

**Application for the European Social Survey CRONOS Panel  
Call Specification for Question Design Teams**

**Title**

**PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD MEMORY POLICIES  
(MEMORY MODULE)**

**Type of survey**

Single Measurement Survey Application

**Principal Applicant**

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**Appendix 1:** First Draft of questions for the Public attitudes toward memory policies module  
“Draft Questions Memory”

**Appendix 2:** Curriculum vitae of the Principal Applicant – “CV Memory PA”

**Appendix 3:** Curriculum vitae of the members of the team (from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, and the United-Kingdom) - “CV Memory Team”

## **RELEVANCE AND RATIONALE**

This proposal **stems from a paradox**. Over the past twenty years, European states, and more recently the European Union as a whole, have actively developed public policies to transmit the memory of violent pasts as a means of fostering inclusive democracies and tolerant citizens. Today, memory and the importance of its transmission are core European values. Yet, memory issues have themselves become a source of major political conflict, while the phenomena that these memory policies were designed to combat – hate crimes, populist movements, and extremist ideologies – have grown exponentially.

### **Classic theorization of memory and politics in social sciences**

The idea that remembering the past contributes to the transformation and pacification of society is at the heart of research fields like transitional justice studies (Barkan, 2001; Olsen et al., 2010) or European studies (Pakier & Strath, 2010; Perchoc, 2019; Sierp, 2014). But these studies deal primarily with how these policies are produced. So far, the few studies that have explored the reception of memory policies have focused on their narrative content and have sought to gauge what individuals remember of history when it is presented in a classroom, a museum, or a memorial (Starratt and al., 2017; Pennell, 2016; Cowan and Maitles, 2007). These studies generally suppose the existence of an abstract citizen, assuming that being interested in the past and the inclusive lessons to be learned from it are universal and largely independent of socio-economic conditions, gender status, social practices, politization, or values.

### **Moving forward: grasping memory policy feedbacks**

Given the paradox raised above, the social sciences have begun to question this mainstream approach (Gensburger and Lefranc, 2020; David, 2020; Burdholm and Schepeleln-Johansen, 2019; Luminet and al. 2019). There is an urgent need to assess the feedbacks of these memory policies rather than (just) how the narratives they promote are internalised by individuals. The driving principle behind the conception of this module is therefore the (re)conceptualization of the relationship between memory and democracy, and between politization and de-politization (Misztal, 2005; Goodman and Grindle, 2016; Kansteiner, 2019).

It is therefore inspired by the policy feedback literature and approach (Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010; Weaver and Lerman 2010). The term policy feedback refers to the way public policies transform mass politics and polity over time, through both their material and cognitive effects (Pierson, 1993). It has led to significant research in this area (Skocpol, 1992; Mettler and Welch, 2005; Svallfors, 2010; Mettler, 2019).

The insertion of our module into the ESS survey will enable us to answer key questions such as: who cares about the past? Who experiences these memory policies and the instruments the state uses to implement them? To what extent does engaging with these memory policies coincide with specific attitudes, values, and social characteristics, and with specific relationships to the state? How do people talk about memory and the way it is promoted? Answering these questions will constitute a first step toward understanding why memory policies in Europe do not work as expected.

This module will address a highly topical issue in both academic and policy debates. Relevant to academic and non-academic audiences alike, it will also interest the hundreds of scholars in memory studies, a very important research field in Europe where however the use of quantitative data has so far been largely underdeveloped. Moreover, it will respond to the urgent need for a deeper understanding of the impact of the memory policies that are increasingly expressed by European governments and administrations as well as countless NGOs.

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## SUITABILITY FOR THE CRONOS-2

In recent years, several surveys have aimed to provide an overview of European citizens' knowledge of the past. Focused exclusively on historical content and its transmission (its knowability) this type of survey mostly excludes the dimension of the governmentality of these memory public policies. The existing surveys have four main limitations:

- 1) They concern the knowledge of a specific past (slavery, terrorism, communism or the Holocaust, for example) rather than memory policies themselves and their social legitimacy.
- 2) They are often designed and conducted at the national level, and in cases of international comparison they consider the country's history as the primary explanatory variable rather than its organisational or institutional characteristics.
- 3) Many neglect the general population in favour of a specific group – “young citizens” for example who are considered to be the primary targets for these memory policies.<sup>1</sup> Many studies also look at sub-groups of the population according to their migratory history or their religion, considering memory as either a factor or an indicator of national integration.

By contrast, the 15 standardised closed survey questions fielded to an online general population panel in different countries, along with other items from the ESS core questionnaire will allow us to address the limitations in the existing research while also incorporating generational, gender, and socio-economic analytic variables. This will provide a well-rounded perspective on public attitudes toward memory policies in Europe, breaking away from the idea that all citizens receive and react to these policies in the same way. Our theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks mean that the design of the CRONOS-2 panel would be perfect for the collection of original data on public attitudes toward memory public policy in Europe.

Moreover, the combination of the “Media and social trust”, the “Justice and Fairness”, and “Human Values” modules will enable us to reintroduce the question of politization into a field where the recent appropriation of memory claims by right-wing activists all over Europe is surprising and concerning for researchers and other actors alike. Indeed, for too long, research in this area has focused on the commitment to “memory” and “transmission” as a path to emancipation and progress. But combining our 15 questions with the ones included in the ESS core modules provides a unique opportunity to understand the feedback effects of memory public policies in unequal and differentiated European societies.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014, in a large survey study entitled *Future Memory*, more than 31,000 young people aged between 16 and 29, citizens of 31 different countries, mostly from the European Union, were questioned about their attitudes to memory and the future, *Mémoires à venir. Enquête internationale réalisée auprès des jeunes de 16 à 29 ans dans 31 pays*, 2014, <http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MEMOIREaVENIR-RESULTATS-A2-BD2.pdf>

## RESEARCH TEAM

The research team is coordinated by the political scientist and CNRS bronze medal recipient (2019), Sarah Gensburger, a specialist in the relationship between memory and politics, along with Benoît Tudoux, a data analysis engineer (both with the CNRS, **France** / <https://isp.cnrs.fr/?project=tudoux-benoit>). Alongside them, a research team composed of ESS ERIC members Valérie Rosoux (political scientist, FNRS) for **Belgium**, Johana Wyss (anthropologist, Czech Academy of Sciences) for **the Czech Republic**, and Jenny Wustenberg (political scientist, Nottingham Trent University) for **the United Kingdom**, as well as Andrea Cossu (sociologist, Trento University) for **Italy**. The team will also include a **neuro-psychologist**, Céline Souchay (CNRS **France** / <https://lpnc.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Celine-Souchay>), given the theme has implications well beyond the social sciences. In order to envisage the future extension of the module beyond these initial participating countries, Anette H. Storeide (**Norwegian** University of Science and Technology) will also participate in the team.

These researchers have been working closely together within the **Memory Studies Association**, organising scientific events and producing joint publications. This module is therefore the fruit of **constant and ongoing dialogue** between specialists of memory studies but also the direct result of **several preliminary investigations already conducted at the national level in the participating countries**. The methodological, disciplinary, and national complementarity of the team members is a genuine asset to the success of this module. Finally, should the list of countries participating in the next round of the ESS be broadened, colleagues from several other countries (**Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, and Spain**) have already indicated their interest.

## FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

The public use of the past by both governments and international organizations is today omnipresent, to the point where it is rare that at any given time current events do not deal with a memory issue in the countries concerned. This, in fact, frees us from any calendar issues. Moreover, the transversal perspective of this module via memory policy feedback, rather than the transmission of elements of history itself, means we can avoid any problems that might have arisen due to the different timeframes for data collection in three different groups of countries in CRONOS-2.

### **Anticipated methodological or practical difficulties**

The recent lockdown in several European countries has forced us to increase the reference period in the questions on social practices; the traditional “over the last year” is reformulated as “would you say you usually” (Draft question 8). Additional practical difficulties may arise with the online administration of the survey. The primary impact of this is the participation of younger respondents to the detriment of older ones, which is important for this subject where generation may be a significant variable. A secondary implication is that online surveys tend to give rise to more extreme positions, as many studies have shown. This will be taken into account in the analysis, and the preliminary data will be used to design a larger future study.

The final anticipated difficulty lies in the construction of a cross-country module on a subject that seems partly linked to the history and identity of each country. However, as explained above, the choice to study public attitudes towards memory policy as a political value, not as historical content, allows us to avoid this pitfall. Moreover, the research team has been constructed specifically to incorporate national situations with a variety of political regimes and structure, trajectories of EU integration, and levels of economic development, but also contrasting trajectories in terms of colonialism, communism, the world wars, or terrorist attacks, for example. The richness and diversity of the participating countries combined with the established collective research relationships will allow us to obtain both equivalence over the wide geographic spread of the survey and relevant variables for comparison.

### **Qualitative to quantitative: tested and operational**

We are fully confident this model will be successful. Indeed, the construction of these 15 items draws directly on preliminary qualitative investigation. In addition to participating in the design of a survey study on reactions to terrorism (Mediaterr) as part of the ELIPSS panel (CDSP France – Sciences Po Paris), Sarah Gensburger has also coordinated several qualitative studies relating to memory policy, its publics, and its transmission. In France, more than 150 non-directive interviews and four focus groups were used to test many of the questions included in the module. These were then tested in several national situations through discussion with other members of the research team, resulting in these 15 standardised closed survey questions, which are fully and immediately operational in all the participating countries independent of the timeline for implementing the online survey.

The shift from national to international, and from qualitative to quantitative has been supervised by Benoît Tudoux, who has been a member of ISSP-France since 2006, responsible for collecting French data within the ISSP. He is also a member of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the French archive for socio-political data (CDSP). In 2018, He was honored by the CNRS with a Crystal Award for his work promoting the spread of methods and tools for data analysis and the secondary use of data. This preliminary study and meetings as well as the composition of the research team will enable us to operationalize our theoretical and conceptual model using 15 standardized closed survey questions.

### **DISSEMINATION PLANS**

The diversity and academic excellence of the research team and its networks will ensure the results of this module are rapidly disseminated through high-level international conferences and publications. In addition to this ambitious publication policy, the “Slow Memory” research project, soon to be submitted for a COST application (deadline October 29) and which includes most of the members of the current research team (and a lot more), will support and further the analysis and dissemination of the module. Indeed, one of the challenges of this module is to develop durable quantitative approaches to memory studies – which are almost entirely lacking in the field today – and reintegrate political science into the field to respond to the increasing politicisation of these issues.

Numerous non-academic bodies have expressed an interest in the goals of this module, including the European Commission’s “Europe for Citizens” program (Gilles Pelayo), the European Parliament (Markus Prutsch) as well as NGOs such as the European Observatory on Memories (Jordi Guixé) or the Körber Stiftung – History Reflection Group (Gabriele Woidelko). In view of this, a joint conference and working papers publication are planned, to present the module’s results to a broad audience, in addition to publications in mainstream international media.