

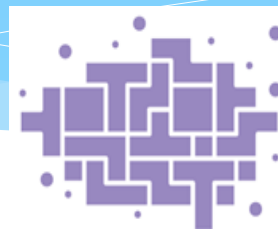
# Fearing the Memory of Father: The impact of Biological Origins on the Life Course of Latvian TR CBOW

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# Who are CBOW?

- \* **CBOW definition:** a child born to a local parent and a member of a foreign military force.
- \* This is a phenomenon, and also now a field of study, that spans continents as well as contexts.
- \* CBOW may experience **stigmas** related to their ethnic or racial origins, stigmas related to their mothers 'loose morals,' and, crucially, for many a stigma of having been born of an 'enemy' soldier and a 'collaborator.'
- \* Stigma is a conflict of **identity**, which in turn is based on **collective (group) memory**



Wedding day, 1946 (Male 10, 2018)

# Hiding CBOW Identities in the West: Fearing Social Reprisals

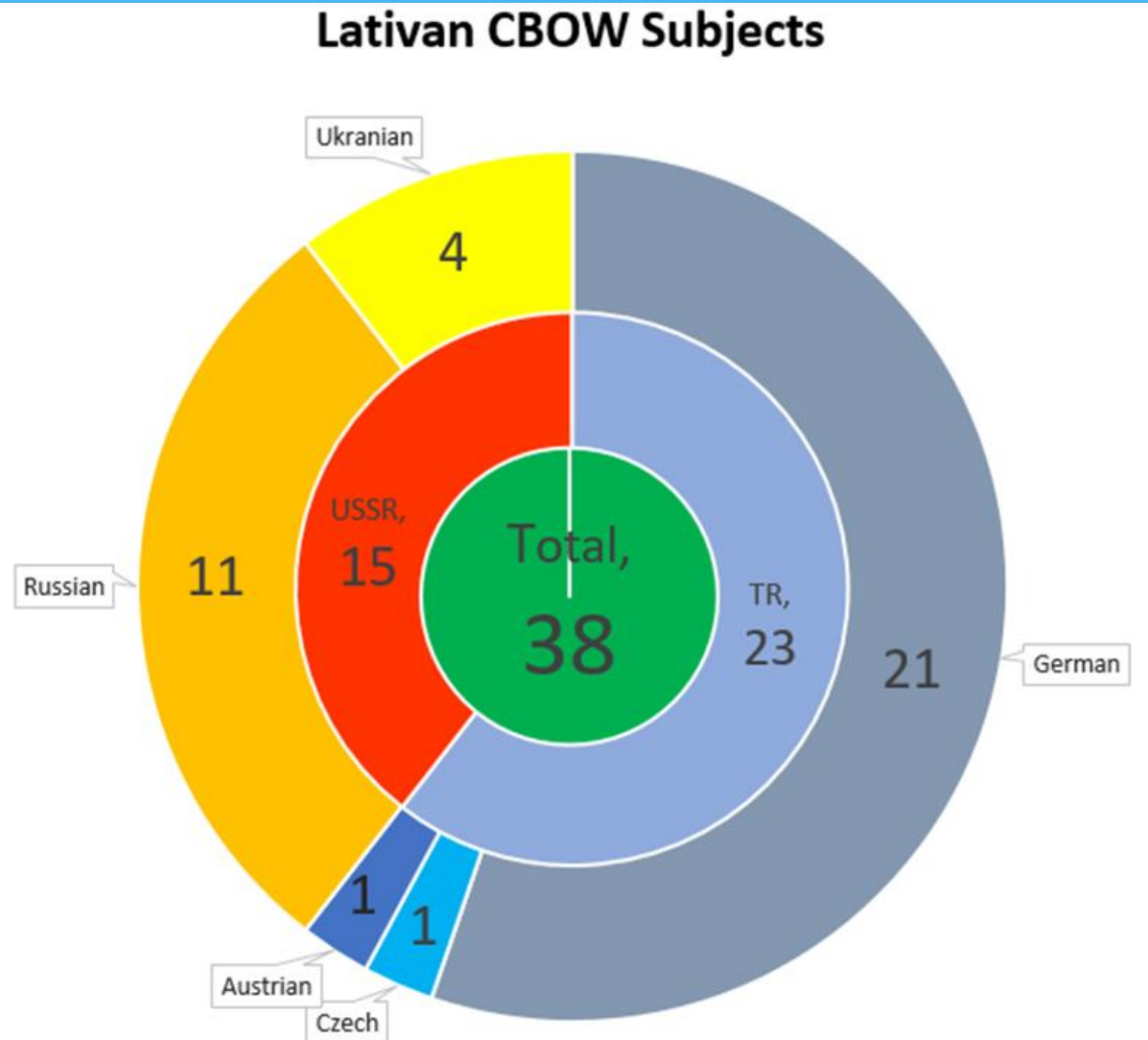
- \* CBOW were often **stigmatized**: bullied, ostracized and not allowed to fully belong in their communities.
- \* CBOW often exhibit psychological, psychosomatic, and even physical problems.
- \* Avoiding stigma often resulted in **mnemonic augmentations** of family memory: erasures, silence and lies.
- \* Families had a **fear** primarily focused on **social reprisals**.



Shorn French women, with TR CBOW in arms, 1944.

# Subjects of Latvian CBOW study

- \* 38 subjects total
- \* 23 'Third Reich' CBOW
- \* 15 'Soviet' CBOW
- \* 33 CBOW interviews
- \* 5 w/ direct relatives



# Hiding Identities in the USSR: A Broad Societal Fear of the State

- \* *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (Orlando Figes)
- \* In the USSR, **fear of the state** led countless families to apply **mnemonic augmentations** in family memory.
- \* Examples include: the destruction or augmentation of documents and photographs, moving around to break ties with the past, taking on different names and biographies, not sharing life stories with family members and **editing family histories for the sake of their children.**
- \* “you don’t throw stones if you live in a glass house.”



Insignia of USSR CBOW's mother's first husband's uniform is colored over (Male 13, 2018).



# Latvian CBOW: Fear of the State

- \* “After the war you were not allowed to open your mouth. What you think, that is not known. Otherwise, you will be immediately sent to Siberia. You were not allowed to say anything. When we spoke about the governments, [we spoke] null. That was all endured quietly, that which we thought. I remember the silence. Especially [among] the farmers, who had not been caught and sent to Siberia, when everyone around them had been deported” (Female 18, 2018).
- \* “There were no instructions, but we [children] already knew that it wasn’t allowed [to talk]. Grandmother also didn’t allow much talk, also during the time of Stalin she didn’t allow it. ‘Hush, Hush!’ That was how it was. There was fear” (Male 8, 2018)
- \* “Basically, we were raised so that there was no chatting around. In general, we were brought up in such a way that what happened in the family was not spoken about outside. That was the norm. Maybe we were raised so as not to trust anyone, anywhere. Because they, the adults, did not trust and that was the norm –that nothing was spoken outside of the family” (Female 13, 2018).

# Latvian CBOW: Rationalizing Survival

- \* *Conspiracy Theories as Part of History* (Van Prooijen & Douglas 2017)
- \* **Crisis situations:** impactful and rapid societal change that calls established power structures, norms of conduct, or even the existence of specific people or groups into question.
- \* In a similar way, immense family **crises require logical explanation**, even if no such logic or facts exist.
- \* Gaps in knowledge or understanding, tend to be filled in ways that **confirm and reinforce identity**.

# Hiding LV TR CBOW Identities

- \* “What could I have told [others], if I [myself] didn’t know? What could I tell [them]? [... ] She [mother] said absolutely nothing. I, myself, had to figure it out” (Male 3, 2018).
- \* “That is all. If someone asks you something, then you must say that [the city of] Rēzekne was bombed and father died. The question is answered. Because those were crazy times, they were such times that even a ram could have broken its leg there” (Male 11, 2018).
- \* “She [mother] was not one to talk openly. Ultimately, she did not want to tell [me], who, where, when. The less you knew, the better you would live” (Male 18, 2018).
- \* “It cannot be said that I was branded [a CBOW], as also no one asked me [about my father]. No one ever asked me, I was never asked by anyone - where is your father or something like that. Nobody ever asked me that” (Female 22, 2018).
- \* “They didn’t know and also no one ever asked. If I can remember now, then I remember that no one asked me; not about my father or about anything. The war was over, everyone was happy to have survived” (Male 11, 2018).



# A TR CBOW Case-Study

- \* Silence from mother
- \* Learned a few details from outside the home
- \* Mother moved around during his childhood
- \* No photograph of father
- \* No known details on father (D.O.B., hometown, ext.)
- \* Never searched for father
- \* Utilized silence as he grew up
- \* Attained a higher education and joined the CP
- \* Continues to use silence
- \* In CBOW project, requested anonymity (Male 3, 2018)

# A USSR CBOW Case-Study

- \* Family open about her father
- \* Has photograph of father
- \* Knows details on father (D.O.B., hometown, ext.)
- \* Mother searched for father
- \* Never hid fact about her father
- \* Asked to join the CP, but declined
- \* Her children are not interested in their grandfather, as they don't like the communist past
- \* In CBOW project, requested anonymity (Female 18, 2018)

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# Thank you for your attention and I appreciate your comments!



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