CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

CONNECTING CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY AND SEMIOTICS

An analysis of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials in Estonia

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Abstract

This thesis aims to advance the understanding of the connections between cultural geography and semiotics on the basis of which to analyse the multiple interpretations of the built environment. To do so, this thesis focuses on the interpretations of a specific part of the built environment: monuments and memorials. Monuments and memorials are built forms with commemorative as well as political functions: national elites use monuments and memorials to articulate selective historical narratives, focusing attention on convenient events and individuals, while obliterating what is uncomfortable for them. Articulating historical narratives, monuments and memorials can set political agendas and reproduce social order.

Human and cultural geographers have focused on the social and power relations embodied in monuments and memorials. However, they have paid little attention to the processes through which monuments and memorials can effectively convey meanings and reinforce political power. Semiotic analysis has concentrated on the signifying dimension of monuments and memorials, while underrating the role of the material and the political dimensions. This thesis argues that a holistic perspective based on the connection between cultural geography and semiotics can overcome the limitations of previous research on the interpretations of monuments and memorials. This holistic perspective conceives the interpretations of monuments and memorials as depending on three interplays: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment. These ideas are explored through an examination of two monuments in Estonia: the Victory Column, a war memorial erected in Tallinn in 2009 and the so-called 'Kissing Students', a fountain with a sculpture featuring two kissing young people unveiled in Tartu in 1998.

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To my mother Laura, to my father Claudio and to my brother Francesco

To Daria, моя принцесса

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Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter describes the context in which this research has evolved and the contribution the study makes to the fields of cultural geography and semiotics. First, the chapter outlines the context of the research, showing how a cultural geographical and semiotic approach can be useful in understanding the built environment and its multiple interpretations. Furthermore, this chapter explores the core areas on which this research is focused through an exploration of preceding studies that have linked cultural geography and semiotics. This chapter also provides an insight into the case study approach of the thesis, looking at the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials in post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe, with a focus on Estonia. Finally, the main research question, aims and objectives are described while presenting the structure of the thesis.

1.1 An inquiry into the multiple interpretations of the built environment

This thesis focuses on the built environment and its multiple interpretations. A significant and still growing literature has looked at the interpretations of the built environment in the humanities and social sciences. Cultural geography is a multifaceted discipline using different theoretical perspectives and methods to analyse concepts such as space, place, landscape, built environment and power. Cosgrove defined cultural geography as a subfield of human geography that focuses "*upon the patterns and interactions of human culture, both material and non-material, in relation to the natural environment and the human organization of space*" (Cosgrove 1994: 111). Since the 1980s, a 'new cultural geography' has conceptualised landscape as a construction to perpetuate social order and power relations (Cosgrove 1984; Jackson 1989; Duncan 1990). Despite using different approaches, most 'new' cultural geographers converge on two assumptions: landscape has power and it can be seen as a text that communicates meanings (Boogart 2001: 39). These assumptions have been extended to the built environment as the result of human actions on the 'primeval' landscape (Duncan 1990).

Several 'new' cultural geographers have used semiotics to decipher the meanings of space, place, landscape and built environment. However, they have not explicitly associated themselves with semiotics. The use of semiotics by cultural geographers has been rather narrow, as a methodological approach to identify meanings in apparently neutral physical forms (Lindström et al. 2014: 114-115). Yet, semiotics provides a broader theoretical framework for understanding cultural meanings, interpretation and culture (Lagopoulos 1993: 255). Scholars in semiotics have explored the concepts of space, place, landscape and built environment using different paradigms ranging from the semiological tradition associating spatial forms with texts (e.g. Marrone 2009) to more ecological understanding of landscape (e.g. Lindström et al. 2014). However, semioticians have used the terms 'space', 'place' and 'landscape' without much rigour (Lindström et al. 2014: 111).

The main contribution of this study is to connect cultural geography and semiotics in order to sketch out an empirical approach for exploring the interpretative aspects of the built environment. The connection between cultural geography and semiotics can be useful to understand how the built environment conveys meanings and how these are variously interpreted at societal levels. Previous cultural geographical and semiotic research on the interpretative aspect of the built environment has grounded itself on oppositions, such as symbolic/material, material/political, individual/collective, dominant/alternative and so on (e.g. Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Sozzi 2012). This thesis aims to overcome these oppositions by advancing the understanding of the connections between the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to the built environment.

Cultural geography prioritises the cultural dimension of the built environment and explores how culture connects with the social, economic and political dimensions (Duncan and Ley 1993: 332). Semiotic analysis prioritises the signifying and symbolic dimensions of the built environment. The connection between cultural geography and semiotics provides an approach prioritising the cultural dimension and focusing upon the multiple interpretations of the built environment.

The next section begins by clarifying the notion of interpretation, highlighting the theoretical basis from which it has evolved. It will then address the multiplicity of the interpretation of the built environment.

1.2   The multiple interpretations of the built environment

This thesis proposes an interpretative approach, considering the interplay between interpreters as fundamental for the production and development of the meaning of the built environment. Literary theory has conceptualised interpretation as the act of comparing a proposition with what is already known. In this view, interpreting means to "*weight*" what one knows against what is proposed and, on this basis, to decide on its meaning (Martin and Ringham 2000: 76-77). For instance, the interpretations of a fairy tale - e.g. 'Snow White' - draws on the prior knowledge of other fairy tales as well as on the understanding of human behaviour in general: in the case of 'Snow White', of concepts such as youth, beauty and jealousy.

Semiotics has advanced the understanding of the concept of interpretation. Charles S. Peirce (1931–58) took the first step toward the foundation of a sign theory able to explain the mechanisms of signification and interpretation inside communicative activities. He defined the sign as a "*source of meaning […] as something that means something for an interpretant (a perspective, not a person)*" (Manning 2001: 149). According to Peirce, a sign is conceptualised as a triadic relation of sign (or representamen), object and interpretant. This triadic relation is "*recursive, hybrid and processual in nature*" (Waterton and Watson 2014: 17): meanings are created through the mediation of signs between objects and interpretants.

The sign theory of Peirce has created the basis for the studies in the field of interpretative semiotics, i.e. a branch of semiotics exploring how the interpretative habits of individuals, as well as of societies, are formed. Peirce's theory has gained a significant international following and it has strongly influenced subsequent semiotic research. For example, Umberto Eco proposed an interpretative method to determine the interpretative habits of different cultures (Eco 1984). After Peirce and Eco, interpretative semiotics has been developed especially by biosemiotics, i.e. a field of semiotics embracing biology to explore the production and interpretation of signs in the biological realm (Sebeok 2001a; Kull 2005; Hoffmeyer 2008; for a definition of biosemiotics see also Cobley 2001b: 163-164).

This thesis focuses on the multiple interpretations of the built environment. The built environment is seen as a text able to create and guide interpretations (Rapoport 1982: 19). In this thesis, 'interpretation' is a broad term including the opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings users have about the built environment. Individuals

interact differently with the built environment depending on their knowledge, evaluation and emotional reactions. Interpretation is essentially subjective and reflects the education, the experience and the individual and communal background of individuals (Yanow 2000: 6). In practice, individuals interpret differently the built environment.

1.3   The multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials

The empirical part of this thesis concentrates on specific components of the built environment: monuments and memorials. It is easily recognisable and publicised that monuments and memorials are erected to promote specific meanings in space. This thesis focuses on the interpretations of monuments and memorials and on how these interpretations affect individuals' cognitions, emotions and behaviours.

Monuments and memorials are built forms with celebratory and commemorative functions. Monuments celebrate significant events or individuals. Young (1993) defined 'memorial' as a general term for commemorative texts, as distinguished from 'monuments', i.e. particular types of memorials fixed in material forms and normally associated with public art. In this thesis, the term 'memorial' refers to built forms erected to commemorate individuals who died due to war, ethnic cleansing, mass violence or other disasters (Kattago 2015). Monuments and memorials can directly or indirectly present political meanings. Elites use them to convey the kinds of ideals they want citizenship to strive towards.

Monuments and memorials can articulate selective historical narratives: they can focus attention on events and individuals that are preferred by elites, while obliterating what is uncomfortable for them (Hay et al. 2004: 204). In doing so, monuments and memorials can articulate specific understandings of the past to inculcate particular conceptions of the present and encourage future possibilities (Francis and Thomas 2007; Massey 1995; Dovey 1999; Dwyer 2000; Osborne 1998). Promoting specific conceptualisations of the past, monuments and memorials can set political agendas and reproduce social order. Thus, elites design monuments and memorials striving to reinforce their political power and to legitimise social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

Design strategies are available to limit the range of interpretations and uses of monuments and memorials. Designers use these strategies to entice users along a

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specific interpretation of monuments and memorials. Nevertheless, designers cannot fully control the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Once erected, monuments and memorials become "*social property*" and elicit a large range of interpretations at the societal level (Hershkovitz 1993: 397). Thus, the meanings of monuments and memorials are never fixed once and for all: individuals differently interpret and use them in ways designers might have never envisioned.

1.4   The under-theorised issues regarding the interpretations of monuments and memorials

This section introduces previous cultural geographical and semiotic research on monuments and memorials, highlighting their shortcomings and potential links.

The analysis by David Harvey (1979) of the political controversy over the Sacré Coeur Basilica in Paris ignited geographers' interests in the cultural and political significance of monumental buildings, public statues and commemorative sites. Ever since, human and cultural geographers have begun to consider monuments and memorials as cultural expressions around which cultural and political positions could be articulated (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991; Hershkovitz 1993; Johnson 1995; Peet 1996; Withers 1996; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Osborne 1998; Dwyer 2000; Whelan 2002; Hay et al. 2004; Benton-Short 2006). Inspired by the debate around the conflation of memory, history and place (e.g. Nora 1989), semiotics has analysed monuments and memorials as communicative devices promoting selective discourses on the past (Pezzini 2006; Sozzi 2012; Abousnnouga and Machin 2013).

Previous cultural geographical and semiotic research on the interpretations of monuments and memorials has wittingly or unwittingly created oppositions, such as symbolic/material, material/political, individual/collective, dominant/alternative and so on. For example, Atkinson and Cosgrove (1998: 30) concentrated on the "intended *and* official" meanings of monuments; despite recognising that these intended meanings could be contested, the authors only focused on the meanings of monuments as articulated by privileged elites. Sozzi (2012: 13) undertook a detailed semiotic analysis of a military mausoleum in northern Italy, describing its material and symbolic aspects as separate from the "*ideological*" content of the memorial. Specifically, these approaches have grounded themselves on two main distinctions: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions and b) between designers and users.

Human and cultural geography has focused on the social and power relations embodied in monuments and memorials. However, geographical research has paid little attention to the processes through which the material dimension of monuments and memorials actually convey meanings and reinforce political power. On the other hand, semiotics has concentrated on the signifying and symbolic dimensions of monuments and memorials, while underrating the role of the material and the political dimensions (although there are a few exceptions, e.g. Lagopoulos 1993; Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou 2014). The material, symbolic and political dimensions are useful analytical concepts. At the empirical level, they equally contribute to the creation and development of a better understanding of how the meanings of monuments and memorials are constructed. There is thus the need for a theoretical framework that conceives the material, symbolic and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials.

As for the relationship between designers and users, previous research has polarised between those concentrating on the meanings of monuments as envisioned by their designers (e.g. Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998) and those emphasising the individual and social interpretations of monuments and memorials (e.g. Withers 1996). As for the interpretation of any text or cultural expression, the interpretations of monuments and memorials lie in an intermediate point between these two poles, i.e. between the designers' intended meanings and the users' interpretations (Eco 1990, 1992). This thesis distinguishes these two levels and suggests ways to connect them.

1.5   The case study

This section provides an insight into the case study approach of the thesis, looking at the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials in post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe, with a focus on Estonia.

Monuments and memorials are tools to create specific interpretations of past, nation and culture (Johnson 1995). This is particularly evident in transitional societies associated with regime change (Grava 1993: 19-10; Ehala 2009: 140). In this context, recently formed elites spend significant resources to shape a society's collective meanings and to establish concepts of nation in accordance with current political conditions. In transitional societies, monuments and memorials are often used as tools to shape specific attitudes toward the past and thus to create specific future expectations (Whelan 2002; Tamm 2013; Till 2003).

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This thesis concentrates on meaning formation in post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe. Specifically, Estonia was selected as a relevant case study to address the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. In Estonia, monuments and memorials have been used as tools for the cultural reinvention of the post-Soviet built environment (Tamm 2013: 665-667). Cultural reinvention is the process of filling the built environment with specific cultural meanings through practices of redesign, reconstruction, restoration, relocation and removal. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cultural reinvention of the Estonian built environment has evolved through two distinct but concurrent practices: the redesign of the inherited built environment created by the Soviets and the simultaneous establishment of a new built environment reflecting the needs of post-Soviet culture and society.

In this context, the Estonian Government has marginalised, removed and relocated some Soviet monuments and memorials. Simultaneously, it has taken initiatives to establish new built forms aiming at promoting specific conceptualisations of the past, present and future. These practices of cultural reinvention through monuments and memorials have helped to define collective meanings and sentiments of national distinctiveness of the recently born Republic of Estonia. However, these practices have not been widely accepted. In Estonia, the marginalisation, relocation, removal of Soviet monuments and memorials and the erection of new ones have often sparked broad debates and resulted in civil disorder. For example, the 2007 relocation of a memorial to the Soviet Army in Tallinn resulted in two nights of disorder, during which a 20-year-old Russian was killed (Chapter Four § 4.3). The controversies over monuments and memorials have been so intense that scholars have used the terms 'War of Monuments' to refer to a series of small-scale conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials starting from the early 2000s (e.g. Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Smith 2008).

The next section will present the main research question. It will then identify the research aims and objectives that directly relate to the primary research question. In doing so, it will present the structure of the thesis as building on the sequence of research aims and objectives.

1.6   The research questions and aims

As seen in § 1.4, there have been two limitations that have been predominant in both the geographical and the semiotic perspectives on monuments and memorials: first, that the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials has been often overlooked; and second, that the relationship between designers and users has remained mostly under-theorised. The main contribution of this study is to overcome these limitations by connecting analytical frames developed in the field of cultural geography and semiotics.

This thesis argues that the connection between cultural geography and semiotics can provide an innovative framework to study the multiple interpretations of the built environment and of monuments and memorials specifically. The primary research question relates directly to this contribution and it is in two parts:

-        What could semiotics add to the cultural geographical approach to the built environment?
-        What could cultural geography add to the semiotic approach to the built environment?

In relation to the case study, these two questions can be combined in one:

-        How can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?

This primary research question is analytically broken down in a series of aims and objectives that can be regarded as a sequence, one building on the other. Research aims and objectives are listed below as divided into theoretical and empirical to provide an indication of how this work will address the primary research question. The structure of the thesis to follow is presented as building on the sequence of the research aims and objectives.

Theoretical aims

The thesis aims to make a contribution both to the theoretical and the empirical dimensions. At the theoretical level, the thesis aims to advance the understanding of the connections between cultural geography and semiotics. There are two research aims addressing the theoretical dimension of the thesis:

1. To identify the key limitations of previous research on monuments and memorials.
2. To overcome some of the key limitations of previous research on monuments and memorials.

Chapter Two, on '*The limitations of the geographical and the semiotic perspectives on monuments and memorials*', addresses the first aim of identifying the key limitations of previous research on monuments and memorials. This chapter completes a review of the geographical and the semiotic literature on monuments and memorials, highlighting limitations and future recommendations. It concludes by identifying two limitations that have been predominant in both the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials: first, that the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials has been often overlooked; and second, that the relationship between designers and users has remained mostly under-theorised.

Chapter Three, on '*The connection between cultural geography and semiotics: A holistic perspective on meaning-making of monuments and memorials*', addresses the second theoretical aim: to overcome the key limitations identified in previous research on monuments and memorials. To do so, it develops a holistic perspective to link the cultural geographical and the semiotic approach. 'Holistic' here refers to a perspective that conceives the interpretations of monuments and memorials as depending on three interplays: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment. Each section of Chapter Three discusses each of these interplays, identifying the theoretical framework on the basis of which to treat the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. The chapter concludes by demonstrating the feasibility of approaching the textuality of monuments and memorials as a methodological perspective (Stano 2014: 61).

Research Design

Chapter Four, on '*The methodological framework for the study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and* memorials', constructs and develops the methodological framework for the empirical study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. This methodological framework is the "*logic*" connecting the primary research question with the conclusions to be drawn (Yin 2009: 24). It identifies the rationale for the strategy, methodology and methods used to integrate the theoretical and the empirical dimensions of the study. In practice, the function of the methodological framework is to ensure that the research strategy, methodology and methods effectively address the primary research question.

Chapter Four hence introduces the research strategy, methodology and methods of data collection and analysis. As for the research strategy, this chapter begins by establishing the logic underpinning case study research, highlighting its rationale and potential for analytic generalisation. Chapter Four then goes on to explain the rationale for analysing the multiple interpretations of two monuments in Estonia, chosen as the most appropriate cases to address the primary research question.

As for the research methodology, Chapter Four explains the rationale for a qualitative approach. It then explains the need for an extensive fieldwork and a multi-method approach for data collection. In this thesis, 'multi-method approach' simply means that data collection consists of several methods. The multi-method approach allows the comparison of data produced through interviews, observations and the investigation of documents. Semi-structured interviews explore the users' opinions, beliefs and emotional reactions. Participant observations concentrate on the actions and interactions of users. Documents and secondary sources provide an account of the researched monuments as envisioned by their designers.

As for the organisation and analysis of data, Chapter Four describes the approach used to transcribe, code and analyse primary data. Finally, Chapter Four explores the ethical issues and the measures taken to avoid harm to both the researcher and the respondents.

Empirical aims

The thesis aims to make an empirical contribution through an analysis of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials in Estonia. Chapters Five and Six analyse the case studies of respectively, one war memorial in Tallinn and one fountain-sculpture in Tartu. Both monuments are placed in squares used in a variety of ways by Estonians and tourists alike. There are two research aims addressing the empirical dimension of the thesis:

1   To engage with the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in Chapters Three and Four to frame, conduct and analyse the multiple interpretations of two monuments in Estonia.

2   To reflect on further developments of the framework above discussing the empirical conclusions of the case study analyses.

Chapters Five and Six cover the case studies and address the first empirical aim by proposing an analysis of respectively the War of Independence Victory Column in Tallinn and the Kissing Students in Tartu. These chapters have similar structure: first they introduce the context in which the researched monuments were erected and explain the reasons why these monuments were selected as appropriate case studies. The case study analyses are then divided into three parts. The first part addresses the designers' stated intentions behind the monuments – i.e. the intended meanings of the 'authors'. The term 'intention' has assumed a specific meaning in semiotics. Eco (1979: 9) defines communication as an author's production of expressions intentionally aiming to achieve certain tasks. Later, Eco (1990: 145) ascribes three distinct but interdependent intentionality to textual interpretation (the intention of the author, the intention of the reader and the intention of the text). Several geographers looking at the interpretations of monuments and memorials have used 'intention' to refer to the designers' aim to promote specific meanings through monuments and memorials (Peet 1996: 22; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998: 30; Dwyer 2000: 661; Hay et al. 2004: 204). In this thesis, 'designers' intentions' simply refer to the cultural and political meanings that designers seek to convey through monuments and memorials.

As users often challenge the designer's intentions, the second part of the analyses presents the interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the researched monuments – i.e. the interpretations, actions and interactions of the 'readers'. Based on data presented in the previous sections, the third part progresses

toward the theoretical dimension of the study aiming at a deeper understanding of the designer' and users' interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

Chapter Seven, on '*The cultural reinvention of the Estonian built environment: a comparative analysis between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students*', addresses the second empirical aim to reflect on further developments of the theoretical and methodological framework of the study, discussing the analytical findings presented in Chapters Five and Six. To do so, Chapter Seven proposes a comparative analysis between the case studies in order to abstract their findings to the theoretical dimension. This analysis identify similarities and differences between the interpretative processes of the researched monuments and make them cohere into a meaningful argument: that the built environment is a form of discourse, which can be shaped and transformed through design in order to convey specific cultural and political meanings.

Chapter Eight, on '*Conclusions: The potential of the connection between cultural geography and semiotics for the study of the built environment*', summarises the conclusions and returns to address the main contribution and principal aims of the thesis, discussing the key arguments made within each chapter and highlighting the contributions that can be claimed as original. This final chapter then goes on to outline the limitations of the thesis. Finally, it indicates directions for future research.

References to published works are to be found in the List of Reference after Chapter Eight. Above in § 1.2 and later in Chapter Two § 2.4, references to the standard edition of '*Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*' are made in the following fashion: 'Peirce (1931-58)', as established within Peirce scholarship (Cobley 2001b: XVI).

Chapter Two

The limitations of the geographical and the semiotic perspectives on monuments and memorials

There is a significant and growing literature on the built environment and its interpretations. Since the 'interpretative turn' (Geertz 1973), research in the humanities and social sciences has proposed a meaning-focused understanding of the built environment. In the wake of the interpretative turn, several publications have appeared documenting the interpretative aspects of monuments and memorials. Despite different approaches, most of this research converges on one assumption: monuments and memorials can confer meanings in space. However, as noted in Chapter One § 1.4, this research has grounded itself on oppositions that have obstructed holistic understandings of monuments and memorials, such as symbolic/material, material/political, individual/collective, dominant/alternative and so on (e.g. Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Sozzi 2012).

This chapter aims to identify the key limitations of previous research on monuments and memorials and its interpretations. In relation to the first theoretical aim presented in Chapter One § 1.6, this chapter completes a review of the geographical and the semiotic literature on monuments and memorials, highlighting limitations and future recommendations.

Section 2.1 provides an overview of the literature on monuments and memorials in art history and in anthropology. This literature has fallen short of describing the political significance of monuments and memorials. Human and cultural geographers have more explicitly investigated the political dimension of monuments and memorials. Section 2.2 completes a review of the geographical literature on monuments and memorials. Despite addressing the political dimension, the geographical approach to monuments and memorials has grounded itself on two key limitations. Section 2.3 addressed these limitations.

Semiotic scholarship has analysed monuments and memorials as communicative devices able to promote specific discourses on the past (Pezzini 2006; Sozzi 2012; Abousnnouga and Machin 2013). Section 2.4 provides an overview of the semiotic

literature on the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Finally, Section 2.5 outlines two key limitations of the semiotic approach to monuments and memorials.

The chapter concludes by identifying two limitations that have been predominant in both the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials: first, that the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials has been often overlooked; and second, that the relationship between designers and users has remained mostly under-theorised. This thesis aims to overcome these limitations by advancing the understanding of the connections between the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials.

2.1 The historical and the anthropological perspectives on monuments and memorials

This section provides an overview of the literature on monuments and memorials in art history and in anthropology, as disciplines that have consistently dealt with monumental buildings, public statues and commemorative sites. Despite providing solid frameworks for analysing the visual qualities and the commemorative functions of monuments and memorials, art history and anthropology have rarely addressed the political dimension of monuments and memorials.

Monuments and memorials in art history

Art history has focused on the visual qualities of monuments and memorials both as independent objects and as parts of the built environment. This research has provided tools for describing material and symbolic aspects of monuments and memorials. Scholars in this field have largely used iconography as a method to identify conventional symbols embodied in monuments and memorials.

Art history has proposed different methods to assess the 'value' of monuments on the basis of which to treat the issue of their preservation. At the beginning of the 21th century, Alois Riegl (1982) developed a classification of the values to consider when approaching the preservation of historical built forms. Riegl suggested that preservation depended on a combination of values attributed to historical built forms. He aimed to

identify the process of valuation to determine different kinds of preservation of historical built forms.

Riegl (1982) considered historical built forms as autonomous physical forms that 'contain' values. In an attempt to address non-physical phenomena, subsequent studies in art history expanded to consider built forms "*as a visual expression of the values of a social class*" (Schorske 1979: 25). For example, Panofsky (1955: 38) proposed a more interpretative approach called "*iconology*" to unveil the "*intrinsic meanings*" of built forms, whose understanding could reveal "*the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion*".

Monuments and memorials in anthropology

Anthropology has conceptualised monuments and memorials as material tools to preserve personal and collective memories. As recurrent elements of many societies and eras, anthropologists have ascribed to monuments and memorials a fundamental need of society, i.e. to celebrate the individuals and to commemorate the dead that are considered important for a group or a community. Hence, anthropological research has explored the ways in which the commemorative practices of a society took shape into the physical space through material objects and processes.

For example, Halbwachs (1992) provided an explanation for the recalling of memories in physical space. Halbwachs laid the ground for a sociological theory of memory according to which individuals acquire and recall memories only collectively. He considered individual memory as inevitably situated against the background of a "*collective framework*":

> *Collective frameworks are […] precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.* (Halbwachs 1992: 40)

According to this view, collective memory is continuously reconstructed on the basis of predominant ideas in society. As such, collective memory is never enclosed once and for all, but changes following transformations in social relations, concepts of nation and opinions on past events. Halbwachs recognised in this fluctuating nature the need for

societies to create permanent and tangible representations of memory in physical space.

Jan Assmann (2008: 111) argued that the concept of collective memory proposed by Halbwachs lacked an "*institutional character*". Assmann proposed to expand research into the institutionalised forms of memory through the notion of "*cultural memory*" (Assmann 2008: 111). Cultural memory referred to the processes through which a community actively construct and maintain cultural formations - texts, rites, monuments and institutional communications – in order to define what is to be remembered of the past (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995: 129). Monuments and memorials were integral part of this stock of cultural formations that formed cultural memory.

Since these seminal works, the connection between material culture, time and memory has received much attention in anthropological research (e.g. Tilley 2001: 268). Anthropology has provided original methods to explore the social significance of material culture. However, focusing on the social and technological aspects of material culture, anthropology has overlooked the extent to which material culture could convey political messages, i.e. messages aiming to promote consensus regarding political standpoints among as large a portion of society as possible.

The limitations of the historical and the anthropological perspectives on monuments and memorials

Art history and anthropology have provided a solid descriptive framework for analysing the visual qualities and the commemorative functions of monuments and memorials. However, these approaches have rarely addressed how monuments and memorials effectively convey political meanings. Research in human and cultural geography has largely investigated the political dimension of monuments and memorials. The next section will complete a review of the geographical literature on monuments and memorials.

2.2 The geographical perspective on monuments and memorials

Since the 1980s, a 'new cultural geography' has conceptualised landscape as a construction to perpetuate social order and power relations (Cosgrove 1984; Jackson 1989; Duncan 1990). Despite using different perspectives, most 'new' cultural geographers converge on two assumptions: landscape has power and it can be seen as a text that communicates meanings (Boogart 2001: 39). These assumptions have been extended to the built environment as the result of human actions on the 'primeval' landscape (Duncan 1990).

In this context, human and cultural geographers have explored the cultural and political significance of monuments and memorials. However, geographers have rarely discussed how the materiality of monuments and memorials actually conveys political messages and thus legitimates political power. Furthermore, they have focused on the elite intentions, while underestimating how monuments and memorials are interpreted at the societal level.

This section completes a review of the literature on monuments and memorials in human and cultural geography. It first reviews the geographical research on landscape as a medium of power, in order to introduce the context in which the geographical approach to monuments and memorials has originated. It then goes on to examine the geographical conceptualisation of monuments and memorials as tools to articulate a uniform national memory and identity and to reinforce political power. Finally, this section discusses the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials.

Landscape as medium of power

From the mid-1980s, the textual paradigm ignited a representational approach towards landscape within human geography (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988; Duncan and Duncan 1988; Duncan 1990; Barnes and Duncan 1992; Duncan and Ley 1993). This approach applied linguistic and semiotic concepts to identify the meanings of apparently neutral physical forms. There were two separate lines of research associating text and landscape: the first research line assumed that 'appropriate' understandings of landscapes could be reached through the investigation of its representations in literature, poetry, art, photography and other media. Following this perspective, Daniels

and Cosgrove described landscape as a "*cultural image*" almost deprived of any physical dimension:

> *A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings. This is not to say that landscapes are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces - in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground. A landscape park is more palpable but no more real, nor less imaginary, than a landscape painting or poem. […] To understand a built landscape, say an eighteen-century English park, it is usually necessary to understand written and verbal representations of it, not as 'illustrations', images standing outside it, but as constituent images of its meaning or meanings.* (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1)

Considering landscape as constructed in literary and pictorial texts, this approach can be dubbed "*landscape-in-text*" (Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou 2014: 456-457). Scholars following the landscape-in-text approach rarely considered textual representations as able to assert power in space. From the mid-1980s, post-structural geographers refashioned the notion of landscape as a construction to perpetuate social order and power relations (Duncan and Duncan 1988; Duncan 1990; Barnes and Duncan 1992; Duncan and Ley 1993). Post-structural geographers aimed to uncover the hidden, dominant meanings represented in landscape in favour of underrepresented cultural meanings. This second line of research privileged the metaphor of landscape-as-text. The association between landscape and text invited questions on authorship and interpretation of landscapes. Landscapes were seen as "*communicative devices*" produced by 'authors' to transmit information to 'readers' (Duncan 1990: 4). In James S. Duncan's terms:

> *The landscape, I would argue, is one of the central elements in a cultural system, for as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, it acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored.* (Duncan 1990: 17)

Using a textual metaphor, some geographers have envisioned monuments and memorials as "*symbolic signifiers*" able to convey dominant meanings (Benton-Short 2006: 299). The next part will examine the geographical studies analysing monuments and memorials as tools to articulate dominant understandings of memory and identity.

Monuments and memorials as media of power

A great deal of geographical research has investigated the cultural and political significance of monuments and memorials (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991; Hershkovitz 1993; Johnson 1995; Peet 1996; Withers 1996; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Osborne 1998; Dwyer 2000; Whelan 2002; Hay et al. 2004; Benton-Short 2006). This research has empirically focused on different built forms and urban areas: monumental buildings, public statues, squares, memorial gardens, civic precincts, cenotaphs, war memorials and so on. Moreover, it has concentrated on a range of geographical locations and time periods. Despite such variety in empirical analysis, geographical research on monuments and memorials has been based on three common assumptions: 1) monuments and memorials play an important role in the definition of a uniform national memory; 2) monuments and memorials play an important role in the definition of a uniform national identity; 3) monuments and memorials are tools to legitimise and reinforce political power. These assumptions are listed below, one building on the other:

a) *Monuments and memorials play an important role in the definition of a uniform national memory.*

Since the beginning of their academic investigation, monuments and memorials have been considered as repositories of memory:

> *In its oldest and most original sense a monument is a work of man erected for the specific purpose of keeping particular human deeds or destinies [...] alive and present in the consciousness of future generations.* (Riegl 1982: 69)

Roger W. Caves (2005: 318) recognised that the traditional function of monuments and memorials was to commemorate events and individuals. However, Caves argued that commemoration could "*be enriched by educational and political functions*" (Caves 2005: 318). Human and cultural geography has particularly investigated the interplay between the commemorative and the political functions of monuments and memorials.

Since the 1990s, several publications in human and cultural geography have demonstrated that political messages are wittingly or unwittingly attached to the commemorative function of monuments and memorials (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz

1991; Peet 1996; Withers 1996; Osborne 1998; Dwyer 2000; Hay et al. 2004; Benton-Short 2006).

> *Commemorating an individual or an event, public monuments are not merely ornamental features of the urban landscape but rather highly symbolic signifiers that confer meaning on the city and transform neutral places into ideologically charged sites.* (Whelan 2002: 508)

Following this view, monuments and memorials can fix in space particular understanding of the past, focusing attention on events and individuals that are preferred by elites (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Hence, elites can design monuments to educate citizens toward what to remember and what to forget of the past (Tamm 2013: 651). For example, Benton-Short (2006) argued that the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC was intentionally erected in the central axis of the National Mall to give the Second World War and its meaning an exclusive place in American history.

Peet (1996: 22) considered memorials as discursive formations able to articulate ideological messages supporting dominant power interests. Analysing a memorial in Massachusetts, Peet (1996: 33) explained that elites could legitimise their "*political-cultural power*" through the formation of historical narratives in landscape. Peet (1996: 22) used a social semiotic methodology to analyse the articulation between the discursive aspects and the political intentions of memorials.

Hay at al. (2004) undertook an analysis of the public statues in a memorial garden in South Australia to demonstrate that monuments and memorials could promote selective historical narratives. In the analysed memorial garden, statues almost exclusively displayed the preferred events and identities of the Australian white elites. For this reason, Hay at al. argued that the memorial garden could be seen as a product of dominant culture to set the social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in South Australia.

> *Memorials and monuments are political constructions, recalling and representing histories selectively, drawing popular attention to specific events and people and obliterating or obscuring others.* (Hay et al. 2004: 204)

Scholars have claimed that past can be articulated to inculcate particular understandings of present and future (Francis and Thomas 2007; Massey 1995; Dovey

1999). Articulating historical narratives, monuments and memorials can inculcate particular conceptions of the present and encourage future possibilities (Dwyer 2000: 661; Osborne 1998: 434).

> *Memory is not, then, a reactionary form of exclusion from the present. Memory, and its expression in memorial or act of commemoration, is a potent means to connect historical meaning and contemporary cultural identity.* (Withers 1996: 328)

Dwyer (2000) and Osborne (1998) provided evidence for this. Dwyer (2000: 661) considered material landscapes as discourses embodying specific "*visions of the past, present and future*". Undertaking an analysis on the material representation and memorial practices of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, Dwyer explained that landscape discourses could entice individuals along dominant dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Dwyer concluded by demonstrating that the memorial landscape of the US South articulated a selective historical narrative that privileged white American elites.

Osborne (1998: 434) explained that monuments offer individuals and groups the opportunity to negotiate conceptions of the past and, through this process, to construct specific future expectations. Osborne (1998: 433) explained that monuments could serve as "*emotional prompts for action in the present*". To demonstrate that, Osborne presented an analysis of a monumental complex in Montreal, erected to convey particular understandings of Canada's nationalism and history.

Human and cultural geographers have analysed the role of monuments and memorial in articulating specific understanding of the past, present and future. The second assumption refers to the role of monuments and memorials in defining a uniform national identity.

b) *Monuments and memorials play an important role in the definition of a uniform national identity.*

Scholars in the humanities have recently conceptualised memory as the basis for identity building (Tamm 2013: 652; Withers 1996: 328). In geography, the concept of national identity drew heavily on the constructivist school of nationalism (e.g.

Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Anderson 1983). This school argued that nation states are relatively recent formations and national identity is constantly reconstructed to promote national unity and to legitimate political institutions. National elites are always committed to actively designing a set of symbols, narratives and rituals that tend to give and maintain the illusion that nations are a matter of fact (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Moreover, national elites seek to establish continuity between nations and a distant, spurious past so to pretend that nations are natural and permanent. Nations are thus constructs grounded on "*invented traditions*", defined as:

> *[…] A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules, and of a ritual nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 1-2)

Human and cultural geographers have focused on the spatial processes through which a uniform identity could be promoted within the national territory (Cosgrove 1990: 564; Johnson 1995: 54; Forest and Johnson 2002: 526). Some geographers have concentrated on the ways though which monuments and memorials shaped and reinforced sentiments of national distinctiveness: for example, Johnson (1995: 52) analysed examples of public statuary in Ireland as the "*material base*" through which national identity was symbolically structured; Atkinson and Cosgrove (1998) examined the design strategies implemented by the Italian state to define a unitary national identity through the Vittoriano, a huge monument in Rome commemorating the first king of united Italy. Whelan argued that monuments and memorials are particularly useful in contentious political circumstances as they "*served to strengthen support for established regimes, instilled a sense of political unity and cultivated national identity*" (Whelan 2002: 509).

This geographical research has demonstrated that monuments and memorials can shape and spread sentiments of national distinctiveness. However, it has mostly focused on the elite intentions, while underestimating how collective national meanings embodied in monuments and memorials are interpreted at societal levels.

c) *Monuments and memorials are tools to legitimise and reinforce political power.*

The assumptions a) and b) presented above showed that national elites could manipulate memory and identity for political purposes. Along with other legal,

institutional and commemorative means, national elites use monuments and memorials to educate citizens toward "*what is and what is not to be remembered of the past*" (Tamm 2013: 651). Since memory is the basis of identity building, monuments and memorial played an essential role in "*shaping a given community's basic values and principles of belonging*" (Tamm 2013: 652). Hence, monuments and memorials could help to promote a uniform national memory and reinforce sentiments of national belonging.

Tamm (2013: 652) used the terms "*national politics of identity/memory*" to distinguish the elite attempts to promote a uniform national memory and identity from the non-elite efforts calling for the recognition of memories and identities. The politics of memory and identity are integral part of national politics. Here, 'national politics' mean the many decisions taken by national governments and its associates. The decision-making of nation states is inspired by a large number of ideas and values, but eventually produces consistent resolutions. Nation states can be seen as cultural practices, i.e. sets of multifaceted actions exhibiting a pattern that remains relatively stable across time (Bevir and Rhodes 2010: 75).

Contemporary nation states create and often privilege elites. As part of the state, urban planning can be used to serve the needs of national elites (Yiftachel 1998). This is also the case for the design of monuments and memorials. National elites have more power and resources to erect monuments and memorials and thus to present and reproduce their political and cultural meanings in space (Dwyer 2002: 32; Till 2003: 297). Hence, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political agendas.

> *Monuments are the most conspicuous concrete manifestations of political power and of the command of resources and people by political and social elites. As such, they possess a powerful and usually self-conscious symbolic vocabulary or iconography that is understood by those who share a common culture and history.* (Hershkovitz 1993: 397)

While national elites design monuments and memorials to convey dominant meanings, their interpretations are never enclosed once and for all. The next part discusses the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials at the societal level.

The multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials

Some geographers have recognised that the interpretations of monuments and memorials are "*mutable and fluid*" (Hay et al. 2004: 204). They have explained that, once erected, monuments and memorials become "*social property*" (Hershkovitz 1993: 397) and thus they "*can be used, reworked and reinterpreted in ways that are different from, or indeed contradictory to, the intentions of those who had them installed*" (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Nevertheless, few geographers have assessed how multifaceted meanings of monuments and memorials emerge at the societal level. Individuals interpret monuments and memorials in ways that can be different or even contrary to the intentions of those who have them erected:

> *It is apparent that any intention to express a fixed and discrete set of collective meanings in the material landscape is inevitably altered, rendered mobile and open to alternative and even contrary readings.* (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998: 30)

Monuments and memorials embody the agency of generations and assume different functions in different time periods. Monuments legitimising elite power can turn into sites of resistant political practice (Hershkovitz 1993; Whelan 2002; Benton-Short 2006). For example, after the fall of Communism, popular movements suddenly used Communist monuments to demonstrate against the same regime that installed them. In other cases, memorials sacred for elites become the object of scorn and ridicule (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998). In less spectacular way, memorials of a bygone era can turn into neutral urban landmarks.

The investigation of the fluctuating interpretations of monuments and memorials gathered momentum in connection with the collapse of Communism (Kattago 2012; Kattago 2015). Research in this context investigated how regime change affected the interpretations of monuments and memorials and in turn the collective memory and identity in post-socialist countries.

Some geographers have explored cases in which monuments legitimising elite power turned into sites of oppositional and resistant political practice. For example, Hershkovitz (1993) showed how Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the centre of political power in China, came to symbolise public political expression and resistance to the dominant power. Whelan (2002) described how monuments dedicated to British monarchs in Dublin became sites of contestation towards the British political regime.

Through an examination of the controversies over the Second World War Memorial in Washington DC, Benton-Short explained that inevitably memorials generate debates on identity and memory.

> *Memorials are intended, if not explicitly then implicitly, to stimulate debate. The debate often revolves around the interpretation of history, the meaning of an event or person, and how that meaning should be conveyed in the built form [...]. Memorials and other forms of heritage are created in a social/political context where culture, location, class, power, religion, gender and even sexual orientation will influence what is considered to be worthy of preserving as heritage [...]. Because heritage, national identity, and memory are socially constructed, they are also inherently contested [...].* (Benton-Short 2006: 300)

Other geographers have analysed cases when monuments considered sacred by those who have them erected became the object of scorn and ridicule. For example, Atkinson and Cosgrove (1998) showed how the Vittoriano in Rome has been derided throughout its history. These cases showed that the meanings of monuments and memorials are not fixed once and for all: unexpected practices can continuously challenge the elite intentions of monuments and memorials.

> *[...] the original meaning is not really written in stone at all. Instead, it might be remembered completely differently later on or become the unexpected site of controversy. The memorial may even become invisible and unnoticed.* (Kattago 2015: 185)

Geographers have recognised that generating multiple interpretations is a common feature of monuments and memorials. Osborne (1998: 453) defined monuments as "*dynamic sites of meaning*". Benton-Short (2006: 300) described memorials as essentially "*polyvocal*". Other geographers used the terms 'negotiation', 'struggle' or 'conflict' to describe the contended interpretations of monuments and memorials (Whelan 2002: 508; Hershkovitz 1993: 395). Henri Lefebvre had previously described the capacity of monuments to generate multifaceted interpretations using the metaphor of "*horizon*":

> *A monumental work, like a musical one, does not have a 'signified' (or 'signifieds'); rather, it has a horizon of meaning: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another*

meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of - and for the sake of - a particular action. (Lefebvre 1991: 222)

2.3 Two limitations of the geographical perspective on monuments and memorials

Geographers provided a methodological basis to understand the ways in which monuments and memorials could reproduce social order and reinforce political power. Moreover, they have developed tools for unveiling the geographies of power embodied in monuments and memorials. Nevertheless, the geographical approach to monuments and memorials has grounded itself on two key limitations.

First, the geographical approach has grounded itself on a rigid notion of symbolism where specific material aspects such as material of construction, location and size were believed to communicate specific meanings. For example, Atkinson and Cosgrove (1988: 45) argued that the vertical spatiality of the Vittoriano in Rome extended its meanings "*from the depths of the tomb to the heights of atmosphere, from death to life and from past to future*". Hershkovitz (1993: 416) claimed that the open space of Tiananmen Square in Beijing was originally designed to symbolise "*concentrated political power, the isolation of the rulers from the ruled, the forbidding grandeur of the state*". With the reference to war memorials in the United Kingdom, Abousnnouga and Machin (2013: 57) claimed that a "*repertoire of semiotic resources*" is available to designers "*to communicate specific meanings in context*". For example, stone as a construction material conveys "*longevity and ancientness*", but also "*naturalness*"; when carved in smooth and rounded shapes it could communicate "*softness*" and so on (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 134).

Noticeably, there is a theoretical black box here: stone is certainly durable and present in the wild - justifying its "longevity" and "naturalness". However, other qualities of stone may stand out, while other materials are similarly "long-lived" or "natural". The simple use of stone as a material of construction does not suffice to convey "naturalness" or "longevity".

Geographers have fallen short describing what strategies designers use to create patterns of interpretation and how these strategies are interpreted at societal levels. On the basis of this limitation, it becomes difficult to describe how monuments and

memorials could legitimise and reinforce political power. Therefore, there has been no extended discussion of how the material and symbolic level of monuments and memorials convey political meanings and thus reinforce political power.

This limitation displays the need for a theoretical framework that connects the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials. Chapter Three § 3.1 provides the conceptual basis to conceive the material, symbolic and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials.

The second key limitation of the geographical approach to monuments and memorials is a restricted focus on elite intentions and prominent built forms. Little attention has been paid to how monuments and memorials are interpreted at the societal level. Geographers have mainly focused on the intentions of those who have the state mandate to regulate and develop public space (Yiftachel et al. 2001: 4) and consequently the authority to design and erect monuments and memorials. This thesis uses 'designers' as a generic term to indicate the wide set of actors - state, local authorities, architects, planners, artists, heritage departments and construction companies - that have the mandate to design and erect monuments and memorials.

As seen in § 2.2, a significant number of publications in human and cultural geography has recognised that unexpected practices often challenge the elite intentions embodied in monuments and memorials (Hershkovitz 1993; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998). However, few geographers have assessed how multifaceted meanings of monuments and memorials emerge at the societal level. This second limitation shows the need to develop a theoretical framework that conceives the interplay between designers and users in approaching the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Chapter Three § 3.2 develops a model for the interpretations of monuments and memorials that conceives the interplay between designers and users.

2.4 The semiotic perspective on monuments and memorials

By inviting questions on 'readership', semiotics has sought to overcome the restricted focus on the designers' intentions that has characterised the geographical approach. Semiotics has been generally understood as "*the study of signs and sign systems as modes of communication*" (Waterton and Watson 2014: 15). Scholars in semiotics have explored the concepts of space, place, landscape and built environment using different

paradigms ranging from the semiological tradition associating spatial forms with texts (e.g. Marrone 2009) to more ecological understanding of landscape (e.g. Lindström et al. 2014). Inspired by the debate around the conflation between memory, history and place (e.g. Nora 1989), semiotics has begun to analyse monuments and memorials as communicative devices to promote selective discourses on the past (Pezzini 2006; Sozzi 2012; Abousnnouga and Machin 2013).

Semiotics has provided tools for overcoming the restricted focus on the designers' intentions that has characterised the geographical approach to monuments and memorials. However, the key limitations identified in section 2.3 persist. In fact, semiotics has rarely discussed how the materiality of monuments and memorials actually conveys political messages and thus reinforce political power. Moreover, despite the efforts to focus attention on the readership, semiotic analysis of monuments and memorials has overlooked the interpretations of monuments and memorials at societal levels.

This section provides an overview of the semiotic literature on the interpretations of monuments and memorials. The section is divided into four parts. The first part outlines the main developments that make semiotics hold a significant position in the study of spatial meanings. The second part presents an overview of the semiotic literature on urban space and built environment in order to introduce the context in which the semiotic analysis of monuments and memorials has originated. The third part reviews the semiotic research addressing the conflation between memory and space. Finally, the fourth part addresses the assumption that material representation of memory can be planned for political purposes. In doing so, it extends the discussion to the planning of the built environment presenting an overview of the semiotic approach to urban planning.

The task of this section is to highlight limitations and future recommendations for the semiotic approach to monuments and memorials that will be later addressed in section 2.5.

Semiotic analysis: From signs to texts, from text to space

Semiotics has been generally understood as "*the study of signs and sign systems as modes of communication*" (Waterton and Watson 2014: 15). Umberto Eco (1979: 4) defined a general theory of semiotics as the "*unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication*". According to Eco, communication is the production of expressions to achieve certain tasks. Every phenomenon of communication presupposed a signification system (Eco 1979: 9). Signification comprises the processes through which something functions as sign (Eco 1979: 9).

Traditionally, the central concern of semiotics has been to understand the ways through which something functions as a sign. As seen in Chapter One § 1.2, Peirce (1931–58) took the first step towards the foundation of a sign theory able to explain the mechanisms of signification and interpretation inside communicative activities. Peirce defined the sign as a "*source of meaning […] as something that means something for an interpretant (a perspective, not a person)*" (Manning 2001: 149). He called semiosis "*the process of signs becoming signs*" and semiotics "*the process of rendering signs meaningful*" for someone in some respect (Merrell 2001: 32).

Peirce defined the sign as a triadic relation of sign (or representamen), object and interpretant. This triadic relation was "*recursive, hybrid and processual in nature*" (Waterton and Watson 2014: 17): meanings are created through the mediation of signs between objects and interpretants. According to Peirce everything could be taken as sign: "*this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs*" (Peirce 1931–58, quoted in Sebeok 2001b: 36). Much of Peirce's work was dedicated to developing sign categories such as the distinction between icon, index and symbol.

Ferdinand de Saussure proposed a theory able to include broader systems of signs: as far as we know from his posthumous *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), the aim of de Saussure was to develop a systematic method to analyse the internal organisation of language.

> *A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable. It would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology. I shall call it* semiology *(from Greek* semeion *"sign"). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them.* (Saussure 1916: 16)

De Saussure considered the sign as an arbitrary relation consisting of a signifier - the physical representation of a sign such as written words, sounds or images - and a signified - the concept with which the signifier is associated (Saussure 1916: 101). De Saussure claimed that signs function only in a complex system of relations: a sign is defined via similarities and differences with other elements in this system. In turn, language was "*a system in which all elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others*" (Saussure 1916: 113). Elaborating de Saussure's model of sign, Louis Hjelmslev (1961) defined the basic, essential features of a language to be defined as such. De Saussure and Hjelmslev showed that signs operate only in relation with other signs (Volli 2000: 60).

Since these seminal works, linguistics increasingly broadened its boundaries from single signs to sentences and from sentences to paragraphs. At the end of the 1960s, the need for a theory that could include broader units of analysis became apparent (Marsciani and Zinna 1991: 11). The works of Propp (1968) and Lévi-Strauss (1962) helped to accomplish this task: their research represented an attempt to identify the irreducible narrative elements of Russian folk tales and American myths respectively. In the wake of their research programs, semiotics began to focus on literary and written texts such as fairy tales, myths and novels.

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, semiotics went beyond literary and written texts, including other cultural products. Everyday objects, advertisement, newspapers, television broadcasts, architecture, design and music became suitable of being analysed through semiotic analysis. Furthermore, semiotics started to draw attention to social practices (e.g. Landowski 1989) and cultural processes (e.g. Lotman and Uspenskij 1975). In this context, semiotic analysis has begun to include topics such as space, place, landscape and built environment. The next part will present an overview of the semiotic literature on urban space and built environment in order to introduce the context in which the semiotic analysis of monuments and memorials has originated.

The semiotic aspect of the city: A review of urban semiotics

From the late 1960s, architectural semiotics has been the first attempt to propose a semiotic conceptualization of space investigating the processes through which architecture can convey meanings (Barthes 1970; Eco 1997; Lotman 1987). Since this proposal, semiotic scholarships have started to investigate urban space creating a

specific field called 'urban semiotics' (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986: 1). Urban semiotics aimed to describe the essential criteria defining a given space as 'urban'. To achieve this aim, urban semiotics undertook analyses of existing urban spaces and their representations "*to reveal underpinning power relations and cultural values*" (Stevenson 2003: 143).

> *First, the city can have the role of a quality — 'urbanity' and 'urban semiosis' as specific phenomena or qualities. This field could properly be called 'urban semiotics' […]. The city seen as a quality is described as "containing" various perceivable elements with diverse characteristics and meanings (for example, things, humans, animals, relations, situations, events, shapes, colours etc.). Nevertheless, or essentially, it makes up a kind of vital whole that is constituted by these seemingly random details. As a cognised whole, this city can have its edge or boundary as a distinctive feature. The end of that city lies where the contained and conceived segments stop working, either in time or space, thus creating a sense of difference between urban and rural impressions and also the distinctiveness of a deserted city.* (Remm 2011: 125)

In the wake of this research program, many semiotic analyses have appeared providing a range of approaches to the semiotic aspects of the city (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986; Volli 2005; Marrone and Pezzini 2006, 2008; Marrone 2009; Pilshchikov 2015). Subsequent works have proposed semiotic investigations of architecture (e.g. Hammad 2003; Montanari 2012) and the built environment specifically (e.g. Randviir 2011; Remm 2011). Cities and built environments have been the main issues of numerous semiotic journals published in recent years[1]. Moreover, case studies have analysed specific urban areas – such as urban peripheries (Cervelli 2005), urban districts (Montanari 2008) and shopping malls (Marsciani 2004; Pezzini and Cervelli 2006). Whereas, other studies have empirically focused on wider urban spaces such as the post-socialist city (Czepczyński 2009) and the post-war city (Mazzucchelli 2010).

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[1] Several semiotic journals have recently dedicated issues to the semiotic investigation of cities and built environment. For example, *Lexia. Rivista di Semiotica* 1-2 (2009. La Città Come Testo - Scritture e Riscritture Urbane. Atti del Convegno 19/20 Maggio 2008); *E / C Rivista on-line dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Semiotici* 2 (2008. Riscrivere lo Spazio. Pratiche e Performance Urbane); *Versus* 109-110-111 (2009. Il senso dei luoghi. Riflessioni e analisi semiotiche); and *Sign System Studies* 18, 19, 42 and 44.

These semiotic analyses have provided a methodological basis for the analysis of the signifying aspects of urban space. However, there is still no unified method or consistent approach discernible in urban semiotics. Rather, these analyses have grounded themselves on four main paradigms. First, some scholars have used the semiological paradigm based on de Saussure to describe urban spaces as sign systems. These analyses have aimed to identify the principles governing the signification of urban space, using text and language as metaphors for explaining social relations within urban life (e.g. Marrone 2009).

Second, some semioticians have applied the generative model of Greimas to urban space (Greimas 1970, 1983; also Greimas and Courtés 1982). According to generative semiotics, texts can be divided into three levels of signification, each level representing a step further into a generative process that moved from the abstract to the concrete and finally producing a text. The generative paradigm of urban space has aimed to investigate the configuration of these layers of signification within existing urban spaces (Lagopoulos 1993).

Third, the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School has largely investigated the semiotic aspects of the urban space. Recent research following this school revised the textual paradigm to provide a more pragmatic understanding of the city, extending the discussion to the planning of urban space (Remm 2016: 34).

Finally, semiotics has recently begun to investigate space in broader terms, so as to establish an essentially semiotic theory of space. Theories have been proposed to go beyond the semiological and the generative paradigms and thus to overcome the arbitrary relations between spatial expressions and spatial meanings (Lindström et al. 2014: 119-121). Drawing on Peirce's model of semiosis, this paradigm has proposed an interpretative method to determine the interpretative habits of individuals and groups (Arnesen 2011).

Chapter Three will present a model bridging cultural geographical and semiotic concepts on the basis of which to investigate the multiple interpretations of the built environment. In an attempt to bridge structuralism and interpretation (Paolucci 2010), the theoretical framework of this study grounds itself on the border between Saussurean and Peircean paradigms, using concepts from generative semiotics and the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School.

The conflation of memory and space: A semiotic approach

In recent years, semiotic scholarships have begun to explore memory representation in the built environment. This part reviews the semiotic literature addressing the conflation between memory and space. Memory has recently attracted much attention in semiotics (Demaria 2006, 2012; Violi 2014). Moving from the psychological concept of memory as a mental faculty, semiotics has described memory as external to human mind as manifested in texts, documents and everyday objects (Violi 2014: 27). Semiotic scholarships have been produced to discuss the modalities through which material devices articulate a specific "*discourse on the past*" (Violi 2014: 11, my trans.).

Scholars in semiotics have recognised that discourses on the past could be designed to convey specific historical narratives. As such, discourses on the past always presented a "*partial vision*" focusing attention on selective histories while concealing others (Eco 1976: 289-290). Authors could thus create discourses on the past in order to educate citizens toward what to remember and what to forget of the past (Tamm 2013: 651). As a consequence, discourses on the past could affect present and future identity as well as the ways in which individuals represent themselves and relate to each other (Violi 2014: 18). Moreover, discourses on the past could convey collective meanings supporting a uniform national memory and identity (Johnson 1995; Withers 1996). Nevertheless, individuals and groups could interpret differently the same discourses on the past.

Envisioning "*site of memory*" (Nora 1996: XVII), the semiotic analysis of memory representation has focused particular attention on the conflation between memory and space. Sites of memory are material, symbolic and functional sites able to "*frame and shape the content of what is remembered*" (Kattago 2015: 7). Semiotic analysis has aimed to explain how sites of memory can establish specific understandings of the past addressing the effects a given material representation of memory has had at the societal level.

The semiotic analysis of memory representation has grounded itself on different methodological perspectives and has explored different site of memory, such as museums (Pezzini 2011; Violi 2014), monuments and memorials (Pezzini 2006; Sozzi 2012; Abousnnouga and Machin 2013; Krzyżanowska 2016). Nevertheless, there is an assumption common to all these semiotic analyses: space is a privileged modality for articulating discourses on the past. Uspenskij et al. (1998: 6.1.3, 6.1.5) defined space

as a primary modelling system: as in natural languages, so in space a given expression conveyed specific contents. As such, space could reveal ideas and values of a society: "*[space] speaks about society, it is one of the primary modes of representation of a society, it expresses itself as a signifying reality*" (Marrone 2001: 292 my trans.). Following this idea, space can simultaneously embody and produce memory (Violi 2014: 21).

Due to the recent association between memory and trauma (Violi 2014: 19), semiotics has begun to focus on places characterised by traumatic events such as war, ethnic cleansing, mass violence or other disasters. This line of research has aimed to investigate the practices through which the material traces of traumatic events have been preserved, marginalised or removed. Semiotics has then focused on the ways in which the material traces of traumatic events presented "*ideological*" instances (Eco 1976: 289-290). For example, Mazzucchelli undertook an analysis of the restoration policies in some countries of former Yugoslavia. Through this analysis, Mazzucchelli explained that urban policies - aiming at preserving, restoring, reconstructing, marginalising and removing the material traces of traumatic events - could be implemented to create a specific urban identity supporting dominant historical narratives while obliterating traumatic past events (Mazzucchelli 2010: 12).

Semiotics, memory and urban planning

This section extends the discussion to the planning of the built environment presenting an overview of the semiotic approach to urban planning. As seen in Chapter Two § 2.2, monuments and memorials can establish dominant discourses on the past. Semiotics has provided analytical tools for examining the discourses on the past embodied in monuments and memorials. Semiotic analysis has focused on what histories are represented and what are obscured or obliterated in monuments and memorials. To answer this question, semiotic analyses have concentrated not only on the contents of monuments and memorials, but also on the multifaceted modalities through which monuments and memorials present these contents.

Some publications have appeared proposing connections between semiotics and urban planning. Hilda Blanco (1992) made the first step toward a semiotic approach to urban planning. Blanco considered urban planning as a dynamic interpretative practice and semiotics as the methodology for assessing the dynamics of urban planning

practice. Moreover, she suggested that a semiotic approach could efficiently support the meanings of social life by understanding the underlying symbolisms, mythologies and significances of planning. Finally, Blanco claimed that the semiotic analysis of planning practices could reveal ideological attitudes and choices permeating the whole planning process.

In recent years, Remm (2016) returned to investigate ideologies underlying urban planning practices. Remm (2016: 34-35) considered urban planning as "*a process that is largely carried out by verbal, visual and behavioural expressions that can be considered texts*":

> *In a very general sense, urban planning can be understood as the generation of a model of an urban area in the future. In its essence, it is an activity of semiotization that has a tangible influence on the material world. It is a form of "dealing" with space. It is a form of semiotic management that involves the dimensions of interpretation of urban space and practices within it, reorganization of these practices, as well as the dimensions of negotiating a cultural world image and self-images and their relationship to the physical space and practices in it.* (Remm 2016: 35)

Remm (2016: 39) overcame the idea that built forms can automatically convey specific meanings by seeing meanings as integral part of the cultural contexts within which they are produced. However, the question of how built forms entice users along certain interpretations and behaviours remained to be addressed.

No doubt semiotics has contributed to understanding the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. However, the semiotic approach has grounded itself on two key limitations. The next section will address two key limitations of the semiotic approach to monuments and memorials.

2.5 Two limitations of the semiotic perspective on monuments and memorials

Semiotics has analysed monuments and memorials as communicative devices to promote selective discourses on the past. Semiotic analysis has aimed to explain how sites of memory can establish specific understandings of the past, especially addressing the effects a given material representation of memory had at the societal level. By inviting questions on 'readership', semiotics has sought to overcome the restricted focus on the designers' intentions that has characterised the geographical approach to monuments and memorials. However, the key limitations identified in section 2.3 persist.

As noted in § 2.3, "*semiotic resources*" are available to designers to convey specific meanings (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 57). For example, they can use stone as a construction material to convey "*longevity and ancientness*" (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 134). But how does stone mean 'longevity' or 'ancientness'? Semiotics has often neglected this questions and this brings to the first key limitation, i.e. that there has been no extended discussion of how the material and symbolic level of monuments and memorials actually convey political meanings. Moreover, semiotics has widely recognised the dialogicity of landscape (Lindström et al. 2014: 126), but it has rarely discussed how monuments and memorials actually convey collective meanings and reinforce political power.

This limitation displays the need for a theoretical framework that connects the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials. Chapter Three § 3.1 provides the conceptual basis to conceive the material, symbolic and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials.

Secondly, semiotics still lacks a unified theory for approaching the interpretations of monuments and memorials at the societal level. Most semiotic analyses have rarely discussed the methods used for collecting primary data (e.g. Sozzi 2012; Krzyżanowska 2016).

2.6 Conclusions: Two limitations of the cultural geographical and the semiotic perspective on monuments and memorials

This chapter identified the key limitations of the cultural geographical and the semiotic research on monuments and memorials and their interpretations. Human and cultural geography provided a methodological basis to understand the ways in which monuments and memorials could reproduce social order and reinforce political power. Semiotic analysis has aimed to explain how sites of memory can establish specific understandings of the past, especially addressing the effects a given material representation of memory had at the societal level.

The chapter identified two key limitations of the geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials:

1. There has been no extended discussion of how the material and symbolic levels of monuments and memorials actually convey political meanings and thus of how they can effectively reinforce political power.
2. Little attention has been paid to how monuments and memorials are interpreted at the societal level.

By inviting questions on 'readership', semiotics has sought to overcome the second limitation of the geographical approach. However, the first limitation has been predominant in both approaches. Furthermore, semiotics still lacks a unified theory for approaching the interpretations of monuments and memorials at the societal level.

These limitations lead to two distinctions that have been predominant in both the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials: 1) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions and 2) between designers and users. This thesis aims to overcome these distinctions by advancing the understanding of the connections between the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to the built environment. To do so, the next chapter will develop a theoretical framework that conceives the interplay between material, symbolic and political dimensions, between designers and users and between monuments, the cultural context and the built environment.

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Chapter Three

The connection between cultural geography and semiotics: A holistic perspective on meaning-making of monuments and memorials

Human and cultural geography has offered a sound methodological basis to understand the ways in which monuments and memorials could reproduce social order and reinforce political power. Semiotics has provided tools to analyse how monuments and memorials promote selective discourses on the past. However, these approaches have grounded themselves on two key limitations. First, the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials has been often overlooked; and second, the relationship between designers and users has remained mostly under-theorised.

This thesis aims to overcome these limitations by advancing the understanding of the connections between the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to the built environment. To do so, this chapter develops a holistic perspective that conceives the interpretations of monuments and memorials as depending on three interplays: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

Each section of this chapter discusses one of these interplays, identifying the theoretical framework on the basis of which to study the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. Section 3.1 provides the conceptual basis to conceive the material, symbolic and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Section 3.2 develops a model for the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials that conceives the interplay between designers' and the users' interpretations. Section 3.3 connects the meaningful nature of the interplays discussed in section 3.1 and 3.2 with the cultural context and the built environment.

Section 3.4 introduces a dynamic concept of text to address the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. The chapter concludes by demonstrating the feasibility of approaching the textuality of monuments and memorials as a methodological perspective (Stano 2014: 61).

3.1   The visual and the political dimensions of monuments and memorials

Monuments and memorials are built forms with celebratory and commemorative functions. Monuments celebrate significant events or individuals. Memorials commemorate individuals who died due to war, ethnic cleansing, mass violence or other disasters (Kattago 2015). Monuments and memorials have a visual and a political dimension. The visual dimension refers to the material and the symbolic levels of monuments and memorials, as distinguished from their political messages. The political dimension relates to the circumstances under which monuments and memorials promote political messages and perpetuate power relations. Here, the terms 'political messages' simply mean messages aiming to promote consensus regarding political standpoints among as large a portion of society as possible.

Previous research has often overlooked the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments. This section provides the conceptual basis to conceive the visual (material and symbolic) and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials. This section first describes the visual and the political dimensions of monuments and memorials and then it presents a way to connect them.

The visual dimension of monuments and memorials

The visual dimension refers to monuments and memorials as material forms, and so as distinguished from the political dimension. Greimas (1989) provided a methodological perspective for the semiotic analysis of visual texts. He divided the visual text into two autonomous but related levels: the figurative and the plastic (fig. 1). The figurative level is recognised on the basis of a correlation with objects of the world. The plastic level refers to the perceptual features of the visual text apart from its representations. The plastic level is divided into topological, eidetic and chromatic elements (fig. 1). The topological element refers to the arrangement of plastic configurations in a given

space. The eidetic element relates to the expansion and combination of shapes. The chromatic element refers to colours and warmth of a visual text.

Fig. 1 – Plastic and figurative, the two levels taken into account by Greimas (1989) for the semiotic analysis of visual text.
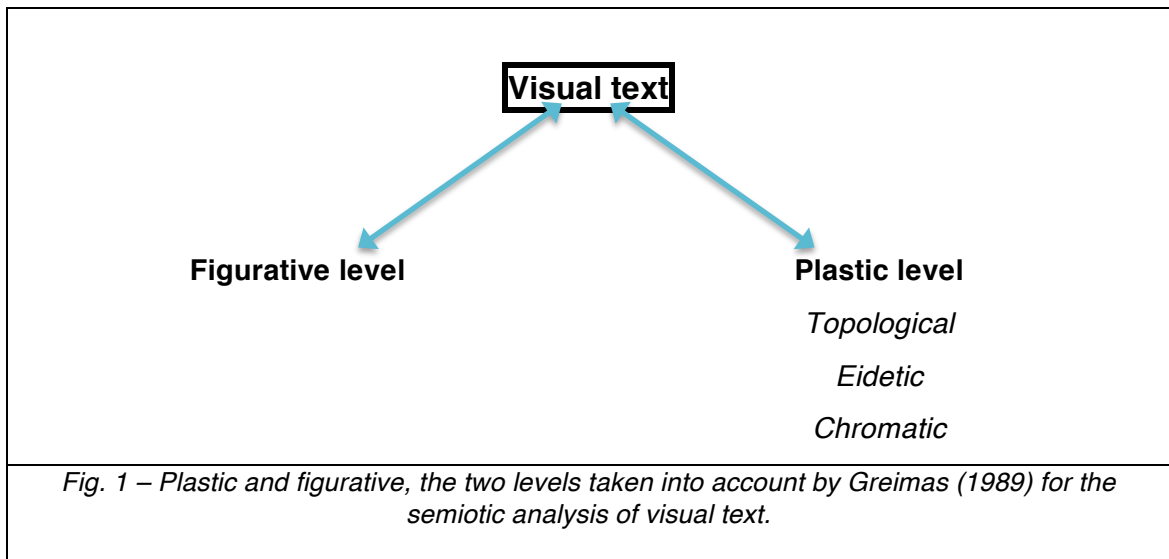
In the case of the built environment, figurative and plastic levels can be respectively describable as symbolic and material levels. Both the material and the symbolic levels are visually perceptible and thus they can be grouped under the visual dimension of monuments and memorials.

The material level refers to physical aspects such as shapes, materials of construction, colours, topological distribution and sizes of monuments and memorials. The list below shows the categories for the analysis of the material level of monuments and memorials. The list includes some of the categories used by Abousnnouga and Machin (2013: 41-57) for the descriptions of memorials in the United Kingdom, combined with the plastic categories by Greimas (1989). The interpretation of the categories in the following list is largely cultural and it inevitably changes over time.

1. Sizes: big/small, large/narrow, high/short;
2. Location: degree of elevation, distance/proximity, angle of interaction;
3. Materials of construction: solidity/hollowness, texture of the surface;
4. Topological categories: position; orientation.
5. Eidetic categories: shapes; regularity/irregularity, curvature;
6. Chromatic categories: colours, brightness/opacity, lighting.

The symbolic level regards the visual representations and the conventional symbols embodied in monuments and memorials. Monuments and memorials stage scenes and represent characters, objects, actions and interactions in material forms.

Elaborating de Saussure's model of sign, Hjelmslev (1961: 30) considered the sign as "*an entity generated by the connection between an expression and a content*". Traditional research in visual semiotics (e.g. Thurlemann 1982: 108) has associated the distinction between expression and content with that between material and symbolic levels. It has therefore conceptualised expressions as ontological entities regarding the physical and visually perceptible aspects of texts. As such, expressions have become meaningless substances to which intangible meanings correlate. Considering expressions as having an ontological status, traditional semiotic analysis has assumed that meanings can be "*extracted*" directly from the materiality of visual texts without any active interpretation process (Chandler 1995).

Contemporary semiotic research has demonstrated that the material and the symbolic levels cannot be automatically associated to expression and content respectively (Paolucci 2010). This research has defined a more complex relation between expression and content and consequently between material and symbolic: expression/content and material/symbolic are in a mutual relation able to define, from context to context, something as expression/material and something else as content/symbolic[2]. Following these proposals, semiotic analysis has granted meaning potential to both the material and the symbolic levels.

However, semiotic analysis of monuments and memorials has grounded itself on the assumption that certain materials can automatically convey specific meanings (e.g. stone conveys 'longevity'). For example, Abousnnouga and Machin (2013: 57) claimed that combining material and symbolic design choices can convey specific meanings. Rather, design uses manifold strategies that encompass (but are not limited to) the combination of material and symbolic design choices. Importantly, the built

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[2] As Paolucci noted (2010), Hjelmslev had previously described the mutual relation between expression and content in his *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*: "*The terms expression plane and content plane […] are chosen in conformity with established notions and are quite arbitrary. Their functional definition provides no justification for calling one, and not the other, of these entities expression, or one, and not the other, content. They are defined only by their mutual solidarity, and neither of them can be identified otherwise. They are defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functives of one and the same function.*" (Hjelmslev 1961: 60).

environment signifies through routinised patterns of interpretations that emerge when design choices are repetitively used to convey certain meanings.

The political dimension of monuments and memorials

The political dimension relates to the characteristic of monuments and memorials to perpetuate social order and power relations. Monuments and memorials embody political messages that can "*transform neutral places into ideologically charged sites*" (Whelan 2002: 508). For this reason, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political agendas.

Monuments and memorials can articulate selective historical narratives, focusing attention on events and individuals that are preferred by elites (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Through the articulation of historical narratives, monuments and memorials could inculcate particular conceptions of the present and encourage future possibilities (Massey 1995; Dovey 1999; Dwyer 2000; Osborne 1998). As such, they are integral part of the national politics of memory and identity (Chapter Two § 2.2).

The interaction of the material, symbolic and political dimension in the interpretations of monuments and memorials

The visual and the political dimensions equally influence the meaning-making of monuments and memorials. Material, symbolic and political may be useful analytical terms, but in practice they function together and influence each other through continuous mediations.

Human and cultural geography has described monuments and memorials as political tools used by elites to perpetuate social order and power relations. However, geographers have overlooked the extent to which the material and symbolic levels connect with the political dimension of monuments and memorials. Semiotics has concentrated on the signifying and the symbolic dimensions of monuments and memorials. Nevertheless, semioticians have rarely discussed how the symbolic and the material levels connect and, in turn, how the symbolic and material levels of monuments and memorials convey political messages.

Therefore, there is the need for a theoretical framework that conceives the material, symbolic and political dimensions as interacting in the interpretations of monuments and memorials. The scheme below presumes that a relationship is established between the visual (material level and symbolic level) and the political dimensions of monuments and memorials. Monuments and memorials are symbolically represented at the centre of the scheme. The material, symbolic and political dimensions are in three distinct but interdependent ovals. Double-headed arrows represent the interdependence between monuments and their material, symbolic and political dimensions.

Fig. 2 – Visualisation of the interplay between the material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials.
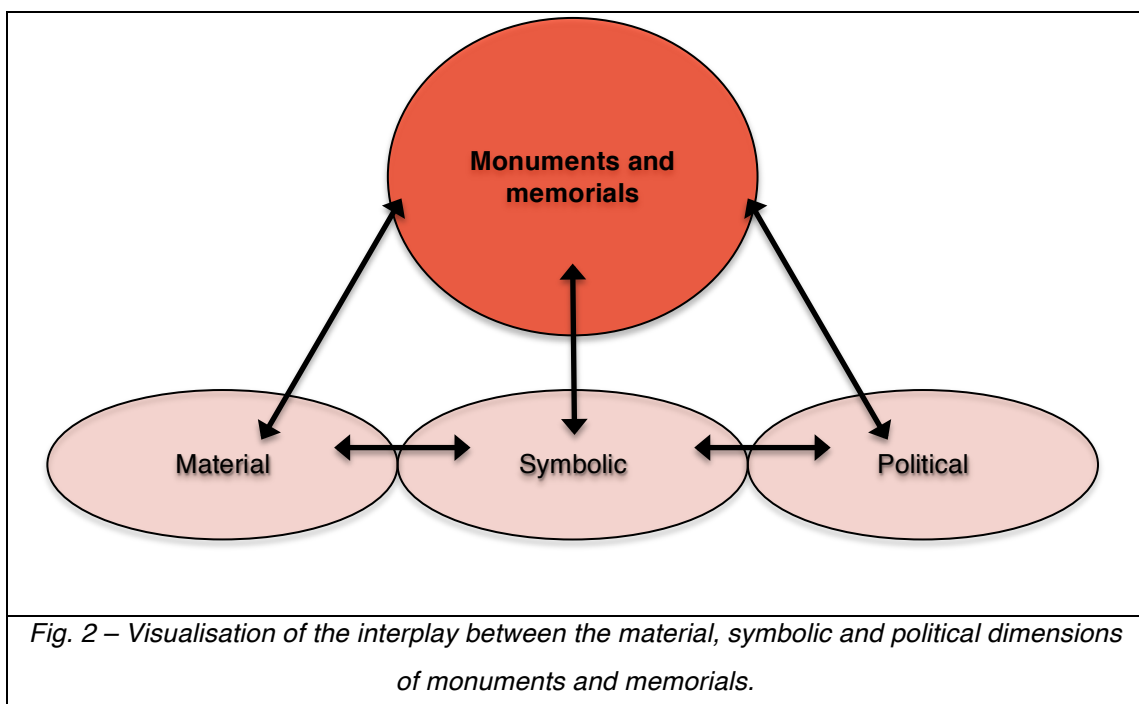
3.2 The interpretations of monuments and memorials between designers and users

This section develops a model for the interpretations of monuments and memorials that conceives the interplay between the designers' and the users' interpretations. 'Designers' is a generic term to indicate a wide set of actors - state, local authorities, architects, planners, artists, heritage departments and construction companies - that have the mandate to regulate and develop public space (Yiftachel et al. 2001: 4). In this thesis, 'designers' indicate those who have the mandate to design and erect monuments and memorials.

Contemporary nation states create and in turn privilege elites for the reproduction of social and political status quo. As part of the state, urban planning can be used to serve the needs of national elites (Yiftachel 1998). This is also the case for the design of monuments and memorials. National elites have more power and resources to erect monuments and memorials and thus to present their political and cultural meanings in space (Dwyer 2002: 32; Till 2003: 297). Hence, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political agendas.

The term 'users' simply indicates those who use monuments and memorials during the course of the everyday life through a myriad of different practices: (in)attentive crossing, practices of commemoration and mourning, sightseeing, learning, resistant political practices and so on. As seen in Chapter Two § 2.2, monuments "*can be used, reworked and reinterpreted in ways that are different from, or indeed contradictory to, the intentions of those who had them installed*" (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Each user interprets monuments and memorials differently and, on this basis, develops specific patterns of behaviour within the space characterised by monuments and memorials.

Abousnnouga and Machin (2013: 57) argued that "*material semiotic choices*" are available to designers to communicate specific meanings and to establish particular relations between memorials and users (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 46-57). Overcoming the assumption that certain materials automatically convey specific meanings, section § 3.1 opened to an interpretative approach by explaining that the built environment signifies insofar as routinised patterns of interpretation are created, i.e. when designers have repeatedly used certain design strategies to convey certain meanings and users have incorporated these meanings in their interpretative activities. The current section starts by describing Umberto Eco's model of textual interpretation – the Model Reader – and then it proposes to extend this model to the interpretations of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. Finally, it develops a model for conceiving the interpretations of monuments and memorials as originating at the intersection between designers and users.

The appropriateness of textual interpretation: The Model Reader

Conducting a review of interpretative theories in the literary domain, Eco (1984) showed that research on textual interpretation had polarised those stating that text can be interpreted only according to the intentions of the authors and those affirming that text can support every possible interpretations of the readers. Later, Eco (1990: 50) suggested that textual interpretation lies in an intermediate point between the authors' intentions and the total arbitrariness of the readers' interpretations. Eco (1990: 145) dubbed this intermediate point 'intention of the text' or *intentio operis*, that interacts with the '*intentio auctoris*' and the '*intentio lectoris*' - that are the intention of the author and the intention of the reader respectively.

Envisioning the intention of the text has overcome the idea that 'appropriate' interpretations occur only when readers follow the intentions of authors. In the wake of these proposals, semiotic analysis has begun to include interpretations deviating from the intentions of the authors. However, Eco explained that texts necessarily impose certain constraints on interpretation and make certain reading more desirable than others:

> *To say that interpretation (as the basic feature of semiosis) is potentially unlimited does not mean that interpretation has no object and that it "river runs" merely for its own sake. To say that a text has potentially no end does not mean that every act of interpretation can have a happy end. (*Eco 1990: 143)

According to Eco, textual strategies are available to authors to entice readers along a specific interpretation. Eco grouped these textual strategies under the terms "*Model Reader*" (Eco 1979: 7-11). According to this model, empirical authors write texts making assumptions about the readership's social background, education, cultural traits, tastes and needs. Hence, empirical authors foresee and simultaneously construct their readership, emphasising certain interpretations while concealing others (Eco 1979: 7-11; Lotman 1990: 63). Although authors seek to control interpretations, texts do not function as mere "*communicative apparatuses*" to directly imprint meanings to readers (Eco 1984: 25). Yet, texts are aesthetic productions that inevitably leave something unexplained:

Every text, after all [...], is a lazy machine asking the reader to do some of its work. What a problem it would be if a text were to say everything the receiver is to understand – it would never end. (Eco 1994: 3)

As such, texts became the place where authors and readers continuously negotiate their interpretations: while authors empirically seek to control readers' interpretations, readers interpret texts in line with their knowledge, experience and needs. Hence, a complex interaction between authors, readers and texts themselves underpin textual interpretation. As Yanow explained:

[…] meaning resides not in any one of these - not exclusively in the author's intent, in the text itself, or in the reader alone - but is, rather, created actively in interactions among all three, in the writing and in the reading. (Yanow 2000: 17)

The appropriateness of spatial interpretation: The Model User

The model describing the complex interaction between authors, readers and texts can be applied to the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. As textual interpretations, the interpretations of monuments and memorials lie in an intermediate point between the designers' and the users' interpretations. As texts, monuments and memorials can anticipate a set of interpretations and discomfort others. Elites design monuments and memorials striving to entice users along interpretations that conform to their political intentions.

Paraphrasing Eco's Model Reader, Marrone (2009, 2013) calls 'Model Users' those individuals that conform to the designers' intentions and that develop patterns of behaviour that are consistent with the envisioned function of monuments and memorials. Nevertheless, not all users conform to the designers' intentions. As explained in Chapter Two § 2.2, users may interpret and use monuments and memorials in ways that are different or even contrary to the designers' intentions (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Each user has a "*rhetoric of walking*" conveying particular "*styles of action*" and "*ways of operating*" able to "*constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production*" (De Certeau 1984: xiv).

As noted in Chapter Two § 2.2, monuments and memorials embody the agency of generations and assume different functions in different time periods. Monuments legitimising elite power can turn into sites of resistant political practice (Hershkovitz 1993; Whelan 2002; Benton-Short 2006). In other cases, monuments sacred for elites become the object of scorn and ridicule (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998). In less spectacular way, monuments of a bygone era can turn into neutral urban landmarks. These cases support Kattago's thesis that:

> *[...] the original meaning is not really written in stone at all. Instead, it might be remembered completely differently later on or become the unexpected site of controversy. The memorial may even become invisible and unnoticed.* (Kattago 2015: 185)

The unforeseen interpretations and practices play a critical role in the meaning-making of monuments and memorials. As a consequence, designers do not have complete control over the interpretations of users. The following section develops a model for conceiving the meanings of monuments and memorials as originating at the intersection between the designers' and the users' interpretations.

The interplay between designers and users

The definition of Model User is based on three assumptions. First, strategies are available to designers to limit the range of interpretations and uses of monuments and memorials. Second, the meanings of monuments and memorials originate at the intersection between the designers' and the users' interpretations. Third, users interpret monuments and memorials in line with their knowledge, experience and needs.

Unexpected practices thus play a critical role in the meaning-making of monuments and memorials. De Certeau (1984) assessed the role of daily life practices in personalising social environments. He used the term "*tactics*" to refer to individuals' practices able to subvert dominant "*strategies*" perpetuating social order and power relations (De Certeau 1984: xvii-xx). For example, a city embodied the strategies of governments and dominant groups who produced plans and policies for the city as a whole; but users could 'remake' a city as their 'own' through their bottom-up use of the urban space and their socialising practices (De Certeau 1984: 91-110). This is

practically the same for monuments and memorials that can be used in ways that are different from those envisioned by their designers.

Following de Certeau, Fiske (1989) focused on the creative use of clothing and other cultural forms by young groups to express resistance to mass culture. The safety pins used by punk rockers in the 1970s are exemplary of these creative uses (Hebdige 1979). Drawing on Stuart Hall (1980), Fiske argued that mass media messages could elicit three different kinds of readings. First, a "*preferred reading*" that guide individuals to a meaning "*that lies within the traditional values of law and order*" (Fiske 1990: 110). This is when individuals interpret a text exactly as the author wanted them to; in Eco's terms, this is the case of Model Readers (Eco 1979: 7-11). Second, there is a "*negotiated reading*" when individuals accept the broad message of a text, but also resist the message in some way (Fiske 1990: 110). Third, there is a "*radically opposed reading*" of those who totally resist the message of a text (Fiske 1990: 111).

In relation to the case study, Model Users rely on preferred readings, which occur for example when users accept the function of a monument, fully understand its iconography and use it as envisioned by its designers. The meaning is negotiated when monuments are used in ways that are different, but not contrary, to the designers' stated intentions: this can be when monuments are used for daily life practices, such as inattentive crossing, meeting, eating, playing an so on. Finally, users can turn monuments and memorials into spaces for resistant political practices (Hershkovitz 1993; Whelan 2002; Benton-Short 2006).

In a pioneering attempt to apply semiotics to mass communication, Eco (1972: 106; see also Fiske 1990: 78) used the terms "*aberrant decoding*" to identify the making sense of messages in ways that are different from what was intended by their authors. According to Eco, aberrant decoding of architecture is mostly unconscious (Eco 1997: 187). He considered the messages of functional architectures such as buildings as being rather coercive and indifferent:

> *Architectural discourse is experienced inattentively [...]. Buildings are always around and people percept them as a background. [...] Architectural messages can never be interpreted in an aberrant way, and without the addressee being aware of thereby perverting them. [...] Thus architecture fluctuates between being rather coercive, implying that you will live in such and such a way with it, and rather indifferent.* (Eco 1997: 187)

This is not the case of monuments and memorials as built forms that evidently convey specific meanings. As seen in Chapter Two § 2.2, users may interpret monuments and memorials in ways that are different or contrary to designers' intentions (Hay et al. 2004: 204).

Some geographers have recognised that unexpected practices often challenge the designers' intentions embodied in monuments and memorials (Hershkovitz 1993; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998). Nevertheless, geographical research has mostly focused on the elite intentions. Semiotics has sought to overcome the restricted focus on the designers' intentions, but it still lacks a unified theory for approaching the interpretations of monuments and memorials at the societal level.

In response, the theoretical framework proposed in this chapter conceives the interplay between designers and users on the basis of which to treat the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. Below, two rectangles symbolically representing the terms 'designers' and 'users' are added to the scheme presented in fig. 2. An arrow linking the rectangles visualises the interaction between designers and users.

Fig. 3 – Visualisation of the interplays a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; and b) between designers and users.
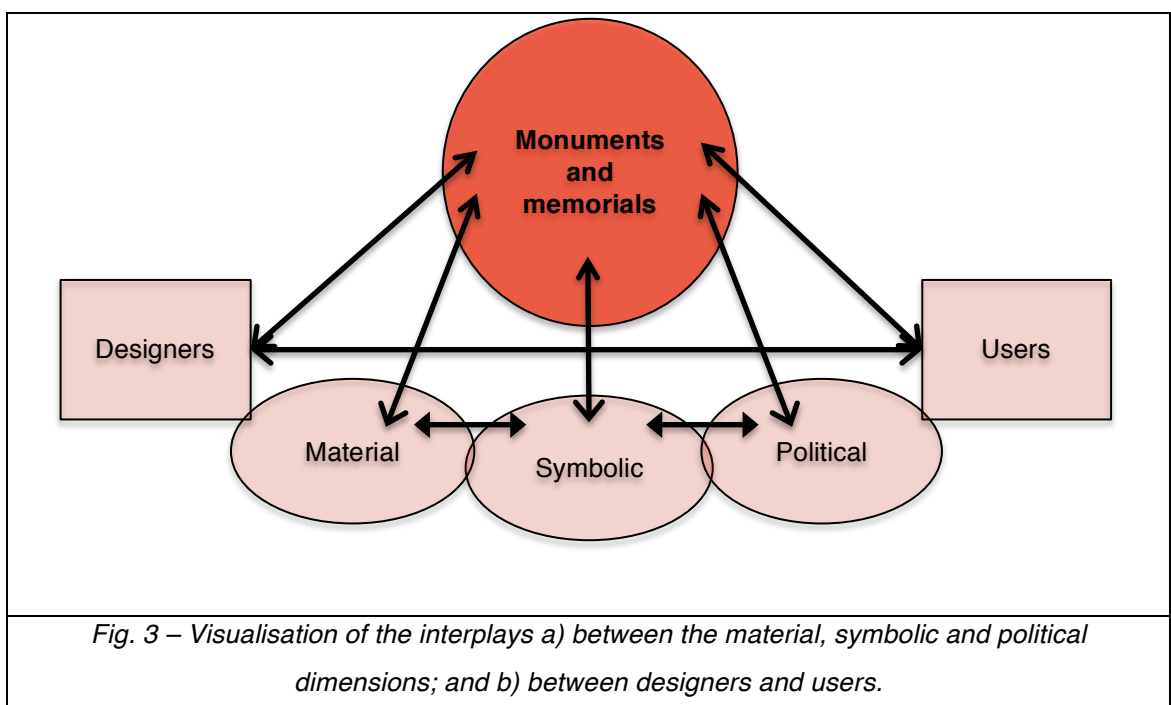
3.3 The semiotic concept of culture

Monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from the cultural context and separately from their interrelations with the surrounding built environment. Below, a polygon visually representing the term 'culture' is added at the top of the scheme presented in fig. 3. Culture is symbolically represented as influencing the production and interpretation of monuments and memorials. Culture can mould the designers' and the users' interpretations and even influence actions and interactions within the space of monuments. In turn, monuments and memorials convey cultural meanings in space contributing to the shaping and reshaping of culture. The dashed oval visually represents the built environment. Monuments and memorials are comprised in the built environment that, in turn, is an integral part of a culture.

This section connects the meaningful nature of the interplays discussed in section 3.1 and 3.2 with the cultural context and the built environment. Culture is here recognised as plural and multiple for the diverse 'interpretative communities' who produce and negotiate meanings of it, as for example designers and users (Yanow 2000). This section first introduces a semiotic concept of culture able to connect the global and the local levels of culture. Second, it defines a semiotic concept of culture that determines monuments and their meanings as much as monuments' meaning-making shapes and reshapes culture. Finally, it described monuments and memorials as interpreted on the basis of the existing built environment.
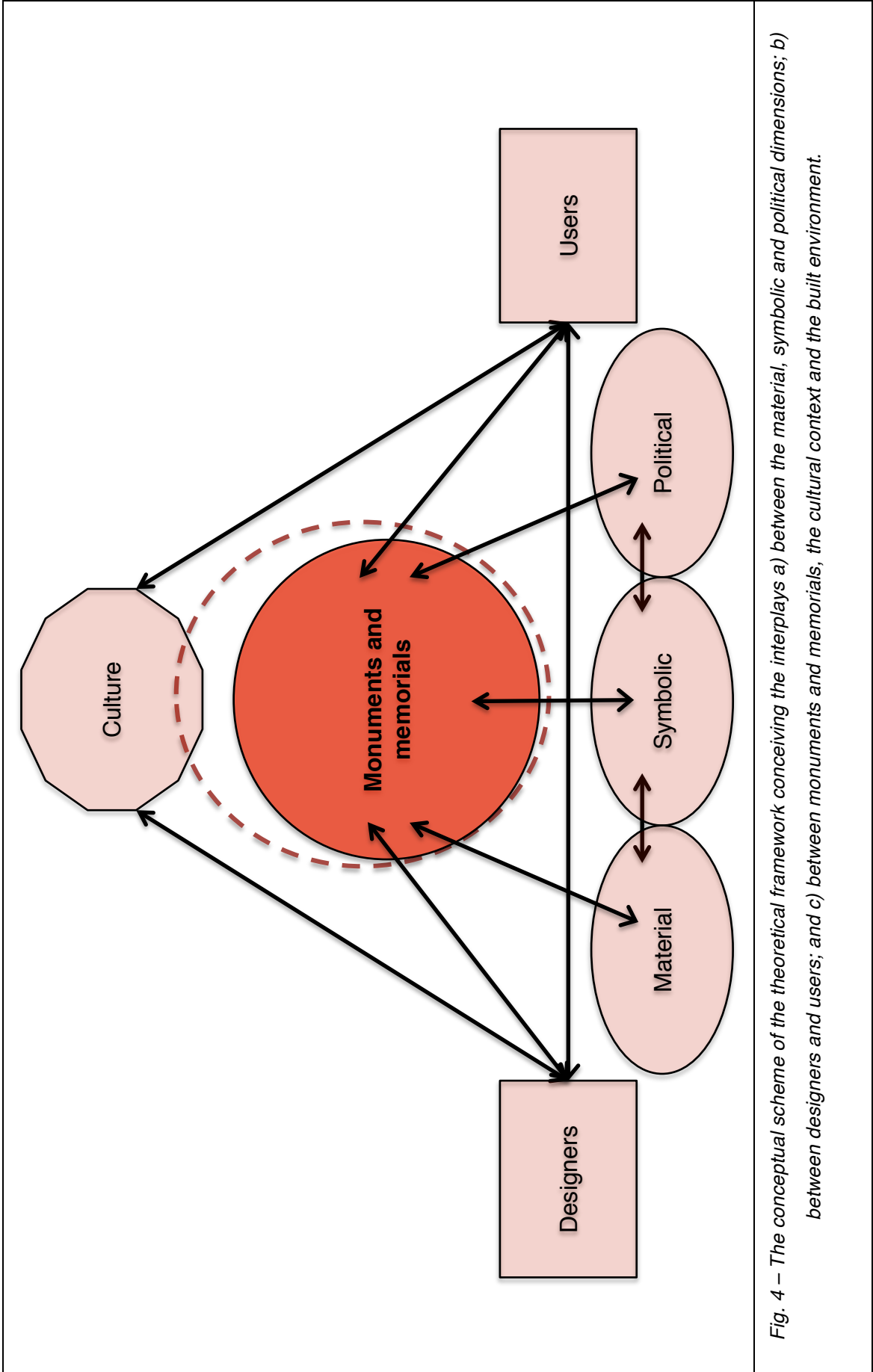
Fig. 4 – The conceptual scheme of the theoretical framework conceiving the interplays a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

Toward a semiotic concept of culture

Many conceptualisations of culture have been proposed throughout the history of geography. Carl Sauer presented one of the first investigations of culture in geography. Sauer (1963: 316) developed the concept of cultural landscape, i.e. "*a naively given section of reality*" made of repetitive and consistently organised elements. According to Sauer, the work of the geographer consisted of unveiling these repetitive elements that made landscape as a homogeneous "*section of reality*" (Sauer 1963: 316). Sauer considered culture as a "*shaping force*" able to convey messages in landscape and upon communities (Sauer 1963: 343). Culture was thus above and beyond the wills of the individuals living in landscapes.

Clifford Geertz (1973: 14) expanded culture by introducing a more specific, "*essentially semiotic*" concept of culture as made from "*an interworked systems of construable signs*". Paraphrasing Max Weber, Geertz associated culture with the metaphor of 'web of significance'. Based on this metaphor, Geertz (1973: 5) claimed that the analysis of culture was "*not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning*". Therefore, Geertz (1973: 24) called for a semiotic approach to culture that aimed at "*gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them*".

The proposals of Geertz ignited a cultural turn in human geography - which can be seen as a semiotic turn (or at least the beginning of it) in geography. In the wake of the semiotic turn, many geographers considered culture as a socially constructed signifying system actively produced and continuously changed by the present needs of society. Cosgrove and Jackson (1987: 99) defined culture as "*the medium through which people transform the mundane phenomena of the material world into a world of significant symbols to which they give meaning and attach value*". Peter Jackson (1989: 2) suggested seeing culture as made from different "maps of meaning *through which the world is made intelligible*".

Hence, a 'new' cultural geography has called for an approach to investigate the struggles over cultural meanings in social and political life (Cosgrove 1990: 561). In this perspective, culture has been increasingly seen as an analytical category to examine cultural meanings prior to economic and political processes:

What then does it mean to say that we practise cultural geography? First, it means that we prioritise culture within our scholarship, that is, we focus upon how the cultural as a signification system interpenetrates the economic and political systems within a social order. Second, we prioritize the geographic within our interpretations, that is, we focus upon the cultural dimensions of landscape, place or space. (Duncan and Ley 1993: 332)

The split nature of the semiotic concept of culture

The semiotic concept of culture is structured in different levels of organisation. Stano (2014: 67) conceived culture as having a "*split soul*". Sedda (2012: 11) described culture as simultaneously "*one and multiple, coherent and contradictory, systemic and procedural, regular and irregular, predictable and unpredictable, hierarchical and unstable, [...] orderly and chaotic*". On the one hand, the exclusive focus on culture as a whole neglects the particular manifestations of culture. On the other hand, focusing only on particular manifested cultures overlooks the mechanism holding them together. A semiotic analysis of culture should thus consider both "*the abstract and theoretical complexity of the cultural dimension conceived as a whole*" and "*the concrete and varied dimension of the cultural life*" (Stano 2014: 67).

Eco (1984) divided culture into global and local levels. The global level included the cultural knowledge as a whole and the local level defined the routinised ways to use that knowledge. Eco (1984) introduced the notion of 'Encyclopaedia' to indicate the stock of shared signs that interpreters use during their interpretative processes. At the global level, the encyclopaedia contained all the potential interpretations circulating in culture. At local levels, there was the routinised set of instructions to interpret specific portions of the socio-cultural space (Eco 1984: 68; Violi 1992: 103; Lorusso 2010: 108-109; Paolucci 2010: 357-358). Eco called this routinised set of instructions "*encyclopaedic competence*" (Eco 1984: 2-3). Eco considered the global and local levels of culture as analytical terms: in practice, the two levels function together through continuous interactions.

According to Eco, local cultures could select relevant portions of knowledge to delimit their own areas of consensus and thus to differentiate themselves from other cultures (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003: 27). Local culture could be seen as a "*collective intelligible social practice*" (Reckwitz 2005, quoted in Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1272)

including "*a number of incorporated and (implicit) routinized 'recurrent regularities' about how to behave and act in specific situations*" (Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1273). Thus, cultural identity could be seen as based on a socially constructed signifying system, actively produced and continuously changed by the present needs of society. Peeter Torop (2002: 593) defined culture as a "*mechanism of translation*" characterised by the constant interaction between its abstract, global level and its concrete, local manifestations (Torop 2002: 593). In this view, the specificity of a culture originated from the friction between these two levels. Lotman (2005) described this process through the notion of semiosphere and the centre-periphery hierarchy (Lotman 2005; see also Lotman 1990: 123-204). The semiosphere was the condition for the existence and the functioning of languages and cultures. It indicated the semiotic space within which different languages and cultures variously interrelate with each other.

> *Semiosphere is the semiotic space, outside of which semiosis cannot exist. The ensemble of semiotic formations functionally precedes the singular isolated language and becomes a condition for the existence of the latter. Without the semiosphere, language not only does not function, it does not exist. The division between the core and the periphery is a law of the internal organisation of the semiosphere.* (Lotman 2005: 205)

The hierarchy centre-periphery was one of the mechanisms for the internal organisation of the semiosphere. At the centre of the semiosphere, there were the "*most developed and structurally organised languages, and in first place the natural language of that culture*" (Lotman 1990: 127). Central cultures continuously attempted to prescribe conventional norms to the whole culture. The majority of members of culture embodied these norms and perceived them as their own 'reality'. In this view, culture consisted of the symbolic set of meanings that are "*essential*" and "*obviously valid*" for a society, an organisation or a nation (Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1273; Torop 2002: 594). However, peripheral culture could always arise and influence the central norm. In doing so, peripheral cultures were vital sources for the definition and the development of the central culture itself. As more developed and organised, central cultures were seen as rigid and incapable of development (Lotman 1990: 134). Conversely, more flexible peripheral cultures continuously refashioned the more regulated central cultures.

The cultural aspects of monuments and memorials

Culture affects how monuments are produced and interpreted. In turn, monuments and memorials convey cultural meanings in space contributing to the shaping and reshaping of culture. The centre-periphery hierarchy by Lotman can be useful to explain the interpretative dynamics of monuments and memorials. As explained in Chapter Two § 2.2, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political and cultural power – promoting the kinds of ideals they define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. For this reason, monuments and memorials "*possess a powerful and usually self-conscious symbolic vocabulary or iconography that is understood by those who share a common culture and history*" (Hershkovitz 1993: 397). Every culture defines its own spatial and design models to convey its symbolic vocabulary in space.

The ways in which monuments and memorials are designed can elicit a range of different interpretations at the societal level. Culture consists of different 'interpretative communities' (Yanow 2000), each one having its particular way to frame social reality based on specific cultural traits, political views, socio-economic interests as well as contingent needs (Yanow 2000; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). In practice, interpretative communities select relevant portions of knowledge to delimit their own specific areas of consensus on the basis of which they differentiate themselves from other cultures (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003: 27).

Interpretative communities interpret differently monuments and memorials on the basis of their shared stock of knowledge. Thus, the same monument can be for one community a sacred place of commemoration, for another a source of traumatic memories. For example, a memorial to the Soviet Army in Tallinn, Estonia recently became controversial[3]. For the Russophone minority living in Estonia, this memorial was an important place of commemoration separated from the crimes of the Soviet regime (Kattago 2009: 159). Conversely, many Estonians saw in the Soviet Army memorial a controversial trace of a past that needed to be removed. The relocation of

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[3] The memorial was unveiled in 1947 to celebrate the third anniversary of the entrance of the Soviet Army in Tallinn. The official name of this memorial was 'Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn'. According to Soviet-Russian historical narratives, the victory of the Soviet Army on the Eastern Front during the Second World War paved the way to the liberation of Tallinn and Estonia from the Nazi regime. Estonians nicknamed this memorial 'Bronze Soldier' (in Estonian *Pronkssõdur*) because it featured a two-meter bronze statue of a soldier.

this memorial and its relevance in relation to the case study element will be discussed in Chapter Four § 4.3-4.5.

The intertextual relations of monuments and memorials

Monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from their interrelations with the surrounding built environment. Linguistic and semiotic research has used the notion of "*intertextuality*" to define the process through which texts establish relations with other texts (Manning 1987: 42). Post-structural geography has used the term 'intertextuality' to describe the relations that built forms establish between them (Duncan 1990: 22-23). As texts reinterpret other texts (Eco 1984: 68), newly erected built forms actively affect the interpretation of the existing built environment.

The spatial settings in which monuments and memorials are located largely affect their interpretations. The location of monuments and memorials can have "*site specific connection to events and people commemorated*" (Benton-Short 2006: 300). In other cases, monuments and memorials are erected in locations they themselves contribute to charge ideologically.

Often, the built environment is reconstructed or redesigned to provide appropriate location for future monuments and memorials. The manipulations of spatial surroundings can also affect the meanings of already existing monuments and memorials. It has been broadly used in the post-Soviet city as a strategy to lessen the visibility and the "*ideological weight*" of Soviet monuments and memorials (Ehala 2009: 140). For example, the Estonian Government implemented numerous manipulations to the surroundings of the memorial to the Soviet Army in Tallinn as an attempt to lessen its visibility[4].

Drawing on the theoretical framework described so far, the next section introduces a dynamic concept of text on the basis of which to treat the issue of the interpretations of monuments and memorials.

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[4] The presented plans suggested balancing the symbolic meanings of the Soviet Army memorial with Estonian national symbols. Eventually, only minor manipulations were realized: diagonal footpaths replaced the direct access to the memorial, new trees were planted, the eternal flame was removed and the text on the commemorative plague was modified (Ehala 2009: 140; Smith 2008).

3.4   A dynamic concept of text

Moving from the traditional concept of text (Floch 1990), this section expresses the need for a more dynamic concept of text to include the interplays discussed in the sections 3.1-3.3, i.e. a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between the designers' and the users' interpretations; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, semiotics went beyond literary and written texts and began to analyse everyday objects, advertisement, newspapers, television broadcasts, architectures, design and music as well as social practices and cultural processes. In this context, semiotic analysis began to include topics such as space, place, landscape and built environment. Most of this semiotic analysis grounded itself on a textual paradigm, associating concepts of space, place, landscape and built environment with text. Similarly, human and cultural geography has associated landscape and text to uncover the hidden, dominant meanings of landscape representations. These approaches used text as "*a metaphor or a model*" to define a methodological perspective on the complex fabric of meanings through which agents make sense of the world (Volli 2009: 9).

From the mid-1980s, post-structural geographic research refashioned the notion of landscape as text, gathering around the slogan 'there is something outside the text'. Post-structural geographers argued that the textual paradigm neglected the material processes and social relations in which texts were interpreted and produced (Peet 1996: 23; Duncan and Ley 1993: 9-10).

Other critics of *landscape-as-text* brought into question the representational model of landscape. The so-called 'non-representational theories' emerged as a critical perspective on those theories reducing the "*naturally present reality*" into representational models (Thrift 1996: 7; see also Thrift 2007; Crang 2005; Lorimer 2005, 2008; Wylie 2007; Vannini and Taggart 2012). Non-representational theories proposed to shift from text to context, i.e. "*a necessary constitutive element of interaction, something active, differentially extensive and able to problematise and work on the bound of subjectivity*" (Thrift 1996: 3). As opposed to the concept of text, practices were seen as "*open and uncertain*" and thus changing according to time and spatial settings (Thrift 1996: 7). Practices were embodied in a space that is "*a practical set of configurations that mix in a variety of assemblages thereby producing new*

senses of space" (Thrift 1996: 16). Rather than being made up of representations, the world was seen as "*made up of all kinds of things brought in to relation with one another by many and various spaces through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter*" (Thrift 2007: 8). Moreover, non-representational theories conceptualised objects as actors involved in various performances and in complex relations with other human and non-human actors. The human body was not counted as separate from the world: human bodies co-evolve with things, taking them in and adding them to different parts of the biological body to produce something which "*[...] resemble[s] a constantly evolving distribution of different hybrids with different reaches*" (Thrift 2007: 10).

The proposal of non-representational theories was to focus attention on practices, as opposed to texts. Traditional semiotic research erected a great boundary between the concepts of text and practices. As products of prior utterances, texts were traditionally considered as immutable, coherent systems of signification (Floch 1990). In consequence, texts were delimited within a temporal structure that necessarily included a beginning, an elaboration and an end. Conversely, practices were defined as on-going processes, continuously developing and changing in situations of social interaction.

Nevertheless, human practices can be completely stable and stereotypical (Paolucci 2010: 174). The open nature of practices does not make them more peculiar than texts. Practices often assume the form of stable "*scripts*" or "*frames*" (Eco 1984: 71), which are coherent systems of experiential knowledge that describe how actors usually behave within social situations. For instance, the practice of 'going to a restaurant' develops similarly for different actors: calling the restaurant to book a table, reaching the restaurant, reading the menu, making a choice on the food to order, waiting to be served, eating, and finally paying the bill. Human practices like 'going to restaurant' might get rewritten by unusual circumstances, but they hardly suffer from abrupt changes.

Hence, contemporary semiotic research has progressively shifted the meaning of textuality to reconceptualise the traditional notion of text as a closed product with fixed borders and defined by internal coherence (Stano 2014: 61; see also Volli 2000: 224). Textuality is a methodological perspective that allows the researcher to periodically redefine the borders of the texts and thus to open new perspectives considered as relevant for the analysis (Stano 2014: 61). In relation to the case study, focusing on the

textuality of monuments and memorials can help to better define the objects and the interpretative processes under investigations, including representations, interpretations, cultural context and social practices.

3.5 Conclusions: A holistic perspective on meaning-making of monuments and memorials

This chapter developed a holistic perspective to conceive the interpretations of monuments and memorials as depending on three interplays: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment. The feasibility of the holistic perspective on the meaning-making of monuments and memorials presented in this chapter is based on the following theoretical assumptions:

a) As texts, monuments and memorials consist of a material and a symbolic level. The material level can be associated with expression. As built forms, monuments and memorials have the heaviest substances among all the non-verbal sign systems (Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou 2014: 436). The symbolic level can be associated with content. Material and symbolic are in a mutual relation able to define, from context to context, something as material and something else as symbolic.

b) As with every text presents the partial worldview of its authors (Eco 1976: 289-290), monuments and memorials present the cultural meanings and political messages of those who erected them. As such, monuments and memorials can be used to serve political needs. Often, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political agendas.

c) Textual strategies are available to authors to entice readers along a specific interpretation. Although authors seek to control interpretations, readers interpret texts in line with their knowledge, experience and needs. This is the case also for monuments and memorials: a set of strategies is available to designers to entice users along specific interpretations of monuments and memorials (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 57). Model Users are those individuals that conform to the designers' intentions and that develop patterns of behaviour that are consistent with the envisioned function of monuments and memorials. Nevertheless, not all users conform to the designers' intentions. The unforeseen interpretations and practices play a critical role in the meaning-making of monuments and memorials.

d) As text, monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from their cultural context. Culture affects how monuments are produced and interpreted. In turn,

monuments and memorials convey cultural meanings in space. The semiotic concept of culture is structured in different levels of organisation. At the local level, culture is a "*collective intelligible social practice*" (Reckwitz 2005, quoted in Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1272) including "*a number of incorporated and (implicit) routinized 'recurrent regularities' about how to behave and act in specific situations*" (Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1273). It consists of the symbolic set of meanings that are "*essential*" and "*obviously valid*" for a society, an organisation or a nation (Othengrafen and Reimer 2013: 1273; Torop, 2002: 594).

e)   As texts reinterpret other texts (Eco 1984: 68), newly erected built forms actively affect the interpretation of the existing built environment.

On the basis of these theoretical assumptions, the next chapter will construct and develop the methodological framework for the empirical study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. To do so, it presents the research strategy, the methodology and the methods used for data collection and analysis.

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Chapter Four

The methodological framework for the study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials

Chapter Two § 2.5 showed that semiotics still lacks a unified theory for approaching the interpretations of monuments and memorials at the societal level. Semiotic analysis has rarely discussed the methods used for collecting primary data (e.g. Sozzi 2012; Krzyżanowska 2016). In response, this chapter constructs and develops the methodological framework for the empirical study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials.

The methodological framework proposed in this chapter is the "*logic*" connecting the primary research question with the conclusions to be drawn (Yin 2009: 24). It thus identifies the rationale for the qualitative methodology used to integrate the theoretical and the empirical dimensions of the study. The function of the methodological framework is to ensure that the research strategy, methodology and methods effectively address the primary research question presented in Chapter One § 1.6: 'how can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?'.

As for the research strategy, section 4.1 begins by establishing the logic underpinning the case study research strategy, highlighting its rationale and potential for analytic generalisation. It then continues to show a set of domains to which the research results can be generalised. Sections 4.2-4.5 explain the rationale for analysing two monuments in Estonia, selected as appropriate cases to address the primary research question. To do so, this section outlines the geographical location, the time boundaries and the communities constituting the selected case studies.

As for the research methodology, section 4.6 explains the rationale for using a qualitative approach. It then assesses the need for an extensive fieldwork and a multi-method approach for data collection. Building on the proposed qualitative methodology, sections 4.7 and 4.8 discuss the methods used for primary data collection: semi-

structured interviews and participant observations. Section 4.9 lists the documents and the secondary sources that have contributed to a broader understanding of the researched case studies. Section 4.10 describes the approaches used to transcribe primary data. Section 4.11 describes the process of coding interview transcripts and field notes. Section 4.12 discusses the methods used for analysing primary data. Data analysis attempted to generalise the findings related to the case studies to a theoretical framework that accounts for the multiple interpretations of the built environment as emerging from the interplays presented in the conceptual scheme of Chapter Three § 3.3: a) between material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment. Finally, section 4.13 explores the ethical issues and the measures taken to avoid harm to both the researcher and the respondents.

4.1 Establishing the logic for the case study research

This thesis uses case studies as research strategy. This section begins by establishing the logic underpinning the case study research strategy, highlighting its rationale and potential for analytic generalisation. It then continues to show a set of domains to which the research results can be generalised.

The rationale for the case study research

A case study is an event, a problem, an activity, a space, a process, a person or a group of individuals selected to address the research questions. The purpose of a case study is to develop and test theory (Yin 2009: 35). The case studies of this thesis will analyse the multiple interpretations of two monuments in Estonia. These case studies will show how a connection between analytical frames developed in the field of cultural geography and semiotics could contribute to a better understanding of the multiple interpretations of the built environment. According to Yin, case studies are the preferred strategy when:

> *(a) "how" or "why" research questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.* (Yin 2009: 2)

Following (a), this thesis addresses the question presented in Chapter One § 1.6: 'how can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?'. As for (b), the researcher does not have any control over the case studies and data were produced on phenomena that were out of the researcher's control. As for (c), analysis concentrates on the current interpretations of two monuments in contemporary Estonia.

As a strategy to research real-life events, case studies allow exploring issues where "*the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*" (Yin 2009: 18). As noted in Chapter Three § 3.3, monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from the cultural context and separately from the interrelations they have with the surrounding built environment. Moreover, Yin (2009: 4) argued that case studies are suitable for exploring daily practices in diverse cultural contexts, allowing examinations into the "*holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events*". Case studies will contribute to the empirical dimension by analysing how interpretations shape users' experience around two monuments in Estonia, one in Tallinn and one in Tartu. Sections 4.2-4.5 will explain the rationale for choosing these monuments as appropriate cases to address the primary research question. The following section will highlight the potential for analytic generalisation of case studies.

Generalising from single case studies

There is a widespread belief within academia that case studies are incapable of contributing to scientific development. This belief is grounded on the idea that individual cases provide poor generalisation. Flyvbjerg (2011: 304) considered this belief as a "*misunderstanding*" coming from the growing application of natural science models within the social sciences. Based on this misunderstanding, academics may prefer research strategies believed to give more ground for generalizability, such as statistical mathematical models. Statistics aims to make inferences about a given population on the basis of data collected from a sample of individuals (Yin 2009: 38). This sample represents a "*prototypical type*" of that population, i.e. a parametrical criterion through which the entire population is evaluated (Paolucci 2010: 14). Academics generally hold statistical mathematical models in high regard because of the confidence determined by quantitative formulas (Yin 2009: 38). However, the logic underpinning statistical generalisation is akin to betting, assuming that data collected on a sample are generalizable and representative of an entire population (Paolucci 2010: 14).

Moving away from statistical mathematical models, case studies build on an "*analytic generalisation*" that aims "*to expand and generalise theories […] and not to enumerate frequencies*" (Yin 2009: 15). This thesis analyses two monuments in Estonia in order to assess the extent of the connection between the cultural geographical and the semiotic approach to the built environment and to monuments and memorials specifically.

Yet, this evaluation can be generalized beyond its original context. There is a set of domains to which the research results can be generalised. This set is divided into five different levels that can be seen sequentially, one building on the other. The set is visualized in the schema of fig. 5, from the most general (built environment) to the more specific domain (the analysed case studies in Tallinn and Tartu). The logic underpinning this schema is that the research results that are valid for the particular cases at the bottom can be generalised to the domains represented above in the schema. Chapters Five and Six will present analyses of particular cases the findings of which contribute to the knowledge of the interpretative aspects of the built environment as such.

Built environment

Monuments and memorials

Post-socialist countries

Estonia

Tallinn and Tartu

War memorial in Tallinn
Fountain sculpture in Tartu
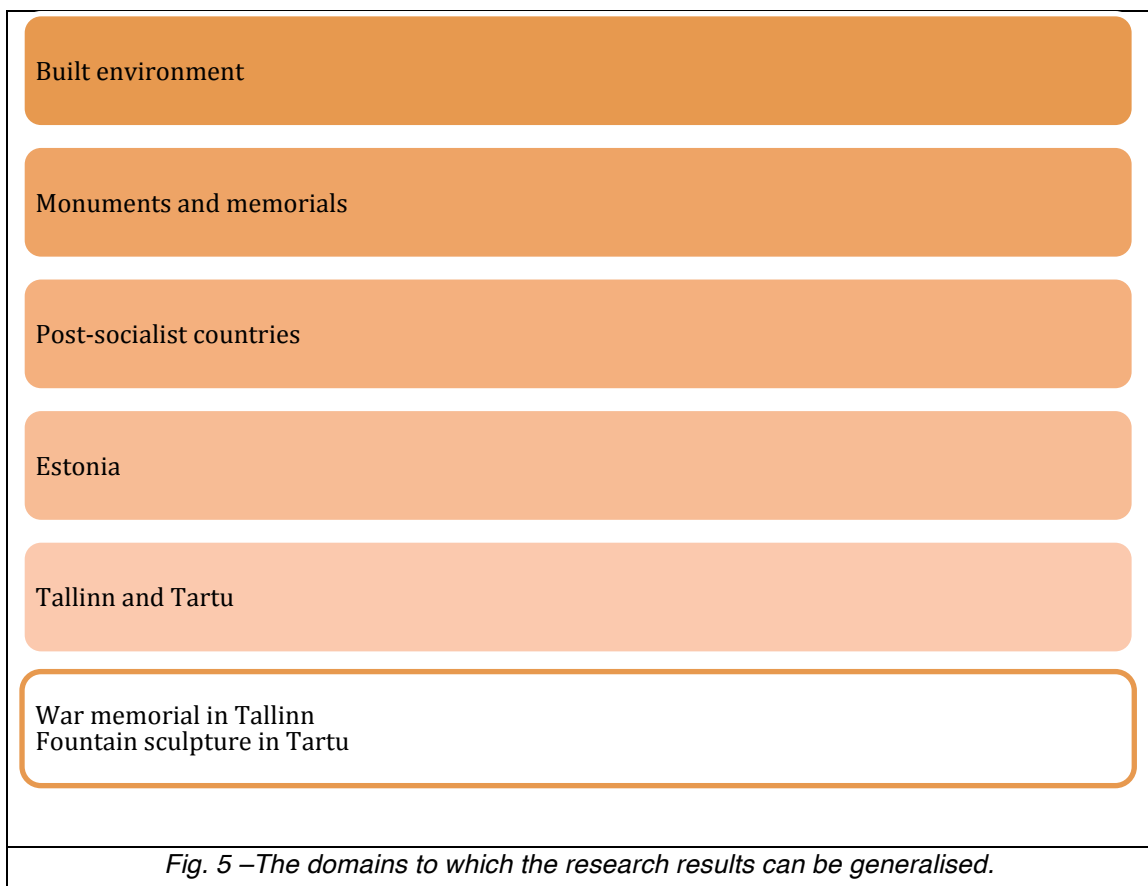
Fig. 5 –The domains to which the research results can be generalised.

This thesis aims to provide a basis for drawing conclusions about the whole built environment and, in turn, to generalise to a theoretical framework that accounts for the multiple interpretations of the built environment. The focus of the thesis is on the interpretations of a specific part of the built environment: monuments and memorials as built forms erected to promote specific meanings. As noted in Chapter Three § 3.1, elites erect monuments and memorials to convey specific understandings of the past as a means to perpetuate social order and power relations.

Monuments and memorials have different status depending on the geographical location and the time period. This thesis concentrates on post-socialist countries and specifically on post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe. Post-Soviet countries are independent states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990-1991[5]. In post-Soviet countries, monuments and memorials have been an issue that has taken on a particular significance. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the tearing down of monuments erected by Soviet authorities was a noticeable sign of regime change. Crucially, with reference to the case study, recently formed national elites used monuments and memorials as tools to culturally reinvent the post-Soviet built environment. Cultural reinvention is the process of filling the built environment with specific cultural meanings through practices of redesign, reconstruction, restoration, relocation and removal. In post-Soviet countries, the design of the built environment has been extensively used to exemplify the new society's rule of play. For example, Young and Kaczmarek (2008: 53) explained that cities in Central and Eastern Europe have sought to create 'western' urban identities in the context of post-socialist transformation, while obscuring the "*unwanted*" socialist and Soviet past.

The cultural reinvention of the post-Soviet built environment has evolved through two distinct but concurrent practices: the redesign of the inherited built environment created by the Soviets and the simultaneous establishment of a new built environment reflecting the needs of post-Soviet culture and society. In this context, recently formed national elites have used monuments and memorials to educate citizens toward the current historical narratives and to set their cultural and political agendas. Elites in post-Soviet countries took various initiatives to marginalise, remove and relocate Soviet

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[5] Lithuania was the first to declare independence on 11 March 1990, with Estonia and Latvia following in August 1991. The remaining republics all seceded throughout 1991. Today, post-Soviet countries can be divided into five groups depending on their geographical location: a) Russian Federation; b) The so-called Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; c) Countries in Central and East Europe: Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine; d) Countries in South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; and e) Countries in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

monuments and memorials while establishing new built forms aiming at signifying specific future expectations.

Contrarily to the elites' expectations, cultural reinvention through monuments and memorials has not been widely accepted in post-Soviet countries, where multiple historical narratives and identities coexist at the societal level. Here, the marginalisation, relocation, removal of Soviet monuments and memorials and the erection of new ones have often sparked broad debates and resulted in civil disorder.

In Estonia, the controversies around monuments and memorials have been so intense that scholars have used the terms 'War of Monuments' to refer to a series of small-scale conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials starting from the early 2000s (e.g. Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Smith 2008). For this reason, Estonia was selected as a relevant case to address the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. Sections 4.2-4.5 will explain the rationale for analysing the current interpretations of two monuments in Estonia, selected as appropriate cases to address the primary research question. The next section will identify the geographical location of the study exploring the rationale for analysis of two monuments in Estonia, one in Tallinn and one Tartu.

4.2 Identifying the geographical location: The cities of Tallinn and Tartu in Estonia

The selected monuments are located in Estonia, the northernmost of three Baltic countries (fig. 6). Several cultures and nationalities have been considered as 'Baltic'. After the First World War, the terms 'Baltic states/countries' have more firmly referred to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Haas 2006: 4). After the Second World War, the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic countries. Estonia restored its independence on 20 August 1991. In 2004, Estonia enthusiastically joined the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Ever since, Estonia has achieved the highest standard of living and the most stable market economy among the former Soviet Republics (Haas 2006: 4).

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The cities of Tallinn and Tartu

This thesis uses two case studies to answer the primary research question: a war memorial in Tallinn and a fountain-sculpture in Tartu. Located in North Estonia (fig. 7), Tallinn is the capital and the most populated city of Estonia, with approximately 408 000 total residents (Statistics Estonia 2011). It was mentioned for the first time in 1154. Tallinn is the major political centre of Estonia, seat of the main governmental organisations. Here are located the Parliament (in Estonian *Riigikogu*) and the official seat of the Government of Estonia (in the Stenbock House, in Estonian *Stenbocki Maja*). Most of national and international companies have their headquarters in Tallinn. Tallinn has the only international airport and it is the most visited city of Estonia by tourists. The main touristic attractions are located within Tallinn's Old Town (in Estonian *Vanalinn*), which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997. In 2011, Tallinn was designated European Capital of Culture.

Tartu, in South Estonia (fig. 7), is the second largest city of Estonia with approximately 104 000 residents (Statistics Estonia 2011). It was first mentioned in 1030. Tartu is the major intellectual centre of Estonia, seat of the national university[6]. Here are located the Ministry of Education and Research and the Supreme Court of Estonia. Tartu is the location of the Estonian National Museum. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, Tartu was an important cultural centre for the Estonian national awakening. The tradition of the Estonian Song Festival started here in 1869 and the first national

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[6] University of Tartu was designated national university by the *University of Tartu Act 1995*, c. 2, passed 16 February (RT1 I 1995, 23, 333) and entered into force 21 March 1995.

theatre (*Vanemuine*) was founded in 1870. On 24 February 1920, a peace treaty was signed in Tartu between Estonia and the Soviet Union (the Peace Treaty of Tartu, § 4.3). Through this treaty, the Soviet Union unreservedly recognised the independence of the Republic of Estonia and renounced in perpetuity all the rights to the territories of Estonia.

Fig. 7 – Map of Estonia. Estonia is bordered to the north by the Gulf of Finland, to the west by the Baltic Sea, to the south by Latvia and to the east by Russia. The map indicates the main cities of Estonia. Located in the north, Tallinn is the capital of Estonia. In the south, Tartu is Estonia's second city by population. Public domain map available at Wikipedia.org, uploaded 21 December 2009.

Freedom Square in Tallinn and Town Hall Square in Tartu

Both the analysed monuments are located in large squares. Freedom Square is a large square on the southern edge of Tallinn's Old Town (fig. 8). The regimes that ruled Tallinn during the 20th century have used the present-day Freedom Square for their public rituals of power (Lige 2014. 153). Between 2008 and 2009, the square underwent a complete reconstruction aiming to provide a venue for public rituals and cultural events. According to the Tallinn City Council, this reconstruction turned Freedom Square into "*the most important*" square in Estonia (Vitsut 2008: 34). During the opening ceremony, the President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves (2009) defined Freedom Square as "*the representative square of the city – and indeed of the entire country*". Kaljundi (2009: 44) explained that the reconstruction of Freedom Square could be seen as "*Estonia's prime textbook example of social formation of space*".

In 2009, on an elevated part of Freedom Square, the Estonian Government inaugurated the War of Independence Victory Column, a war memorial to those who served in a war that created the basis for Estonia's first period of independence. The Victory Column is considered "*the most important monument erected in Estonia after the country regained its independence*" (Mattson 2012). However, the war memorial sparked broad debate among the public that has now been going on since it was conceived in 2006.

Fig. 8 – Map of Tallinn's Old Town. The red line defines the borders of Tallinn's Old Town. The blue line indicates the area of Freedom Square (in Estonian Vabaduse väljak). Map data ©2017 Google.

Town Hall Square is a large square in the old town of Tartu (fig. 9). Town Hall Square has been the political and civic centre of Tartu since the 13th century. The regimes that ruled Tartu during the 20th century have used the present-day Town Hall Square as seat of government and venue for public rituals of power (Salupere 2013: 80). Today, Town Hall Square is the location of the Tartu City Council and a venue for entertaining, cultural events, commerce and shopping (Tõnisson et al. 2006). During the Second World War, several bombings left in ruins the central area of Tartu. In the late 1940s, the Soviet local authorities of Tartu reconstructed part of the damaged buildings in Town Hall Square.

In the context of these reconstructions, a fountain was constructed in front of the old town hall. After Estonia regained independence in 1991, the fountain fell into a state of disrepair. In consequence, Tartu local authorities held competitions for the design of a new fountain. The winning entry provided for the redesign of the basin of the fountain and included a bronze sculptor featuring two kissing young people under a dripping

umbrella. The circular fountain and the bronze sculpture formed the Kissing Students complex. The Kissing Students was believed to fit with the urban identity of Tartu and quickly become a popular meeting point for citizens. Standing in a salient location and celebrating significant identities for Tartu, the Kissing Students has assumed the characteristic of a monument.

Fig. 9 – Map of the city centre of Tartu. The red marker shows the location of Town Hall Square. The blue line indicates the area of Town Hall Square. Map data ©2017 Google.

This thesis analyses the Victory Column and the Kissing Students because they present outcomes regarding a) the national politics aiming at culturally reinventing the Estonian built environment and b) how these national politics are interpreted at societal levels. Chapters Five and Six will undertake analyses of respectively the War of Independence Victory Column in Tallinn and the Kissing Students in Tartu. Chapter Seven will propose a comparative analysis between the two case studies to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

4.3 The historical background of Estonia until 1991

This section introduces the historical background of Estonia, focusing on Estonia's route to independence and transition to a European democracy. The historical background of Estonia is intricately connected with the rationale for choosing the time boundaries and the communities of the study, which will be identified later in sections 4.4 and 4.5. For a more detailed history of Estonia, see Kasekamp (2010).

A history of foreign rule

In the Estonian History Museum in Tallinn, an introduction label says that more than ten different foreign powers have ruled Estonia since ancient times. Estonians have been the main people ruling the country only from 1918 to 1944 and from 1991 onwards (Kasekamp 2010). For this reason, Estonia's history is closely tied to the history of the political regimes that ruled the territories of present-day Estonia. The Danes, the German knights, the Polish, the Swedes and the Russians fought many wars for the control of the territories of present-day Estonia (Kasekamp 2010).

In the 13th century, Danish troops invaded northern Estonia and the German knights of the Teutonic Order occupied southern Estonia (Kasekamp 2010: 16-17). The main attempt by the locals to liberate themselves from the Danish and German rulers was in 1343, during the so-called St. George's Night Uprising, but the attempt was unsuccessful (Kasekamp 2010: 34). Subsequently the territories of Estonia passed under the knights of the Livonian Order, a branch of the German Teutonic Order (Kasekamp 2010: 34-35). In 1435, bishops and representatives of the Livonian Order signed the Livonian Confederation agreement to unify orders and bishoprics in present-day southern Estonia and northern Latvia (Kasekamp 2010: 35). Between the 13th and the 17th century, many Estonian and Livonian costal towns prospered as part of the Hanseatic League, an economic alliance of trading towns and merchant guilds (Kasekamp 2010: 37). Tallinn and Tartu reached particular wealth from their western trade links.

Between 1558 and 1583 a war was fought for the control of the territories under the Livonian order (Kasekamp 2010: 43). During this war, the Tsardom of Russia fought against Livonian coalitions to gain control on the present-day territories of Estonia and Latvia (Kasekamp 2010: 44). Russia lost the war and as a result northern Estonia succumbed to the Kingdom of Sweden (Kasekamp 2010: 46). Southern Estonia briefly came under control of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Kasekamp 2010: 46). In 1625, the entire territory of present-day Estonian became part of the Kingdom of Sweden (Kasekamp 2010: 50-51). Between 1700 and 1721, during the so-called Great Northern War, the Russian Empire fought against the Swedish Empire for the control of territories in northeast Europe; as result of the war, the territories of present-day Estonia capitulated to the Russian Empire (Kasekamp 2010: 43).

Under the Russian Empire, Baltic Germans living in the territories of Estonia started to document Estonian language and culture (Kasekamp 2010: 76). Moreover, they introduced the Enlightenment, which propagated ideals of freedom and equality. These cultural movements played a crucial role in the Estonian national awakening in the 1850s (Kasekamp 2010: 77).

The first independence of Estonia

The Republic of Estonia was formed as an independent state in 1918. Estonia reached independence after the two years' war known as the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920, Kasekamp 2010: 102-104). During this war, the Estonians managed to defeat Soviet forces to the east and Baltic German forces to the south. In this war, the allies of Estonia were the White Russian North-Western Army, Latvia and the United Kingdom. Finnish, Swedish and Danish military corps also fought on the side of Estonia. The war ended with the Peace Treaty of Tartu (2 February 1920), when Soviet authorities recognised *de jure* the independence of the Republic of Estonia and renounced in perpetuity all the rights to Estonian territories (Kasekamp 2010: 104). This is the first recognition of Estonia as an independent state. For this reason, in the current Estonian historical narratives, this war is known as the 'War of Independence' or 'Freedom War' (in Estonian *Vabadussõda*) and it is closely linked with ideals of freedom and sovereignty.

Estonia under the Soviet Union

In 1940, as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union occupied Estonia (first Soviet regime 1940-1941, (Kasekamp 2010: 125). Later, Nazi Germany occupied Estonia from 1941 to 1944 (Kasekamp 2010: 131). During the Second World War, Estonia suffered huge losses in terms of population, industry and transport infrastructure. The 1944 Russian air raids destroyed residential areas in Tallinn and a large part of the central area of Tartu.

At the end of the Second World War, Estonia was re-annexed into the Soviet Union and remained a Soviet Republic until 1991 (Kasekamp 2010: 138-139). Stalin's terror characterised the aftermath of the war. In March 1949, approximately 21.000 people were deported to forced labour camps in Siberia (Kasekamp 2010: 146). The Communist Party became the most prominent organisation in Estonia, mostly formed

by Russophones. 'Russophones' refers to Russian speakers that are in possession of Estonian citizenship, including Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and other ethnic communities that speak Russian as first language and do not define their ethnic identity as 'Estonian'.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the new leader of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev (in charge 1955-1964) expanded the social base of the Communist Party to include more Estonians. Moreover, he granted permission for citizens to make contact with foreign countries. In 1965, the Soviet Estonian Shipping Company opened a ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki (Kasekamp 2010: 150). Since the 1960s, Estonians began to watch Finnish television that provided more access to western culture than any other group in the Soviet Union.

> *Estonians, who speak a language closely related to Finnish, tuned in to Finnish television more frequently than Soviet-Estonian television, until the period of glasnost in the late 1980s, when emancipated Estonian television became an instrument of an exciting political struggle. Finnish television – YLE as well as MTV – had a significant political and cultural impact on Estonian society during the last decades of Soviet rule. Estonia was the first Soviet Republic to break away from the USSR in the 1990s, and it is not just a joke to say that one of the strategic factors which contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union was Finland's television.* (Newcomb 2004: 880)

To reduce the influence of western culture, a period of intense Russification was initiated between 1978 and 1982 (Kasekamp 2010: 154-155). Russification is a set of measures to marginalise Estonian national identity and language in favour of Russian heritage. In this context, Russian language started to be taught from kindergarten age. Furthermore, several Russophone families were forcedly moved to Estonia from other territories of the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, Soviet authorities erected new prefabricated districts - e.g. *Lasnamäe* and *Mustamäe* in Tallinn and *Annelinn* in Tartu - to house Russophone families.

Estonia's way to independence

After becoming secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, Gorbachev realised he had inherited problems such as economic crisis, poor standards

of living and lack of freedom for citizens. To address these problems, Gorbachev initiated a reform program based on two pivotal concepts: *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). This reform program promoted significant political and economic transformations and provided citizens with more freedom to express divergent views (Kasekamp 2010: 160-161).

In the wake of this reform, Estonians started to demonstrate their discontent toward the Soviet regime. Demonstrations developed mainly in the form of environmental and heritage protection (Tamm 2013: 652-653). The first wide protest against the Soviet regime in Estonia was organised in May 1987 to demonstrate against the creation of phosphate mines in North East Estonia (Kasekamp 2010: 161). In 23 August 1987, a protest was arranged in Tallinn to publicly condemn the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Kasekamp 2010: 161). In December 1987, the Estonian Heritage Society was founded to preserve Estonian culture and to promote the return of historic place names, memorials and folk practices (Tamm 2013: 653).

In 1988, song festivals and other cultural events became the occasions to demonstrate against the Soviet regime. According to Estonian historical narratives, these events were crucial for the restoration of Estonian independence so that they are grouped under the name 'Singing Revolution' (Kasekamp 2010: 163). On 2 February 1988, a protest was held in Tartu for the anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty (Made 2015: 39). On the 70th anniversary of the pre-1940 Republic of Estonia (24 February 1988), Soviet authorities denied an application for permission to organise a public meeting in Tallinn and organised an event in Victory Square (present-day Freedom Square) to condemn the western countries' support for Estonian independence (Made 2015: 40-41). Despite the ban, thousands of people spontaneously gathered in a park in Tallinn city centre. This was the first spontaneous public demonstration in Soviet Estonia (Made 2015: 40-41).

In the wake of these events, a pop-music festival was organised in Tartu on 14 May 1988 (Šmidchens 2014: 209). During the festival, audience members unfurled two blue-, black- and white Estonian flags, which were illegal under the Soviet regime (Palmer 2005: 405). This practice was repeated at the 'Estonian Song 1988', a song festival that attracted nearly 300.000 people at the Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds on 11 September 1988 (Made 2015: 63-64). On 24 February 1989, to celebrate the independence of the pre-1940 Republic of Estonia, the Estonian flag was raised on *Pikk Herman*, a tower next to the Estonian Parliament (Made 2015: 72-75). On 23

August 1989, a human chain over six hundreds kilometres long was formed from Tallinn in Estonia to Vilnius in Lithuania, in a sign of freedom of the Baltic countries from the Soviet regime (Made 2015: 81-82).

In the early 1990s, despite the use of force by the Soviet authorities, Estonian independence became more realistic. In December 1989, the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union admitted the existence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and declared it invalid (Made 2015: 85-86). Finally, on 20 August 1991, the independence of Estonia was restored and the pre-1940 Republic of Estonia was reconstituted as a sovereign state (Kasekamp 2010: 171).

Estonia's transition to democracy and the status reversal

A vast number of changes has characterised Estonia after the regaining of independence in 1991. In academic discourse, the term 'transition' has been used to describe the turmoil of economical, legislative, political, social and cultural changes in post-socialist countries (e.g. Tamm 2013). Specialised literature has mainly focused on the legislative, executive and judicial measures taken to condemn and compensate the crimes of socialist regimes (e.g. Teitel 2000; Elster 2004; Stan 2009; Nalepa 2010). Other scholars have concentrated on the socio-economic aspects of transition (Bezemer 2006). Scholars have recently broadened their investigation into the cultural aspects of transition. A significant part of this literature has explored the national politics of memory and identity (Tamm 2013).

In Estonia as in the other post-Soviet countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the regaining of independence also determined a "*status reversal*" of the ethnic communities (Ehala 2009: 148). The Russophones enjoyed the highest status in Soviet Estonia (Ehala 2009: 147). Estonians were the largest ethnic community living in Soviet Estonia, but Russians were the main people ruling the country's institutions. After Estonia regained independence, the formally dominant Russophone community suffered status decline (Ehala 2009: 147). Conversely, the previously "*minoritised majority*" of Estonians found new economic opportunities and political power (Riga and Kennedy 2009: 461). This situation resulted in economic and social inequality between Estonians and Russophones (Ehala 2009: 152).

Russophones were assigned immigrant status since their presence was ascribed to a forced colonisation (Ehala 2009: 147). Estonians hoped Russophones would return to

their homelands and this process was actively supported by strict citizen policies. Due to these strict policies, Russophones were expelled from state politics and from the public sphere in general (Ehala 2009: 148). The more natural reaction to this was identity privatisation of the Russophones in Estonia, i.e.

> *[…] a process by which all macro-social elements of one's identity, including nationality, class, political affiliations and status are marginalized, and only the part of identity which manifests itself in the private sphere is retained.* (Ehala 2009: 147)

New integration strategies such as the Integration Strategy 2008-2013 (Asari 2007) have aimed to improve the social conditions of Russophones in Estonia. As a result of these strategies, a larger number of Russophones wanted to be integrated into Estonian society (Ehala 2009: 151). The Estonian Government implemented these integration strategies to satisfy European standards on multiculturalism: integration of the non-Estonian people into the Estonian society was a fundamental requirement to achieve EU membership (Ehala 2009: 152). However,

> *The division between Estonian and Russian-speaking communities has not disappeared but rather consolidated as a border between two communities. Those two communities are, in everyday life, relatively separated and also have different values and beliefs. Not surprisingly the communities do not share the same collective memory […].* (Pääbo 2008: 9)

Estonia became a member of the EU and NATO in 2004. EU and NATO memberships increasingly changed the social circumstances and caused shifts in the identities of both Estonian and Russophones (Ehala 2009: 151). Individualism and consumerism became common features of both Estonians and Russophones (Ehala 2009: 151). Overall, the status of Russophones has risen considerably after Estonia joined the EU (Vihalemm 2008, quoted in Ehala 2009: 155). However, Russophones in Estonia continue to be marginalised in the national politics of identity and memory (Lehti et al. 2008: 409). Particularly, the erection, removal and relocation of monuments and memorials have divided the population on ethnic grounds. The next part will discuss the conflict over the interpretations of monuments and memorials that characterised Estonia starting from the early 2000s.

The Estonian War of Monuments

Part of the literature on the cultural aspects of transition has explored the cultural reinvention of the post-socialist built environment (e.g. Young and Kaczmarek 2008). In this context, case studies have analysed specific conflicts over the erection, removal and relocation of monuments and memorials. In Estonia, the removal and relocation of Soviet monuments and the erection of new ones have not been accepted by the entire population and thus they have sparked broad debates and resulted in civil disorder (Kattago 2015: 180). Here, the conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials have been so intense that scholars have used the terms 'War of Monuments' to indicate a series of small-scale conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials starting from the early 2000s (e.g. Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Smith 2008). Other terms were used to refer to the same conflicts, such as "*Memorials War*" (Pääbo 2008: 13). These conflicts began in 2002 with the erection of a controversial memorial in Pärnu and culminated in 2007 with two nights of disorder in Tallinn following the decision to relocate a Soviet memorial (Pääbo 2008).

EU and NATO memberships provided an adequate "*sense of security*" in such a manner as to underpin the redesign of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically (Ehala 2009: 152). In 2002, a memorial representing an Estonian soldier in a Second World War uniform was erected in Pärnu (Pääbo 2008: 12). During the Second World War, Estonians soldiers were fighting alongside the German army, so the portrayed soldier presented Nazi military resemblances (Ehala 2009: 142). For this reason, the memorial was removed even before its official inauguration. In 2004, the local authorities of Lihula, a town in West Estonia, decided to erect again this memorial to commemorate the "*Estonian men who fought in 1940-1945 against Bolshevism and for the restoration of Estonian independence*" (Smith 2008: 424). According to the current Estonian historical narratives, the soldiers who wittingly or unwittingly joined the German army are seen as "*freedom fighters*" fighting to stop the advancing of the Soviet Army in Estonia (Pääbo 2008: 13). As was to be expected, the erection of a memorial potentially associated with Nazi symbolism elicited criticism from the EU, Russian Federation and several Jewish organisations (Lehti et al. 2008: 399). In consequence of international condemnation, Estonian authorities removed the memorial after two weeks from its inauguration, without any notice to the public (Ehala 2009: 142). This sudden removal sparked a debate among the public on more politically correct ways to commemorate the Estonian soldiers fighting to free Estonia alongside the German army (Lehti et al. .2008: 400).

The controversy around Nazi symbolism elevated the tension toward the public display of other totalitarian material remains such as the Soviet material symbols. An increasing number of Estonians began to think that the same logic behind the removal of the Lihula memorial should have been applied to Soviet monuments and memorials (Lehti et al. .2008: 400). This situation elevated tensions particularly towards a memorial to the Soviet Army in Tallinn, unveiled in 1947 to celebrate the third anniversary of the entrance of the Soviet Army in Tallinn. Estonians nicknamed this memorial the 'Bronze Soldier' (in Estonian *Pronkssõdur*) because it featured a two-meter bronze statue of a soldier in a Second World War era Soviet Army uniform. After the removal of the Lihula memorial, Estonian national-conservative parties persistently called for the removal of the Bronze Soldier (Pääbo 2008: 13). These political parties gained exceptional popularity promising to remove this memorial and won the elections in 2007 (Tamm 2013: 666). Once in power, they honoured the promise starting the works for the relocation on 26 April 2007.

Some Tallinn citizens - especially belonging to the Russophone minority - perceived this act as a provocation: for them, the memorial represented an important site of commemoration disconnected to the crimes of the Soviet regime (Kattago 2009: 150). According to Russian historical narratives, the victory of the Soviet Army on the Eastern Front during the Second World War paved the way for the liberation of Tallinn and Estonia from the Nazi regime (Pääbo 2008: 11-12). In Soviet Estonia, the anniversary of this victory was celebrated on 9 May (Pääbo 2008: 11). This day is still one of the most important national holidays in today's Russian Federation, known as Victory Day (Ehala 2009: 144). Russophone communities living in post-socialist countries spontaneously celebrate Victory Day, even if it was removed as a national holiday in their country of residence (Mälksoo 2009: 664). The area around the Bronze Soldier has been the main setting for the unofficial celebrations of Victory Day in Estonia (Kattago 2009: 158). For this reason, Russophones wanted the Bronze Soldier to remain in its original location.

Nevertheless, the Estonian Government removed the memorial in April 2007. After removal, the memorial was relocated in a military cemetery, approximately two kilometres outside the city centre of Tallinn. As a result of the relocation, two nights of disorder broke out in the centre of Tallinn, during which a 20-year-old Russian was killed (Pääbo 2008: 22-23).

4.4 Identifying the time boundaries: A focus on the contemporary interpretations of the Estonian built environment

According to Yin (2009: 2), case studies are the preferred strategy when "*the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context*". This section identifies the time boundaries of the researched case studies, being a focus on the contemporary interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. Primary data were collected between February and October 2015 and rely on contemporaneous events. However, there are three turning points in Estonia's history that radically changed the ways in which the Estonian built environment was interpreted: the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Estonian EU and NATO memberships in 2004 and the relocation of the Bronze Soldier in 2007.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 came a rethinking of the architects' and planners' profession and a consequent transformation of the Estonian built environment (Väljas and Lige 2015: 75-77). In post-Soviet Estonia, the design of the built environment has been extensively used to exemplify the new society's rules. The cultural reinvention of the post-Soviet built environment in Estonia has evolved through two distinct but concurrent practices: the redesign of the inherited built environment created by the Soviets and the simultaneous establishment of a new built environment reflecting the needs of post-Soviet culture and society. In this context, the recently formed Estonian Government and its affiliates have used monuments and memorials to educate citizens toward the current historical narratives and to set their cultural and political agendas.

The erection of new monuments and memorials gained momentum in 2004, with the Estonian EU and NATO memberships. The Estonian Government led by Andrus Ansip, prime minister of Estonia between 2005 and 2014 and chairman of the Estonian Reform Party (in Estonian *Reformierakond*), took various initiatives to marginalise, remove and relocate Soviet monuments and memorials and to establish new built forms aiming at signifying specific future expectations. However, the removals and relocations of Soviet monuments and the erection of new ones have not been accepted by the entire Estonian population. Thus, these practices have sparked broad debates and resulted in civil disorder (Kattago 2015: 180).

The relocation of the Bronze Soldier showed the kinds of issues that could arise in Estonia in response to the manipulation of monuments and memorials. The case of the

Bronze Soldier has attracted much attention from different research communities, especially within Estonian academia. The Legal Information Centre for Human Rights dealt with the legal aspects related to the relocation and the following riots in April 2007 (LICHR 2007). Political scientists addressed the political context of the relocation, highlighting its risk of damaging the relations between Estonian elites, Russophone communities living in Estonia and the Russian Federation (Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Smith 2008; Lehti et al. 2008; Pääbo 2008; Selg 2013). Social scientists investigated how the political dispute surroundings the relocation revealed social problems and ethnic divergences (Torsti 2008; Vihalemm and Masso 2007). Anthropologists described the Bronze Soldier as a site of competing memories and identities (Wertsch 2008). While investigating the Estonian identity dynamics, Ehala (2009) explained why the presence of the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn had been accepted for fifteen years and suddenly became such an issue. A great deal of research considered the relocation of the Bronze Soldier as a typical example of those national politics aiming at dismantling the material remains of the Soviet regime (Smith 2008; Kattago 2009; Mälksoo 2009; Vihalemm and Kalmus 2009; Melchior 2011; Raun 2009; Tamm 2012, 2013).

All this diverse research agreed in seeing the relocation of the Bronze Soldier as a "*benchmark*" in the contemporary history of Estonia (LICHR 2007: 7). This relocation created a disruption in the everyday interactions between Estonian and Russophone communities in Estonia, a country where transition had evolved peacefully up to the riots following the relocation (Pääbo 2008: 5). Thus, the relocation uncovered potential divergences between the Estonian and Russian understandings of the past (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008).

A great deal of research has provided a comprehensive account of the Estonian 'War of Monuments', a series of small-scale conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials starting from the early 2000s (e.g. Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Smith 2008). However, research has stopped exploring this issue after the relocation of the Bronze Soldier, considering this event as the culmination and the end of the conflicts around monuments and memorials in Estonia. This thesis aims to return to this issue since the controversies over the interpretations of monuments and memorials are far from being over, as showed by the broad debate that surrounded the erection of the War of Independence Victory Column in Tallinn, in 2009. These ongoing controversies over Estonian monuments provide suitable cases for studying the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials

4.5 Identifying communities: The antagonism between Estonians and Russophones

Estonia has a multi-ethnic society. The two largest ethnic communities are Estonians and Russian. In this study, the term 'Russophones' is used to include all the Russian speakers that are in possession of Estonian citizenship, but do not define their ethnic identity as 'Estonian' (§ 4.3). According to the *Population and Housing Census 2011* (Statistics Estonia 2011), Estonians are 68.75 % (889.770) and Estonian Russophones are 24.82 % (321.198). The total size of the Estonian population is 1.294.236 (Statistics Estonia 2011). Estonians are the main people ruling Estonian governmental organisations since 1991. After the "*status reversal*" in 1991, Russophones suffered status decline (§ 4.3).

The relations between Estonians and the Russophone minority have not always been peaceful. Onken (2010: 290) has defined the relationship between Estonians and Russophones as an "*antagonism between ethnic majority and minority populations*". To meet European standards in multiculturalism and political correctness (Ehala 2009: 152), the Estonian Government implemented several strategies to integrate the Russophone community into the Estonian society (§ 4.3).

However, Russophones in Estonia continue to be marginalised in respect to the national politics of identity and memory (Lehti et al. 2008: 409). Some scholars defined the potential divergences in historical narratives as one of the reasons underpinning the antagonism between Estonians and Russophones. Kattago (2010) explained that the Russophones' historical narratives differed from those publicly promoted by the Estonian Government.

> *In the case of the Baltics States, two narratives of the recent past perennially conflict with one another: whether the war and the subsequent communist period should be remembered primarily as occupation or liberation. Beneath the surface often lie hardened stereotypes, resentment, misunderstandings and accusations of collective guilt. If, for example, the Estonian national narrative highlights the Estonian nation as a victim of dual occupations by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the Soviet-Russian narrative emphasizes the USSR as the liberator of Europe from fascism and the willing annexation of the Baltic States to the USSR.* (Kattago 2010: 383)

Burch and Zander (2010: 54) defined the antagonism with Russophone communities as unique to the Baltic countries due to its constant presence in public debate and in the mass media. Several scholars used war metaphors to describe this antagonism in Estonia, as showed by the terms 'War of Monuments' (e.g. Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008; Pääbo 2008; Smith 2008). Wertsch (2008: 46) defined Estonians and Russophones as contrasting mnemonic communities. Terms such as "*memory front*" (Mälksoo 2009: 65), "*struggle over interpretations of history*" (Lehiti et al. 2008: 393), "*identity threat*" and "*identity battle*" (Ehala 2009: 139, 142) were used to highlight the antagonism between the cultural memory and identity of Estonians and Russophones.

This antagonism has often resulted in conflicts over the interpretations of the built environment and of monuments and memorials specifically. For this reason, Estonians and Russophone have been taken as relevant communities in analysing the interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. Noticeably, Estonians and Russophones are not homogeneous communities; rather, they include individuals of a wide spectrum of ages, gender identities, educational levels, professions, experiences and political beliefs.

4.6 The rationale for doing qualitative research

This sections identifies the rationale for the methodology and methods used to analyse the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. The analyses are based on primary data collected in Tallinn and in Tartu, between February and October 2015. This section first explains the rationale for doing qualitative research into the interpretations of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. Second, it provides the rationale for an extensive fieldwork. Finally, it demonstrates the feasibility of a multi-method approach to compare data produced through interviews and observations.

Qualitative research into the interpretations of the built environment

This research focuses on the multiple interpretations of two monuments in Estonia. According to interpretative epistemology, to experience the built environment is to participate in it and simultaneously to construct its meanings. Constructing meanings in different ways, individuals interpret differently the built environment. As noted in Chapter Three § 3.3, each interpretative community interprets differently the built

environment on the basis of its shared stock of knowledge. This is particularly evident in monuments and memorials as it is easily recognisable and publicised that they are erected to promote specific meanings that each interpretative community can interpret in different ways (Chapter Two § 2.2). Qualitative research is better able to deal with the multiplicity and the ambiguity of interpretations. In this study, a qualitative approach allows investigating the meanings users attach to the researched monuments and connecting these meanings to the real-life context in which they are produced and interpreted.

In qualitative research, the researcher's identity, values, beliefs and emotions inevitably influence the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative data are thus produced as the researcher collects and interprets them.

> *Interpretive research has no such singular starting point. Instead, a researcher enters the hermeneutic-interpretive circle-spiral at any starting point, with whatever (prior) knowledge she has at that moment.* (Yanow 2014: 17)

Semiotics has acknowledged the researcher's involvement in the collection and analysis of data. Since signification is both manifested in texts (text-object) and in the scientific discourses on the text (meta-text; Marsciani 1999: 9), the language of the texts-object has the same quality of the meta-language. There is no explicit meta-language to provide a distant account of the text-object. As a consequence, it is not possible for the semiotician to investigate meanings from a privileged position. In consequence, the knowledge acquired during analysis inevitably reflects the researcher's identity, values, beliefs and emotions.

Grounded on an interpretative and semiotic epistemology, this research reflects the researcher's interpretation that develops and interacts with the myriad of other interpretations of the analysed monuments. However, grounding descriptions and theories in reality enhanced the credibility of qualitative research. Moreover, a multi-method approach reduced the variations from data produced by the individual perception and thus helped to improve the reliability of research. The primary data were extensively grounded in fieldwork and were collected through a multi-method approach using interviews and observations.

The rationale for an extensive fieldwork

Qualitative research was conducted through fieldwork that allowed collecting primary data and empirical material on the interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. The analyses of Chapters Five and Six were based on fieldwork carried out in Tallinn and in Tartu, between February and October 2015. Fieldwork provided an extensive contact with the real-life context of the researched monuments. It was based on the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 and thus was focused on understanding the three interplays: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

Although located within the theoretical dimension, fieldwork was practical, dealing with the practice of qualitative research methods and with the specificity of the real-life contexts under analysis. Hence, a reduced number of concepts were selected to investigate the contemporary phenomena within the real-life contexts of the researched monuments. Envisioning the semiotic theory of Greimas (1970, 1983; also Greimas and Courtés 1982), the real-life contexts of the monuments were explored taking into account the following dimensions:

1. Cognitive,
2. Axiological,
3. Emotional,
4. Pragmatic.

Greimas divided narrative texts into two fundamental dimensions: the pragmatic and the cognitive. The pragmatic dimension referred to the actions and practical doing of actors within a text; the cognitive dimension related to the internal mental activities of actors, such as knowing (Martin and Ringham 2000). In his final years, Greimas expanded his model to include the axiological and the emotional dimensions. The axiological dimension was based on the euphoria/dysphoria couplet (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 21). Euphoria related to positive and attractive feelings, while dysphoria elicited negative feelings. Finally, the emotional dimension identified which kinds of emotions and feelings the actors have within a text (Greimas and Fontanille 1993).

In relation to the case study, the cognitive dimension refers to the knowledge users have about monuments and memorials. This knowledge affects how users evaluate the

ideals, events and individuals represented in monuments. The axiological dimension considers users' personal opinions and evaluations of monuments. The question of the axiological dimension is whether users have positive or negative attitude toward monuments. In consequence of their knowledge and evaluations, users have various emotional reactions. The emotional dimension identifies which kinds of emotions and feelings monuments elicit in users. Potentially, the same monuments in different users can elicit pleasant emotions or recall uncomfortable memories.

The pragmatic dimension concerns how users act and interact within the space of monuments. Notably, the use of the built environment largely depends on what users know about monuments (cognitive dimension), on whether users value monuments positively or negatively (axiological dimension) and on the emotions and feelings that monuments elicit in users (emotional dimension). The distinction between cognitive, axiological, emotional and pragmatic dimensions is only analytical. In practice, these dimensions are interdependent and equally contribute to the creation of the users' interpretations of the built environment and of monuments and memorials specifically.

The rationale for a multi-method approach

This thesis used a multi-method approach based on semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Each method illuminated different dimensions of the researched monuments as identified in the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3. Semi-structured interviews investigated the users' opinions, beliefs and emotional reactions, describable as the cognitive, axiological and emotional dimensions of users. Participant observations concentrated on the actions and interactions of users who daily cross and use the spaces of the researched monuments, i.e. the pragmatic dimension of users. Alongside interviews and observations, the investigation of documents and secondary sources provided an account of the monuments as envisioned by their designers.

Building on the proposed qualitative methodology, sections 4.7 and 4.8 justify the choice of using interviews and observations as methods for primary data collection. Section 4.9 lists the documents and the secondary sources that have contributed to a broader understanding of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

4.7 Methods of data collection: Semi-structured interviews

This section justifies the choice of using interviews for analysing the interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students at societal levels. It starts by defining the rationale for using semi-structured interviews. It then outlines the criteria for selecting the relevant respondents of the study. This section continues to describe the practice of interviewing and the measures adopted to reduce the impact of the researcher's personal identity. Finally, it discusses advantages and disadvantages of interviewing in English, not being the mother tongue of either the researcher and the respondents.

The rationale for semi-structured interviews

Interviewing was used to gather detailed data directly from respondents recruited during fieldwork. Interviews aimed to collect the interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students at societal levels. As noted in Chapter One § 1.2, 'interpretation' is a broad term including the opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings users have about the researched monuments. In brief, 'interpretation' includes cognitive accounts, axiological judgements and emotional reactions of respondents. Interviews relied on to the ways through which respondents constructed their interpretations in different narratives. A narrative is "*one of the fundamental ways in which humans organize their understanding of the world*" (Cortazzi 2001: 384). As such, narratives present a particular worldview, selecting events and omitting others (Cobley 2001a: 7).

Interview research can be categorised in terms of the structure of the interview process. Semi-structural interviews were used to investigate "*the personal experiences, interpersonal dynamics and cultural meanings of participants in their social worlds*" (Heyl 2001: 372). They encouraged respondents to report personal experience in their own terms. The researcher had a clear list of issues to cover, but questions were flexible in terms of order so as to follow the conversational flow. Interviews were open-ended so that respondents could develop particular areas of interest as long as they needed, while the researcher was able to keep control of the main focus of discussion. The researcher was attentive to identify and amplify recurrent issues of interviews. Appendix 1 shows two lists of the main issues to cover during interviews: the first refers to the Victory Column in Tallinn, the second to the Kissing Students in Tartu. Following these lists, interviews evolved into five phases:

1. The pre-interview phase aimed to do introductions and to talk about the aim and the origin of research. During this phase, the researcher asked to sign the informed consent (Appendix 2) and reassured respondents about confidentiality.

2. The first questions were about the squares where the researched monuments are located: Freedom Square in Tallinn and Town Hall Square in Tartu. These questions aimed to collect the respondents' accounts of their experience of the immediate surroundings of the monuments. They also provided 'easy' questions to relax (Denscombe 2003: 180).

3. Questions about the Victory Column and about the Kissing Students delved deeply into what respondents know about monuments, into whether they value monuments positively or negatively and into the emotions and the feelings that monuments elicit in them (§ 4.6). Finally, respondents were asked to provide an account of their everyday use of the monuments. These questions took most of the time of the interviews.

4. Once the required areas of discussion were covered, the final question aimed to collect opinions on potential comparisons (by similarities or by differences) between the Victory Column/Freedom Square and Kissing Students/Town Hall Square.

5. To conclude, normal courtesy and regards were extended to respondents.

The criteria for selecting respondents

The empirical analyses are based on thirty-two interviews of Estonian citizens, recruited to collect an assorted range of personal interpretations on the researched monuments. All respondents resided in Estonia their entire life, i.e. they had only left Estonia temporarily. Sixteen respondents were originally from Tallinn, interviewed about the Victory Column. Sixteen respondents were originally from Tartu, interviewed about the Kissing Students. Similarities and differences between the two case studies were discussed at the end of each interview. All respondents were well informed on the analysed monuments for a number of criteria, ranging from a general interest in the built environment to a specific connection with the monuments.

Noticeably, 'Tallinn inhabitants' and 'Tartu inhabitants' were linked by other criteria. Above all, ethnic origins, age, gender, education and profession were criteria that could influence the interpretations of respondents on the researched monuments. Thus, a

suitable balance of Estonians and Russophones, age bands, males and females, education levels and professions was guaranteed. The table in the next page shows the criteria taken into account during the recruiting process. The table was drawn using the software Numbers, version 3.6.2 (2577).

As showed in the table, between the sixteen respondents from Tallinn and the sixteen from Tartu, eight respondents were Estonians and eight belonged to the Russophone community. As explained in § 4.5, the relations between Estonians and Russophones have not always been peaceful and this antagonism has often resulted in conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Estonians and Russophones could then have different and even conflicting interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

Different age groups might interpret differently the researched monuments. In the table above, respondents are divided into four age bands. The youngest band included respondents born in independent Estonia or that were small children in Soviet Estonia; the oldest age band spent 30 or more years in Soviet Estonia. Two other age bands were selected: those who spent 5-10 years and those who spent 11-25 years in Soviet Estonia. Respondents from different age bands could connect their personal chronologies to different public events. For example, respondents from the three older age bands experienced the transition of Estonia from being a Soviet Republic into being an independent state. During transition, "*the main themes of the national memory politics-to-be were framed at the grass-roots level*" and when "*the key concepts were defined and a provisional network of institutions was created*" (Tamm 2013: 654).

Recruiting respondents

Age band	Small children in 1991 or born in Independent Estonia				from 5 to 10 years old in 1991 Children in Soviet Estonia				Between 11 and 25 years old in 1991 Young person/early adulthood in Soviet Estonia				30 or + in 1991 Adult in Soviet Estonia			
	Ethnic-Estonians		Ethnic-Russians		Ethnic-Estonians		Ethnic-Russians		Ethnic-Estonians		Ethnic-Russians		Ethnic-Estonians		Ethnic-Russians	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
TARTU																
Profession/ Education																
TALLINN																
Profession/ Education																

Fig. 10 – The table showing the criteria to recruit respondents.

Respondents from the three older age bands witnessed several cultural reinventions of the Estonian built environment. For example, they witnessed the spatial transformations of the squares where the Victory Column and the Kissing Students are located. In Tallinn, older respondents remembered the celebrations of Soviet public rituals arranged in the area of the present-day Freedom Square. They also remembered Freedom Square turned into an open-air parking lot after Estonia regained independence. Respondents from all age bands witnessed the troubled events following the relocation of the Bronze Soldier. Finally, all respondents witnessed the 2008 excavations for the reconstruction of Freedom Square and the 2009 inauguration of the Victory Column. In Tartu, older respondents remembered the local Soviet authorities using Town Hall Square as their political headquarters. They also remembered Town Hall Square full of local shops. All the respondents from Tartu experienced the erection of the Kissing Students and they all saw Town Hall Square turning into a venue for entertaining, cultural events, commerce and shopping.

Respondents from the intermediate age bands were recruited due to changes occurred from the post-Stalin era until the regaining of independence in 1991. These changes were supposed to have an impact on the interpretations of the Estonian culture and society and of the Estonian built environment specifically. In the late 1950s, Soviet authorities allowed more contacts with foreign countries to develop Estonia's economy (§ 4.3). In the 1960s, Estonians were influenced by non-socialist ideals furtively coming from the west (Newcomb 2004: 877-880). In the 1980s, Gorbachev initiated a reform program that provided citizens with more opportunities to demonstrate discontent against the Soviet regime and to call for the independence of Estonia. These new opportunities ultimately brought about the dissolution of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet regime in Estonia. A vast number of economic, legislative, political, social and cultural changes has characterised Estonia after the regaining of independence in 1991. Those who spent between 5 and 25 years in Soviet Estonia experienced the new advantages and the unrealised expectations of the Estonian transition to democracy.

A balanced number of males and females was ensured. Noticeably, the social experiences of women and men could potentially differ and so their interpretations and use of the built environment (Bondi 1992). As showed in the table, between the sixteen respondents from Tallinn and the sixteen from Tartu, eight respondents were women and eight were men. Finally, a range of educational levels and professions was taken into account in recruiting respondents.

Reducing the interviewer effect

As a qualitative research method (§ 4.6), interviews are not a neutral method of collecting primary data. The researcher's personal identity inevitably has an impact on the kind and amount of information respondents are willing to divulge (Denscombe 2003: 169). Respondents may have prejudices toward the researcher's age, gender, national origin and social status. These prejudices may differently encourage the development of trust during interviews (Denscombe 2003: 170).

Precautions were taken in order to create a reciprocal relationship where the interview could be seen to be of benefit of both interviewer and interviewee. Respondents were initially contacted via e-mail or social-networking websites to arrange a meeting. Meetings had a confidential and informal style. Interviews were held in restaurants or cafes while eating and drinking, at times far from rush hours. Nevertheless, some circumstantial disturbances as noise and intrusion of other people interrupted a few interviews. Yet, such disturbances never completely disrupted the conversational flow. Interviews were planned to be 30-45 minutes long, but some respondents continued to discuss points they wished to make beyond this limit.

In general, all respondents except one seemed comfortable and stated they had enjoyed the discussion. To reach confidentiality with Russophones took a bit more time than with the Estonians, but eventually all Russophone respondents were happy to explain their opinions on the researched issues. Only one respondent did not give permission to record and looked tense and defensive. Yet, she still gave an answer to each question.

All interviews except one were audio-recorded with a Dictaphone (*Sony ICD-PX240 Voice Recorder*). Before starting the audio-recording, respondents were asked about permission to record and reassured about confidentiality. Some Russophone respondents looked nervous while the request to record was made. After reassurance about confidentiality all respondents except one gave permission to record the interview and quickly forgot about the presence of the Dictaphone. Only one respondent did not give permission to record the interview: in this case, only notes were taken.

The advantages and disadvantages of interviewing in a foreign language

Interviews were held in English. The use of English presented both advantages and disadvantages. English was not the first language for both researcher and respondents. This may have led to a loss of precision in language. On the other hand, the use of English was an effective strategy to reach more confidentiality in respondents whose personal opinions could less easily be understood within the public settings. Thus, speaking English made respondents more confident, since most of the near-by people would not immediately understand their words as if speaking their mother tongue.

Recruiting Estonian citizens with a fair knowledge of English was an easy task. According to the European Commission (2012: 48), 52 % of Estonians has practical skills in at least two foreign languages. 50 % of Estonians cited English as most fluent foreign language spoken. Estonia is the seventh in a large table of European countries of those who speak English as a foreign language are most likely to use it every or almost every day (this ranking does not include the United Kingdom and Ireland where English is an official language). No striking differences between age groups emerge, but younger people between 15 and 24 years old are more likely to rate their level of ability in English as "very good", compared with those aged 55 or more (European Commission 2012: 24).

4.8 Methods of data collection: Participant observations

This section justifies the choice of using participant observations to gain insights into the spatial settings and the practices surrounding the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. It starts by defining the rationale for using participant observations. Second, it addresses strengths and limitations of observations as practices affected by the researcher's self. This section then offers an observation schedule to enhance the reliability of observational data. Finally, the problem of modality will be discussed, i.e. the impossibility for observations to deal with the intentions that motivate users' actions. This section concludes by describing indirect observations on live web cameras to observe events for which direct observations had not been planned.

The rationale for participant observations

As seen in the previous section 4.7, interviews aimed to collect the respondents' personal accounts of the researched monuments, including their opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings. Thus, interview data inevitably contained an element of subjectivity. Drawing on "*the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand*" (Denscombe 2003: 192), observations provided a means to reduce variations that may arise when interviewing different individuals.

Participant observations were chosen to preserve the naturalness of the public settings and thus to observe phenomena as they normally occur. The researcher assumed a covert role to minimise disruption and to observe phenomena through participating in the public settings of the squares (Denscombe 2003: 202). In large squares, it was easy to gain and maintain an unobtrusive position and to avoid interactions, while being able to observe the whole area of the squares.

The role of personal identity in producing observational data

As qualitative data (§ 4.6), observational data were necessarily constructed by the interplay between the observed phenomena and the gaze that has observed them. The data collection from observations based on four assumptions:

a) *what is under observation always presents a textual form, i.e. it is always a manifested discourse;*
b) *in principle, sociological and psychological macro-categories do not predetermine what is under observation;*
c) *what is under observation contains the values to determine its significance;*
d) *the value of what is under observation depends on the relation between the observed and the observer.* (Marsciani 2007: 11, my trans.)

According to these assumptions, the observed practices were already meaningful as analysed in the process of being and participant observations had to be considered as practices among a myriad of other practices occurring within the area of the researched monuments (Marsciani 2007: 11-13). Observational data were thus produced by the researcher's direct experience of the real-life context (Denscombe 2003: 196). The researcher's personal identity – cultural conventions, education, past experiences and needs as well as transitory physical and emotional states – inevitably influenced data

collection and analysis. Although there was always an element of interpretation, an observation schedule helped to enhance the reliability of observational data.

Creating a schedule for participant observations

An observation schedule was created to reduce the variations from data produced by the researcher's individual perception and interpretation. The previous geographical and semiotic literature reviewed in Chapter Two helped to select the "*features*" that warranted attention during participant observations (Denscombe 2003: 195). Moreover, issues that arose during interviews helped to refine the observation schedule: for example, interviews directed attention on the numerous entertaining and cultural events taking place nearby the monuments or on users' practices diverging from those envisioned by the designers. Appendix 3 presents the list of the relevant features for observations identified from the literature and emerging from interviews.

However, the large number of selected features in the list was likely to make the observations unpractical. Thus, the features were divided into three main categories from the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3: visual dimension, intertextual relations and practices. First, observations concerned the visual dimension of monuments. As explained in Chapter Three § 3.1, visual dimension refers to the material and the symbolic levels of monuments and memorials. Observations on the material level referred to physical aspects of the researched monuments, such as shapes, materials of construction, colours, topological distribution and sizes. The list presented in Chapter Three § 3.1 provided a framework for observing the material level of the researched monuments. Observations on the symbolic level regarded the visual representations and the conventional symbols embodied in monuments. Information on iconography and symbolism of the researched monuments was collected before observation. As was to be expected, the visual dimension of monuments remained basically unchanged. Descriptive notes on the changes of the visual dimension as perceived by the researched were recorded in a fieldwork diary (§ 4.10): for example, notes were taken on how the variation of light intensity altered the colour and the brightness of monuments or on how climate conditions affected the monuments.

Second, observations investigated the intertextual relations of the researched monuments with the surrounding built environment. As explained in Chapter Three § 3.3, monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from their interrelations with the surrounding built environment. Observations on the immediate surroundings of

the monuments were carried out daily. Information on the surrounding built environment was collected from the literature and tourist materials to understand its potential interrelation with the researched monuments. Interrelations between the monuments and the surrounding built environment were identified with respect to the material, symbolic or political dimensions. An example regarding the material dimension was the verticality of the Victory Column as confronting nearby vertical buildings. An example regarding the symbolic dimension was the similar iconography of public statues recently erected in the immediate surroundings of the Kissing Students.

Third, observations aimed to register the practices within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. The observed practices were of three types: authorised practices, everyday practices and unexpected practices. Authorised practices included public rituals and official celebrations organised by Estonian national and local authorities as well as cultural and entertaining events arranged by multifaceted organisations. Celebrations of public holidays were attended to collect information about the use of the researched monuments and their surroundings during these events. Before the celebrations, online searches provided the schedules of celebrations and the information about arranged public rituals. Attending these celebrations permitted to record the types of engagement and activities allowed to the public. Observations were also arranged during cultural and entertaining events organised in Freedom Square and in Town Hall Square. Pictures were taken during these observations. Relevant information was recorded in a fieldwork diary after observations (§ 4.10).

Observations on everyday practices offered a detailed understanding of the actions and interactions of users who daily cross the squares and variously engage with the researched monuments. As noted in Chapter Three § 3.2, the users' practices play a critical role in the meaning-making of the built environment. A considerable amount of time was allocated to foster insight into everyday practices. Observations were carried out every day between February and October 2015, with the exception of the following periods spent not working: 15-26 March, 17-21 June, 20-24 July and 15-20 August. Observations took place at least once a day; more than one observation per day was required in particular circumstances, such as sport events, concerts and demonstrations. Each observation normally lasted about one hour. Observations were arranged at different times of the day and on different days of the week, including weekends and public holidays. They were carried out during the day and occasionally

at night, under a wide range of environmental conditions: until 20 February 2015, Tallinn and Tartu were covered with snow and the cold-weather required one to wear proper clothing (§ 4.13); after 20 February the snow melted, but the cold weather conditions continued up to the end of April and came again in October; from May to September the temperature was fairly warm, with heavy rain during the first half of July. Pictures were taken as memory aids and relevant information was recorded in a fieldwork diary after observation (§ 4.10).

During observations on everyday practices, particular attention was paid to unexpected practices, i.e. those practices significantly deviating from the uses intended by the designers and momentarily disrupting the everyday routine within the space of the monuments (De Certeau 1984; Fiske 1989). Online searches and extensive time spent in the field provided information about these practices. Furthermore, interviews confirmed the occurrence of unexpected practices, such as skating and biking near-by the Victory Column (Chapter Five § 5.6) or multifaceted playful activities in the surroundings of the Kissing Students (Chapter Six § 6.4). Pictures were taken ensuring not to disrupt the normal occurring of unexpected practices.

The problem of modality

The users' action depends on an array of "*modal structures*" (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 231). Modal structures define the status of the choice in users, i.e. to which extent users want or have to do a certain thing and if they are able to do and know how to do this thing. Hence, users are driven by different degrees of choice and power in approaching the built environment. For example, users may deliberately want to visit a memorial for their commemorative practices. Conversely, they may forcedly cross through the area of the memorial because it is located within their everyday journeys. Users might know or not the function and the purpose of the memorial. Finally, they might have different degrees of power in using the memorial during specific events. Notably, participant observations in the public settings do not deal with the modal structures underpinning the users' practices. Participant observations focus on practices and behaviours, but they can fall short in describing why certain behaviours happen. In response, interviews provided valuable insight on the reasons behind specific uses of the monuments (§ 4.7).

Observing two monuments far from each other

Being impossible for one researcher alone to observe two case studies simultaneously, live events happening in the researched squares were indirectly observed through web cameras: when in Tallinn, the live events happening in Town Hall Square were watched on a web camera; when in Tartu, the live events happening in Freedom Square were viewed on a web camera (fig. 11-12). This operation was repeated at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Both these live web cameras were installed on the buildings hosting the city council. Checking out live web cameras allowed registering public events for which direct observations had not been planned, such as sport events, concerts, demonstrations or religious practices. Yet, observations through live web cameras presented three main limits: a) cameras pointed on only one particular portion of the analysed squares; b) a lower amount of details could be observed than direct observations; and c) observations through cameras could exclusively focus on the visual.

Fig. 11 – Screenshot from web camera: the starting point of Tallinn Marathon in Freedom Square. Screenshot taken 13.9.2015	*Fig. 12 – Screenshot from web camera: Estonian tricolours on the flagpoles in front of Tartu's old town hall for the Day of Restoration of Independence. Screenshot taken 20.8.2015*

4.9 Methods of data collection: Documents and secondary sources

The collected empirical materials were twofold: documents both in English and in Estonian and secondary sources. Documents provided an account of the meanings designers strived to convey through the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. The collected documents included:

- Planning documents, collected through archival researches. Planning documents allowed a reflection on the original plans of the researched monuments. They gave

information about timetables and scale, funding, potential problems, objectives and outcomes relating to the projects. They outlined the organisations that led and implemented the projects. In Tallinn, the Urban Planning Department was visited to collect the plans for the erection of the Victory Column and for the reconstruction of Freedom Square. In Tartu, visits were organised to the National Archives of Estonia and the Department of Urban Planning, Land Survey and Use of the Tartu City Council. These visits provided information on the recent restorations of Town Hall Square. Further documents were collected through online databases, such as *AIS* (Archival Information System), *SAAGA* (digitalised archival sources) and the Estonian Historical Archives' Founds. Furthermore, information was gathered from the online portals of the Estonian Government.

- Scientific literature. Visits to the Estonian National Library in Tallinn and to the University Library in Tartu aimed to collect the scientific literature available in English on Estonia's socio-historical background and on the spatial histories of the researched monuments. These visits provided materials on the main changes of the Estonian built environment, of Freedom Square in Tallinn and Town Hall Square in Tartu specifically. These materials were carefully read and relevant information was written down in a fieldwork diary.

- A collection of tourist guidebooks in English helped to reconstruct the spatial histories of the analysed locations and monuments. Guidebooks were collected through library visits. Relevant information was written down in a fieldwork diary.

- Photography was used as a memory-aid during fieldwork and as source of data in its own right (Bryman 2004: 312). As a source of data, photography and postcards provided a visual insight on the spatial histories of the analysed locations and monuments. Old pictures and postcards were collected from libraries, archives and the online picture database *FOTIS*.

Secondary sources about the Estonia's socio-historical background and about the researched monuments were collected and carefully read. These included demographics of Estonia, collected from the web site of Statistics Estonia (*Statistikaamet*, link: http://www.stat.ee/en), the governmental agency producing official statistics of Estonia. Moreover, general information considered as relevant from newspapers, magazines, movies, television programmes, web sites, blogs and online social networking services was registered in a fieldwork diary.

Finally, visits to the Estonian History Museum (Tallinn), the Estonian Open Air Museum (Tallinn), the Estonian National Museum (Tartu) provided information on Estonia's

socio-historical background. The Occupational Museum (Tallinn) and the KGB Cells Museum (Tartu) displayed a biased representation of the historical experience of the Soviet regime. The Museum of the Popular Front (Tallinn) and the Song Festival Museum (Tartu) presented a passionate view on the process through which Estonia regained independence in August 1991. The Tallinn City Museum and the Tartu City Museum provided detailed accounts of the histories of Tallinn and Tartu. A detailed report on the modalities through which historical narratives were presented in museums was written down in a fieldwork diary.

4.10 Methods of data organisation

This section describes the approaches used to transcribe primary data. A verbatim transcript was prepared for each interview. Observational data were recorded in an electronic fieldwork diary.

Transcribing data

The interviews were transcribed thanks to the free software *Transcription*, version 1.1 (1.1.1) and *F5 Transcription FREE*, version 3.2 (234). Transcripts reported interviews word by word, including language mistakes, filler words and hesitation marks. A time code was inserted at each change of speaker between researcher and respondent. Long pauses and information not specifically mentioned were included in square brackets. Square brackets and italicised text was used to indicate non-verbal communication, such as gestures and laughter (e.g. [*expanding arms*] or [*laughing*] in the extracts of interviews included in Appendices 4 and 7).

The transcripts were then proofread and converted into a *Microsoft Word* file. Appendix 4 presents two extracts from transcribed interviews prior to coding. At this stage, words and short phrases that attracted the attention of the researcher were underlined. Underling words and short phrases was a sort of "*pre-coding*" to highlight key pieces that may provide illustrative examples for analysis (Saldaña 2009: 16). Before starting coding, transcribed interviews were divided into three categories: the event structure reporting the happenings; the descriptive structure portraying particular situations; and the evaluation structure presenting the interviewee's judgments on the Victory Column and the Kissing Students (Cortazzi 2001: 384-385). These categories were an initial coding to familiarise with the transcripts and to facilitate later organisation of data.

Taking notes on the fieldwork diary

Relevant information registered during observations was recorded in a fieldwork diary. The fieldwork diary was a sort of "*phenomenological diary*" where to register both descriptive and reflective notes, including the researcher's personal experience in the field, as a user among other users (Mazzucchelli 2010: 100, my trans.). Field notes were written down right after observations, together with personal thoughts. Notes were combined with pictures taken with a mobile phone to give a visual account of the reported phenomena. At the end of fieldwork, the diary consisted of eighty-three pages and includes reports of two hundred field visits. Appendix 5 shows two pages of the diary containing field notes prior to coding. Field notes were written down on the word processor *Pages* by Apple Inc., version 5.6.2 (2573).

4.11 Coding interview and observational data

This section describes the approaches used to code interview transcripts and field notes. First, it outlines three 'levels' of codes used to organise interview and observational data. Second, it describes the process of theming the data as an outcome of coding. Finally, this section explains the role of isotopies in progressing toward an interpretative analysis of data.

Three levels of coding interview and observational data

Data from interview transcripts and field notes were organised using coding methods as suggested in Saldaña (2009). According to Saldaña (2009: 3), code is "*a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salience, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data*". Coding is an "*interpretative act*" aiming to find "*repetitive patterns of actions and consistencies in human affairs documented in data*" (Saldaña 2009: 5).

Appendix 6 lists the codes used to organise interview and observational data. There were three groups of codes that can be seen as a sequence, from the most general to the more specific. First, summative codes presented the most general concepts or types of social action. These codes were the outcome of a "*first cycle*" of coding to make sense of a wide segment of data (Saldaña 2009: 45). Second, a larger number of codes revealed more specific information about data. These latter codes emerged from the literature revised in Chapter Two and from the conceptual scheme presented in

Chapter Three § 3.3. They were applied during a "*second cycle*" of coding (Saldaña 2009: 149). Examples of these codes are 'material level', 'symbolic level', 'political dimension', 'cognitive dimension' and 'axiology', to be found under the summative code 'monuments and memorials' (Appendix 6).

Finally, codes emerging from the field described the particular events or situations from the real-life contexts of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. This third level of codes included descriptive words or short phrases (Saldaña 2009: 70-73), gerunds to connote actions (Saldaña 2009: 77), versus codes (Saldaña 2009: 93-97) or labels referring to values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and feelings (Saldaña 2009: 92). Examples of these codes are 'meeting point', 'crossing', 'tourism' and 'frequency', to be found under the "*second cycle*" code 'everyday practices of users' (Saldaña 2009: 149). Appendix 7 shows two coded extracts from interviews. Appendix 8 includes two pages of the fieldwork diary after being coded.

From coding to theming

The three levels of codes described in the previous section allowed discerning and labelling content and meaning of data. After coding, groups of similar data were organised into overarching themes (Saldaña 2009: 8). Theming data aimed to reduce the number of codes and provided a deeper understanding of why something happened in a certain way. Themes were the "*outcomes*" of coding and analytic reflection (Saldaña 2009: 13). They were added to identify what a segment of data is about and/or what it means (Saldaña 2009: 13).

For example, 'meeting point' was a code, but 'unwilling meeting point' was a theme revealing something about the degree of freedom users had in meeting in the area of the researched monuments. 'Meeting point' was a recurrent code throughout interviews transcripts and field notes. However, it was unwillingly that the majority of respondents met in Tallinn's Freedom Square. Most of respondents explained that they used Freedom Square as a meeting point only because 'it is a public transport hub' (interview 5, Estonian, born in 1986, male, architect), 'there is a comfortable parking lot underneath' (interview 19, Russophone, born in 1985, female, medical practitioner), 'it is a large urban node' (interview 27, Russophone, born in 1982, female, journalist) and so on. Analytic reflection revealed that meeting in Freedom Square was not necessarily a deliberate and happy choice. Eventually, the more informative theme 'unwilling

meeting point' was used in reference to most of the interviews about Freedom Square. Contrarily, ten out of sixteen respondents referred to the Kissing Students as a 'comfortable meeting point' (Chapter Six § 6.4).

Detecting isotopies: Toward an interpretative analysis of data

The traditional definition of isotopy was based on the concept of repetition (Greimas 1987). An isotopy was a repetition of basic meaning traits that continuously reiterated their content in texts and thus ensured coherence and homogeneity to texts (Pozzato 2001; Kourdis 2012: 106-107). Umberto Eco (1984: 189-190) expanded isotopy to include "*diverse semiotic phenomena generically definable as coherence at the various textual levels*". Eco (1992: 65) replaced the concept of 'repetition' with the concept of "*direction*", defining isotopy more generally as "*a constancy in going in a direction that a text exhibits when submitted to rules of interpretative coherence*".

In this research, isotopies allowed reflections on the possible links among the themes identified within interview and observational data. The identified themes were compared with each other and related to the literature revised in Chapter Two and to the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3. By connecting themes with the theoretical dimension of the study, isotopies helped to reach an interpretative understanding of the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

Isotopies common to both interview and observational data will be presented in the third part of Chapters Five and Six, in sections 5.5 and 6.5 respectively. First, these sections will present isotopies regarding the designers' stated intentions; second, these sections will introduce isotopies identified in primary data regarding interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the researched monuments.

4.12 A multi-method and comparative approach to data analysis

This section discusses the methods used for analysing primary data. Data analysis aimed to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural-geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. It focused on the kinds of cultural geographical spaces that stemmed from the interplay between the designers' and users' ways of attributing meanings to the researched

monuments. In doing so, data analysis attempted to generalise the findings related to the case studies to a theoretical framework that accounts for the multiple interpretations of the built environment as emerging from the interplays presented in the conceptual scheme of Chapter Three § 3.3: a) between material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

As seen in § 4.6, in qualitative research, the researcher's identity, values, beliefs and emotions inevitably influence data analysis. Intimately involved in the analysis of data, it is not possible for the researcher to stand outside the phenomena under analysis and to interpret them free from any subjectivity. A multi-method approach and a comparative analysis helped to reduce the variations from data produced by the individual perception and thus helped to improve the reliability of research.

Data analysis compared data produced through investigations of documents and secondary sources, interviews and observations to shape an original interpretation on the kinds of cultural geographical spaces the Victory Column and the Kissing Students are. Collected planning documents and literature provided an account of the meanings that designers strived to convey through the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. Direct observations explored how national and local authorities used the researched monuments for their public rituals, official celebrations and cultural events.

Interviews and observations collected data on the users' interpretations and practices. Semi-structured interviews investigated the users' opinions, beliefs and emotional reactions, describable as the cognitive, axiological and emotional dimensions of users (§ 4.6-4.7). The analysis of interviews thus concentrated on the knowledge, evaluations and emotional reactions of users. Moreover, it reflected on the personal accounts regarding the respondents' actions and interactions within the space of the researched monuments.

Interview data referred to substantive meanings as well as to the ways through which respondents constructed these meanings (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 79). Interview analysis considered the interplay of the substantive information and how respondents organised this information in different narratives. Interview analysis also took into account the respondents' hesitations and contradictions (Heyl 2001: 375). Finally, it considered the topics that respondents deliberately avoided or neglected during

interviews: the "*non-said*" could be sign of self-censorship or concern toward the questions (Heyl 2001: 375).

Participant observations concentrated on the actions and interactions of users who daily "*cross, live and use*" the spaces of the researched monuments (Mazzucchelli 2010: 13, my trans.). As explained in § 4.8, the observed practices included authorised practices, everyday practices and unexpected practices significantly deviating from the uses intended by the designers and momentarily disrupting the everyday routine within the space of the researched monuments.

The multi-method approach allowed the comparison of data produced through interviews and observations. On the one hand, observational data were used as confirmatory to interview data. On the other hand, interview data referred to previous observations in the field. The comparison and the interaction of interview and observational data allowed gaining a better understanding of the relations between the built environment and users and on how users make sense of this relation through personal narratives.

A comparative analysis between the case studies was required to abstract their findings to the theoretical dimension (Manning 1987: 25). The analytical findings that will be presented Chapters Five and Six are compared to assess the extent and the potential of the connections between the cultural-geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. Chapter Seven will undertake a comparative analysis between the case studies in order to abstract their findings to the theoretical dimension. A comparative analysis will identify similarities and differences between the interpretative processes of the researched monuments and make them cohere into a meaningful argument: that the built environment is a form of discourse, which can be shaped and transformed through design in order to convey specific cultural and political meanings.

4.13 Ethical considerations and risk assessments

This section explores the ethical issues and the measures taken to avoid harm to both the researcher and the respondents.

The ethics of interviews on personal experience

Prior to interview, respondents were informed about the origin and the aim of the research. They were told that the interview aimed to collect personal accounts of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students, including their opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings (§ 4.7). Respondents were informed that there were no a right or wrong answers to questions. Furthermore, respondents were told that they did not have to answer questions they did not want and that they could withdraw from participating to research at any time. Finally, they were informed about the approximate time of interview (30-45 minutes).

Before starting the audio-recording, respondents were asked about permission to record and reassured about confidentiality. Appendix 2 includes the informed consent forms given to respondents before starting interview. Respondents were given the possibility to stop recording anytime to discuss issues they wanted to remain off-records. Moreover, they were reassured about privacy through the following statements: a) that their words and identity will be used only for research purposes; b) that the interview (or part of it) and their identity will never appear together so that they could not be identified or identifiable; and c) that the audio-recorded file will be stored password protected in the researcher's laptop.

Interviews did not involve children less than 16 years of age, people with learning or communication problems or people in custody. No respondent was or is likely to become a client of Cardiff University.

The ethics of doing observations in public settings

Fieldwork provided for an extensive length of time within the space of the researched monuments (§ 4.6). Observations were carried out in open public settings. A covert role was used to preserve the naturalness of the public settings (§ 4.8). Several pictures were taken during observations to register the actions of users and the interactions

between users and the researched monuments. Pictures were taken paying attention to protect the privacy of users. Observations did not include any invasion of privacy.

Risk assessments

The researcher anticipated and guarded against potential harm for respondents. Measures were taken to minimise the stress that could arise discussing sensitive topic or recalling traumatic memories. Moreover, the researcher was briefed on cultural norms: use of body language, acceptability of physical contact and social distances.

This research met the requirements of the Cardiff University's policy *Health and Safety in Fieldwork* (Wingham 2005). A Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 9) was approved prior to fieldwork. Control measures were implemented to safeguard the health and safety of the researcher. Proper cold-weather clothing was selected to safely conduct observations under the difficult climate conditions of the Estonian winter (§ 4.8).

Chapter Five

Case Study One: The multiple interpretations of the Victory Column in Tallinn

This chapter engages with the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in Chapters Three and Four, presenting an analysis of the first case study - the multiple interpretations of the War of Independence Victory Column (fig. 13), a war memorial unveiled in Tallinn in June 2009. This memorial was selected as one of the two case studies to address the primary research question presented in Chapter One § 1.6: 'how can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?'. In this respect, the Victory Column provides an appropriate case study to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural geographical and the semiotic aspects of the built environment.

Fig. 13 – The War of Independence Victory Column. Picture taken 5.10.2015

The chapter argues that the Victory Column presents outcomes regarding a) the embodied cultural and political meanings and b) the different ways in which these meanings are interpreted at societal levels. Memorialising a victory through which

Estonia reached independence for the first time, the Victory Column has promoted a selective understanding of the past, while symbolising a range of possibilities about Estonia's future. Articulating specific conceptualisation of the past, present and future, the Victory Column has helped to reflect and sustain the cultural and political agendas of the Estonian Government. As such, the Victory Column has reflected the intention to establish an exclusive space filled with dominant cultural and political meanings. However, the meanings that the Estonian Government has strived to convey through the Victory Column are not reflected at the societal level. Users have largely reinterpreted the designers' stated intentions behind the Victory Column. Furthermore, the unexpected interpretations of users have spawned uses that are different from those envisioned by the designers of the memorial.

This chapter analyses the designers' stated intentions behind the Victory Column and the ways through which users interpret these intentions. This analysis is based on data collected during fieldwork in Tallinn, between February and October 2015. Analysis is informed by the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3, conceiving the interplay a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

The analysis is divided into three parts. First, section 5.3 addresses the designers' stated intentions behind the Victory Column - i.e. the intended meanings of the 'authors'. Second, section 5.4 presents the interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the Victory Column - i.e. the interpretations, actions and interactions of the 'readers'. Third, section 5.5 provides a deeper understanding of the meanings of the Victory Column as emerging from the interplay between designers' and users' interpretations.

In section 5.6, the data presented in previous section are compared with each other to progress toward the theoretical dimension of the study. To do so, this section applies the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 to the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column. Hence, this section identifies three gaps of the Victory Column: a) between the designers' stated intentions and the users' interpretations; b) between the intended purpose of the Victory Column and its material and symbolic levels; and c) between the Victory Column and its location.

Before organising and discussing data, this chapter introduces the context of the Victory Column and explains the reasons why it was selected as an appropriate case study. Section 5.1 introduces the context of the Victory Column: name, purpose of commemoration, historical process that led to its erection, process of unveiling, significance and location. Section 5.2 highlights the reasons why the Victory Column was selected as one of the two case studies to address the primary research question.

5.1 Introducing the Victory Column

The War of Independence Victory Column is a large column-shape memorial commemorating those who served in a war against Soviet Russia and Baltic German forces between 1918 and 1920. The war ended with the first recognition of Estonia as an independent state. For this reason, in the current Estonian historical narratives, this war is known as the 'War of Independence' or 'Freedom War' (in Estonian *Vabadussõda*) and it is closely linked with ideals of freedom and sovereignty.

> *[…] 90 years ago, our forefathers saved the Estonian nation and again six months later at the Eastern Front. They won for us the right to exist and to live in our own country. […] This is why every Estonian should understand the meaning and importance of the War of Liberation. This, literally, was a war for freedom.* (Ilves 2009)

In consequence, the soldiers who served in this war are seen as freedom fighters against foreign occupation. To celebrate them, Estonian authorities erected many local monuments and memorials throughout the country. Between 1922 and 1940, one hundred and forty-nine monuments and twenty-one commemorative plaques were erected all over Estonia and its allied counties; five monuments were erected in Russia, five in Latvia and one in Finland (Viljat 2008). However, a central memorial to commemorate this war and the freedom it brought was not erected at that time.

The first ideas to erect a central memorial dated back to 1919, before the end of the war (Pihlak et al. 2009: 42). In the 1930s, plans to erect this memorial were not realised for scarcity of resources or for lack of agreement on design issues. The Second World War obstructed any plans for its erection. The incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union prevented the erection of this memorial celebrating the independence of the Estonian nation. After Estonia regained independence, questions about erecting a

memorial arose again from time to time. In particular, the families of the fallen in the war called for a memorial to their relatives (Pihlak et al. 2009: 41-54).

After a controversial design process, the memorial was unveiled in June 2009, with the official name of War of Independence Victory Column (in Estonian *Vabadussõja võidusammas*). The National Audit Office of Estonia considered this memorial as "*the most important monument erected in Estonia after the country regained its independence*" (Mattson 2012). Tamm (2013: 667) defined the Victory Column as "*the most important national memory-political decisions of the last few years*", considering the large economic resources spent for its erection and the acute controversies over its design.

To recapitulate what was said in Chapter Four § 4.2, the memorial was erected on an elevated platform of Freedom Square (in Estonian *Vabaduse väljak*, fig. 14), a large square on the southern edge of Tallinn's Old Town. The name 'Freedom Square' was first given to welcome the Estonia's independence in 1918 and it was later restored in 1991 to celebrate the regaining of sovereignty. The regimes that ruled Tallinn during the 20th century have used the present-day Freedom Square for their public rituals of power (Lige 2014: 153). During the last years of the Soviet regime, Freedom Square lost its function as venue for public rituals of power and turned into an open-air parking lot. In 1998, Tallinn City Council manifested the need for revitalising such a symbolic urban space and held an architectural competition (UNESCO 2014). Between 2008 and 2009, the square underwent a complete reconstruction aiming to provide a venue for public rituals and cultural events. According to the Tallinn City Council, this reconstruction turned Freedom Square into "*the most important*" square of Estonia (Vitsut 2008: 34). The President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves (2009) defined Freedom Square as "*the representative square of the city – and indeed of the entire country*". Kaljundi (2009: 44) explained that the reconstruction of Freedom Square could be seen as "*Estonia's prime textbook example of social formation of space*".
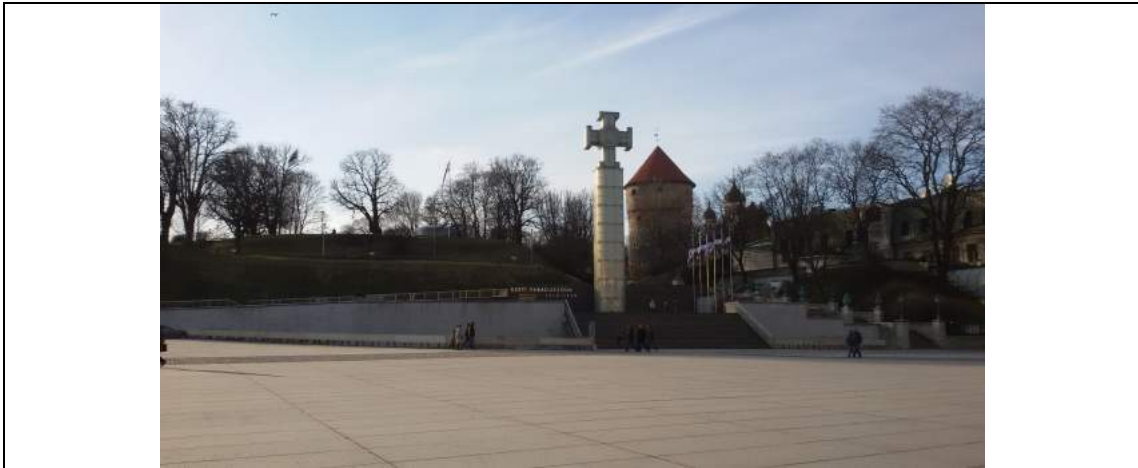
Fig. 14 – The Victory Column in Freedom Square. Picture taken 14.03.2015

5.2 The reasons for selecting the Victory Column as case study

There are a number of reasons why the Victory Column provides an appropriate case study to address the primary research question presented in Chapter One § 1.6. Following the conceptual scheme defined in Chapter Three § 3.3, these reasons can be divided between three dimensions: material, symbolic and political.

The reasons that can be found in the material level related to the size, visibility, design choices, location and costs of the Victory Column. The Victory Column is the largest memorial to the soldiers who served in the Estonian War of Independence. Due to the imposing size, the memorial is visible from many parts of Tallinn. The modern-looking design of the Victory Column differs from the adjacent medieval built environment of Tallinn's Old Town. Several criticisms by artists and architects accompanied the choice of modern designs in this location. Furthermore, the location of the Victory Column in Freedom Square has been used throughout history as an arena where different political regimes have tried to assert themselves via architecture, monuments and public rituals. Today, Freedom Square is the location of the Tallinn City Council and an important public transport hub. Finally, the Estonian Government spent a large amount of money to design and construct the Victory Column.

The reasons at the symbolic level for selecting the Victory Column are its commemorative purpose and the significance it has assumed for the Estonian political elites. The publicised purpose of the Victory Column was to commemorate the soldiers who served in the war that created the basis for Estonia's first period of independence (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009). Due to the significance of this

commemoration within Estonian historical narratives, the Victory Column has been considered as "*the most important monument erected in Estonia after the country regained its independence*" (Mattson 2012). The Victory Column was unveiled during an opening ceremony attended by approximately 10,000 people from all over Estonia and neighbouring countries (Pihlak et al. 2009: 135, fig. 15). Many politicians and diplomatic officials attended the ceremony. The President of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, delivered a speech on the importance of freedom and sovereignty. Religious institutions sanctified the Victory Column. A concert concluded the celebrations while the name of those who fought and fell during the War of Independence scrolled down on a screen in front of the orchestra. After the concert, it was allowed for the attendants to climb the stairs to touch the memorial and lay flowers in commemoration of the dead.

Fig. 15 – The opening ceremony of the Victory Column. Picture from Pihlak et al. 2009: 143.

Due to its significance for the Estonian elites, the Victory Column and its immediate surroundings are constantly maintained with great care. They are daily cleaned from garbage (fig. 16). Snow is carefully removed throughout the winter (fig. 17). Gardeners carefully maintain the green area behind the Victory Column during spring and summer (fig. 18). The area of the memorial is kept under surveillance with eight security cameras. Signs advise on the appropriate behaviour to adopt within the area of the memorial: 'The Freedom Monument was erected for those who stand and fought for Estonian Independence. Please, behave responsibly and with dignity in the space of the monument' (translated from Estonian, fig. 19).

Fig. 16 – Cleanings in the surroundings of the Victory Column. Picture taken 28.6.2015	*Fig. 17 – Removing snow from Freedom Square. Picture taken 28.1.2016*
Fig. 18 – Gardening in the park behind the Victory Column. Picture taken 3.7.2015	*Fig. 19 – A sign advising on appropriate behaviour to adopt near the Victory Column. Picture taken 7.10.2015*
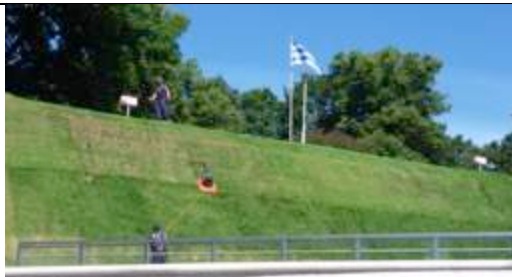
However, the intended purpose of the Victory Column and the significance it has assumed for the Estonian political elites have not been widely recognised at the societal level. For example, the iconography featuring a military decoration sparked broad debate due to resemblance with totalitarian aesthetics.

Regarding the political dimension, the Victory Column was erected to promote a uniform national memory and to reinforce sentiments of national belonging. The memorial served to keep a memory as well as a power alive by reinforcing the political power of the Estonian Government in charge. As such, the Victory Column has become a political tool to legitimate the primacy of the political power of the Estonian Government that took the initiative for erecting the memorial. A deadline set to meet political needs rushed the design and the construction of the Victory Column. Due to a controversial design, the Victory Column sparked a broad debate among artists and architects as well as among the public (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008: 11).

The debate surrounding the design and the construction of the Victory Column has demonstrated that the controversies surrounding the interpretations of monuments and memorials are far from being over in Estonia (Chapter Four § 4.3). However, research

has stopped exploring this issue after the relocation of the Bronze Soldier, considering this event as the culmination and the end of the conflicts around monuments and memorials in Estonia. Only Tamm (2013) included the erection of the Victory Column within the Estonian 'War of Monuments'. Lehti et al. (2008) described the controversies over the Victory Column as a minor resurgence of the 'War of Monuments'. Kalm (2014: 125) dubbed 'Column War' the dispute around the materials of construction and aesthetics that characterised the development phase of the design of the memorial. Belobrovtseva and Meimre (2008) provided an opinionated account of the controversies over the design of the Victory Column and found the main reason for the controversies in the lack of participative planning practices. Lehtovuori et al. (2014: 137) mentioned the Victory Column exploring the emerging public space of Freedom Square. Beside these exceptions, there is no publication in English that proposes an extensive analysis of the Victory Column. This chapter aims to fill this gap proposing an analysis of the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column.

5.3 The designers' stated intentions behind the Victory Column

The investigation of the designers' stated intentions behind the Victory Column is based on direct observation, documents and secondary sources. Direct observations explored how national and local authorities used the Victory Column for their public rituals, formal celebrations and cultural events.

As noted in Chapter Four § 4.9, collected planning documents and literature provided an account of the meanings designers strived to convey through the Victory Column. Planning documents for the erection of the Victory Column and for the reconstruction of Freedom Square were collected in the Urban Planning Department in Tallinn. They provided information on time and scale, funding, potential problems, objectives and outcomes of the Victory Column. Moreover, they outlined the organisations that led and implemented the design and the construction of the memorial.

The scientific literature available in English on the Victory Column was collected through visits at the National Library in Tallinn. Other material in English was collected through online searches, including a compilation of case studies on the conservation of historic cities published by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (UNESCO 2014); annual publications of the Tallinn City Council, such as yearbooks, development plans and comprehensive management plans; fact sheets of governmental organisations;

public speeches held during the opening ceremonies for the inauguration of Freedom Square and the unveiling of the Victory Column; the schedules of the celebrations of public holidays taking place in Freedom Square and in the area of the Victory Column; textual and multimedia files of the National Audit Office of Estonia reporting problems before and after the erection of the Victory Column (Mattson 2012); a description of the reconstruction plan for Freedom Square in the online portfolio of the designers; online news regarding the costs and the defects of the Victory Column before and after erection. A collection of tourist guidebooks in English, old pictures and postcards helped to reconstruct the spatial history of Freedom Square. General information considered as relevant from newspapers, magazines, movies, television programmes, web sites, blogs and online social networking services was registered in a fieldwork diary.

One of the designers of the Victory Column was interviewed to collect opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings he has on the memorial. This interview will be identified as 'Designer interview 1'.

This section is split into three parts to investigate the material, symbolic and political dimensions of the Victory Column as envisioned by its designers. The section first identifies the designers of the Victory Column, i.e. those who took the initiative for creating and implementing the design of the memorial. It then investigates the material and the symbolic choices that the designers used to entice users along specific interpretation. It then goes on to analyse the political messages behind the Victory Column and the political debate surrounding its design and construction. Finally, this section gives a sense of the range of issues that accompanied the process of designing and constructing the Victory Column.

The designers of the Victory Column

In spring 2005, the Estonian Parliament decided that a column should be erected in Tallinn to celebrate all those who served in the War of Independence (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009). For this reason, the Estonian Parliament passed the resolution *On Erecting a War of Independence Victory Column* (RT I 2005, 19, 111 cited in Tamm 2013: 667). To mark this decision, a stone was placed in the future location of the memorial in October 2005. This stone included the writings: 'The Freedom Monument will be located here' (translated from Estonian).

The Estonian Parliament entrusted the Ministry of Defence to lead the development phase of the project. The Ministry of Defence sponsored a design competition on 14 March 2007 (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008: 10). By the final term on 2 July 2007, the competition received forty-four conceptual designs (Tamm 2013: 667). The selected winning entry was *Libertas* (fig. 20), designed by the engineering students Rainer Sternfeld, Andri Laidre and Anto Savi. The Czech company Sans Souci was chosen to build the memorial. The works to realise the project started in July 2008.

An opening ceremony was organised on 23 June 2009 for the unveiling of the memorial. In Estonia, 23 June is a public holiday named 'Victory Day' (in Estonian *Võidupüha*), marking the day in which Estonians defeated the German troops in 1919 during the War of Independence[7]. This public holiday became associated with ideals of freedom during Estonia's first period of independence, when the President of Estonia used to build a fire in the morning of 23 June to celebrate the victory over the German troops. On this occasion, a flame was carried from the presidential fire to light bonfires across Estonia. To evoke this practice, the relatives of the soldiers who served in the War of Independence symbolically lit a torch in front of the Victory Column during the opening ceremony.

Fig. 20 – Visual representation of 'Libertas', the winning entry for the design of the Victory Column. Image from Olgo 2012.

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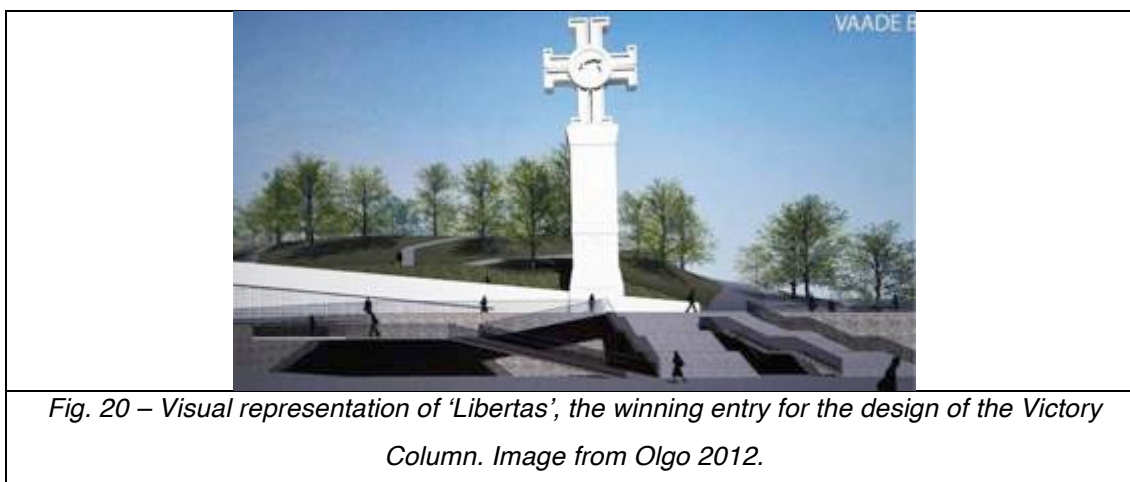
[7] Victory Day merges with the traditional celebrations of St. John's Eve (In Estonian *Jaaniõhtu* or *Jaanilaupäev*), the day before St. John's Day (in Estonian *Jaanipäev*, 24 June). St. John's Day is the most important public holiday in Estonia along with Christmas (25 December). Traditionally, St. John's Day was a pagan festival marking the change in farming year. This festival was celebrated with lighting bonfires, dancing, singing, drinking and following pagan rituals. Nowadays, it is tradition for Estonians to light bonfires during the night between 23 and 24 June.

The purpose of commemoration and the iconography

The Fact Sheets of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009) explained the primary purpose of the Victory Column: to celebrate the soldiers who fought in the War of Independence and all those who contributed in every possible way to reach Estonia's first independence.

> *Through the memorial, the Estonian people are showing respect and recognition to those who, gun in hand, established our independence, as well as those who have stepped up with words or weapons in the name of Estonia's freedom and independence.* (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009: 2)

As seen in § 5.1, the Victory Column was erected to provide a nationwide memorial aiming at aggregating all previous local memorials.

The iconography of the Victory Column features a Greek cross topped on a column. This is a large-size representation of the Cross of Liberty, a military decoration established to honour remarkable services during the War of Independence (fig. 21). According to the project drivers, this military iconography could function as a symbol to celebrate the entire Estonian nation.

> *In the winning design, a central role is played by the Cross of Liberty as Estonia's national service award with the most prestigious history and the most important symbol of the War of Independence. […] The 1st rank, II division Cross of Liberty on the memorial – the highest recognition for personal bravery – has never been conferred on anyone. Now it is being used to symbolically honour all of Estonia.* (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009)

The designer of the winning project remembered that the design competition strongly suggested including the Cross of Liberty in the iconography of the memorial:

> *In the competition was clearly stated that the designer should use the Cross of Liberty. Perhaps, it was not compulsory, but highly recommended.* (Designer interview 1)

Fig. 21 – The Cross of Liberty at the top of the Victory Column during the constructions.
Picture from Pihlak et al. 2009: 120.

The Cross of Liberty was the first Estonian state decoration (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009). The conservative Prime Minister of Estonia, Konstantin Päts, established this decoration on the first anniversary of the declaration of independence on 24 February 1919. The decoration comprised three divisions and three ranks (fig. 22): the first division was for military leadership; the second division was for individual valour; the third division was for civilian service. The modernist Estonian artist Nikolai Triik designed different medals for each grade and class. The first and the second divisions of the medal presented at their cores the symbols 'e' for Estonia and an arm with sword. These symbols were included in the iconography of the Victory Column.

During Estonia's first period of independence, the Cross of Liberty became a symbol associated with the War of Independence and, in turn, with the Estonia's fight for freedom and sovereignty. That is why most of the memorials to this war included the Cross of Liberty in their iconographies. The Victory Column reintroduced this practice:

> *The use of the Cross of Liberty as a symbol in the victory memorial to the War of Independence is nothing new – the Cross of Liberty as a motif has been used on many local memorials to the War of Independence created before World War II and later restored.* (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009: 2)

Fig. 22 – The divisions and ranks of the Cross of Liberty. The red box highlights the 1st rank, II division Cross of Liberty, which was made reference to in the construction of the memorial. Public domain image available at Wikipedia.org, uploaded 10 March 2010

The material design and the location choice

The Victory Column is a 23.5 meters-high column (≈ 86.6 feet) topped by a Cross of Liberty, 5.4 meters width x 6.5 meters long x 2.7 meters deep (in feet ≈ 17.7 W x 21.3 L x 8.8 D, Pihlak et al. 2009: 105). The memorial features a symmetrical shape with regular forms and straight edges. It is made of 143 glass plates supported by eight concrete blocks. The concrete blocks and the granular surface of the glass plates prevent one from looking through the column. Due to this opacity, the memorial assumes a whitish colour hardly changing with weather conditions and light. The Victory Column is wholly illuminated during hours of darkness, that in Tallinn are up to 18 hours per day in December and January (fig. 23).

Fig. 23 – The Victory Column illuminated. Picture taken 8.6.2016

The Victory Column stands on an elevated platform on the western side of Freedom Square, a large square on the southern edge of Tallinn's Old Town. Already in the 1920s, architectural committees made proposals to erect a memorial to the War of Independence in the area of present-day Freedom Square (Pihlak et al. 2009: 43). The design competitions held in 2006 clearly indicated Freedom Square as the location for this memorial (Pihlak et al. 2009: 51; Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009: 2). A 21-steps staircase links the space of the memorial with the ground of Freedom Square. Nine 13-meters-high (≈ 42.6 feet) pillars sustain the column on the elevated platform. A 2.5-meters-high (≈ 8.2 feet) pedestal connects the pillars with the column. Walls of different statures surround the ground of the area of the Victory Column. Behind the Victory Column, there is a wall dividing the area of the memorial from a green area (Harju Park). On this wall, there are writings in silver letters including the name of the commemorated war ('*Eesti Vabadussõda*' – in English Estonian War of Independence, fig. 24), the years of the War of Independence ('*1918-1920*', fig. 24) and part of a poem written by the Estonian neo-Romantic poet Gustav Suits in 1919 (fig. 25):

'*Tõsta lipp! See aja käänul / Tunnistagu tuulte väänul / Üle maa ja vee ja tee: / Tund tulnud vannet vandu, / Et ei iial enam andu / Ikke alla rahvas see*'

Raise the flag! In this turn of time / witness the winds twist / over the land and water and road: / hour has come to swear an oath / that never again will bow down / under a yoke this nation[8].

Fig. 24 – The name and the years of the War of Independence and the poem on the wall behind the Victory Column. Picture taken 7.10.2015	Fig. 25 – Particular of the poem on the wall behind the Victory Column. Picture taken 7.10.2015

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[8] Thanks to Eva-Mai Maripuu for the accurate translation.

Going by the wall behind the Victory Column, a paved path leads to a park. Users can reach the park also through a staircase on the left of the Victory Column[9]. On the sides of the staircase, there are eight cast iron vases decorated with the coat of arms of Estonia (fig. 26), removed during the Soviet regime and returned in 2009. On the left of the memorial, there are six flagpoles on which Estonian tricolours fly during public holidays and other days of national importance (fig. 26).

Fig. 26 – *The staircase, the cast iron vases decorated with the coat of arms of Estonia and the flagpoles on the left of the Victory Column. Picture taken 25.4.2015*

Throughout history, Freedom Square has been an arena where different political regimes have tried to assert themselves via architecture, monuments and public rituals. Here, a statue of Peter the Great was erected in 1910 to celebrate the 200th anniversary since the capitulation of Tallinn to Russia. The Baltic Germans financed this statue to please Russian authorities since they were afraid to lose their power over Estonian territories (Kalm 2014: 121). In the same year, Russian authorities named this square after Peter the Great (in Estonian *Peetri Plats*; in Russian *Petrovskoj Ploshhad'*) and inaugurated it with an opening ceremony (Koger 2002: 55-56).

During Estonia's first period of independence, Estonian authorities named this square 'Freedom Square' (in Estonian *Vabaduse väljak*) to celebrate the recently achieved independence. In 1918, Baltic Germans organised here military parades as sign of non-recognition of the Estonian declaration of independence[10]. On 24 February 1919, Estonians arranged in Freedom Square the celebrations of the first anniversary of the

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[9] The staircase was named after Carl August Mayer, chairman of the executive council of Tallinn between 1860 and 1864. The Mayer staircase was built between 1864 and 1865 to link the area of the actual Freedom Square to the park on the hill *Harjuvärava*.
[10] In March 1918, German military authorities marched in Freedom Square as a sign of authority. In June 1918, they organised a military parade for the visiting of the commander-in-chief of the German Eastern Front of the First World War (Koger 2002: 67).

declaration of independence (fig. 27). Between the 1920s and the 1930s, Estonians erected buildings to better define the space of the square (Kalm 2014: 108)[11]. In this context, they removed the statue of Peter the Great in 1922.

During the first Soviet regime (1940-1941), the name of Freedom Square was changed to Triumph Square (in Estonian *Võiduväljakuks*, in Russian *Triumfalnaya Square*). In 1941, Nazi authorities changed the name again to Freedom Square. During the second Soviet regime (1945-1991), Soviet authorities called this square Victory Square (in Estonian *Võidu Väljak*; in Russian *Ploshhad' Pobedy*) to celebrate the victory of the Soviet Army at the end of the Second World War. Soviet authorities chose Freedom Square as the location for the *coup d'état* to establish their power in Estonia (Kuusk 2006: 8): about 5000 people were gathered in Freedom Square on 17 June 1940, crying out for work, daily bread and a new government. Freedom Square was largely used as an urban stage for public rituals of power in Soviet Estonia. For example, Soviet authorities organised mass meetings to celebrate the restoration of the Soviet regime in Estonia in 1945 (21 June and 6, 17 and 24 July). The formal celebrations of public holidays such as the Worker's Day (1 May, fig. 28) and the October Holiday (7 November, the anniversary of the October Revolution) were held in Victory Square every after that.

Fig. 27 – Celebrations of the first anniversary of the declaration of independence, 24 February 1919. Available in FOTIS, reference number: EFA.656.0-407277.	*Fig. 28 – Celebrations of the Worker's Day, 1 May 1947. Available in FOTIS, reference number: ERAF.9607.1.975.49.1*

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[11] The buildings erected in Freedom Square between the 1920s and the 1930s were: on the south edge, the cinema *Gloria Palace* (1926), the main building for the insurance agency *EKA* (1932) and the Hotel *Palace* (1937). On the north edge of the square, an art exhibition centre (in Estonian *Kunstihoone* - Art Hall) was inaugurated in 1934. Attached to it, the first Estonian insurance company *Maja* commissioned a commercial building in 1937 - the so-called *EEKS* building - which hosted a bank, a café and a restaurant.

Freedom Square lost its function as a venue for public rituals of power and turned into an open-air parking lot during the last years of the Soviet regime (fig. 29). After Estonia regained independence, the name of this area was changed again to Freedom Square. In 1998, the Tallinn City Council manifested the need for revitalising Freedom Square and held an architectural competition to transform Freedom Square into an attractive public space (UNESCO 2014: 291). In consequence, Freedom Square underwent a complete reconstruction in 2009. Figure 30 shows how the square is today.

Fig. 29 – Freedom Square as an open air parking lot. Picture from Pihlak et al. 2009: 98.	Fig. 30 – The reconstructed Freedom Square. Picture taken 7.10.2015

As noted in § 5.1, the reconstruction aimed to provide a venue for Estonia's public rituals and cultural events. According to Tallinn City Council, this reconstruction turned Freedom Square into "*the most important*" square of the entire Estonia (Vitsut 2008: 34). In Freedom Square and in the area of the Victory Column, Estonian authorities regularly organise celebrations of public holidays commemorating independence, such as the Independence Day (24 February, fig. 31) and the Day of Restoration of Independence (20 August). Commemorations take place on the day of remembrance of the Soviet deportations in March 1949 (fig. 32): it is common practice during this commemoration to light candles at the base of the Victory Column and all over Freedom Square (Estonian Ministry of the Interior 2015). Official meetings of political and military representatives regularly take place in Freedom Square.

| *Fig. 31 – Laying of wreaths in front of the Victory Column during the celebrations of the Independence Day, 24 February 2015. Available at: Postimees.ee [Accessed: 24 February 2015]* | *Fig. 32 – Candles in remembrance of the Soviet deportations of March 1949 in Freedom Square. Picture taken by Mikko von Bremen, 25.3.2017.* |

Freedom Square is also the location for cultural events, popular entertainment and attractions, such as concerts, sport competitions (fig. 33), art exhibitions, children's days (fig. 34), gastronomy stands and so on. The formal celebrations of New Year's Eve take place in Freedom Square with concerts, fireworks and light shows. Finally, Freedom Square has recently become the geographical point for civic demonstrations (Lige 2014: 153).

| *Fig. 33 – The court for bike polo constructed in Freedom Square. Picture taken 5.6.2015* | *Fig. 34 – A stage hosting a school play during the celebrations of the opening of the school year. Picture taken 1.9.2015* |

The cultural context and the political controversy

The first ideas to erect a central memorial to celebrate those who served during the War of Independence dated back to 1919, before the end of the war (Pihlak et al. 2009: 42). Ever since, several committees were formed to choose a design for this memorial: location, materials of construction, size and so on[12]. A number of design competitions were held, but no plan was realised due to lack of money, lack of agreement on the design, outbreak of the Second War World and obstruction of foreign ruling powers (Pihlak et al. 2009: 41-48).

After Estonia regained independence, questions about erecting a memorial to the War of Independence arose again from time to time (Pihlak et al. 2009: 41). A plan for erecting this memorial was presented to the Estonian Parliament in 1997 (Tamm 2013: 666) and a declaration was adopted *In Support of Creating an Independence Monument* (RT I 1997, 42, 684; see also Tamm 2013: 666). The Tallinn City Council held a design competition on 5 April 2001 to provide the project for the memorial. This competition collected more than one hundreds plans, but no one was realised because of adverse political conditions due to a presidential change (Tamm 2013: 667). This competition openly indicated Freedom Square as the place to erect the memorial.

As noted in Chapter Four § 4.3, the Estonian EU and NATO memberships have provided opportunities to gain symbolic capital through the redesign of the built environment and the erection of new monuments and memorials (Ehala 2009: 152). The cultural reinvention of the post-Soviet built environment in Estonia has evolved

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[12] On 8 November 1920, a committee was formed to reach the consensus on the memorial design. The committee came out with the idea of a memorial rock with the names of the fallen of the War of Independence (Pihlak et al. 2009: 41). The committee suggested to locate this monument "*in the middle of the capital*" to enhance its prestige and visibility (Pihlak et al. 2009: 41). Between 1919 and 1922, the sculptor Amandus Adamson proposed the first plan for the memorial to the War of Independence: a pyramid with two figures representing characters from the Estonian epic poem *Kalevipoeg* (Pihlak et al. 2009: 42). However, this plan remained unrealised due to lack of money. Later, committees were formed to reach agreement on location, sizes and materials of construction: in 1925, a committee was formed and suggested to locate the memorial in a park right behind the present-day location of the Victory Column. In 1930, another committee suggested building this memorial "*big as the importance of the Freedom War was*" and using construction materials from Estonia (Pihlak et al. 2009: 43). In 1928, the first public competition for the design of this monument was held. The winning entry was never realised (Pihlak et al. 2009: 43). In 1931, a second competition collected 18 entries, but the architectural committee did not select any of them (Pihlak et al. 2009: 43). During the 1930s, many other plans were proposed and revised, but no one was realised for lack of money or agreement on design choices. For example, a plan by the architect Edgar Kuusik was accepted in 1933, but the author expressed dissatisfaction toward the chosen location and thus the plan remained unrealised (Pihlak et al. 2009: 48). The plans designed in the 1930s showed the need to provide the memorial with appropriate surroundings and thus included projects for a grandiose square to contain the memorial.

through two distinct but concurrent practices: the redesign of the inherited built environment created by the Soviets and the simultaneous establishment of a new built environment reflecting the needs of post-Soviet culture and society. In this context, the recently formed Estonian Government and its affiliates have used monuments and memorials to educate citizens toward the current historical narratives and to set their cultural and political agendas.

This cultural reinvention of the built environment largely affected the space of Freedom Square and its immediate surroundings. In April 2007, the Bronze Soldier was removed and relocated outside Tallinn's city centre. Two years later, the Victory Column was unveiled in Freedom Square, less than 500 meters from the Bronze Soldier's original location. The initiative for both the removal of the Bronze Soldier and the erection of the Victory Column was taken during the mandate of Andrus Ansip, prime minister of Estonia between April 2005 and March 2014. Some scholars argued that the erection of the Victory Column was a direct response of the troubled events following the relocation of the Bronze Soldier.

> *First and foremost, the political dimensions of this new public space [Freedom Square] originate from the fact that it was redesigned as a response to the Bronze Soldier crisis. One could even argue that it is Vabaduse väljak [Freedom Square] itself that finalizes the Bronze Soldier event.* (Kaljundi 2009: 44)

This argument did not take into account that the design competition for the Victory Column was announced on 14 March 2007, before the Bronze Soldier's relocation on 26 April. Moreover, the competition for the reconstruction of Freedom Square dated back to 1998 and the first part of the detailed plan was approved in 2001 (UNESCO 2014: 293). However, it is true that the process leading to the erection of the Victory Column was rushed after the events following the Bronze Soldier's relocation. The selection of the winning entry was taken all of a sudden: seven of twelve members of the design committee voted for the winning project right after the Bronze Soldier's relocation (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008: 9). Furthermore, the conceptual design of the Victory Column was completed and approved only in July 2007 (Olgo 2012) and the Ministry of Defence pushed for several changes to the original plan even during the development phase of the project. This means that the Bronze Soldier's relocation may have affected certain design choices of the Victory Column.

The Estonian Government saw in the Victory Column a means to emerge as a winner from the conflicts around monuments and memorials. Furthermore, Andrus Ansip saw in the Victory Column an opportunity to gain political consent among those who strongly wanted this memorial to be erected, in view of the upcoming elections scheduled for 4 March 2007 (Mattson 2012). For this reason, The Ministry of Defence speeded up the work of construction and made a number of changes to the original plan without including public contests or participatory methods (Mattson 2012).

The design issues of the Victory Column

Due to controversial design, the erection of the Victory Column sparked a broad debate among artists and architects as well as among the public. This section gives a sense of the range of issues that have accompanied the process of designing and constructing the Victory Column.

Different issues characterised the development phase of the design: lack of participative planning practices, non-transparency of financing, shortage of adequate supervision and defective works during construction. The National Audit Office of Estonia (Mattson 2012) stated that the design of the Victory Column was "*too rushed and work was done by the trial and error method*". The Estonian Government set a short deadline for this memorial to be erected: 28 November 2008, the 90th anniversary of the beginning of the War of Independence (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008: 11). To meet this deadline, the Estonian Government entrusted the Ministry of Defence to lead the entire process of design and construction of the Victory Column. The National Audit Office of Estonia (Mattson 2012) claimed that it was "*unrealistic*" to meet this deadline. One of the designers of the Victory Column explained that this deadline created several issues during the development phase of the design:

> *For the politicians in power at that time was important to do it [to erect the memorial]. I think that one of the biggest problems was that the politicians set a deadline […] and that cause a lot of problems. […] As a consequence, there was not enough time to negotiate between all participants: architects' unions, heritage conservation companies, artists' organisations and so on.* (Designer interview 1)

The time pressure created by the deadline created two major issues. First, it drastically reduced participative planning practices. During the development phase of the design, the Ministry of Defence took several design choices without including public contests and disregarding appropriate public participation processes. For example, it entrusted the Czech company Sans Souci to build the Victory Column without public contest. The short deadline prevented other companies from submitting accurate projects and Sans Souci was the only company that promised to build the memorial in time (Mattson 2012). The designer of the winning entry explained that:

> We established contacts with many glass companies around the world, from Saint Gobain to Ittala. We went to Ittala factory first to discuss the project. We thought it would be a good idea to have a Finnish company to build this memorial: many Finnish soldiers fought and fell along Estonians during the War of Independence. Moreover, Ittala has been always really famous for its quality: I am sure you know Ittala, everybody knows Ittala! They said that they would be happy to build this memorial, but that the deadline was too short to develop a proper plan. For this reason, they said that they could not do it. The Czech company San Souci was the only company saying that they could develop a plan and build this memorial on time: eventually it turned out that they could not. (Designer interview 1)

Second, the time pressure resulted in a lack of the required supervision on the quality of the works for constructing the Victory Column. The construction "*started before the required project documents had been prepared and before the Ministry of Defence had given its final approval*" (Mattson 2012). Experts did not have enough time to check the crack resistance and the colour stability of the glass panels (Mattson 2012). For this reason, three glass panels appeared to be defective right after the erection. Dust and water seeping inside the panels damaged the electrical system and thus the memorial remained unlit for more than one year after inauguration (Joost 2009). Finally, three glass panels turned pink because of dust.

The memorial cost 8.5 million euros in total and 9% of the total costs were spent to repair defective works after the erection (Mattson 2012). The financing process was not transparent. More than a half of the expenses were covered with money initially allocated for defence purposes. Furthermore, public donations were used for purposes other than covering the costs for erecting this memorial (Mattson 2012).

5.4 The interpretations, actions and interactions of the users

This section presents the interpretations of users and their actions and interactions within the space of the Victory Column – i.e. the interpretations, actions and interactions of the 'readers'. This reflection is based on primary data collected through interviews and observations carried out during fieldwork in Tallinn between February and October 2015.

As seen in Chapter Four § 4.7, semi-structured interviews aimed to collect a range of interpretations on the Victory Column. Appendix 1 shows the list of the main issues covered during interviews on the Victory Column. Interview data derived from sixteen interviews with respondents that resided in Tallinn their entire life or that had only left Tallinn temporarily. Respondents varied in terms of ethnic origins, age, gender, education and profession. A suitable balance of Estonians and Russophones was guaranteed: eight respondents were Estonians and eight belonged to the Russophone community of Tallinn. Since different age groups might interpret differently the researched monuments (Chapter Four § 4.5), respondents were divided into four age bands. Older respondents remembered the celebrations of Soviet public rituals arranged in the area of the present-day Freedom Square. Moreover, they remembered Freedom Square turned into an open-air parking lot after Estonia regained independence. Respondents from all age bands witnessed the troubled events following the relocation of the Bronze Soldier. Furthermore, they all witnessed the 2008 excavations for the reconstruction of Freedom Square and the 2009 inauguration of the Victory Column.

Participant observations concentrated on the actions and interactions of users who daily cross and use the space of the Victory Column. Appendix 3 presents the list of the relevant features to be observed identified from the literature and from interviews. Observations were carried out in Freedom Square every day between February and October 2015, with the exception of some periods spent not working.

This section is split into three parts to investigate the users' interpretations and criticisms of the material, symbolic and political dimensions of the Victory Column. As noted in Chapter Three § 3.1, material, symbolic and political are analytical terms: in practice they function together and influence each other through continuous mediations. This section begins by exploring the users' interpretations of the material

and the symbolic level of the Victory Column. It then addresses the cultural and political meanings that users have attached to the Victory Column.

The users' interpretations of the symbolic level

Interviewing on the symbolic level of the Victory Column concerned the purpose of commemoration and the iconography. All respondents acknowledged the intended purpose of the memorial to commemorate those who served in the War of Independence. However, observations did not register any commemorative practice, if not during the formal commemorations arranged by the Estonian Government and its affiliates (§ 5.3, fig 27-28).

The iconography of the Victory Column attracted several criticisms. The inclusion of the Cross of Liberty (fig. 17) came in for a great deal of criticism during interviews. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affair (2009: 2), the Cross of Liberty is "*Estonia's national service award with the most prestigious history and the most important symbol of the War of Independence*". Yet, no respondents recognised the value that this symbol has for the Estonian Government and its affiliates. Eight respondents clearly manifested negative attitudes toward the iconography of the Victory Column. Among them, four respondents claimed that this iconography conveys meanings of might and control rather than freedom and mourning, as the purpose of commemoration would suggest.

> *[The memorial] seems to symbolise not freedom, but might or control. That…perhaps…it is not a necessary thing or the most important thing to represent in the centre of the capital of Estonia.* (Interview 11, Estonian, born in 1959, male, academic)

Actually, also the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009: 2) used war-related terms to describe the purpose of commemoration of the Victory Column: for the Ministry, the memorial commemorated those who "*gun in hand*" and "*with words or weapons*" established Estonia's independence (§ 5.3).

Among these eight respondents, a Russophone respondent from the oldest age band associated the iconography of the Victory Column with totalitarian aesthetics (interview 24, Russophone, born in 1959, female, academic). In her opinion, the Victory Column presented a Nazi iconography, being a military insignia used by Estonian soldiers

fighting alongside the German army during the Second World War[13]. She also warned that other Russophones living in Tallinn would see the Victory Column as presenting a Nazi iconography. However, no other Russophone respondents made this association.

The association of the Victory Column with Nazi iconography was repeatedly reported in Russian media. Russian media considered erecting a memorial presenting symbols used by the German army during the Second World War inconceivable and outrageous. They then accused the Estonian Government of promoting an historical revision of Nazism through the erection of the Victory Column. Hence, Russian media variously ridiculed the memorial and defined it as a "*scandalous*" and "*ambiguous*" memorial (*MK Estonia* 2013)[14]. Some Estonian historians warned of the risks for totalitarian association to create discontent abroad: for example, Amar Annus (2008), cited in Belobrovtseva and Meimre (2008: 11), argued that such a large-size representation of the Cross of Liberty may create political controversies since the decoration was awarded to the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and the French marshal Henri Philippe Pétain.

Two respondents defined the cross-shaped figure of the Victory Column as a "*primitive*" and "*trivial*" symbol. They associated the cross with Christian symbolism and defined this association as "*provocative*", considering that Christianity was brought into Estonian territories through church-sanctioned campaigns fought to combat paganism.

> *[The Cross of Liberty] is one of the most trivial solutions. I know it is a huge replica of a military medal conferred during the previous independence. But I would prefer the memorial to represent something different, more modern looking. The current symbol [the Cross of Liberty] is representing a sort of pre-modern, peasant-like figure that doesn't fit in the square, which is one of the most important squares in modern Tallinn.* (Interview 20, Estonian, born in 1973, male, academic)

Three respondents argued that the iconography of the Victory Column is highly hermetic and not many users can understand what the cross represents - visitors as well as Estonian citizens themselves. Consistent with this, three respondents were unacquainted with the iconography of the Victory Column.

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[13] The memorial erected in Lihula in 2004 evoked the same kind of controversy (Chapter Four § 4.3).

[14] Thanks to Daria Arkhipova for the exact translation.

The users' interpretations of the material level

Interviewing on the material level of the Victory Column concerned three issues: the material design choices, the location and the cost. Three respondents defined the material design of the memorial as "*unprofessional*". Some artists and architects also expressed scepticism over the degree of professionalism of the winning plan (Kaljundi 2009: 44; Kalm 2014: 124). Specifically, the material of construction and the size of the Victory Column came in for a great deal of criticism.

As for the construction material, four respondents considered glass panels as an "*inappropriate*" material for two reasons. The first reason concerned practical problems related to weather conditions: glass panels do not easily resist the harsh Estonian winter. In fact three glass panels appeared to be defective right after the erection. As seen in § 5.3, these defects also ignited a controversy between the project drivers and the glass designer entrusted to construct the memorial. The second reason concerned the inconsistency of a glass construction in Tallinn's Old Town. For respondents, glass was seen as a present-day construction material that does not fit in with the adjacent medieval built environment.

> *There are too many issues around this memorial. Many people are not satisfied with how it looks. For example, they put something quite big and made of glass in the historical part of the city.* (Interview 4, Russophone, born in 1992, male, student)

Actually, glass panels replaced the original plan to use dolomite as construction material for the Victory Column (Kalm 2014: 125, fig. 35). During the design process, criticisms stated that dolomite could enhance the risk of the association with totalitarian aesthetics: in Estonia, dolomite was largely used for Soviet public architecture (Kalm 2014: 119). To avoid these criticisms, the Ministry of Defence decided at very short notice to replace dolomite with glass as construction material for the Victory Column (Mattson 2012). Some artists criticized this replacement and denounced the disregard of the Ministry of Defence for aesthetic requirements (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008: 12). Six respondents recalled that the controversies over the material design choices were largely discussed in the media (e.g. Joost 2009a, 2009b).

Fig. 35 – The original design project using dolomite as construction material for the Victory Column. Picture from Pihlak et al. 2009: 61.

As for size, six respondents defined the Victory Column as "*too big*". Their concerns about the size related with the issue of the Victory Column's location. These respondents argued that the large size of the memorial does not fit in with the adjacent medieval built environment of Tallinn's Old Town. They considered the verticality of the Victory Column as confronting near-by vertical built forms, such as the tower bells of St. John church and St. Charles XI church and the medieval towers *Kiek in de Kok* and *Pikk Hermann*. Respondents expressed discontent toward the chosen location for another reason: to build the elevated platform of the Victory Column, encroachments on the nearby park and on the medieval bastions were necessary. Respondents considered the erection of the Victory Column not worth losing this natural and historical heritage. Consistent with this view, observations showed that the elevated platform of the Victory Column remained largely unused.

The only few respondents that manifested appreciation toward some material features of the Victory Column were Russophones. Although expressing general dissatisfaction for the material design, two Russophones defined the column-shaped figure of the memorial as "*stylish*" and "*appropriate*". One of them considered glass as a material of construction confortable to clean and consistent with Estonian aesthetics. Only one Russophone respondent was entirely positive about the material design of the Victory Column, including shapes, material of construction, size and location (interview 26, Russophone, born 1985, male, civil service employee).

As for the cost, three respondents complained about the high costs of construction and the lack of transparency of the financing.

The users' interpretations of the political dimension

Interviewing on the political dimension of the Victory Column concerned two main issues: the design issues and the political meanings that the Victory Column has assumed for users. As for the design issues, respondents agreed that the development of the original plan was controversial. Six respondents recalled the debate around the material design choices and the defects during and after the construction of the Victory Column (§ 5.3).

> *I know there has been such a broad debate around it [the Victory Column], like - you know - 'part of the lighting system didn't work' and people didn't like the cross - whatever kind of thing over there…hum…I wouldn't say that this is something we should be very proud of.* (Interview 1, Estonian, born 1991, female, hostel receptionist)

As for the political messages, seven respondents defined the Victory Column as a memorial erected to convey dominant political power. These respondents considered the power of the Victory Column as something "*controversial*" for a memorial erected with the intention to commemorate ideals of freedom and sovereignty. One Estonian respondent stated that the memorial "*communicates might rather than freedom*". Ironically, two Estonian respondents born in independent Estonia considered the Victory Column as resembling typical monuments erected during totalitarian regimes:

> *And it [the Victory Column] looks like really Soviet for me. […] Actually it is a combination of Nazi German and Soviet aesthetics. […] For me, it is like a combination of something that we fought against for so long time. That is why it is odd.* (Interview 1, Estonian, born 1991, female, hostel receptionist)

Two Russophones considered the Victory Column as a direct result of the Bronze Soldier's relocation. They considered the erection of the Victory Column as a firm resolution to annihilate the ideological weight of the Bronze Soldier. One of these respondents saw the memorial as a provocative act of the Estonian Government against Russophone communities living in Estonia:

> *I don't like the Cross [the Victory Column]. First of all because of when and why it appears here [in Freedom Square]. And after what [the troubled events following the Bronze Soldier's relocation]! These are the main reasons why I don't like this*

memorial. I do understand that it is Freedom Square and I do understand which
Freedom they are talking about. […] But what is this Cross about? I don't know…
More than anything else, it has the function of the red cloth of the torero in front of
the bull. (Interview 27, Russophone, born in 1982, female, journalist)

5.5 The interpretation of the Victory Column between designers and users

This section provides a deeper understanding of the meanings of the Victory Column
as emerging from the interplay between designers' and users' interpretations. Here,
"isotopies" are detected to make sense of the data presented in sections 5.3 and 5.4
(Eco 1992: 65). As seen in Chapter Four § 4.11, isotopies allowed reflections on the
possible links among the themes identified within interview and observational data,
helping to progress toward the theoretical dimension of the study.

The isotopies identified in this section are tied to the literature revised in Chapter Two
and the conceptual scheme of Chapter Three § 3.3. They are underlined and identified
in italics. The first part of this section presents isotopies regarding the designers' stated
intentions behind the Victory Column. As explained in Chapter Three § 3.5, a set of
strategies is available to designers to entice users along specific interpretations of
memorials (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 57). The Victory Column can be seen as a
text able to implement these strategies and to construct the intended meanings of
designers. The second part introduces isotopies detected in primary data regarding the
interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the Victory Column.

The discourse of power of the Victory Column

This section presents isotopies regarding the designers' stated intentions behind the
Victory Column. Isotopies are underlined and identified in italics below.

- An ideological understanding of the past to signify future possibilities

The publicised purpose of the Victory Column was to commemorate the soldiers who
fought in the War of Independence and all those who contributed in every possible way
to reach Estonia's first independence (§ 5.3). However, the purpose of the Victory
Column went beyond commemoration. As seen in Chapter Three § 3.1, memorials can
articulate selective historical narratives, focusing attention on events and individuals

that are preferred by elites, while obliterating what is uncomfortable for them (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Articulating specific historical narratives, memorials can inculcate particular conceptions of the present and encourage future possibilities (Massey 1995; Dovey 1999; Dwyer 2000; Osborne 1998).

The Victory Column was erected to create specific understanding of the past and thus to symbolise a range of expectations about Estonia's future. The Victory Column emphasized past links with the war whose victory led to Estonia's first independence. The reference to this victory meant to recall the memory of Estonia's first period of independence in order to signify the aspiration of returning to pre-war traditions and institutions, that were destroyed by foreign regimes (Tamm 2013: 654). The first Estonian independence is remembered as a pre-Soviet "*golden age*" creating the ground for the development of Estonian national culture (Young and Kaczmarek 2008: 54). The celebrations of public holidays regularly arranged in the surroundings of the Victory Column have aimed to re-experience this "*golden age*" through engagement and commemorative practices (Young and Kaczmarek 2008: 54).

- An important tool for the national politics of memory and identity

The Victory Column is a visual symbol that creates the basis for a collective national mourning of the dead of the War of Independence. As seen in Chapter Three § 3.1, national elites erect memorials to promote a uniform national memory and to shape sentiments of national belonging (Tamm 2013: 651-652). The Victory Column was erected as a tool to reinforce sentiments of national belonging and to promote practices signalling devotion for the entire nation. Public rituals in the surroundings of the Victory Column have facilitated the spread of these sentiments and practices.

As an important tool for the national politics of memory and identity, the Victory Column can be seen as a firm resolution by the Estonian Government to emerge as a winner from the 'War of Monuments' and to turn a new page in the construction of the national politics of memory and identity. As such, the erection of the Victory Column became more urgent after the troubled events following the Bronze Soldier's relocation.

The resources spent for the erection of the Victory Column mirror the significance that its remembered events and identities have for the Estonian political elites. Moreover, prominent location and resonating design has given the Victory Column a high visibility in the city centre of Tallinn (§ 5.3).

As noted in Chapter Three § 3.1, national elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political and cultural agendas. The Victory Column served to reinforce the power of those who took the initiative for its erection, i.e. the Estonian Government led by the Estonian Reform Party in the person of Andrus Ansip. For this reason, comparisons can be drawn between the Victory Column and the governmental politics that took the initiative for its erection and implemented the design. Ansip became prime minister a few months after Estonia gained EU and NATO memberships, which provided opportunities to gain symbolic capital through the redesign of the built environment (Ehala 2009: 152).

The cultural reinvention of the post-Soviet built environment in Estonia has evolved through two distinct but concurrent practices: the redesign of the inherited built environment created by the Soviets and the simultaneous establishment of a new built environment reflecting the needs of post-Soviet culture and society. The general plan behind this cultural reinvention was twofold: to emphasise the differences from the Soviet built environment and to emphasise the link of the Estonian built environment with that of western and northern countries (Lehiti et al. 2008). These practices have stayed high in the political agenda of the Ansip's government and specifically developed through the relocation and removal of monuments and memorials and the erection of new ones.

The intentions of the Estonian Government behind the Victory Column were mainly political: to gain political consent among those who strongly wanted this memorial to be erected, such as the relatives of the soldiers who fought in the War of Independence; to put an end to the social conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials that has characterised Estonia starting from the early 2000s; and, in consequence, to turn a new page in the construction of the Estonian national memory and identity. Due to its political significance, the erection of the Victory Column was rushed in view of the March 2007 elections. Moreover, the Estonian Government exercised stringent control over the design of the Victory Column to make the memorial seem a successful result of political leadership.

A short deadline for erecting the Victory Column was set to satisfy the political purposes of the Estonian Government. As explained in § 5.3, the time pressure resulted in different issues. Moreover, the artistic and architectural aspects of the memorial were largely disregarded (Kaljundi 2009: 44; Kalm 2014: 124).

Among other changes made without including public contests or participatory methods, the Estonian Government replaced the original planned material with glass and shrunk the column in size. These changes were believed to avoid potential association with totalitarian aesthetics. The assumption was that these changes could move users away from the associations of the Victory Column with totalitarian aesthetics, while assuring appropriate visibility to the memorial. As seen in Chapter Three § 3.1, the built environment signifies insofar as routinised patterns of interpretation are created and such patterns emerge when design choices are repetitively used to convey certain meanings. Therefore, there is no reason why a material of construction should encourage or discourage certain interpretations. In practice, seven respondents claimed that the Victory Column conveys powerful meanings. Furthermore, three of them associated the memorial with totalitarian aesthetics.

The interpretations of the discourse of the Victory Column

The Model User of the Victory Column should have correctly recognised the iconography and acknowledged the commemorated events. Moreover, the Model User should have shown respect for the celebrated dead and approached the memorial with sentiments of mourning and commemoration. Among these expectations, only the purpose of commemoration was correctly recognised and respected by the totality of respondents. Beside this, users have mostly reinterpreted the political and the cultural positions embodied in the Victory Column. This section addresses the interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the Victory Column, introducing isotopies derived from analytic reflections on primary data. These isotopies are underlined and identified in italics below.

The Cross of Liberty is a highly hermetic iconography. Only those that are familiar with the historical experience of the War of Independence could correctly recognise what the cross represents. To acknowledge this iconography is unlikely for visitors and difficult also for Tallinn citizens themselves: consistent with this, three respondents were unacquainted with the iconography of the Victory Column.

The hermetic iconography of the Victory Column contradicts the original plan to erect a "*central memorial, one dedicated to the whole nation*" (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009). Moreover, it challenges the aim to aggregate all acts of memoralisation of the War of Independence. Following the original plans, the designers initially planned a more broadly recognisable iconography for the memorial, including the Estonian coastline at the centre of the cross. The Estonian coastline has been a symbol largely used in tourist materials, advertising, textile patterns, material objects; it was also chosen as national side for the Estonian Euro coins. However, the Estonian Government decided to maintain the original iconography of the Cross of Liberty (fig. 17).

No respondents recognised the value that the Cross of Liberty has for the Estonian Government and its affiliates. Eight respondents clearly manifested negative attitudes toward the iconography of the Victory Column. Two respondents associated the cross-shaped memorial with religious symbolism. Its location in front of St. John's Church may suggest this interpretation to those not familiar with the War of Independence. However, the religious association seems implausible in Estonia, where only 14% of the population defines religion as an important part of daily life (Vucheva 2009).

- Language barriers

In the wall behind the Victory Column, there are writings in silver letters, including part of a poem written by the Estonian neo-Romantic poet Gustav Suits (fig. 20-21). Tallinn citizens were mostly unacquainted with the presence and the significance of the poem behind the Victory Column. Five respondents reported that they never noted the presence of writings behind the Victory Column. Eight respondents stated that they were informed about the presence of the poem, but not about its contents. Observations showed that it is very rare that users climb the staircase to read the writings behind the memorial.

The poem behind the Victory Column is only in the Estonian language and there are no translations provided. It is common within the main tourist paths of Tallinn that information plaques give details about important places into many different languages. This is not the case with the writings behind the Victory Column. The lack of translations for these writings gives no weight to touristic needs; nor, arguably, to the foreigner countries which were allied to Estonia during the War of Independence.

Moreover, no information is provided about Gustav Suit and his poem, so that only those confident with the Estonian cultural context can correctly understand why this poem was included on the wall behind the Victory Column. Gustav Suits was the leader of a neo-romantic literary group established in 1905 (Young Estonia, in Estonian *Noor Eesti*). During the first Estonia's independence, Gustav Suits was one of the first to teach and publish in the Estonian language. Suits fled Estonia under the Soviet regime and went to Sweden, where he produced most of his poetry. The poem on the wall behind the Victory Column was written in 1919, toward the end of the War of Independence, to celebrate ideals of freedom and to encourage Estonians to fight against foreign rule. This poem was later used in memorial events associated with Estonia's independence, such as the 50th anniversary of the Estonian tricolour (Aun 1984: 11). Due to its memorial function associated with independence, the poem was included in the Victory Column complex.

- Controversial design and disconnection from spatial surroundings

Seven respondents expressed discontent toward the material design of the Victory Column (§ 5.4). The strongest criticism regarded three material aspects. First, respondents believed that this design is inappropriate and disconnected from the adjacent medieval built environment of Tallinn's Old Town. Second, they considered the great size and the verticality of the Victory Column as in conflict with existing built forms in the immediate surroundings. Finally, they considered the loss of natural and historical heritage caused by the earthworks to build the elevated platform accommodating the memorial to be not a worthwhile cost.

The choice for this location can be explicable considering the spatial history of Freedom Square, an arena where different political regimes have tried to assert themselves via architecture, monuments and public rituals (§ 5.3). The regimes that ruled Tallinn during the 20th century have used the present-day Freedom Square for their public rituals of power (Lige 2014. 153). In recent years, Freedom Square has

become a space of confrontation between the Tallinn City Council and the Estonian Government, led by the two largest political parties of Estonia: the Estonian Reform Party (in Estonian *Eesti Reformierakond*), the governing party from 2005 to 2014 and the Estonian Centre Party (in Estonian *Eesti Keskerakond*), governing the Tallinn City Council from 2001 to 2015. In December 2003, the Tallinn City Council inaugurated a monument in Freedom Square, occupying one of the potential locations for the memorial to the War of Independence (Kalm 2014: 124).

- Uncomfortable interaction

The Victory Column is raised up on an elevated platform. Observations showed that on rare occasions users climb the staircase of this platform to approach the memorial. Users crossing Freedom Square remain literally at the feet of the memorial. The memorial does not facilitate comfortable interactions: users have to look upwards and from an appropriate distance to have a complete vision of the memorial. The elevated location and the great size are design choices typically used for monuments and memorials erected during totalitarian regimes or in places where there is a high control over population. Indeed, seven respondents claimed that the Victory Column conveys powerful meanings. Furthermore, three of them associated the memorial with totalitarian aesthetics.

- A provocative act against an ethnic community?

Prior to fieldwork, assumptions were made about the potential aversion of the Russophones toward the political messages embodied in the Victory Column. These assumptions grounded in the antagonism between Estonians' and Russophones' understanding of the past (Chapter Four § 4.5). However, these assumptions were not met and no significant difference was registered between the interpretations of Estonian and Russophone respondents.

Only one Russophone expressed aversion to the Victory Column as presenting a totalitarian aesthetics (interview 24, Russophone, born in 1959, female, academic). Moreover, one Russophone considered the Victory Column as a provocative act by the Estonian Government against the Russophone minority living in Estonia (interview 27, Russophone, born in 1982, female, journalist). As for the material design, three Russophones expressed negative attitude toward the location of the Victory Column and another two toward the size of the memorial. Beside these exceptions,

Russophones expressed a more positive attitude than Estonians on the material design of the memorial: two Russophones defined the column-shaped figure of the memorial as "*stylish*" and "*appropriate*"; one of them considered glass as a material of construction confortable to clean and consistent with Estonian aesthetics (interview 24, Russophone, born in 1959, female, academic); one Russophone respondent stated they fully appreciate the material design of the Victory Column, including shapes, material of construction, size and location (interview 26, Russophone, born 1985, male, civil service employee). Only two Estonians expressed slightly positive opinions on few material design choices: one stated they like the fact that the Victory Column is illuminated over hours of darkness (interview 7, Estonian, born 1960, female, museum research assistant) and another defined its size as "*just all right*" (interview 5, Estonian, born in 1986, male, architect).

- Scarce use

As seen in Chapter Four § 4.6, the use of monuments largely depends on what users know about monuments (cognitive dimension), on whether they value them positively or negatively (axiological dimension) and on the emotions and feelings that monuments elicit in them (emotional dimension). The negative attitudes of respondents can be related with the fact that the Victory Column has remained largely unused. Observations demonstrated that it is very rare that users approach the memorial. Users fill the area of the memorial only during the celebrations of public holidays, periodically arranged by the Estonian Government and its affiliates. Few tourists visit Freedom Square and take pictures of the memorial during the warmer weather.

- Unexpected practices

As explained in Chapter Three § 3.3, unexpected practices play a critical role in the meaning-making of memorials and they often challenge the designers' intentions embodied in memorials (De Certeau 1984; Fiske 1989). So far, the Victory Column has attracted practices that are different from those envisioned by its designers. Due to flat ground and sharp curbs, skaters and bikers use the space of the Victory Column for their tricks during the warmer weather (fig. 36). For this reason, the Tallinn City Council put up some signs advising on the appropriate behaviour to adopt within the area of the memorial.

Fig. 36 – Signs of skating and biking on the pedestal of the Victory Column. Picture taken 14.3.2015

- Formal commemorative practices

Practices in accordance with the designers' stated intentions occur only during public rituals and celebrations of public holidays, periodically arranged by the Estonian Government and its affiliates in the space of the Victory Column. During these public rituals, soldiers lay wreaths at the foot of the Victory Column, government officials and military representatives hold public speeches from the elevated platform of the memorial. The public attends the ceremonies standing on the ground of Freedom Square; during mass-gathering events, people pile into the staircase on the left of the Victory Column or into the park on the hill behind the memorial. These rituals and practices have sought to entice users along the intended purposes of the Victory Column, i.e. to construct sentiments of national belonging and to promote practices signalling devotion for the entire nation.

- Civic demonstration

Estonians have recently used the Victory Column and its surroundings as geographical point for civic demonstrations (Lige 2014: 153, fig. 37). Protesters use the salient meanings of the memorial to gain the public limelight and to grant the cause they represent with the significance the memorial has assumed for Estonian elites.

Fig. 37 – Protests against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement in Freedom Square, 11 February 2012. Public domain image available at Wikipedia.org, uploaded 11 February 2012

5.6 Three gaps of the Victory Column

Based on the isotopies detected in section 5.5, this section applies the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 to the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column (fig. 38). Hence, this section identifies three gaps of the Victory Column: a) between the designer's stated intentions and the users' interpretations; b) between the intended purpose of the Victory Column and its material and symbolic levels; and c) between the Victory Column and its location. In the scheme below, the conceptual scheme defined in in Chapter Three § 3.3 is applied to the Victory Column. The dotted arrows in red symbolically represent the gap between designers and users. The dotted arrows in orange visualise the gap between the intended purpose of the memorial and its material and symbolic levels. Finally, the dotted circle in yellow illustrates the gap between the memorial and its location.
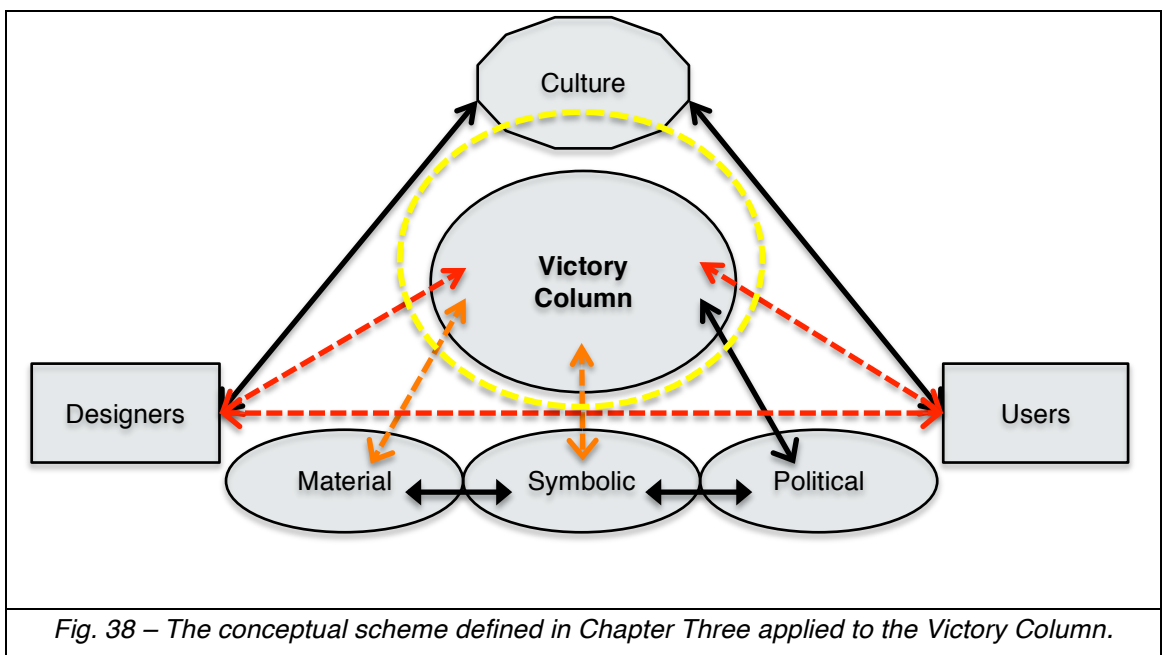
Fig. 38 – The conceptual scheme defined in Chapter Three applied to the Victory Column.

As for the gap between designer and users, the intended purpose of the Victory Column and the significance it has assumed for Estonian political elites have not been widely recognised at the societal level. The Victory Column was conceived to produce a Model User able to correctly recognise the iconography, to acknowledge the commemorated events, to show respect for the celebrated dead and to approach the memorial with sentiments of mourning and commemoration. Among these expectations, only the purpose of commemoration was correctly recognised and respected by the totality of respondents (§ 5.4).

However, respondents expressed discontent toward the fact that this event was presented in such a hermetic iconography and resonating design. Interviews showed that the memorial came in for a great deal of criticism (§ 5.4). Only three respondents stated they have a positive attitude toward some material aspects of the memorial; nine respondents clearly stated a strong dislike or a dislike for the memorial. Three respondents were unacquainted with the iconography of the Victory Column.

The Victory Column spawned uses that are different from those envisioned by the designers, e.g. skating and biking (fig. 36). The memorial attracted the expected practices of commemoration only during public rituals and ceremonies organised by the Estonian Government and its affiliates (§ 5.6). These public rituals have sought to entice users along the intended purposes of the Victory Column, i.e. to construct sentiments of national belonging and to promote practices signalling devotion for the entire nation.

The gap between the designer's stated intentions and the users' interpretations demonstrates that memorials "*can be used, reworked and reinterpreted in ways that are different from, or indeed contradictory to, the intentions of those who had them installed*" (Hay et al. 2004: 204). Despite design strategies being available to entice users along a specific interpretation, designers do not have complete control over the interpretations of monuments and memorial and thus users interpret memorials following their opinions, beliefs and feelings (De Certeau 1984: xvii-xx).

Regarding the gap between the intended purpose of the Victory Column and its material and symbolic levels, the memorial celebrates an event that, according to Estonian historical narratives, is linked with ideals of freedom and sovereignty. However, design choices such as hermetic iconography, large size and elevated location have linked the Victory Column with powerful messages and totalitarian

aesthetics. During the development phase of the design, the Estonian Government took a number of measures to move users away from these associations with totalitarian aesthetics, while assuring appropriate visibility to the memorial (§ 5.3). However, interviews demonstrated the association between the Victory Column, powerful meanings and totalitarian aesthetics (§ 5.4).

The gap between the publicised intended purpose of the Victory Column and its symbolic and material levels demonstrates that specific design choices cannot communicate specific meanings. As seen in Chapter Three § 3.1, the built environment signifies insofar as routinised patterns of interpretation are created and such patterns emerge when design choices are repetitively used to convey certain meanings.

As for the gap between the Victory Column and its location, the conservative political messages embodied in the Victory Column are in conflict with the public space of Freedom Square. The objectives behind the reconstruction plan of Freedom Square were to provide Tallinn with "*a car-free pedestrian-friendly environment […] a platform for urban life in the heart of Tallinn*" (Alver Architects 2009). The plan aimed to create "*a public space open to everyone and filled with diverse content and events*" (Lige 2014: 152). Conversely, the Victory Column presents conservative political messages and its design choices resemble those used for monuments and memorials erected in totalitarian regimes or in places where there is high control over the population. Moreover, respondents believed that this design is inappropriate and disconnected from the built environment of Tallinn's Old Town. Finally, they considered the great size and the verticality of the Victory Column as in conflict with existing built forms in the immediate surroundings (§ 5.4). The gap registered between the Victory Column and its location supports Lige's thesis that:

> *There is a strong conflict in the value categories of the square and the column subconsciously experienced by everyone using the space. It is a place that creates a simultaneous experience of pride and freedom but also embarrassment and elation.* (Lige 2014: 153)

5.7 Conclusions: The multiple meanings of the Victory Column

The erection of memorials and the public rituals centred on them are political tools by which specific histories and geographies become embodied in space. Political elites erect memorials to educate users toward the kinds of ideals that they define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. To do that, elites use a set of design strategies to entice users along specific interpretations. Memorials can be seen as texts able to implement those strategies and to construct the intended meanings of designers. However, users can interpret and use memorials in ways that are different from those envisioned by designers (Hay et al. 2004: 204).

This chapter explored these ideas through an analysis of the multiple interpretations of the War of Independence Victory Column, a war memorial unveiled in Tallinn in June 2009. The holistic perspective based on the connection between cultural geography and semiotics proved to be useful to gain a deeper understanding on how the built environment becomes a "*dynamic site of meanings*" in the context of changing concepts of past, nation and culture (Osborne 1998: 453).

Estonian elites erected the Victory Column to promote an ideological understanding of the past to symbolise a range of expectations about Estonia's future. In doing so, the memorial has helped to construct sentiments of national belonging and to promote practices signalling devotion for the entire nation. In brief, the Victory Column was an important tool for the national politics of memory and identity. As such, the Victory Column sought to legitimate the power and to set the cultural and political agendas of the Estonian elite.

However, the meanings that the Estonian Government strived to attach to the Victory Column were not reflected at the societal level. The Victory Column revealed a case in which users have largely reinterpreted the designers' stated intentions. A multi-method approach based on interviews and observations demonstrated that the Victory Column came in for a great deal of criticism and remained largely unused. This criticism regarded the way in which the War of Independence is remembered through the material and the symbolic design choices of the memorial. Tallinn citizens expressed discontent toward the fact that the remembered events and identities were presented through a hermetic iconography and controversial design, in a location that does not facilitate interactions and that it does not fit in with the adjacent built environment. The negative attitudes of respondents link with the fact that the Victory Column has

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remained largely unused. Observations revealed that it is very rare that users climb the staircase to approach the memorial. The memorial attracts practices of commemorations - i.e. practices in accordance with its intended purpose - only during public rituals periodically arranged in its surroundings. For the rest of the year, the Victory Column attracts only unexpected practices that are different from those envisioned by its designers.

The interpretations and uses of the Victory Column may change over time following change in social relations, in concepts of nation and in views on past events. At the moment, three gaps were identified between the designer's stated intentions and the users' interpretations, between the intended purpose of the Victory Column and its material and symbolic levels and between the Victory Column and its location. Filling these gaps may change the current interpretations of the Victory Column and encourage users to engage with the commemorated events and identities.

Chapter Six

Case Study Two: The multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students in Tartu

This chapter engages with the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, presenting an analysis of the second case study - the multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students (fig. 39), a circular fountain with a sculpture featuring two kissing young people under a umbrella, unveiled in Tartu in 1998. The Kissing Students was selected as one of the two case studies to address the primary research question presented in Chapter One § 1.6: 'how can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?'. In this respect, the Kissing Students provides an appropriate case study to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural geographical and the semiotic aspects of the built environment.

Fig. 39 – The Kissing Students. Picture taken 1.6.2015

The chapter argues that the Kissing Students presents outcomes regarding a) the embodied cultural and political meanings and b) the different ways in which these meanings are interpreted at societal levels. The publicised function of the Kissing Students was to reassess an old fountain and in turn to improve the appearance of its

surroundings. Its design choices created an inclusive, people-friendly space: its iconography is easily recognisable, its material design encourage interaction. As such, the Kissing Students reflects the intention to create a people-friendly public space suitable to include the plural daily practices by users.

The Kissing Students has been largely assimilated into the daily life of Tartu citizens. Only occasionally has the fountain-sculpture attracted practices that are different to the designers' intentions. Nevertheless, Tartu local authorities have tolerated these unexpected practices, so that they have become integrated into the symbolic and material dimensions of the Kissing Students.

This chapter analyses the designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students and the ways through which users interpret these intentions. This analysis is based on data collected during fieldwork in Tartu, between February and October 2015. The conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 informs this analysis conceiving the interplay a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments and memorials, the cultural context and the built environment.

The analysis is divided into three parts. First, section 6.3 addresses the designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students - i.e. the intended meanings of the 'authors'. Second, section 6.4 presents the interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the Kissing Students - i.e. the interpretations, actions and interactions of the 'readers'. Third, section 6.5 provides a deeper understanding of the meanings of the Kissing Students as emerging from the interplay between designers' and users' interpretations.

In section 6.6, the data presented in previous section are compared with each other to progress toward the theoretical dimension of the study. To do so, this section applies the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 to the multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students. Hence, this section identifies three connections of the Kissing Students: a) between the designers' stated intentions and the users' interpretations; b) between the Kissing Students and the built environment of Tartu; and c) between the Kissing Students and the urban identity of Tartu.

Before organising and discussing data, this chapter introduces the context of the Kissing Students and explains the reasons why it was selected as an appropriate case

study. Section 6.1 introduces the context of the Kissing Students: name, location, the historical process that led to its construction, process of unveiling and significance. Section 6.2 highlights the reasons why the Kissing Students was selected as one of the two case studies to address the primary research question.

6.1 Introducing the Kissing Students

The Kissing Students (in Estonian *Suudlevad tudengid*) is a sculptural composition including a circular fountain and a bronze sculpture. The sculpture features two young people while kissing, arms around each other beneath a dipping umbrella.

The Kissing Students stands in front of the old building of the town hall in Town Hall Square (in Estonian *Raekoja Plats*, fig. 40), the large central square of Tartu. Town Hall Square has been the political and civic centre of Tartu since the 13th century. A town hall was first built in this location in the 13th century. The present town hall is the third constructed in the same location and it was opened in 1786 (Salupere 2013: 82). To mark its historical function as seat of the town council, this place was called Town Hall Square in 1990 (Salupere 2013: 82). The area in front of the town hall served as a market place for several centuries. For this reason it was known as the 'great market' (in Estonian *Suurturg*, Kärdla 2009: 12). The square was also used as venue for festive events (Kärdla 2009: 11). A road from northwest to east passed through the market square to connect a caste on the hill with a riverside port. After a number of great fires ravaged Tartu, Empress Catherine II gifted Tartu a granite bridge with two triumphal arches (the so-called Stone Bridge, 1775-1784). The bridge served to connect the square with the east bank of the river. The Soviet Army blew up the bridge in 1941 and the German army completely destroyed it in 1944 (Salupere 2013: 80).

The regimes that ruled Tartu during the 20th century have used the present-day Town Hall Square as seat of government and location for public rituals of power (Salupere 2013: 80). During the Soviet regime, the square was used as an open-air parking lot. After Estonia regained independence, the square has undergone various transformations and restoration aiming at preserving its classical style. Today, Town Hall Square is the location of the present-day Tartu City Council and a venue regularly used for commerce, shopping, entertaining and cultural events (Tõnisson et al. 2006).

During the Second World War, several bombings left the central area of Tartu in ruins. In Town Hall Square, few buildings survived the bombings: among them, the old town hall and some of the classical buildings on the northern edge (fig. 41). In the late 1940s, the Soviet authorities of Tartu reconstructed part of the damaged buildings of Town Hall Square. For example, they rebuilt the buildings on the southern edge of the square (fig. 42) and erected a pedestrian bridge to link the square with the eastern part of Tartu.

Fig. 40 – Town Hall Square and the old town hall. Picture taken 27.4.2015

| *Fig. 41 – The north edge of Town Hall Square. Picture taken 29.9.2015* | *Fig. 42 – The south edge of Town Hall Square. Picture taken 29.9.2015* |

In the context of this reconstruction, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Tartu[15] ordered the construction of a fountain in 1948, to be located in front of the old town hall. After Estonia regained independence, the fountain fell into a state of disrepair (Püttsepp 1997). Hence, Tartu local authorities held competitions to collect design projects for the rebuilding of the fountain. The project of the Kissing Students won the design competition. The fountain-sculpture was inaugurated on 1 September 1998. Ever since, the fountain-sculpture has quickly become a popular meeting point for Tartu citizens.

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[15] The Chairman was Bronislav Võrse – the mayor of Tartu in today's terms.

6.2 The reasons for selecting the Kissing Students

There are a number of reasons why the Kissing Students provides an appropriate case study to address the primary research question presented in Chapter One § 1.6. Following the conceptual scheme defined in Chapter Three § 3.3, these reasons can be divided into the material, symbolic and political dimensions.

The reasons that can be found at the material level regard size, visibility and location of the Kissing Students. Despite its life-sized proportions, the fountain-sculpture is easily visible to users standing in a salient location of Town Hall Square in front of the old town hall. Town Hall Square has been an arena where different political regimes have tried to assert themselves via architecture and public rituals. Today, Town Hall Square is the location of the Tartu City Council and it regularly hosts public rituals, official celebrations and cultural events.

The reasons found at the symbolic level relate to the significance the Kissing Students has assumed for Tartu's urban space and identity. The Kissing Students has become an increasingly popular meeting point for Tartu citizens. The fountain-sculpture has assumed particular significance for young people and students. Bearing in mind that Tartu is the seat of the national university, Salupere (2013: 84) defined the iconography of the sculpture as well suited for the urban identity of Tartu. Thus, the image of the Kissing Students has been largely used in manifold media associated with Tartu: tourist guidebooks, advertisement, news, postcards, souvenirs, everyday objects, urban signage and TV programs (fig. 43-46); it has also been a recurrent image on the web site of the Tartu City Council (fig. 47). The large use of the Kissing Students as a sort of logo of Tartu has demonstrated its strong link with the city and the importance it has assumed for the local authorities. Tartu citizens generally embraced the Kissing Students being used a logo for Tartu. However, criticisms have been levelled at the Kissing Students as too poor in meaning and artistic value for being the symbol of Tartu.

Fig. 43 – A tourist booklet of Tartu. Picture taken 5.10.2016	*Fig. 44 – A public transport card. Picture taken 3.8.2015*	*Fig. 45 – An information booklet of the University of Tartu. Picture taken 5.10.2016*
Fig. 46 – An advertisement for the festival 'Tartu City Days'. Picture taken 22.08.2015	*Fig. 47 – The website of the Tartu City Council web site www.tartu.ee. Screenshot taken 5 October 2016.*	

Due to its significance for Tartu, the Kissing Students is constantly maintained with great care. Its surroundings are daily cleaned from garbage. City council staff periodically clean the basins of the fountain and polish the sculpture with special products (fig. 48-49). Snow is carefully removed throughout the winter (fig. 50). The whole area of Town Hall Square is kept under surveillance with security cameras.
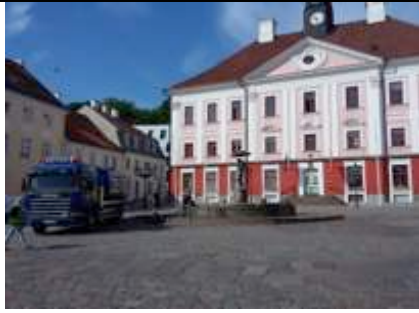
Fig. 48 – Cleaning the fountain of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 30.6. 2016

Fig. 49 – Polishing the sculpture of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 27.4.2015

Fig. 50 – A snowplough removing snow from the surroundings of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 24.1.2016

The Kissing Students was selected also for reasons concerning its political dimension – or better, for the apparent lack of direct political purpose behind its erection. The project of rebuilding the old fountain did not openly express direct political purposes. Nevertheless, the Kissing Students as every built form presents specific cultural and political meanings. The Tartu local authorities considered the rebuilding of the fountain-sculpture as an important project, so that it was implemented before supposedly more urgent interventions. For this reason, productive comparisons can be drawn between the Kissing Students and the local authorities that took the initiative to erect the fountain-sculpture. The Kissing Students still promotes the kinds of ideals that designers define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards.

Beside brief glimpses, there is no research in English on the Kissing Students. A great deal of research has provided a comprehensive account of the controversies over the interpretations of monuments and memorials starting from the early 2000s. This focus has diverted attention from less controversial built forms. Contrarily to the Victory Column, the Kissing Students reveals a case in which the interpretations of users match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent.

This chapter argues that less controversial built forms still present political and cultural meanings whose analysis can be as revelatory as that of more politicised monuments and memorials in understanding the connection of the cultural geographical and the semiotic perspectives on the built environment. This chapter aims to assess the extent and the potential of the connections between cultural geography and semiotics through the analysis of the multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students.

6.3 The Kissing Students according to its designers

This section addresses the designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students - i.e. the intended meanings of the 'authors'. This investigation is based on documents and secondary sources collected during fieldwork in Tartu between February and October 2015. Furthermore, direct observations explored how national and local authorities used the Kissing Students and its surroundings for their public rituals, official celebrations and cultural events.

As noted in Chapter Four § 4.9, literature and tourist materials in English provided an account of the meanings designers strived to convey through the Kissing Students. They also gave information about timetables, funding, objectives and outcomes relating to the Kissing Students. Finally, they outlined the authors of the design project. Literature available in English on the Kissing Students was collected at the University Library of the University of Tartu. Tourist materials in English were collected at the Tartu Visitor Centre.

Other material in English was collected through online searches, including online news regarding the design competitions of the Kissing Students; the schedules of the celebrations of public holidays taking place in the area of the Kissing Students; texts and multimedia files about the Kissing Students and Town Hall Square; tourist representations of the Kissing Students and Town Hall Square; and video and textual advertisement representing the Kissing Students.

Planning documents provided information on the various transformations and restoration of Town Hall Square after Estonia regained independence. They were collected in the Department of Urban Planning, Land Survey and Use of the Tartu City Council. A collection of tourist guidebooks in English, old pictures and postcards helped to reconstruct the spatial history of Town Hall Square. Relevant materials in this

respect were collected through visits to the National Archives of Estonia in Tartu and to the Tartu City Museums. General information considered as relevant from newspapers, magazines, movies, television programmes, web sites, blogs and online social networking services was registered in a fieldwork diary.

The sculptor of the bronze sculpture was interviewed to collect opinions, beliefs, judgements, emotions and feelings he has on the Kissing Students. This interview will be identified as 'Designer interview 2'

This section is split into three parts to investigate the material, symbolic and political dimensions of the Kissing Students as envisioned by its designers. The section first identifies the 'designers' of the Kissing Students, i.e. those who took the initiative for creating and implementing the design of the fountain-sculpture. It then investigates the material and the symbolic choices taken to implement the design of the Kissing Students. It then goes on to analyse the cultural context and the political meanings behind the Kissing Students.

The designers of the Kissing Students

In 1948, the Chairman of Executive Committee of the Tartu City Soviet, Bronislav Võrse, ordered the construction of a fountain in front of the old town hall. The fountain consisted of a circular basin and a pile of stones in the middle from where a small water jet emanated (fig. 51). This was not the first basin in the square: initially, Town Hall Square was a market place with public wells to water the animals.

Fig. 51 – The old fountain. Available in FOTIS, reference number: EFA.333.0-153990.

After Estonia regained independence, the fountain fell into a state of disrepair (Püttsepp 1997). To reassess this fountain, Tartu local authorities held a design competition in 1996. The proposed plans appeared to be too expensive and none was realised. A second competition was then held in 1997 (Ottas 1997). The terms and conditions of this competition were based mainly on economical and functional criteria. First, the project should not exceed the price of 300 000 kroon. Second, the design should interact with the old town hall without overshadowing it. Third, design entries should redesign the existing basin of the fountain without proposing new constructions. Finally, the chairman of the Tartu City Council's architecture department added that the design project should be suitable for the cold Estonian climate (Püttsepp 1997). However, the interviewed designer did not remember any strict terms to follow in the design competition, thus demonstrating that there was little political pressure applied to follow them:

> *The competition was held by the city and it was free on its terms - there weren't any suggestions or criteria given. […] The city did not intervene in the process in any way.* (Designer interview 2)

This 1997 design competition received 35 entries, but the committee unanimously decided not to award the first prize due to lack of appropriate projects (Ottas 1997). A second prize was awarded to a project called *Duo* by the architect Piret Müüripeali: this decision was explained through a letter stating that the project was consistent with the existent spatial settings. Two third prizes were awarded – *Emajõel ON lätted* by Erik Tukmann and *Vivat Universitatis* by Mati Karmin and Tiit Trummal. Finally, three special prizes of 5000 kroon were awarded.

In February 1998, the deputy mayor announced that the winning entry was one of the two selected third prices: *Vivat Universitatis* by the sculptor Mati Karmin and the architect Tiit Trummal. A letter explained that this project was selected for four main reasons: resistance to weather conditions; suitability with the classical built environment of Town Hall Square; monumentality; and consistency with the urban identity of Tartu (Püttsepp 1997).

The selected project fell within the criteria of the design competition listed here above. However, the construction of the fountain-sculpture cost more than expected: 1.4 million of kroon (Korv 1998). It was opened on 1 September 1998.

The purpose of erection and the iconography

The 1997 design committee aimed to select a rebuilding project to reassess the old fountain in front of the old town hall and in turn to improve the appearance of its spatial surroundings. An artist in the 1997 design committee stated that it was urgent to rebuild this fountain because of its state of critical disrepair.

The winning entry provided for the redesign of the fountain basin and included the bronze sculpture of the two young people kissing beneath a dripping umbrella (fig. 52). The official name of the project was *Vivat Universitatis*. However, the whole complex of the fountain-sculpture assumed the official name 'Kissing Students' after the sculptor Mati Karmin clarified that the two represented young people were students. A real-life event inspired this iconography: the sculptor himself once saw his sister's elder son kissing a girl under the rain; he photographed them and used the picture as a model to carve the sculpture of the Kissing Students (Lukas 2005).

Fig. 52 – The sculpture of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 12.3.2016

The mayor of Tartu stated that the Kissing Students was selected because its student-related iconography was consistent with the urban identity of Tartu (Püttsepp 1997). Tartu is the seat of the national university and it is considered the "*intellectual capital of Estonia*" (*University of Tartu Act 1995*; Salupere 2013: 6). Estonian citizens believe that Tartu and its students were crucial in promoting the main elements of Estonian culture and in creating the ground for the Estonian national awakening:

> *[…] it is here that the entire Estonian national consciousness and national culture arose and developed. Estonian literature and journalism have their*

origins in Tartu, as does the famous tradition of the song festival and professional theatre. The foundation of Estonian national scientific thought and Estonian as a language of culture were laid here. (Salupere 2013: 6)

Due to the student-related iconography, Salupere describes the Kissing Students as an appropriate sculpture for Tartu:

In front of the town hall, […] there is a fountain. This was built in the first post-war years, but was reconstructed a few years ago, and in 1998 was adorned with a sculpture that is well suited to the city of youth – kissing students beneath a dripping umbrella. (Salupere 2013: 84)

Furthermore, tourist materials largely refer to the Kissing Students as a suitable "*symbol*" for Tartu as a university city.

At the town centre on Raekoja plats is the town hall (1782-89), topped by a tower and a weathervane, and fronted by a statue of lovers kissing under an umbrella – an apt, jolly symbol of Tartu. (Lonely Planet 2009: 352)

In 1998 the Town Hall Square was decorated with a fountain-statue depicting two kissing students, which has become a symbol of the youthful and academic spirit of the university city. (Tartu City Government 2015: 3)

Apart from the Town Hall, its most notice- able feature is the somewhat cheeky Kissing Students fountain. This is a relatively recent addition - designed by Mati Karmin and installed in 1998 - but locals have already adopted it as a symbol of the town. (Singer 2016: 23)

'The Kissing Students' sculpture and fountain is one of the most recognised symbols of Tartu. (https://www.visitestonia.com/en/the-kissing-students)

Conversely, the Victory Column almost never appears in the suggested itineraries of the main tourist guidebooks (e.g. Lonely Planet 2009).

The material design and the location choice

The fountain of the Kissing Students consists of two basins divided into three circular levels. The level at the ground is a granite wall about 7 meters of diameter (≈ 23 feet). On the granite wall, four bronze cupola-shaped nozzles pour water in a smaller basin (fig. 53). From the smaller basin, the water flows within the larger basin at the ground level. The basins can hold up to 7500 litres. The fountain operates only during the warmer times of the year, generally from the end of April until the end of October. The nozzles variously operate during this time and they can pour water at different pressures on special occasions: for example, the nozzles operated as to resemble the sound of the sea on 21 June 2016, during the day marking the summer solstice. During quiet hours, one can hear the water of the fountain all over the square.

In the centre of the smaller basin, a circular pedestal supports the bronze sculpture of the Kissing Students (fig. 54). As it stands in the middle of the fountain basin, the sculpture cannot be accessed. There are ten smaller nozzles and ten underwater spotlights around the pedestal. The spotlights illuminate the sculpture on particular occasions. The dark bronze colour of the sculpture varies according to cleanness of the surfaces. During spring and summer, the sculpture is regularly polished with special products (fig. 48-49).

The total complex of the fountain-sculpture weights 40 tons. The fountain stands on a circular platform that provides flat ground in the sloping Town Hall Square. In 2006, sixteen bronze plates were installed on the external part of the granite wall with the names of Tartu's twin cities (fig. 55)[16].

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[16] The sculptor of the Kissing Students Mati Karmin designed the bronze plates with the name of Tartu's twin cities: Bærum, Deventer, Ferrara, Frederiksberg, Hafnarfjörður, Hämeenlinna, Kaunas, Lüneburg, Pihkva, Riga, Salisbury, Tampere, Turu, Uppsala, Veszprem, Zutphen. The plates are 14 centimetres width x 24 centimetres long (≈ 0.45 x 0.78 feet). The plates are situated in the direction of the cities and they also mark the distance between Tartu and the twin cities.

| Fig. 53 – The bronze cupola-shaped nozzles of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 29.4.2015 | Fig. 54 – The pedestal of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 21.5.2015 |
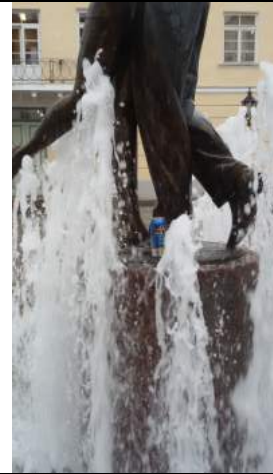
Fig. 55 – Some of the bronze plates with the name of Tartu's twin cities on the basin of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 18.3.2015

The Kissing Students is located in Town Hall Square, in front of the main entrance of the old town hall. South of the fountain-sculpture lies the building hosting the offices of Tartu City Council. Parallel to the fountain toward the east, the streets *Ruutli* and *Kuuni* merge one into the other in Town Hall Square: a distinctive cobblestone pattern on the surface of the square creates a link between these streets. A copper coat of arm of Tartu was placed in the middle of this cobblestone pattern in the 1980s (Kerge 2007, fig. 56). Few meters from it, a stone tile marks the former location of a public well opened in 17th century (fig. 57).

Fig. 56 – The Tartu coat of arm on the ground of Town Hall Square. Picture taken 1.10.2015	*Fig. 57 – The stone tile on the floor of Town Hall Square, marking the location in which a public well stood between the 17th and the 18th century. Picture taken 27.4.2015*

The regimes that ruled Tartu during the 20th century have used the present-day Town Hall Square as seat of government and location for public rituals of power (Salupere 2013: 80). In Town Hall Square, a parade was organised for the February Revolution in 1917. Estonians arranged here the celebrations of the first anniversary of the declaration of independence in 1919 (fig. 58). On 7 August 1940, military representatives paraded through Town Hall Square to welcome Soviet authorities (fig. 59). Nazi authorities organised a military parade in Town Hall Square on 25 August 1942, a year since the Nazi regime replaced the Soviet regime. All this political turmoil caused many name changes. During the Nazi regime, the square was named after Adolf Hitler. Soviet authorities changed the name to Soviet Square (in Estonian *Nõukogude väljak*). The name was finally changed to Town Hall Square in 1990.

Fig. 58 – The celebrations of the first Independence Day in Town Hall Square, 24 February 1919. Available at: landfield.pri.ee [Accessed: 20 February 2017]	*Fig. 59 – The parade to welcome Soviet authorities in Town Hall Square, 7 August 1940. Available at: ajapaik.ee [Accessed: 20 February 2017]*

Today, the square is pedestrianized and provides a venue for political rituals, cultural events and attractions, such as student days, historical revivals (fig. 60), food and craft fairs, film festivals, concerts, sport competitions (fig. 61) and children's days. Even if not taking place right in Town Hall Square, other cultural entertaining events are repeatedly advertised here through PVC banners, installations or performances. Moreover, Town Hall Square provides the setting for the celebrations of Christmas and New Years' Eve. From the end of November until the beginning of January, strip lights are installed from one side to the other of the square, to form a lighting ceiling (fig. 62). Lighting and garlands are placed on the Town Hall and a Christmas tree is erected in the middle of the square: at its bottom, children can bring their wish lists.

| Fig. 60 – The craft and food fair during the festival 'Hansa Days' in Town Hall Square. Picture taken 12.7.2015 | Fig. 61 – Beach volley field in Town Hall Square. Picture taken 4.6.2016 |

Fig. 62 – Town Hall Square during Christmas. Picture taken 6.2.2016

The cultural context and the political dimension

The rebuilding of the old fountain has assumed specific significance for Tartu local authorities so that they spent a significant amount of resources to implement this project. An artist in the design committee stated that the decision for the rebuilding project should have been made carefully and with great attention (Ottas 1997). However, the artist felt it was urgent to reassess the old fountain in such a central area

of the city. As a result, the project for rebuilding the fountain was implemented even before supposedly more urgent interventions such as the return of the *Kalevipoeg* monument, i.e. a monument commemorating those who fell in the War of Independence, destroyed during the Soviet regime (fig. 76).

The project of rebuilding the old fountain did not openly express direct political purposes. The establishment of a built environment free from direct political meanings has been a common cultural policy in independent Estonia supposed to enhance the "*marketability*" of the post-socialist built environment (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204). Nevertheless, the Kissing Students as every built form presents specific cultural and political meanings. The Kissing Students dedicates a place to a significant part of the population of Tartu: the students. Estonian citizens consider Tartu and its students as crucial in creating the ground for the Estonian national awakening (Salupere 2013: 6). Moreover, students initiated several events that contributed to the regaining of the Estonia's independence. In May 1987, students gathered in the main building of the University of Tartu to demonstrate against the creation of phosphate mines in North East Estonia (Estonian Embassy in Berlin 2011). On 2 February 1988, a protest was held in Tartu for the anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty (Made 2015: 39). On 14 April 1988, nearly 10 000 Estonians gathered near the Estonian Student Society waving the blue-, black- and white Estonian flags, which were illegal under the Soviet regime (Estonian Embassy in Berlin 2011). A month later students waved Estonian flags and sent message of freedom during the Tartu pop-music festival (Šmidchens 2014: 209). Located right in the central square, the Kissing Students recognises the significance students have for Tartu, as bearers of an Estonian national consciousness.

In the immediate vicinity of the Kissing Students, Tartu local authorities regularly organise the celebrations of public holidays commemorating independence, such as the Independence Day (24 February) and the Victory Day (23 June). The main celebrations take place during Victory Day, a public holiday marking the day in which Estonians defeated the German troops in 1919 during the War of Independence[17]. This public holiday became associated with ideals of freedom during Estonia's first period of independence, when the President of Estonia used to build a fire in the morning of 23 June to celebrate the victory over the German troops. On this occasion, a flame was carried from the presidential fire to light bonfires across Estonia. Each year this day, Tartu local authorities light torches in front of the old town hall, military and political

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[17] See note 7.

representatives hold public speeches and military parades take place (fig. 63-64). Similar rituals are held for the local celebrations of Independence Day on 24 February.

Fig. 63-64 – Celebrations of Victory Day and St John's Eve on 23 June 2015. Pictures available at: tartu.postimees.ee [Accessed: 23 June 2016]

Commemorations take place in the square on the day of remembrance of the Soviet deportations in March 1949: it is common practice during this commemoration to light candles around the Kissing Students to commemorate the victims of the Soviet deportations in March 1949 (fig. 65). Furthermore, Tartu citizens spontaneously use the Kissing Students to commemorate victims of terrorism, mass violence or other disasters. Occasionally, the Kissing Students and its surroundings are used for civic demonstrations. On these occasions, the basin of the Kissing Students can serve as a stage from where to hold protest speeches (fig. 66).

Fig. 65 – Candles around the Kissing Students in remembrance of the victims of the Soviet deportations in March 1949. Picture available at: news.err.ee [Accessed: 27 March 2016]

Fig. 66 – Demonstration in favour of immigration. Picture taken 9.4.2016

6.4 The interpretations, actions and interactions of the users

This section presents the interpretations of users and their actions and interactions within the space of the Kissing Students – i.e. the interpretations, actions and interactions of the 'readers'. This reflection is based on primary data collected through interviews and observations carried out during fieldwork in Tartu between February and October 2015.

As seen in Chapter Four § 4.7, semi-structured interviews aimed to collect a range of interpretations on the Kissing Students. Appendix 1 shows the list of the main issues covered during interviews on the Kissing Students. Interview data derived from sixteen interviews with respondents that resided in Tartu their entire life or that had only left Tartu temporarily. Respondents varied in terms of ethnic origins, age, gender, education and profession. A suitable balance of Estonians and Russophones was guaranteed: eight respondents were Estonians and eight belonged to the Russophone community of Tallinn. Respondents were divided into four age bands. Older respondents remembered the local Soviet authorities using Town Hall Square as their political headquarters. They also remembered Town Hall Square full of local shops. All the respondents from Tartu experienced the erection of the Kissing Students and they all saw Town Hall Square turning into a venue for entertaining, cultural events, commerce and shopping.

Participant observations concentrated on the actions and interactions of users who daily cross and use the space of the Kissing Students. Appendix 3 presents the list of the relevant features to be observed identified from the literature and from interviews. Observations were carried out in Town Hall Square every day between February and October 2015, with the exception of some periods spent not working.

This section is split into three parts to investigate the users' interpretations and criticisms of the material, symbolic and political dimensions of the Kissing Students. The section begins by exploring the users' interpretations of the material and the symbolic level of the Kissing Students. It then addresses the cultural and political meanings that users have attached to the Kissing Students.

The users' interpretations of the symbolic level

Interviewing on the symbolic level of the Kissing Students concerned two main issues: the iconography and the suitability of the fountain-sculpture in relation to the urban identity of Tartu as a university city. All the respondents acknowledged the name and the iconography of the Kissing Students. Three respondents recalled the real-life event that inspired the iconography as reported by the sculptor.

Seven respondents accepted the idea that the Kissing Students can be taken as the main 'symbol' of Tartu. In respondents' terms, the word 'symbol' simply meant a recognisable and distinctive built form that is normally associated with Tartu. Conversely, nine respondents called this issue into question seeing the Kissing Students as too poor in meaning and artistic value to be the symbol of Tartu. Among these respondents, seven suggested that the main building of the University of Tartu would be more suitable as symbol for a student city. Yet, the totality of respondents generally agreed on the statement that the Kissing Students could be taken as one of the symbols of Tartu.

> *I think that the most important symbol [of Tartu] is the university itself and its main building, even if they [the university and the Kissing Students] are two different things, in scale and function. But anyway the sculpture is in a very good location and people take it as a symbol. I remember when last year my nephew graduated from university, all the graduated went there to take pictures. In this sense, people take it as a symbol, even if not 'the most important'.* (Interview 28, Estonian, born in 1960, male, astrophysicist)

Ten respondents identified in the iconography the reason why they considered the Kissing Students as one of the symbols of Tartu. They believed that the Kissing Students sculpture appropriately represented student life and ideals related with youth.

> *The name of the fountain is the 'Kissing Student'. Tartu is the city of students. I think it is a very good example to represent how the students are connected with Tartu.* (Interview 17, Russophone, born in 1995, male, student)

Two respondents from the oldest age band associated the Kissing Students with ideals of love.

I think this [the Kissing Students] is the symbol of Tartu because it represents youth and love. Love and youth are related with Tartu. The sculpture represents also the relation between students and Tartu. (Interview 16, Estonian, born in 1953, female, language teacher)

These two respondents identified in the iconography the reason for that, but they also recalled the wedding traditions popular during Soviet times, when it was common for newlyweds and their guests to circle the fountain in their cars while honking in celebration. Even today one can occasionally spot newlyweds posing for wedding photo-shoots while mimicking the image of the Kissing Students.

Ten respondents described the Kissing Students as being a popular meeting point among students and young people. Among them, four respondents were actually students and explained that they often use the Kissing Students as a place where to meet with friends.

I have been living in Tartu for the majority of my life and Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square] is the place where I usually go if I have to meet someone, because it is the easiest [meeting point], it is the centre of the city or town…and everybody knows Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square]. Even if - let's say - we go for dinner or to any other place, we first meet in Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square] and then we decide where to go…so it is a meeting place. Usually [we meet] where the fountain is. If I say Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square], I usually mean near the fountain. Sometimes people ask for the precise meeting point, so I have to specifically tell them where to meet. But this happens very few times. If I say to meet in Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square], it is usually near the fountain. (Interview 14, Estonian, born in 1986, female, student researcher)

Observations confirmed the significance of the Kissing Students for young people and students. Very often young people wait for friends in front of the Kissing Students. Fraternity and sorority students gather around the Kissing Students during specific rituals and celebrations (fig. 67). Moreover, it is common for newly graduated students to take pictures with their families and friends in front of the Kissing Students after the graduation ceremony. Occasionally, groups of students take a dip into the basin of the fountain, following the legend saying that one should take a dip in the fountain to be considered a "*real student*" of the University of Tartu (Estonian Moments 2013).

Furthermore, observations demonstrated that the fountain is an attraction for young people and small children. Schoolchildren use the fountain for water balloon fights as celebration of the end of school in May and June. During these practices, students occasionally put soap in the basin to create foam all over the fountain (fig. 68). Often during the week, teachers bring pre-school children for a stroll in the area of the Kissing Students (fig. 69). Children events are organised in Town Hall Square to celebrate the starting or the end of the school year. Moreover, it is common practice throughout the warmer season to see parents making their children climb on the basin of the fountain to touch the water. Two respondents from the oldest age band remembered that they often visit the Kissing Students with their grandchildren.

Fig. 67 – Fraternity students drinking in front of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 19.10.2015

Fig. 68 – Schoolchildren taking a picture in front of the basin of the Kissing Students full of soap foam. Picture taken 25.6.2016
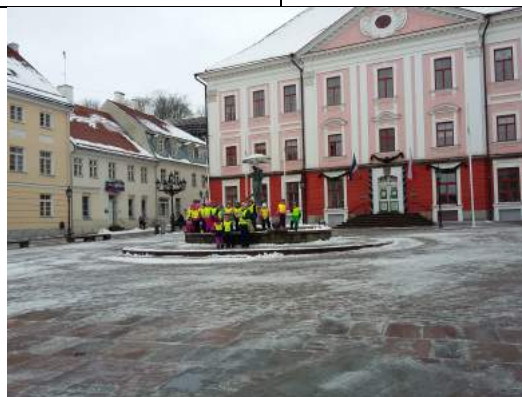
Fig. 69 – Pre-school children on the Kissing Students fountain. Picture taken 22.2.2016

Finally, observations revealed two other kinds of practices that symbolically charged the Kissing Students. First, religious communities occasionally organise their rituals in front of the Kissing Students (fig. 70). Second, Tartu citizens and students spontaneously arrange commemorative practices around the Kissing Students to commemorate the victims of terrorism, mass violence or other disasters. For example

in 2015, Tartu citizens and students lit candles and laid flowers for the victims of the Paris terroristic attacks in November 2015 (fig. 71); the Georgian community living in Tartu organised a commemorative event in memory of the victims of the Tbilisi flooding in June 2015.

Fig. 70 – Hare Krishna in front of the Kissing Students. Picture taken 30.03.2015	Fig. 71 – Candles, flowers and memorial messages for the victims of the Paris terrorist attack in November 2015. Picture taken 19.11.2015

The users' interpretations of the material level

Interviewing on the material level of the Victory Column concerned two main issues: the material appearance and the location. No respondents expressed criticisms of the material design of the Kissing Students. Only one respondent defined the sculpture as a modest urban decoration that may divert attention from "*more valuable*" monuments of Tartu (Interview 18, Russophone, born in 1982, female, academic administrator). Five respondents explicitly stated that the Kissing Students has a good design and stands in an appropriate location. One of them was pleased by the fact that the Kissing Students looks beautiful and clean.

> *The Kissing Students is beautiful and I like they constantly keep it clean. It has a nice design. Many people do different activities around it!* (Interview 15, Russophone, born in 1985, female, customer adviser and football player)

Two respondents considered the Kissing Students as very visible in the context of Town Hall Square, being placed in a salient location of Town Hall Square. The

fountain-sculpture stands in front of the old town hall, near the building of the present-day city council and next to the intersection of two main streets, *Ruutli* and *Kuuni*.

> *Placing the sculpture there was a really good idea. It [the Kissing Students] looks very good for me and I really like it! It is also in front of the Town Hall which is another symbol of Tartu for me…it creates a good harmony! If you want to take a picture, you can take a picture with the town hall and the fountain, which both look very good for me!* (Interview 17, Russophone, born in 1995, male, student)

Eleven respondents stated they daily cross this area of Town Hall Square because it is on the way to reach other functional parts of the city. Furthermore, they reported that they visit Town Hall Square for different reasons throughout the year. Seven respondents stated they regularly visit the restaurants and cafes on the square. Six respondents remembered that they visited Town Hall Square during entertaining and cultural events or during the celebrations of public holidays. Three respondents often visited the square for work purposes. Three respondents explained that they periodically go to hairdresser shops located in the square. Finally, two respondents reported about their frequent need to visit the offices of the Tartu City Council.

Observations demonstrated that the location of the Kissing Students has a higher level of pedestrian traffic all through the week. During the weekdays, there is quick crossing of students to reach the university or to go back home after classes. Many other people stop in Town Hall Square and meet at the Kissing Students. Some people wait for their friends standing in front of the Kissing Students or sitting on the basin of the fountain; others prefer the benches on the sides of the Kissing Students. Especially at weekends during the warmer times, citizens and tourists spend time eating or drinking in the outdoor seating of restaurants and cafes in Town Hall Square. Outdoors seating is usually open from May to September.

The users' interpretations of the political dimension

Interviewing on the political dimension of the Kissing Students concerned the relation between the Kissing Students and those who took the initiative for its construction, i.e. the Tartu City Council and its affiliates. Four respondents defined the Kissing Students as a good project implemented by Tartu local authorities. Ten respondents manifested approval toward the design project because it conveys ideals connected with student

life, youth and love. They identified these ideals in accordance with the urban identity of Tartu.

One respondent directly referred to the political dimension of the Kissing Students - or better, to the apparent lack of direct political purposes. The respondent manifested a positive attitude toward the Kissing Students because it presents meanings disconnected from selective political messages and historical narratives.

> *When I think about…when other Tartu statues come into my mind - I don't know, I remember there is the pig in front of the market, there is Juri Lotman in front of the library, there is Kristjan Peterson in Toomemägi Park - they all refer to specific spheres of interest. Conversely, the Kissing Students is something that almost everyone can relate to. It is what the city is about for basically everyone, it is about you, people, students, and their relations…yeah it very relatable! […] What I wanted to say is that…yeah…it is not a random historical figure, you know, that you can read when was born, when died and what he did…it is very impersonal in this respect. But it is also very personal because it relates to everyone.* (Interview 3, Estonian, born in 1990, female, customer adviser)

Tartu city authorities periodically organise celebrations of days of national or local importance in Town Hall Square (§ 6.3). However, no respondents recalled to have attended any of these official celebrations. One respondent reported that they regularly observed the commemorative events in memory of the victims of the Soviet deportations in 1949, for the reason that a family member was deported (interview 28, Estonian, born in 1960, male, astrophysicist). Respondents affirmed to prefer visiting Town Hall Square during entertaining or cultural events. Three respondents remembered their visits to markets and fairs periodically organised in the square. Four recalled the film festival occurring every year in August. Two respondents remembered attending concerts occasionally organised in the square. One respondent recalled the student festivals and one the art installations occasionally assembled in the square. Finally, five respondents enthusiastically recalled their visiting of Town Hall Square during Christmas or New Years' Eve.

> *[I like Town Hall Square] because it is cosy and nice. I especially like it in winter. In winter is the best square in Estonia and the most cosy during Christmas time, even more than Tallinn Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square]. I like the fact they put the Christmas illumination all over Raekoja Plats [Town Hall Square], as to create*

a sort of light ceiling. (Interview 18, Russophone, born in 1982, female, academic administrator)

One respondent remembered that Town Hall Square is Tartu's geographical point for civic demonstrations, occasionally occurring in the immediate surroundings of the Kissing Students (fig. 63).

6.5 The interpretation of the Kissing Students between designers and users

This section provides a deeper understanding of the meanings of the Kissing Students as emerging from the interplay between designers' and users' interpretations. Here, "*isotopies*" are detected to make sense of the data presented in sections 6.3 and 6.4 (Eco 1992: 65). As seen in Chapter Four § 4.11, isotopies allowed reflections on the possible links among the themes identified within interview and observational data, helping to progress toward the theoretical dimension of the study.

As explained in § 6.3, designers did not openly advocate specific intentions behind the Kissing Students, if not reassessing the old fountain and thus improving the appearance of Town Hall Square. However, it is inevitable for built forms to construct and frame meanings (Dovey 1999: 1). As noted in Chapter Three § 3.2, authors of texts foresee and simultaneously construct their readership, emphasising certain interpretations while concealing others (Eco 1979: 7-11; Lotman 1990: 63). As text, built forms embody the intention of the designers to convey the meanings that they define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. Accordingly, the work of designers is inevitably political:

> *Planners do not work on a neutral stage, an ideally liberal setting in which all affected interest have voice; they work within political institutions, on political issues, on problems whose most basic technical components (say, a population projection) may be celebrated by some, contested by others. Any account of planning must face these political realities. […] The people work is always political, sometimes explicitly so, at other times not.* (Forester 1989: 3-4)

As a result, built forms are necessarily involved in discourses of nationalism, power, ethnicity, gender and other contingencies related with group identification (Lindström et al. 2014: 114; Duncan and Duncan 1988). As with every built form, the Kissing

Students presents specific cultural and political positions of those who erected it. The first part of this section presents isotopies regarding the designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students.

As seen in Chapter Three § 3.2, users differently conform to the designers' intentions. The second part of this section presents isotopies regarding the interpretations of users and their actions and interactions within the space of the Kissing Students (Saldaña 2009: 13). The isotopies detected in this section are tied to the literature revised in Chapter Two and the conceptual scheme of Chapter Three § 3.3. They are underlined and identified in italics.

The designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students

This section presents isotopies regarding the designers' stated intentions behind the Kissing Students (Saldaña 2009: 13). Isotopies are underlined and identified in italics below.

- *An urgent need to reassess public space*

As seen in § 6.1, the fountain built in 1948 by the Soviet local authorities of Tartu quickly became a popular meeting point and attracted ritual practices such as the newlyweds visiting it for good luck. After Estonia regained independence, Tartu local authorities expressed the urgent need to reassess the fountain. Despite the urgency, the committee promptly committed to choose a redesign project that was consistent with the surrounding built environment (§ 6.3). Artists and designers were entrusted to assess the appropriateness of the competition entries. Participatory methods were envisaged so that citizens could express their preferences on the rebuilding projects: for example, a local newspaper published the submitted design projects and invited citizens to express their opinions through a poll. Yet, the final decision rested with the design committee lead by Tartu City Council.

- *Consistency with the built environment*

As seen in Chapter Three § 3.3, newly erected built forms actively affect the interpretation of the existing built environment. The Kissing Students interacts with the surroundings built environment, without overshadowing existing built forms. No major interventions were implemented to construct the fountain-sculpture. The decision to

maintain the original basin of the old fountain demonstrates the intention of the rebuilding project to combine with the existing built environment. Even the tiles of the circular platform on which the fountain is located are the same as those of Town Hall Square.

- *An iconic built form*

The Kissing Students has become a sort of logo for Tartu as a university town. The fountain-sculpture is constantly represented on tourist guidebooks, advertisement, news, postcards, souvenirs, everyday objects, urban signage, TV programs and web sites (fig. 39-42). Tourist guidebooks refer to the Kissing Students as a suitable 'symbol' of Tartu. The totality of respondents generally agreed on this statement and used the word 'symbol' to describe the Kissing Students as a distinctive built form normally associated with Tartu. Due to its continuous association with Tartu, the Kissing Students can be seen as a material synecdoche, i.e. a built form used to identify an entire city. In literary theory, a synecdoche is

[…] the employment of a part to stand for the whole or the whole to stand for a part. Synecdoches are powerful signifiers because they parsimoniously conjure up in the mind of the observer a whole narrative. (Duncan 1990: 20)

Material synecdoche is a common strategy used in tourist communication and city branding. In Europe, the material synecdoche of a city is often great in size, architecturally imposing and erected in the remote past, e.g. the Coliseum for Rome, Big Ben for London, the Tour Eiffel for Paris and so on. However, there are examples where a smaller sculpture has become the material synecdoche for an entire city, e.g. the *Little Mermaid* for Copenhagen and the *Manneken Pis* for Brussels.

- *A place for public rituals*

As seen in § 6.2, Town Hall Square has been an arena where different political regimes have tried to assert themselves via architecture and public rituals. Today, Town Hall Square is the venue for public rituals, official celebrations (fig. 59-63) and cultural events (fig. 56-57). Observations demonstrated that public rituals and celebrations organised by the Tartu local authorities often take place in the immediate surroundings of the Kissing Students, but it is rare that the fountain-sculpture is actually used for any specific purpose during these rituals. Conversely, the basin of the Kissing Students

takes an active part in the celebrations of widely observed holidays such as Christmas. Moreover, the Kissing Students is actively used for commemorative practices, such as the lighting of candles during the commemorations for the victims of the Soviet deportations in March 1949 (§ 6.3). This commemoration is repeated in the largest Estonian cities. The main memorial event of the kind takes place in Freedom Square, Tallinn (Chapter Five § 5.3).

- *An attractive tourist destination*

The Kissing Students and Town Hall Square are the most visited places in Tartu. Observations showed that many tourists visit Town Hall Square and take pictures of the Kissing Students, especially during the warmer times. A number of interventions have been taken to make this area an attractive place for tourists and the Kissing Students has helped to attract practices of tourism and leisure. In the square, tourists can find the Tartu Visitor Centre, souvenir shops, cafes and restaurants. It is common practice for groups of tourists to take pictures having the Kissing Students in the background. This is the case also for the other visitors of Tartu such as sport teams, conferences attendees, school trips and business meeting. Moreover, there is a widespread use of the Kissing Students on manifold tourist guidebooks, leaflets and web sites (fig. 39, 41 and 43).

- *A tool to convey political and cultural meanings*

Whilst no political purposes were openly expressed, the Kissing Students presented the political meanings and cultural positions of those that took the initiative for its erection. As with every built form, the Kissing Students articulates "*one set of ideas, sequence of events, values and identities as opposed to another set*" (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 4). The sculpture presents two young people – a guy and a girl – that were said to be students. As noted in § 6.3, Estonian citizens consider Tartu and its students as crucial in creating the ground for Estonia's independence (Salupere 2013: 6). Students are a significant part of Tartu population: University of Tartu has nearly 14 000 students (University of Tartu 2016); the number grows to 18 000 counting students enrolled in other higher education institutes (Salupere 2013: 64). Academic and educational institutions are the largest employers of Tartu and their budget exceeds that of the entire city (Salupere 2013: 64). Dedicating a place to students, the Kissing Students has assumed the characteristic of the monumental, i.e. to celebrate significant identities for a city or a community.

The interpretations of the discourse of the Kissing Students

The Model User of the Kissing Students was supposed to recognise the significance of students for Tartu as a university city. The Model User should have engaged with the fountain-sculpture during the course of the daily life, without trying to directly access it. Users mostly conform to these expectations. Interview data showed that the Kissing Students was received in a positive way. Approval was manifested toward the symbolic and the material levels of the fountain-sculpture as well as toward the cultural positions it articulated (§ 6.4). At the empirical level, the interpretations of users match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent. Observations demonstrated that Tartu citizens make large use of the Kissing Students during the course of their everyday life. Few practices differing to the designers' intentions were registered.

This section presents isotopies derived from analytic reflection on primary data regarding the interpretations of users and their practices within the space of the Kissing Students. These isotopies are underlined and identified in italics below.

- *Easily understandable iconography*

The meanings of the Kissing Students are easily recognisable. The totality of respondents acknowledged the iconography of the sculpture. Ten respondents considered the Kissing Students as consistent with the urban identity of Tartu, promoting ideals related with student life, youth and romantic love (§ 6.3).

- *Overrated symbolism*

Seven respondents accepted the idea that the Kissing Students can be taken as a sort of logo of Tartu. Nine respondents called into question the use of the Kissing Students as a logo for Tartu. These respondents defined the Kissing Students as a simple urban decoration, too poor in meaning and artistic value to embody the whole urban identity of Tartu (§ 6.3). They preferred different built forms to be taken as symbols for the city, e.g. the main building of the University of Tartu, a classicist-style building erected between 1804 and 1809 to host the main academic activities and events.

These respondents considered University of Tartu as the most important organization of the city. Salupere (2013: 6) considered it as a source of national pride, as the place where the national consciousness and culture first developed. The University of Tartu

has continued to operate during the regimes ruling Tartu during the 20th century. Today, it is the national university and the only classical university of Estonia (*University of Tartu Act 1995*; Salupere 2013: 64). For this reasons, respondents considered the main building of University of Tartu as a more suitable symbol of Tartu.

- *Good design and appropriate location*

Five respondents explicitly stated that the Kissing Students presents a good design and that it stands in an appropriate location (§ 6.3). They considered the Kissing Students consistent with the built environment of Town Hall Square and with the urban identity of Tartu. They agreed that, the Kissing Students has a high visibility in the context of Town Hall Square, despite its life-size proportions.

- *A common feature in everyday life*

The Kissing Students stands at a crossing point between functional parts of Tartu and it has become a popular meeting point among Tartu citizens' activities. Eleven respondents stated they daily cross nearby the Kissing Students. Observations confirmed that the Kissing Students is a common feature that is crossed everyday in the itineraries of Tartu citizens. Observations demonstrated that Town Hall Square and the area in front of the Kissing Students have a higher level of pedestrian traffic all through the week and a high number of visitors throughout the year.

- *A place for young people*

Ten respondents described the Kissing Students as a popular meeting point especially among students and young people. Observations confirmed this function: very often young people wait for friends in front of the Kissing Students; fraternity and sorority students gather around the Kissing Students during specific rituals and celebrations (fig. 64); newly graduated students take pictures with their families and friends in front of the Kissing Students after the graduation ceremony; schoolchildren use the fountain for water balloon fights to celebrate the end of the school. Furthermore, the fountain is an attraction for small children. Finally, the Kissing Students has attracted uses that do not conform to the intended purposes of the fountain-sculpture.

- *A place for entertaining and cultural events*

Town Hall Square periodically hosts entertaining and cultural events (§ 6.3). Observations showed that the Kissing Students is integral part of student festivals and sport events. Art installations are occasionally assembled as interacting with the fountain-sculpture. For example, an ice sculpture is installed every winter right in front of it. Advertisement and performances often use it to enhance their visibility.

Local authorities use the Kissing Students during the celebrations of widely observed holidays such as Christmas. Each year in November, they hold an opening ceremony of the Christmas decorations in Town Hall Square. On this occasion, a bonfire is lit in the basin of the fountain and public speeches of local representatives take place in the immediate surroundings of the Kissing Students.

- *Unexpected practices*

As seen in § 6.4, the Kissing Students has attracted some practices that are different to the designers' stated intentions. However, these practices are only occasional. Moreover, the Tartu local authorities have not spent much effort to discourage them. In consequence, these practices have become integrated into the symbolic and material dimensions of the Kissing Students. Nevertheless, the space of the Kissing Students is kept under surveillance with security cameras. Furthermore, police monitor the area of the Kissing Students over weekend nights.

- *Civic demonstrations*

The Kissing Students and its surroundings are used as the geographical point for civic demonstrations. These events are only occasional: for example in 2015, only one political rally in favour of immigration (fig. 63) and one demonstration for the legalisation of cannabis were organised here. These demonstrations attracted less than hundred attendants. On these occasions, the basin of the Kissing Students can serve as a stage from where to hold protest speeches (fig. 63).

6.6 Three connections of the Kissing Students

Based on the isotopies identified in sections 6.5, this section applies the conceptual scheme presented in Chapter Three § 3.3 to the multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students (fig. 69). Hence, this section identifies three connections of the Kissing Students: a) between the designers' stated intentions and the users' interpretations; b) between the Kissing Students and the built environment of Tartu; and c) between the Kissing Students and the urban identity of Tartu. In the scheme below, the conceptual scheme defined in in Chapter Three § 3.3 is applied to the Kissing Students (fig. 72). The arrows in red symbolically represent the interconnection between designers and users. Located at the centre of the conceptual scheme, the interpretations of the Kissing Students interrelate with the built environment and with the cultural context. In the Kissing Students, these interrelations are manifested through the connections with the built environment and with the urban identity of Tartu respectively. In the scheme below, the ovals containing the terms 'built environment' and 'Kissing Students' are coloured in yellow to symbolically represent their connection; the arrow in orange visualise the connection of the Kissing Students with the cultural context.
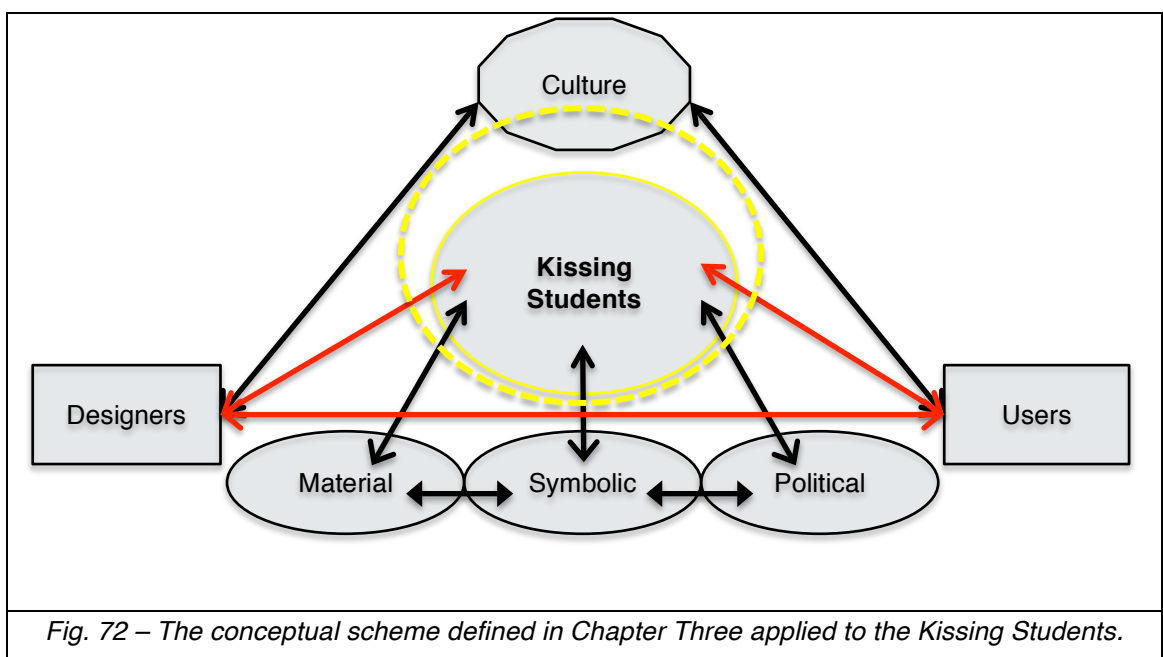
Fig. 72 – The conceptual scheme defined in Chapter Three applied to the Kissing Students.

As for the connection between the designer's intentions and the users' interpretations, the Kissing Students reveals a case in which the interpretations of users match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent. Tartu local authorities rebuilt the old fountain to improve the appearance of the central area of Tartu (§ 6.3). The positive attitude of citizens and the large use during their everyday life are symbolic of the

accomplishment of this task. Design strategies such as easily understandable iconography, life-sized proportions and continuity with the surrounding built environment have facilitated the interaction between the Kissing Students and users. The meaning of the Kissing Students is inclusive: users do not require a specific knowledge to interpret its function and iconography. Consistent with this, all respondents acknowledged and endorsed the narrative embodied in the Kissing Students (§ 6.4).

Analysis registered connections between the Kissing Students and the built environment of Tartu. As seen in § 6.5, the Kissing Students interacts with the surrounding built environment, without overshadowing existing built forms. No major interventions were implemented to construct the fountain-sculpture and the original basin of the fountain was maintained (§ 6.3). Moreover, the inclusive meanings of the Kissing Students have helped to generate and support everyday practices by citizens as well as cultural and entertaining events periodically arranged in its surroundings.

Finally, ten respondents considered the Kissing Students as consistent with the urban identity of Tartu (§ 6.3). The connection with the urban identity of Tartu was one of the publicised reasons why the Kissing Students was chosen as the winning entry for the rebuilding of the old fountain (Püttsepp 1997). The fountain-sculpture articulates a set of ideals that relate to student life, youth and love. Respondents identified these ideals in accordance with the urban identity of Tartu. The large use of the Kissing Students on manifold media reinforces the association between the Kissing Students and Tartu as a university city.

The connections of the Kissing Students demonstrate that designers implemented appropriate design strategies to entice users along interpretations that conform to their intentions (Chapter Three § 3.2). Users conform to the Model User foreseen by designers, i.e. they interpret and use the Kissing Students in the ways designers have expected. Only a few practices differing to the designers' stated intentions were registered (§ 6.5). Therefore, the relation between the Kissing Students and users is not confrontational, as it was for the case of the Victory Column presented in Chapter Five. Material and symbolic design choices and the lack of direct references to selective political meanings and historical narratives have contributed to the non-confrontational character of the Kissing Students.

Nevertheless, the Kissing Students presents specific cultural and political meanings, promoting the kinds of ideals that designers define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. Avoiding confrontational political messages is still a specific urban policy, which has been largely used in the context of the transition to democracy and the subsequent changing of the concepts in the Estonian nation and society. In Tartu, the general aim of this policy was to establish a built environment that does not directly refer to the political storm characterising Estonia throughout the 20th century. Yet, Tartu local authorities decided to place in the central square of the city a built form representing a student-related iconography and conveying ideals of youth and love.

As seen in Chapter Three § 3.3, location largely affects the interpretations of built forms and in turn built forms influence the space in which they are located. Tartu local authorities gave the Kissing Students high visibility and significant ideological weight by placing it in Town Hall Square. In turn, the Kissing Students helped the symbolic geography of Town Hall Square to turn from being the former seat of the orthodox political power into a "*cultural quarter*" bringing together playful practices, tourism, leisure and general consumption of space (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204). As such, the Kissing Students can be seen as a practice of cultural reinvention seeking to create sites of consumption symbolising Estonia's shift to a market economy:

> *The strong onrush of commercial architecture stuck out the most in the urban scene during the 1990s – office- and bank buildings, shopping centres and malls, car dealerships and hotels.* (Väljas and Lige 2015: 77)

The everyday practices observed within the space of the Kissing Students have demonstrated the realization of this cultural reinvention: the students meeting at the Kissing Students between classes, couples taking pictures mimicking the sculpture, tourist groups using the Kissing Students as the background for their pictures, children seeking to climb on the basin of the fountain to reach the water and many people walking along Town Hall Square to enter restaurants and cafes.

The establishment of a built environment free from direct political meanings has been a common cultural policy in post-Soviet Estonia as well as throughout post-socialist countries (Väljas and Lige 2015: 77). Attractive in design and easily understandable in meaning, non-confrontational built forms have become cultural goods supposed to enhance the "*marketability*" of post-socialist cities (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013:

204). Other examples of these non-confrontational built forms can be found not far from the Kissing Students. Here, two public statues were erected to present ideals of familial love: the first statue is in Town Hall Square itself, representing an adult woman taking care of an old woman (fig. 73, *Maanaised* – in English *Rural women*, erected in 2013); the second statue is few meters away from the Kissing Students and it portrays a father and a son holding hands (fig. 74, *Isa ja Poeg* – in English *Father and Son*, erected in 2004). Mati Karmin, the sculptor of the Kissing Students, carved a statue of a big pig (*Siga* - in English *Pig*), erected in front of Tartu market in 2008. In Tallinn's Old Town, another statue of a pig was ironically erected right in front of a BBQ restaurant (*Black Angus*, erected in 2011). In a park in Tallinn city centre, there is a fountain of two children under a dripping umbrella (fig. 75, *Poisid vihmavarjuga* – in English *Boys with umbrella*, erected in 2008). In Rakvere, a town in North East Estonia, there is a big bull erected in 2002 near the ruin of a medieval castle (*Tarvas*). In 2006, several sculptures of strawberries were erected all over Viljandi, a town in South Estonia.

| Fig. 73 – The statue 'Rural Women' in Town Hall Square, Tartu. Picture taken 27.4.2015 | Fig. 74 – The statue 'Father and Son' in Tartu. Picture taken 1.7.2015 |

Fig. 75 – The fountain-sculpture 'Boys with Umbrella' in Tallinn. Picture taken 29.1.2016

Several examples of these of non-confrontational public statues and urban decorations have been erected throughout post-socialist countries. Often, they portray characters from popular culture, such as the *Bremen Musicians* in Riga, Latvia (erected in 1990); the bust of *Frank Zappa* in Vilnius, Lithuania (erected in 1996); the *Bruce Lee* statue in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina (erected in 2005); *The Beatles* statue in Almaty, Kazakhstan (erected in 2007).

As is usual for a city, Tartu has its own monuments and memorials conveying direct political and cultural positions. In a park on a hill (*Toome* hill), there are monuments to important cultural figures for Estonian culture[18]. Behind the main building of the university, there is the monument to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, founder of the *Academia Dorpatensis*, today known as the University of Tartu. In front of the *Vanemuine* theatre, there are monuments to Estonian composers and conductors. On the right bank of the river, there is a boulevard called Freedom Avenue (in Estonian *Vabaduse Puiestee*), constructed during the first Estonian independence to celebrate the newly achieved sovereignty. Along the avenue, there is a park, which has been the place to erect important monuments since the 1930s (Salupere 2013: 139). Here, a memorial was erected to commemorate those who served during the Estonian War of

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[18] In this park, there are monuments to the Estonian writer and doctor Friedrich Robert Faehlmann (erected in 1930); the Swedish statesman who initiated the establishment of the University of Tartu Johan Skytte (erected in 2007); the Estonian poet Kristjan Jaak Peterson (erected in 1983); the pastor and historian Villem Reiman (erected in 1931); the Baltic German natural scientist Karl Von Baer (erected in 1886); the Baltic German physiologist Hermann Adolf Alexander Schmidt (erected in 1982); the German philologist Johann Karl Simon Morgenstern (erected in 1851); and the astronomer and geographer Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Struve (erected in 1969).

Independence (fig. 76). The sculptor Amandus Adamson modelled this memorial after *Kalevipoeg*, the hero of the Estonian national epic. This memorial was unveiled in 1933 on a pedestal with the years of the war inscribed (1918-1920). In 1950, Soviet authorities removed this memorial commemorating ideals of freedom and replaced it with a granite bust of Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, the author of the national epic *Kalevipoeg*, to avoid potential uprising following the removal of the *Kalevipoeg* monument. A new bronze statue of *Kalevipoeg* was created on the basis of the original and unveiled in 2003 during the celebrations of Victory Day (23 June). The monument to Kreutzwald was moved few meters from the *Kalevipoeg* monument. Near this monument, there are other monuments to Estonian writers that initiated the Estonian national awakening.

The *Kalevipoeg* monument is today the main site for the local celebrations of days of national importance such as the anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty (2 February), the Independence Day (24 February) and the Day of Restoration of Independence (20 August). During these celebrations, local authorities give public speeches and lay wreaths in front of the monument.

Fig. 76 – The Kalevipoeg monument commemorating those who served during the Estonian War of Independence. Picture taken 12.4.2015

6.7 Conclusions: The multiple meanings of the Kissing Students

The erection of built forms and the public rituals centred on them help to embody specific histories and geographies in space. The built environment can be used as a form of discourse to construct and spread cultural and political meanings in space (Dovey 1999: 1). The design of the built environment can be used to educate users toward the kinds of ideals that elites define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. A set of strategies is available to designers to entice users along specific interpretations; however, users conform at different degrees to the designers' intentions (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 57).

This chapter explored these ideas through an analysis of the multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students, a fountain-sculpture unveiled in Tartu in 1998. The holistic perspective based on the connection between cultural geography and semiotics proved to be useful to gain a deeper understanding of non-confrontational built forms that are interpreted and used in the ways designers have expected.

The Kissing Students has embodied the intention to establish an inclusive space presenting soft meanings and everyday narratives. Design strategies such as easily understandable iconography, life-sized proportions and continuity with the surrounding built environment have facilitated the interaction between the Kissing Students and users. Attractive in design and inclusive in meaning, the Kissing Students has enhanced the "*marketability*" of Town Hall Square. Observations demonstrated that the area of the Kissing Students is today a "*cultural quarter*" bringing together playful practices, tourism, leisure and general consumption of space (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204). As such, the Kissing Students can be seen as a practice of cultural reinvention to create sites of consumption symbolising Estonia's shift to a market economy (Väljas and Lige 2015: 77).

The Kissing Students revealed a case in which the interpretations of users match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent. A multi-method approach based on interviews and observations registered a general positive attitude toward the Kissing Students. Respondents manifested approval toward the material and the symbolic levels of the Kissing Students as well as toward its non-confrontational cultural and political meanings. They described the Kissing Students as consistent with the built environment and the urban identity of Tartu. Furthermore, the Kissing Students has

become a popular meeting point that is crossed everyday in the itineraries of Tartu citizens.

Yet, designers do not have complete control over users' interpretations and practices. The Kissing Students has thus attracted some practices that are different to the designers' stated intentions; however, these practices have become integrated into the symbolic and material dimensions of the Kissing Students. Moreover, criticisms have been levelled seeing the Kissing Students as too poor in meaning and artistic value for being the symbol of Tartu. The interpretations and uses of the Kissing Students may change over time following change in social relations and in concepts of nation. At the moment, consistency was registered between the designers' stated intentions and the users' interpretations, between the Kissing Students and the built environment of Tartu and between the Kissing Students and the urban identity of Tartu.

Chapter Seven

The cultural reinvention of the Estonian built environment: A comparative analysis between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students

Chapters Five and Six presented single analyses of each case at hand - the multiple interpretations of the Victory Column in Tallinn and the Kissing Students in Tartu respectively. This chapter proposes a comparative analysis between the case studies in order to establish the generality of the findings and to abstract them to the theoretical dimension (Manning 1987: 25).

As seen in Chapter Four § 4.12, comparative analysis identifies the similarities and differences between the interpretative processes of the researched monuments and makes them cohere into a meaningful argument: that the built environment is a form of discourse, which can be shaped and transformed through design in order to convey specific cultural and political meanings. A holistic perspective connecting cultural geography and semiotics can thus be useful to understand what strategies designers use to design the built environment and how these are variously interpreted at societal levels. In practice, the analysis of this chapter compares the analytical findings presented in Chapters Five and Six in order to assess the extent and the potential of the connections between the cultural-geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

The Victory Column and the Kissing Students are different in a number of aspects, but they also present several similarities. Section 7.1 presents the differences and the similarities of the researched monuments in order to create the ground for understanding the rationale for the comparative analysis. This section concludes by comparatively discussing the outcomes of the researched case studies, i.e. a) the embodied cultural and political meanings and b) the different ways in which these meanings are interpreted at societal levels.

Comparing these outcomes, sections 7.2-7.4 address three objectives. Section 7.2 describes the kinds of cultural meanings and national politics embodied in the Victory Column and in the Kissing Students. Section 7.3 compares the ways in which the Victory Column and the Kissing Students were interpreted at societal levels. Section 7.4 discusses the kinds of practices occurring within the space of the monuments.

Finally, section 7.5 concludes by discussing the "*themes*" emerging from the comparative analysis (Saldaña 2009: 13). These themes are then integrated into the theoretical dimension of the study in order to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural-geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

7.1 The rationale for an unusual comparison

Estonian citizens consider the Victory Column and the Kissing Students as very different built forms. Interviews and observations registered many differences on the material, symbolic and political aspects of the analysed monuments. The Victory Column and the Kissing Students are different in a number of aspects, but they also present several similarities. This section begins by presenting the differences and the similarities of the researched monuments in order to create the ground for understanding the rationale for the comparative analysis.

Since built forms influence the space in which they are located (Chapter Three § 3.3), the differences and the similarities between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students echo those of their locations – respectively Freedom Square and Town Hall Square. In turn, Freedom Square and Town Hall Square have affected the interpretations of the researched monuments. To explore this mutual influence, this section describes the differences and similarities between Freedom Square and Town Hall Square.

This section concludes by comparatively discussing the outcomes of the researched case studies, i.e. a) the embodied national politics of cultural reinvention of the built environment and b) the different ways in which these national politics are interpreted at societal levels.

Differences and similarities between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students

The Victory Column and the Kissing Students present many differences. Following the conceptual scheme defined in Chapter Three § 3.3, these differences can be divided between the material, symbolic and political dimensions. The material levels differ greatly between the two monuments. The Victory Column is monumental, it is placed on an elevated location and it is made of regular-shaped glass plates (Chapter Five § 5.3). The Kissing Students has life-sized proportions and it is placed on a circular platform on the ground level; the fountain is made of granite and the sculpture of bronze (Chapter Six § 6.3). As for the symbolic level, the Victory Column presents a military iconography that only a few can easily recognise (Chapter Five § 5.3). The Kissing Students sculpture represents the everyday narrative of two students while kissing with arms around each other (Chapter Six § 6.3).

As for the political dimension, the Victory Column was conceived as a tool to reinforce the power of the political elites who took the initiative for its erection. The design of the Victory Column was rushed to accommodate political needs. The time pressure resulted in a lack of participative planning practices, non-transparency of financing, shortage of adequate supervision and defective works during construction (Chapter Five § 5.3). The lack of dialogue between designers and users has ignited a controversy around the ways in which this memorial presented the commemorated event, i.e. the victory that led to the first independence of Estonia. On the other hand, the Kissing Students did not openly express direct political purposes (Chapter Six § 6.3).

Different in a number of aspects, the Victory Column and the Kissing Students also present several similarities. Both have become important landmarks in the central areas of Tallinn and Tartu. Due to their significant locations, the immediate surroundings of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students are regularly used for public rituals and commemorative practices, such as the formal commemorations of the victims of the Soviet deportations in March 1949 (Estonian Ministry of the Interior 2015).

Differences and similarities between Freedom Square and Town Hall Square

The differences and similarities of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students are reflected in their locations – respectively Freedom Square and Town Hall Square. As explained in Chapter Four § 4.7, the final part of interview aimed to collect opinions on potential comparisons (by similarities or by differences) between the Victory Column/Freedom Square and Kissing Students/Town Hall Square. As for the differences, fourteen out of the thirty-two total respondents defined Tallinn Freedom Square and Tartu Town Hall Square as very different from one another. In addition to them, two respondents agreed on this dissimilarity, even if they were able to identify some common features between the squares. Again, the reasons for the difference between the squares can be found in the material, symbolic and political dimensions.

At the material level, Freedom Square underwent a complete reconstruction implemented through contemporary design choices, including modern detailing and furniture (Chapter Five § 5.1). The buildings forming Freedom Square's north and south walls were erected between the 1920s and the 1930s (note 11). Conversely, Town Hall Square in Tartu has preserved its classical style through the years. For these reasons, six respondents considered Freedom Square as more modern than Town Hall Square. The ground of the two squares has encouraged practices that are different from each other: for example, the flat ground of Freedom Square has attracted skating and biking practices (Chapter Five § 5.5), impossible on the cobblestone of Town Hall Square.

At the symbolic level, the reconstruction of Freedom Square aimed to provide Tallinn with a pedestrianised public space open to different cultural events (Chapter Five § 5.6). However, the hermetic meaning of the Victory Column has had such an impact that three respondents defined Freedom Square as an empty place eliciting cold emotions. Conversely, seven respondents explained that Town Hall Square is a popular public square with a relaxed and joyful atmosphere.

As for the political dimension, the reconstruction of Freedom Square aimed to provide Tallinn with a venue for Estonia's public rituals (Chapter Five § 5.3). The erection of the Victory Column filled the square with conservative political meanings. Conversely, the erection of the Kissing Students helped to turn Town Hall Square from being the former seat of the orthodox political power into a "*cultural quarter*" bringing together playful practices, tourism, leisure and general consumption of space (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204).

Due to the perceived differences between Freedom Square and Town Hall Square, twelve respondents suggested that stronger association can be made between Tallinn's and Tartu's Town Hall Square. Beside the same name, the two Town Hall Squares present many features in common. Historically, these squares hosted a market and were the location of the medieval town hall. The old buildings of the town hall still stand in both these squares today. These squares are surrounded by historical buildings and have cobblestone floors. Hundreds of tourists visit these squares every day and enter their numerous restaurants and cafes. Both squares periodically become the venue for traditional festivals and fairs. Finally, they are the main location for the celebrations of Christmas.

However, the squares also differ in a number of respects. Town Hall Square in Tartu is the main location for public rituals and formal celebrations. Moreover, it provides a venue for cultural events and attractions, such as student days, historical revivals, food and craft fairs, film festivals, concerts, sport competitions, and children's days (Chapter Six § 6.3). Finally, it is a popular meeting point among locals. All these features are in common with Tallinn Freedom Square. It is then possible to identify several similarities between Tallinn Freedom Square and Tartu Town Hall Square. Again, these similarities can be identified in the material, symbolic and political dimensions.

As for the material level, the recently reconstructed built environment of Freedom Square highly differs from the classicist-look of Town Hall Square. Nevertheless, the locations of the squares have analogous functions. Thirteen respondents from Tallinn and fourteen respondents from Tartu defined these squares as either popular meeting points or places to cross to reach other functional parts of the city. Four respondents recognised that both squares are periodically used for entertaining and cultural events.

As for the symbolic level, Estonian elites have always considered these squares as symbolically important within the contexts of Tallinn and Tartu. Thus Estonian elites spent a lot of resources for the reconstruction and the preservation of their built environment. Furthermore, they chose these squares as locations to erect important built forms and monuments, such as the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

As for the political dimension, both squares function as urban stages for public rituals and celebrations of days of national and local importance. Both are the location of the city council. Finally, both squares are occasionally used as the geographical point for civic demonstrations and protests.

The rationale for the comparative analysis between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students

The rationale for comparing the Victory Column and the Kissing Students is twofold: first, they show two different ways of conveying cultural and political meanings; second, they present different ways in which these national politics are interpreted at societal levels. As for the different ways of conveying cultural and political meanings, the Victory Column helped to promote an ideological understanding of the past and thus to symbolise a range of expectations about Estonia's future (Chapter Five § 5.5; Francis and Thomas 2007; Massey 1995; Dovey 1999). In doing so, the memorial sought to reinforce the power of the Estonian Government that took the initiative for its erection (Chapter Five § 5.5). In brief, through the Victory Column, Estonian elites sought to establish an exclusive place for national mourning and commemoration as well as to reinforce the primacy of their political power. On the other hand, the Kissing Students did not openly express direct political purposes (Chapter Six § 6.3). The fountain-sculpture presented soft meanings and everyday narratives aiming at embellishing its spatial surroundings and enhancing the marketability of the central area of Tartu.

As for the interpretations at societal levels, the Victory Column revealed a case in which users have largely reinterpreted the designers' stated intentions. Conversely, the Kissing Students presented a case in which the interpretations of users match with the designers' intentions to a great extent. The multiple interpretations of these monuments spawned many different kinds of practices.

Despite the different ways of realisation, the Victory Column and the Kissing Students can be seen as part of the cultural reinvention implemented to create a built environment in accordance with the current political and cultural agendas of the Estonian elites. Even if in a less obvious manner than the Victory Column, the Kissing Students presents specific cultural and political meanings, promoting the kinds of ideals that designers define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards.

On the basis of this comparison, the next sections will address three comparisons, between the kinds of cultural meanings and national politics embodied in the Victory Column and in the Kissing Students; between the ways in which the Victory Column and the Kissing Students were interpreted at societal levels; and between the kinds of practices occurring within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

7.2 The cultural meanings and national politics embodied in the Victory Column and in the Kissing Students

This section addresses the aim to describe the kinds of cultural meanings and national politics embodied in the Victory Column and in the Kissing Students. As seen in Chapter Two § 2.2, monuments and memorials are essential tools to promote a uniform national memory and reinforce sentiments of national belonging. Articulating historical narratives, monuments and memorials can inculcate particular conceptions of the present and encourage future possibilities (Massey 1995; Dovey 1999; Dwyer 2000; Osborne 1998).

As such, monuments and memorials educate users toward the kinds of ideals they define as "*central*" (Lotman 1990) and want users to strive towards. Hence, elites use monuments and memorials as tools to legitimate the primacy of their political power and to set their political agendas. This is also the case of apparently less confrontational built forms that still present specific political meanings and cultural positions.

The table in the next page compares the isotopies that emerged from the analyses in Chapters Five and Six as divided into the categories proposed in the theoretical model presented in Chapter Three: symbolic level, material level, political dimension, cultural context and intertextual relations. In addition, the table compares the kinds of practices occurring within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students.

	Victory Column	**Kissing Students**
Symbolic level	- Hermetic iconography - Language barriers	- Easily understandable iconography
	- Commemorative purpose	- Reassessment of public space
	- A place for public rituals and cultural events	- A place for public rituals and cultural events
Material level	- Overpowering	- Life-sized proportions
	- Controversial design	- Good design
	- Uncomfortable interaction	- Easy interaction
Political dimension	- Explicit: a concrete manifestation of political power	- Implicitly conveying cultural and political meanings
	- A tool for the national politics of memory and identity: an ideological understanding of the past for a select audience	- A tool to convey cultural and political meanings: an everyday narrative for the general public
Cultural context	- Reference to precise past event and identities to signify future possibilities	- Reference to an undefined past and representation of specific identities (gender, age, race)
	- Link with the socio-ethnic controversies over the interpretation of the past	- No major controversies
Intertextual relations	- Disconnected from its spatial surroundings	- Appropriate location: continuity with the surrounding built environment
	- Loss of natural and historical heritage	- No major interventions in the built environment
	- Located within a representative space of the nation	- Located in a cultural quarter
Users' practices	- Scarce use	- A common feature in the daily life of citizens
	- Unexpected uses	- Unexpected uses
	- Civic demonstrations	- Civic demonstrations

The analysis in Chapter Five demonstrated that the Victory Column was a concrete manifestation of power. The memorial aimed to establish a place for national mourning while creating the basis to gain political consent. Great size, verticality and elevated position were material design choices used to convey powerful meanings in space. These material design choices resemble those used for monuments and memorials erected in totalitarian regimes or in places where there is a high control over population (Chapter Five § 5.6). Similar design choices were used in post-First World War memorials in the United Kingdom in order to legitimise and glorify war (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013). The symbolic level of the Victory Column was designed for a select audience informed on Estonian language and on Estonia's history.

The Victory Column was conceived to produce a Model User able to understand the writings in Estonian language, to correctly recognise the iconography and to acknowledge the commemorated events. Moreover, the Model Users should have shown respect for the celebrated dead and approached the memorial with sentiments of mourning and commemoration.

The analysis in Chapter Six demonstrated that the Kissing Students did not openly express direct political purposes (Chapter Six § 6.3). Nevertheless, the Kissing Students presented specific cultural and political meanings of those that took the initiative for its erection. The establishment of a built environment free from direct references to the political storm characterising Estonia in the 20th century has been a common cultural policy in post-Soviet Estonia (Chapter Six § 6.6; Väljas and Lige 2015: 77). Attractive in design and easily understandable in meaning, the Kissing Students has enhanced the "*marketability*" of Tartu's central area, turning Town Hall Square into an attractive "*cultural quarter*" (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204). The symbolic level of the Kissing Students refers to open meanings, while dedicating a place to a significant part of the population of Tartu: the students. The material design of the Kissing Students is consistent with the surrounding built environment. Its life-sized proportions allow an easy interaction with users.

The Model User of the Kissing Students was supposed to recognise the significance of students for Tartu as a university city. Moreover, the Model User should have engaged with the fountain-sculpture during the course of the daily life, without trying to directly access it.

The table below compares the kinds of cultural meanings and national politics embodied in the Victory Column and in the Kissing Students:

Victory Column	Kissing Students
Deliberate political purposes	Free from direct political messages
Concrete manifestation of political power	Urban ornament presenting an everyday cultural narrative

7.3 The interpretations of the cultural meanings and national politics at societal levels

This section compares the ways in which the Victory Column and the Kissing Students were interpreted at societal levels. As noted in Chapter Three § 3.2, the interpretations of users differently conform to the designers' intentions.

The intentions of the Estonian Government behind the Victory Column were mainly political: to gain political consent among those who strongly wanted this memorial to be erected, such as the relatives of the soldiers who fought in the War of Independence; to put an end to the social conflicts over the interpretations of monuments and memorials that has characterised Estonia from the early 2000s; and, in turn, to turn a new page in the construction of the Estonian national memory and identity (Chapter Five § 5.5). Using the Victory Column for such political purposes, the Estonian Government established a space at which the primacy of its political power distinctly becomes legitimated. However, users have differently interpreted the powerful intentions embodied in the Victory Column. Altogether, the intention to establish an exclusive space for national mourning and celebration of the nation is not reflected at the societal level. Tallinn citizens expressed disapproval of various aspects of the Victory Column: they considered the hermetic iconography of the memorial as not suitable for the purpose of commemoration; they expressed discontent toward the material design of the memorial, too resonating and grandiose to commemorate ideals of freedom. Furthermore, historians, artists and academics have differently criticised the Victory Column (Belobrovtseva and Meimre 2008). In brief, the Victory Column revealed a case in which the designers' stated intentions have been largely reinterpreted.

Conversely, the Kissing Students presented a case in which the interpretations of users match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent. Tartu local authorities

erected the fountain-sculpture to improve the appearance of Tartu's central area (Chapter Six § 6.6). Its erection can be seen as a practice of cultural reinvention seeking to enhance the attractiveness of Estonian cities. Practices of the like have recently become common throughout Estonia as well as throughout the post-socialist countries (Chapter Six § 6.6; Väljas and Lige 2015: 77). The positive attitudes of citizens have been symbolic of the general approval of the Kissing Students at the societal level: the totality of respondents have acknowledged and endorsed its everyday narrative; they have expressed general approval toward the iconography and the material design of the Kissing Students. Design strategies such as easily understandable iconography, life-sized dimensions and continuity with the surrounding built environment have facilitated the interaction between the Kissing Students and users (Chapter Six § 6.6). The image of the Kissing Students has been largely used in manifold media, so that it has become a sort of logo for Tartu (Chapter Six § 6.5). Altogether, the Kissing Students has been largely assimilated into the everyday itineraries of Tartu citizens.

The table below compares the different ways in which the political and cultural meanings embodied in the Victory Column and the Kissing Students have been interpreted at societal levels:

Victory Column	Kissing Students
Reinterpretation of the designers' intentions	Endorsement of the designers' intentions
General disapproval	General approval

7.4 The different practices occurring within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students

This section aims to compare the kinds of practices occurring within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students. As seen in Chapter Four § 4.6, the use of monuments largely depends on what users know about monuments (cognitive dimension), on whether they value them positively or negatively (axiological dimension) and on the emotions and feelings that monuments elicit in them (emotional dimension). In turn, the ontological experience of spatial practices has an impact upon the interpretations of monuments and memorials. Interpretation and practice should not be

seen as mutually exclusive, but as interdependent ways of understanding the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically (Chapter Three § 3.4). Observations demonstrated that the Victory Column has attracted practices that are different from the expected commemoration and mourning: for example, skaters and bikers trying out their tricks (Chapter Five § 5.5). The Tallinn City Council took measures to limit skating and biking, also because skating and biking leave marks damaging the floor around the Victory Column (fig. 36). However, these measures remained ineffective, so these practices are today integrated into the symbolic and material dimensions of the memorial. Beside these practices, the memorial has remained largely unused during the course of daily life (Chapter Five § 5.6).

Conversely, the Kissing Students is a common feature that is crossed everyday in the itineraries of Tartu citizens. Interviews and observations demonstrated that the Kissing Students is largely used as a meeting point (Chapter Six § 6.4). The Kissing Students has occasionally attracted some practices that are different to the designers' stated intentions, especially playful practices such as students swimming in the fountain or schoolchildren pouring soap in the fountain to celebrate the end of the school (fig. 68). The Tartu local authorities have not spent much effort to discourage these practices; therefore, they have become integrated into the symbolic and material dimensions of the Kissing Students (Chapter Six § 6.5).

The table below compare the different kinds of uses and practices occurring within the space of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students:

Victory Column	Kissing Students
Scarce use	Large use
Unexpected practices	Unexpected practices

7.5 Conclusions: The geographical and semiotic interplay of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students

This section integrates the "*themes*" emerging from the comparative analysis into the theoretical in order to assess the extent and the potential of the connection between the cultural geographical and the semiotic aspects of the Victory Column and the Kissing Students (Saldaña 2009: 45). However, the findings related to these case studies can be generalised to the whole built environment and, in turn, to a theoretical framework that accounts for the multiple interpretations of the built environment.

The table below summarises the findings from the comparative analysis presented in the previous sections 7.2-7.4:

Victory Column	Kissing Students
Deliberate political purposes	Free from direct political messages
Concrete manifestation of political power	Urban ornament presenting an everyday cultural narrative
Reinterpretation of the designers' intentions	Endorsement of the designers' intentions
General disapproval	General approval
Scarce use	Large use
Unexpected practices	Unexpected practices

The comparison between the kinds of cultural meanings and national politics presented in section 7.2 demonstrated that the built environment can be designed to convey specific meanings. The Victory Column is the cultural expression of dominant national meanings. The memorial was designed to signify the power of the Estonian Government who took the initiative for its erection. Design strategies were used to establish an exclusive space for a selected audience: the memorial does not address those who are alien to Estonian culture and history, who may easily misinterpret its logic. Yet the Victory Column creates a distant relation even with the addressed audience. As a concrete manifestation of power, the Victory Column has played a role in turning a new page in the construction of the Estonian politics of memory and identity.

As capital and a major political centre of Estonia, Tallinn was considered as the most appropriate city in which to erect the Victory Column. As traditionally used for spatial

power games, Freedom Square was chosen as the most appropriate location to erect a memorial presenting the dominant meanings of the Estonian elites. Due to its resonating design and hermetic meanings, the Victory Column dominates space and affects the interpretations of the whole Freedom Square. Initially designed as an open and attractive public space, respondents considered Freedom Square as a flat, unemotional square filled with powerful meanings instead of the expected ideals of freedom.

The erection of the Victory Column, the reconstruction of Freedom Square and the relocation of the Bronze Soldier are close in space and in time. They all are cases of the cultural reinvention that has characterised urban policies and practices in independent Estonia. Cultural reinvention is the process of filling the built environment with specific cultural meanings. In Tallinn as in many other post-socialist cities, the cultural reinvention of the built environment has occurred through practices of redesign, reconstruction, restoration, relocation and removal of Soviet remains and through the erection of new built forms able to reinforce meanings in accordance with current political and cultural purposes.

On the other hand, the Kissing Students has promoted a cultural reinvention seeking to enhance the attractiveness of Tartu's central area. As such, it has helped to create new sites of consumption and playful activities symbolising Estonia's shift to a market economy (Väljas and Lige 2015: 77). Design strategies were used to create a people-friendly built form and to encourage the interaction between the Kissing Students and users. Its purpose and iconography are easy to understand for Estonians as well as for outsiders. Furthermore, the fountain-sculpture is consistent with the surrounding built environment.

Being Tartu the seat of the national university has encouraged the creation of a built environment free from direct political meanings. The university has largely defined the urban identity of Tartu and its developments have affected urban planning and policies through the years (Lapin 1996: 27). A significant part of the population of Tartu consists of students: approximately 18 000 students are enrolled in Tartu's higher education institutes (Salupere 2013: 64), out of approximately 104 000 total residents (Statistics Estonia 2011). Standing in front of the old town hall from where several regimes have administered Tartu since ancient times, the Kissing Students dedicates an important location to ideals related with student life. As such, the Kissing Students helps to turn

Town Hall Square from being the former seat of the orthodox political power into a space of more general cultural consumption.

The comparison between the users' interpretations presented in section 7.3 demonstrated that the meanings of the built environment are never enclosed once and for all (Hershkovitz 1993: 416) and thus users differently interpret the built environment following their opinions, beliefs and feelings. The intention of the Victory Column to establish an exclusive space for national commemoration is not reflected at societal levels. Users have mostly reinterpreted the political and the cultural positions embodied in the Victory Column. So far, the memorial has come in for a great deal of criticism. Moreover, it has not attracted the expected practices of commemorations and sentiments of mourning.

Conversely, Tartu citizens have welcomed the cultural positions embodied in the Kissing Students. Users have mostly approved the material and the symbolic design choices of the Kissing Students. This approval has resulted in the positive attitudes of citizens toward the fountain-sculpture. So far, citizens have considered the Kissing Students as suitable and representative for the urban identity of Tartu and they have included it in their everyday itineraries.

As seen in section 7.4, both the Victory Column and the Kissing Students have attracted practices that designers had never expected. This demonstrates that designers do not have complete control over users' interpretations and practices. Thus, users differently interpret the built environment following their opinions, beliefs and feelings. Since the meaning of the built environment is never enclosed once and for all (Hershkovitz 1993: 416), the interpretations of the Victory Column and Kissing Students may change over time following change in social relations and in concepts of nation. Accepted built forms can turn into sites of resistance. Likewise, controversial memorials can become increasingly accepted and unthinkingly experienced during the routine of daily life.

The Kissing Students was erected approximately ten years before the Victory Column, so time has passed for potential criticism to dissipate. However, new interpretations and practices may arise in future changing the current positive attitudes toward the fountain-sculpture. Only a few years have passed from the unveiling of the Victory Column in 2009, but the negative attitudes toward this memorial still remain. In future,

this concern could fade away and finally Tallinn citizens might start to more positively accept the memorial.

Designers can encourage this process attaching new meanings to the Victory Column. A new interpretative pattern may originate once Estonian authorities reduce the anxiety towards their original intentions and accept the plurality of interpretations, practices and relationships created by the memorial. Cultural entertaining events and more informal practices of commemoration may help to create new attitudes toward the Victory Column. For example, Tallinn citizens enthusiastically attended the 2016 commemorations for the 75th anniversary of the Soviet deportations of 14 June. On this occasion, thousands of blue balloons were inflated and installed in Freedom Square to symbolically represent tears being shed for the victims. Many people visited the installation and kids joyfully played with the balloons. The installation named *Sea of Tears* was conceived and developed by the Estonian Institute of Human Rights in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Justice and other organisations dealing with the national politics of memory and identity. This people-friendly public display encouraged lively practices of consumption of the space of Freedom Square and active learning about the commemorated event.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions: The potential of the connection between cultural geography and semiotics for the study of the built environment

This final chapter returns to address the main contribution and principal aims of the thesis. It first recalls the context in which this research has originated. It then discusses the key arguments made within each chapter of the thesis, highlighting the contributions that can be claimed as original. Building on the research aims, this chapter presents the contributions of each chapter as divided into theoretical contributions and empirical contributions. This chapter then goes on to outline the limitations of the thesis. Finally, it indicates directions for future research.

8.1 Recalling the context

This thesis aimed to make an original contribution to the understanding of the interpretations of the built environment. The research results indicated that the connection between semiotics and cultural geography can advance the understanding of what strategies designers use to design the built environment and how the built environment is variously interpreted at societal levels.

Even though the aim was to provide a basis for drawing conclusions about the whole built environment, the focus of this thesis was on the interpretations of monuments and memorials as built forms erected to promote specific meanings. Monuments and memorials were defined as built forms with celebratory and commemorative functions that directly or indirectly present political purposes. Monuments and memorials can promote specific conceptualisations of the past, present and future. In doing so, they can set political agendas and reproduce social order. Thus, elites design monuments and memorials striving to reinforce their political power and to legitimise dominant dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Nevertheless, designers cannot fully control the interpretations of monuments and memorials: users differently interpret monuments and memorials following their opinions, beliefs and feelings.

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The primary research question of the study was:

- How can cultural geography and semiotics connect to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of monuments and memorials?

This question was analytically broken down in a series of aims. Each chapter of the thesis addressed one of these aims.

8.2 The original contributions to the multiple interpretations of the built environment

This section discusses the key arguments made within each chapter, emphasizing the original contribution to the multiple interpretations of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. Building on the research aims, the contributions of each chapter are here divided into theoretical and empirical contributions.

Three key theoretical contributions

Chapter Two, on '*The limitations of the geographical and the semiotic perspectives on monuments and memorials*', identified the key limitations of the geographical and the semiotic literature on monuments and memorials. Human and cultural geography provided a methodological basis to understand the ways in which monuments and memorials could reproduce social order and reinforce political power (§ 2.2). Nevertheless, the geographical approach to monuments and memorials grounded itself on two key limitations (§ 2.3):

1. There has been no extended discussion of how the material and symbolic levels of monuments and memorials actually convey political meanings and thus of how they can effectively reinforce political power.
2. Little attention has been paid to how monuments and memorials are interpreted at the societal level.

Chapter Two continued by providing an overview of the semiotic literature on the interpretations of monuments and memorials (§ 2.4). Semiotics has sought to

overcome the restricted focus on the designers' intentions that has characterised the geographical approach. However, the key limitations of the geographical approach persisted in semiotics (§ 2.5). Chapter Two concluded identifying two limitations that have been predominant in both the cultural geographical and the semiotic approaches to monuments and memorials: first, that the connection between the material, symbolic and political dimensions has been often overlooked; and second, that the relationship between designers and users has remained mostly under-theorised (§ 2.6).

Chapter Three, on '*The connection between cultural geography and semiotics: A holistic perspective on monuments and memorials*', proposed a theoretical framework to overcome the limitations identified in Chapter Two and thus to contribute to the understanding of the multiple interpretations of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. This framework was based on a holistic perspective that conceives three interplays as central: a) between the material, symbolic and political dimensions; b) between designers and users; and c) between monuments, the cultural context and the built environment. The proposed theoretical framework has a number of consequences that open three original perspectives.

1. The material, symbolic and political dimensions of monuments and memorials always function together and influence each other through continuous mediations (§ 3.1). These dimensions equally contribute to the creation and development of a better understanding of how the meanings of monuments and memorials are constructed and negotiated.

2. The meanings of monuments and memorials originate at the intersection between the designers' and the users' interpretations (§ 3.2). A set of strategies is available to designers to entice users along specific interpretations of monuments and memorials (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 57). Nevertheless, not all users conform to the designers' intentions. Unforeseen interpretations and practices thus play a critical role in the meaning-making of monuments and memorials.

3. The interpretations of monuments and memorials are determined by culture and by the interrelations monuments have with the built environment (§ 3.3). The meaningful nature of monuments and memorials cannot be analysed separately from the cultural context and separately from its interrelations with surrounding built forms.

The connection between the theoretical and the empirical dimensions of research

Chapter Four, on '*The methodological framework for the study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials*', drew out the methodological framework for the empirical study of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. In doing so, it explained the rationale for a case study research strategy and a qualitative methodology based on a multi-method approach for data collection.

The case study research strategy was appropriate to show how a connection between analytical frames developed in the field of cultural geography and semiotics could contribute to a better understanding of the multiple interpretations of monuments and memorials. As for the research methodology, a qualitative approach showed a clear advantage over the multiplicity and the ambiguity of interpretations. A multi-method approach was chosen to compare data produced through interviews, observations and the investigation of documents. Semi-structured interviews explored the users' opinions, beliefs and emotional reactions. Participant observations concentrated on the actions and interactions of users. The investigation of documents and secondary sources provided an account of the researched monuments as envisioned by their designers.

Concepts presented in Chapter Two and Three proved to be a useful assemblage for the analysis of interview transcripts and field notes. Data analysis managed to shape an original interpretation on the kinds of cultural geographical spaces that stemmed from the interplay between the designers' and users' ways of attributing meanings to the analysed monuments.

Empirical contributions

Chapters Five and Six presented analyses of the two case studies: the Victory Column in Tallinn and the Kissing Students in Tartu. These two monuments had different appearance, but both contributed to cultural reinventions seeking to create a built environment in accordance with the current political and cultural agendas of the Estonian elites.

Chapters Five, on '*Case Study One: The multiple interpretations of the Victory Column in Tallinn*', analysed the War of Independence Victory Column, a war memorial

unveiled in Tallinn in 2009. Analysis showed that the Victory Column is a concrete manifestation of power signifying the power of the Estonian Government who took the initiative for its erection. Its material and symbolic design strategies establish an exclusive space for a select audience: the memorial does not address those who are alien to the Estonian culture and history, who may easily misinterpret its logic. Yet the Victory Column creates a distant relation even with the addressed audience (Chapter Seven § 7.5).

Analysis demonstrated that there is an evident gap between the designer' stated intentions and the users' interpretations of the Victory Column. The Victory Column was erected to articulate specific understandings of the Estonian national memory and identity and to support dominant power interests. However, the selective meanings that the Estonian Government strived to convey through the Victory Column are not reflected at societal levels (§ 5.7). Users have mostly reinterpreted the political and the cultural positions embodied in the Victory Column. Furthermore, the memorial has not attracted the expected practices of commemorations and sentiments of mourning.

Chapter Six, on '*Case Study Two: The multiple interpretations of the Kissing Students in Tartu*', extended the discussion to a less confrontational built form: the Kissing Students, a circular fountain with a sculpture featuring two kissing young people under an umbrella, unveiled in Tartu in 1998. This chapter argued that the analysis of less controversial built forms can be as revelatory as that of more politicised monuments and memorials in understanding the connection of the cultural geographical and the semiotic approach to the built environment (§ 6.2).

The Kissing Students presents a cultural reinvention extensively used in post-Soviet Estonia: to establish a built environment free from direct political meanings and not directly related to the political storm characterising Estonia throughout the 20th century (§ 6.6; Väljas and Lige 2015: 77). Analysis showed that material and symbolic design strategies help to create a people-friendly built form and to encourage interaction with users (§ 6.3). The purpose and iconography of the Kissing Students are easy to understand for Estonians as well as for outsiders.

Analysis demonstrated that the users' interpretations of the Kissing Students match with the designers' stated intentions to a great extent. Tartu citizens have welcomed the cultural positions embodied in the fountain-sculpture and included it in their everyday itineraries. Citizens have mostly approve the material design of the Kissing

Students and seen it as consistent with the surrounding built environment. They have considered the Kissing Students as suitable and representative for the urban identity of Tartu (§ 6.4).

Chapter Seven, on '*The cultural reinvention of the Estonian built environment: a comparative analysis between the Victory Column and the Kissing Students*', proposed a comparative analysis of the case studies. Comparative analysis identified the similarities and differences between the interpretative processes of the researched monuments and made them cohere into a meaningful argument: that the built environment is a form of discourse that designers can shape and transform in order to convey specific cultural and political meanings (Dovey 1999: 1). However, designers do not have complete control over users' interpretations and practices and thus users differently interpret the built environment following their opinions, beliefs and feelings (Chapter Three § 3.2).

The results that emerged from the analyses indicated that elites use monuments and memorials as a form of discourse to construct and spread meanings in space. Designers use complex semiotic strategies to channel users' interpretations, but users interpret monuments and memorials in ways designers may have never intended. The holistic perspective connecting semiotics and cultural geography can be very useful to understand what strategies designers use to design monuments and how these are variously interpreted at societal levels.

8.3 Limitations of the thesis

While it is hoped that this study has contributed to the understanding of the connection between cultural geography and semiotics, there are some apparent limitations concerning the concepts chosen for discussion, the methods of data collection and the empirical inquiry.

Limitations concerning the concepts chosen for discussion originated from the limits of the Ph.D. thesis in scope and in space. The thesis primarily concentrated on the cultural geographical and semiotic aspects of the built environment and to the ways they connect. More concepts from geography and semiotics themselves could be discussed in order to give a full picture of the contribution of the thesis: for example, concepts and methodologies from biosemiotics and from semiotics of culture could

enrich understanding of the interpretative aspects of the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically (see § 8.4).

Second, limitations regarded the methods of data collection. First, measures were taken to minimise the researcher effect on data collection. However, the researcher's personal identity inevitably influenced the collection and analysis of data to a certain extent (§ 4.6). Data collection and analysis are essentially subjective and necessarily reflect cultural conventions, education, past experiences, needs as well as transitory physical and emotional states of the researcher.

Secondly, data collection may have overlooked important information due to the language barriers of the researcher. The researcher has only an elementary knowledge of Estonian and Russian. For this reason, relevant material in Estonian and Russian not translated into English may have been disregarded: for example, no systematic investigation of planning documents that were only in Estonian or in Russian was attempted. Secondly, the researcher interacted mostly, but not exclusively, with relatively well educated Estonian and Russian respondents that speak English as a foreign language. As seen in Chapter Four § 4.7, interviewing in English was not immediately an issue: recruiting Estonian citizens with a fair knowledge of English was an easy task and using English as an interview language was an effective strategy to reach more confidentiality in respondents. However, speaking English as a foreign language may have led to a loss of precision in language during interviews.

At the empirical level, this research highlighted how interpretative communities differently interpret the built environment. However, it has not yet proved itself capable of contributing to practical planning and management policies.

8.4 Future directions

The theoretical and methodological proposals of this study set an agenda that could not be exhausted in the space of a research thesis. Future directions of research directly build on the limitations concerning the concepts chosen for discussion and the empirical inquiry addressed in section 8.3.

The first question to take further concerns the ways in which concepts from cultural geography and semiotics can inform practical planning and management policies in

relation to the built environment and monuments and memorials specifically. The analytical results could provide 'solutions' for planners and policy makers to comprehend how interpretations are negotiated between different agents involved in urban planning policies and practices. In this respect, since interpretation is closely connected with individual bodies, interpretative semiotics is open to a reflection for the approach known as biosemiotics (Sebeok 2001a; Kull 2005; Hoffmeyer 2008; see also Cobley 2001b: 163-164). A biosemiotic approach is recommended to enrich the understanding of the semiotic mechanisms underpinning the individuals' interactions with the built environment. Concepts from semiotics of culture, such as the notion of "*explosion*" (Lotman 2009), are also needed to map the dynamics of social and political change in relation to urban space and consequently to improve urban planning and management policies (Lindström et al 2014: 126). Future studies should also concentrate on how to limit broad debates and social conflicts resulting from ill-advise national politics of memory and identity in post-Soviet countries as well as in other transitional societies.

Secondly, future research will concern the ways in which the research results can offer 'solutions' for the practical planning and design of monuments and memorials in the context of the post-socialist city. Further research on Estonian national politics of memory and identity is desirable. This desire stems from the large amount of data collected that were not included in the present thesis due to the limits in scope and in space. Further analysis on the field cases is continuing and will be presented in future papers. Furthermore, other built forms in Estonia can be compared with the case studies analysed in this thesis. Finally, comparisons with other case studies can be done to advance the understanding of the current national politics of memory and identity throughout the post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in Central Asia as well as in other transitional and changing societies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Questions to discuss during interviews.

The first list of question refers to the Victory Column and Freedom Square in Tallinn. The second list refers to the Kissing Students and Freedom Square in Tartu.

Introduction and formalities
- Hello!
- Aims of research
- My project in Cardiff University and University of Tartu
- Do I have your permission to record?
- Reassuring about confidentiality
- Time, Date, Place
- ▪Name Interviewee

Questions on Victory Column/Vabaduse väljak

1. When do you **usually go** to Vabaduse väljak?
   o Do you go there for any **specific purposes**?
     - Meeting point
     - Working
     - Shopping
     - Restaurant/cafes
     - Visiting friends
     - Visiting monuments/museums
     - Studying
     - Partying
     - Commemoration/rituals/celebrations
     - Demonstrations
       - OR
     - Just passing by
     - Passing there to reach other places
     - Crossing it for no precise purposes

2. In average, **how many times par day/month** you pass from there?

3. In 2008-2009 Vabaduse väljak changed a lot. Planning documents about this reconstruction stated some **objectives**, such as:

   a. "*Embellish the square*" with an "*attractive design*". Do you think this square is **more attractive** today?
   b. "*Increase the space of the square*". Do you think the square is **bigger** today?
   c. Create a "*comfortable transport hub for public transport flow, parking and pedestrians*", but in the same time the square should be "*in accordance with archaeological layers*". Do you think that the changes have respected the **archaeological layers** of this square?
   d. Another objective says that changes have been done to create a space that is in accordance "*with nowadays sense of life*". In your opinion, in which way Freedom Square represents "**nowadays sense of life**"?

   So, in general, **how do you define the 2008 changes**?

   e. ***[If respondent seems to not like the changes]***
     i. It seems you do not really like these changes…Can you please explain me why? Which are the main problems for you? If you had the possibility, **would you change (add/remove) something?**

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4. Tell me…do you like the **Victory Column** (*Vabadussõja võidusammas*)?

    a. What do you think it **represents**? What is its **purpose**? [What do you know about it?]
    b. What do you think about its **location**? Do you think it is a good idea that this memorial was placed here?
    c. How do you feel about its **dimensions/material**?
    d. What **emotions** come up for you?
    e. [How do you **use** it?] How is the Kissing Students important for your "everyday" life?

5. What do you think about the **poetry** by Guistav Suits. Have you ever seen it? Do you like it?

Tõsta lipp! See aja käänul *tunnistagu tuulte väänul* *üle maa ja vee ja tee:* *tund on tulnud vannet vandu,* *ei ei iial enam andu* *ikke alla rahvas see!*	Raise the flag! In this turn of time witness the winds twist over the land and water and road: hour has come to swear an oath that never again will bow down under a yoke this nation

6. **Comparison**: Tell me your opinion: in what the Victory Column in Tallinn is similar to the Kissing Students in Tartu? And in what it is dissimilar?
    a. On the basis of this, in what Freedom Square in Tallinn is similar to Town Hall Square in Tartu? And in what it is dissimilar? Do you think those squares are comparable (by similarities or differences)?

7. What do you think about:
    a. Freedom Clock
    b. Tell me, in your opinion…, Which is the most important building in Vabaduse väljak?
    c. Underground shopping centre
    d. Jaani Kirik
    e. Harju Street

8. *[Remember! Tips: you say "pretty" good. Why pretty? What makes you say "pretty?]*

Introduction and formalities
- Hello!
- Aims of research
- My project in Cardiff University and University of Tartu
- Do I have your permission to record?
- Reassuring about confidentiality
- Time, Date, Place
- Name Interviewee

Questions on Kissing Students/Raekoja Plats

2. When do you **usually go** to Raekoja Plats?
    - Do you go there for any specific purposes?
        - Meeting point (Kissing Students?)
        - Working
        - Shopping
        - Restaurant/cafes
        - Visiting friends
        - Visiting monuments
        - Bureaucracy at the town hall
        - Partying
            - OR
        - Just passing by
        - Passing there to reach other places
        - Crossing it for no precise purposes

3. In average, **how many times par day/year** do you pass from there?

4. Tourist guides on Tartu often refer to Raekoja Plats as **the most important square in Tartu**. Which is your opinion: **why** do you think it is important?
    - [Understand if respondent considers Raekoja Plats important for historical reasons or as the centre of Tartu contemporary life]

5. [Relating to previous question…why is important *for you*?] Tell me…do you like Raekoja Plats?

    - *[If respondents seems to like it]*
        - I see. What do you like the most? (architecture, monuments, function, size, location, specific elements, practices, experiences, events)
    - *[If respondent seems to not like it]*
        - It seems you do not really like it…Can you please explain me why? Which are the main problems for you?
    - If you had the possibility, **would you change (add/remove) something?**

6. Now tell me…Do you like the **Kissing Students (1998)?**

   - Touristic guides usually say that is the "**symbol**" of Tartu. Do you agree with that?
     - If yes, Tartu has many statues/symbols. Why do you think the Kissing Students is considered as a symbol?
   - [What do you **know** about that?] How do you know those two people are students? …
   - What **emotions** come up for you?
   - [How do you **use** it?] How is the Kissing Students important for your "everyday" life?
   -
7. **Comparison**: Tell me your opinion: **in what** the Kissing Students in Tartu is similar to the Victory Column in Tallinn? And in what it is dissimilar?
   - On the basis of this, **in what** Town Hall Square in Tartu is similar to Freedom Square in Tallinn? And in what it is dissimilar? Do you think those squares are comparable (by similarities or differences)?

8. What do you think about:
   - **Hammer and Sickle Symbols**
     - Do you notice them? [try to get if the respondent is happy that they are still there or if she/he would prefer them to be removed].
   - Tell me, in your opinion, which is the **most important building** in Raekoja Plats?
   - Yellow Rectangle
   - Town Hall
   - Bridge
   - Ruutli street / Kuuni Street

   - *Tips: you say "pretty" good. Why pretty? What makes you say "pretty?*

Appendix 2 – Informed consent forms.

The first informed consent form was given to respondents interviewed on the Victory Column. The second form was given to respondents interviewed on the Kissing Students.

Date:

Federico Bellentani
Research Student at School of Planning and Geography
University of Cardiff, UK
Visiting research student at Department of Semiotics
University of Tartu, Estonia
Mail: BellentaniF@cardiff.ac.uk
Mob.: +372 58 044 864

Dear Interviewee,

My name is Federico Bellentani, research student at School of Planning and Geography, Cardiff University, UK. **The purpose of my research** is to prepare an analysis on **Vabaduse väljak and the Victory Column in Tallinn**.

Today, we will have a chat about Vabaduse väljak and the Victory Column. I am looking for **your personal opinions** about Vabaduse väljak and the Victory Column. **There are no wrong or right answers** to my questions, only your personal opinions about Vabaduse väljak. I am interested in what you usually do in Vabaduse väljak, what you know about it and which kinds of emotions Vabaduse väljak and the Victory Column generate in you.

I have only few questions to ask. Our chat will not last more than **30-40 minutes**. If you give me your consent, this chat will be **taped and transcribed** to not loose anything we say. If you do not feel comfortable with recording, feel free to tell me. Please, remember that your name will never be associated with the record. The recorded file will be stored as **password-protected on my computer**. Moreover, you can ask to turn off the recorder anytime, if there is anything you want to tell me in private.

Moreover, I will always respect your **privacy**, storing the data separately from you identity. There is no one else but me listening to the recordings. I will use the recording only for the research purposes. Finally, I will provide you with a draft copy of the transcript of the interview, so that you may review its content. Please, remember you still have the opportunity to withdraw from interview even after receiving the transcript.

As you can see, there is nothing to worry about! So **do I have your permission to record our interview?** Let's start and **thank you very much for your help**!

Sincerely,

Federico Bellentani

I have read this document and I understand what is requested of me. I give permission to record this interview and to storage password-protected the file recorded. I freely consent to participate.

□ Please, tick the box if you wish to see a transcript of the interview.

□ Please, tick the box if you wish to be contacted once the work is done and if you wish to receive the final report with my findings.

Date, …………………….

 Name of Interviewee (printed)   Name of Interviewer (printed)

Name of Interviewee (signed)   Name of Interviewer (signed)

Date:

Federico Bellentani
Research Student at School of Planning and Geography
University of Cardiff, UK
Visiting research student at Department of Semiotics
University of Tartu, Estonia
Mail: BellentaniF@cardiff.ac.uk
Mob.: +372 58 044 864

Dear Interviewee,

My name is Federico Bellentani, research student at School of Planning and Geography, Cardiff University, UK. **The purpose of my research** is to prepare an analysis on **Raekoja Plats and the Kissing Students in Tartu**.

Today, we will have a chat about Raekoja Plats and the Kissing Students. I am looking for **your personal opinions** about Raekoja Plats and the Kissing Students. **There are no wrong or right answers** to my questions, only your personal opinions about Raekoja Plats. I am interested in what you usually do in Raekoja Plats what you know about it and which kinds of emotions Raekoja Plats and the Kissing Students generate in you.

I have only few questions to ask. Our chat will not last more than **30-40 minutes**. If you give me your consent, this chat will be **taped and transcribed** to not loose anything we say. If you do not feel comfortable with recording, feel free to tell me. Please, remember that your name will never be associated with the record. The recorded file will be stored as **password-protected on my computer**. Moreover, you can ask to turn off the recorder anytime, if there is anything you want to tell me in private.

Moreover, I will always respect your **privacy**, storing the data separately from you identity. There is no one else but me listening to the recordings. I will use the recording only for the research purposes. Finally, I will provide you with a draft copy of the transcript of the interview, so that you may review its content. Please, remember you still have the opportunity to withdraw from interview even after receiving the transcript.

As you can see, there is nothing to worry about! So **do I have your permission to record our interview?** Let's start and **thank you very much for your help**!

Sincerely,

Federico Bellentani

I have read this document and I understand what is requested of me. I give permission to record this interview and to storage password-protected the file recorded. I freely consent to participate.

□ Please, tick the box if you wish to see a transcript of the interview.

□ Please, tick the box if you wish to be contacted once the work is done and if you wish to receive the final report with my findings.

Date, …………………….

Name of Interviewee (printed)   Name of Interviewer (printed)

Name of Interviewee (signed)   Name of Interviewer (signed)

Appendix 3 – Observation schedule.

Direct observations:

- *On monuments and memorials*

- *Size*, *degree of elevation*, *angle of interaction*, *material of construction*, *texture*, *shapes*, *curvature*, *colours* and *brightness/opacity* (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 41-57; Greimas 1989).

- *Iconography* and *symbolism* (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1988; Johnson 1995; Whelan 2002).

- *Ethnicity*, *age*, *gender*, *occupation*, *noteworthy achievement*, *actions* and *interactions* of the characters represented in monuments and memorials (Johnson 1995; Hay et al. 2004: 205).

- *Writings* and *dedications* (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991).

- *Spatial surroundings* (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1988: 34).

- *On the designers' use of the squares*

- *Public rituals of power* (Benton-Short 2006: 299).

- *Celebrations of public holidays* (Osborne 1998: 435).

- *Entertaining* and *cultural events*.

- *On the users' actions and interactions in the squares*

- *Social interaction* (Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou 2014: 446).

- *Actions of social practices* (Lefebvre 1991: 222).

- Practices of *commemoration* (Withers 1996).

- Practices of *tourism*, *leisure* and *general consumption of space* (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 204).

- *Oppositional political practices* (Hershkovitz 1993: 395).

- *Different uses* from those envisioned by the designers (Hershkovitz 1993: 397).

Appendix 4 – Two extracts from transcribed interviews, prior to coding.

The first extract is from an interview on the Victory Column; the second is from an interview on the Kissing Students.

Extract from an interview on the Victory Column

[…]

me: ok. Tell me your opinion about the Kissing Students and statue. Do you like this monument? Many guide-books and other documents define Kissing Students as the symbol of Tartu. Do you agree with that? #00:16:04-8#

respondent: it become the symbol… #00:16:05-5#

me: ok, it became the symbol. Why do you think so, why do you say "become a symbol". #00:16:11-9#

respondent: because this is what one sees first on the main square [smiling] and then it represents of course the students. The student who are the main inhabitants, main citizens of Tartu…ha-ha-ha…and the shape of it it is used in many postcards and stuff. But have you see the old fountain? #00:16:35-8#

me: No…I mean there were only a pool.. #00:16:44-2#

respondent: yes, it was just a couple of stones…ha-ha-ha #00:16:50-0#

me: so in your opinion this statue improved the space there… #00:16:52-5#

respondent: it looks…hum...like…like…like a symbol…ha-ha-ha. Something you can associate with Tartu. Because the old fountain you could not associate with anything ha-ha-ha. #00:17:12-2#

me: so you agree with the statement that this can be the symbol of Tartu #00:17:21-4#

respondent: yeah yeah...and also, I think you know, but it became part of student customs…a student from University of Tartu should swim in the fountain #00:17:37-9#

me: I know very well…unfortunately…ha-ha-ha #00:17:42-0#

respondent: [*laughing*] have you ever done it? #00:17:43-1#

me: of course! Several times…and I will do it again because I am still a student here! #00:17:46-2#

respondent: ha-ha-ha great! #00:18:04-1#

[…]

<u>Extract from an interview on the Kissing Students</u>

[…]

me: say that "there are certainly things that I do not like so much". So would you like to remove or add anything from there… #00:07:17-4#

respondent: well I was….not particular fan with this monument, this Freedom Monument or…how it is called in English, this big monument. So yes, I do not…as you said…you probably know there were a very hot debate around this topic [Victory Column] and I was certainly against this particular monument there…but as it is…it was people's decision…the majority of Estonians favoured this decision [to built it]…it was an honest decision [to built it in a way]…I must respect it although I do not personally like it. #00:07:56-1#

me: May I ask you the reasons why you do not really like the Victory Column? It is matter of location? Size? … #00:08:10-3#

respondent: …no no no no, location could be ok, why not. But this, in general…[long pause] how do you say in English…the general appearance, it is huge, it is…it looks slightly militaristic perhaps…it is very clearly religious sign in military time…it is not beautiful and it perhaps seems not to symbolise freedom, rather it tries to symbolise might or something over there [*expanding arms*]. So…which is perhaps not necessary, it is not the most important thing to represent in the centre of Estonia's capital. #00:08:57-6#

me: I see. Are you anyway comfortable with what it represents and with the need for commemorate the fallen of the Estonian War of Independence, or do you think this monument was not necessary at all. #00:09:25-2#

respondent: hum…hum…let's say…I do not have any clear opinion about that. My personal attitude toward monuments in general is rather [long pause not very hot. I am not particularly interested, [emphasising] personally interested, in monuments. But I do understand that people wish to have monuments, even if I do not. For many people it was certainly necessary…they wished to have this monument. Now there is the question if it should have been exactly that type of monument: and again I can say that could have been another type of monument. But I do understand why people wished to have this type of monument in this central square. #00:10:18-4#

[…]

Appendix 5 – Two pages from the fieldwork diary, prior to coding.

The first page refers to observations on the Victory Column. The second page regards observations on the Kissing Students.

The coffee Wabadus put outdoor tables, with umbrella to cover from the sun. The square seemed more and more alive nowadays, because more tourists visit Tallinn in summer…and the weather was good. Around 11am, gardeners were cutting the grass and watering the green area behind the Victory Column and the movable plant boxes, that are now near the outdoors of Wabadus.

At lunchtime I visited the Tallinn Linnamuseum (City Museum): this museum shows the history of Tallinn, especially focusing on Tallinn during the Middle Age and as an Hanseatic City. On the second floor, there is two further rooms: one displaying picture and everyday object from Soviet era and one explaining the process of regaining independence.

The room relating to the Soviet era is politically charged: a curtain symbolically imprisons books, newspapers and posters of the repressed anti-Soviet Estonian propaganda. Here are displayed Soviet propaganda texts. The informative plaques referring to these materials introduce this documents with sentences like "Learn and learn…said Lenin!". In the room relating to transition, there is a picture of an old men celebrating with hands to the sky (as for "freedom finally!") on the basement previously holding a Soviet statue: it is a good picture of the emotions of early transitional times. Another pictures represent a big fire in Vabaduse valjak to celebrate the end of "the occupation". The association bonfires and freedom works also during Estonian Independence celebrations and Janipaev celebrations.

In the evening, a big group of rollerbladers meet in Vabaduse valjak to start the Tallinn Friday Night Skate, a tour of Tallinn with rollerblades. Maybe thanks to this, I noticed all the signs of skates and bmx on the stairs leading to the underground tunnel. Passed in Vabaduse valjak during late night: there is a fancy club called Vabank on the corner between the square and Harju street.

Today is Jaaniõhtu (Midsummer Eve). Along with Christmas, Jaaniõhtu (23 of June) and Jaanipäev (St. John's day) are the most important among Estonian holidays. Jaaniõhtu follows the longest day of the year (June 21, summer solstice. In Estonia it seems that the sun never sets during day and night). In the night between June 23 and 24, it is a traditions among citizens of Estonia to go to the countryside, lit bonfires, grill, drinks, singing and dancing with friends and family. For Estonians, Jaaniõhtu merges with the celebration of Võidupüha (Victory Day). On 23 June 1919 Estonian forces defeated the German troops during the Estonian War of Independence. Because of this, Jaaniõhtu and the traditional lighting of bonfires became linked with the ideals of independence and freedom.
The Victory column was erected on this day, in 2009.

Military bodies marched from Vabaduse street until Raekoja Plats. In Vabaduse street some military vehicles were exposed to be visited by citizens. At 4 military bodies marched into Raekoja Plats: here there were the representative of City of Tartu's authorities, some military veterans and a military orchestra. There were a brief official speech before the head of some army body reached Raekoja Plats with a jeep and greeted authorities. Hence, political and military authorities as well as veterans paraded in front of the town hall in order to lit torches. Before Soviet period, on the morning of Võidupüha (June 23), the tradition was that the Estonian Presidents lights a fire. From this fire, the flame of independence was carried to light several bonfires across the country.

During Soviet period, the Soviet Union made no great attempts to stop Jaaniõhtu and Jaanipäev celebrations. However, for Estonians Jaanipäev remained tied to Estonia's victory during the War of Independence, that leads to the first Estonian independence. Therefore, Jaanipäev has always been linked to Estonian independence, despite the Soviet attempts to eliminate such ideas.
During the transition to the re-establishment of Estonia's independence, Jaanipäev became an unofficial holiday, with many work places closing down. It once again became an official national holiday in 1992.

Nothing seems to go on in Vabaduse valjak, Tallinn.

Appendix 6 – List of codes used for interview and observational data.

This appendix lists the codes used to organise both interview and observation data. There are three groups of codes that can be seen as a sequence, from the most general to the more specific. First, summative codes presenting the most general concepts or types of social action are **<u>underlined and in bold</u>**. These were the outcome of a "first cycle" of coding that started making sense of a wide segment of data (Saldaña 2009: 45). Codes **_in bold and in italics_** present more specific features of data. These codes come from the literature revised in Chapter Two and were applied during a "second cycle" of coding (Saldaña 2009: 149). Finally, codes in *italic* are emerging from the field and describe the particular events or situations from the real-life context of the case studies. The latter codes can be descriptive words or short phrases (Saldaña 2009: 70-73), gerunds to connote actions (Saldaña 2009: 77), versus codes (Saldaña 2009: 93-97) or labels referring to values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and feelings (Saldaña 2009: 92).

- **<u>Monuments and memorials</u>** (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991; Hershkovitz 1993; Johnson 1995; Peet 1996; Withers 1996; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998; Osborne 1998; Dwyer 2000; Whelan 2002; Hay et al. 2004; Benton-Short 2006)

    - **_Material level_** (Abousnnouga and Machin 2013: 41-57; Greimas 1989)
        - *Overall design*
        - *Size*
        - *Location*
        - *Material of construction*
        - *Interaction user-monument*
        - *Consistency/inconsistency with the surrounding built environment*

    - **_Symbolic level_** (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1988; Johnson 1995; Whelan 2002)
        - *Iconography*
        - *Meaning*
        - *Symbolism*
        - *Purpose of commemoration*

    - **_Political dimension_** (Hershkovitz 1993; Johnson 1995; Osborne 1998; Dwyer 2000; Hay et al. 2004; Benton-Short 2006)
        - *Tool for national politics of memory and identity*
        - *Manifestation of political power*
        - *Political meaning*
        - *Public rituals*

- - *Cultural position*
  - *Future possibilities*
  - *Provocative act*
  - *Controversy*
  - *Civic demonstration*

  - *Cognitive dimension* (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 38-41)
    - *Perceived/aware*
    - *Unperceived/not aware*
    - *Perceived but ignored*
    - *Indifferent*

  - *Axiology* (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 21)
    - *Positive/like*
    - *Negative/dislike*
    - *Indifferent*

- **Practices** in the area of the monuments (pragmatic dimension)

  - *Everyday practices of users* (De Certeau 1984)
    - *Meeting point*
    - *Crossing*
    - *Frequency*
    - *Tourism*
    - *Leisure and consumption (shopping, restaurants, cafes, playing)*
    - *Young people*
    - *Work*
    - *Visiting city council/organisations*
    - *Partying/drinking*

  - *Authorised practices* (Benton-Short 2006: 299; Osborne 1998: 435; Withers 1996)
    - *Care/maintenance*
    - *Public holidays and rituals*
    - *Commemorative practices*
    - *Cultural and entertaining events*

- *Sport*
- *Music*
- *Cinema*
- *Art*
- *Historical revival*
- *Fair/market*
- *Student/children days*

- ○ **Unexpected practices** (Eco 1997: 194)
  - ▪ *Student practices*
  - ▪ *Tricks with skate, bike, BMX*

- ○ **Oppositional practices** (Hershkovitz 1993: 397)
  - ▪ *Civic demonstrations*

- **Space** of monuments

  - ○ **Centrality** (Lotman 1990)
    - ▪ *Perceived centrality*
    - ▪ *Obvious centrality*
    - ▪ *Alternative centre*

  - ○ **Making centrality** (Lotman 1990)
    - ▪ *Historical centre*
    - ▪ *Architecture/art history*
    - ▪ *Modern life centre*
    - ▪ *Geographical centre*
    - ▪ *Event/representative squares*
    - ▪ *People practices*
    - ▪ *Narratives*

  - ○ **Re-planning and reconstruction** (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1988: 32)
    - ▪ *Adding*
    - ▪ *Removing*
    - ▪ *Reconstructing*
    - ▪ *Reassessing*

- - - **Conservation/marginalisation remains** (UNESCO 2014)
    - *Totalitarian remains*
    - *Part of the history*
    - *Archaeological layers*
    - *Heritage*
    - *Tourism*

- **Time** of monuments
  - *Past VS present*
  - *Day VS night*
  - *Weekdays VS weekend*
  - *Summer VS winter*
  - *Frequency*

Appendix 7 – The coded extracts from the interviews presented in Appendix 4.

NAME
Freedom Square, Tallinn
Ethnic-Estonian, male, 56-years-old, researcher and teacher at UT.
From Tallinn, nowadays living in Tallinn and working at UT.
<u>Venue</u>: Mosaik, Freedom Square, Tallinn.

DATA FORMAT:
Interview 11, Estonian, born in 1977, male, academic.

[…]

me: say that "there are certainly things that I do not like so much". So would you like to remove or add anything from there… #00:07:17-4#	
respondent: well I was….not particular fan with this monument, this Freedom Monument or…how it is called in English, this big monument. So yes, I do not…as you said…you probably know there were a very hot debate around this topic [Victory Column] and I was certainly against this particular monument there…but as it is…it was people's decision…the majority of Estonians favoured this decision [to built it]…it was an honest decision [to built it in a way]…I must respect it although I do not personally like it. #00:07:56-1#	*Dislike: "not particular fan of this monument"* *Controversy* *Political position: "people's decision"* *Respecting purpose, but dislike*
me: May I ask you the reasons why you do not really like the Victory Column? It is matter of location? Size? … #00:08:10-3#	
respondent: …no no no no, location could be ok, why not. But this, in general…[long pause] how do you say in English…the general appearance, it is huge, it is…it looks slightly militaristic perhaps…it is very clearly religious sign in military time…it is not beautiful and it perhaps seems not to symbolise freedom, rather it tries to symbolise might or something over there [*expanding arms*]. So…which is perhaps not necessary, it is not the most important thing to represent in the centre of Estonia's capital. #00:08:57-6#	*Like: location* *Dislike: size* *Manifestation of power: "slightly militaristic"; "religious sign in military time"* *Dislike: symbolism* *Symbolism: not for "freedom", but "might"* *Symbolism location*
me: I see. Are you anyway comfortable	

with what it represents and with the need for commemorate the fallen of the Estonian War of Independence, or do you think this monument was not necessary at all. #00:09:25-2#	
respondent: hum…hum …let's say…I do not have any clear opinion about that. My personal attitude toward monuments in general is rather [long pause] not very hot. I am not particularly interested, [emphasising] personally interested, in monuments. But I do understand that people wish to have monuments, even if I do not. For many people it was certainly necessary…they wished to have this monument. Now there is the question if it should have been exactly that type of monument: and again I can say that could have been another type of monument. But I do understand why people wished to have this type of monument in this central square. #00:10:18-4#	*Indifference toward purpose of commemoration* *Indifference: "not personally interested"* *Understanding purpose* *Alternative monument* *Location*

[…]

NAME
Town Hall Square, Tartu
Ethnic-Russian, male, 38-years-old, teacher at UT.
Born in Narva (Ida-Virumaa), then moved to Tartu to study at 18-years-old.
Nowadays working at UT.
Venue: Terviseks Hostel (my place), living room.

DATA FORMAT:
Interview 13, Russophone, born in 1977, male, academic.

[…]

me: ok. Tell me your opinion about the Kissing Students. Do you like this monument? Many guidebooks and other documents define Kissing Students as the symbol of Tartu. Do you agree with that? #00:16:04-8#	*Monument: Kissing Students*
respondent: it become the symbol… #00:16:05-5#	
me: ok, it became the symbol. Why do you think so, why do you say "become a symbol"? #00:16:11-9#	*Symbolism: "becoming a symbol"*
respondent: because this is what one sees first on the main square [smiling] and then it represents of course the students. The students who are the main inhabitants, main citizens of Tartu…ha-ha-ha…and the shape of it is used in many postcards and stuff. But have you see the old fountain? #00:16:35-8#	*Location Iconography: students, the "main inhabitants" Large use in representation*
me: No…I mean there were only a pool.. #00:16:44-2#	
respondent: yes, it was just a couple of stones…ha-ha-ha #00:16:50-0#	*Old fountain*
me: so in your opinion this statue improved the space there… #00:16:52-5#	
respondent: it looks…hum...like…like…like a symbol...ha-ha-ha. Something you can associate with Tartu. Because the old fountain you could not associate with anything ha-ha-ha. #00:17:12-2#	*Symbolism*
me: so you agree with the statement that this can be the symbol of Tartu #00:17:21-4#	
respondent: yeah yeah…and also, I think you know, but it became part of student customs…a student from University of Tartu should swim in the fountain #00:17:37-9#	*Unexpected practices Student practices*
me: I know very well…unfortunately…ha-ha-ha #00:17:42-0#	
respondent: [*laughing*] have you ever done it? #00:17:43-1#	
me: of course! Several times…and I will do it again because I am still a student here! #00:17:46-2#	
respondent: ha-ha-ha great! #00:18:04-1#	

[…]

Appendix 8 – The coded pages from the fieldwork diary presented in Appendix 5.

The coffee Wabadus put outdoor tables, with umbrella to cover from the sun. MORE CROSSING, MORE TOURISTS The square seemed more and more alive nowadays, because more tourists visit Tallinn in summer… and the weather was good.
CARE/MAINTENANCE Around 11am, gardeners were cutting the grass and watering the green area behind the Victory Column and the movable plant boxes, that are now near the outdoors of Wabadus.

At lunchtime I visited the Tallinn Linnamuseum (City Museum): this museum shows the history of Tallinn, especially focusing on Tallinn during the Middle Age and as an Hanseatic City. On the second floor, there is two further rooms: one displaying picture and everyday object from Soviet era and one explaining the process of regaining independence.

NATIONAL POLITICS The room relating to the Soviet era is politically charged: a curtain symbolically imprisons books, newspapers and posters of the repressed anti-Soviet Estonian propaganda. Here are displayed Soviet propaganda texts. The informative plaques referring to these materials introduce this documents with sentences like "Learn and learn…said Lenin!". In the room relating to transition, there is a picture of an old men celebrating with hands to the sky (as for "freedom finally!") on the basement previously holding a Soviet statue: it is a good picture of the emotions of early transitional times.
PAST FREEDOM SQUARE - INDEPENDENCE: another pictures represent a big fire in Vabaduse valjak to celebrate the end of "the occupation". PUBLIC HOLIDAY The association bonfires and freedom works also during Estonian Independence celebrations and Janipaev celebrations.

SPORT EVENTS In the evening, a big group of rollerbladers meet in Vabaduse valjak to start the Tallinn Friday Night Skate, a tour of Tallinn with rollerblades. Maybe thanks to this, SKATING/ BIKING I noticed all the signs of skates and bmx on the stairs leading to the underground tunnel. NIGHT Passed in Vabaduse valjak during late night: there is a fancy club called Vabank on the corner between the square and Harju street.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY Today is Jaaniõhtu (Midsummer Eve). Along with Christmas, Jaaniõhtu (23 of June) and Jaanipäev (St. John's day) are the most important among Estonian holidays. Jaaniõhtu follows the longest day of the year (June 21, summer solstice. In Estonia it seems that the sun never sets during day and night). In the night between June 23 and 24, it is a traditions among citizens of Estonia to go to the countryside, lit bonfires, grill, drinks, singing and dancing with friends and family. For Estonians, Jaaniõhtu merges with the celebration of Võidupüha (Victory Day). On 23 June 1919 Estonian forces defeated the German troops during the Estonian War of Independence. Because of this, Jaaniõhtu and the traditional lighting of bonfires became linked with the ideals of independence and freedom.

TALLINN The Victory column was erected on this day, in 2009.

TARTU PUBLIC RITUALS Military bodies marched from Vabaduse street until Raekoja Plats. In Vabaduse street some military vehicles were exposed to be visited by citizens. At 4 military bodies marched into Raekoja Plats: here there were the representative of City of Tartu's authorities, some military veterans and a military orchestra. There were a brief official speech before the head of some army body reached Raekoja Plats with a jeep and greeted authorities. Hence, political and military authorities as well as veterans paraded in front of the town hall in order to lit torches.
Before Soviet period, on the morning of Võidupüha (June 23), the tradition was that the Estonian Presidents lights a fire. From this fire, the flame of independence was carried to light several bonfires across the country.

During Soviet period, the Soviet Union made no great attempts to stop Jaaniõhtu and Jaanipäev celebrations. However, for Estonians Jaanipäev remained tied to Estonia's victory during the War of Independence, that leads to the first Estonian independence.

SYMBOLISM PUBLIC HOLIDAY Therefore, Jaanipäev has always been linked to Estonian independence, despite the Soviet attempts to eliminate such ideas. During the transition to the re-establishment of Estonia's independence, Jaanipäev became an unofficial holiday, with many work places closing down. It once again became an official national holiday in 1992.

NO RITUALS IN TALLINN
Tallinn Web Camera: Nothing seems to go on in Vabaduse valjak, Tallinn.

Appendix 9 – Approved Risk Assessment Form.

Risk Assessment Form

IMPORTANT: Before carrying out the assessment, please read the Guidance Notes

1. General Information

Department	CPLAN	Building	GLAMORGAN BUILDING	Room No	- 1.23
Name of Assessor	FEDERICO BELLENTANI	**Date of Original Assessment**	4/12/2014	**Assessment No**	1

Status of Assessor: Supervisor ☐ , Postgraduate ☒ , Undergraduate ☐ , Technician ☐ , Other: _____
(Specify)

2. Brief Description of Procedure/Activity including its Location and Duration

FIELDWORK in Tallinn and Tartu, Estonia. From 6/02/2015 until 31/10/2015. Fieldwork includes participant observations and in-depth interviews.

3. Persons at Risk   Are they...   Notes

Staff ☐	Trained ☒	Training was provided by the literature, supervisor's advices, speaking with colleagues, University Graduate College's trainings.
Students ☒	Competent ☐	
Visitor ☐	Inexperienced ☐	
Contractor ☐	Disabled ☐	

4. Level of Supervision   Notes

None ☐ Constant ☐ Periodic ☒ Training Required ☐	Fieldwork is a lone work and the communication with supervisors will be periodic. With my supervisors, I agree on sending them an e-mail once par week. Further Skype meetings will be scheduled once a fortnight.

5. Will Protective Equipment Be Used? Please give *specific* details of PPE

Head ☐ Eye ☐ Ear ☐ Body ☒ Hand ☒ Foot ☒	Warm, weatherproof, high visibility clothing will be used for cold, wet and dark conditions, in remote areas as well as in traffic.

6. Is the Environment at Risk?   Notes

Yes ☐ No ☒	

7. Will Waste be generated?   If 'yes' please give details of disposal

Yes ☐ No ☒	

8. Hazards involved

Work Activity / Item of Equipment / Procedure / Physical Location	Hazard	Control Measures and Consequence of Failure	Likelihood (0 to 5) ×	Severity (0 to 5) =	Level of Risk
Participant Observations	general theft and vandalism	- Never resisting a mugger - Not wearing expensive jewellery/clothes and having a dummy wallet - Ensuring to have copies of your itinerary & passport - Using the safe in my private accommodation - Having the numbers required for emergencies	1	1	1
Interviews	Social and political problem linked to traumatic past	- Being discreet about potential traumatic memories. - Being briefed on cultural norms. -Being aware of the use of body language and the acceptability of physical contact. -Establishing appropriate social distance.	2	3	6
Collection Visual Material	Taking inappropriate picture	Pictures will not be taken of under-age people, police and military subject and areas	2	1	2
Collecting Official Documents	Copyright	Being informed about copyright measures	1	1	1

9. Chemical Safety (COSHH Assessment)

Hazard	Control Measures	Likelihood (0 to 5) ×	Severity (0 to 5) =	Level of Risk
Chemicals on site (if Ida-Viru Country will be visited)	I will spend in Ida-Viru Country the appropriate time not to be afected.	1	2	2

10. Source(s) of information used to complete the above
 Cardiff University Health and Safety in Fieldwork Policy and Guidance; Cardiff University Risk Assessment - Guidance notes

11. Further Action

Highest Level of Risk Score	Action to be taken
0 to 5 ☐	No further action needed
6 to 11 ☐	Appropriate additional control measures should be implemented
12 to 25 ☒	Additional control measures **MUST** be implemented. Work **MUST NOT** commence until such measures are in place. If work has already started it must **STOP** until adequate control measures are in place.

12. Additional Control Measures – Likelihood and Severity are the values with the additional controls in place

Work Activity / Item of Equipment / Procedure / Physical Location	Hazard and Existing Control Measures	Additional Controls needed to Reduce Risk	Likelihood (0 to 5) $\times$	Severity (0 to 5) $=$	Level of Risk
Participant observations	Political hazard, conflict and terrorism	- Being aware of the current security situation in the cities I am visiting - Checking dates of trip against public holidays or days of special recognition - Checking dates of trip against local elections, major sporting events and public holidays - Avoiding foreign Embassies and hotels next door/nearby - Avoiding all demonstrations - Always having mobile phone and emergency numbers - Notifing family and friends when I do particiant observations in Tallinn and Tartu			

After the implementation of new control measures the procedure/activity should be re-assessed to ensure that the level of risk has been reduced as required.

13. Action in the Event of an Accident or Emergency

Report to supervisor / manager and …Bellentani Claudio.

Address: Via Toscana, 227 Postcode: 40141 City: Bologna

Mob.: +39 3356324758 Mail: claudio.bellentani@gmail.com

14. Arrangements for Monitoring the Effectiveness of Control

Ad-hoc visual checks and …

15. Review: This assessment must be reviewed by (date):

Name of Reviewer:		Date of Review:	
Have the Control measures been effective in controlling the risk?			
Have there been any changes in the procedure or in information available which affect the estimated level of risk?			
What changes to the Control Measures are required?			

16. Signatures for printed copies: