP	Baltic Way	other
1989	5	4	9
1994	5		4
1999	14	3	3
2004	1	1	3
2009	11	15	5
2014	5	11	5

Table 4. Main topic of the article – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	MRP	Baltic Way	other
1989	3	5	1
1994	1		2
1999	1	2	3
2004	2		1
2009	2	2	2
2014		3	1

Table 5. Main topic of the article – Russian press (number of articles)

	MRP	Baltic Way	other
1989	9	2	2
1994	1		1
1999	-	-	-
2004			1
2009	1		5
2014			3

Table 6. Baltic Way as the main topic – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	MRP mentioned	MRP not mentioned	Baltic Way only mentioned, without MRP
1989	4		
1994			
1999	3	1	
2004	1	2	2
2009	15	22	2
2014	11	23	1

Table 7. Baltic Way as the main topic – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	MRP mentioned	MRP not mentioned	Baltic Way only mentioned, without MRP
1989	5		
1994			
1999	2	1	2
2004		1	
2009	2	4	
2014	3	3	1

There were no articles in the all-Soviet/Russian media that deal with the Baltic Way while not mentioning the MRP.

Table 8. Sources used - Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
historian	1		3		4	2
politician	2	5	5	2	9	9
other expert	1	2	1		3	
participant – 1939 MRP			2		2	1
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal		1				
participant – 1989 Baltic Way	1			1	1	8
participant – MRP comm. event	1	1			1	
participant – Baltic Way comm event					1	
documents, archive	2	1	1		4	1
Estonian-language media		1	3		1	2
Estonian Russian-language media						
Russian media						1
other foreign media		1	1	1	3	2
other	2		2	1	4	3
no sources used	10	2	6	2	9	5

Table 9. Sources used - Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
historian	3		1		1	1
politician	4	2		1	3	1
other expert	1				1	1
participant – 1939 MRP	1					
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal				1		
participant – 1989 Baltic Way	3		1			
participant – MRP comm. event						
participant – Baltic Way comm. event						
documents, archive	1				1	
Estonian-language media	1		1			
Estonian Russian-language media	1					1
Russian media			1		2	
other foreign media						1
other			1		1	2
no sources used	2	1	3	1		

Table 10. Sources used - Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
historian	1		-		2	
politician	7		-		4	
other expert	6		-		1	
participant – 1939 MRP			-			
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal			-			
participant – 1989 Baltic Way	1		-			
participant – MRP comm. event	1		-			
participant – Baltic Way comm. event			-			
documents, archive	1		-			
Estonian-language media	1		-			
Estonian Russian-language media	1		-			
Russian media	1		-			
other foreign media	4		-			
other	1		-		1	
no sources used	2	2	-	1	2	3

Table 11. Speakers – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
journalist, newsroom	10	7	13	4	28	18
historian			7		2	3
politician	5	1	1		1	
other expert	4				1	
participant – 1939 MRP						
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal		1	1		1	
participant – 1989 Baltic Way					3	
participant – MRP comm. event	1					
participant – Baltic Way comm. event						1
other			1	1	3	

Table 12. Speakers – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
journalist, newsroom	7	3	6	3	6	4
historian	3					
politician				1		
other expert					1	
participant – 1939 MRP						
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal						
participant – 1989 Baltic Way	3					1
participant – MRP comm. event						
participant – Baltic Way comm. event						
other						

Table 13. Speakers - Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
journalist, newsroom	11	2	-	1	5	1
historian	4		-			
politician	1		-			
other expert	1		-		2	1
participant – 1939 MRP			-			
participant – 1979 Baltic Appeal			-			
participant – 1989 Baltic Way			-			
participant – MRP comm. event			-			
participant – Baltic Way comm. event			-			
other	1		-			

Table 14. Attitudes towards the MRP – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
negative, criticising	14	7	6	2	15	13
positive			1		1	2
justifying			1		7	
underlines the importance of MRP	3	1	10		5	4
no attitudes towards the MRP	4	2	8	3	12	6

Table 15. Attitudes towards the MRP – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
negative, criticising	8	1	2	2	6	2
positive	1		1		1	
justifying	2		1		3	
underlines the importance of MRP	2			1		1
no attitudes towards the MRP	1	2	3	1		2

Table 16. Attitudes towards the MRP – Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
negative, criticising	10	2	-		3	2
positive		1	-			
justifying	5		-		3	
underlines the importance of MRP	1	2	-		1	
no attitudes towards the MRP	1		-	1	1	1

Table 17. “Othering” – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Soviet Union/ Russia	13	7	6	3	12	5
Germany	1					2
Estonia		1				1
Baltic States						1
Poland						
Western Europe					4	1
within the same country	2	2	1		1	2
other		1			3	
no "Othering"	5	1	14	2	14	13

Table 18. “Othering” – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Soviet Union/ Russia	6	1		1	3	
Germany						
Estonia	1					
Baltic States	2	1				
Poland						
Western Europe	1				2	
within the same country		1	1			
other						
no "Othering"	3	1	5	2	3	4

Table 19. “Othering” – Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Soviet Union/ Russia			-		1	
Germany			-			
Estonia			-			
Baltic States	5	2	-		3	1
Poland	2	1	-			
Western Europe			-		2	
within the same country	1		-			1
other			-			
no "Othering"	5		-	1	2	1

Table 20. Historical contextualisation – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
outbreak of WWII		1	3	1	9	1
occupation/ annexation of Estonia/Baltic States	8	6	6	2	14	10
avoiding/postponing the Soviet-German conflict			2		4	2
German betrayal of the MRP and attack on the Soviet Union			1			
consequence of the Munich Agreement						

Table 21. Historical contextualisation – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
outbreak of WWII	2			1	2	
occupation/ annexation of Estonia/Baltic States	6		3	2	3	2
avoiding/postponing the Soviet-German conflict	2				2	
German betrayal of the MRP and attack on the Soviet Union	1				1	
consequence of the Munich Agreement						

Table 22. Historical contextualisation – Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
outbreak of WWII			-		2	
occupation/ annexation of Estonia/Baltic States	7	1	-		2	
avoiding/postponing the Soviet-German conflict	4		-		2	
German betrayal of the MRP and attack on the Soviet Union	1	1	-			
consequence of Munich agreements			-		2	

Table 23. Mnemopolitical discussion – Estonian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
domestic affairs	2	2		2	4	
bilateral - referring to the “Other”	7	3	5	1	6	
bilateral – Russia vis-a-vis another country	1					
European level	2	1	1	1	5	4
Europe-Russia					1	1
other	2		1		8	4
no mnemopolitical discussions	9	4	15	1	14	14

Table 24. Mnemopolitical discussion – Estonian Russian-language press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
domestic affairs	3					
bilateral - referring to the “Other”	5		1		3	
bilateral – Russia vis-a-vis another country	2	1				
European level	1			1	1	
Europe-Russia					1	
other					1	
no mnemopolitical discussions	1	2	5	2	2	4

Table 25. Mnemopolitical discussion – Russian press (number of articles)

	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
domestic affairs	2		-			1
bilateral - referring to the “Other”			-			
bilateral – Russia vis-a-vis another country	8	2	-		2	
European level			-			
Europe-Russia			-		3	
other			-			
no mnemopolitical discussions	3		-	1	2	2

Table 26. 23 August Remembrance Day for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes in the press (number of articles)

		neutral	positive	negative	analytical	no reference
Estonian	2009	1	2			28
	2014	4	1			16
Estonian Russian-language	2009					6
	2014	1				3
Russian	2009			3		3
	2014					3

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