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Još Hrvatska ni propala: [Still Croatia Has Not Fallen]

Examining the Public Face of Memory in Croatia

Taylor Andrew McConnell
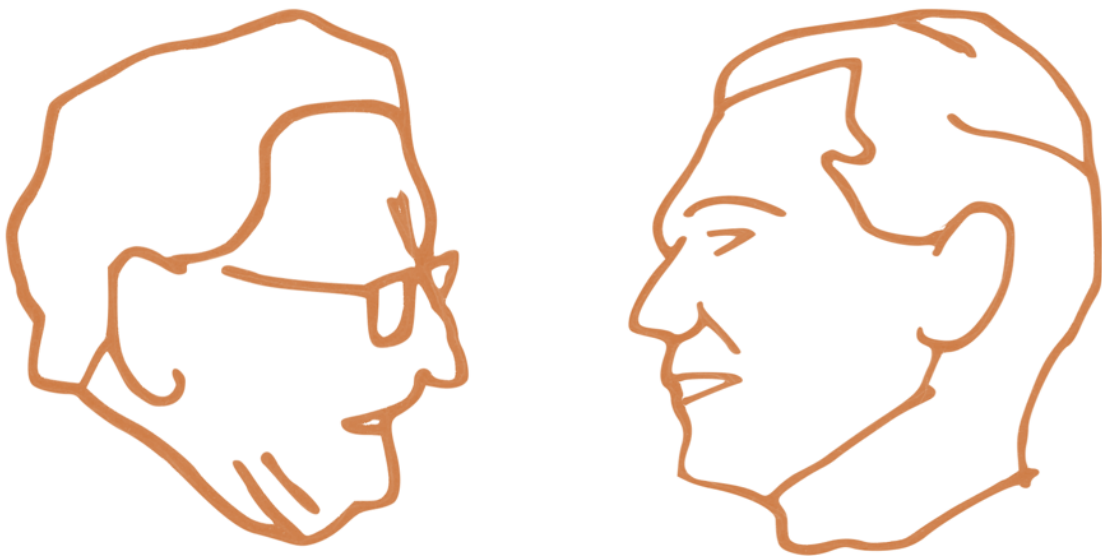
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

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Signed

Taylor Andrew McConnell
3 July 2020

**SMRT FAŠIZMU, SLOBODA NARODU.
WIESBADEN, SRPANJ 2020. GODINE**

Except where noted, all images of monuments, memorial placards, museum exhibitions and street art are my own and have only been lightly adjusted to enhance readability when necessary. All translations from Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian, German or French into English are my own unless otherwise stated.

Abstract

This thesis examines the "public face of memory," the visual elements of cultural memory going beyond the simple structure of a statue or a plaque to tell a story about the politics of remembrance. The structure of cultural memory is determined by ongoing struggles between social groups for power over memory itself (Müller 2009) to secure the power to endure (Hearn 2014), thus binding memory and identity over space and time.

My study of the structures of power and memory in Croatia highlights the role of social responses to the past in determining local, national and supranational identities. Since the end of the Croatian War of Independence or "Homeland War" in 1995, much has been remembered and more forgotten for the sake of a united national identity. Monuments have been constructed to remind passers-by of the nation, its defenders and its victims, yet the meaning these concrete manifestations of memory impart depends on how a given audience interacts with them. This results in plural and contradictory iterations of cultural memory, contrary to the intent of those exercising power over memory to forge a unitary image of the nation.

In this thesis, I address the following core research questions:

- How is memory visualised in public spaces, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?
- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?
- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?
- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?
- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

My point of departure is the construction of cultural memory, as described by Aleida Assmann (1999; 2006) and Jan Assmann (2000). I address the neglect and subsequent lack of development of Todorov's term, "memory abuse" (1995). I find the transitions between forms of memory provide voids in which various actors exercise power over memory to mould narratives of the past to serve their vision of the present and future. These transitions and abuses are made visible through public memorials. Through my work on capturing its public display and performance, I advance a method for the documentation of memory. Through the case study of Croatia, this work highlights patterns of memorialisation that perpetuate violence and provides a template to identify memory abuse elsewhere.

My key arguments are:

- Memory can be "abused" when processes of memorialisation are manipulated in ways that result in violence;
- Privileged groups (in this case, the ruling Croatian Democratic Union and veterans of the Homeland War) exercise power over memory to construct an exclusive narrative of national identity and belonging; this is represented in memorial spaces;
- There is no singular "cultural memory," rather cultures of memory intersect or align at key points in the mnemonic calendar, with groups seeking power over memory to ensure the persistence of their own identity;
- The process of making "Croatian" identity shares similar characteristics with other national groups in that much of this identity is formed by the drawing of strict ethnic, political, religious or related boundaries through negation. In marking these boundaries, those with greater influence over the mnemonic landscape deny opportunities for some of those most affected by the violent destruction of Yugoslavia to contribute to the formation of shared cultural memory of the past at the level of the Republic of Croatia, ultimately, and a corresponding inclusive national identity.

Lay Summary

This thesis is about the public face of memory in Croatia, that is, what we see, what we hear and what we touch that reminds us of the past. The public face of memory is something intentionally constructed over time by various actors – politicians, activists, artists and so on – who attempt to implant their vision of history onto the wider cultural sphere. In the case of Croatia, as in other countries, this takes shape in monuments, historical plaques, museums, newspapers, graffiti and public commemorations.

The purpose of this work is to investigate the nuances of public rehearsals of memory in post-conflict settings. Having secured its independence from Yugoslavia in what is known domestically as the "Homeland War," Croatia remembers its violent past – including the memories of the Second World War and beyond – in ways that stoke controversy at home and abroad. Particularly amongst the Serb community in Croatia, which has viewed itself as the victim of violent expressions of Croatian nationalism in the 1940s and again in the 1990s, the memories of the Homeland War have been brought to their front doors, with monuments to Croatian victories constructed in villages from which the vast majority of the Serb population has fled. The voices of victims – both Serb and Croat – have been drowned out by an overwhelming tide of memorial acts praising the Croatian "defenders," the soldiers who fought on the side of Croatian independence from 1991 to 1995, and criticisms from liberal civil society of this rather uncritical approach to the past are ignored.

This thesis presents the "public face of memory" as an analytical tool to capture memory, a rather personal and ephemeral phenomenon, in its visual forms. I also reintroduce the term "memory abuse" as a means to uncover patterns of social behaviour that lead to the misappropriation of the memory of the past as a tool to instigate violence in the present. This term has been used rather uncritically in recent scholarly works, and my hope here is to give it new meaning for those interested in using memory as a tool for peace rather than division. Throughout this work, I present dozens of monuments I documented in eleven field visits to all regions of Croatia, from the smallest remnants of pre-war villages to large urban areas like Zagreb, Split, Osijek and Pula. Special attention is given to commemorative events in Knin marking the anniversary of 1995's Operation Storm, which saw the return of Serb-controlled territory to the Republic of Croatia, and in Vukovar, the site of a massacre of 264 civilians and soldiers by the Yugoslav People's Army and Serb paramilitary forces at the start of the war.

In whole, this thesis lays a groundwork for future explorations of memory in post-conflict settings and to create a useful theoretical frame through which the public presentation, use and abuse of memory can be critically evaluated. The key findings here are first and foremost that memory can be "abused" in the sense that processes of remembrance can be manipulated by those who exercise power over memory to exclude others from their vision of the in-group through violent means. Resistance to this forceful approach to memory- and identity-making, however, is presented by pro-European human rights activists and associations of the Serb ethnic minority. This results in

the presence of many cultures of memory in Croatia but no singular "Croatian" cultural memory or identity, much to the chagrin of extreme nationalists, both past and present.

List of Abbreviations

ARBiH	*Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*
	Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH	*Bosna i Hercegovina*
	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BIRN	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
CE	Common Era
DZS RH	*Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske*
	Croatian Bureau of Statistics
EU	European Union
FBiH	*Federacija Bosna i Hercegovina*
	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FRAMNAT	Framing the Nation and Collective Identity in Croatia: Political Rituals and the Cultural Memory of Twentieth Century Traumas
HAZU	*Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti*
	Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts
HDZ	*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*
	Croatian Democratic Union
HINA	*Hrvatska izvještajna novinska agencija*
	Croatian News Agency
HNS	*Hrvatska narodna stranka*
	Croatian People's Party
HOS	*Hrvatske oružane snage* (1944-1945)
	Croatian Armed Forces
	Hrvatske obrambene snage (1991-1992)
	Croatian Defence Forces
HPSS	*Hrvatska pučka seljačka stranka*
	Croatian Peoples' Peasant Party
HR 1	*Hrvatski radio 1*
	Croatian Radio 1
HRT	*Hrvatska radiotelevizija*
	Croatian Radiotelevision
HV	*Hrvatska vojska*
	Croatian Army
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally displaced person
JAZU	*Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti*
	Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts
JNA	*Jugoslovenska narodna armija*
	Yugoslav People's Army

KWIC	Key word in context
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (and other non-heterosexual/non-cisgender identities)
MASPOK	*Masovni pokret*
	Mass Movement (Croatian Spring)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDH	*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*
	Independent State of Croatia
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NOB	*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*
	National/People's Liberation War
NSDAP	*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*
	National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party)
RH	*Republika Hrvatska*
	Republic of Croatia
RSK	*Republika Srpska Krajina*
	Republic of Serbian Krajina
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAO	*Srpska autonomna oblast*
	Serb Autonomous Region
SDF	*Srpski demokratski forum*
	Serb Democratic Forum
SFRJ	*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*
	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SHS	*(Kraljevina) Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*
	(Kingdom of) Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
SKH	*Savez komunista Hrvatske*
	League of Communists of Croatia
SKJ	*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*
	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
SNO	*Srpska narodna obnova*
	Serbian National Renewal
SNV	*Srpsko narodno vijeće*
	Serb National Council
SRS	*Srpska radikalna stranka*
	Serbian Radical Party
UBDRVSŽ	*Udruga "Braniteljice Domovinskog rata Vukovarsko-srijemske županije"*
	Association of (Female) Defenders of the Homeland War of Vukovar-Sirmium County
UDBA	*Uprava Državne Bezbjednosti*
	State Security Administration (Yugoslav secret police)

UN	United Nations
VSNM	*Vijeće srpske nacionalne manjine*
	Serb National Minority Council
YIHR	Youth Initiative for Human Rights
ZDS	*Za dom spremni!*
	Ready for the homeland!
ZVO	*Zajedničko vijeće općina*
	Joint Council of Municipalities

Pronunciation Guide

Croatian, like Serbian and Bosnian, is among the simpler Slavic languages to read and pronounce given the use of the Latin alphabet and a one-letter-one-sound rule, with the exception of the digraphs *dj, dž, nj* and *lj*, that allows for consistent spelling.

C	"ts" as in tsar	Kumrovec
Ć	harder "ch" as in church	Ćevapi
Č	softer "ch" as in chocolate	Krojač
Dj/Dž/Đ	soft "g" as in George	Djurdjević/Džep/Tuđman
G	hard "g" as in grow	Generalštab
J	"y" as in yellow	Josip
Lj	"lya" as in million	Ljubljana
Nj	"nya" as in Kenya	Njegoš
R	"ur" as in "hurt" if between consonants	Trg
Š	"sh" as in shore	Šolta
Ž	"zh" as in measure	Željeznice
A	"ah" as in hall	Agresor
E	"eh" as in elevator	Zagreb
I	"ee" as in cheer	Riba
O	"oh" as in home	Omišalj
U	"oo" as in whom	Dubrovnik

The letters q, w, x and y appear only in non-transliterated foreign loanwords.

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Map No. 3689 Rev. 12 UNITED NATIONS
June 2007

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Source: United Nations Geospatial Information Section (2007).

Croatia

Source: United Nations Geospatial Information Section (2008).

Counties and Regions of Croatia

Source: Iryna Volina (2020).

Siniša Glavašević was a journalist from the town of Vukovar, the site of the worst atrocities of the Croatian War of Independence. In the early days of the conflict, he relayed stories from the war via radio to Zagreb, many of which were later published by the Matica hrvatska in the volume *Priče iz Vukovara,* "Voices from Vukovar."

Siniša was murdered at the Ovčara farm outside Vukovar on 20 November 1991, his remains later uncovered in a mass grave and reburied in the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb in 1997. His writing appeals to basic human values and reminds us of our common humanity, even in the darkest of times.

This work is written in memory of Siniša Glavašević and of the many others whose stories can no longer be told. Glavašević's "Story about the War" and "Story about the Enemy" bookend this thesis, bringing the innately human nature of memory and violence to the forefront.

"The Story about the War," Siniša Glavašević (1960-1991), *Voices from Vukovar*

Image: Vukovar, 1991. Author unknown.

War is the worst thing to befall humanity. But humans seem unable to do anything but to go to war with one another and to kill. The question is, "Is that not just simply normal?"

If it is normal to put science in the service of weapons, if it is normal to engage in shooting for sport, if it is normal to boast about it, then it is also normal to wage war. That is certainly a natural way to free the world from all evil that affects it. Unfortunately, many people die in the course of war, and we only lay them to rest against our will. But that is the price of progress; there is no bargaining. Take it or leave it! Or: Go or leave it! Don't go! Die in your city, in your street, in your house! But never at the hand of your own friend. Friends are there for everything but to decide on your death.

War selects. It separates the good from the bad, the strong from the weak, beautiful from ugly, honourable from less honourable, capable from incapable. And the longer war lasts, the stronger

this selection becomes. And there are naturally more victims. One has to have a good sense of direction to find his way in war.

Where to flee, whom to trust, what to do?

How, above all else, to be amongst those who win?

How to be among the first, just when it is most necessary?

I knew many intelligent people who were not fast enough for this war. I knew many capable people who were, however, too dumb to grasp the repulsiveness of war. I also knew many brave people, without whom I and this city would still not be. Who knows where they all are now, those whom I knew and to whom I so often listened?

They and the echo that resonated from their boastful beating of their chests. Where are they all now, as Vukovar lies bleeding? Why are they not screaming? Why are they not helping to push the enemy from here with their shouting? Why are they not here now, when it most depends on them, to repay their debts to the earth, now that this city that made them rich must carry their burden? But war is merciless. It is the lash that beats with all its strings. War is simultaneously power and powerlessness. For one it is hell, for the other, and we all know who these people are, it is a gift from God.

Introduction

Humans are memory machines.

We remember the things that shock us, haunt us, please us, scare us, help us and hinder us. We remember those in our past in the hope that we learn from them in our future. We remember the joy of family, the joy of love and the joy of friendship, but we also remember pain, loss and sorrow. What we remember is an inherently personal experience, the most intimate function of cognition. But we also are taught how to remember, and conversely, we are taught how to forget. Our memories are social memories.

In the aftermath of war, much is remembered and more is forgotten – the stories of the victims of war have been erased as their houses burned, the suffering of individual soldiers ignored for the sake of a united national identity. Monuments have been constructed intentionally – in both physical and social terms - to remind passers-by of the nation, of its defenders and of its victims, yet the meaning these concrete manifestations of memory can impart depends heavily on how particular audiences interact with them. This results in various, often contradictory iterations of cultural memory in spite of the demands of those who exercise power over memory to forge a unitary image of the nation.

At the outset of my research, I wanted to explore what it meant to abuse memory, to twist it in such a way that violence was an inevitable result. How could people like Slobodan Milošević in Serbia and Franjo Tuđman in Croatia use their power to convince others that the historical injustices enacted upon them by the "Other," the "enemy," were justifiable means to seek vengeance for the past? What were the theoretical underpinnings of memory abuse, a term coined by Tzvetan Todorov (1995), and why as a term has it seldom been applied critically in memory studies? Ultimately, this thesis addresses the following core research questions:

- How is memory visualised in public spaces, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?

- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?

- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?

- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?

- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

My theoretical point of departure is the construction of cultural memory, as described by Aleida Assmann (1999; 2006) and Jan Assmann (2000), building from the works of Émile Durkheim (1893; [1915] 1964), Maurice Halbwachs ([1941, 1952] 1992) and Pierre Nora (1989). I address the lack of academic investigations of "memory abuse," a term first brought about by Tzvetan Todorov (1995) and since much abandoned, and how the transitions between forms of memory provide voids in which various actors can exercise power over memory to mould narratives of the past to their vision of the present and future, and how these transitions and abuses are reflected in public memorials. I also advance methodological considerations on the documentation of memory, a rather fleeting and personal phenomenon, through my work on capturing its public performance in 614 monuments, 27 museums and two key commemorative events in Knin and Vukovar. This work should help others to identify patterns of memory abuse and suggest places for intervention (however loaded the term, especially in the former Yugoslavia) and to highlight patterns of memorialisation that can and do perpetuate violence in its many forms. The earthquake that rattled Zagreb in the early hours of 22 March 2020 has also made the documentation of construction, evolution and potential destruction of memorial spaces ever more prescient, as have the George Floyd protests against policy brutality, white supremacy and racial injustice in the United States from May 2020 to the present day.

This is a work on the "public face of memory," that is, the visual elements of cultural memory in the Republic of Croatia, which go beyond the simple structure of a statue or a plaque and tell us a story about the social dynamics of remembrance in a space impacted by conflict within our lifetime. The public face of memory is revealed in museums, parks, cemeteries, newspapers, celebrations, religious celebrations, street art, television and advertisements. This thesis focuses mainly on the links between power, memory, identity and violence in the aftermath of war, using Croatia's emergence from the "Homeland War" of 1991 to 1995 as a case study. The structure of cultural memory itself is one determined by ongoing struggles for power over memory (Müller 2009), a longstanding battle between various social groups, however defined, to assure these groups the power to endure (Hearn 2014), binding memory and identity as they shift over space and time. By studying public manifestations of these social interrelations, we can begin to understand how cultural memory can be used and, importantly for this work, "abused" to perpetuate divisions and violence in post-conflict settings.

The key findings of this work are:

- Memory can be "abused" in that the processes of memorialisation, i.e. monument construction, the creation of historical narratives or the resignification or relativisation of historical facts and events, can be manipulated (not only but in the context of this research) primarily by those who exercise power over memory in ways that results in violence. This adds to the sociological literature on memory by demonstrating the repercussions of its intersections with power and violence;

- Privileged groups, most notably veterans of the Homeland War and the ruling nationalist Croatian Democratic Union, exercise their power over memory to construct an exclusive narrative of national identity and belonging, and this is represented in a wealth of memorial spaces across Croatia;

- There is no singular "cultural memory" in Croatia, let alone "collective memory," rather, various cultures of memory intersect or align at key points in the mnemonic calendar, with each group seeking relatively greater power over memory to ensure the persistence of its own identity. In these instances, violence can be used as a transformative force, particularly in those situations where a gap emerges between the idealised, singular vision

of "Croatian" identity and those marginalised voices forcibly excluded from the interlinked processes of memory- and identity-making;

- The process of making "Croatian" identity shares similar characteristics with other national groups in that much of this identity is formed by the drawing of strict ethnic, political, religious or related boundaries through negation. In marking these boundaries, however, those with greater influence over the mnemonic landscape deny opportunities for those most affected by the violent destruction of Yugoslavia – here, looking at civilian victims, women and ethnic Serbs – to contribute to the formation of a cohesive national identity/shared "Croatian" cultural memory of the past.

From 2014 to 2016, prior to my doctoral studies, I worked at the Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and was faced day-to-day with the consequences of war fought within living memory and how it impacted my relationships to friends and colleagues and their relationships amongst one another. "War is the worst thing to befall humanity" (Glavašević 1994, 52) – it is unnecessary, it is unjust and it is blind, a violence guided by greed and hatred. I saw how war was remembered and how the violence of the past only served to beget further violence. I watched as a crowd of mourners attacked the then Serbian prime minister, now president, at Srebrenica in 2015, a consequence of his refusal to acknowledge the suffering forced upon their home twenty years earlier by Serbs. I felt angry, too, that nothing much had changed in the intervening years. As I spent more time in the former Yugoslavia, I realised the inherent complexity of the various conflicts that took place throughout the 1990s, a time where I was enjoying my childhood in Pennsylvania, free from the burdens of war that my friends had to face in their youth. I realised that Serbs, too, had their unresolved grievances with Bosniaks, with Albanians and with Croats, and that each of these groups had their own grievances in one form or another. After I left Sarajevo in 2016 to pursue my PhD on cultural memory in the former Yugoslavia, I noticed how silent issues of the past had been made in Croatia, at least relative to the daily bombardment of visual nationalism in Sarajevo, and chose to explore monuments and memorial spaces there instead, inspired by the work of Vjeran Pavlaković at the University of Rijeka.

This thesis is a highly visual piece of work, and my findings are interspersed with a curated selection from the thousands of images of the 614 memorial sites I documented during the course of this research. The purpose of the images is to highlight patterns of memorialisation, showcase

particular elements of the public face of memory in Croatia and to provide room for comparison amongst the various kinds of monumental forms to be found across the country. While such striking visuals might evoke different interpretations for different audiences, I provide context to each of the monuments or other memorial works depicted to demonstrate the threads that bind or the lines that divide various memorial cultures in Croatia. At the beginning of each chapter, I have included a map showing the locations of the monuments included throughout the text to give the reader a sense of the spatial dispersion or concentration of these sites of memory.

Structure of the Thesis

I divide my work into six chapters, three framing the research and three discussing the empirical findings and conclusions I draw from my extensive fieldwork and the implications they have for commemorative practices and identity-making in Croatia and more widely in the former Yugoslavia. The lessons learned in this research, however, do have wider repercussions for the fields of memory, peace/conflict and nationalism studies.

Chapter 1 discusses the theoretical framework I developed to address cultural memory in Croatia, its public presentation and its potential for abuse. This chapter in particular applies sociological literature on power (see Foucault 1978; 1980) and identity (see Durkheim 1893; J. Assmann 2011) to memory studies, pointing towards the link between memory and the creation and perpetuation of national (or other) communities through violence. From this discussion, I employ the term "memory abuse" (borrowing from Todorov 1995) to capture the interrelations between power, violence, memory and identity, core concepts in my study of the public face of memory in Croatia. I also present concept models linking memory, power and identity, and the interactions between the various forms of memory the Assmanns have described in their works and how the potential for memory abuse arises from the transitions between these forms. Throughout the chapter, power in various forms is revisited continuously, as it is among the most crucial elements of the puzzle that is understanding the creation, sharing and destruction of public forms of memory. This contributes to extant memory literature by offering a focus on power and its applied role in determining identity outcomes that is underplayed in existing work.

Chapter 2 provides some necessary historical context, tracing the "millennial statehood" narrative prevalent in conservative nationalist interpretations of the Croatian past from the founding of the

medieval Kingdom of Croatia in 925 CE to the present day. Great attention is given to the events of the Second World War, the Yugoslav period and the Croatian War of Independence/Homeland War, as it is the memory of these eras that overwhelmingly populate memorial spaces in Croatia today.

Chapter 3 describes my methodological approach to the study of memory in Croatia. The majority of the data collected come from visual studies of memorial spaces in all regions of Croatia, concentrating primarily on the areas most directly impacted by the Croatian War of Independence. This type of "monument hunting" proved incredibly fruitful, and I was able to uncover memorials long forgotten, whether intentionally or otherwise.[1] I also adopted participant-observation methods for the public commemorations of Operation Storm in Knin (Dalmatia) on 5 August 2017 and of the fall of Vukovar (Slavonia) on 18 November 2017. Data from other commemorative events, namely the controversial ceremonies in Bleiburg, Austria, and at the site of the former Jasenovac concentration camps, were provided by the FRAMNAT (Framing the Nation) research group at the University of Rijeka.

My understanding of the "big picture" of the public face of memory, most notably of what was present and what curiously was missing from today's mnemonic landscape in Croatia, framed the structure of the content of the empirical chapters. Each of these chapters directly addresses the question, "How is memory visualised in public spaces, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?"

Chapter 4 starts with the most prevalent theme in contemporary Croatian cultural memory, the *branitelji/* "defenders" of the Homeland War. Here, I ask and answer most clearly, "How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?" and "How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?" Approximately one-fifth of all the memorial spaces I documented were related to the 1990s conflict, uncritically praising those who fought for Croatian

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[1] The term "monument hunting" appears in (Goggins 1998, 54) but in reference to the removal of Mayan monuments by looters and plunderers. Rather, colleagues like Vjeran Pavlaković and Ana Milošević have used the term in the context of our shared work on documenting hidden monuments in the former Yugoslavia, which forms the core set of data presented in this dissertation.

independence in the face of "Greater Serbian aggression." Here, I discuss the political framework in place during and after the war that contributed to this privileged view of the *branitelji* and how their status in Croatian society has been legitimised. Though many monuments are introduced throughout this chapter, the core subject of my analysis here is the annual commemoration of Operation Storm in Knin on 5 August, the "Day of Homeland Victory and Thanksgiving and the Day of Croatian Defenders." As well, I present the challenges to the defenders' power by various elements of civil society, including peace activists and minority groups. The chapter ends with a discussion of the role of gender in remembering combatants in Croatia and earlier in Yugoslavia after the Second World War and the near total absence of the voices of female defenders in modern memorial spaces. In this chapter, I argue that veterans' associations, supported by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), enjoy a great level of social privilege and accordingly greater power over memory to construct a more exclusive image of the Croatian nation by influencing the outcomes of various memorial initiatives (museums, monuments, commemorations), even twenty-five years after the end of the Homeland War. This then leads to my subsequent examination of absences, namely of Serbs and civilian victims, from this interpretation of Croatian cultural memory in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 discusses the selective remembrance of victims of the Homeland War, Serbs in particular. Here, I address the question, "Using a concept of 'memory abuse' in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?" This chapter nevertheless presents how civilian victims from both sides of the conflict are remembered – or forgotten – and how the Yugoslav narratives of the Second World War have been modified, challenged or erased in today's Croatia. Specifically, the commemoration of the 1991 siege of Vukovar, various monuments to civilian victims of the Second World War and Homeland War, retributive violence against Serbs in Dalmatia in 1995 and the 1991 and 1995 rocket attacks on Zagreb are discussed here. The core controversy surrounding the memorialisation of victims I discuss is the appropriation of unique victim narratives (individual histories and familial remembrances) by nationalist actors as narratives of "martyrdom," suggesting a false sense of agency in an unchosen death. I argue that given these forcible identity constructions, there can be no singular "Croatian" cultural memory, as the presence of boundaries around the "in-group" – the defenders and "true patriots" – demands the

existence of counter-narratives, which are now slowly eroding some of the foundations of the post-war state identity.

Finally, Chapter 6 takes a step back to view the public face of memory in its entirety; the chapter is simply titled, "Croatia." In it, I break down various core elements of Croatian identity as they are represented in material form, matching each section to an adapted version of the wedding rhyme, "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue." Respectively, I analyse the narrative of millennial Croatian statehood, the challenges of the Europeanisation of memory (or lack thereof) in Croatia, the rejection of all things Yugoslav from contemporary cultural memory and the pervasiveness of national conservatism and its proximity to Croatia's fascist past. This chapter provides more answers to the question, "How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?" The role of Catholicism in shaping Croatian identity, aesthetically and socially, is discussed throughout the chapter, as is the tension between groups' power over memory (Müller 2009) and their power to endure (Hearn 2014). The overarching argument in this chapter is one of identity-making through the public face of memory; here I demonstrate how the creation of Croatian national identity is a process that is not too dissimilar from other national groups while advancing the discussion of memory and identity by incorporating the concept of power over memory and the resulting exclusions of those most affected by the violence of the Homeland War – Serbs, women, and civilian victims.

Ultimately, this is a thesis on war memory, as despite the diversity of mnemonic communities within Croatia, that which is presented publicly remains defined by the struggles of the 1940s and the 1990s. This, too, is a thesis on transitions – between various forms of memories, between identities and between states – and the impact of violence as a transformative, or even as a "generative" (Bergholz 2016), force. It is not a pleasant topic, nor is it something that this work can address holistically. It is nonetheless worth the endeavour to understand how memory, identity, violence and power interplay in post-conflict societies like Croatia, and I hope this text has done justice to the pursuit of sustainable peace. ★

Chapter 1: Memory, Identity and Power

Introduction

Understanding memory, a seemingly ephemeral and highly personal phenomenon, requires an interdisciplinary look into the creation, dissemination and perpetuation of myths and histories by various actors scattered across time and location. As Zheng Wang notes,

> *One of the important reasons why few scholars have used historical memory as a variable in their research is because it does not fit neatly in one specific academic discipline; the subject and its implications are scattered throughout many academic fields. Insights into its theories are strewn across diverse bodies of literature on anthropology, culture, history, literature, politics, psychology, and sociology* (Wang 2018, 2).

In the context of my work on varied approaches to cultural memory in Croatia, I intertwine literatures of sociology (i.e. McCrone 1998; Smith 2003), political science (i.e. Müller 2009), philosophy (i.e. Hegel 1971; Foucault 1978) and history (i.e. Todorova 1997; Bet-El 2009), but ground my functional definitions of memory, whether cultural, collective, communicative, political, public or national, in the sociological work of authors like Émile Durkheim (1893; [1915] 1964), Maurice Halbwachs ([1941, 1952] 1992), Pierre Nora (1989) and Aleida Assmann (1999; 2006). To first understand how memory is politicised and how it can be used as a tool to achieve political or social aims, I will examine the concept of power and relations between various competing actors in the process of shaping of the "public face of memory," that is, the publicly accessible, visible manifestations of cultural, national and political memory. The practical implications of these interrelations will then be examined in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

The purpose of this dissertation is to document just one of many situations in which power, memory, politics and national identity, among myriad other elements of modern society, intersect in a post-conflict environment. I begin this chapter with a theoretical discussion of memory, whether political, national, cultural or collective, and address the various ways memory in its manifest forms intersects with and informs understandings of politics, violence, identity and culture. It is important to note, however, that these interactions are neither linear nor predictable but rather take their form only in relation to their immediate contexts. The politics of memory of genocide in Croatia, for example, does not match the politics of memory of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada or Israel. Croatia serves here as a case study to highlight particular post-

Yugoslav and post-socialist idiosyncrasies but also to observe and evaluate wider patterns of commemoration and negotiations of power and identity. This chapter introduces sociological literature on power and identity to the interdisciplinary field of memory studies, pointing toward a process through which memory is linked to the creation and perpetuation of national (or other) communities through violence. From this discussion, I arrive at the term "memory abuse" to capture the interrelations between power, violence, memory and identity, core concepts in my study of the public face of memory in Croatia.

This chapter is divided into three sections, focusing first on how memory intersects with politics – the most relevant source of mnemonic conflict in Croatia today. I then continue the discussion of memory's intersections secondly with culture and the process of identity-making and finally with violence. Throughout the chapter, the concept of power is revisited continuously, as it is (aside from memory, of course), the most crucial element of the puzzle that is understanding how memories are created, shared, challenged and destroyed in the public sphere. In the following section on memory, politics and power, I present a few, necessary working definitions of "cultural memory," the major unit of analysis in this dissertation, with accompanying, primarily sociological, views on this highly interdisciplinary subject. The theoretical discussions presented here create the framework for my research questions set out in the introduction and lay out conceptual tools I have developed like the "public face of memory" (the methodological approach to which I present in Chapter 3) and "memory abuse," a term I borrow from Tzvetan Todorov (1995), the implications of which become clear in my empirical analysis of Croatian cultural memory in the latter half of this dissertation.

Memory, politics and power

In this section, I lay out the historical development of theories of collective (and related forms of) memory from the late nineteenth century to the present day and present the various typologies of memory proposed by Jan and Aleida Assmann in the 1980s and 1990s. Given the exclusive nature of cultural memory (that is, it is particular to a specific ethnic, political or other social group), I use cultural memory as an analytical framework for understanding memory's role in instigating and maintaining conflict through the mnemonic, and ultimately social, exorcism of the "Other." As well, it is the contestations over the content of others' cultural interpretations of a shared past that enable politicians and others who may exercise power to manipulate national narratives, where

possible, in a way that prevents the formation of a transcultural, collective memory of that past and, in extreme instances, foments violence.

Development of cultural memory theory

The origins of collective (and by extension, cultural) memory theory can be traced to Émile Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) most notably through the work of French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs (see Halbwachs 1925; [1941] 1971). Halbwachs built upon Durkheim's understanding of collective conscience in the early twentieth century by positing that individuals' memories are socially conditioned and only have true meaning in relation to those of their wider social groups. Durkheim, using examples of various methods of dealing with crime and punishment, reflects on societies' relative degrees of cohesiveness; in older, simpler societies in which little value is placed on the individual, there exists a "mechanical solidarity" that is based primarily in shared experiences and in religious beliefs (Durkheim 1893, 73-117). This mechanical solidarity evolves with the gradual division of labour in productive societies into a more decentralised, "organic" solidarity, in which some degree of interdependence amongst individuals gains greater precedence over existing religious norms or individualistic values (ibid., 158-188). Collective consciousness emerges through solidarity, Durkheim argues, but with the reordering of society through increased production, the value of this consciousness becomes increasingly dependent on the relationship between the collective and individual consciences and the degree to which collective practices are prioritised over individual performances of identity (ibid., 118-141).

Durkheim's later work, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, provides greater insight into the interrelatedness of individual and collective consciousness. Using evidence from totemic religious practices amongst Aboriginal Australians, he notes that while religion provides an externalised sense of belonging amongst disparate clans and individuals, "the clan, like every other sort of society, can live only through the individual consciousnesses that compose it" (Durkheim [1915] 1964, 221). Totems, in these societies, mark the coming together of such individual "consciousnesses" in religious rituals. Durkheim writes, "This is what the totem really consists in: it is only the material form under which the imagination represents this immaterial substance, this energy diffused through all sorts of heterogeneous things, which alone is the real object of the cult" (ibid., 189). By transposing meaning onto static, inanimate objects, religious communities

create a place for shared meaning. The "collective effervescence" represented by these objects reflects the shared spirit of the group, one that is greater than the sum of the individual energies in that community as they gather in the performance of a religious ceremony.

Halbwachs, a contemporary of Durkheim, developed from this notion of "collective effervescence" the theory of collective memory, the function of which derives from the lines of group belonging and meaning provided solely through the immediate context of the individual. He writes,

> *A child nine or ten years old possesses many recollections, both recent and fairly old. What will this child be able to retain if he is abruptly separated from his family, transported to a country where his language is not spoken, where neither the appearance of people and places, nor their customs, resemble in any way that which was familiar to him up to this moment? [...] In order to retrieve some of these uncertain and incomplete memories [of his past] it is necessary that the child, in the new society of which he is part, at least be shown images reconstructing for a moment the group and the milieu from which the child had been torn* ([1941, 1952] 1992, 38, parentheses in the original).

In this instance, Halbwachs appears to argue that memories, while they can be retained and remembered by individuals, have no meaning to other individuals in one's current environment if they were not formed there originally. In arguing for the social conditioning of memory, Halbwachs breaks with his tutor, Henri Bergson, who earlier posited the concept of "pure memory" deriving from individual, rather than social, experiences, instead framing memory as a "reconstruction of a past in accordance with the present vision of the society" (Jaisson 1999, 167). Halbwachs argues that there exists a common – collective – performance of cognition within a group of people, summarised by Aleida Assmann as one "in which the participants could link back to a common store of experience that had been stabilized by communication – e.g. family members, school classes, military regiments, travel groups" (A. Assmann 2012, 175).

One's ability to retrieve and store memories is dependent on the ability of the society, or in Halbwachs' terms, *milieu*, to remember and recall those same memories. These mnemonic communities (families, school groups, and so on) and the ability to store memory socially allow

individuals to interpret and order their immediate surroundings, their relations to the past and their roles in the present.

Building from Halbwachs' argument on the social storage of memory, French sociologist Pierre Nora has commented,

> *Memory is blind to all but the group it binds – which is to say [...] that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. [...] Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images and objects [...]"* (Nora 1989, 9).

In this light, memory, or more actively, remembering, is an action and a process rather than any particular end product. Nora's contribution to the burgeoning study of memory is that of *lieux de mémoire*, or points/locations/sites of memory, which are formed around "a turning point of a break with the past [...] with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to post the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory" (ibid., 7). Nora's sites of memory, though, do represent a degree of continuity with the Durkheimian tradition of "collective effervescence" and the use of totems as symbols of a community's spirit. Sites of memory are similarly a particular location, object or point of history (for example a battlefield, the parchment of a declaration of independence or the end of a war) with concentrated meaning for a defined social group (or groups). They and other manifestations of cultural memory (books, image, dance, commemorations, etc.) represent Durkheim's totems as mediated, externalised forms of memory. Their existence is premised on the need to instil renewed meaning in spaces and events created by no longer extant societies or regimes, and the cultural value attached to each site of memory derives from its active interpretation by the community that acknowledges the necessity of that site for the continuity, however disrupted in reality, of its history. The relationship of the palace of Versailles to the people of France, for example, has shifted dramatically from the *acien régime*, the Napoleonic dynasty and the various French governments in place during the First and Second World Wars and the current Fifth Republic. Nora writes,

> Lieux de mémoire *originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally. The defense, by certain minorities, of a privileged memory that has retreated to jealously protected enclaves in this sense intensely illuminates the truth of* lieux de mémoire – *that without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away* (Nora 1989, 12).

Lieux de mémoire arise from wider social patterns of remembrance and provide a useful approach for selecting sites, like commemorations, museums or monuments, for analysis, and ultimately build what I call in this work the "public face of memory." While Nora addresses wider public forms of memory in his work, Halbwachs' focus remains at the level of the microenvironment, like church groups and nuclear families, something outside the scope of this research, and ignores the exchange of information between both neighbouring and foreign communities. This, however, is somewhat striking given the degree of mobility in people and capital in the 1920s, around which time his early work, *The Social Frames of Memory* (see Halbwachs 1925), was written. In the context of my work, I more closely adopt Nora's *lieux de mémoire* frame to single out key locations or events around which elements of Croatian cultural memory and national identity are built. It is the collection of these spaces that signifies what parts of the past are shared and how this contributes to a greater sense of the "nation" in its imagined form (see Anderson 1983). Aleida Assmann summarises Halbwachs' work as a "radical thesis [...] that people do not build up an individual memory but are always enclosed in memory communities [...] a completely isolated human, according to Halbwachs, therefore could not build up a memory at all" (A. Assmann 2012, 175). On this, Halbwachs notes,

> *To be sure, everyone has a capacity for memory* (mémoire) *that is unlike that of anyone else [...]. But individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact [...] leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over – to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu. [...] In this way the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other* (Halbwachs [1941, 1952] 1992, 53).

It is in this regard that my study of memory in Croatia must focus on the power *over* memory through strucutres of power, like state institutions or privileged groups, (discussed later in this

chapter), which is characterised by relations of domination, subordination and legitimasation (of violence, for example) and not by individual memory alone. The interactions between various individual, communicative memories in the public sphere are ultimately those that determine cultural memory, and similarly the links between cultural and collective memory, which I summarise in the next section, are the outcomes of negotiations of power and identity in an even greater social context.

Assmann and Assmann's framework of collective memory

This section lays out my framework for applying the study of cultural memory, as defined by Jan and Aleida Assmann, to its public performance, use and abuse in Croatia. The social construction and management of collective memories occurs in myriad ways, and the mode of diffusion differs significantly by group, location and intent; memory construction also is intricately tied to the process of identity formation. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann have written extensively on three notable categories or forms of memories and consciences – the communicative, cultural and collective – that facilitate the understanding of the creation of memories and mnemonic communities.[2] Their work builds upon Halbwachs' framework of collective memory by providing these more useful analytical categories, which facilitate the sorting and selection of potential data sources in this project (physical manifestations of memory like monuments and museums over more fleeting and adaptable oral traditions, for example). This work leaves open the possibility for conceptualising what I prefer to call "memory abuse" (following Todorov 1995, to be discussed below), which focuses on the transitions and interactions between these three forms of memory, that is, the acts performed in transition and those who exercise power responsible for shaping those acts.

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[2] It is important to note the somewhat conflated use of the German terms Assmann and Assmann employ in their descriptions of collective memory. While *Erinnerung* often refers to a singular memory (hence the translation of Nora's *lieux de mémoire* as *Erinnerungsort*), the reflexive verb *(sich) erinnern* highlights the storage or retrieval of a memory from the individual conscience. *Gedächtnis* more generally refers to conscience, as defined above; this contrasts to *Bewusstsein*, consciousness (literally "being conscious"), which often is not found in this literature. The authors often use *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* interchangeably, but I contend that this is an intentional distinction between an individual memory best managed within a particular conscience, or set of memories actively managed by the collective, such as "a collective memory of" the Holocaust, part of the larger German (or European) "collective conscience" or the "collective memory" more generally. Snyder (2009) correlates the French *mémoire* with *Gedächtnis* and *souvenir* with *Erinnerung.*

Varying degrees of transparency and democratic memory construction, i.e. through public consultation over the outcomes of memorial projects or official inquiries into the past and the preservation of archives, determine the ultimate content of cultural and collective memory, and the transitions between various forms of memory invariably involve intergroup negotiations and contestations. Here, I conceptualise *collective* memory at its minimum as a mutual acknowledgement and commemoration by more than one social group of the same elements of their shared past. The term "collective," however, rather weakly describes how I envision wider processes of memory exchange, at the very least in Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, as "collective" implies something more monolithic than extant mnemonic tensions between various social or national groups would currently allow. A more apt term that might guide future research into boundary-transcending patterns of commemoration would be "transcultural memory," which Erll describes as "a certain *research perspective*, a focus of attention, which is directed towards mnemonic processes unfolding *across* and *beyond* cultures [author's emphasis]" (Erll 2011, 9). Transculturality, or perhaps intercommunality, would suggest a greater dynamic capability of memory which researchers can capture through the shifts and adaptations of shared memories as they cross or are transmitted across borders. Though not pursued in my research, an ambitious goal of future memory work in the region should be (and already has been) to achieve some sense of mutual understanding of the past that overcomes harsh boundaries between the various cultures of memory, like those I do explore here, and fosters what could then be more reasonably termed a *collective* approach to a common, painful history.

Returning to other forms of memory explored by the Assmanns, the communicative conscience consists of personal memories within a particular social context (time and place) and is primarily built upon day-to-day communications amongst individuals in that setting. As "the mnemonic profile of a society changes drastically with each generational shift," Assmann and Frevert claim that the communicative conscience symbolises the "short-term conscience of a society" (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999, 37). The memories contained within this communicative conscience are rather fleeting, personal remembrances of past exchanges with friends or colleagues and are largely based on yet unrecorded oral histories. Cultural memories, part of a "cultural conscience," are on the other hand those that have been recorded externally and manifested in institutions that function across the medium- to long-term in order to transmit memories across generations (A. Assmann 1999, 19). The transition from communicative to cultural memory represents an act of

making more permanent those fleeting memories of the communicative conscience, through publication or open display, which necessitates an investigation of a society's power structures to determine the role of individual actors and institutions in the management of memory discourse. Jan Assmann (2011, 41) makes clear the differences between the communicative and the cultural conscience (or memory), summarised in Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: Communicative and cultural memory, according to Jan Assmann (2011)

	Communicative Memory	**Cultural Memory**
Content	Historical experiences in the framework of individual biographies	Mythical history of origins
Forms	Informal, without much form, natural growth, arising from interaction, everyday	Organized, extremely formal, ceremonial communication, festival
Media	Living, organic memories, experiences, hearsay	Fixed objectifications, traditional symbolic classification and staging through words, pictures, dance, and so forth
Time structure	80-100 years, with a progressive present spanning three-four generations	Absolute past of a mythical, primeval age
Carriers	Nonspecific, contemporary witnesses within a memory community	Specialised tradition bearers

Here we see the degree to which "cultural memory" takes on a deeply rooted, transgenerational meaning; it is through cultural memory that nations create, remember and commemorate their origin stories (McCrone 1998, 44-63; see Connerton 1989). Müller similarly states that cultural memory "lack[s] the immediacy of [the] first-hand recollection" of communicative memories (2009, 14). Sani et al. describe the purpose of such transgenerational transmissions of the past in the form of cultural memory, noting that,

> *perceived collective continuity has two main dimensions [...] The first dimension is concerned with the perceptions that core values, beliefs, traditions, habits, mentalities, and inclinations are trans-generationally transmitted within the group. That means that the group is perceived as having deep, essential cultural traits that have a degree of permanence. The second dimension is related to the perception that the different ages, periods, and events in the history of the group are causally linked to one another, that they form a coherent narrative* (Sani et al. 2007, 1120).

For instance, the date 28 June 1389 (*Vidovdan/*"St. Vitus Day") has a strong resonance among ethnic Serbs as a date of reckoning for the nation and a symbol of their perceived perpetual victimhood through their initial defeat by the Ottomans at Kosovo Polje. The legends of Battle of Kosovo, those of betrayal, cowardice, martyrdom and sacrifice, have been transmitted through the centuries through oral epics, poetry, tapestry, literature, film and song. This represents what Volkan terms the "transgenerational transmission of shared traumas," linking past to present over more than six centuries (Volkan 2001, 85). The year 1389 marks both a rupture with Serbia's past and its relationship to Kosovo as a place of national origin and a symbol of the continuity and persistence of the nation in spite of foreign occupation, instilling hope for the rebirth of Serbia as an independent nation, something only achieved again in 1804. Similar events, such as the fall of Vukovar in 1991 and the victory of Operation Storm in August 1995, play critical roles in observing processes that relate to memory and identity in Croatia, as will be explored more thoroughly in Chapters 4 to 6. More recent communicative memories, like personal histories of the Croatian War of Independence, in contrast, have been swept aside by what Bet-El aptly describes as "a truly impressive mountain of books, magazine essays and newspaper columns" about the dissolution of Yugoslavia which recall "the most dramatic and romantic images of the century" (2009, 216). The prevalence of state-supported media in the former Yugoslavia from the 1980s onward also limits to a great degree the narrative power of communicative memory. Given the evolution of communications technologies in the intervening centuries, it is unlikely that the epic poetry surrounding the Battle of Kosovo will come back to life in new myths of the Kosovo War of 1999; these legends, however, might take a different form. Rather, as Jan Assmann argues, cultural memory is transmitted by "specialised tradition bearers" (J. Assmann 2011, 41), which may manifest both in chosen representatives of defined social groups or, thinking toward the future of memory, in newer forms of "external media" that take on a critical role in mediating memory across generations (A. Assmann 1999, 19). Modern technologies, particularly on the Internet, have helped to an extent to democratise the commemorative process, with the immediate dissemination of images, videos and text that otherwise would have taken decades or centuries to emerge in the cruder and often artistically filtered forms of poetry and painting. Nonetheless, the photographs and archival footage of the wars of the 1990s represent selective periods or events, determined by the photographer, editor, journalist or passer-by as important enough to be shared.

In comparison, assessing communicative memories (e.g. oral histories passed down generation-by-generation) involves a deeper ethnographic study of localised or familial mnemonic practices, which opens up different forms of memory to description and interpretation. Rather than taking this approach, I address wider, social, memorial practices that allow for a degree of generalisation across time and location within Croatia. Further, it is hard to claim that there is a collective memory shared between Croats and Serbs of the Yugoslav past, resulting from culturally-specific and inherently ethnonationalist, exclusive interpretations of their respective histories. These clashes in narrative arise from power contestations over memory and its public performance, as I discuss later.

Cultural memory, in contrast to communicative memory, can be studied through visual studies of memorial spaces and public events, such as those I describe in Knin in Chapter 4 and Vukovar in Chapter 5. Cultural memory often is defined in the wider context of collective identity, shedding light on its social conditioning as described above. Jan Assmann describes the relationship between personal and collective identity as interdependent, stating:

> *There is a strange, seemingly paradoxical relationship between the two forms of identity. I would like to define this by way of two theses that seem to contradict each other:*
>
> *1. A self grows from the outside in. It builds itself up individually by participating in the interactive and communicative patterns of the group to which it belongs and by contributing to that group's self-image. Therefore, the 'we' identity of the group takes precedence over the 'I' of the individual – in other words, identity is a social phenomenon, or what we might term 'sociogenic.'*
>
> *2. The collective 'we' identity does not exist outside of the individuals who constitute and represent it. 'We' is a matter of individual knowledge and awareness* (J. Assmann 2011, 130-112).

Collective identity, and by extension cultural and collective memory, therefore, relies on the interaction of individuals who adopt a shared identity. This collective nature is an emergent property that is constantly negotiated between individuals and groups across time and space. Personal identities and the labels one chooses to adopt, however, are also formed socially; individuality is therefore dependent on social belonging or not-belonging. As Benedict Anderson

argues that nations represent "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), Jan Assmann describes the term "collective identity" as "something fictive – a product of social imagination" (J. Assmann 2011, 114). He also states that cultural memory as a term encompasses mnemonic processes, including "The positive new forms of retention and realization across the millennia [which] are counterbalanced by the negative forms of loss through forgetting and through suppression by way of manipulation, censorship, destruction, circumscription, and substitution" and the evolution of "storage technologies [...] in short, [encompassing] such functional concepts as tradition forming, past reference, and political identity or imagination" (ibid., 9). Cultural memory as a process of social imagination therefore appears particularly susceptible to shifts created through such negotiation and imagination as these mnemonic communities, that is, nations, are formed, defined and challenged.

Transitions between communicative, cultural and collective forms of memory are generally fluid but can be envisioned circularly as a process involving various actors at various stages of transition. As described above, the point of entry of a memory into the cultural sphere involves the mediation or externalisation of a communicative memory, whether oral tradition, family secret or other individually-oriented remembrance, be it through the publication of word or image in a setting where that memory becomes available to a wider but still exclusive group as determined by language, religion, ethnicity or some other limiting factor. This transition involves many different actors and, as illustrated in Figure 1, "power holders," that is, those who may exercise power, be they individual authors, independent or mass media publishers, community organisations and so forth. Jelin defines such characters as "memory entrepeneurs," that is, those "who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past" (Jelin 2003, 33-34). These include political élites and others in positions of relative power who can and do influence the processes of identity- and memory-making through acts of public policy and diplomacy. The shift from the cultural to collective memory, in comparison, is a process driven to a higher degree by state or related political actors, who may wield greater influence in ongoing negotiations or contestations of memory with groups external to those whose cultural memories they represent. Therefore, cultural memory represents a formalised or institutionalised form of communicative memory, which then produces collective (or intercommunal/transcultural) memory. This, then, can feed back into communicative memory as the external paramaters in which individuals remember have been adapted over time.

Figure 1.2 visualises this concept vis-à-vis Jan and Aleida Assmann's framework of memory, highlighting the transitions between various forms of memory in ths process of memory formation, from which the susceptibility to "abuse" arises. This is not to suggest that memory abuse does not occur in the transition from the communicative to the cultural as well, but the focus of this research, as highlighted here, is in the construction of Croatian cultural memory and the ostensible lack of transition from cultural to collective or, following Erll (2011), transcultural memory between various social groups in Croatia and the wider region. The model, though representing a circular model, has been presented here linerally for sake of simplicity, noting specifically where I argue the observed patterns of memory abuse emerge, as I discuss below.

Figure 1.2: Memory construction and memory abuse concept model
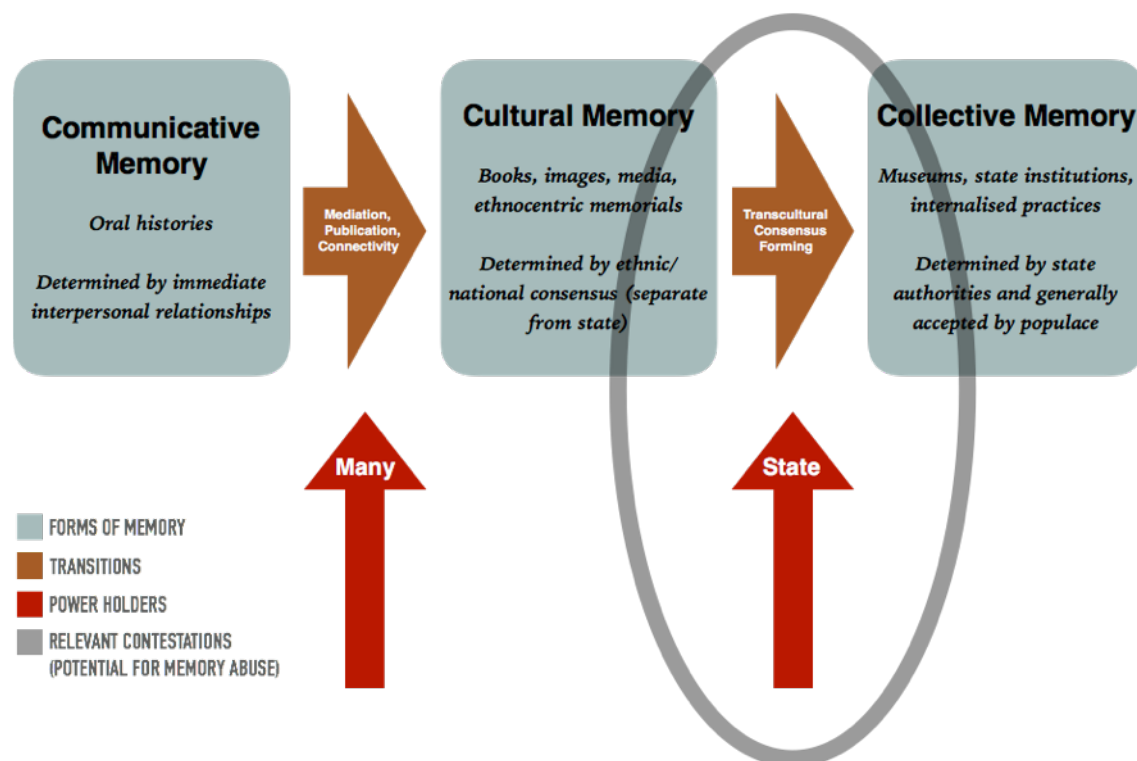
Collective memories of past atrocities are particularly lacking in the former Yugoslavia. During Tito's presidency there was little public discussion of grievances between the state's varied ethnic groups for the sake of forging a unitary, future-oriented "Yugoslav" identity at the cost of suppressing national identities (see Ramet 2013). The memory of the Second World War across the Yugoslav successor states arguably is not a collective one. These contestations arise in the points of transition between forms of memory, given the dynamics of power, identity and historical interpretation inherent in the process of remembering. Despite the victory of Tito's Partisans in the mid-1940s, the foundation of a communist state and the subsequent creation of a superficially

collective memory of the war premised on the Partisan experience, lingering inter-ethnic tensions – most notably between Croats and Serbs – prevented that memory construct from ever becoming a singular narrative palatable to all Yugoslav citizens.

Compare this with the collective memory of the Holocaust and the lessons and mnemonic practices that have emerged from decades of debate and critique. One might imagine there to be a comparably monolithic system of remembrance, noting, however, the existence of current challenges by historical relativists who force a false equivalence between fascist crimes and crimes commited by post-war communist totalitatian regimes. Within this greater structure of Holocaust memory lie nested cultural memories specific to particular nations, ethnicities and social groups (religious or sexual minorities, for instance) which remain contested from within and without those groups. While the Holocaust itself still is denied by many to this day, the mnemonic practices created around it – the central role it played in the creation of the forerunners to today's European Union, the international Holocaust institutions (legal and memorial), the wealth of museums and exhibitions dedicated to its memory and the unending literature assessing its impact from all imaginable angles – have proven unshakable. The same cannot be said about even the distant past in Serbia; the word "Kosovo" elicits not only a sharp debate about the status of a partially-recognised independent country in the Balkan peninsula but also invites controversy about the events of a fourteenth-century battle as a foundational myth of the Serb nation. The mnemonic battles that surround much of Yugoslav history therefore place cultural memory in a decisive position for contemporary analysis of the creation of identity and violence in the region, given the lack of consensus over how a *collective* memory of the past may appear. These tensions form a central part of my research, and in the empirical discussion of Croatia's public face of memory, particularly in Chapter 6, I demonstrate how they physically manifest and how these manifestations reflect undercurrents in the identity making process in the Yugoslav successor states. The next section ties in the sociological concept of power and various iterations thereof (power over memory and power to endure) to concurrent processes of identity and memory formation, in doing so highlighting the influence of various social groups over these negotiations.

Power

My thesis is grounded in the study of cultural memory and the transition (or lack thereof) from cultural to collective memories of twentieth-century traumas in Croatia. Cultural memories

themselves are often the most contested of the three predominant categories of memory – communicative, cultural, and collective – put forward by the Assmanns. This contestation in the transitions from communicative to cultural and from cultural to collective memory can be guided by a wide range of actors, whether public or private, from inside and outside the relevant social group. In the case of the communicative memory "becoming" cultural, we must ask who determines the communicative memories that ought to be published, mediated or externalised in one way or another. Further, we must note how social groups (ethnic groups or nations in this instance) come to accept those memories as their own and to perceive events the individual members of that group did not witness as fundamental to their own identities, and what media are used to transmit such communicative memories temporally and spatially. Who, for example, decides to publish a story, and in what form – news article, book, film, memorial? (Why did the Grimm Brothers select one region's oral retelling of Snow White to include in their *Children's and Household Tales* over another? Why is the *šahovnica* a contemporary symbol of ethnic Croats, the water tower in Vukovar one of their suffering, and the fortress in Knin one of victory and thanksgiving?) Why are these symbols unique to one group and not shared with others?

Power and its various manifestations, then, must be examined more critically in the context of memory- and identity-formation. Power as a factor of identity and memory is given limited attention in extant memory studies literature, but the interdisciplinary nature of memory studies allows me here to import useful concepts from sociological literature. Sociological approaches to power, however, are divded into Foucauldian and Weberian accounts, but in this thesis, I draw from each to synthesis how power is both an omnipresent force (from Foucault) and a consequence of social relations and interactions between agents, like soldiers, politicians or activists (from Weber).

Michel Foucault defines power often in what it is *not,* that is not a "group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state" or a "general system of domination exerted by one group over another;" rather, he argues that "power must be understood in the first instance as a multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (Foucault 1978, 92). Power, therefore, is not static but rather an ephemeral and dynamic phenomenon, much like memory, one that is "produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another" (ibid.,

93). As well, power is difficult to measure outside the realm of physics but socially does not necessarily result in a zero-sum game; power relationships are instead "an ensemble of actions which induce others and follow from one another" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 217). To this, Foucault states, "we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (Foucault 1978, 100).

Here, I do not seek to explore who exercises power for the sake of power (a rather lengthy philosophical discussion), but who exercises power *over* something or someone, as a Foucauldian analysis of power relations in the context of memory politics may suggest. Whence power emerges is less relevant to this case study than how relative balances of power are negotiated – whether peacefully or violently – and such an examination of power *over* memory (see Müller 2009), if at all possible, brings together narrative(s) and counter-narrative(s). Weber, in contrast to Foucault, defines power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber [1922] 1978, 53). Hearn notes that Weber's conceptualisation of power ("Macht") must be coupled with the notion of dominantion or authority ("Herrschaft"), which is built on the lack or presence of some form of legitimacy and the probability that particular commands will by followed by the dominated group (Hearn 2012, 29). The concept of counter-narrative (see Y. Zerubavel 1995, below) neatly encapsulates Weber's notion of resistance to authority, that is, subversion, within power relations as they apply to the field of memory. In Croatia, for example, despite the dominance of a very centralised, conservative retelling of the recent past (see Chapter 6), and despite the near-total overlap of national, political, linguistic, and cultural identities and memories, it is not fruitful to assume that this vision is one defined by one clear "Other" or one clear counter-narrative. Instead, a myriad of contestations arises from varying social groups – Serbs, civilian victims, pro-Europeans, Yugonostalgics, women, LGBT+ groups, and so on – each striving for some relative degree of power *over*, if not a total dominance of, memory. This, in essence, is memory politics.

Contestations of power invariably involve contestations of memory, and such clashes between different social groups prevent the formation of a collective or perhaps transnational memory or

consciousness of the historical event at the root of that conflict. Further, some memories are formed around events particular to one site or cultural group and have no role in an outgroup's archive of cultural memories. Where such events involve more than one party, however, the meanings and contemporary interpretations of that past by each group may diverge, also preventing a collectivisation of that memory. Cultural memories, I contend, can only become collective through transcultural or intergroup consensus forming, tacitly, if not explicitly, approved by the state. This process of consensus forming, however, is inherently political and requires a deeper understanding of the ability of the state and of state actors (institutions and politicians) to influence memory and identity construction, as empirical analyses of the "defender" narrative (Chapter 4) and the formation of post-war Croatian identity (Chapter 6) will demonstrate. It, too, demands an understanding of the dynamics of power to allow for the relative or total domination of cultural memory and identity by particular groups across time.

To examine the link between power and identity, I continue briefly with Foucault, who claims that such struggles "revolve around the question, 'Who are we?'" while also questioning "the status of the individual" (1983, 211-212). Much as memory is an individual capacity performed in the social, identity, whether individual or collective, is a result of various, dynamic power contestations. The struggle for power *over* memory is inherently tied to the process of identity formation, which transforms "power-over" into "power-to" (see Hearn 2014); following the work of Anthony Smith, "cultural identity generates power – the power to endure" (Hearn 2018, 288). As processes of transgenerational cultural transmission, memory (internalisation) and remembrance (rehearsal) are therefore a form of treasure trove, in Jan and Aleida Assmann's terms "an archive" (see J. Assmann and Hölscher 1988, 13; A. Assmann 1995), through which identities can be shaped, broken and reborn. Müller refers to this archive as the "grab-bag of history" that policymakers use "for viable historical analogies and political orientation" (Müller 2009, 7). Hearn notes further, "in the ethnosymbolic approach *[which Hearn, a modernist, criticises, discussed below],* the strength of symbols, myths and memories explains the persistence of nations" (ibid.).

Demonstrating power *over* memory necessitates the production of material symbolic representations of the in-group, here "nations" or "cultures." In this thesis, I use physical, visual manifestations of memory – monuments, museums, street art – and the employment of symbols in

public performances of memory – that is, in annual commemorative events – to highlight the various relations between social groups in their competition for power over memory. Transformations of symbols and monuments over various historical eras, for example, show us who determines the contemporary "public face of memory," how these aims are achieved – whether through peaceful or, in the case of the Homeland War, violent means, like the destruction of monuments – and why. Smith suggests to the latter question that,

> *... the more of the different kinds of sacred foundations a given nation possesses, and the richer and more varied their cultural resources, the more persistent and adaptable to change is the corresponding national identity likely to be. The members of those present day nations that can boast a rich heritage of such cultural resources in relation to community, territory, history, and destiny are more likely to retain their sense of national identity and ensure the survival of their national community, despite the increasing pressures for radical change and cosmopolitan assimilation* (Smith 2003: 260).

Here, he points to the necessity of material markers of identity to show the dominance of the public mnemonic sphere (power *over* memory) to "ensure the survival of their national community," that is the "power to endure." This, too, relates to Foucault's argument that "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Foucault 1978, 95). While the base aim of power over memory is the survival of the national or ethnic group in the cases I examine here, those aims do expand as power-over and power-to expand to include further mnemonic, territorial and political goals. As I discuss later, this need for survival endurance becomes a source of pride around which identities, particularly in Croatia, can be and are centred.

Memory abuse

Memory informs perceptions of the contemporary affairs of the state and can influence policymaking depending on how exactly these memories are instrumentalised. Accordingly, politicians and others with the ability to exercise power are able to use (or abuse) memory in such a way as to morph policy outcomes to their own desires and imaginations. By controlling access to public spaces, funding monument and museum construction, and determining censorable taboos, politicians – or more generally the state, in the case of Croatia as an institutional representation of

the national majority ethnic group[3] – plays an important role in the commemorative process. Painful and controversial subjects, in the case of the former Yugoslavia including the massacres in Srebrenica, Jasenovac and Bleiburg, often comprise the bulk of cultural memory and to a great extent have been employed by state actors (here, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and Croatian President Franjo Tuđman come to mind) as material in the "memory wars" that either preceded or emerged from Yugoslavia's violent demise.

Cultural memory, as this shows, is highly susceptible to manipulation and can be put to nefarious purposes. Here I present "memory abuse" as an innovative use of a term introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in 1995 and a concept to understand how certain properties of memory can be used in a detrimental fashion, including, but not limited to, inciting ethnic conflict or violence, defaming others – individuals or peoples – along historical enmities that are no longer reflected in contemporary situations, or justifying military or armed defensive actions through the construction of cultural paranoia. The latter, for example, was the premise upon which Serbs in areas of what is now Croatia attacked their Croat neighbours, using the term *čišćenje terena/*"the cleansing of the earth" to remove Croats from the map of "Greater Serbia." Much of the ethnicised hatred incited prior to the outbreak of war in Croatia in March 1991 was brought on by Serb propaganda, in which Croats were called *Ustaše*, a term referring to the ultranationalist Croatian Revolutionary Movement of Ante Pavelić. Pavelić controlled the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska,* NDH), a Nazi puppet state erected in 1941 that covered much of the territory of modern Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and northern Serbia and carried out acts of mass murder and ethnic cleansing against Serbs until its defeat in 1945. By reintroducing the term *Ustaše*, Serb politicians, among them Slobodan Milošević, used the "othering" of ethnic Serbs from their Croat and Bosniak neighbours to push the notion of a "Greater Serbia" stretching from Croatia to Kosovo amongst the scattered Serb population of Yugoslavia. Though this appropriation of a cultural and collective point of memory as a tool for ostensibly nefarious

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[3] Article I of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia defines the state as "the nation state of the Croatian nation and the state of the members of its national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Rusyns, Bosniaks, Slovenians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs, Albanians and others who are its citizens and who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and the exercise of their national rights in compliance with the democratic norms of the United Nations and the countries of the free world" (Sabor 2010).

reasons, Milošević could arouse his audience, striking at the core of their ethnic identities to incite them to act in self-defence against these supposed historical enemies.

The first published use of the term "memory abuse" can be found in the realm of psychoanalysis (see Shevrin 1994), but in the social sciences, I address the more impactful introduction of "memory abuse" by Tzvetan Todorov in his work, *Les abus de la mémoire*, in 1995. The term, however, has hardly been used in any critical form in the past quarter-century. Todorov himself does not apply the term in his own work, rather relying on "the abuses of memory" as a catchy phrase to draw attention to forcible constructions or destructions of memory in twentieth-century totalitarian regimes (see Todorov 2001, 11). Berliner similarly adopted the phrase "the abuses of memory," in which he addresses the rather flagrant introduction of poorly-defined or analytically unsound forms of memory and the "danger of overextension" of the concept in related fields at the turn of the *memory boom* in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Berliner 2005, 198). Margaret MacMillan more closely adopts the term "abuse of history" in her work to address forms of historical manipulation by nationalists and autocrats but without linking these sorts of narrative construction to violence (see MacMillan 2009). While these authors ultimately point toward the form of manipulation I address in this thesis, none truly guide the reader through the term "memory abuse," and it is in this gap in the links between memory, identity, power and violence that my theoretical contribution through the analytical concept of "memory abuse" is embedded.

Certain properties of cultural memory allow for this manipulation to take place. Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt state that memory has "plastic" and "dynamic" properties, as "individual memory is itself volatile and transient; it is constantly in flux" (Assmann and Shortt 2012, 3). As a publicised and mediated form of individual communicative memory/-ies, the meaning and content of cultural memory is highly dependent on those who exercise power to initiate the transition from the communicative into the cultural. Hence, it is important to consider the potential of memory abuse in this transition as well as that between the cultural and collective. Abuse in the transition from communicative to cultural memory might, for example, be maintained through violence in order to perpetuate social divisions which directly affect the individual. In the transition from cultural to collective memory, however, abuse would serve to undermine or to block the establishment of a truly "collective," transcultural or intercommunal memory. In the former instance, a wide variety of actors may influence such transition, such as authors, publishers,

photographers and others who mediate or connect disparate communicative memories (and therefore have some degree of power *over* memory, as discussed above). In the tradition of Halbwachs, memory also is socially constructed and given its meaning only in the social sphere. Individual memory, a phenomenon which Halbwachs otherwise repudiates, is informed by the individual's process of socialisation, e.g. the environment and conditions in which he or she grew up and was educated.

Jan Assmann also describes "reconstructivity" as a property of memory that lends itself to malleability, stating,

> *The cultural memory acts reconstructively, i.e. its knowledge is always in reference to a current, contemporary situation. [...] It exists in two modi: one in the modus of its potentiality as an archive, as a total horizon of collected texts, pictures, patterns of behaviour, and the second in the modus of actuality, as a body of objectified sense that is made current and given perspective by a respective present* (J. Assmann and Hölscher 1988, 13).

The ability to reconstruct events of the past to mirror, for example, frustrations of the present – be they political, economic or social – through a cultural and thereby ethnic lens, provides room for manipulation. The ostensible objectification of historical fact – and, indeed, history *is* inherently subjective – gives those who use cultural memory as a political tool some convincing power in the context (time and space) in which they operate. By exploiting the history of late 14th century Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, for example, was able to use a cultural filter of Serbdom and a narrative of victimhood to use the memory of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo as a tool for convincing Serbs in Bosnia and Kosovo to defend themselves against the *Turks*, cast contemporarily as the mortal enemies of the Serb people. By obscuring the fact that Serbia's gradual defeat and annexation by the Ottoman Empire would not occur until the 1450s, Milošević and the media outlets he controlled managed to create a sense of urgency and immediate threat by reconstructing Serb cultural history in terms favourable to his political mission to carve a Serb state from the crumbling Yugoslavia.

The second property of cultural memory that enables its abuse is its inherent inconsistency over time. As Aleida Assmann writes, "The form and quality of cultural memory spaces [...] are

determined both by political and social changes as well as by change in technical media" (A. Assmann 1999, 408). Through various interpretations and reiterations of history over time and across generations, it appears that the first to transform the communicative memory of the past into the cultural determines to a large part the meaning that these memories will carry into perpetuity. Vuk Karadžić (*1787-†1864), for example, was amongst the first Serb philologists to collect and publish the oral histories of Serbia, including that of the Battle of Kosovo, into a tangible and accessible form of epic poetry for the growing literate masses. Like the tales of the Brothers Grimm, however, Karadžić's stories and the Serbian epics were still subject to nefarious forms of manipulation after his death, providing cultural and literary fodder for the Milošević regime to reinterpret as a nationalist tool to incite violence against others (see Greenawalt 2001, 50).

However, I must problematise the term "nefarious" in my definition of memory abuse, as the role of national narratives is not to be underestimated in determining the actions of a state or individuals that may be met with contempt elsewhere. A more recent example of conflicting national narratives is to be found in the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia in South Ossetia, as described by James V. Wertsch. Wertsch explains that the Western perspective of Russian aggression in the former Soviet realm may not hold or be convincing to Russians themselves, as their worldview has been framed by the "Expulsion of Foreign Enemies narrative template" over decades and centuries, sharpening since the end of the Second World War (Wertsch 2012, 178). The framing of the conflict over Russophile territory in modern Georgia through an ingrained national narrative of self-defence, informed by personal and collective experiences of warfare, denies the relevance of a Western narrative of neo-colonial expansionism. Wertsch writes,

> *They also dismiss claims that Georgia is some kind of laboratory for democracy as naïve, if not transparently dishonest. Instead, the Expulsion of Foreign Enemies narrative template was harnessed to present a picture in which the real agenda in Georgia was to create a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) outpost that could eventually serve as a site for launching aggression against Russia. From this perspective, the Russian incursion into the breakaway Georgian enclave of South Ossetia was an act of legitimate pre-emption against an aggressor, and also liberation for the Ossetian population, many of which indeed did side with Russia* (ibid., 179).

Whether the use of cultural memory tools like national narratives in this sense is truly nefarious is in the eye of the memory holder. In my research, this demands reflexively understanding the framing of "right" and "wrong" or "appropriate" and "inappropriate" uses of memory, as discussed in Chapter 3. The memory "holder," however, becomes a person or collective body of interest, and in many instances, I conceptualise memory holders as those with the power over memory in whose image monuments and museums are designed and constructed.

The return of competitive, and ultimately violent, expressions of nationalism in Yugoslavia in the late twentieth century was, much to the dismay of sensationalist authors, not the result of "ancient hatreds" that had existed in the region since time immemorial. Rather, Malešević (2017a) argues that nationalism itself was not a guiding or even useful political principle in the Western Balkans during its heyday elsewhere in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. Gellner comments in this light, "[...] nationalism is *not* [author's emphasis] the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state" (1983, 48). The lack of suitable communication infrastructure in the newly independent Serbian state of 1804 prevented the spread of news and ideas or the spirit of a wider, "imagined" community in Anderson's (1983) sense beyond the local or provincial level. This, however, is not particular to Serbia in the general sense of early stages of widening national identity, but when compared to the more rapid development of communication technologies in, for example, Britain or Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century, the growth of Serbia as an imagined community appears rather latent. Low literacy rates and the inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to provide education to anyone but the sons of the élite combined with a dearth of paved roads or railways to inhibit state intervention in the socialisation process of young Serbian peasants through universal education in language, history, religion or culture. As communication technologies evolved, then, the Serbian government gained the ability to "[nationalise] the masses [...] at the end of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, reaching its peak on the eve of and during the Balkan wars (1912–3) when the Serbian establishment put a great deal of effort into developing the ideological narratives that would legitimise territorial expansion throughout the Balkans" (Malešević 2017a, 137). It is this process of mobilising the wider populace itself toward self-identification with the nation that Reicher and Hopkins describe as "nationalism" (2001, 54).

Expressions of a different, more militaristic vein of expansionist nationalism often derive from Ilija Garašanin's 1844 *Načertanije,* a policy document which espoused a *Велика Србија/*"Greater Serbia" stretching from Hungary to Bulgaria; this vision of a "Greater Serbia," suppressed like other nationalist undercurrents in Titoist Yugoslavia, was revived in the wars of the 1990s by far-right-wing supporters of the Serbian Radical Party. Concurrently, images of a *Velika Hrvatska/* "Greater Croatia" were spread by Croatian nationalists during the 1991-1995 Croatian War of Independence, who had brought back to life the NDH policy of Croatian expansionism that had also emerged during the early nineteenth century. This appropriation or reinterpretation of historical manifestations of fledgling nationalism in Croatia and Serbia underscores McCrone's analysis of the invention of the past and the intersections of history and nationalism. He writes that "this mobilisation of history is [...] an exercise in legitimation" and that "tradition is an appeal to the present, not the past" (McCrone 1998, 51). Thus, the use of nineteenth-century expansionist ideologies in the late twentieth was not intended to push for historical continuity but rather to reclaim a lost past for present and future gain in the name of the nation, again reaffirming the right for a nation to endure. The post-independence Croatian state has also used the language of "the millennial national identity of the Croatian nation and the continuity of its statehood" in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Sabor 2010, 1) to legitimate and ground the future-facing identity of "the Croatian nation" in a historical context dating to the seventh century CE. This phenomenon will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 6, in which I examine the HDZ's active use of history through post-independence memorial spaces and practices.

In this section, I have laid out the framework of communicative, cultural and collective memory and how the spaces between them are those in which motivated individuals can seize power over memory, in the context of my research in order to instil their vision of the world in the public sphere. The above definition of "memory abuse" may appear to be a more extreme interpretation of manipulation, but it is through the transformation of memory as a tool for achieving violent aims, even if in the struggle for "power to endure," that this term may gain greater currency. In the following section, I discuss how matters of memory, power and violence combine to shape culture and identity and how these identities are reflected visually.

Memory, culture and identity

The process of creating an identity requires recollections of who one "was," and in this way, memory and identity are tightly bound. The question of belonging is central to the study of nations and nationalism, a sociological discourse with divergent approachs, most crucially between Smith's ethnosymbolism, modernist interpretations of nationhood, and (though mostly rejected in contemporary literature) the primordialist argument based on theories of human evolution. Modernists, such as Jonathan Hearn, David McCrone, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, among others, assert that nations are a recent construct that emerged through the centralisation of authority and the modernisation of a self-sustaining economy. These developments necessitated the use of standardised language, currency, measures and other values that provide room for common identities to be sustained. Durkheim, who may be classified as a modernist thinker, demonstrates this through his typologies, noted above, of traditional societies built on "mechanical solidarity" and productive (that is, modern) societies that emerge through "organic" solidarity (Durkheim 1893, 158-188). The limitations of modernist theories of nationalism lie primarily in their attention to the rather short-term view they take on the emergence, development, maintenance and contestation of national identities. Anthony Smith, whose ethnosymbolic approach I describe later in this section, criticised this rather short-sighted view of nationhood and belonging, arguing that attention should be drawn, too, to the *longue durée* of a group's history (Smith 1998, 170), which proves rather fruitful when studying the narrative of Croatia's "millennial nationhood".

Smith notes, "The sense of 'whence we came' is central to the definition of 'who we are'" (Smith 1991, 22). This relationship also feeds backward; one's memories are informed by one's identity and ingrained social frames of reference, which can and often do change over time. The common conscience shared by a particular community, whether family or nation, therefore refers to the store of memories and commemorative practices actively produced by the group. Aleida Assmann writes, "ethnic groups, nations and states [...] do not *have* a collective memory, but *make* one with the aid of various **symbolic media**, such as texts, images, monuments, anniversaries and commemorative festivals. [...] Such common and for each community binding links to the past and to cultural tradition are what give these collectives their **identity as 'we.'** This is not a matter of individual origins but something acquired through learning, participation in the rituals, and all the

other practical ways in which people integrate into a community [author's emphasis]" (A. Assmann 2012, 175).

Identity formation also involves identifying what a nation is *not*, which invariably creates an exclusive identity of the "self" and of the "other." The contestations between Croats and Serbs over their respective national identities has emerged from the disentanglement of an earlier recognition of shared Slavic (or Yugoslav, "South Slavic") roots. In doing so, former neighbours become foreigners, identities which crystallised in the course of the wars in the former Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s. Reicher and Hopkins discuss at length the role of (new, post-conflict) national identities in *international* or intergroup relations (2001, 77-99) but do not directly address how the "other" is created in contrast to someone's chosen national identity. Todorova (1997; see also Bakić-Hayden 1995), in comparison, details the processes of othering of and within the Balkans and postulates "Balkanism" as a European post-colonial and orientalist approach to solidifying European identity/-ies around what Europeans are not: brutish, violent, divided, uncivilised. As discussed previously, the struggle for power to endure helps to perpetuate or reform existing identities that, if not formed in affirmation of their continuity, are defined by contrast. Hearn comments that "power creates identity [...] in opposition":

> *When the people in one organisation or group hold power over others, those so dominated will tend to construct identities as counterfoils to that domination, to define their identities against their oppressors. And this of course is a central motif in nationalism studies, in the appeals to local, authentic folk cultures that resist the powers of colonising civilisations. But here, the very intensity of identification is understood as an effect of the power relationship and how it is met, not a pre-existing resource that then determines survival* (Hearn 2018, 288).

Jenkins' survey of social identity (2014) describes processes of determining and institutionalising identity at the collective level, which may mimic those of collective memory, yet the author does not differentiate identity and memory at any point in the book. He nonetheless states, "Identity can only be understood as a process of 'being' or 'becoming.' One's identity [...] is never a final or settled matter" (18). This inherent dynamism of identity fits neatly with the definition of memory as a *process* of remembering, but remembering and being necessarily involve two different timespans. Remembering involves the time between the event being recalled or commemorated

and the present but need not speak to the future; Schwartz notes to this effect that collective memory employs "symbols to awaken ideas and feelings about the past" (2000, 9). Identity, on the other hand, bridges the gap from the present state of "being" or "becoming" to an indeterminate future, generally someone's lifespan or the duration of their post-mortem legacy.

Political actors also significantly influence the content of national identities and often use memory as a tool for such narrative construction. The susceptibilities of cultural memory and its power to inform and shape personal and collective identities lend cultural memory to manipulation and abuse by nefarious power holders or influencers in the transitions between the various forms of memory discussed above. In contrast to "violence," I use the term "abuse" in the strictest dictionary sense, that is, to "use (something) to bad effect or for a bad purpose; misuse" (Oxford Dictionary 2017). In the context of this research, "memory abuse" hence refers to the intentional manipulation of memory past a particular threshold, beyond which violence may result. I also acknowledge the normativity of the phrase "memory abuse," particularly as an outsider to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, but I maintain that those "bad purposes" include any action that leads to violence. While memory studies itself has yet to face such a divergence in approaches as has, for example, nationalism studies (compare the primordialist, modernist and ethnosymbolic approaches), my use of the term "memory abuse" represents a break from standard Durkheimian studies of cultural memory and takes a more critical stance not only on the function of memory but also on the role of the researcher as an activist and possible interventionist. In the case of Yugoslavia's dissolution, the mnemonic battles that framed much of the discourse that led to the outbreak of war represents memory abuse in the clearest way. Bet-El summarises this point:

> *Large chunks of verbal agony, beginning with the words 'I remember,' and often ending with a sharp admonition: Remember! These were memories of aggressive acts committed by the others: Croats upon Serbs and Muslims; Muslims upon Croats and Serbs; Serbs upon Croats and Muslims and Albanian Kosovars; Albanian Kosovars upon Serbs. Sin upon sin, national memories conjured up as if they were real, personal memories, locking each ethnicity into itself, making all the others abhorrent, unjust and fearful. Words of the past became weapons of war* (Bet-El 2009, 206).

In his discussion of the fall of Yugoslavia, Müller similarly has commented, "[...] Yugoslavia has horrifically demonstrated what happens when memory wars turn into real wars" (2009, 17). The

ability of politicians, through authoritarian control over the creation of new identities and cultural memories, to convince co-ethnics to commit acts of violence against neighbours and friends certainly justifies the use of the words "nefarious" and "bad" in this definition of memory abuse. It is in the ongoing gap in post-conflict memory literature on the relationship between power (or absolute power) and memory that the concept of "memory abuse" is situated, not only addressing and challenging the pervasive "ancient hatreds" narrative (e.g. Kaplan 1993) that permeated much of the early writing on the fall of Yugoslavia but also the dearth of literature on the role of the Croatian state in the mnemonic and physical wars of the 1990s.

If the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s were models of contemporary "memory wars," then the role of identity in shaping conflict and, vice versa, the role of conflict in shaping identity is not to be underappreciated. The struggle for power to endure is central to understanding the Croatian "millennial" narrative, linking various Croatian states over time to preserve a vision of Croatian independence no matter the cost. Indeed, much of the tension that emerged in the 1980s prior to Yugoslavia's violent dissolution related back to the existence of an "Independent State of Croatia" in the 1940s, one responsible for genocide against Serbs, Jews, Roma and other minority groups. The use (or abuse) of religious symbols in the NDH and in modern Croatia call into question the role of symbols in determining and signalling national identity. Anthony Smith's "ethnosymbolism" serves as a useful analytical term in this context to assess visual representations of the nation, which he defines as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith 1991, 14). For Smith, ethnosymbolism functions as "an approach that [seeks] to establish relations between the different kinds of collective cultural identity by focusing on elements of myth, memory, value, symbol and tradition that tended to change more slowly, and were more flexible in meaning, than the processes in other domains" (Smith 2004, 196). This means that studying markers and performances of memory, among others, helps us understand better the nature of identity as well as clashes of identities over time and space. Hearn nonetheless criticises Smith's past-oriented approach to nationalism through ethnosymbolism, noting that Smith's claim that cultural identities "serve a fundamental ontological need for 'authenticity' and orientation in this world" toe the line of primordial thinking (Hearn 2018, 288).

Mass commemorative events such as those held in Knin (see Chapter 4) and Vukovar (see Chapter 5) are useful sources of information on social behaviours surrounding public memory and how they intersect with personal beliefs and identities, whether religious, ethnic, national or political. Sumartojo notes, "the gathered actions, narratives, symbols and environments of commemoration are employed to help reinforce versions of national identity that can have wide social ramifications" (Sumartojo 2016, 541). As these various identities closely overlap in the public face of memory in Croatia, it is important to examine how such conformity, one of these "wide social ramifications," has come to be. It is also important to note exceptions to the rules that are indeed marginalised or directly call into question the content of state narratives of the past. This conformity is a result of the consolidation of the power of the HDZ and the defenders through their symbiotic relationship and aggressive approach to deflecting or rejecting external criticisms to their narratives, detailed in Chapter 4. More widely in the realm of memory studies, much as national identities require some "Other" to provide delineation (Dervin 2012, 187-187; Anderson 1983), the patterns of negotiation that result in the formation of cultural, collective or other public forms of memory depend on the existence of a mainstream narrative and one or more that challenge it.

These narratives are supported by symbols, slogans and songs commemorating a nation's past, which serve as critical elements of national identity and a nation's unique set of shared memories. As such, these symbols are susceptible to manipulation or abuse (Swidler 1986). In the late 1980s and throughout the course of the 1990s wars in the former Yugoslavia, many contested symbols from the Second World War were revived by nationalist actors in both Croatia and Serbia that were used to rally co-ethnics to the defence, respectively, of the "homeland" (*domovina*) or "fatherland" (*otadžbina/отаџбина*). In Croatia, flags depicting the chequerboard *šahovnica* and the crossed U of the Ustaša regime of the NDH were flown, seen by ethnic Serbs as a provocation that invoked the memories of the Jasenovac extermination camp in which an estimated 100,000 Serbs, Roma, Jews and Muslims were murdered between 1941 and 1945 (USHMM 2020a); the death tolls of the massacres at Jasenovac, Kragujevac, Bleiburg and several other sites near or within the former Yugoslavia remain heavily contested. Similarly, in Serbia and areas across Yugoslavia populated by ethnic Serbs, symbols of the royalist Četnik troops who in the course of the Second World War collaborated with Axis powers to create an ethnically pure "Greater Serbia," were worn by supporters of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), founded in 1991 from a merger between two far-right movements, including Vojislav Šešelj's "Serbian National Renewal" (*Srpska narodna*

obnova/Српска народна обнова, SNO); the uniforms of the White Eagles (*Beli orlovi/Бели орлови*), a paramilitary wing of the SRS, also bore the double-headed eagle of the Serbian royal coat of arms that emerged from the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty in the Middle Ages. Whilst both the *šahovnica* and the double-headed eagle date several hundred years prior to the wars of the twentieth century, their appropriation by both the NDH and the Četniks during the Second World War have shifted public perceptions of these symbols. Since the conflicts of the 1990s, these symbols have remained present in everyday life, either as antagonisms at football matches, in nationalist graffiti or as national symbols integrated into the flags and currencies of each country.

More recently, movements to rehabilitate war-time Axis collaborators have rekindled deeper historical grievances in Croatia and Serbia. On 15 May 2015, the Belgrade Higher Court rehabilitated Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović, leader of the Četniks in the Second World War, who was executed in 1946 by the Yugoslav government under Josip Broz Tito for treason and collaboration with the Third Reich (Ristić and Milekić 2015). As well, the Zagreb District Court overturned in July 2016 a Yugoslav-era conviction of Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac, sentenced to prison for collaboration with the Ustaša regime but later beatified by Pope John Paul II (Vasović 2016); the resulting exchange of diplomatic protest notes between Serbia and Croatia highlights the sensitive nature of these legal decisions to the families of the victims of the respective states' war-time predecessors. In February 2017, In the Name of the Family (*U ime obitelji*), a Croatian conservative/traditionalist NGO, filed a request to the Zagreb District Court to consider the rehabilitation of Filip Lukas, president of the *Matica hrvatska* Croatian cultural institute during the Second World War who was aligned with NDH leader Ante Pavelić; Lukas fled Yugoslavia before he could be executed and died in Rome in 1958 (Milekić 2017a). As these cases suggest, contestations of memory have proven key to perpetuating ongoing social divisions in the region, and it is particularly the use and abuse by state actors of cultural memories of the Second World War during and after the wars of the 1990s that have driven these tensions, which continue to serve as markers of ethnic identity. How memory abuse manifests in violence is explored in the next section, and I return to Foucault to highlight how the process of othering is a paramount example of the links between violence and identity.

Memory and violence

Cultural memory, when examined as a tool rather than a process, can become a motivating force to turn otherwise friendly or indifferent neighbours into mortal enemies. Here, I envision violence as a process that runs concurrently to that of identity formation, one in which memory is transformed from a binding element to a divisive weapon; as well, violence is a strategy in the competition for power. Violence can manifest in many forms and does not always result in physical destruction, bodily harm or death. As Malešević notes, "Violence [...] is a scalar concept: it includes diverse practices which vary in scale, magnitude and intensity of physical, moral or emotional damage" (Malešević 2017b, 10).

My work goes beyond the Oxford Dictionary (2019) definition of violence as "behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something," as the focus on *intent* to harm is quite subjective and more appropriate for a legal examination of conflict. My vision of violence, as stated above, is one of a force that divides and is a strategy to achieve power (see May 1972, 147-164). As well, violence is enacted upon various levels of society, with each experiencing the same act of violence in often wildly different ways. That is, "To properly understand violence, it is necessary to compare and contrast its historical transformation at the **interpersonal and intra-group** (micro), the **inter-group and intra-polity** (mezzo), and **inter-polity** (macro) levels [emphasis own]" (Malešević 2013, 273). The levels of analysis in this work, when viewing memory abuse and social conflict through a national lens, target the latter macro level in Chapter 6 with a focus on the construction of Croatian national identity and the mezzo level in Chapters 4 and 5, where tensions within Croatian society between men and women, civilians and soldiers come into play. Particularly in my examination of inter-group *social* violence, I look at the struggle for recognition of victims' groups by the Croatian state and how their neglect perpetuates or exacerbates power struggles within a divided civil society.

The intersection of violence and identity occurs where an act of violence alters someone's perception of the self and the other. The creation of opposing forces, however artificial or superficial their differences, both reaffirms and negates various elements of personal, and eventually, social identities. Exercising power over memory allows different actors varying levels of resistance or "insubordination" to attempts to seize public space for the performance and demonstration of memory, this resistance a refusal to accommodate the Other's identity.

Foucault's term "counter-memory" proves useful in these contexts. While Foucault describes "counter-memory" as "a transformation of history into a totally different form of time" (Foucault 1980, 160), and though this definitional aspect of *temporal* transformation is not quite relevant to my own work, I find the notion of resistance that "counter-memory" implies and the element of transformation at its core of critical importance. A similar term emerges from Zerubavel's work on "counter-narrative," (Y. Zerubavel 1995) which more closely captures the discourse of resistance in the wider context of identity formation. If the purpose of violence (itself a transformative force) resulting from memory abuse is to mark mnemonic territory, then identities will be impacted accordingly by the outcomes of that violence. This process is summarised in Figure 1.3 below, which shows the links between cultural memory, the power *over* memory, the power to endure and resulting identities, which, as in Figure 1.2, are not strictly linear and can work in opposing directions. This back-and-forth between memory and identity, particularly where violence is initiated or perpetuated, becomes apparent in Chapters 4 to 6, again reinforcing the need for some "counter" or "Other" to push the (trans)formation of identity.

Figure 1.3: Relationship between memory, power and identity
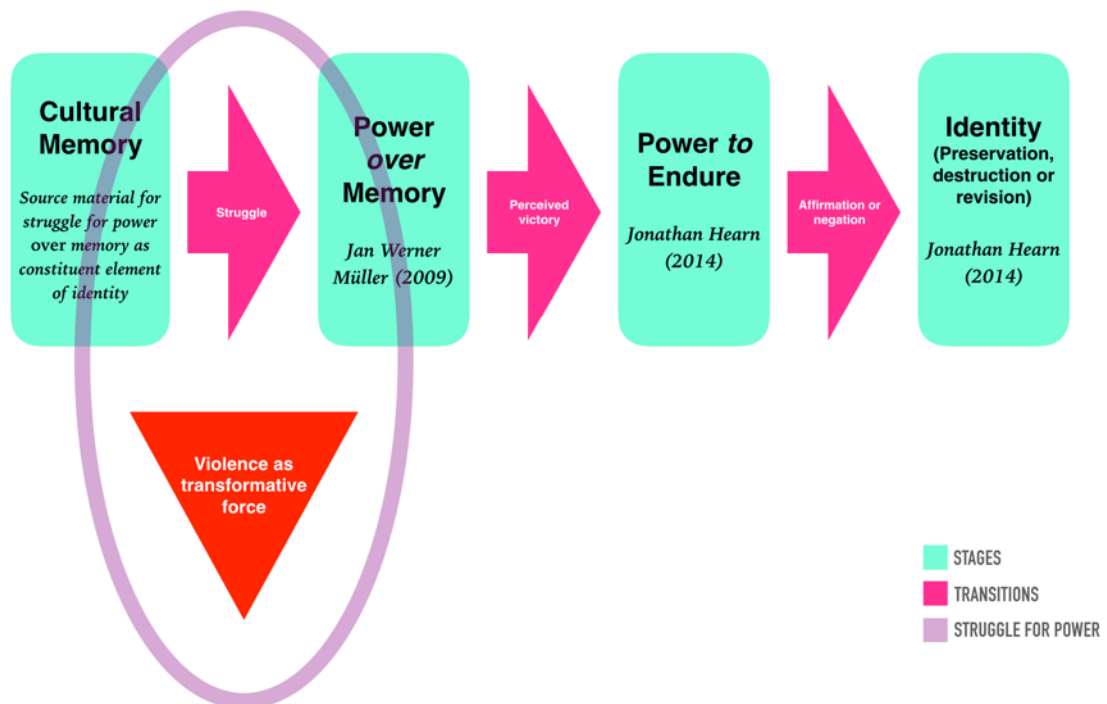
The process of othering and related forms of cultural differentiation and identity construction, however, can be and often are achieved through non-violent means. Nonetheless, the primary

focus of my research is to assess how violence impacts identities and mnemonic behaviours (and vice-versa) as they are represented visually in the aftermath of war. I am less interested in the physical destruction caused by war than in the rhetoric and political decision-making that furthers more silent forms of violence that interweave with social transformation in the years that follow. Malešević notes, "Although in modernity violence has become less publicly visible, it is, in fact, much more prevalent […] as both killing and dying are removed from the public eye" (Malešević 2013, 285). This is true of inter-group violence as demonstrated in the mnemonic conflicts I describe throughout this thesis, particularly as clear instances of inter-personal violence as would be seen in war have declined. The near-total absence of images of Croatian suffering that I will demonstrate in memorial spaces dedicated to the Homeland War and the abstraction of death into purely symbolic reductions may attest to this claim. The abstract nature of social violence, that is, actions that harm social cohesion and over time negatively impact particular communities, also requires a more process-oriented view that is better addressed through sociological, historical and political lenses, a multidisciplinary approach I employ throughout my research.

In the immediate pre- and post-war periods of the 1940s and 1990s in Yugoslavia and Croatia, the absence of large-scale physical violence did not mean the absence of social forms of violence, framed as means of justice, most notably in the maintenance of forced labour in prison camps like Goli otok or in anti-Serb violence since the conclusion of the Homeland War. In the mid- to late 1980s, the loud, public embrace of othering and the transformation of religious identities into more hardened ethnic or national ones, defined by political rather than spiritual boundaries, brought about the end of the Titoist project of "Brotherhood and Unity." The above-mentioned examples from Serbia's rediscovery of the medieval Battle of Kosovo and the resulting definition of Kosovar Albanians, Bosniaks and other perceived enemies of the Serb nation as "Turks" demonstrate this process. As well, mnemonic divisions and more exclusive definitions of citizenship in the aftermath of the Homeland War represent obstacles for the creation of a memory of the war that transcends territorial, ethnic, national, religious and cultural boundaries. Identities formed through violent means, as I contend is the case in Croatia (see also Tanner 2010), are often those defined by opposition and negation rather than affirmation of unique or perhaps more universal features of those identities.

Returning to the above discussion of power, Foucault notes that, "Power exists only when it is put into action," that is, "power is not a function of consent" (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 219-220). Seeking a monopoly over memory, then, is a forceful act that disrupts existing power relations, here through violence. Foucault continues,

> *A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities. Its opposite pole can only be passivity, and if it comes up against any resistance, it has no other option but to try to minimize it. On the other hand, a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that "the other" (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open* (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 220).

In this thesis, I use power and the quest to wield or exercise power over memory and, ultimately, others, to frame violence as a transformative tool rather than as an ends in and of itself. Power over memory, which secures groups' power to endure, also secures the definition of some "Other," against which the in-group is defined. The "Other" must not necessarily consent to its being defined as such, when we follow the logic of Foucault. Therefore, while the content of the "Other" may be changed constantly (as in the Croatian example where various "Others" exist), the existence of the "Other" is always necessary for identities to remain unique and to endure across generations. This notion further derives from Hegel's differentiation of the Self and Other, which underscores the importance of an "Other," without which any sense of self would be lost (see Hegel 1971; Berenson 1982). However, the purpose of "othering" is often unclear beyond tactically striving for narrative independence in the process of identity construction. The violence (social, physical, psychological or other) that is involved here is neither just for the sake of violence (as is seeking power for the sake of power) nor is it alone self-perpetuating. Various motives come to play out on both the individual actor – a soldier, a politician, a police officer, and so on – and at the wider social level. For some, violence may be retributive, for others pre-emptive, and for others still for the sake of maintaining honour. If – only conceptually – we reduce the motivation for violence as one of seeking the power to endure, then cultural differentiation, an act that plays out

in the mnemonic sphere as well as the physical realm, is a process that can to a great degree be achieved through memory abuse.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the core theoretical arguments I will elucidate throughout this work, namely:

1) Memory is a social phenomenon that builds from interactions between individuals and groups across space and time and is supported by various structures (political systems, religion, tradition, etc.) that can be analysed for their role in the creation of national identities. As it is a malleable construct susceptible to manipulation by particular groups with relative degrees of influence, memory can be "abused." "Memory abuse" as a term ought to be applied more strictly to contexts where memory, power and violence intersect to provide a better understanding of the mechanisms and actors that give rise to violence through the manipulation of shared remembrances of the past.

2) Cultural memory can be used as a tool to foment or exacerbate social tensions that are inherently violent in the process of identity formation. Identity formation, however, is a result of the shift from the struggle for the power *over* memory to the power *to* endure. That is, as a group seeks to ensure its preservation, it uses aspects of its past to justify violence that asserts not only its dominance over particular cultural narratives but affirms, reshapes or destroys the identities of the Self and of the Other in the process of transitioning from cultural to collective memory.

3) Symbolic representations of the nation – in the context of this work, monuments, museums, street art or public commemorations – serve to maintain that nation and transmit memory and identity over generations. Such works are (quite literally) concrete evidence of cultural memory, and the interactions of various groups with them reflect the dynamics of memory politics and the "plasticity" of cultural memory itself.

These theoretical arguments will allow me to isolate various processes that run concurrently to identity formation in and around conflict, including memory abuse, narrative construction, remembering and forgetting. The next chapter explores the historical background of the Croatian case study that forms the basis of my research, detailing the various events that led to violence

before, during and after war in the twentieth century and continue to guide the formation of Croatian national identity through the present day. ★

Chapter 2: Historical Background

Introduction

The history of Croatia is not just one of the Croats but of the many peoples and states that have come and gone through the Adriatic coast and in the Slavonian countryside in the past 1100 years. This chapter will focus more closely on those critical junctures in Croatian history that have determined to a significant degree the mnemonic content of Croatia's collective conscience and speak to the various themes of identity, politics and violence that underpin this research. Fundamentally, this retelling of Croatia's past is as much about the Croat(ian) *narod/*"nation" as much as it is of the Serbs and others who have cohabitated with Croats since at least the early sixteenth century. The trajectory of the Second World War and its aftermath, however, represent the most significant turning points in Serbian-Croatian relations and in turn have solidified major elements of the contemporary and predominantly conservative national identity of Croats in Croatia and the diaspora. Here, I organise the chapter into sections that separately discuss the foundations of the Croatian "nation," the histories of violence in the 1940s and 1990s in Croatia and finally the politics of memory and identity that emerge from them, particularly in light of Croatia's 2013 accession to the European Union. Each section will highlight the various layers of Croatian identity that have formed around those historical events and in their aftermaths.

The creation of "Croatia," 925 to 1941 CE

This brief review of relevant moments in Croatia's past begins with an overview of the origins of "Croatia" as an independent kingdom and its evolution through various changes in power, from the tenth century to the beginning of the Second World War in Yugoslavia. While such a large span of this chronicle may have been crucial in the formation of contemporary elements of Croatian identity, as I will discuss in Chapter 6, much of this past has been overlooked in the public face of memory we see today.

Croatian history dates back more than a millennium to at least the eighth century CE, and depending on the historical approach taken, the Croat nation has been theorised to descend variously from tribes that migrated from what is now Iran, Bulgaria, Italy, Ukraine or Poland or formerly was part of Roman Illyria, now the Western Balkans (Tanner 2010, 2). No matter the historical origins of what could have been an early Croatian tribe, what is known for certain is that a Slavic group known as the *bijeli Hrvati/*"White Croats" was first recognised in Central Europe around modern Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine by the seventh century, at which point a number

among them, along with the Pannonian Avars, migrated south to what is now Croatia (Heršak and Silić 2002). At this point, various Roman-cum-Ostrogoth-cum-Byzantine cities existed across the Dalmatian littoral and Pannonian inland areas, including major trading outposts like Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and Salona (Solin), near Spalatum (Split). The year 925 CE represents perhaps the first major *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1989) of modern Croatian cultural memory, namely with the founding of the Kingdom of Croatia under King Tomislav I and his recognition as ruler by Pope John X. This point is a vital marker of the persistent relationship between the church and the state in Croatia and the longevity of the Croatian "millennial" narrative. Shortly before the foundation of Tomislav's kingdom, the Glagolitic script, the first Slavic alphabet, was created by Saint Cyril for the spreading of popular liturgy, and only in Croatia has a modified variant of the script been preserved for religious use through the present day.[4] The state created by Tomislav, a *knez/*"duke" from 910, would last until 1102 and the union of the Croatian monarchy with Hungary, while coastal regions fell under the influence of the Republic of Venice, marking the continuation of a long-standing on-and-off relationship between Italy and Croatia on the Adriatic (Tanner 1997). Only in 1954 with the resolution to hand back the Free Territory of Trieste, established in the aftermath of the Second World War, to Italy would the ongoing renaming of towns like Zara/Zadar, Fiume/Rijeka, Spalato/Split and Ragusa/Dubrovnik end.

With both the gradual decay of the Venetian trade empire and the fall of the Hungarians to the Ottoman invasions of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century and their defeat at the 1526 Battle of Mohács, rule over what is now Croatia shifted once more. On invitation by the severely neutered Croatian Sabor/"Parliament," the Habsburg monarchy established a large *Vojna Krajina/*"Military Frontier" across Slavonia, Srijem and Baranja and the Una and Sava rivers bordering Ottoman Bosnia. Keeping the Ottomans at bay also involved the recruitment of Serb, Croat, Austrian and Hungarian soldiers, the *Grenzer* or *graničari*, whose inevitably prolonged stay led to the formation of multicultural settlements in Croatia's agricultural heartland (Goldstein 2001, 34-53). This first integration of Serbian Orthodox Slavs into the Croatian landscape also plays a critical role in determining the territory marked for "ethnic cleansing" (the term originating from the Croatian *etničko čišćenje*) in the Second World War and the Croatian War of

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[4] In several monuments across the country today, the Glagolitic script still can be found, often applied to the quote, *"Navik on živi ki zgine pošteno"*/ "He who dies honourably lives forever," attributed to the seventeenth-century noble Petar Zrinski, discussed below.

Independence in the twentieth century.
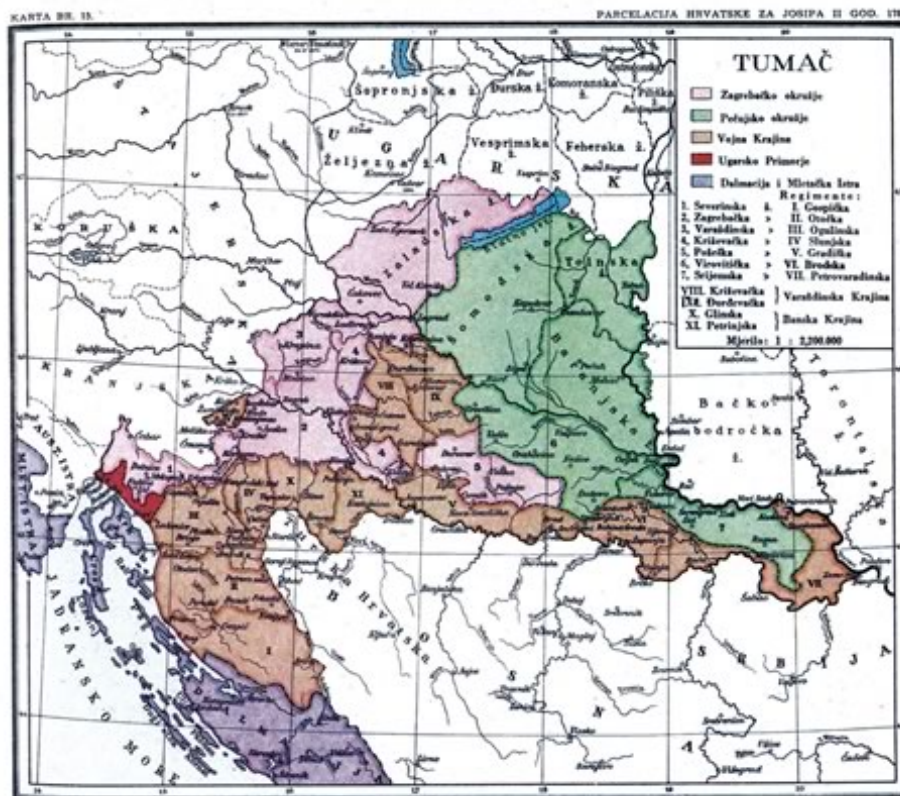
Legend: Pink – Zagreb environs; Green – Pecs (Hungary) environs; Brown – Military Frontier/*Vojna Krajina*;
Red – Hungarian littoral; Purple – Dalmatia and Venetian Istria
Source: Zamolčana Istra (2008).

Throughout the period of rule by the Habsburg Monarchy, Croatia served as Europe's "Christian bulwark," an *antemurale christianitatis*, a critical piece in the ever-changing puzzle of European sovereignty (Housley 2014). Until the late seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire fought for greater territorial control in what is today Slavonia and in Vojvodina in northern Serbia, before their defeat at Vienna in 1683. Wars in Slavonia and Srijem, as well as in parts of northern Bosnia, then an Ottoman *eyalet*, continued into the 1700s, but by 1689 the vast majority of Croatia's Muslim population fled south into central Bosnia. At the same time, the Great Serb Migrations from the territories of the Serbian Despotate in Kosovo northward into what is now Serbia, Vojvodina and Slavonia, had begun (Tanner 2010, 52-56). An estimated 37,000 families of Orthodox Serbs émigrés led by Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević arrived with the Austrian army in Belgrade by June 1690 and were recognised by the Habsburg monarchs as a *corpus separatum*, an

autonomous community governed by the Serbian Orthodox Church. A series of forced conversions by Roman Catholic clergymen in the Habsburg periphery, primarily in the territory of Vojvodina and in modern-day southwestern Hungary, across the Danube from Croatia, led to imperial interventions in the early 1690s that ensured the religious freedoms of the newly-arrived Serbs (Melichárek 2017; Prelić 2011). Another migration followed in 1739 with Serbs settling in Srijem, the territory between the Danube and Sava rivers in contemporary Croatia and Serbia (Jelavich 1954, 148).

Military interventions, too, played a crucial role in the national awakening in the region. By the 1790s, much of the Ottoman possessions in Croatia had been taken over by the Venetians on the Adriatic and the Habsburgs in the north, and the French Revolution and the successive Napoleonic Wars saw the continued strengthening of the Habsburg hand. Many Croatian soldiers of the Dual Monarchy fought alongside Austria and Great Britain against Napoleon and the Bavarians in the 1809 War of the Fifth Coalition as part of the Dalmatian Campaign. While the French occupied Dubrovnik and the Croatian littoral from 1808 to 1814, the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15 affirmed Habsburg control over Dalmatia, which would be divided into the subordinate Kingdoms of Dalmatia, Illyria and Croatia (Botwen and Tarbox 1980; Smith 1998). Administrative boundary shifts occurred throughout the nineteenth century; Croatia and Slavonia merged in 1868, placing the new kingdom's capital in Zagreb. With the beginning of the First World War, instigated by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenburg, in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, the territory of modern Croatia was divided into the Austrian littoral (*Küstenland*), the Kingdom of Dalmatia and the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia.

Linguistic developments as a precursor to modern identity formation, 1500s to 1860s

Between the sixteenth and the late nineteenth centuries, Croatian national identity developed with the growing use of the printing press. Marko Marulić's *Judita*, a retelling of the Biblical story of Judith in the vernacular Croatian language, was the first epic poem published in Croatian in 1501 (Gutsche 1975). Novels like Petar Zoranić's *Planine/*"Mountains" followed in the mid-sixteenth century, and by the late eighteenth century, Baroque literature highlighting the importance of Croatia as a bulwark of Christianity began to transition into romantic nationalism, in line with wider trends in Central European literature at the time (see Grubišić and Grubišić 2007; Šabić 2019). The Illyrian movement, referring to one of several origin theories of South Slavs, emerged

in Croatian literary circles in the mid-1830s, advocating the ethnolinguistic unity of the South Slavs in the Austrian (and later Austro-Hungarian) Empire and resistance to ongoing processes of Germanisation and Magyarisation. These processes were seen from Croatia – and elsewhere in the Hungarian parts of the Dual Monarchy – as a form of aggression against majority populations by a powerful but distant kingdom (Dragojević 2005, 65-67; M. Greenberg 2011). Initial resistance to external pressures came with the revocation of reforms put in place under Marshal Auguste de Marmont, titled the "Duke of Ragusa [Dubrovnik]," who in his role as Marshal of the French Empire introduced the standardisation of the Croatian language in administration around the štokavian dialect. As well, Marmont oversaw the reunification into a single "Illyrian" province of the five Croatian kingdoms that had been divided under earlier Habsburg rule. With Napoleon's defeat and exile, the return of Hungarian administration saw the revocation of Marmont's reforms and a push for greater Magyarisation in an attempt to build a united Kingdom of Hungary stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian Mountains (Bellamy 2003, 42-43). Under Hungarian rule, Croatia was governed by a *ban*, or viceroy, and the *Sabor*, the parliament from which the current legislative chambers take their name. The first notable attempt to overthrow this nobility came with the Croatian-Slovene Peasant Revolt in early 1573, a short-lived rebellion to establish direct links between the peasantry to the imperial court rather than through the feudal arrangements then in place. Such demands for greater autonomy did not cease, however, and in the late seventeenth century the Croatian nobility, too, sought to expel foreign powers from the kingdom. The Frankopan and Zrinski families, two long-standing noble houses that emerged in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, respectively, conspired to free Hungary and Croatia from Habsburg rule in response to the increasing centralisation of the Empire's administration in Vienna in the aftermath of the Ottoman invasion of Transylvania. No concrete, violent action was ever taken by the conspirators, and the plot was foiled in 1670 with the executions of Petar IV Zrinski, Fran Krsto Frankopan and other affiliated nobles. Consequently, no *ban* of Croatian origin was appointed until 1732.

Anti-Hungarian sentiment ultimately manifested in the Illyrian national movement of the 1830s and 1840s. In 1868, an agreement was reached with the Habsburg authorities on the status of Croatia within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and use of Croatian as a language of administration, also returning the lands of the Military Frontier to civil administration in Zagreb. However, the pact maintained the division of the lands of the medieval kingdom, troubling those who sought

greater autonomy for Croatia (Bellamy 2003, 43). Among the most important figures of this movement for Croatian linguistic and administrative autonomy was the linguist Ljudevit Gaj, who in 1830 published the first orthography of the language (see Mosely 1935) that has since come to be known variously as Serbo-Croatian, "Serbian or Croatian," Bosnian, Montenegrin, *naški/* "our," *zajednički/* "the together language" or "the polycentric language."[5] Gaj advocated linguistic reforms to simplify and Slavicise the vernacular in order to promote wider literacy, in doing so facilitating the creation of an "imagined" South Slavic community, as distinct from one of peripheral Magyarised Slavs (see Anderson 1983). Hungarian (and similar Slovak) digraphs like *sz* or *cz* were to be replaced with diacritical marks – š and ž (Žagarová and Pintarić 1998), and in later reforms, including those by Đuro Daničić, a Serbian philologist from Novi Sad, additional letters, including *đ* (dj) and *ć* (ch), were added, thus creating the modern South Slavic alphabet (see Daničić 1847). In 1866, Daničić was elected Secretary General of the newly-established Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU), a cultural centre founded with the donations of Josip Juraj Strossmayer, the bishop of the then-named Diocese of Bosna (Djakovo) et Srijem. Strossmayer was also instrumental in the construction of the seat of the diocese, the Đakovo Cathedral, a massive brick construction visible from afar along the Slavonian countryside. JAZU epitomised the cultural desire for a pan-Slavic movement in Croatia and continues its work in preserving cultural heritage and scientific discovery as HAZU, the Croatian Academy for Sciences and Arts (Dulibić 2002; Tanner 2010, 100-102).

The rise of Croatian nationalism, 1860s to 1920s

Tensions slowly developed between the pan-Slavists and Croatian nationalists throughout the Romantic period of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth. Ante Starčević, an author, linguist and politician from near Gospić in Lika developed from the works of Ljudevit Gaj a more refined definition of the "Croatian" language and national identity. Starčević's understanding of Croatian identity generally fell along pan-Slavic lines, denying the individuality of ethnic groups like Serbs, Slovenes or Bosniaks, whom he deemed to be "Croats" rather than "Yugoslavs," yet in a pattern that would emerge throughout the twentieth century, his definition of the Croat nation also involved definition in opposition to something or someone else (Spalatin 1975; Tanner 1997; 2010, 102). To him, the Habsburgs were the ultimate foe who sought to undermine the

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[5] For simplicity, I will refer to this language as "Croatian" when referring to its use by ethnic Croats or "Serbian" in the context of Serbia, Serbs or the application of Cyrillic alphabet in this language.

sovereignty of the Croat nation through their undemocratic, monarchical rule. For his emphatic works on the Croatian nation, eventually resulting in rivalry with Strossmayer, Starčević is often referred to in monuments and history books as the *otac domovine/*"father of the homeland." His Serbian contemporary Vuk Karadžić was similarly involved in reforming the Serbian language in a way to make it accessible to all Serbs and refining the Cyrillic alphabet from liturgical into vernacular use. Starčević denied the viability of Karadžić's work, which had been supported by Strossmayer and Gaj, and in 1861 founded with Eugen Kvaternik the *Stranka prava/*"Party of Rights," which advocated strong Croatian national rights. Kvaternik later split with the Party and launched a revolt against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the village of Rakovica in 1871, which was summarily put down and Kvaternik and his co-conspirators executed on the fourth day of the attempted revolution (Tanner 2010, 105). Several monuments near Rakovica and squares and streets across Croatia remember Kvaternik and his uprising (see Chapter 6).

Starčević, however, was noted for his racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Serb views; extreme right-wing supporters of the Party of Rights would eventually form the Ustaša paramilitary movement, discussed below (Trbovich 2008, 136). Starčević also sought to assimilate Serbs as "Orthodox Croats," Slovenes as "Alpine Croats," and Muslims, later termed "Bosniaks" in Yugoslavia, as "flower[s] of the Croatian people" (Macdonald 2002, 87). Macdonald notes,

> *For some Serbian historians, Starčević's programme consisted exclusively of 'denying and exterminating the Serbian people' as a precondition to Croatian self-determination. Again, the idea of denying the existence of cultural, linguistic and historic ties between Serbs and Croats, was presented as the first major step in Serbophobia, a step that led inexorably to genocide* (Macdonald 2002, 86-87).

Stjepan Radić was another contemporary who played a similarly key role in the development of Croatian national identity and opposition to the pan-Slavic notions of Ljudevit Gaj. In his twenties, Radić had been imprisoned multiple times for speaking against the Dual Monarchy and for burning a Hungarian flag upon the visit of Kaiser Franz Joseph to Zagreb in 1895. After traveling and studying in Russia and France, Radić returned to Croatia, founding the *Hrvatska pučka seljačka stranka* (HPSS)/"Croatian Peoples' Peasant Party" in reaction to the Monarchy's limited interest in improving the lives of those ineligible to vote; at the time, only two to three percent of the male

population could participate in elections (Tanner 2010, 107).

The end of Austria-Hungary and the birth (and first death) of Yugoslavia, 1914-1941

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought with it the final deathblow of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which collapsed in January 1918. The war itself, despite the unprecedented human and environmental toll, is evidently of little mnemonic consequence for modern Croatia. Of 614 monuments surveyed in the course of my fieldwork, only five were dedicated to the memories of the First World War. Of these, one incorporated the war with the remembrance of "all the victims of the First and Second World War, the death marches, communist terror, and especially the Croatian defenders of the Homeland War who gave their lives on the altar of the Homeland." The lack of relevance of the First World War to today's mnemonic landscape in Croatia fits the pattern of removing the Yugoslav past since the 1990s, which I discuss in Chapter 6. The end of the war and the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire led to the creation of what would eventually become known as "Yugoslavia" in the form of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS). This incorporated the vast majority of the territory of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Only the territory surrounding the Istrian peninsula and the northern Adriatic coast, the missing puzzle piece of the state that would last in various forms until 1992, belonged to Italy.

The early years of the SHS state were marked by strained negotiations amongst representatives of the constituent peoples over the nature of political rule and the identity of this South Slavic state. Stjepan Radić and his party resisted Croatia's integration into the new kingdom, ruled by the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty, which they viewed as illegitimate rulers over a Croatia that had not willingly acceded to the union (Schoflin 1993; Biondich 2000, 91-119; Brkljačić 2003, 44). When the Kingdom's first parliamentary session was held in December 1920, the renamed Croatian Republican Peasant Party and Starčević's Party of Rights did not take their seats. Subsequent elections saw greater returns for Radić, particularly in Slavonia, but by 1924, Radić was once again imprisoned, this time for alleged conspiracy with Communists after his return from a prolonged visit to the Soviet Union. For a brief term in 1925, the Peasant Party entered government in a coalition with the Serbian People's Radical Party, the largest conservative party in the parliament, and Stjepan Radić served as Minister of Education until his return to the opposition in 1926. A new coalition with the Independent Democratic Party, also a leading Serbian political

party but one with which the Peasants Party had been allied during Habsburg rule, nearly led to the formation of a new parliamentary majority, but government formation proved elusive (Biondich 2000, 207-244). Crisis erupted with Radić's assassination at the hand of Puniša Račić, a Montenegrin member of the People's Radical Party, on 20 June 1928. Radić was shot in the stomach but survived until 8 August 1928, succumbing to his wounds.

The assassination of Stjepan Radić was among the most notable events of the early Yugoslav period that marked the fraught relations between Serbs, who supported a more central state, and Croats in the newly centralised monarchy, many of whom had supported Radić's desire for an autonomous or independent Croatian state (Božić 2010, 204). His death was met with a harsh reaction by Yugoslav King Aleksandar (the state having been renamed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929), who dissolved parliament and established a royal dictatorship, intolerant of national outbursts. Renaming the kingdom to "Yugoslavia" led to the removal of "Croatia" from the political map for the first time in over one-thousand years and the renewed division of Croatia and Dalmatia into *banovine* named after the region's rivers and not its historical political communities (Bellamy 2003, 49-50). Aleksandar's 1931 constitution concentrated executive power in his own hands, using it to nominate half of the upper chamber of parliament. The further centralisation of power in Belgrade fomented tensions with Croats and other constituent peoples of Yugoslavia, and in 1934, the King was assassinated in Marseille by a Bulgarian revolutionary who supported the independence of Macedonia, often perceived as an ethnic kin state of Bulgaria (Nielsen 2009; see also Seton-Watson 1935). Aleksandar was succeeded by his eleven-year-old son Petar II, whose regent, his father's cousin Paul, forged an agreement with the Croatian Peasant Party for greater home-rule for Croatia as an autonomous *banovina*, which incorporated large swaths of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 1939 Cvetković-Maček Agreement gave powers back to the Croatian Sabor to manage the *banovina*'s internal affairs while retaining jurisdiction over national and foreign policy in Belgrade. Intended to placate Croatian demands for autonomy and reduce the ongoing tensions between Croats and the Yugoslav government (and Serbs by proxy), the Agreement, however, had the unintended effect of strengthening the Croatian desire for independence (Biondich 2007; Ramet 2007), fitting the narrative of Croatia's millennial existence as a rightfully independent nation from Tomislav's kingdom of 925 CE onward.

Petar II was the last King of Yugoslavia. The rise of the NSDAP in Germany in the 1930s, Hitler's

seizure of power and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939 spelled the end of peaceful coexistence of the various constituent nations of Yugoslavia. Fascist paramilitaries emerged across Central Europe throughout the late 1920s and into the 1930s, among them the Ustaša – Croatian Revolutionary Movement led by Ante Pavelić. The Ustaše[6] promoted an ethnically pure vision of an independent Croatian nation-state and was premised on an anti-Serb, anti-Semitic and anti-Orthodox worldview. The ethnicisation of religion, the invasion of Yugoslavia by the Third Reich in 1941 and the monarchy's flight into exile in London would drag Croatia into its darkest period yet and irrevocably shift the mnemonic landscape of both Croatia and Serbia and their constituent ethnic groups.

A history of violence: Croatia in the Second World War

The vast majority of the content of Croatia and Serbia's ongoing struggles over the past derives from the Second World War in Yugoslavia. This section highlights those points of memory in the Croatian cultural conscience that underpin the violent uses of memory in the region and how this violence manifested in the course of the Second World War and the Croatian War of Independence/Homeland War from 1991 to 1995.

The Second World War in Yugoslavia began with the Nazi bombardment of Belgrade on 6 April 1941. The turbulence of the monarchy led to the swift capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the Third Reich. Puppet governments were installed in Croatia and Serbia, in the latter controlled by the Wehrmacht and in the former as the *Nezavisna država Hrvatska* (NDH)/"Independent State of Croatia," with Ante Pavelić installed as *poglavnik*, the "chief" and head of state. Pavelić's Ustaša movement underpinned the armed forces of the Axis powers in Yugoslavia and quickly endeavoured to build an ethnically pure Croatian state, as had been the movement's aspiration since its founding in 1929 (Frucht Levy 2009; Korb 2010). The brutality of the Holocaust and the genocide of Roma, Slavs and other "non-Aryans" in the course of the Second World War extended to the NDH, which operated numerous labour and extermination camps in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the most infamous of them all at Jasenovac. By copying and extending the racial policies of the Third Reich, the NDH took aim at the destruction of the

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[6] "Ustaša," a Croatian feminine noun, refers to the Movement in the singular, while "Ustaše/ustaše" refers more widely to the members of the paramilitary group in the plural. The group's name derives from the verb *ustati*, to "rise up," as in an insurgency.

Serb population of Yugoslavia (see Ramet and Listhaug 2011).

The town of Jasenovac is a small settlement at the confluence of the Una and Sava rivers facing Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is also the site of the greatest human tragedies and act of targeted violence directed against ethnic minorities during the course of the Second World War in Yugoslavia. The exact toll of human loss has been perhaps the greatest source of mnemonic disputes between Croatia and Serbia since the 1940s. Croatian estimates tend to fall below 100,000 victims of the NDH regime, the vast majority among them Serbs then equally Jews and Roma, followed by political dissidents of Croat or Muslim (Bosniak) background (see Ciliga 1998). Serbian historians, however, have claimed that over one million individuals were murdered in Jasenovac and its sub-camps (Tomasevich 2001, 725-726). The first president of post-Yugoslav Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, himself a controversial historian, claimed an estimate of only 30,000 to 60,000 victims, including Serbs, Jews and Roma, further stoking the problematic relationship of Serbia and Croatia with their shared tragic past (Kolstø 2011; see Tuđman 1989); a more commonly accepted estimate lies between 77,000 and 99,000 victims, with 83,837 directly named by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM 2020a; 2020b). Those who fell victim to the NDH and the Ustaša were often tortured and murdered in a brutal fashion; among the most notable symbols of the brutality of the Ustaše was the *srbosjek*, the "Serb cutter," a small knife attached to a leather glove typically employed in the harvest of wheat. Slashings and stabbings were common methods used to kill inmates, as were live cremations and mass gassing as was common in the extermination camps of the Third Reich (Dulić 2006; Korb 2010; Levy 2009).

The NDH operated around the ideology of a "Greater Croatia," the creation of an ethnically pure Croat(ian) state, covering Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and most of Serbia, which the Ustaše saw as rightful Croatian land. The Greater Croatia ideology originated in the works of the nineteenth-century writer Pavao Ritter Vitezović. Vitezović followed the Illyrian origin theory of the South Slavs, claiming all Slavs as Croats and delineating the territory of the Croat nation as the vast majority of the Balkan Peninsula and parts of Central Europe farther to the north (Tanner 1997, 50-51). The 1939 Cvetković-Maček Agreement created the Banovina of Croatia, which covered a large portion of the territory the NDH would come to occupy. The NDH would eventually take over more of the land in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia that Vitezović had described as Croatian. By 1943, the NDH had expanded to the immediate suburbs of Belgrade, taking control of the

Gestapo concentration camp in Staro Sajmište, across the Sava River from the heart of the city (Kolstø 2011, 226). Similar fates to those who were brought to Jasenovac befell the Serbs, captured Partisans, Jews and Roma, including women and the elderly, at Staro Sajmište. Serbs in Vukovar, a Croatian Baroque town on the Danube facing the forested Serbian countryside, had issued a resolution in 1939 as a reaction to the Cvetković-Maček Agreement, seeking an exemption from its inclusion in the Banovina of Croatia and decrying the lack of Serb input on the outcomes of the negotiations between the Peasant Party and the Yugoslav government (Regan 2008). Vukovar and many smaller locales in Western (i.e. Croatian) Srijem and Eastern Slavonia had held a Serbian majority or plurality population, which even after the destruction across the region in the 1990s still maintain a significant political and social presence today. A Serbian *banovina* was never established, however, and the Danube *banovina* that comprised much of the territory facing Vukovar was among the first to fall to German, Hungarian and NDH occupation in 1941.

Figure 2.2: Map of Independent State of Croatia territory, 1941-1945
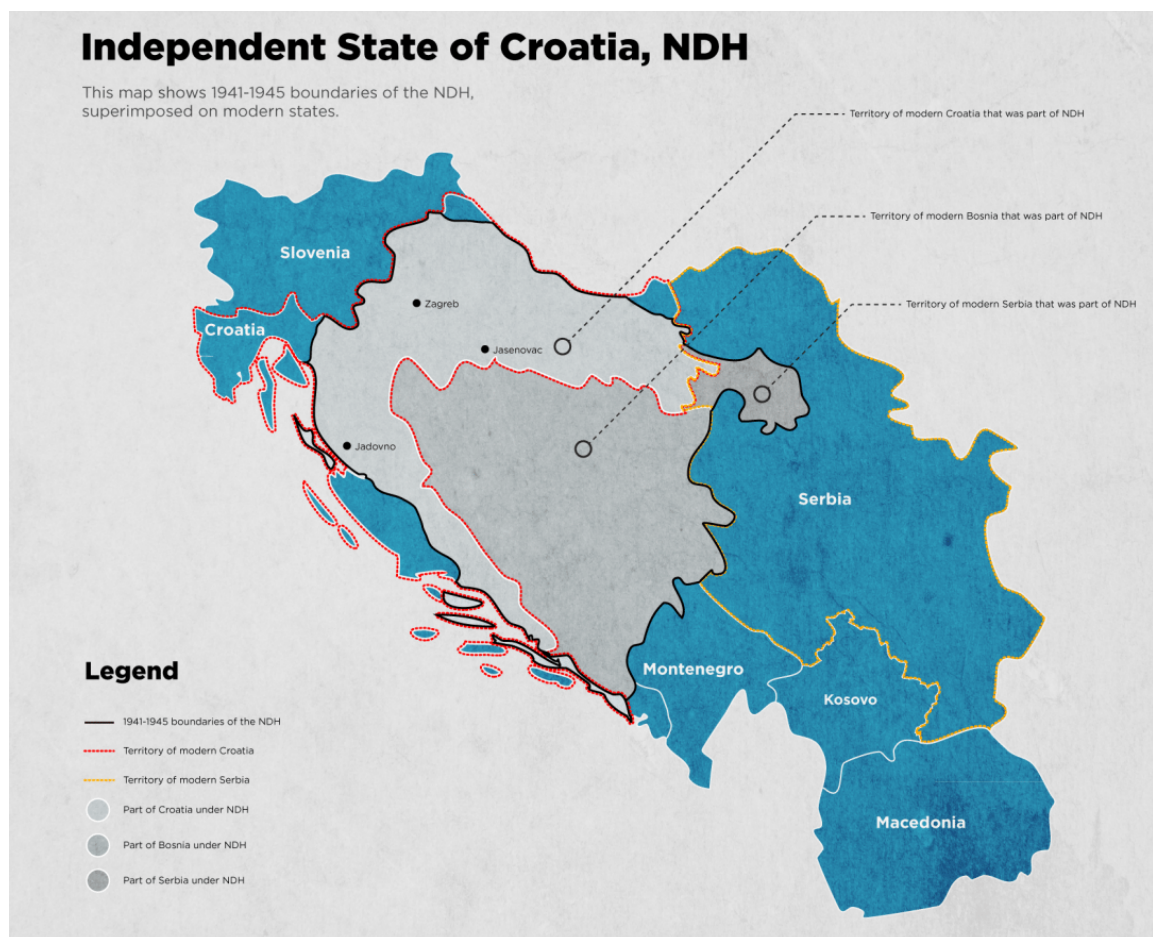
Source: Opačić, Tamara (2018).

The NDH also employed visual symbols from the medieval past and slogans of the "homeland" to maintain the narrative of Croatia's millennial independence, many of which are viewed today as equivalent to the Nazi use of the swastika or chants of "Sieg Heil!" but retain their popularity in far-right, nationalist circles in Croatia and its diasporic communities. Among these, the red-and-white chequerboard coat of arms, the *šahovnica* (from *šah/*"chess"), was incorporated into the NDH flag. The oldest existing *šahovnica* dates to 1495 in Innsbruck, Austria (von Hye 1993), and was used by noble and royal families in Croatia throughout the Habsburg period, the 1939 Banovina of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Croatia during the late twentieth century. The *šahovnica* remains a constituent element of the Croatian coat of arms, now crowned by symbols representing the country's five traditional regions – Croatia proper, Slavonia, Istria, Dalmatia and Dubrovnik. The NDH *šahovnica* differed from the modern use of the pattern by placing a white square in the top-left of the chequerboard, while today the pattern followed red-then-white (see Figure 2.3). This minor detail, however, plays an important role in differentiating fascist from other uses of the *šahovnica*; its revival as part of the original flag of the Republic of Croatia in the early 1990s employed the more problematic white-then-red pattern, further stoking mnemonic tensions with ethnic Serbs in and outside the young (old) country (Pavlaković 2008a; 2008b).

Figure 2.3: Use of the *šahovnica* in Croatian coats of arms by the NDH and Republic of Croatia
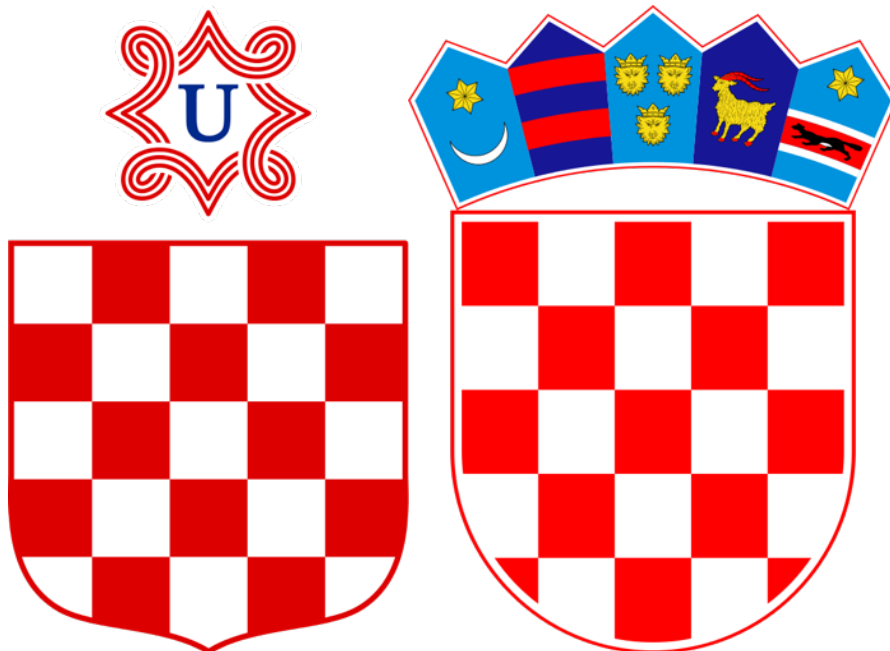
Source, left: Wikimedia Commons user Barryob (2007). Source, right: Wikimedia Commons user Shokatz (2013).

Ustaša symbols were also incorporated into the state coat of arms, signifying the importance of the paramilitary movement to the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia. In the NDH coat of arms, the "U" is surrounded by the Croatian *pleter,* or wattle, an interlace pattern that also dates to the early Croatian Kingdom around the time of Zvonimir in the late eleventh century. A commonly sprayed graffiti tag of the Croatian far-right today also employs the "U" of the Ustaša, with a Christian cross inserted in the middle of the letter.

Figure 2.4: Ustaša graffiti tag: Žažvić

Above: Fascist symbol copied from graffiti sprayed onto communist-era monument in Žažvić (Dalmatia),
20 March 2018.

Ustaše and Croatian nationalists promoted the identity of the NDH as the Croatian homeland with the chant "*Za dom spremni*" – "Ready for the Homeland." The chant was used to intimidate Serbs and other minorities deemed unfit for the Independent State of Croatia, signifying the "Homeland" as Croatian and nothing else. The inherent exclusivity of the NDH's ideal and imagined community (Anderson 1983) also touched on political boundaries; those unwilling to fight for the cause of the Ustaša were murdered.

The Ustaše were not, however, the sole military power in the NDH. The *Domobranstvo/*"Homeland Defence" served as a regular army partially detached from the radical ideology of the Ustaša, which was more ruthless and disorganised in its brutality. Michele Frucht Levy notes, "Ideologically motivated militias, working with local Croats and Muslim recruits, generally carried out the massacres against Serbs. This frequently created tension with the less ideologically motivated Domobranstvo, which sometimes participated in killings but more often than not attempted to restore order after violence had devastated an area" (Levy 2009, 818). By 1944, the *Domobranstvo* would be folded into the Ustaša *Obrana/*"Defence," responsible for the

construction and operation of Croatia's concentration camps, removing the last few internal barriers to unchecked mass violence in the NDH (ibid.). At times, even the German occupation forces signalled that the Ustaša had gone too far in its murderous campaigns, and by 1942, the pace of the Ustaša's genocidal campaign against the Serbs slowed relative to the year prior.

The targeting of Serbs occurred primarily in the former Military Frontier regions, known locally as the *Krajina*, which includes territory in the regions of Western Slavonia, Kordun, Lika and north-eastern Dalmatia, where Serbs had settled from the sixteenth century onward. Despite their long shared history with Croats in the region, the Serbs were treated as the "Other" throughout the war and referred to as "Greek Easterners" to deny their identity and to transform them into enemies (Barić 2011, 176). The Ustaša appealed to the German forces and identity politics by following a Gothic origin theory of the Croats, in disagreement with Vitezović's Illyrian hypothesis, positing the Croats as an Aryan race; within a month of its establishment, the NDH had come to define its citizens as loyal Aryans, and through its denial of the Serbs as a constituent Croatian people prohibited them from the rights and privileges of NDH citizenship (Levy 2009, 809-814). Milovan Žanić, NDH Minister-President of the Legislative Committee, proclaimed the racial purity of the state:

> *This has to be a country of Croats and nobody else, and the method does not exist which we as Ustaša would not use in order to make this country truly Croatian and cleanse it from the Serbs, who have threatened us for centuries and would threaten us at the first opportunity* (Žanić, quoted in Levy 2009, 813).

It was in the context of the genocide of Serbs in Croatia that the term "ethnic cleansing" entered common parlance, from the Croatian *čišćenje terena*, the "cleansing of the terrain" in the name of racial purity. As noted in Chapter 1, this term was also used in the reverse direction during the Croatian War of Independence. Iterations of the term "ethnic cleansing" existed from the early twentieth century, yet it was during the Second World War where global powers sought to achieve extreme racial/national aims through mass atrocities in such scale. The violence of the NDH matched, and sometimes exceeded, the pattern of wider violence committed by the Axis powers.

Resistance and the rise of the Partisans

The violence of the Ustaša instigated wide-spread resistance and insurrection among the Serbs

who had survived the original onslaught of violence in 1941. In a micro-level analysis of the origins of violence in Serb communities along the Bosnian-Croatian border, Max Bergholz (2016) identified those actions and memories that mobilised Serb resistance to Croatian attempts to ethnically cleanse the area. The community of Kulen Vakuf, a small village in north-western Bosnia-Herzegovina, saw the processes of retribution and identity formation intertwine to force perpetuated violence. The micro-analysis of violence, power and memory in the territory of the NDH calls into question grander generalisations, often repeated by Western journalists and transitory scholars like Robert Kaplan (see Kaplan 1993), of "ancient hatreds" that did not, in fact, exist. While tensions amongst Serbs and Croats had occurred throughout their shared history, it was not until the First World War and the formation of the first Yugoslav state that those struggles became prominent. The sheer chaos of NDH brutality also becomes clear in the work Bergholz presents, his text indicating how the initial wave of violence proved a "generative force" that shifted identity away from religion to ethnicity (and accordingly political conviction) and challenged assumptions of authority in the NDH between the fascist authorities in Zagreb and local Ustaša fighters in Kulen Vakuf. This would upend the previous indifference of local populations to matters of nationality in multi-ethnic communities across NDH territory.

The aforementioned intra-ethnic fighting amongst Serbs in the Second World War was the catalyst for the split between Četnik and Partisan support, as the rapid escalation of conflict in 1941 allowed little time for building a united resistance amongst the persecuted minorities. The Četnik movement, formally the Četnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army and later the "Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland"/*Jugoslavenska vojska u otadžbini*, were a Serbian irredentist group aligned with the royal Yugoslav government in exile in London, where King Petar II fled soon after his coup in April 1941. The Četniks were led by Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović, who organised guerrilla brigades to fend off the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia. His troops were motivated primarily by the preservation of the Yugoslav monarchy and operated in tandem but not necessarily in alliance with the Partisans in the early stages of war in the summer of 1941. Over time, however, the mass retributive murder of Serbs by the German occupiers convinced the Četniks to diminish their attacks on Axis soldiers, and by August 1941, the movement shifted allegiances against the Partisans while maintaining its opposition to the Ustaša, as well (see Hoare 2006). This change was also provoked by the adoption of a "Greater Serbian" ideology developed by Stevan Moljević in the early 1940s, the realisation of which necessitated the ethnic cleansing of non-Serb

populations in much the same territory as had been claimed by the proponents of Greater Croatian and Yugoslav ideals. Moljević's ideological predecessor Ilija Garašanin, Serbian Prime Minister from 1861 to 1867, published a similar document referred to as *Načertanije*/"The Draft," which promoted the establishment of a Serbian nation-state following French, Italian and German models (Dragović-Soso 2004, 171-173). Moljević's expanded "Homogenous Serbia" was adopted as the guiding principle of the Četnik movement by mid-1941, by which time Mihailović and his troops began engaging in violent campaigns against ethnic Muslims and Croats, primarily in Bosnia-Herzegovina (and in the Kulen Vakuf region described by Bergholz). This organisation of Četnik – and eventually some Partisan – brigades marked a departure from the original chaos of the initial Serb insurgencies that reacted to violence in the NDH.

The Četniks were opportunistic in their allegiances and, in comparison to the Partisans, much more disorganised in their approach to gaining control over contested territory in Yugoslavia (Jareb 2011; Trew 1998). Throughout the Second World War, Mihailović attempted alliances with the Partisans, which failed by winter of 1941-42; the Allied powers, who dismissed him in favour of the Partisans in 1943; and even the Ustaše, with whom the Četniks collaborated in violence across Bosnia-Herzegovina with the support of the German forces. Massacres occurred primarily in Herzegovina along the Croatian border and in eastern Bosnia, including in the towns of Srebrenica and Foča, which would become major sites of violence in the wars in BiH during the early 1990s (Dulić 2005). The unreliability of the Četniks as allies – taking support from the British and Soviets while failing to deliver on action against the NDH in some cases – ultimately convinced King Petar II's government to legitimise the Partisans as the forces responsible for the liberation of Yugoslavia.

Tito and the Partisans drew many of their recruits from the Serb populations that had been terrorised by the NDH in 1941 and had not joined willingly the Četnik paramilitaries. Ideologically driven by the liberation of the Yugoslav people under the banner of communism and anti-fascism, the Partisans represented the largest and most successful resistance group in Europe during the Second World War, which they framed as the *Narodnooslobodilačka borba* (NOB)/"National (or People's) Liberation Struggle" (Hoare 2002). Breaking from military tradition, the Partisans also drew in large numbers of women – by the end of the war up to two million – into their ranks, who in the years following the war came to be honoured as heroines of

Yugoslavia for both the active fighting and auxiliary (primarily medical) duties they performed (Batinić 2015; Jancar-Webster 1990). In the initial phases of the war, Serbs – and nominally Serbs from Croatia – formed a notable plurality of Partisan forces, but as fighting progressed across the region, this ethnic makeup shifted. That the movement was not defined by ethnic exclusion and genocidal intent against any particular segment of the pre-war Yugoslav population also widened its appeal in Slovenia, BiH, Vojvodina, Montenegro and Macedonia. The organisation of Partisan troops mirrored the federal structure of what Yugoslavia would become after the end of the war, laying aside ethnic boundaries for republican ones. Hoare notes,

> *Serbs in Croatia would fight as Croatian Partisans in the People's Liberation Army of Croatia [... and] in Bosnia-Herzegovina [...] as Bosnian Partisans [...] There would be no Serbian Partisan or Serbian communist leadership or control of ethnic-Serb Partisans or civilians outside Serbia proper, nor of the Yugoslav peoples generally* (Hoare 2011, 205).

The diverse nature of the Partisan resistance allowed it great flexibility to fight on various fronts across Yugoslavia – in Croatia against the Ustaše, in Dalmatia against Italians until 1943 and in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Germans and Četniks, among others (Hoare 2002, 25). Though not strictly aligned with Allied forces until later in the Second World War, support from the British and Soviets provided the Partisans with tactical advantages over their enemies, particularly after the royal government's disavowal of the Četniks in 1944 (Biber 1988). Their defeat was secured by attacks from both the Partisans and the Ustaša toward the end of the war in Europe in 1945. The NDH had also been weakened by the capitulation of the Italians in 1943 and were similarly defeated by the Partisans in 1945. Though forced to flee with their families north toward Austria, a column of soldiers of the *Hrvatski oružane snage/* "Croatian Armed Forces" (HOS) were made by the British to surrender to the Partisans near the village of Bleiburg, near the southern border with Slovenia. On their march back to Yugoslavia, the remnants of the Ustaše forces, along with captured German and Italian soldiers, Slovene, Serb and Montenegrin collaborators, were massacred by the Partisans, their bodies buried in mass graves in forests and coal mines throughout southern and eastern Slovenia (Kolstø 2010, 1158).

The "martyrdom" of Croatian fascism

The Bleiburg repatriations represent another major *lieu de mémoire* in Croatia's twentieth-century

history (Đureinović 2018; Jareb and Omrčanin 1977/78). As with other mass atrocities committed during the Second World War, estimates of the number of victims of the repatriations, known allegorically in Croatia as the *križni put/* "Way of the Cross," range widely. Many estimates claim a total of at least 70,000 military and civilian casualties, with some potentially exaggerated claims of near 250,000 casualties (Kostø 2010). The commemoration of this period was repressed throughout the existence of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), the state established in the aftermath of war, from 1945 to 1992, and as a result of this repression, commemorative events were and continue to be held in Bleiburg annually on 15 May, as well as in other Croatian diasporic communities. Despite the restrictions on nationalist rehearsals of the past, as today, during the Yugoslav period multiple, competing narratives of "Croatianhood" existed, some more closely aligned with socialist principles than fascist; national identity then as it is now was never a homogenous phenomenon. While a crackdown by Austrian authorities on the use of fascist symbols and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented a commemorative mass in Bleiburg in 2020, a controversial ceremony was held in Sarajevo at the central cathedral, met by thousands of counter-protestors who rejected the relativisation of the Ustaša's legacy in their city (Dervišbegović 2020).

The defeat of the NDH and the establishment of Tito's Socialist Federal Republic led to swift action against the perpetrators of mass violence during the Second World War. Draža Mihailović was captured and executed in 1946, while Stevan Moljević, his ideological counterpart, was sentenced to twenty years in prison, where he died in 1959. Ante Pavelić, *poglavnik* of the Independent State of Croatia, was able to flee via Austria and Italy to Argentina, where a failed assassination attempt was made against him in April 1957. Pavelić later was granted asylum in Francoist Spain, where he died in 1959 as a result of the wounds sustained in the attempted assassination. Similar acts of retributive justice occurred in the years immediately following the Second World War. Tito's primary targets were nationalists who fought against the "brotherhood and unity" of the new Yugoslavia, which until 1948 fell in line with the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin (Banac 1988). Initial repression of religion in Yugoslavia also resulted from the experiences of forced conversions and religious-cum-ethnic violence that had been the hallmark of the NDH. Among those convicted of treason against the Yugoslav state was Alojzije Stepinac, a Croatian Catholic priest, later made cardinal in 1952, who played an uncertain but controversial role as Archbishop of Zagreb during Ustaša rule in the Second World War (see

Chapter 6; see also Buchenau 2006; Gitman 2007; Iveković 2002). Stepinac, after whom many major roads and squares across Croatia are named, maintained a close relationship with the rulers of the NDH throughout its existence but at times resisted their more violent policies; however, he never directly denounced the state and was arrested along with the rest of the Catholic leadership of Zagreb on 17 May 1945, two days after the final capitulation of the Ustaša in Bleiburg, but released the following day, only to be arrested again in September 1946 (Goldstein 2001, 157; Tanner 2010, 179-181). After his conviction for high treason and war crimes for his collaboration with the NDH, Stepinac was sentenced to sixteen years in prison, of which he served five before being transferred to his home parish, where he died in 1960.

Tito's Yugoslavia and the Croatian Spring, 1945-1990

The second Yugoslavia presented various dilemmas to the makers of Croatian national identity, many of whom were silenced or had left in exile after the war. Creating a Yugoslav identity that transcended national boundaries required trade-offs, whether forced or negotiated, between regional and republican autonomy and the "brotherhood and unity" of the Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Albanians and other national groups that the country now comprised. Events which signalled the heightened demand for a Croatian identity independent of the socialist "Yugoslav," including the Croatian Spring movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 6. Despite the various projects to unite former combatants, whether through the construction of the *Autoput Bratstvo i Jedinstvo/*"Highway of Brotherhood and Unity" linking the various republics or the massive rail infrastructure joining hinterlands with urban populations, tensions still remained amongst the various ethnic groups as a result of the violence of the Second World War. As in the first Yugoslavia, Croat politicians viewed the SFRJ as a Serb-centric creation bent on suppressing their own identities, putting a stop to Croatia's "millennial dream" of independent statehood. Serbs, on the other hand, viewed Yugoslavia as a protective measure against the resurgence of fascism in Europe (Judah 2008, 137-141). The only independent Croatian state under which they Croatian Serbs had lived, the NDH, was premised on their destruction, so Tito's Yugoslavia was by any cost a more favourable alternative.

The early years of post-war Yugoslavia saw close ties between Tito's government and Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union. In 1948, however, Yugoslavia was dismissed from Cominform,

formally, the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, the key coordinating body of Marxist-Leninist states in Central and Eastern Europe, and the organisation's seat move from Belgrade to Bucharest. This break from Soviet influence was premised on Tito's refusal to accept Moscow as the primary source of communist authority in the whole of Europe and his (ultimately failed) aspirations to incorporate Bulgaria, then more closely allied with Stalin, into Yugoslavia. Tito's cult of personality, already established in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, continued to grow, and the more virulent critics of his embrace of a "third way" – which manifested in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 – were imprisoned.

Tito's Yugoslavia had little tolerance for nationalist sentiments, which challenged the central *bratstvo i jedinstvo/*"Brotherhood and Unity" ideal promoted since the end of the Second World War. Nationalist agitators, and, after 1948, Stalinists, were often imprisoned and served sentences in the labour camps on barren islands in the Adriatic, including the infamous *Goli otok/*"Naked Island," near the Croatian island of Rab (Antić 2006, 180). Nationalism was treated as a form of "chauvinism" (see Allcock 1989), and instances of attempted national uprisings, generally in the form of demands for greater autonomy as in Croatia and Kosovo, were repressed. The resistance to Albanian and Croatian nationalisms was directed heavily by Aleksandar Ranković, seen widely as the third greatest builder of the new Yugoslav state after Tito and economist Edvard Kardelj. Ranković, an ethnic Serb, in his various roles as Minister of the Interior and ultimately as Yugoslavia's first vice-president oversaw the centralisation of power in Belgrade as well as the operations of the secret police, UDBA, in the southern republics and the autonomous region of Kosovo (Zacharias 2001, 145-147). Ranković's mistrust of Albanians stemmed from the still-close relations between Stalin and Enver Hoxha, the Albanian dictator, and wide-spread repression of any expressions of Albanian national identity became the norm under his supervision. In 1966, however, Ranković was dismissed from all positions in the Yugoslav government for overstepping his surveillance boundaries, supposedly even against Tito, and was forced into private life until his death in 1983.

The dismissal of Alkesandar Ranković signalled the beginning of the end of the first phase of Tito's Yugoslavia and its central authority in Belgrade. In Croatia, demands for greater autonomy and the recognition of particular civil and political rights emerged, including the right to celebrate Croatia's own history rather than Yugoslavia's alone. In March 1967, a large group of signatories,

including Croatian authors, linguists and politicians, issued the "Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Standard Language," demanding the separate recognition of Croatian as a language in its own right. This represented a break from the "Serbo-Croatian" standard, despite nearly full mutual intelligibility between what were then seen as Serbian and Croatian dialects. The Declaration sparked wider protests against centralising forces in Yugoslavia, and from it emerged the Croatian Spring movement, known locally as *Masovni pokret (MASPOK)/* "Mass Movement," among the most important events in post-war Yugoslav history (Zubak 2005, 197-199). Despite wide public support for constitutional reforms to allow for greater political and cultural autonomy, the Yugoslav state cracked down on what it saw as yet another "chauvinist" reaction. Though mass arrests in the early 1970s, including that of Franjo Tuđman (ibid., 210), put an end to the movement, the calls for greater autonomy and the decentralisation of Yugoslav administration ultimately were recognised in the revised 1974 federal constitution (ibid, 216).

Aleksandar Ranković died in Dubrovnik on 19 August 1983, just three years after Tito. His funeral in Belgrade, meant to be limited to a small group of family mourners, turned rapidly into a wider protest of nationalists who had supported his policies on preserving Serb identity in Kosovo and the maintenance of central authority over the Yugoslav state in the capital. These policies provided a framework for Slobodan Milošević, in a sense his spiritual successor, to continue the suppression of Kosovar Albanians upon his rise to power in the mid-1980s (Cohen 2002, 98). The reawakening of national identities in Yugoslavia in the years leading up to Tito's demise spelled the dramatic end for his project of "Brotherhood and Unity."

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the (re)birth of Croatia

Despite relative peace from the 1950s through the 1980s, the violent legacy of the Second World War returned in full force with the rise of nationalist leaders (in Croatia, Franjo Tuđman and in Serbia, Slobodan Milošević). The socialist ban on any hint of nationalist irredentism during the mid-twentieth century did not prevent or eradicate all national sentiment, and by century's end, the fear of a new war erupted into outright conflict. On this, Levy writes, "if Tito's goal of a multi-ethnic communist state demanded that Yugoslavs forget the past, Freud taught us the power and cost of memories repressed" (Levy 2009, 817). The manipulation of memories of the Second World War, above all, played a critical role in spreading nationalist myths and mobilising Serbs and Croats toward violence by the late 1980s. After the consolidation of power in Serbia, Kosovo

and Vojvodina, and to an extent in Montenegro, under Milošević and his "anti-bureaucratic revolution" allies, by 1987 much of the media landscape in Serbia had fallen under his control (Božić-Roberson 2005, 400). This consolidation of power was made possible through Milošević's tactical use of the post-Tito rotational presidency; having revoked Kosovo's status as autonomous provinces of Yugoslavia in March 1989 and replaced the heads of Vojvodina and Montenegro with sympathetic "reformer" allies, Milošević quickly gained control of four of the eight possible votes in the collective Presidium (see N. Vladislavljević 2008, 145-178).

Though he framed much of his opposition to the extant political system in Yugoslavia through the lens of centralising the Yugoslav state in reaction to the devolutionary reforms of the 1974 constitution, Milošević's ambitions were marked by provocations in Kosovo in 1987 and 1989 that attracted large crowds of ethnic Serbs. On 28 June 1989, Milošević presided over commemorations in Gazimestan, Kosovo, of the 600th anniversary of the defeat of the medieval Serbian kingdom under Prince Lazar by the Ottomans, led by Sultan Murad I; both Lazar and Murad were killed in the Battle of Kosovo Field, their deaths entering the Serbian cultural conscience through folklore and epic poetry, particularly around the Romantic period (Pavlović and Atanasovski 2016). In his speech, he called for Serbian unity and national reconciliation, which Ana Milošević and Heleen Touquet note "opened the door for legal and symbolic acts aiming to rehabilitate the Četniks – to restore the former privileges and the reputation of the movement, and its members prosecuted or exiled during the communist Yugoslav period" (Milošević and Touquet 2018, 386). In Croatia, too, Serbs reacted to Slobodan Milošević's appeal to uniting the Serb nation and looked to Belgrade for guidance as communist regimes in Europe rapidly crumbled. In early 1990, the *Savez komunista Jugoslavije* (SKJ)/League of Communists of Yugoslavia dissolved under disagreement between Serbian and Slovenian delegates over the centralisation or devolution of political power in the country, and in April 1990, the first free, multi-party elections since 1938 were held in Croatia. The elections were won primarily by the *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (HDZ)/Croatian Democratic Union under Dr. Franjo Tuđman, the aforementioned controversial historian who had spent nine months of a two-year sentence in prison for his participation in the Croatian Spring movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Parliamentary elections in 1990 highlighted the social and political rifts in Croatia that had been muted in the period of communist rule from the end of the Second World War. While the HDZ

won seats in areas predominantly populated by ethnic Croats, citizens in areas with noticeable Serb populations voted for the *Savez komunista Hrvatske* (SKH)/League of Communists of Croatia, the remnant republic-level branch of the SKJ (see Figure 2.5 below). The SKH would eventually dissolve and re-emerge as the pro-European Social Democratic Party in November 1990, shedding much of its former communist, Yugoslav identity (Pickering and Baskin 2008). The Serb Democratic Party (SDS), the party which would ultimately lead the Republika Srpska Krajina during the Homeland War, however, polled rather weakly in areas with a greater Serb population like Lika and Kordun, suggesting that Milošević's attempts to consolidate and play up Serb identity in Croatia had not yet taken effect to the extent to which he might have aspired.

Figure 2.5: Results of 1990 Croatian parliamentary election by party (left) and Serb population of Croatia from 1991 Croatian census (right)
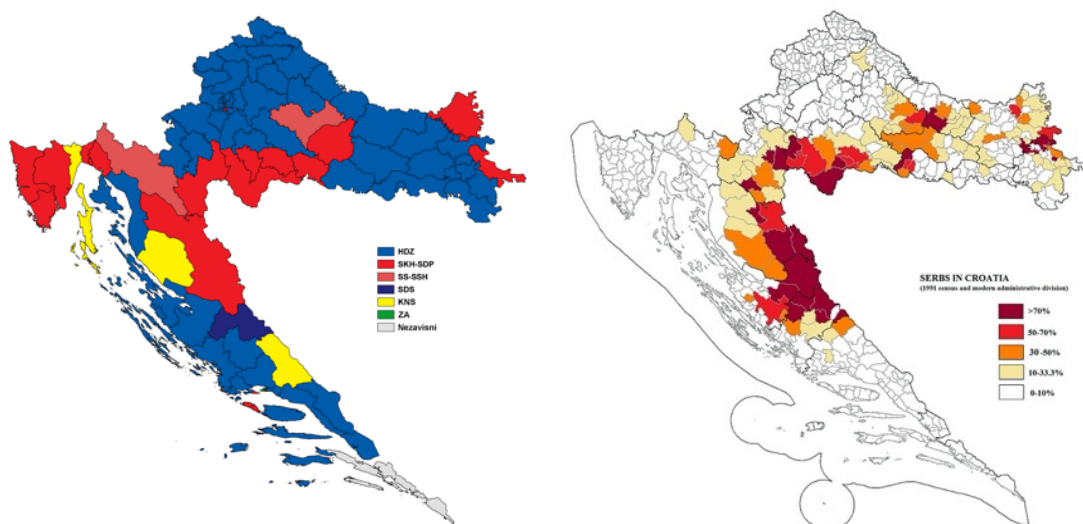
Party key, left: HDZ – Croatian Democratic Union; SKH-SDP – League of Communists of Croatia/Social Democratic Party; SS-SSH – Socialist Alliance/Alliance of Socialists of Croatia; SDS – Serb Democratic Party; KNS – Coalition of People's Accord; ZA – Green Action (Split); Nezavisni - Independent
Source, left: Wikimedia Commons user Tzowu (2014).
Source, right: Wikimedia Commons user MirkoS18 (2013).

Like Milošević, Tuđman sought to centralise power in Croatia not only in the hands of the HDZ but in his own person, building a cult of personality not unlike that of Tito. Ramet states, "What made Tudjman seem larger than life was his self-concept as Father of this country," here borrowing the label often applied to Ante Starčević, "and the way he projected that self-concept. His Tito-like poses before the camera, for which he sometimes donned white uniforms reminiscent of those

worn by Tito, were a part of this" (2010, 259). Tuđman's election to the Croatian presidency in May 1990 and the promulgation of a new constitution that December granted him wide-reaching powers to install party loyalists in important cabinet and other ministerial positions. This meant removing a large number of Serbs from public service and replacing them with ethnic Croats who supported Tuđman's ambitions for an autonomous, if not independent, Croatian state. In Serbia, however, the media under Milošević's control began propaganda campaigns against Tuđman, accusing him of Ustaša sympathies and "scheming with Germany to impose 'a Fourth Reich'" (Engelberg 1991, n.p.). The pronounced, public revival of the violent memories of the Second World War stoked fears amongst the Serb population of Croatia, especially near the Serbian and Bosnian borders in Slavonia, Lika, Banija, Kordun and northern Dalmatia, that a second genocidal campaign by the Croats was imminent. Serbs began to arm themselves, in part through the support of Milošević's Ministry of the Interior and the *Jugoslovenka narodna armija* (JNA)/Yugoslav People's Army, in the case of an attack, while the newly democratic Croatian government sought to take control of JNA assets in Croatia. Before the first round of elections in April 1990, Serbs in the village of Berak in eastern Slavonia installed wooden barricades along the road leading toward Vinkovci and Vukovar to prevent the elections from taking place. That August, Serbs established similar road blocks along major roads joining Dalmatia with northern Croatia in the *Balvan revolucija/*"Log Revolution." This insurrection was supported by Milan Babić and Milan Martić, Croatian Serbs who would establish the breakaway Serbian Autonomous Oblast (SAO) of Kninska Krajina, the forerunner of the Republika Srpska Krajina and the primary target of the Croatian armed forces in the Homeland War. Small-scale skirmishes like the Log Revolution and an armed clash of Croatian police with SAO Krajina paramilitaries at the Plitvice Lakes National Park on 31 March 1991 marked the slow start to the Croatian War of Independence, a nearly five-year conflict that was never formally declared by either the Croatian Sabor or the rump Yugoslav parliament in Belgrade.

As the JNA had seized weapons from the Croatian Territorial Defences (republic-level reserve guards) around the time of the 1990 elections, Croatian defence was predicated on the participation of local police forces under the guise of the Croatian Ministry of the Interior (MUP). The first Croatian police officer to die in the war was Josip Jović, whose convoy had been ambushed by the SAO Krajina forces in the Plitvice Lakes incident of 31 March 1991. In the same skirmish, one Serb fighting for the SAO Krajina was also killed, marking the first Serb fatality in the war.

Shortly thereafter, on 25 June 1991, Croatia unilaterally declared independence from Yugoslavia. While neighbouring Slovenia, which also declared independence that same day, had taken measures to secure its Territorial Defence and seize major border posts – sparking a ten-day war against the JNA that led to the swift recognition of its declaration of independence – Croatia was significantly less prepared for violent conflict. Larger-scale violence began in the summer of 1991 around Pakrac in central Slavonia and the village of Dalj in the east (Tanner 2010, 253). By autumn, the Yugoslav Navy's bombardment of Dubrovnik had begun, with rocket strikes from the Adriatic Sea and nearby strategic sites close to the borders with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. The skirmish at Plitvice Lakes that March had sparked a reaction from Serbia, where while avoiding the proposal for uniting the breakaway SAOs in Krajina, Slavonia and Syrmia (Srijem/Srem), "the parliament offered Krajina 'all necessary help,' with all that that implied in terms of arms and money" (Tanner 2010, 244). The siege of Dubrovnik, which lasted from 1 October 1991 to 31 May 1992, was the first major battle in Croatia to grab international attention, given Dubrovnik's famed reputation as the "pearl of the Adriatic." In the nearly eight months of shelling, almost ninety civilians were killed, including photographer Pavo Urban, whose final images captured a mortar attack on Stradun, the major artery of Dubrovnik's Old Town, seconds before he was killed by shrapnel from the explosion (see Maračić 1998; Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Pavo Urban's final photograph, Dubrovnik, 6 December 1991

Source: Flickr user Andrew Hunter1 (2005).

The bombardment of Dubrovnik marked the first of three major *lieux de mémoire* (borrowing from Nora 1989, as discussed in Chapter 1) of the Homeland War. In November 1991, the city of Vukovar fell to attacks by both the JNA and irregular Serb paramilitaries, including Željko "Arkan" Ražnatović's *Tigrovi/*"Tigers," a squad formally known as the *Srpska dobrovoljačka garda/*"Serb Volunteer Guard."[7] The Battle of Vukovar, which had begun in August 1991, culminated in the capture of the Vukovar hospital and the massacre of 264 civilians and soldiers at the nearby Ovčara farm, among the victims Siniša Glavašević, a local journalist whose reports from the besieged town were disseminated by radio to counterparts in Zagreb and eventually published in the collection *Priče iz Vukovara/*"Voices from Vukovar;" his stories bookend this dissertation. Vukovar, another critical *lieu de mémoire* in both the temporal and spatial meanings of the phrase, marked a circling back to the memories of Second World War atrocities and, until the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995, was the site of the worst massacre on European soil since the 1940s. The once beautiful Baroque town on the Danube was reduced to ash and rubble, the scars of its destruction still lingering in many spaces today. Its role in the mnemonic landscape of contemporary Croatia is central to the state narrative of legitimate defence against "Greater Serbian aggression" (Sabor 2000).

The war in Croatia would see upwards of ten-thousand civilian deaths – both Croat and Serb – and the displacement of a further 700,000 individuals. The Homeland War and the contemporaneous wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina represented a human catastrophe of a proportion unprecedented in post-war Europe as well as a noticeable break from comparably more peaceful transitions from socialist to democratic rule in much of central and eastern Europe. For much of the war in Croatia, territories with large Serb populations, namely in Slavonia, northern Dalmatia, Banija, Lika and Kordun, fell under the control of the Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK), which, as noted above, received financial and military support from Serbia despite Milošević's insistence that Serbia played no role in the conflict. These sites, too, were those where the vast majority of fighting occurred, with limited attacks on military barracks or other important strategic points in the territory held by the new Republic of Croatia and its fledgling army (*Hrvatska vojska* – HV).

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[7] Arkan, as Ražnatović was popularly known, later would play a role in the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and was indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He married the (in)famous turbofolk singer Svetlana "Ceca" Ražnatović in 1995 and was assassinated in Belgrade in January 2000 and buried with military honours.

Zagreb was bombarded twice during the war, first on 7 October 1991 with the Yugoslav Air Force targeting the then-official residence of President Franjo Tuđman, who was in the building at the time of the attack but was left unharmed, and again on 2 and 3 May 1995 by the RSK Army, leading to seven civilian deaths not far from the central Ban Jelačić Square. While violence lessened throughout 1992 with occasional ceasefires, by 1993, the Croatian Army made advances against the RSK, which at its peak controlled nearly one-third of Croatian territory. In Operation Maslenica from late January to early February 1993, the Croatian government regained control of a land route from Dalmatia back into Croatia proper after the earlier destruction of the Maslenica bridge, linking coastal areas around Zadar to the interior.

In 1994, the RSK forces faced increasing pressure from within Croatia and across the Una from the wartime Army of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (ARBiH) and the Croatian Army (HV) that had allied against Republika Srpska (breakaway Bosnian Serb) forces and Serb paramilitaries in BiH by 1993.[8] Through its participation in campaigns near Bihać in north-western BiH and the city of Livno in western Herzegovina, the Croatian Army was able to begin cornering the RSK across the border, preparing the final "liberation" of Croatia in the summer of 1995. Operation *Bljesak/*"Flash" in early May 1995 secured the territory in western Slavonia near Pakrac, where the first larger battles of the Homeland War took place, in retaliation to which the RSK launched its final rocket attacks on Zagreb. On 4 August 1995, after over a year of support from American military contractors as a result of the peace agreement that ended the Croat-Bosniak War, and with direct assistance from the ARBiH, the Croatian Army launched Operation *Oluja/*"Storm." With Knin, the wartime capital of the RSK, surrounded to the south, east and west by the HV and to the north by the Bosnian forces in the Bihać pocket, the remnants of the RSK armed forces swiftly fell. Confident of the success of Storm, President Tuđman travelled to Knin, kissing and hoisting a massive Croatian flag over the fortress that towers over the town centre. Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Šušak declared a successful end to Operation Storm on the evening of 7 August, and the next day, negotiated terms of surrender were signed outside Sisak.

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[8] The Croatian Army and other Croat forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina originally fought against the ARBiH in the 1992-1994 Croat-Bosniak War, with animosities peaking in 1993 with the destruction of Mostar's Stari most (Old Bridge). The Old Bridge, which had stood since its completion by the Ottomans in 1566, is one of the most notable symbols of Bosnia-Herzegovina and would be restored partly from the rubble found in the Neretva River in 2004.

Operation Storm, the final key *lieu de mémoire* in the Croatian narrative of the Homeland War, remains a contentious point in the troubled shared history of Serbs and Croats in Croatia and abroad. While the territorial integrity of Croatia was re-established with the success of the Croatian armed forces, thousands of Serbs fled their homes toward the Republika Srpska or further into Serbia; today, two major settlements outside Belgrade – Busije and Grmovac – remain predominantly populated by those Serbs displaced during Operations Flash and Storm. As with the number of Serb victims of the NDH at Jasenovac, the number of those displaced during the end phases of the Homeland War are still contested between Serbia and Croatia (Milekić 2017). After Storm, too, Serb civilians – often elderly and rural – were murdered by Croatian soldiers, as in the case of Varivode, a small village in the Dalmatian hinterlands, where on 28 September 1995, nine Serbs aged between 60 and 85 were killed. The October 2010 erection of a monument recalling their deaths was marked by controversy, as the first iteration of the monument had been destroyed six months before. While anti-Serb genocidal intent has not been proven in the ICTY and in domestic courts, the central role of Operation Storm in the cultural memory of Croatian Serbs runs parallel to the memories of Jasenovac in the Second World War (Susnjic 2011). The nature of commemorative events around Operation Storm in both Croatia and Serbia will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapters 4 ("Branitelji/Defenders") and Chapter 5 ("Žrtve/Victims").

Operation Storm marked the closing act of the Homeland War, which ended on 12 November 1995 with the signing of the Erdut Agreement (formally the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium). While the defeat of the RSK in Dalmatia and Lika was secured by force, peace was achieved in Slavonia primarily through diplomatic means, with smaller skirmishes marking the sputtering end of the war. The Erdut Agreement foresaw a more gradual re-integration of the territory held by the RSK in Eastern Slavonia, which was placed under United Nations transitional administration until January 1998.

Negotiating post-war Croatian identity/-ies

The restoration of Croatia's territorial integrity completed Franjo Tuđman's vision of independence and the preservation of the state's "millennial dream" of liberation from foreign powers (see Bellamy 2003; Pavasović Trošt 2018). Croatia's recent history of violence, that is, the long and painful history of the twentieth century, highlights the critical points in the past that have played conclusive roles in forming the content of Croatian cultural memory and, simultaneously,

of a mainstream Croatian identity. This identity is formed through contrasts to some group of "Others," be they Hungarian or Habsburg, Serb or Slovene, Yugoslav or European (see Chapter 6); this process of delineation is not dissimilar to other patterns of identity construction in other national groups. The origins of Croatian nationalism indeed lie in opposition to attempts for greater Magyarisation in the Austro-Hungarian period, and the end of the Homeland War signified Croatia's ultimate refusal of its Yugoslav past. Croatia is Christian, because it was not Muslim (Ottoman); Croatia is Catholic, because it is not Orthodox (Serb); Croatia is European, because it is not Balkan (Yugoslav). This awkward positioning as a transitory point "between the Balkans and Europe," however this trope explanation may manifest (see Milekić 2018a; Bartlett 2006), continues to present challenges to the formation of a unitary Croatian identity today, despite the centrality of the Homeland War to the narrative of the modern state.

Franjo Tuđman, Croatia's first president and the spiritual (if self-declared) successor to Ante Starčević as the "father of the homeland," ruled the country until his death on 10 December 1999. The latter years of his presidency were marked by a troubled transition into a fledgling market economy through the privatisation of state assets, often into the hands of his accomplices (see Čengić 1996; Čučković 1993). If not for his death, it is perceived that Tuđman would have been indicted by the ICTY for participation in a "joint criminal enterprise" along similar charges as had been pressed against Slobodan Milošević before his own death in The Hague in 2006 (Maass 1999; Moore 1999; Milekić 2016a). While the economy slowly recovered in the aftermath of war, the political landscape shifted after Tuđman's death, and in the 2000 elections, Stjepan Mesić of the liberal-democratic *Hrvatska narodna stranka* (HNS)/"Croatian People's Party" was chosen as Tuđman's successor. Under Mesić, the presidency was reformed to grant more powers to the office of the prime minister, transforming the role of the president into a more performative head of state within a stronger parliamentary republic. Mesić, though politically distant from the HDZ from which he split in 1994, like Tuđman preserved the vision of "national reconciliation" of Croatia's fascist and partisan pasts and had similarly and controversially challenged the number of Serbs, Jews and Roma murdered at Jasenovac in the Second World War (Czerwiński 2016).

In the ten years of the Mesić presidency, however, various governments shifted between centre-left coalitions from 2000 to 2003 and centre-right, HDZ-led cabinets through 2011, swinging the focus of memory politics between coming to terms with the NDH and Yugoslav pasts,

respectively, more of which will be discussed in Chapters 4 through 6. Above all else, however, the Mesić years were marked by Croatia's negotiations to accede to the European Union, with many elements of the process, most notably the requirement for Croatia to adhere to the demands to hand over various indicted generals to the ICTY, furthering rifts within Croatian society. The most controversial of the ICTY's demands was the arrest of General Ante Gotovina, who had overseen Operation Storm and the final defeat of the Republika Srpska Krajina in the summer of 1995. After his forced retirement at the insistence of Mesić in 2001, Gotovina went into hiding and was ultimately arrested in the Canary Islands in 2005, where he voluntarily surrendered, and was extradited to The Hague. Despite an initial guilty verdict for war crimes and crimes against humanity, among others, Gotovina was ultimately acquitted on appeal in November 2012, which caused the Serbian government to suspend negotiations temporarily with the Tribunal (Flego 2012). Gotovina and Mladen Markač, who had similarly been sentenced for war crimes committed during Storm, received a heroes' welcome in Zagreb upon their return from the Netherlands on a Croatian government jet, with banners by joyful defenders claiming "Gotovina – Hero" or "Croatia's pride" marking the event across the country (Pavelić and Barlovac 2012).

Not only the acquittals of Markač and Gotovina but also the accession of Croatia to the European Union on 1 July 2013 granted Croatia greater leverage against Serbia in the ongoing memory wars between the two post-Yugoslav states. The soured relations between Serbia and Croatia have limited the emergence of a potential reconciliatory narrative of the 1990s and further of their shared Yugoslav experiences. Whereas Slovenian insistence on the settling of territorial disputes with Croatia over the Piran Bay dampened the pace of Croatia's EU accession negotiations, Croatia today (noting, too, that the government is again led by the HDZ) is in a position to see its demands on legal reforms and border disputes along the Danube met as part of Serbia's accession process, which began in 2007. Milošević and Touquet (2018) note, however, that Croatia's leverage in this context allows it greater room to "upload" its memory content to the European memory framework, which Serbia upon eventual accession would be made to "download." This content could include a "final" accepted number of victims of the atrocities in Jasenovac and Srebrenica, the Croatian retelling of the Yugoslav story and the narrative of the Homeland War as one of "legitimate defence against Greater Serbian aggression," following earlier declarations by the Croatian Sabor (see Sabor 2000; 2006). Whether Croatian "wins" its everlasting memory war with Serbia remains to be seen, and the manifestations and repercussions of such a conclusion

would only set off a new round of challenges to a peaceful resolution of the events of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

While mnemonic tensions remain between Serbia and Croatia over the symbolic and physical violence of the past, the current state of affairs looks peaceful when compared to the destruction of the Second World War and the fall of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Though both parties' histories have intertwined for centuries, on the whole it is wider European processes and events from the nineteenth-century onward that have conclusively formed much of the content of Croatia's modern memory landscape. The scars of the past, marked now by monuments, museums and commemorations across Croatia, show the difficulties inherent in the coupling of nationalism and violence that marked much of this period.

This chapter has addressed the key turning points in Croatia's millennial past, from the founding of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia in 925 CE to the origins of Croatian nationalism in nineteenth-century literature and politics and the First and Second World War in the early twentieth century. The legacy of Croatia's Yugoslav past, however, plays a prominent role in determining some of the most important shifts in Croatian identity, particularly as a result of the Croatian Spring movement and the demands for greater cultural and political autonomy, which ultimately manifested in Croatia's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia on 25 June 1991. The outbreak of the Homeland War in that same year has resulted in a wealth of memorial sites and commemorative events, which form the greatest bulk of my data to be analysed in Chapter 4, 5 and 6. These are first and foremost the intial sieges and defeats of Croatian forces of 1991 in Dubrovnik and Vukovar and the ultimate victory over the Republika Srpska Krajina in Knin in August 1995, but other critical events in Croatia's recent past like its accession to the European Union in July 2013 are presented throughout my analysis.

The following chapters will detail more specifically how Croatia today marks its past, who is remembered, who is forgotten, how and why, and what these choices mean for the contemporary self-imagination of a state in the early years of its membership in the European Union. The purpose of this chapter was to lay out those events that emerge again and again in the physical manifestations of memory, that is, the "public face of memory," as I will refer to them throughout

this text, that are inescapable in the context of Croatian history. How I approach, document and analyse these sites and events will be discussed in the following chapter. ★

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This research focused on the links between memory, identity, power and conflict by suggesting how the construction of the post-independence Croatian commemorative narrative exacerbates tensions in spaces formerly heavily populated by ethnic Serbs in Dalmatia and Slavonia.

In the course of my work, I aimed to address the following questions:

- How is memory visualised in public spaces, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?

- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?

- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?

- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?

- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

To answer these questions, my research relied primarily on qualitative methods and visual data; while quantitative strands of research may be suitable for larger-scale studies of memory (Keightley 2010, 65) or to triangulate results of qualitative research (Deacon et al. 1998), the particular historical and social dimensions of this work create a lack of fit for statistical approaches to lived and living memory. The embeddedness of social interactions in memory studies necessitates qualitative methods to explore not only personal and minute instances of behaviour relevant to the process of remembrance (Keightley 2010, 65), but also wider patterns of social behaviour as I analyse here with the use of visual methods. To this end, I employed mixed methods, including informal ethnography, visual methods, and relatively standardised text-based approaches to describing and analysing memory and its many uses in a post-conflict environment like Croatia. The use of Croatia as my key field site presented significant challenges and opportunities in expanding contemporary memory research; continued exposure to active participants in the

commemorative processes taking place in post-independence Croatia also forced a serious reconsideration of existing themes within the Croatian collective conscience and assumptions of Croatia as a transitory space "between Europe and the Balkans" (Bartlett 2006), "between Central Europe and the Balkans" (Vukadinović 2003), or as the "fragile heart of the Balkans" (Engel 2018).

Most notably, this project broke from a more common use of élite interviews found in political research on memory (e.g. Milošević and Touquet 2018) and instead relied on capturing the "public face" of memory, that is, that which is visible and accessible to all within a designated community, here limited by knowledge of the Croatian language. Élite interviews may be a valuable source of information relating to various levels of state or regional policy (Beamer 2002), recent historical shifts in social or mnemonic processes (Hochschild 2009), and determining both formal and informal hierarchies and networks embedded in decision-making processes (Parry 1998). However, I intended with this research to relate to more publicly accessible and socially defining forms of data but over which ownership or decision-making structures may be blurred, undocumented or forgotten, most notably in memorial construction. The temporally and spatially dispersed nature of my data also limits the explanatory capacity of interviews and may provide an unbalanced view of the memorialisation process in Croatia and more widely in the former Yugoslavia.

My data are a collection of documented monuments, museum exhibits, commemorative speeches, newspaper articles and ethnographic observations made during eleven field visits to Croatia between May 2017 and September 2019 (see Appendix 1), which collectively triangulate points of contention in contemporary memory politics across generations, religious and ethnic communities and political affiliations, among other markers of identity. I also explored visual elements of memory (street art, posters, informal monuments, etc.) and how their construction (or destruction) reflects shifts in the content of Croatia's cultural memory over time. The use of publicly accessible information, like monuments, museums or published transcripts, allows for a degree of verifiability, if not replicability, of the objective and descriptive elements of my research. Below, I explore the various considerations taken in developing my methodological approach to studying memory in post-independence Croatia and discuss the manner in which data were collected and analysed as well as the ethics of researching memory in post-conflict spaces.

Data collection

Case selection

The selection of Croatia as my key case study derives from my prior working experience at the Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), from June 2014 to May 2016. During my time as an intern and later as Communications Manager from February 2015, I became aware of major ongoing negotiations of identity and politics centred around commemorative practices, including national holidays and the remembrance or denial of the Srebrenica massacre, defined in accordance with international law as a genocide (*Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić*, IT-98-33-A, 2004). My master's dissertation for the University of Edinburgh (McConnell 2015) focussed on how these mnemonic tensions are reflected in media and politics in BiH, highlighting not only inter-ethnic tensions between Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks but also intra-ethnic struggles for influence between nominally ethnic Bosniak parties in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). Over time, I noticed a strong focus in literature and day-to-day discourse on memory struggles in and between BiH and Serbia, but comparatively little had been written on the tensions between BiH and Croatia beyond matters of identity between Croats in Croatia and the Croat population of Herzegovina. The multi-layered complexities of a comprehensive Bosnian case study, with overlapping elements of religion, ethnicity, international intervention and a convoluted domestic political structure, also limited the feasibility of a holistic approach to post-war memory in the confines of a doctoral thesis. Croatia, by comparison, faced similar challenges to post-war reconstruction and regional reconciliation, but the country's post-war population is significantly more ethnically and religiously homogeneous than that of BiH (Toe 2016), allowing for a faster synthesis of a uniquely Croatian narrative of the recent conflict by the ruling party and, eventually, of the Yugoslav past. Nevertheless, internal divides remain along political and socioeconomic lines amongst ethnic Croats and more widely between Croats and ethnic minorities, among them Serbs, Hungarians, Czechs and others. Croatia's 2013 accession to the European Union (EU) also represents a useful historical turn, around which much of my analysis centres. While I aimed to incorporate as much context from monuments dating from Croatia's Austro-Hungarian past through Yugoslav history and into the present, the years 1991 (start of the Homeland War), 1995 (Operation Storm and the end of the war), 1999 (the death of President Franjo Tuđman) and 2013 (EU accession) are the most important for this research.

The nature of this case study is such that I did not aim to be comprehensive in my documentation of monuments (which are innumerable) or of the entirety of Croatia's commemorative processes but rather that I intended to indicate major and often problematic themes within Croatian cultural memory. This research represents a single-country case study that highlights the idiosyncrasies of the rehearsal of memory in Croatia but may also demonstrate parallels or contrasts with the commemorative practices of other post-Yugoslav, post-communist or post-war societies. Croatia matters in that its often contradictory history and narratives of the past provide useful fodder for an engagement with the literatures of memory, power, identity and violence, grounding the intersection between them in a tangible, real-world setting known to many.

While I did travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia during my field visits, this research takes the shape of a single-country study, as a wider comparative study would not have been best served with the constraints of a doctoral thesis. Culpepper argues, "Comparative politics is fundamentally about using comparison across different units of analysis to delineate the causal mechanisms that explain variation among political, social, and economic outcomes in those units and beyond them" (Culpepper 2005, 2). As my work spans both political and sociological themes, the validity and necessity of a single-country study becomes more apparent as the internal complexities of that case intensify. Particularly case studies of the former Yugoslavia – either as a whole or in individual studies of the constituent republics - provide broad strokes of comparison between what are now six or seven independent states (recalling the question of recognition of Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence from Serbia); this can blur more important distinctions between the Yugoslav successor states and their various idiosyncrasies that a deeper examination of just one of these countries may address. Nonetheless, I intended for this research to speak to the necessity of ongoing comparative research in the region and further in post-conflict and post-socialist societies by providing a unique unit of analysis – here, the "public face of memory" – upon which future investigations may build. From this single-country study, I used extended case method to incorporate more reflexive (autoethnographic) elements of participant-observation, particularly through the attendance of public commemorations in Knin and Vukovar in 2017. The aim of the extended case method is:

> *to locate everyday life in its extralocal and historical context [...] in order to extract*
> *the general from the unique, to move from the 'micro' to the 'macro,' and to connect*

the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory (Burawoy 1998, 4-5).

This description of the extended case method is most fitting for how I conducted my research given my ambition to speak to ongoing tensions in Croatian memory politics through the theoretical lens of historical uses and abuses of the past for future gain. By viewing memory at the micro-level through individual monuments, museum exhibitions or other memorial artworks, I can piece together a more coherent image of the macro-level patterns of memory politics and social remembrance in a given space.

Site selection

During my fieldwork, I documented 614 monuments, memorial placards and other public physical manifestations of memory and visited 27 museums or exhibits on Croatian history or specifically on the Homeland War (1991-1995) (See Appendix 2). Figure 3.1 below traces the various routes I drove across the country in six of my field visits. In the course of these trips, I travelled across all major regions of Croatia, including the Istrian peninsula, which played a comparatively marginal role in the war. For the greatest part of my fieldwork, I concentrated on sites in the breakaway Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK), the internationally unrecognised Serb statelet that covered up to one-third of Croatian territory by 1993. Major research sites included Zagreb, Croatia's capital city, Vukovar, a city on the Danube facing Serbia overrun and destroyed by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and Serb paramilitaries in 1991, Knin, the wartime capital of the RSK, and Dubrovnik, the famed "pearl of the Adriatic" besieged by Serb and Montenegrin forces in the early stages of the war.

Figure 3.1: Fieldwork routes, August 2017 – September 2019

The selection of major memorial sites derives from their relative importance during Croatia's Yugoslav history and its recent experiences in the Homeland War. During preliminary background research, I made note of important monuments or sites of battles during the 1990s, searching region by region for the most relevant sites. In the case of Slavonia, for instance, while Vukovar is the most notable city for the suffering endured in the early stages of the war, I also made sure to incorporate visits to Berak, where the "Log Revolution" began in August 1990. I additionally visited villages like Trpinja, Jagodnjak and Negoslavci that are members of the Joint Council of Municipalities (ZVO, association of municipalities with Serb-majority or –plurality populations), and Pakrac, the largest town in what was the breakaway Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Western Slavonia in 1991. Other factors considered in selecting particular research sites in

Croatia included public access, demographic makeup of the surrounding area, disparities between rural and urban war narratives, the presence of historical figures (i.e. Nikola Tesla, Stjepan Radić, Ante Starčević, Josip Broz Tito, Franjo Tuđman, etc.), and the relative impact of tourism, particularly around Plitvice Lakes National Park and the Croatian littoral. Figure 3.2 below shows the results of this preliminary site search, which contrasts with the final results of my fieldwork in Figure 3.3. Most of the original sites were indeed visited in the course of my fieldwork, and additional stops were made at monuments or in villages between sites planned for my daily itineraries.

Figure 3.2: Initial research site selection results, by region
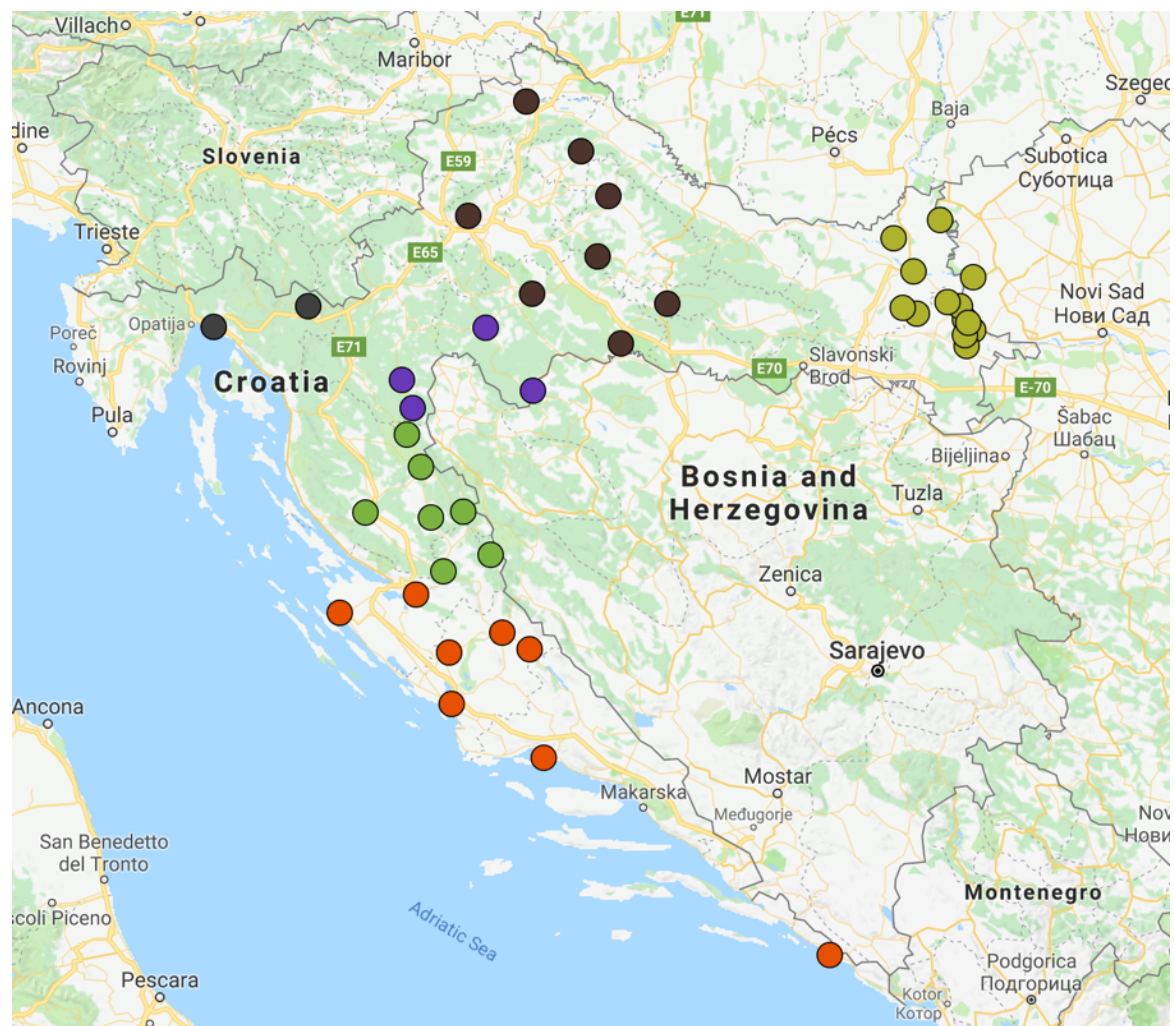
Legend: Gold – Slavonia; Black – Central Croatia and Gorski kotar;
Purple – Kordun; Green – Lika; Red – Dalmatia
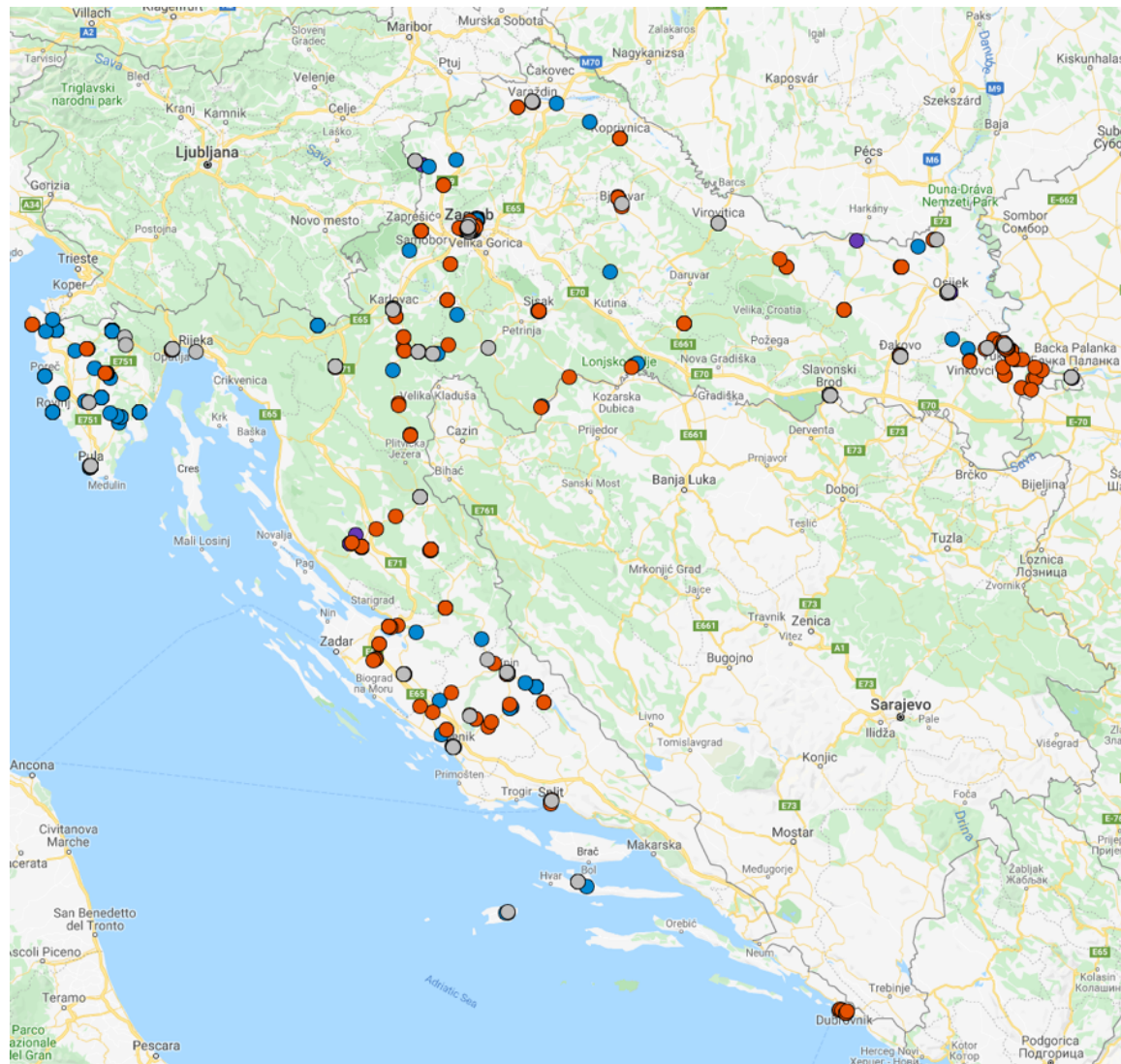
Legend: Purple – Austro-Hungarian Empire (1526 – 1918); Blue – Yugoslavia (1918-1991);
Red – Republic of Croatia (1991 – present); Grey – Other (pre-1526, incl. Greco-Roman memorials or medieval
Kingdom of Croatia)

Visual research methods and capturing the "public face of memory"

Visual sociology involves, in part, the study of methods of communicating culture with media that expands beyond the purely textual (Pauwels 2010, 553). My analysis in this research centres on what I prefer to describe as the "public face of memory," that is, those visual manifestations of memory which are generally accessible to all and are made with a public, rather than a private, audience in mind. The "public face of memory" here differs in its materiality from various theoretical definitions of "public memory" that exist and have been discussed in Chapter 1. As noted above, access to the latter may be limited by knowledge of the Croatian (or Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Serbo-Croatian, Yugoslav, "our," "local," "together" or "polycentric") language

and a general familiarity with local histories. However, other monuments commemorating larger figures like Nikola Tesla or, most notably, Josip Broz Tito extend beyond the realm of Croatian cultural memory, as will be discussed in Chapter 6 ("Hrvatska"). The "public face of memory" expands beyond monuments to include local, regional and national museums, commemorative events – for the purposes of this research the 5 August commemoration in Knin of 1995's Operation Storm and the 18 November commemoration of the 1991 fall of Vukovar – newspapers, cemeteries and street art. The highly visual nature of my data underscores the increasing relevance of visual methods in social research (see Banks and Zeitlyn 2015; Pauwels 2010), while these individual visual representations of memory point toward the wider unit of analysis of this project, Croatia's "public face of memory." Several related studies exist on the reception of visual representations of the nation in modern Croatia (Fernández 2017), 19th- and 21st-century Serbia and Croatia (Malešević 2017c) and 18th-century France (Landes 2001), among others, building from Anderson's conceptualisation of the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) and Hobsbawm's "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). This work continues this discussion, using physical instances of memory rather than entire imagined national groups as conduits for remembering, forgetting, denying or determining historical events and future trajectories.

Following Fernández (2017), I borrow from Victoria Alexander's categorisation of visual approaches to the social sciences, namely:

> 1. *The analysis of **existing visual materials** (e.g. looking at the portrayal of gender or race on television).*
> 2. *The use of visual materials to **generate data** (e.g. showing photos to an individual during an interview or a film to a focus group).*
> 3. ***Creating** visual data to analyse (e.g. filming children on the playground to learn about their social interaction).*
> 4. *Using images to **present results**. [author's emphasis]* (Alexander 2004, 344).

While I had originally aimed to create visual data (Category 3) through video-recording interactions with monuments and participants at commemorative events, ethical considerations detailed below moved me toward building instead a database of monuments, memorial placards and street art using still images. Subsequent field visits to many of these monuments also invalidated the video-based approach I had originally planned, as most monuments were hardly

visited and often located in remote or poorly accessible areas of the countryside. More importantly, I pull from Alexander's fourth category and use the images recorded and visual summaries (i.e. graphs, databases and maps) to present my findings. In the data collection process, I relied only on existing materials (Category 1) rather than generating my own beyond photographing these memorial sites, which only became relevant in the data analysis procedures detailed below. Visual manifestations of cultural memory and wider collective representations of groups, whether ethnic, national or religious, are central to understanding how memory is performed, negotiated and contested across time and space. Here, I justify the use of my chosen data sources, expanding from Jan Assmann's definition of symbolic forms of "collective identity" as "not only words, sentences and texts, but also [...] rituals and dances, patterns and ornaments, costumes and tattoos, food and drink, monuments, images, landscapes, way- and border markers" (J. Assmann 2000, 139).

Monuments

The most important sources of data for my research were to be found amongst the innumerable monuments scattered around Croatia. As noted, I documented 614 monuments, memorial placards or pieces of street art that recall historical events in Croatia or the former Yugoslavia. The monuments I recorded were publicly accessible, that is, no payment was necessary to visit the sites except in the case of museums (which were assessed separately from these monuments), were often found in central public areas or along major roads in and between towns and villages, and were generally visible to passers-by. There were certainly many exceptions to these guidelines, especially in the case of monuments constructed or placards installed during the socialist Yugoslav era (1943 – 1991). Many of these monuments commemorated battles outside major urban areas, but within localised contexts, particularly in smaller villages in Dalmatia and Slavonia, these criteria (central location, high visibility) were generally met. While the number of monuments recorded here does not exhaust the entire reservoir of monuments that may exist in the country – especially given the fluid nature of memory and the construction and destruction of monuments over time – the purpose of this fieldwork was not to achieve quantitative representativeness but to enable a qualitative assessment of major themes that emerge in the memory landscape of post-war Croatia. The manner in which I conducted my fieldwork allows for a high degree of replicability, as long as the materials documented remain intact. Further, the sheer volume of monuments documented allows for a thematic analysis of the contents of Croatian cultural memory, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 through 6.

My work with monuments closely follows that of Vjeran Pavlaković (2008a), Ana Milošević (2017) and Davor Pauković (Kolstø and Pauković 2014), among others, who in their work trace the construction, reconstruction and destruction of controversial monuments and the performance of contested memory at commemorative events in Croatia and more widely in the former Yugoslavia. Pavlaković was the first to introduce me to the world of "monument hunting," as he and colleagues have described the sometimes unglamorous process of finding and documenting monuments and memorial placards across the Balkans, often driving several hundred kilometres per day to "bag a monument," much as Scottish hikers "bag munros" when climbing what in Croatia can only be described as a pleasant hill. Field days generally involved advanced planning around key memory sites identified above or larger urban areas with intermediary stops for museum visits, allowing a generally high degree of flexibility when monuments not originally included in my itineraries were sighted along the road or while I wandered around towns. When visiting urban areas, I sought first the main public square and would then walk in the nearest streets immediately surrounding the square, particularly around churches, city halls or museums, where monuments were more commonly installed. Any monument spotted was photographed on my iPhone, enabling instant geotagging for later mapping. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 show how this pattern emerges in Vukovar, which I visited in July, August and November 2017 and again in March 2018.
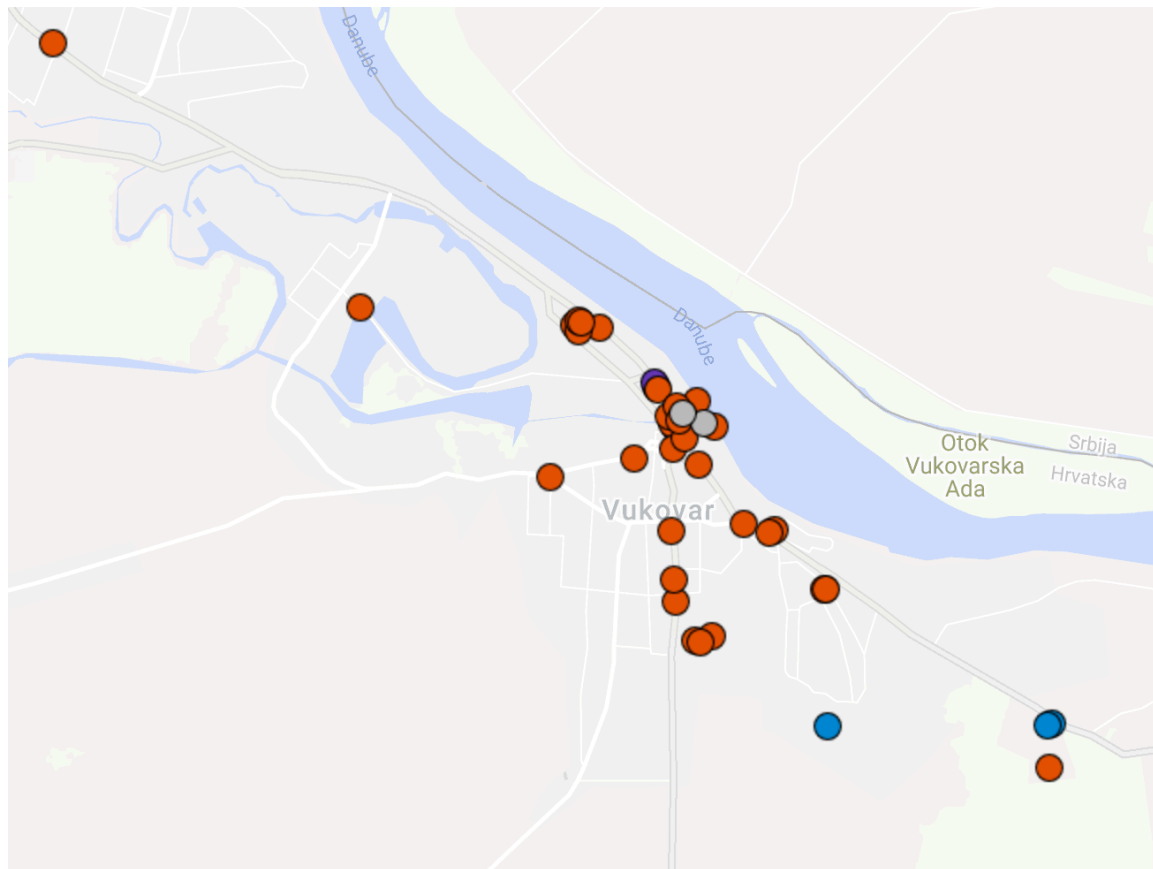
Legend: Purple – Austro-Hungarian Empire (1526 – 1918); Blue – Yugoslavia (1918-1991);
Red – Republic of Croatia (1991 – present); Grey – Other

Of the 46 monuments recorded within the municipal boundaries of the city of Vukovar, 16 were located within a three-minute walk of the main square, Trg Republike Hrvatske, where the seat of the municipal government is based. In larger cities like Zagreb, Split or Osijek, monuments were more scattered around various neighbourhoods and squares, in courtyards or parks, along major arteries and by important buildings. Zagreb, the capital city, featured the greatest pattern of monument dispersal given its sheer geographic and population size relative to most other "large" cities in the region; while the 2011 census noted Zagreb's municipal population as 790,017 inhabitants, Split, the second largest city, only had 178,102 residents, and only Rijeka and Osijek in addition had populations greater than 100,000 (DZS RH 2011a). The 107 monuments I documented in Zagreb were similarly located in more heavily-trafficked commercial zones than in residential areas; Zagreb, like most European cities, however, features less significant zoning divides between living and working spaces than in the United States of America, my country of origin, so my perception may be slightly skewed.
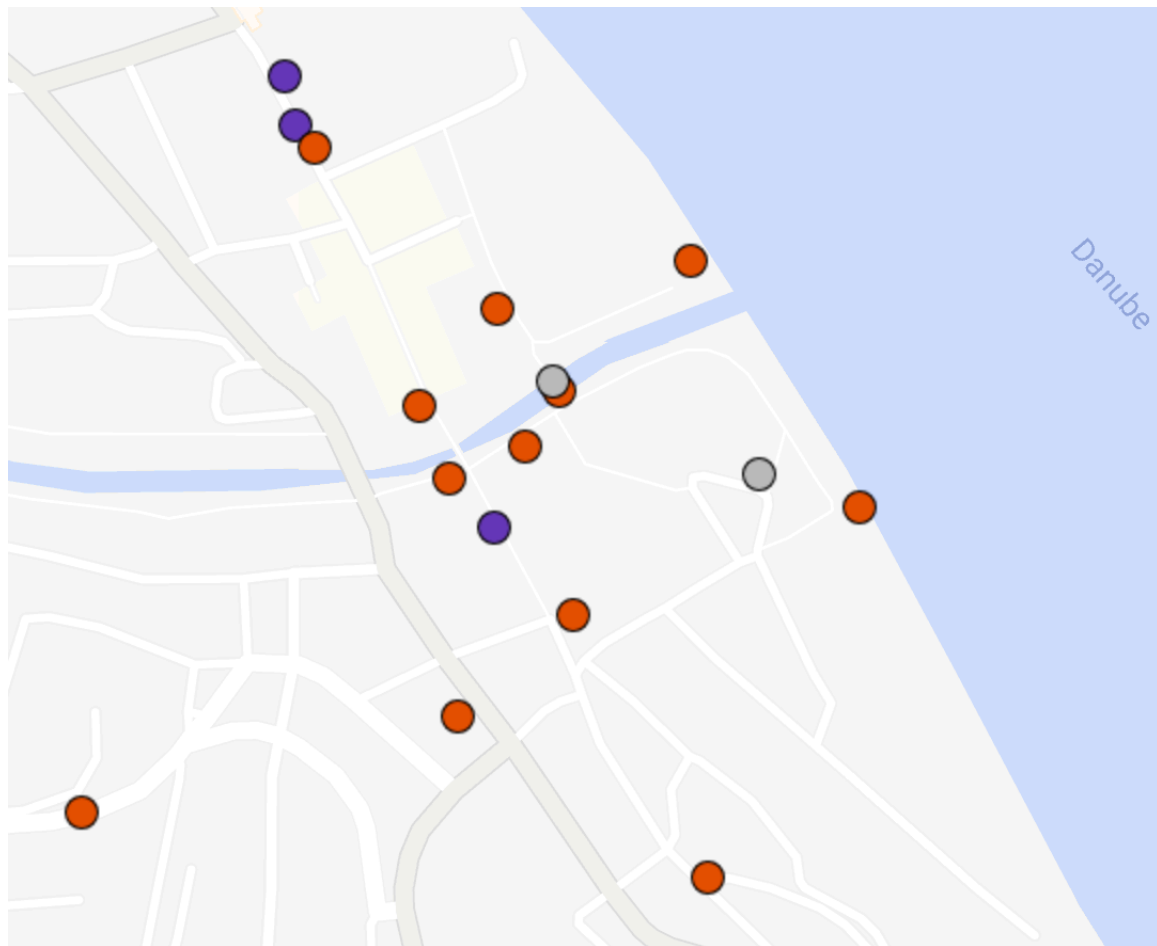
Legend: Purple – Austro-Hungarian Empire (1526 – 1918); Blue – Yugoslavia (1918-1991);
Red – Republic of Croatia (1991 – present); Grey – Other

Museums

Museum visits also provided insight on local variations of the Croatian narrative, with each site presenting local interpretations of, among other periods, the Austro-Hungarian administration of Croatia, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the different Yugoslavias that existed in Croatia and in which Croatia existed from 1918 to 1991, and, most importantly, the Homeland War. In many instances, the narratives presented overlapped, particularly when reference was made to the 1990s, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 to 6. Museums were selected primarily by their relevance to major Croatian *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory, see Nora 1989). Of the 27 museums visited, nine were entirely dedicated to the Homeland War in its entirety or at the time of visit featured large exhibits on events that occurred during the conflict, four more were local museums with partial exhibits or passing references to the war, and the fourteenth was a recreation of the birth house of Croatian President Franjo Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće. Beyond this, I visited two

exhibits dedicated to Nikola Tesla, the famed scientist of Serbian ethnicity born in Smiljan, near Gospić, two to Josip Broz Tito, born in Kumrovec facing the Slovenian border, and the site of the former Jasenovac concentration camp across the river from BiH. The purpose of visiting sites identified with a particular historical figure was to highlight the often conflicting perceptions of the individual across the former Yugoslavia; both Tesla and Tito were born in Croatia but carry great cultural weight in Serbia, too. While I do not discuss in great comparative detail the different approaches to the memory of Tito, for example, in his hometown and the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade, as this is not within the immediate scope of my research, visits to memorial sites outside of Croatia provided helpful background information on framing the presentation of certain individuals in Croatia itself. The remaining museums were either modern art or ethnographic museums with limited relevance to the overall themes of this research but were visited in order to find some elements of topical complementarity (individual items or paintings, temporary exhibitions). Appendix 2 provides the names of the museums and the dates visited.

Given the varied nature of the museums visited, I prioritised discussing those with exhibits dedicated to the Homeland War in my empirical findings. Where possible, I photographed these exhibits and transcribed the text present into a workable word processing document for future key word in context (KWIC) analysis using NVivo, a software for managing and sorting qualitative data. For museums where photography was forbidden or where exhibits were not exhaustive or very detailed, field notes were taken immediately upon leaving. On one instance, I was guided through the Memorial Centre for the Rocket Attacks in Zagreb by a museum worker, who then engaged me in an insightful but politically and morally challenging conversation about the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), Serbs, the Siege of Vukovar and the Jasenovac concentration camp (discussed in Chapter 5); this was easily one of the most memorable moments in my fieldwork, but given the impromptu nature of this conversation, it will be considered as part of my ethnographic observations of commemorative practices discussed below.

Museums function in similar ways as smaller physical monumental structures (columns, statues and plaques) but also feature dynamic social elements (curating temporary exhibitions, rotating staff, ongoing negotiations for funding, determining and communicating core values) that a study solely focusing on monuments would preclude (Fyfe 2011, 32). Their inclusion in my research represents an acknowledgement of the more immediately performative role of museums in the

process of memorialisation. Museums can speak to Assmann and Assmann's definitions of both cultural and collective memory discussed in Chapter 2, as they can reflect the content of either one defined in-group as a primary audience (Croats, Catholics, archaeologists, geologists) or more generally to shared instances of memory that transcend group boundaries (experiences like the Holocaust, living in Yugoslavia, surviving post-Communism, immigrating and emigrating). Museums are also a fertile site for ethnographic observation, both as a researcher and as a participant. How museums are configured determines visitors' behaviour and their interactions with the material presented; touch this, don't touch that, take photos, flash forbidden, enter here, exit only, online tickets, ticket desk, your ticket provides a 5% discount at the museum shop, and so on. The presence or absence of security staff and the behaviour of other visitors, too, affect to a great degree how museums are received (Trondsen 1976). Most importantly, what is highlighted, what is obscured and what is left out are highly political decisions that speak to ongoing tensions in mnemonic debates, and museums – past, present and future – provide yet another insight into these discussions. My field notes from museum visits reflected on some of the feelings I experienced during the visit and the general impression I received given these many factors.

Newspapers and related media

Mass media are yet another tool of communicating cultural memory, and the contexts in which they emerge, including their political and social environments, authorship, ownership structures, framing, biases and audiences, highlight the differential approaches to constructing and remembering the past. Aleida Assmann classifies these media outlets (newspapers, television, film, radio, and so on) as "external storage media" that interpret and communicate across generational boundaries (A. Assmann 1999, 19). In this research, I analyse the visuals and narratives of major Croatian newspapers around key events in the commemorative timeline, namely the commemorative events held annually in Knin and Vukovar on 5 August and 18 November, respectively. Given my limited ability in Croatian (discussed later in this chapter), however, the role of newspapers and mass media is relatively diminished in comparison to that of monuments, museums and commemorations. In order to help contextualise the events in Knin, I asked a friend in Belgrade to purchase five major newspapers in Serbia during the Operation Storm commemoration, which I collected the next week. The manner of presentation in Croatian and Serbian newspapers taken together also provides a useful comparison against Western reporting on the former Yugoslavia, which, as discussed above, can be laden with simplistic tropes that

ignore subtler cultural insights present in the local papers. As well, I purchased four Croatian papers on the morning after Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladić's sentencing to life imprisonment on 22 November 2017, which given the comparatively limited interest in Croatia in the Srebrenica genocide (as Croatia did not participate in those events) may show some differential approach to Serbs as individuals or maintaining a "Serbs as a collective" narrative. On the whole, the newspapers selected have among the highest circulation in Croatia or Serbia and reflect a range of biases where possible (though many are right-of-centre or maintain a very close relationship with the government) and cater to various demographics, namely reflecting age, rural/urban or local/national divides. A list of the newspapers with dates and circulation numbers, which I analyse most directly in Chapter 4, is available in Appendix 3.

In addition to newspapers, I also watched television reporting of the Vukovar commemoration on the afternoon 18 November 2017 from HRT, the state broadcaster, after having visited Vukovar during the morning for ethnographic observations. This decision emerged from the difficulty in accessing the memorial site (the Memorial Cemetery for the Victims of the Homeland War) on the outskirts of Vukovar by road, as the only thoroughfare leading southeast from the city centre was blocked for the five-kilometre memorial march of politicians, defenders, victims' families and other willing participants to the cemetery. Instead, I drove back to Osijek, where I was staying during the memorial weekend, and watched the march, mass and commemorative speeches by local clergy as would most other Croats choosing to observe the day's events without travelling to Vukovar. I recorded in my field notebook the tone, dress and framing of the events while comparing them to the commemoration of Operation Storm I attended with Vjeran Pavlaković in Knin earlier that summer.

The use of television programming as a data source is common in marketing studies and dates from the early years of mass television ownership (see Krugman 1965; Resnik and Stern 1977) but since has expanded to wider fields, including memory studies, whether social, psychological or neurological (see Holdsworth 2011; Kim and Biocca 1997; Newhagen and Reeves 1992; van den Broek et al. 1996). That television is widely accessible either through cable, satellite or Internet also provides stations with significant influence in determining social discourse, as recent studies of Fox News and other conservative or far-right media in the United States have demonstrated (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007; de Zúñiga et al. 2012). In Croatia, as well as in Serbia, state

television played a very critical role in manipulating audiences' imaginations of the Other (here, Serbs or Croats, respectively) (Livingstone 1996), hence the importance of its inclusion as a source in this research, too, however limited in scope.

Commemorative events

The Croatian commemorative calendar is dominated by the events of Operation Storm in 1995, marked annually as a public holiday on 5 August as *Dan pobjede i domovinske zahvalnosti i Dan hrvatskih branitelja/*"Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day and the Day of Croatian Defenders," and the fall of Vukovar in 1991, remembered on 18 November. Beyond these events, the Framing the Nation and Collective Identity in Croatia (FRAMNAT) research project traced other commemorative events from 2013 to 2017 in Srb, Jasenovac, Jazovka, Brezovica and Bleiburg in Austria, which mark events during the Second World War and are of continued relevance in Croatia today. Given the general focus of my research on post-conflict memory and the events of and following the 1990s Homeland War, I chose to attend only the Knin and Vukovar commemorations during longer periods of fieldwork in 2017. The two provide interesting counterpoints in Croatian memory politics, as the Knin celebrations remember the end of the war and Croatia's victory over the RSK and the "liberation" of large swaths of Lika and Dalmatia, while the events in Vukovar mark the tragic destruction of the city in 1991 and the massacre of 264 civilians and soldiers at the Ovčara farm at the hands of Croatian Serbs, Serb paramilitaries and the Yugoslav People's Army. While the mood in Knin is festive and patriotic, the tone in Vukovar is rather mournful and the commemoration led by religious rather than political figures, who are nonetheless in attendance. The differences in tone among these and other commemorations not attended in the course of this research (Bleiburg and Jasenovac, namely) are important in answering my fifth research question, that is, how certain social groups are or are not integrated into the mainstream Croatian narrative.

Attending these events as an outsider without native language abilities (discussed below) posed certain challenges that in some instances were mitigated by the presence of Croatian-speaking colleagues or the ability to review materials on YouTube or other online portals at a later date. The FRAMNAT project also provides their own transcripts of speeches given at the events that can be more accurate than officially published transcripts, which I discussed with Vjeran Pavlaković, FRAMNAT's principal investigator, while driving to Knin on the morning of 5 August. The

purpose of attending these events was to witness "live" memory and to see how the past was recalled and performed, whether through military parades, solemn marches, prayers, chants or songs. Having a general understanding of the language of remembrance sufficed in many instances to have a strong impression of the methods of commemoration and audiences of these memories, and I documented much of the events in photo and video to recall at a later time and to verify what I had witnessed.

Ethnographic observations

Beyond witnessing commemorative events in person and on television, I was interested in recording smaller-scale mnemonic practices in Croatia: how people spoke of the war, of Yugoslavia and of Serbs, if flowers were lain at memorial sites, whether young people had inherited the trauma of their parents or had formed their own opinions independent of family experiences, or, for example, if someone's clothing reflected their political stances, something that again highlights the importance of visual methods in the social sciences. How or why individuals remember (or forget) the past highlights the social nature of memory and communal ties that bind strangers through shared practices and norms, as explained by Maurice Halbwachs in his cornerstone studies of collective memory (see Halbwachs 1925; [1941] 1971). Although individual and hyper-localised patterns of remembrance are constituent of communicative memory, which Aleida Assmann argues represents the "short-term conscience of society" (A. Assmann 2006, 37), the remarks or behaviours expressed by individuals speak to wider patterns of social discourse that sit at the cultural and collective levels.

As mentioned above, I eschewed structured interviews in favour of documenting the "public face of memory," so this definition may extend into the realm of public actions taken by private persons, as the decision to wear a controversial "*Velika Hrvatska*"/"Greater Croatia" or "*Za dom spremni*"/"Ready for the homeland" T-shirt in public is a conscious one made nonetheless by the individual. What we do in the public sphere is generally distinct from our behaviours behind closed doors. Accordingly, I found it appropriate and necessary to incorporate insights from these sorts of ethnographic observations into my research to establish a contextual background abstract from the more concrete mnemonic programming of monuments, museums and newspapers. The amount of time I dedicated to ethnographic observation, whether as a distant observer, sitting in a car or a café, or as a direct participant in Knin and Vukovar, would not qualify this research as

"deep hanging out," to borrow from Clifford Geertz's methodology of participant-observation (Geertz 1998), but my work touches on the very informal nature of observation upon which Geertz's anthropology builds. While I did not actively seek out people or prompt certain actions, I noted instances of behaviour I found part and parcel of the Croatian commemorative experience, including flags and symbols, language, dress, action and reaction.

Data analysis

The primary goal of my data analysis was to identify key themes in contemporary Croatian cultural memory and the web of ideas and beliefs that underpin the mnemonic rituals and symbols of the modern state. To achieve this, I took various approaches to sort, code and interpret the assorted data I had collected during my field visits, including a custom-built database for monuments and use of NVivo for analysing text.

As the largest source of data came from the 614 monuments, memorials and pieces of street art I documented, I spent an appropriately greater amount of time developing a database, coding system and interactive map of monuments, which took approximately seven months to complete. I built my database using Apple's Numbers software, a more user-friendly competitor of Microsoft Excel that enables users to integrate images and links with greater ease. The final version of the database includes columns for the following values of each monument recorded:

A. Given name of the monument (city/municipality and number)

B. Municipality

C. County

D. Original Croatian text

E. English/other text, if present

F. Funder/builder, if known

G. Theme (from own coding)

H. Year of construction

I. Coordinates

J. Historical era commemorated (Austro-Hungarian, Yugoslav, Croatian, Other; see Appendix 4)

K. Victim/defender keywords (from own observations, not post-analysis)

L. Local/national (nature of person, place or event commemorated)

M. Notes

N. Photo

O. Date of visit

P. Who is being commemorated?

Q. Remembering which historical era (from own coding)

R. Constructed during which historical era (from own coding)

The first few rounds of edits left behind many blank spaces in the database where targeted information was unavailable or not directly noted at the memorial site. In later versions, I added web links to various news articles or other reports about the monuments visited, which helped to clarify or corroborate unclear information or add valuable historical context to the sites that will complement any analyses of individual monuments in subsequent chapters. Further, the database serves as a useful tool for comparison and clustering as well as thematic and chronological organisation. The coding system I developed emerged primarily from key themes I noticed in initial superficial overviews of the database and grew into a four-level analysis of the individual monuments recorded. Primary sorting determined whether a person, place, thing or abstract concept was remembered, followed by more specific themes, i.e. war, arts and science, religion, politics or other. Sub-strata coding beyond this second level identified, for example, which war was being commemorated, and if in case of a war, who (soldiers, victims, etc.) was being remembered. A parallel coding system was used to identify historical eras that the monuments recalled and during which period they were erected, stretching from ancient (Greco-Roman) times through the various Yugoslavias into the modern Croatian state and EU member. The coding legend is included in Appendix 4.

In keeping with the visual elements of this project, my analysis included the creation of an interactive map of the monuments and art identified in the database, using Google Maps. The various layers of the map match the historical eras being commemorated identified in column J of the database; these are simplified into four categories for ease of visual summary. A second iteration of the map included categorisation by type of memorial (monument, memorial plaques, graffiti/street art, and a separate layer for busts of President Franjo Tuđman), but this proved less effective in terms of analysis than the former. A temporally-sorted map showed more clearly how

and where which memories of Croatia's various pasts were preserved or forgotten, which was particularly noticeable when observing the destruction of socialist monuments in areas like Dalmatia and Lika where the Homeland War was fought most severely. This work pairs neatly with that of Donald Niebyl, whose "Spomenik Database" has become a growing resource on post-Second World War monuments in the former Yugoslavia; Niebyl – who has no prior family or educational background in the region – became interested in the Yugoslav-era "spomenik" building frenzy from the 1960s until the country's demise and has built a user-friendly website that traces the history and ongoing debates over some ninety large-scale monuments from Slovenia to Macedonia (Niebyl 2016). In my work, I borrow from Niebyl's approach to contextualising individual monuments in Croatia and documenting plaques, engravings and graffiti or other textual elements of the monument, and I have often relied on his database for guidance in planning daily itineraries for my fieldwork. The analytical and descriptive patterns established in the Spomenik Database provide useful frameworks for expanding the work of memory scholars and monument hunters in the region and further afield.

Beyond what I gathered from visiting Croatian monuments, the data collected in museums, newspapers and other relevant sources were treated on similar visual and textual levels, as their content and the visual framing of this content are of equal relevance in the study of contentious memories. For all museum exhibits, the most relevant news articles and transcripts from commemorative speeches, I aimed to put this data into a workable text format using Microsoft Word in order to facilitate the identification of key themes in the Croatian cultural memory. Doing so required the use of NVivo's key-word-in-context function, which within these large text corpora immediately identified variations of the words *Hrvatska/*"Croatia" and *branitelj/*"defender" or *odbrana/*"defence" as the most commonly used words in all monuments and commemorative speeches, followed by *domovina/*"homeland," which I incorporate into the "Croatia" narrative for the purpose of my analysis. *Žrtva/*"victim" trailed significantly, but the lack of a thorough victimhood narrative signalled such an important mnemopolitical decision that I dedicate an entire chapter of this dissertation to this phenomenon.[9] KWIC searches (as explored in Wood 1984;

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[9] The case structure of the Croatian language results in up to fourteen different declensions of a single noun (singular/plural across seven cases), but many of these declensions overlap. For the purpose of these KWIC searches, I simplified search terms to include only the unchangeable roots of each noun: "hrvat*," "*bran*," "domovin*," "žrt*." Any words with similar stems that did not refer to the intended term were removed from search results.

Garett 2006) also allowed me beyond identifying frequently-used words and phrases to situate these in the wider contexts of the speeches or monuments from which they emerged, which added a deeper sociological dimension to this research when combined with my ethnographic observations or relevant historical and political data.

Alternatives and limitations

As my research involved dealing with the past through the contested lens of cultural memory, I aimed to ensure that all those memories in their various forms are at the very least generally publicly accessible. Informal conversation with attendees of the commemorative events in Knin and Vukovar as well as day-to-day discussions with museum staff, friends or colleagues provided very intriguing insights on individuals' perceptions of the Croatian War of Independence and of contemporary relations between Croatia and Serbia. This information, however, does not address directly my research questions that focus on the social, collective remembrance practices established around the memories of the Homeland War and the much longer process of creating Croatian identity, and given the lack of a structured interview approach in this research, I chose to incorporate the information provided through these interactions as contextual background rather than presenting it as a core component of my data. Mihelj (2013) questions the appropriateness of formal interviews for gauging public over vernacular (or communicative) memories. She notes that whilst "qualitative interviewing was seen as a research resource able to elicit accounts that eschew researcher's [sic] expectations and reveal authentic emotions and attitudes," data gleaned from interviews "cannot be treated as representative of social interaction" (Mihelj 2013, 62). The primary difficulty, therefore, lies in the inability of the researcher to attribute a personal memory to a function of more widely shared, social memories of a past event, as someone's upbringing and own socialisation will differ significantly from informant to informant, even where family members or immediate neighbours are involved.

Similarly, Bryman warns against pushing informants too far to retrieve memories from farther back in their timelines lest these memories be "inaccurate" (Bryman 2008, 243), to oversimplify here. As a researcher, I did not want to put myself into a position to determine whether someone's personal memories of a particularly traumatic event like war, forced removal or the loss of a loved one was "accurate" or not. Therefore, I chose to analyse only those forms of memory that involve some social or political component, such as publication or commemoration. Potential future

research, however, could more directly address this gap between public and individual memories and to what degree this gap contributes to, for example, memory abuse or reconciliation processes in post-conflict settings.

Further, I considered alternative case studies, such as post-war developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Serbia, but, as noted above, these have been addressed to a much greater degree than the problems I chose to observe in Croatia. Serbia has often been accused of being the greatest contributor or the instigator of most of the violence in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, and while the role of the Milošević regime in fomenting hostilities in the region is unquestionable and evinced by the wide-reaching archives of the ICTY, the Croatian state under Franjo Tuđman certainly contributed to the violence, as well. As Tuđman died before an indictment was issued from the tribunal in The Hague, the degree of criminal responsibility of his government has not been questioned as rigorously as has that of Serbia or the breakaway statelets of the Republika Srpska (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and the Republika Srpska Krajina (central and western Croatia).[10]

Nonetheless, my research faced several shortcomings, most notably in the risks of translation from Croatian into English and the generalisability of this research into wider post-conflict settings, within or outside of the former Yugoslavia. This research built heavily on interpreting visual and material objects, which adds the burden of potentially differing interpretations of the same memorial space between authors, yet acknowledging these biases is an inherent part of data analysis.

Translation and the post-Yugoslav language(s)

I estimate my Croatian language skills at B1-B2 ("independent user") on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), with my reading and speaking skills somewhat stronger than my writing or listening. As a non-native, intermediate-level Croatian speaker,

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[10] Franjo Tuđman died on 10 December 1999 in Zagreb. At the time of his death, the ICTY issued an indictment for Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, the first in international criminal law of a sitting head of state. Milošević died on 11 March 2006 in The Hague awaiting a verdict in (IT-02-54), "Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia." Before Tuđman's death, no Croatian government officials had been indicted by the ICTY, but in the early 2000s, several indictments were handed down for cases related to Operation Medak Pocket (1993) and Operation Storm (1995). Other trials involved Bosnian Croat generals and political figures for war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.

conducting fieldwork in Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia posed certain challenges that more fluent speakers of the local language may not face. While many residents of Zagreb or coastal towns do speak sufficient English, or in some cases amongst older populations, German, which I also speak at a native level, much of my research took me to smaller locales far away from the more frequented tourist areas of Croatia where neither language is as frequently understood. Having lived for fifteen months in BiH did prepare me, thankfully, for a great number of standard conversational situations in which I found myself, but more important for my region of study are the minor differences between what are now recognised as separate but mutually intelligible languages. Translation between the various post-Yugoslav languages and English was often completed through Google Translate and corroborated using the *Hrvatski jezični portal/*Croatian Language Portal, an online dictionary providing declensions and conjugations of nouns and verbs where needed. While Google Translate does not provide authoritative translations from many Slavic languages into English (even switching between the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian options will provide different translations of the same text), I was confident enough with my own language skills to recognise where a false translation, which often arose in cases of negation, was provided. In rare instances, I asked for secondary translations or clarifications from friends from the region willing to assist.

The more I travelled to Croatia, the more I noticed my vocabulary shift away from words more commonly used in Bosnia (for bread, *kruh* in Croatia vs. *hl(j)eb* in Bosnia and Serbia; *povijest* rather than *istorija* for history; *zračna luka* vs. *aerodrom* or *aeroport* for airport). In part, this is due to the stigma associated with the Bosnian and Serbian languages in Croatia as languages of refugees and "enemies;" when I lived in Sarajevo, one documentary I watched explained how child refugees were forced to leave shops when asking for *hljeb* or *paradajz* instead of *rajčice* (tomatoes). While I was aware of minor linguistic issues like this, that I do not speak Croatian fluently did limit some of my ability to make more thorough ethnographic observations; for example, a colleague in Zagreb explained how Serbs and Croats in Vukovar will frequent separate cafés and bars, living by one another but not together, something a purely visual observation would overlook. Had I more time or funding, I would have planned several months of continued residence in Croatia to learn the language more thoroughly to mitigate issues of translation and to be able to participate more actively in the places and events I was observing. As this research is driven by visual and

documentary evidence, however, these limitations did not confine my work to the degree it may were this project more strictly anthropological in nature.

How one names the language(s) spoken in the region also serves as a marker of ethnic and/or political identities, adding not only to the complications of cross-cultural research but also providing useful insight into the day-to-day dynamics of identity in Croatia. For example, I noticed in Bosnia many of my friends or colleagues referring to the language as "*naški*," "ours," rather than strictly "*bosanski*," "Bosnian" or Croatian or Serbian, despite markers – greetings, colloquialisms or grammar – that might indicate which of the three "new" languages were being spoken. In Croatia, this "*naški*" nomenclature was less popular, and given the more homogeneous ethnic make-up of the country, "*hrvatski*," "Croatian," was more common. Speaking "Serbian" in Croatia, whether unintentionally by forgetting the –*ije* sounds in words like "milk" (*mlijeko* in Croatia, *mleko* in Serbia) or "Germany" (*Njemačka* in Croatia, *Nemačka* in Serbia) or using a *da/*that construction with modal auxiliaries ("I want *that* I go" rather than "I want *to* go"), was sometimes met with suspicion but for the most part ignored. Nonetheless, the use of the Serbian language in Croatia by state or local authorities has been challenged in the near past, as explained in Chapters 2 and 5. The Croatian language has been constructed through the revival or creation of words with ties to proto-Slavic roots in a concerted effort to differentiate it from the Serbian/Bosnian/Montenegrin languages, as Snježana Kordić notes in her analysis of the ties between language and national identity in the post-Yugoslav space (Kordić 2010). As an outsider, I made a point to avoid contentious linguistic debates while on fieldwork, generally referring to the language spoken as "Croatian" while in Croatia and as "Serbian" in the few weeks I spent in Belgrade outside of my research.

However, as noted above, translating across languages and cultures does carry the risk of misinterpreting coded language that only makes sense in the context of that particular mnemonic culture. The Croatian language, like English, has various terms relating to memory that in many cases are interchangeable when abstracted from nuances of direction (thought toward, recalling from) and number (memory in the collective, a memory): *uspomena, spomenik, spomen, komemoracija, sjećanje, pamćenje, memorija*, like *memento, monument, remembrance, commemoration, reminiscence, recollection, memory*. Incorporating German terms from the memory studies literature also complicated this picture: *Speicher, Denkmal, Erinnerung,*

Gedenken, Andenken, Gedächtnis. The biggest risk in employing all these terms is in conflating their specific meanings and applications in describing memorial practices, but in this research I reduce this list primarily to rather fixed terms like *memory* (the analytical concept), *commemoration* (an event), *memorial* (an object) and *remembrance* (a process).

Generalisability of findings

Generalisability of research findings also represents a wider problem amongst much qualitative research. While the highly theoretical nature of this allows me some comparative generalisability among post-conflict settings, as stated above, the aim of this research is to explore in greater depth the processes of commemoration (or forgetting) in Croatia and its immediate vicinity. Each (post-)conflict situation is certainly empirically different, but many of the mnemonic tensions that arise from these conflicts do fit a wider model of cultural memory, and hopefully, therefore, of memory abuse in various national contexts. My observations on power and violence also advance the study of the theoretical links between memory and identity that transcend national boundaries.

The content of cultural memory is never definite and never exclusive to one particular culture; some may claim for themselves a history shared with other social groups (key Partisan victories in the former Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union during the Second World War, for example). It is observing the pattern of remembrance and the potential for abuse within the commemorative framework, however, that motivates this research. Here, I test the limits and suggest the utility of Jan and Aleida Assmann's definitions of communicative, cultural and collective memory, as described in Chapter 1, in post-conflict settings. This approach speaks to Yin's definition of "analytical generalisation," whereby I compare the results of one empirical case study (Croatia) to wider extant theory. Yin states that the purpose of case studies is "to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)" by comparing one case against a given population (Yin 2009, 15). Similar work on shared memorial practices in the former Yugoslavia, or more widely in post-conflict environments, has been completed by Jelena Đureinović in Serbia (Đureinović 2018), Anida Sokol (Sokol 2014) and Max Bergholz in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bergholz 2010; 2016) and Jelena Subotić on the Holocaust legacy in Eastern Europe (Subotić 2019).

Further, I aim to expand the use of visual data and visual methods in memory studies and more widely in sociological and political research, as the study of the visual entails examinations of the construction, presentation and reception of the image (here, monuments, memorial placards, museum exhibitions and so on) across various social groups (Freedberg 1989; Robins 1996). While a document-based approach would support some of the main conclusions I present, the added narrative weight of visual data provides analytical depth that a study of memory without the study of visual representations of memory would certainly overlook. The added complexities and "thickness" that emerge through visual research are, if anything, welcome. Flyvbjerg notes,

> *To the case-study researcher [...] a particularly 'thick' and hard-to-summarize narrative is not a problem. [...] The dense case study [...] is more useful for the practitioner and more interesting for social theory than either factual 'findings' or the high-level generalizations of theory* (Flyvbjerg 2006, 237-238).

Nonetheless, my research strives for some degree of generalisability in speaking to the theoretical implications of the intersections between power, memory, identity and violence, particularly in as nascent a field as memory studies, where a balance has yet to be struck between the general (with infinite typologies of memory) and the particular (with infinite, disparate case studies). The visual nature of this work additionally heightens the importance of research undertaken in living, public environments like commemorations and museums, which bridge a gap between the academic world and the everyday lives of memorial participants.

Reflexivity and positionality

Conducting research in an environment in which one was not raised creates various challenges, as the researcher is generally considered an outsider to the contexts examined in the course of his or her own work (Becker 1963). While interviews involving definite power negotiations were not a component of this research, it was useful all the while to consider arguments over who can study whom and how (see Chavez 2008; Merriam et al. 2001). This phenomenon was particularly pronounced in my work in Croatia, first as a non-native speaker of the local language, second as someone with no familial ties to the region and third as a Westerner and American with an upper middle-class background. Overcoming these limitations required developing trust and recognition as a valid researcher with no hidden agenda, and whenever asked about my work, I was as transparent as necessary within the context of the individual, informal conversation, neither

disclosing information to which I had been privately entrusted nor taking sides on any particular debate to which I as a non-Croatian was not fully privy or to which I did not have a well-informed opinion (local electoral politics, Croatia's accession to the EU, the Yugoslav past, etc.). An open ear proved to be the most useful tool in collective background ethnographic notes with which to contextualise the data more systematically gathered for this research.

Having worked in Sarajevo immediately prior to the start of this research, I was aware of sensitive or taboo topics in the former Yugoslavia and sought to inform myself of the various approaches to these debates. As an American citizen, had I not already lived extensively in Europe, and particularly in BiH, I would have been at an information disadvantage, as little is known or discussed about European history; during my high school education, if European history was taught, it focused exclusively on Western European or Russian histories, ignoring the rich and complicated experiences of South-eastern Europe. Had I entered this research without the experiences I gathered in fifteen months of residence in BiH (and a further two years between Germany and Scotland), my approach may have remained ignorant toward important but commonly-overlooked phenomena, like the minor linguistic differences between Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian, the layered histories of actors in the Second World War in Yugoslavia or the regional differences in memory in Croatia, which often has been boiled down lazily to "ancient hatreds" in Western writing. However, my language skills, while sufficient to conduct the vast majority of my fieldwork only occasionally relying on online dictionaries or translation sources, still precluded me from enjoying a more thorough understanding of the cultural idiosyncrasies that inform studies of social memory that, as discussed above, a native speaker may have noted. In some instances, nonetheless, I felt more "insider" than "outsider," and certainly more of an "insider" than many other North American and Western European scholars I have encountered in Sarajevo, Zagreb or Belgrade, whose fieldwork was concentrated in short, one-off bursts rather than a prolonged study of the region. This meant that I could more aptly navigate the pool of data I had amassed without the reliance on interpreters to guide me through the entire research process, allowing me, as well, to gain greater control over access to and interpretation of my own data.

Other elements of my identity (gender, sexuality, political leanings, etc.) did come into play from time to time, particularly with regards toward the gender imbalance in Croatia's commemorative process and the sometimes toxic masculine presence in the visuals of war and remembrance. I

found as someone more sensitive toward matters of gender and sexual inequalities the lack of a feminine narrative of war outside the realm of memoir writing – for example, in the works of Slavenka Drakulić (1993; 1996; 1999; 2004 [2015]) and Dubravka Ugrešić (1994; 1998; 2005) – jarring, and have chosen to investigate this further throughout this dissertation, most notably in Chapter 4 ("Branitelji/Defenders"). As a pacifist, too, I am particularly critical of the patriotic narrative of war that dominates the Croatian (and other) commemorative process, but as a non-participant in the post-war creation of Croatia's new narratives, I strive for a greater sense of objectivity in my descriptions and analysis of the histories I examined here.

Finally, I conducted this research under full financial independence from external funding, public or private, which allowed a great degree of flexibility to explore mnemonic practices more critically than other funded projects may provide. Some considerations were made to mitigate excess costs, namely avoiding a prolonged residence in Croatia and instead choosing to make periodic, repeat visits throughout the year. However, my self-funding allowed me to visit more parts of Croatia more frequently than perhaps many Croatians themselves would have. My financial status and class background certainly altered the outcomes of this research, but reflecting on this and my independence from external funding obligations allowed me to interact with people of other class backgrounds, from the political élite to museum staff and human rights activists, enriching the depth and breadth of my analysis of social remembering.

Ethical considerations
This research conformed to Level 1 of ethical scrutiny of the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh and posed little to no risk to any informants, whether formal or informal, or me. Names of those with whom I conversed informally have been altered if present in this research to maintain anonymity, and any identifying information has been removed where necessary and possible.

As this research does incorporate a small amount of interpersonal interaction with private individuals, researching memory, particularly of a culture foreign to someone's upbringing, does carry some ethical risks. These conversations, however, were often free-flowing and not sought out in my methodology, and therefore information sheets or consent forms were not deemed necessary. Among the most prevalent issues that arises when undertaking work in another culture

are matters of translation and value imposition. Given my work experience in BiH, I felt confident that my knowledge of the local language was sufficient for most day-to-day interactions and for understanding the general tone and message of memorial sites visited.

The highly visual nature of this research also calls into question the nature of public memory and intellectual ownership of images and texts, particularly in larger memorial sites and museums. However, I do not aim to benefit commercially from any of the text replicated here from these sites, and there is an implicit tolerance of quoting from public sites like museums where photography is allowed without restriction. The images I use throughout this dissertation are my own, or permission has been sought where possible for photos or other intellectual property that do not belong to me, with appropriate citations added (see Image Credits toward the end of this thesis). Such images remain in their original appearance and have not been altered in any way. As with the majority of the data presented here, the images, including my own, are publicly accessible online without restriction. ★

Chapter 4: Branitelji
Defenders
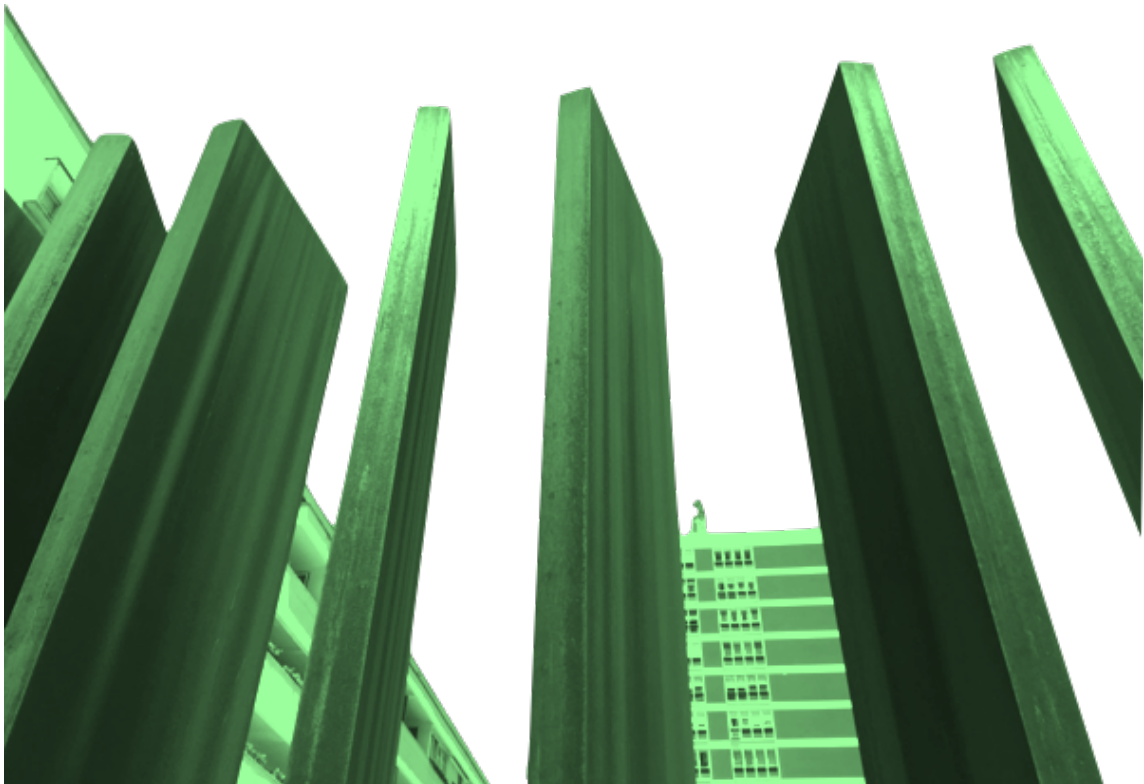
Memorial sites presented in Chapter 4
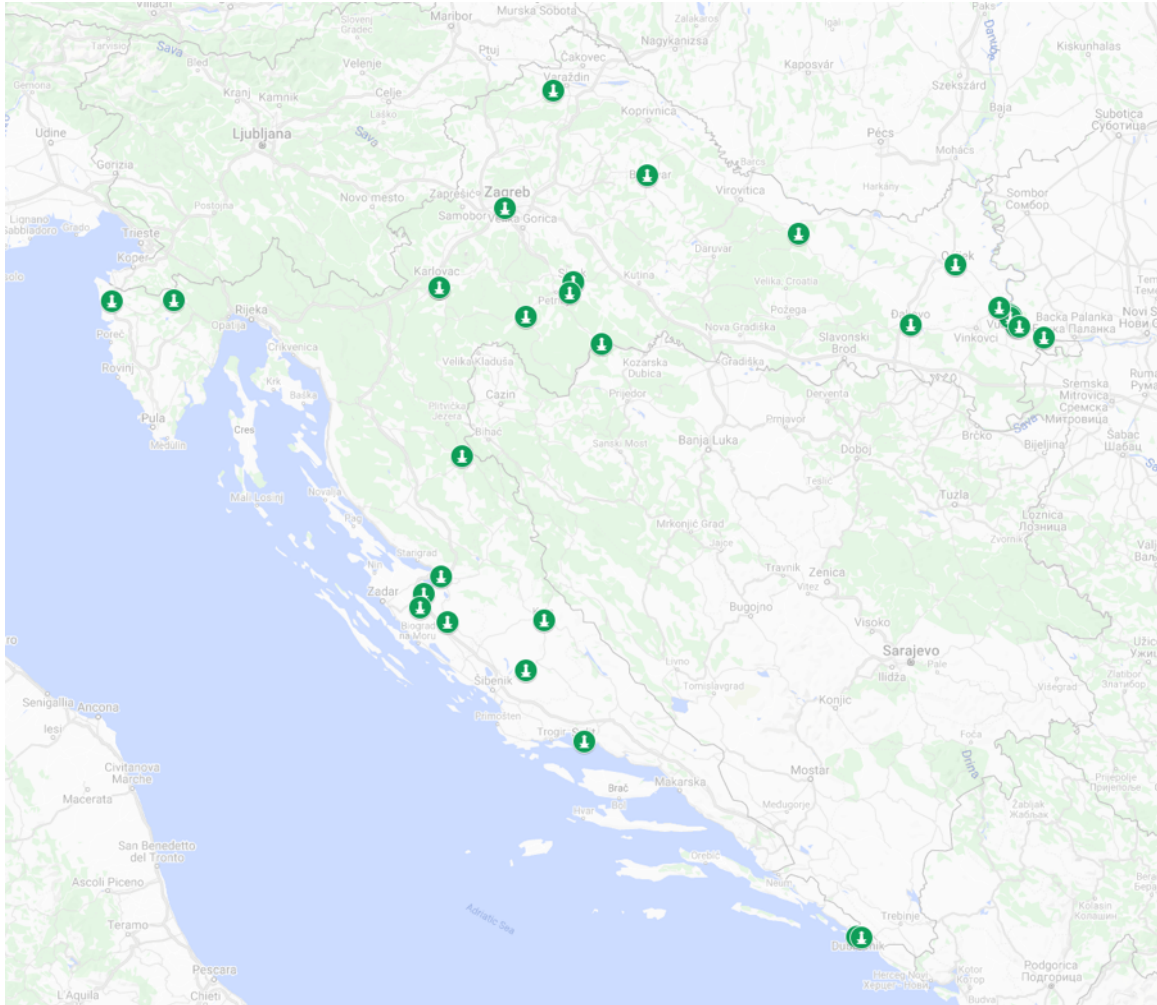
Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the visual aspects of the Croatian commemorative process I documented in the course of my fieldwork that focus on the narrative of the "defender," the central – abstracted – figure of the Homeland War. Here, I demonstrate how the defender narrative came to dominate post-war cultural memory, how particular actors, namely veterans' associations and conservative political and social organisations, have individually or collectively shaped this memory landscape, and how the politics of remembrance elevate the status of the defenders to those of near-mythical heroes. In doing so, as discussed in Chapter 1, I argue that those who exercise power over the (mainstream) commemorative process in Croatia either intentionally or unintentionally push away counter-narratives of civilian victims, most notably of the Serb minority in Croatia and of civilian victims more widely, whose suffering in the course of the Homeland War does not constitute a core element of the war's history as it is repeated and performed in Croatia. As with Chapters 5 and 6, this chapter is informed by the public sites of memory, including monuments and museums, I documented across Croatia. Furthermore, I analyse the 2017 commemoration of Operation Storm in Knin as a central element of contemporary Croatian cultural memory. This commemoration and the memorial events dedicated to the victims of the 1991 fall of Vukovar, which I discuss in Chapter 5, mark the high points of the Croatian mnemonic calendar and allow my analysis of the Knin and Vukovar commemorations to serve as empirical points of contrast and comparison. The other memorial sites I incorporate into this chapter serve as examples of additional core elements of the "defender" identity and how they reflect – visually or otherwise – on intersecting social processes and contestations.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the construction of the "defender" identity and how it has been legitimised in the face of internal and external criticism. I argue here that this label, first applied in the early stages of the Homeland War, has been constructed using some of the narrative framework of the Yugoslav Partisans during the Second World War. This process, however, is coupled with selectively applied cognitive dissonance (described below, see Festinger 1957) through the demonisation of the Serb minority and a general disregard toward the narratives of civilian victims more widely. This is followed by an examination of the knock-on effects of such identity construction in the public presentation of defenders' and victims' narratives (the latter expanded more in Chapter 5) and on the relationship between gender and power in Croatian cultural memory. Gender as an element of conflict is relevant in both this and the following chapter,

as victimhood itself must be viewed from a gendered perspective, and in the case of veterans, it is useful to compare how the voices of female fighters of the Second World War and the Homeland War have been incorporated or ignored in grander, post-conflict narratives.

Here, I address several key research questions by applying empirical findings to the theoretical discussion of memory, power and violence I present in Chapter 1. The questions are namely:

- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?
- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?
- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

Throughout this chapter, I provide examples of how identity has been constructed and visually reflected in the public face of memory, that is, in monumental form. I argue that the narrative of the *branitelji* comprises the bulk of the modern Croatian cultural memory, as reflected in visual manifestations of memory and the mnemonic practices and behaviours of political and social élites who have either pushed for or challenged the predominance of the defenders. Their contentious status as victims of "Greater Serbian aggression," defenders of the Croat(ian) nation, and perpetrators of violence against the Serb minority highlights the various social dynamics that interplay in the shared memory of the veterans of the Homeland War. These discussions build upon Aleida Assmann's description of the "symbolic media" of cultural and collective memory (A. Assmann 2012, 175), and how such visual representations of the past are affected by the relative balance of power (see Hearn 2018; Roszko 2010) in the formation of group identities. My analysis of the struggles between the *branitelji*, their supporters and their critics demonstrates how the desire to exercise power over memory (Müller 2009) plays a determinant role in shaping the public face of memory in Croatia.

Narrative/discourse markers

Tracing the narrative of the Croatian defenders necessarily involves identifying key words or phrases as signals that link otherwise disjointed monuments or other edifices of memory to

construct one public face. In the context of this research, I noted the word *branitelj/*"defender" was used uniquely in reference to those who fought in the Homeland War on the side of the Republic of Croatia, whereas armed participants from other conflicts may have been called "veterans," "fighters" or, simply, "soldiers." Particularly in the Yugoslav post-war narrative of the Second World War, the word *borac/*"fighter" was used in reference to the men and women who fought for Tito's Partisans, in line with the socialist vision of the war as a *narodnooslobodilačka borba/*"National Liberation Struggle" and not *rat/*"war" as in other instances. This necessarily shifts the language to reflect the scrappier, disjointed nature of the Second World War in Yugoslavia as a period of resistance than one of defence or offence, in order to create a new socialist Yugoslav state. This stands in stark contrast to the nationally legitimated narrative of the Homeland War, one fought to "reclaim" a state that had existed in some form for one-thousand years. The phrase *domovina/*"homeland," too, is almost exclusively used in the monuments and museums I documented in the context of the Croatian War of Independence from 1991 to 1995; similar phrases like *otadžbina/*"fatherland" or *zavičaj/*"homeland" in the more nuanced sense of the German *Heimat*, are not used (the 1990s war is also referred to in the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina as the *otadžbinski rat/*Fatherland War).

When sorting and analysing the data I collected, I also noticed differences in the verbs and adjectives used to describe how combatants died in the course of the respective wars. In the Yugoslav retelling of the Second World War, fighters "had fallen" or "gave their lives" for "freedom" or "in the people's/national revolution." Several monuments make reference to Partisan fighters and "victims of fascist terror" who were "killed" during the war, providing a strict delineation between the two. Croatian defenders, on the other hand, were "killed" more frequently, while far fewer references are made to those who "fell" or "died." This language suggests more that the narrative of the Homeland War is one of defence than one of revolution or active struggle *for* rather than *against* something, in this case against "(Greater) Serbian aggression." Further, Croatian defenders are called "brave" less frequently than in Yugoslav monuments (see Figure 4.1), which indicates a shift in the public celebration of the defender as both victim and victor, neither term strictly accompanied by a concept of "bravery," in contrast to the archetype of the heroic Partisan.

Figure 4.1: Frequency of descriptors in Yugoslav and Croatian war monuments

Yugoslav term	Frequency	Croatian term	Frequency
pali(m)/"fallen"	26 in 148 monuments	*pali(m)/*"fallen"	2 in 151 monuments
dali svoje živote/ "gave their lives"	11 in 148 monuments	*umrle/*"died"	7 in 151 monuments
žrtve fašističkog terora/"victims of fascist terror"	13 in 148 monuments	*(veliko)srpska agresija/*"(Greater) Serbian aggression"	18 in 151 monuments
poginuli/"killed"	17 in 148 monuments	*poginuli/*"killed"	31 in 151 monuments
hrabro/"brave"	23 in 148 monuments	*hrabro/*"brave"	7 in 151 monuments

Note: Total numbers relate only to war-specific monuments (for Yugoslavia, the Second World War; for Croatia, the Homeland War).

Beyond these key words, little else is used to describe the Croatian defenders. Nonetheless, through visual cues (helmets, busts, military insignia or equipment), just over one-half of the monuments and other physical manifestations of memory I documented that were constructed in Croatia since 1991 appear to be dedicated to or at least mention the defenders (97 of 192 documented) and the vast majority certainly to the Homeland War (151 of 192). Most monuments, however, feature little to no reference to civilian victims of the war, an aspect of this research that will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 5. The inherent masculinity of the *branitelj* narrative, through linguistic signals or visual clues, also will be discussed toward the end of this chapter.

Similar patterns emerge in speeches held annually from 2014 to 2017 in Knin on 5 August in commemoration of Operation Storm and on 18 November in Vukovar on the anniversary of the city's fall in 1991. Concepts of nationhood and pride in the nation – "Croatia," "Croat(s)," "homeland," "state," "freedom," "victory" and "thanksgiving" – were mentioned in far greater frequency than words containing negative associations with war, such as "died," "death," "victim" or "regret." Most notably, the concept of mourning of fallen Croatian soldiers is never mentioned. Rather, they are celebrated as defenders of the homeland and the victors against "Greater Serbian aggression." Where massacred victims and defenders are mourned, as in Vukovar, there is no "grief" or "sadness." For example, Archbishop of Zadar Želimir Puljić stated at the 2015 commemoration in Vukovar, that "Our coming to this ceremony shows the other side that leads us to eternity. Therefore, on this sunny day *our faces are not sad; we believe that our dear and beloved*

are not missing [emphasis own], but rather that they have changed ways of life. They are no longer with us in space or time, but with God in eternity" (see FRAMNAT 2015)[11].

Following these trends, I contend that an element of cognitive dissonance, if not social selective amnesia, is inherently present in the commemorative process. Cognitive dissonance arises in situations where new information is presented that forces at the very least a short but potentially meaningful break with commonly accepted knowledge or opinions (Festinger 1957, 4). To reduce this momentary dissonance (that is, a lack of fit between new and existing knowledge), at least on the surface, the information that conflicts with current behaviours or beliefs may be denied or excised from those beliefs. Festinger notes, too, that "Dissonance may arise because of cultural mores" or "because of past experience" (ibid., 14), and that in reducing dissonance, "Changing the environment itself [...] is more feasible when the social environment is in question than when the physical environment is involved" (ibid., 20). In public commemorations of the Homeland War, this is accomplished through the evocation of the divine and the nation, deflection of blame, the intentional construction of a narrative of active defence against a mortal enemy and the heavy reliance on defenders (through political arrangements that will be discussed below) for said narrative construction. Shifting the physical environment to suit particular narratives, however, involves more laborious negotiations of space and community, as I demonstrate in the next section.

The necessity of cognitive dissonance, or of forgetting more generally, is part and parcel of the commemorative process around difficult pasts, not only in Croatia, but the degree to which neglecting particular elements of the past exists in this case becomes apparent in the construction of the "defender" narrative in the immediate aftermath of the Homeland War. Here, I have demonstrated how narratives and key discourse markers are constructed, repeated and adapted over time, applying my insights from fieldwork in Croatia to an extant body of literature on identity and memory. The discussion above of commemorative practices and narrative markers regarding the Croatian defenders and Yugoslav Partisans exemplifies Aleida Assmann's description of the "making" of collective memory through "symbolic media" (A. Assmann 2012, 175), that is, through the physical application of particular descriptors of the past to memorial sites. I have also

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[11] Original quote in Croatian: *"Naš dolazak na ovu svečanost pokazuje onu drugu stranu koja nas upućuje prema vječnosti. Zato, na ovom sunčanom danu naša lica nisu tužna; mi vjerujemo kako naši dragi i mili nisu nestali, nego su promijenili način života. Nisu više u prostoru i vremenu s nama, nego u vječnosti kod Boga."*

advanced briefly various arguments on the construction of identity in opposition, here drawing out the different approaches taking to remembering veterans of the Second World War and the Homeland War, which depend on the dynamic power relations between in- and outgroups (Hearn 2018; Smith 1991; Smith 2003), discussed later in this chapter.

Defending Croatia: Physically constructing the narrative of the *branitelji*

Here I present a brief overview of the history of the "defender" narrative during and in the aftermath of the Homeland War, addressing the close relationship between veterans' groups and the ruling HDZ throughout the 1990s. This demands an applied examination of power relations and identity formation, as addressed in the literature review in Chapter 1, tying in empirical observations from commemorations and monuments built across Croatia since the 1990s.

The predominance of the defender narrative is evident through my own research on memory and its physical manifestations in Croatia, reinforcing the understanding that monument construction is a form of (self-)legitimisation (see Roszko 2010). Roszko, using the example of post-conflict commemorations in Vietnam, demonstrates how the political use of symbolic images and the construction of memorials to fallen solders "legitimize[s] their power and engage[s] people in institutionalized and emotional forms of action" (Roszko 2010, 1). Through my work, I show how similar processes have emerged in Croatia, elevating the status of the *branitelji* to, as Roszko writes, the "most potent symbols of the official struggle over memory and legitimation of the war" (ibid.). This is the result of a long process of negotiating power and influence in the transition between various forms of memory, from the familiar – communicative (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999) – to the public – cultural and collective (A. Assmann 1999; J. Assmann 2011). In the early phases of the Homeland War, Croatian police, military and paramilitary forces, given their official or unofficial proximity to the state then under HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) rule, served not only as the defenders of the Croatian state but also of the government and the vision of Croatian independence espoused by Franjo Tuđman. Sharon Fisher describes the relationship between defender groups and the HDZ as one in which "most of the prominent veterans' groups were hardly distinguishable from the ruling party itself," calling into question their role in civil society, which she notes as a form of clearly *voluntary* association to the state (2003, 70). The HDZ-*branitelji* relationship, therefore, consists of mutually beneficial arrangements that propped up the party throughout the post-war transition while guaranteeing rights to veterans, often involving

exorbitant financial costs in the process. Some of this money was used to build memorial spaces recalling the sacrifices of the defenders in the course of Croatia's "liberation." Monument construction began early on in the war, with the first memorial placard I recorded installed at the Imperijal Fortress above Dubrovnik in December 1993, recalling the loss of three "defenders" who died in 1991 and 1992 during the JNA's siege of Dubrovnik (Figure 4.2); it is worth noting, then, that the terminology of "defenders" was present already by the midpoint of the Homeland War.

Text: In memory of the Croatian Defenders
Nenad Čorić, Ivo Koprivica, Robert Ivušić
Rest in the Peace of God
[From] Surviving Comrades
6 December 1993
Documented 12 May 2017

Further, the integral role of the defenders, originally a mixture of local police forces, territorial defence units and irregular paramilitaries, became clearer over the course of the war as a centralised Croatian armed forces was steadily constructed. As fighting during the war peaked first with the seizure of upwards of one-third of Croatian territory by the JNA and Republika Srpska Krajina forces and the bombardments of Dubrovnik and Vukovar in 1991 and again with Operations Flash and Storm in 1995, so did the state's actions toward securing the rights and privileges of the defenders. In early 1991, as Croatian leaders were rapidly building the republic's

legal infrastructure in advance of the 25 June declaration of independence, the Law on Defence was among the first promulgated, on 28 June, to be revised twice in August 1993 and July 1996 (Lozančić and Burđelez 1998, 47). This was followed with the *Zakon o hrvatskim braniteljima iz Domovinskog rata i članovima njihovih obitelji/*Law on Croatian Defenders of the Homeland War and Their Family Members, first promulgated in 1994 and subsequently amended in 2017, which provides more than six categories of "defender" for those who participated in the early war efforts in 1991 (Sabor 2017). Among these are combatants who participated in, were injured, detained, went missing or were killed in the early phase of the Homeland War, namely from 30 July to 31 December 1991. The Law further defines eight other categories of participants in the Homeland War – those without "defender" status – and victims or *stradalnici/*"the suffered" of the Homeland War. It also details the many privileges and rights granted to these veterans and their families, among them medical care, social insurance, pensions and business grants, but says little about the rights of civilian war victims. Even twenty-four years after the end of the Homeland War, no such law on the rights of civilian victims has been enacted, as such a law would regenerate dissonance between the accepted narratives of the war and an acknowledgement of individual victimhoods, including those of the Serb population, that have been brushed aside for the sake of a forcibly consistent narrative of victory. Various groups, as I discuss below, would challenge the drafting and enacting of such a law given the necessity to create further provisions for the Serb minority in Croatia.

Fisher (2003) provides a useful analysis of the symbiotic relationship between defender groups and HDZ officials. The number of local, regional and national associations of defenders and their families exploded in the immediate aftermath of the Homeland War. Their aims included moral, humanitarian and medical support, among others, but the overarching ambitions of these groups were political, namely in demanding rights for those who fought to defend Croatia's independence (Fisher 2003, 72). Protests throughout the 2000s, even during periods of HDZ rule, were publicly supported, as many surrounded the ICTY indictments of Generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, the chief planners of 1995's Operations Storm and Flash. Fisher notes that, "In its discourse, HDZ representatives presented the veterans as national heroes, and the ruling party tried to halt discussion of war crimes committed by Croatian soldiers in the apparent belief that questioning the sanctity of Croatia's war for independence and the dignity of its defenders would threaten its own political monopoly" (Fisher 2003, 77). Acknowledging Croatian war crimes

throughout the Homeland War, such as the killing of 120 Serb civilians in Gospić in 1991, invited death threats and further protest from groups associated with the defenders. To open a discussion of war crimes was to call into question the sanctity of the defenders as Croatia's lifeline in the war. In a letter to the public written by Croatian generals involved in the Homeland War, such criticisms were framed as an "assault on the army and [...] 'criminalisation' of the Homeland War" (ibid., 86). As a result of the continuous tensions and bouts of appeasement of the defenders' demands, a Ministry of Croatian Veterans was established in 2003. War veterans also now enjoy some of the highest pensions in Croatia, already in 1999 nearly five times higher than that of the ordinary labourer (ibid., 79). While political shifts in the 2000s between HDZ and SPD rule effected gradual cuts to such welfare provisions, the narrative role of the defenders in Croatian society, if not the political, remains intact. This summary of the links between the *branitelji* and conservatives underscores my arguments laid out below that the public face of memory in Croatia is dominated by symbolic representations of Croatian soldiers and that this predominance provides little room for victim-oriented narratives in memorial spaces to the Homeland War, something only possible through targeted support by influential political and social actors.

Monuments and museums

How defenders exercise or maintain power *over* memory has depended heavily on the continuity of the HDZ-*branitelji* relationship. As discussed in Chapter 1, the power over memory ensures a group its power to endure, yet controlling mnemonic processes alone does not assure a group's existence. This section addresses Müller's work on the exercise of power over memory (Müller 2009) and the transformation of the power over memory to Hearn's notion of the "power to endure" (Hearn 2018) by assessing how defender-centric memorial spaces in Croatia mark some sort of mnemonic territory to assure the perpetuation of their narratives of the Croatian nation. The intervention of the HDZ and the institutions of the Croatian state in providing rights and public space for commemorating Croatian defenders at the cost of other social groups, most notably civilian victims and ethnic minorities, has given *branitelji* an upper hand in determining the "public face" of memory in Croatia. In my documentation of these memorial spaces, I noted where possible who or what groups funded their construction, and in many cases, the monuments to Croatian defenders were directly supported by associations linked to the HDZ or related nationalist or conservative parties, which I discuss below.

In Croatia, unlike in Serbia since the recent promulgation of memory laws centralising the approval of monument construction, the planning, funding and building of memorial spaces is heavily decentralised; no singular memorial authority exists in Croatia that regulates the appearance or content of memorial spaces, and this is reflected by the diversity of funding bodies named on the various monuments I have documented. The design and placement of monuments are often dependant on municipal organs or civil society groups willing to install new statues or plaques, yet despite the lack of memory laws regulating their content or visual appearance, many conform to national narratives of the Homeland War noted above and in Chapter 2. The power of local defender organisations, especially in areas affected by the war (Slavonia and Dalmatia above all) is signalled by this conformity and the near total lack of monuments that might suggest some element of criticism of defenders' actions during the conflict. That is, the victims of Croatian soldiers, particularly Serb civilians killed during and in the aftermath of Operations Flash and Storm, represent a challenge to the sanctity of the public image of the defender, a quandary I discuss in the following chapter. During my fieldwork, I visited sites of war crimes committed against the Serb minority during and in the immediate aftermath of the Homeland War – namely Gospić, Varivode and Sisak (for information on other locations, see SNV 2018). In these sites, where I would have expected monuments dedicated to civilian victims to have been erected given the magnitude of these crimes, I saw none, save for a small memorial in Varivode, the history of which I discuss in Chapter 5. The absence of such memorial sites reinforces the role of cognitive dissonance or outright denial in preserving more powerful narratives of the in-group, in this case, the Croatian state, the Croat nation and its defenders.

The visual conformity of Croatia's "public face" of memory of the defenders is most clearly represented by the standardised monuments at the site of mass graves, designed by Slavomir Drinković, featuring a dove of peace in a cracked black marble slab (see Figure 4.3).

Left: Drinković monument at site of mass grave in Ovčara, 23 August 2017. Centre: A rosary hangs from the "cracked bird" in Mohovo, 16 March 2018. Right: Fresh flowers laid at the Drinković monument in Škabrnja, 20 March 2018.

The Croatian state commissioned Drinković to design these monuments, the first of which was dedicated near the Ovčara farm, site of the November 1991 massacre by the JNA and Serb paramilitaries of civilians and defenders from the Vukovar hospital. Though Drinković died in December 2016, his monuments, which also feature a Christian cross, highlighting the importance of Catholicism to Croatian identity, have been installed in at least 79 locations across Croatia, mostly rural (Hudelist 2019). Each monument features the same text: "In memory of the (number) Croatian (defenders and/or civilians) executed in (month and/or year/s) in the Greater Serbian aggression against the Republic of Croatia."[12] The monuments are dedicated in the name of the "Croatian people/nation" and represent the commonality of loss among the survivors of defenders and civilians, the latter whose memories are otherwise generally forgotten in the commemoration of the defenders.

Other monuments, generally memorial plaques, feature the insignia of military divisions and paramilitary groups, some provoking controversy over the use of fascist slogans and symbols, to be discussed in Chapter 6. In some situations, military vehicles and other equipment – helicopters, tanks, boats, ambulances and weapons – serve as the monument to these divisions. In the Memorial

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[12] Original text in Croatian (example from Tovarnik monument): *"U spomen na 27 branitelja i civila pogubljenih 1991.-1992. u velikosrpskoj agresiji na Republiku Hrvatsku. Hravtski narod. Studeni 1999. Škabrnja 18.11.1991."*

Centre for the Homeland War in Vukovar, too, the tail of a destroyed Yugoslav MiG fighter jet acts as a reminder of the eventual defeat of the the Republika Srpska Krajina in 1995 (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5 below). The Memorial Centre itself was created in 2013 at the initiative of the Ministry of Croatian Defenders and is part of compulsory school tours for all eighth-grade pupils across Croatia (MHB RH 2020).

Figure 4.4: Military equipment as memorials: Trpinjska cesta, Vukovar, Dubrovnik, Slatina

Top left: Memorial House of Croatian Defenders, Tprinjska cesta (Vukovar), 18 November 2017. Top right: Memorial Centre for the Homeland War, Vukovar, 3 July 2017. Bottom left: *Sveti Vlaho/St. Blaise* battleship, Dubrovnik, 13 May 2017. Bottom right: FAP D-10-Furgon improvised tank, Slatina, 17 March 2018.

Figure 4.5: Yugoslav Air Force MiG fighter, Memorial Centre for the Homeland War: Vukovar

Left: Tail of shot-down JNA MiG-21 fighter jet, Vukovar, 3 July 2017. Right: Information placard: "On November 12, 1991, the Croatian Air Defense crew of the 64th AD light self-propelled artillery missile battalion (the Šokački battalion) brought down a MIG-21 of the Yugoslav Air Force near Đakovo," Vukovar, 3 July 2017.

While during the time of my fieldwork no singular museum to the Homeland War existed, by March 2018 construction was already underway in Turanj, a few minutes' drive south of Karlovac, on an exhibition space and memorial hall to the war. The main hall is constructed in a former military barracks – during the war called the "Hotel Californija" – surrounded by a new metal-and-glass frame with military vehicles and planes placed around the grounds. Across the street is a black-and-white monument with fourteen panels of names of fallen defenders from Karlovac, the bollards separating the grass from the walking path built from empty missile shells (Figure 4.6). The museum opened on 5 July 2019 with a dedication by then-Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, who called the space "our symbol of victory," remarking that Karlovac served as a strategic location in the Homeland War, as "Croatia did not break there, rather Turanj became a symbol of victory for Croatia as a whole" (Direktno 2019). The opening ceremony and orchestra concert was attended by many defender groups and family members. The political relationship between the museum and the HDZ-led government is also evident in the funding of its construction; of a budget of 26.6 million kuna (£3.2 million), 8 million kuna (approximately £970,000) was granted by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, with the goal of turning the memorial complex into a major tourist attraction in the coming years (ibid.).

Top left: Museum of the Homeland War under construction, Turanj (Karlovac), 18 March 2018. Top right: Missile shells as monuments and boundary markers, Turanj (Karlovac), 18 March 2018. Bottom: Monument to 239 fallen defenders from the City of Karlovac, Turanj (Karlovac), 18 March 2018.

Images taken during the museum's dedication show a dimly-lit interior with a wall of faces of defenders, their names, birth and death dates, a common feature of victim-centred memorial spaces, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the 9/11 Museum or Yad Vashem (see Radonić 2017), and in Croatia the Ovčara Memorial Center near Vukovar. This museum, like many of the monuments dedicated to fallen *branitelji*, co-opts the aesthetics of

victim-centred memorial spaces (see Figure 4.7 below) to position defenders as the ultimate victims of the Homeland War, continuing a wider pattern of neglecting the memory of civilian victims of conflict and actively occupying memorial space that otherwise would be afforded to victims. This pattern can also be seen in bookstores with titles boasting the triumphs of the defenders and Croatia's victory in the Homeland War, with very few texts showing victims' experiences of the conflict. Images of destroyed property, if anything, are more prevalent than images of civilians who perished in the war, widening the visual perspective of war destruction. This tension between the commemoration of defenders and the mourning of victims will be discussed more thoroughly below and again in Chapter 5.

Figure 4.7: Walls of faces: Turanj and Vukovar
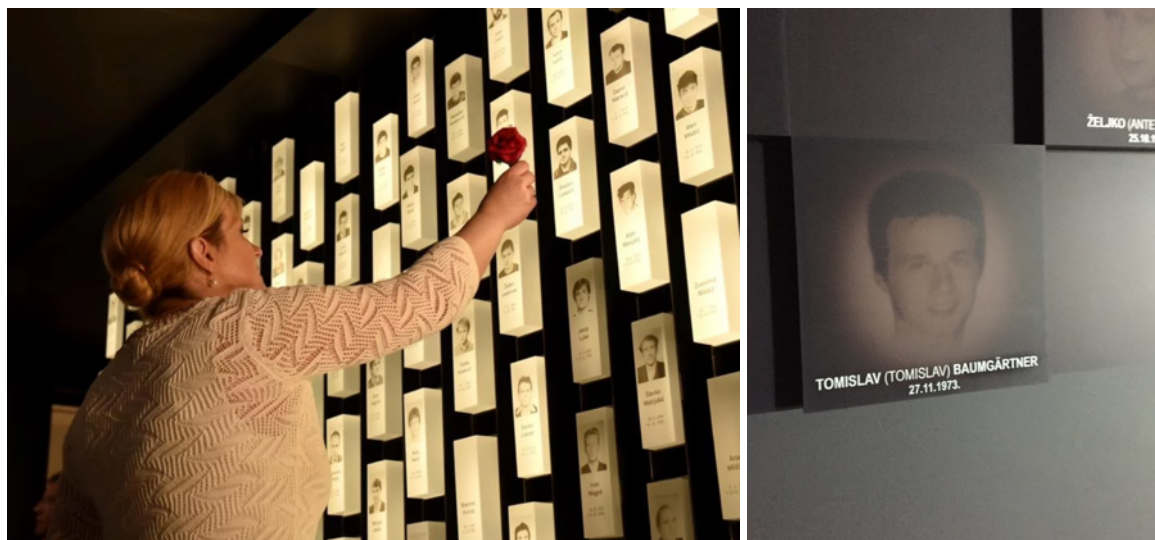
Source (left): Direktno (2019). Then-President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović presents a flower at the newly opened Museum of the Homeland War in Turanj. Right: Image of Tomislav Baumgärtner, victim of the Ovčara massacre, Memorial House Ovčara, Vukovar, 23 August 2017.

At the Imperijal Fortress near Dubrovnik, and in a smaller scale at the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb, the "Dubrovnik during the Homeland War, 1991-1995" exhibition depicts scenes of destruction during the shelling of the city by JNA and Serb and Montenegrin paramilitary forces in the early stages of the Homeland War. The museum in the fortress was opened on 10 July 2010 and dedicated by then-Mayor of Dubrovnik Andro Vlahušić (HNS, Croatian People's Party) and several Homeland War veterans (Marušić 2010). Images of burnt entryways, crumbled pillars and thick, black smoke billowing over the Adriatic are integrated into displays of the defence of Dubrovnik by Croatian forces, but again it is the faces of defenders and politicians, not civilians, that are to be seen. This reflects the power these defender groups exercise over the construction

of memory in their name, reaffirming their centrality to the story of Croatian independence. The text on the displays, in both Croatian and English, drearily recounts military actions during the Homeland War in and around Dubrovnik and southern Dalmatia, in some cases editorialising these dreary yet sensational events. Words like "heroism" and "sacrifice" are associated with the defenders, while Serbs and Montenegrins are only called "the aggressor" and "the enemy," in line with the Croatian Sabor's 2000 Declaration on the Homeland War, described below. Entry to both the Dubrovnik and Zagreb exhibitions is free of charge for Croatian veterans, as in many other locations.

Returning briefly to smaller-scale memorials of the Homeland War, the placement of monuments to Croatian defenders – in central squares, parks, roundabouts, or graveyards – underscores the ubiquity of their narrative in the public face of memory. Unlike Yugoslav memorials, which today are often found at the periphery of villages or, as in the case of the large, abstract "spomenici" constructed throughout the communist period, in far-flung rural spaces that marked the sites of major battles in the Second World War, contemporary monuments occupy more heavily-trafficked areas. This positioning of monuments, occasionally through the removal of ground formerly occupied by an urban monument commissioned by Yugoslav authorities, symbolises the political relationship between sympathetic city planners and defender groups. That the tales of Yugoslavia past are pushed to the physical margins or even destroyed in the name of the makers of the present Croatian state neatly summarises one of the key elements of the post-war identity-making process as moulded by conservatives in various positions of power. Accordingly, several new monuments to Croatian defenders co-opt the abstract nature of older Yugoslav monuments by using symbolic representations of the state in lieu of realistic sculptures of individual soldiers (see Figure 4.8 below).

Left: Monument to Defenders and Victims of the Homeland War, known colloquially as "The Radiator," Osijek, 4 July 2017. Right: Monument to Fallen Croatian Defenders in the Homeland War, Sisak, 24 August 2017.

In Vukovar, nonetheless, occasional busts of individual defenders, mostly of those who died early in the Homeland War, occupy large public spaces (see Figure 4.9). The most notable example is that of Jean-Michel Nicolier, a French volunteer who was killed in the Vukovar massacre on 20 November 1991, treated posthumously as an honorary Croat. On 3 May 2015, at the foot of the pedestrian bridge bearing his name, which crosses over the Vuka (a tributary of the Danube), a bust of Nicolier was dedicated. Not one-hundred meters from this sculpture is also a statue of Franjo Tuđman, again physically underpinning the close relationship between defenders and the HDZ during the Homeland War. Another bust, located at the Memorial House of Croatian Defenders on Trpinjska cesta, a major thoroughfare heading north from Vukovar toward Osijek, features the likeness of Blago Zadro, a Major General of the Croatian Army who died in action in October 1991. On the day of the annual commemoration of the victims of Vukovar in 2017, Zadro's sculpture was surrounded by plastic memorial candles depicting the Croatian coat of arms or in the shape of the Vukovar water tower. Such candle holders were visible across Vukovar-Sirmium County when driving back and forth between Vukovar and Osijek, often placed every few metres on the sides of the road, whether in the countryside or in more densely-populated city centres.

Left: Bust of French "defender" Jean-Michel Nicolier, Vukovar, 3 July 2017. Right: Bust of Major General Blago Zadro, Memorial House of Croatian Defenders, Vukovar, 18 November 2017.

A peculiar case is found in the bust of Niko Cigić in the village of Pakovo Selo near Drniš in north-central Dalmatia. The bust (Figure 4.10), situated inside a small intersection, was installed sometime after 2008 in the place where a massive sculpture bearing the "U" of the fascist Ustaša paramilitary once stood. The original monument (also Figure 4.10) was dedicated in the midst of the Homeland War on 17 September 1993 and featured the text, "We stood up to defend our home. September 17, 1993, Sandokan Unit" (Jurković 2008), the original Croatian text linguistically tying the memory of Ustaše fighters to that of the *branitelji* of the Homeland War; "to stand up" in Croatian, *ustati*, forms the root of "Ustaša," and "home" written on the former monument as *dom*, from the fascist chant *za dom spremni*, and not *domovina*, the form of "home" or "homeland" used in the Croatian name for the 1990s war. The monument's removal on 21 September 2008 was instigated by a journalist's report from the village, located on an otherwise unremarkable country road with next to no through traffic. In the fifteen years that the monument stood, no state institution requested its removal, despite the clear link to the fascist past (ibid.; see also US Department of State 2010, 1235).

Figure 4.10: The curious case of Pakovo Selo

Left: Monument to Croatian defender Niko Cigić, Pakovo Selo, 5 August 2017. Source (right): Jurković, M. (2008). The former U-shaped monument installed in 1993 and removed in 2008.

Finally, as in the case of the Drinković monuments to fallen defenders and civilians, Christian iconography is prevalent in many memorial spaces (Figure 4.11) In lieu of the bodies of fallen defenders, the body of Christ on the cross represents the "martyrdom" element of the *branitelj* narrative. Returning to the religious narratives of the war highlights the deaths of *branitelji* as having purpose, that is, the salvation and preservation of the Croat nation and the Croatian state. This framing, however, becomes particularly problematic when applied to the memories of civilian victims, as I will explore in the next chapter.

Top left: Memorial cross, Islam Grčki, 7 August 2017. Top right: Memorial cross with flowers, Barutana Memorial Park, Bjelovar, 22 August 2017. Bottom left: Memorial cross of "Croatian sons" with image of Christ, Maslenica bridge, Jasenice, 7 August 2017. Bottom right: Memorial cross to fallen and missing Croatian defenders, Hrvatska Kostajnica, 24 August 2017.

The various themes visually represented in monuments and museums to the Croatian defenders suggest, in summary, the centrality and necessity of the defenders to the survival of Croatia as an independent, Christian state, with the defenders as the carriers of national identity in times of conflict. The actions of the defenders, when done in service of the state, are not called into question, and any negative consequences of the military defence of Croatia against "Greater

Serbian aggression" – namely the retaliatory murders of Serb civilians during and after Operations Flash and Storm and the destruction of private property – are downplayed, ignored or denied.

The presentation of the monuments and museums noted above serves to contextualise physical manifestations of the power relations in the contestation of post-war memory discussed at the outset of this thesis and, more closely, to examine how social identities are mapped onto public memorial spaces. The Memorial Centre of the Homeland War in Vukovar perhaps most clearly demonstrates how certain historical narratives are included (Croatian defenders) or excluded (civilian victims, Yugoslavia, Serbs) through processes of social differentiation, addressing one of my core research questions, as the presentation of the wreckage of a JNA fighter jet symbolises the destruction of Yugoslavia itself – the "enemy" to Croatian ambitions of statehood – as an element of Croatian's path to victory in the war. I have also addressed who has the power to construct memory in such ways – undeniably in top-down, state-centric approaches to the past. Finally, I provided a partial answer to how the interrelations of power, violence, memory and identity are manifested in the visual culture of remembrance in Croatia by showing which elements of Croatian identity are intentionally included in memorial spaces.

Identifying an "enemy" as clearly as has been done in post-war memorial spaces in Croatia crystallises the identity of the defenders and provides this label greater power to endure, supported by the top-down project of narrative construction by the HDZ. An unwavering image of the "Other," here Serbs, no matter their role in the Homeland War, excludes civilian casualties from the commemorative practices I documented and that continue still today, brushing their losses aside as a form of collateral damage, if it was framed as a loss at all. By remembering this violent past without acknowledging the cost of independence, key Croatian powerholders prevent the creation of a common understanding, if not a collective memory, of a shared historical experience. This pattern can be observed outside of the former Yugoslavia in other instances where victor narratives neglect to recognise the human toll of their victory, perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the presentation of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States Army Air Forces in American schoolchildren's textbooks as a moment of patriotic action rather than a mass atrocity (see Crawford 2003; Kazemek 1994).

As I argue in the following analysis of the commemoration of Operation Storm (and in Chapter 5 of the commemoration of the fall of Vukovar), the role of the defenders in shaping Croatian identity, as provided through their state-sanctioned power to endure through monopolising memorial space, has presented challenges to the ongoing Europeanisation process in Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, primarily through the use of symbols of the past that continue to divide today. The purpose of this discussion is to frame resistance and opposition as a part of the identity-making process, which highlights the struggle for the power over memory as an ongoing process of negotiation rather than a static balance of strength and weakness. In Chapter 6, then, I detail more closely how Europeanisation as a process impacts the formation of Croatian national identity on a wider scale.

Commemorating Operation Storm

The most striking element of the Croatian cultural memory of the Homeland War is the predominance of the narrative of legitimate self-defence against aggression by Serbia, Montenegro and the Yugoslav People's Army. The annual commemoration on 5 August of the successful Operation Storm in Knin has been declared a national holiday as *Dan pobjede i domovinske zahvalnosti i Dan hrvatskih branitelja/*Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day and the Day of Croatian Defenders; the "Day of Croatian Defenders" title was added by parliamentary decree in 2008 (Sabor 2008). On this date, politicians, members of civil society and the public gather at Trg Ante Starčevića in the town centre and observe a military parade leading up the winding path to the Knin fortress, from which one can view strategic routes leading toward the coast and into the mountains of Lika and Herzegovina. Throughout the town and at the fortress, crowds are greeted by hundreds of flags, whether state, military or paramilitary, and speeches are given in remembrance of the men (and in rare instances women) who "defended" and "liberated" Croatia from "Serbian aggression." Knin is alive with song, dance and barbecue, with the occasional "*Za dom spremni/*Ready for the Homeland" salute (which until the recent election of a nonpartisan mayor was relatively tolerated behaviour) or folksong praising the NDH. Magnets are sold depicting President Tuđman and both the Croatian and NDH coat of arms, and T-shirts are widely available with various military insignia or nationalist slogans and images of Tuđman holding his hands high in victory at Knin in 1995. Major newspapers feature separate inserts and posters depicting maps of military movements during Storm and new Croatian Army uniforms with integrated technologies developed and built in Croatia, commemorating "Storm 2017" (Figure

4.12 below). The festivities in Knin reflect the desire by these various actors to "reinforce [their] versions of national identity" (Sumartojo 2016, 541) and make their indelible mark on the public face of memory in Croatia.

Source: *Jutarnji list,* 5 August 2017. Poster of contemporary Croatian soldiers highlighting domestic technologies integrated into army uniforms. Text above reads "Croatian Army, Storm 2017."

During my visit to the celebrations in Knin on 5 August 2017, the whole town felt like one large party, reminiscent of the many Memorial Day parades I participated in during my time in high

school marching band in the United States. The visual bombardment of Croatian symbols and flags, not only on buildings, but also on T-shirts, hats, or, later at the beach, on revealing swimwear, was to me an instantaneous signifier of the patriotism underlined by nationalism that has become part and parcel of the Croatian commemorative experience. On the morning of the commemoration, my colleague and I drove from Šibenik on the Adriatic coast to Knin, passing abandoned villages in the Dalmatian hinterlands, with little indication of any major happening up the road in Knin.

When we arrived, however, parking spaces filled quickly, and we hiked in 43°C heat on a cloudless day to the fortress overlooking the town and the mountain passes to the south and east. On our way toward the staircase leading to the fortress, we passed the first large commemorative event on Trg Ante Starčevića, involving a parade of soldiers with their aforementioned barrage of flags, heading toward the top of the mountain. Flags displayed included those of military brigades and paramilitaries, including that of the Croatian Party of Right's "Croatian Defence Forces" (HOS), who had controversially adopted the Ustaša battle cry *"Za dom spremni"*/"Ready for the Homeland" as its own, incorporating it into its insignia. HOS forces were present in Vukovar during the 1991 siege, and the group is viewed as one of the most important defender associations in the early phase of the Homeland War. The legacy of HOS and its relationship to the HDZ's approach to reconciling the fascist and communist pasts will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Before we arrived at the fortress, we sought out our press accreditations at the local community college, which unfortunately were not received in time. Accordingly, we were not allowed to directly observe the speeches by President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and other government representatives or by Nikolina Mataija, a daughter of a defender who died in Operation Storm twenty-two years earlier. As we walked toward another viewing area in the fortress, we encountered Zlatko Hasanbegović, among Croatia's most controversial public figures, whose efforts to remove Yugoslavia from Croatia's past will be examined in Chapter 6. Hasanbegović, a historian and former Minister of Culture during the short-lived Orešković government in 2016, greeted my colleague, also a historian, and shook hands with me before we moved on. Several massive screens were installed in the *donji grad*/lower fortress, which broadcast live feed from the upper fortress, where the speeches were held on the spot where Tuđman raised the Croatian flag on 6 August

1995. Unfortunately for the public crowded in the lower fortress, the speakers relayed sound at different rates, resulting in an incomprehensible blast of speech for nearly an hour, making hard work of my colleague's transcription project.

After the events on the mountaintop ended, the second memorial parade proceeded down toward the town centre, with various groups of defenders, current soldiers, firefighters, and historically costumed regiments marching in step back to the main square (see Figure 4.13).

Top left: Parade observers hang a HOS flag featuring the slogan "*za dom spremni*" over Trg Ante Starčevića, Knin, 5 August 2017. Top right: Parade observers line Ulica dr. Franje Tuđmana, many wearing clothing with Croatian symbols or flags, Knin, 5 August 2017. Bottom left and bottom right: Members of the Croatian army prepare for the march from Knin Fortress back to the town centre, many carrying flags of their respective battalions, Knin, 5 August 2017.

Commemorations held in Knin and Vukovar since the war have varied in attendance and tone, but in general, the idolisation of Croatian veterans has been a consistent theme, particularly since Croatia's accession to the EU in July 2013. I discuss the impact of the European Union on Croatian cultural memory more thoroughly in Chapter 6; here, however, Croatia's accession should have marked a symbolic conclusion to the break with Tuđman's policy of isolation in the 1990s and therefore of a revocation, at least in part, of the more aggressive nationalist narratives that emerged during his rule. The prevalence of the defender narratives nonetheless is demonstrated in the overwhelming presence of the defenders in monuments built to remember the Homeland War between 1993 and 2018. The twentieth anniversary of the end of the Homeland War also contributed to the increase in monument construction in 2015, but it is important to note in the same year that the HDZ returned to power in the presidential and parliamentary elections (though an unstable coalition led to the government's collapse and new elections in 2016). The chart below (Figure 4.14) shows the breakdown of 73 Homeland War monuments I documented with marked dedication dates by which groups are directly remembered.[13] As the chart shows, the number of monuments dedicated in part or in whole to defenders has consistently outnumbered those built in memory of civilian victims of the Homeland War. The peaks in monument construction in 1999 and 2015 can be partly explained by an expansion of the Drinković memorial project (4 of 8 monuments dedicated in 1999) and the twentieth anniversary of Operation Storm, respectively.

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[13] These correspond to codes 1A3, 2A3, 3A3 or 4A3 (General), 1A3-A (Defenders), 1A3-B (Civilians) or 1A3-C (Both) in my monument database. See Appendix 4.
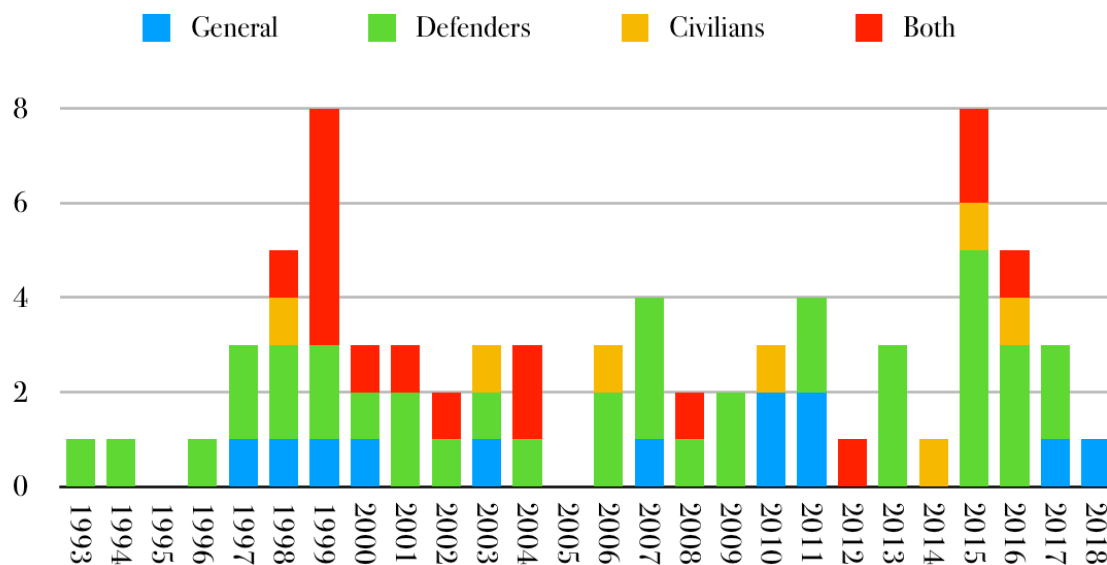
n = 73 Homeland War monuments with identifiable dedication dates

In some ways, Croatia's return to conservative politics, following a pattern in recent years across Central and Eastern EU member states, has fostered an environment more amenable to commemorating the military victories of the Croatian defenders over the victims of their and their enemies' actions. Using transcripts of speeches made by politicians, veterans and religious figures at the commemorations in Knin and Vukovar collated by the Framing the Nation and Collective Identity in Croatia (FRAMNAT) project at the University of Rijeka, clear patterns emerge in the content of these events. Key-word-in-context (KWIC) analysis indicates, unsurprisingly, 493 references to "Croat(s)" or "Croatia" in speeches made in Knin between 2014 and 2017, but also 126 to the "homeland" or the "Homeland War," 118 to "defenders" and 85 to the "state." In comparison, only 27 references were made to "victims," of which some reference was made to "victims for freedom" (not "martyrs"), "victims of Greater Serbian aggression," "victims of the Homeland War" or "sacrificed [victims] in the dimension of Jesus' cross." Almost no reference was made to Serb victims of the war (see Chapter 5), which as noted above would call into question the honourable, venerated status of Croatian veterans, who in some instances have been referred to as "*vitezi*/knights," indicating a narrative continuity with Croatia's medieval past.[14]

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[14] Three monuments in Split, Pakovo Selo and Bjelovar used the phrase "*vitez*" in reference to fallen Croatian defenders. Refer to points "Split 1," "Pakovo Selo 1" and "Bjelovar 2" on the "Republic of Croatia" monument filter on www.taylormcconnell.com/croatian-monuments.

In 2017, the behaviour of the crowds gathered in Knin appeared to have shifted (only slightly) away from the images presented of prior commemorations, most prominently that of the twentieth anniversary of Operation Storm in 2015. That year, the commemorations were marked by anti-Serb ("Kill a Serb!") and fascist ("*za dom spremni!*") chanting among concertgoers attending the performance by Marko Perković "Thompson," a famous nationalist, folk rock singer and his eponymous band, which headlined the day's events after political speeches had concluded in the early afternoon (Milekić 2015). In attendance at the commemorative events atop the fortress were then-President Grabar-Kitarović; former Prime Minister/now President Zoran Milanović and chairman of the Social Democratic Party, who was booed upon arrival by many in the crowd; and the recently acquitted General Ante Gotovina, who in contrast received mass applause (Nikolić and Milekić 2015). In the build-up to Thompson's concert that evening, songs recalling the NDH and praising the Ustaša paramilitaries were sung in the streets of Knin (ibid.), with seemingly no interference from authorities. Two years later, however, I watched as a man playing an accordion singing similar songs was told off and eventually fined by the municipal police, who appeared to be under orders from the new, independent mayor to diminish the presence of NDH symbols during the course of the day. After my colleague and I left Knin early in the afternoon, seven people who shouted "*za dom spremni!*" on Trg Ante Starčevića, the site of most of the day's in-town activities, were swiftly arrested (Milekić 2017c). The men were ultimately charged with a misdemeanour offense for "shouting inappropriate content" (HINA 2017). As I note in the following chapter, the legality of symbols and slogans of the Ustaša has been called into question in recent years, with a state inquiry into the "Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes" providing rather ambivalent guidelines for the use of such symbols in commemorative settings. The inquiry's report was published in February 2018 and permitted the use of the *"Za dom spremni"* text only in the insignia of the Croatian Defense Forces (HOS) (see Kusić 2018).

Commemorations of *Dan sjećanja na žrtvu Vukovara/* the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Vukovar, an unofficial holiday each 18 November, also elevate the defender narrative over that of (supposedly civilian) victims, to whom the date is dedicated. As the commemoration is nominally victim-centred, I will provide a more thorough description of the events and an analysis of the

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"Vitezovi" may also refer to the *Postrojba posebne namjene*/Special Purpose Unit *"Vitezovi" (PPN Vitezovi)*, a paramilitary group active in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1993, but the monuments mentioned here do not refer to this group specifically.

visual content of this commemoration in the next chapter. Though the speeches take a more religious than political tone in comparison to the Knin celebrations (indeed, almost all speeches made since 2014 are by local or national Catholic leaders), *branitelji* are mentioned more frequently – 38 times from 2014 to 2017 – than victims/*žrtve* – 29 times. Perhaps unsurprisingly, "Croat/s" and "Croatia" are the most frequent term used in these speeches – 99 times – closely followed by "Vukovar" – 93 times. In Chapter 5, as well, I trace the progress (or lack thereof) of the narrative conflict between defenders and the victims of the Homeland War, whose marginalisation in politics is reflected in their absence in Croatia's visual memory culture today.

Defending Themselves: Internal challenges to the narrative

Here, I discuss challenges from within Croatia to the predominance of the "defender" narrative, given its central status through the 2000 Declaration of the Homeland War, discussed in this section. These include critiques from the left, particularly the Social Democratic Party of Croatia, pro-European human rights organisations seeking reconciliation between former combatants, and the post-war generation, here represented by examples from recent campaigns by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights. This section will give context to the concept of "counter-memory" (Foucault 1980) and "counter-narrative" (Y. Zerubavel 1995) by demonstrating instances of resistance to the prevalence of the "defender" narrative, which includes an internal critique thereof by a former soldier who participated in the early stages of the Homeland War and points toward wider domestic pressure from local youth activists. This section will again reinforce prior discussions of power and identity in this chapter and in the literature review and draws on reflections on and reactions to war narratives from below (individual testimony and resistance by civil society) and above (defenders' associations and state institutions).

The centralised nature of the public representation of Croatia's defenders is in the first instance challenged at the private level, even among former combatants, for whom the decision to fight for their "homeland" or Yugoslavia was intimately linked with family histories. In this section, I incorporate personal recollections of the war and examples of resistance in civil society to the centralised defender narratives. One defender I met in Zagreb was raised in a socialist family in Croatia, his grandfather and great-uncle closely linked with Tito's movements in the early stages of the Second World War. His father, born in the El Shatt refugee camp for Yugoslav Partisans in Egypt, was a committed supporter of the SFRJ, despite purges of family members by the new

communist government in the post-war years. During his obligatory military service in the late 1980s, Marko[15], my contact, was stationed in Kosovo, and recalled his decision to leave for Croatia in 1991, to fight for – in his words – his "home country." His brother was among the first Croats to attend a mass recruitment at the Maksimir stadium, site of the Dinamo-Red Star riot of 13 May 1990, in many ways a symbolic start to the wars in Yugoslavia; Marko's father eventually joined the Croatian forces later in the conflict. Marko himself was the first of the Croats stationed in his unit in Kosovo to leave to fight in the Homeland War, but eventually the remaining soldiers also left, often by asking for rides from sympathetic Albanians to Belgrade, a sign that they were indeed headed onward to Zagreb.

In 1993, Marko joined the United Nations peacekeeping forces as a translator, in part as a rejection of the nationalism that had become integral to the identity of many *branitelji*. Since the war, however, Marko sees little reason to ostracise right-wing fighters and inversely has experienced little criticism from nationalists for his personal politics. Rather, whenever he has encountered other *branitelji* or Serbs who also took part in the wars in the 1990s, Marko claims that there has been some sense of mutual understanding or acknowledgement of a shared experience, no matter how miserable it was. For right-wing Croats, political divides are brushed aside for the sake of national unity, in line with Franjo Tuđman's vision of "reconciling" the sons and grandsons of communists and fascists, while for Serbs, the war was an experience in which they and Croats like Marko were pulled into unwillingly, that is, the war was not something they but rather the political élite had caused.

These personal stories, that is, the communicative memories of Yugoslavia's demise (see A. Assmann and Frevert 1999), get lost in the politics of nationalising memory that ultimately are reflected in the public face of memory, whether in Croatia or elsewhere. Such tales challenge at the most micro-level the narratives that have been crafted by master manipulators like Franjo Tuđman, Slobodan Milošević, their proxies and their successors, but given their highly intimate, autobiographic, and in many cases traumatising, nature, the power these stories and their authors have in influencing wider public discourses of the past is limited. This does not mean, however,

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[15] Name altered to preserve anonymity.

that others have been more active and successful in challenging the centrality, exclusivity and nationalism of the defenders and their role in the formation of post-conflict identity in Croatia.

The sanctity of the defender narrative is embodied in the 2000 Declaration on the Homeland War, which describes the war as "just and legitimate, and not an aggressive war or war of conquest against anyone, in which it [Croatia] defended its territory from Greater Serbian aggression within internationally recognised borders" (Sabor 2000. The 2006 Declaration on Operation Storm claimed to correct and "[defend] the historical truth" of Storm adopted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and to acknowledge the legitimacy of the military action undertaken against the RSK in August 1995 (Sabor 2006). Storm had been coordinated in large part by Croatian General Ante Gotovina, indicted by the ICTY in 2001 for crimes against humanity, among other charges, during Storm; upon his subsequent arrest in the Canary Islands in 2005, initial guilty verdict in 2011 and sentencing to twenty-four years in prison, Croatian veterans mobilised to clear his name and to venerate him as a saviour of the fledgling Croatian state. This effort represents the impetus to preserve the defenders' relative power over memory and their own narrative in light of real legal challenges to – in their eyes – an unblemished record of legitimate defence of the Croatian state and nation. When acquitted and released from The Hague the following year, Gotovina received a hero's welcome in Zagreb, not unlike the reception granted to radical Serbian politician Vojislav Šešelj upon his return to Belgrade on temporary medical release from the United Nations Detention Unit of Scheveningen prison in 2014. I still recall "Gotovina – Heroj" posters depicting the general in full military uniform while travelling along the Adriatic coast from Zadar to Split in May 2013.

The domestic imperative of defending the defenders' legacy while conforming to the EU's conditions for Croatian accession to the bloc in the early 2000s presented a challenge to the SDP-led governments that succeeded Franjo Tuđman. The first government to form in the wake of his death in December 1999 was elected in January 2000, headed by Prime Minister Ivica Račan. Račan led with two cabinets of various coalitions with liberal democrats, the first also in cooperation with the Croatian Peasant Party until 2002. As the SDP was seen as a successor to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and thereby as the "Other" and the political enemy of Croatian nationalists, its power was seen as a threat to that of the defenders and the HDZ's legacy of leading Croatia through war and independence. Under Račan, Croatia signed the Stabilisation

and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, a precursor to accession negotiations that opened with a formal application for membership, again under Račan, in February 2003. As Europeanisation was a driving factor in the election of a social-democratic government, Račan faced heavy criticism from nationalist and far-right actors, who labelled him a traitor for pursuing those generals indicted by the ICTY. Cooperation with the ICTY was made a prerequisite for Croatian accession to the EU as part of the bloc's interpretation of the Copenhagen criteria regarding rule of law (see Schimmelfennig 2008, 928-929). By demonstrating a willingness to conform to EU demands, however, the Croatian government would "[undertake] activities that clearly conflict[ed] with the self-conception of Croatia as a heroic and innocent nation" (Freyberg and Richter 2010, 271). Whereas the prevailing narrative of the defenders had represented a form of institutional memory, the challenges and criticisms toward this narrative were framed as a sort of "counter-narrative" that sought to modify, undermine or fully replace what had been built up as the sole acceptable account of the Homeland War. Defenders were framed as victims of the new government, with the sanctity of their sacrifices, their honour as soldiers, and ultimately their very identities called into question, with their power to endure removed by a foreign actor with no seeming stake in the matter of the Homeland War. Fisher notes,

> *Instead of trying to form alliances with the current ruling parties, [war veterans'] groups have tried to mobilise the population in favour of radical activities that are apparently aimed at bringing down the current pro-Western government and reinstating HDZ. While under HDZ the veterans attained a privileged position mainly because their views were similar to or the same as those of HDZ, under the current leadership the veterans' increasingly radical approach appears to be pushing them to the edge of society* (Fisher 2003, 87).

I address this perceived marginalisation in the following section. More widely, attempts by civil society organisations and social-democratic politicians to remember the war dead, including fallen Serbs, often have been met by protests in Zagreb. In October 2014, under another SDP-led coalition headed by Prime Minister Zoran, then-Assistant Minister of Croatian Defenders Bojan Glavašević claimed that Serb victims of the war should be treated equally as other war victims and, *inter alia*, be recognised as a traumatised group as had been the Croatian defenders. This, as described by Koska and Matan, was perceived by conservative groups (particularly veterans' associations) as "blasphemy which inflicts damage to the very fibre of Croatian society" (2017, 142). Glavašević's father, Siniša (see Epilogue), was a renowned journalist who was murdered in

Ovčara in November 1991, yet Bojan Glavašević, a Social Democratic (SDP) parliamentarian, maintains a reconciliatory approach to Serbs. His remark provoked a series of protests involving veterans camping outside Ministry offices for several months, who demanded the resignation or sacking of Glavašević, the Minister of War Veterans Predrag Matić and his deputy Vesna Nađ. The protests ultimately ended in April 2016, eighteen months later, and eventually led to the creation of the 2017 Law on Croatian Veterans noted above; the SDP lost national elections in 2015, and Matić, Nađ and Glavašević were replaced (Milekić 2016b). The violence that marked various periods of the protests underscores the tense situation that exists in public discourse about "defenders" and their current status as well as the lack of support for war victims across Croatia.

Similarly, a 2016 campaign by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights/*Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava* (YIHR Hrvatska), which featured advertisements in billboards and on public buses and trams across Zagreb asking forgiveness from victims for the suffering inflicted upon them during Operation Storm, was met by reactionary voices from the Croatian right. The #ISPRIKA ("excuse") posters stated, "National interest is a confession, not a lie"[16] over an image of large columns of Serbs evacuating Croatia after Operation Storm and "*Nacionalni interes je prihvaćanje, a ne mržnja/*National interest is acceptance, not hate" over the rainbow flag, symbolising both peace and LGBT+ individuals, who are often mistreated in Croatia as elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia (Figure 4.15). Then-program coordinator Joco Glavaš claimed, "If the liberation of Knin is celebrated, there should also be a commemoration for the victims of Storm" (Slobodna Dalmacija 2016). HDZ politician and former Split city council member Hrvoje Marušić replied via a post on Facebook, "You Yugoslav-Communist bastards, you should be sentenced, shot... If we were a democratic state, you would be tried for grand treason and shot. And probably they will [shoot you], soon" (Milekić 2018b).

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[16] Original text in Croatian: "*Nacionalni interes je priznanje, a ne laž.*"

Source (left): Slobodna Dalmacija (2016). Source (right): Žapčić, A. (2016).

The YIHR campaign represents a generational shift in the approach to Croatia's past and a recognition of the suffering inflicted on others in the name of nationalism. Many of my friends and acquaintances from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia have expressed disinterest or outright intolerance of such behaviour from right-wing actors, who they have accused of apologising for fascism and genocide. One friend, admittedly a self-declared socialist, stated his frustration outright in a conversation over my research one evening: "I hate the *branitelji*!." Others I have encountered have suggested that defenders have co-opted a narrative of victimhood that is not exclusively theirs (a phenomenon I discuss in Chapter 5) in order to gain public and material support, in doing so spinning conspiracy theories – many involving the Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros – about those who point out any self-contradictions or irregularities in their retellings of the past.

In this section, I have provided an overview of various instances of resistance to the top-down constructed narrative of Homeland War veterans as the legitimate and infallible defenders of the Croatian nation, each chipping away at this rigid and uncritical framework of remembrance. Though no singular, coherent "counter-narrative" has emerged, I argue that given the disjointed nature of civil society in Croatia, various "counter-memories," that is, interpretations of memory that challenge the conservative view of the defenders, do exist, across all levels of society. Marko's role as a defender and his conversation with me about his past represent a small-scale intervention in the communicative memory of the Homeland War, while larger-scale domestic critiques by the

SDP and YIHR show how the defender narrative can be challenged at the level of cultural memory. Finally, the process of Europeanisation as it continues to play out in Croatia demonstrates the process of negotiating supranational or transnational memory, corresponding to Jan Assmann's framework of collective memory (see J. Assmann 2011). The following section returns to the domestic arena of cultural memory and frames gender as another critical dividing line in the construction of a monolithic identity of the defenders.

Masculinity and Heroism: Gendering the Croatian commemorative process

The defender narrative is overwhelmingly masculine in tone and content, as reflected in commemorative events and memorial spaces across the country. While most war narratives are also marked by masculine voices, the presence of women as defenders, bystanders and victims of the Homeland War throws a metaphorical wrench in the predominant retelling of the war and its aftermath. This section explores the *braniteljice,* Croatia's female defenders, their presence or absence in the public face of memory in Croatia, and what an examination of gender in the context of war adds to a wider understanding of post-war identity formation. Here, too, I suggest some similarities to other post-war narratives (namely Yugoslav) and idiosyncrasies of the Croatian commemoration of the Homeland War, focusing on the differential role gender has played in the remembrance of nation-founding wars.

Of the approximately half-million defenders registered by the Republic of Croatia through 2013, only about 23,000 were women. *Braniteljice,* or women more generally who were not aristocrats, artists or authors (see below), are not mentioned, nor are they made visible in public memorial spaces in any particular way. Mayer describes the presentation of war as a masculine feat, not a realm of women, stating, "Masculinity is expressed in the 'man's' world of the battlefield. While these expressions can be seen as typical of military rhetoric, they enter into the strategic language of ethnocracy as expressions selected for public consumption [...]" (Mayer 2012, 93). This public consumption, "on television or in popular magazines and newspapers" (ibid.), also takes place in memorial spaces, all of these a form of Aleida Assmann's "symbolic media" of cultural memory (A. Assmann 2012, 175). While the Croatian language, like German, may have a deference to masculine nouns in situations involving groups where men are present, there was no monument, no memorial placard, and no museum that retold the experiences of female fighters in the

Homeland War.[17] It took until 2 June 2018 for a *Trg hrvatskih braniteljica/*"Square of Croatian (Female) Defenders" to be dedicated, and at that in the small village of Mošćenica (population 2,471), at the initiative of Petrinja mayor Darinko Dumbović, whose mother Marija, a Croatian defender, officially dedicated the square (HINA 2018a; see Figure 4.16 below).

Figure 4.16: Marija Dumbović dedicates *Trg hrvatskih braniteljica*: Mošćenica

Source: Gršić, M. (2018b).

A handful of organisations of female defenders does exist, particularly in the areas most directly impacted by the Homeland War, Dalmatia and Eastern Slavonia. There is a *Women's Club of the Association of Volunteers and Veterans of the Homeland War* in Petrinja, an *Association of Female Defenders of Vukovar-Srijem County*, founded in 2010, and an *Association of Women in the Homeland War* in Zadar. These groups have organised *Dani braniteljica/*"Days of the Female Defenders," hosted public talks and exhibitions and participated in commemorative events across Croatia (Gršić 2018a). The Association of Female Defenders of Vukovar-Srijem County

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[17] *Braniteljica* also refers to female lawyers, which may limit the effectiveness of most cursory searches for information on those who participated in the Homeland War.

additionally hosts annual *Festivali domoljubne poezije/*"Festivals of Patriotic Poetry," with the aim of preventing forgetting the sacrifices of the defenders (UBDRVSŽ 2016).

Despite this work, the voices of the female defenders have not been integrated into the mainstream narrative of the Homeland War that is driven by (male) veterans' associations, like those who led the 18-month protest against the Ministry of Croatian Defenders from 2014 to 2016. The only instance in my initial museum fieldwork from 2017 to 2018 where I noticed images of women in military fatigues was at an open exhibition at the Hrvatski dom Glina; of the hundreds of images placed on boards around the small gallery, only a few dozen featured women, where they appear to be performing auxiliary or secretarial roles rather than participating in active combat. This was only complemented by the *Jutarnji list* poster insert noted in Figure 4.12 above. Only one image depicts a woman holding a gun (Figure 4.17 below). As well, the only monument to make mention of women was in the context of war victims in Vukovar, which perpetuates the more prevalent narrative of women as passive victims with no agency to choose whether to participate in conflict – a history of war written and fought by men. Women in war have been subjected to humiliating rape and sexual abuse by men, whether professional soldiers, paramilitary forces or police, and the war in Croatia is no exception. While the Croatian state has passed a law for compensation of victims of wartime sexual violence, as I discuss in the following chapter, the lingering effects of such violence on its victims and their communities are irreparable.

Women depicted in various (but few) images at the temporary exhibition of war-time photography, many shown in auxiliary roles, Hrvatski dom Glina, 24 August 2017.

Further, until very recently no monument to Croatia's female defenders existed, as their stories were often co-opted into the wider *branitelj* narrative explained throughout this chapter. Until one of my last visits to Zagreb in June 2019, I noted no memorial placard, no monument, no museum, save for the seemingly impromptu photo exhibition in Glina, and no artwork commemorating women who fought in the Homeland War. However, a new monument to Nevenka Topalušić, a disabled *braniteljica* who died during the course of the defenders' protests in 2014, was installed in front the building of the Ministry of Croatian Veterans, where the protests occurred. During the Homeland War, Topalušić fought in Vrbovec near Zagreb and in Operations Storm in Una, during which she was wounded (Rašović 2014).

The monument to Topalušić (Figure 4.18)**,** and the small square renamed in her memory at Savska cesta 66, features her face engraved into a slab of marble, accompanied by the text "*za domovinu uvijek spremni, 20.X.2014, 100% za Hrvatsku*," in reference to the rallying call of the protests led by invalid war veterans. Her name, birth and death years are also noted in a small slab below. The text again highlights the problematic relationship between the narrative of the defenders and that of the Ustaša, also formerly (and among far-right circles, contemporarily) seen as liberators of

the Croatian nation. By selecting the text "*za domovinu uvijek spremni*"/"Always ready for the homeland" – that is, a slight modification of "*za dom spremni*" – the monument's creators knowingly seek continuity in the narrative of Croatian independence, without any sense of critical regard to the fascist slogan's impact on Croatian identity. Keeping in line with other monuments to the defenders across the country, a large metal cross strung with rosary beads has been placed in the very centre of the memorial courtyard, and flowers featuring the *šahovnica*, topped with small Croatian flags, and memorial candles with the slogan "100% for Croatia" surround the monument.

Figure 4.18: Monument to *braniteljica* Nevenka Topalušić: Zagreb

Monument to disabled veteran Nevenka Topalušić at Savska cesta 66, in front of the Ministry of Croatian Veterans, Zagreb, 16 June 2019.

With the few exceptions above, the Croatian experience highlights a remarkable shift from the narrative of active female Partisan fighters in the Second World War, a total war in which anyone with the means to participate could and did. Chiara Bonfiglioli's writing on these "dangerous women," the *Partizanke*, demonstrates the degree to which women were integrated in the war

effort to liberate Yugoslavia from enemy combatants. She notes, "The contribution of *partizanke*, [...] to the Yugoslav liberation war was unprecedented in occupied Europe: official statistics of the socialist period report 100,000 women fighting as partisans, and two million participating in various ways to the support of the National Liberation Movement. Approximately 25,000 women died in battle, 40,000 were wounded, and 2,000 of them acquired the officer's rank, while 92 women were designated as national heroes." *Partizanke* were remembered as soldiers and volunteers in the anti-fascist struggle, and their memories are slowly being revived by memory activists across the region who seek to build "counter-memories [...] as a repertoire against the post-socialist retraditionalisation of gender relations" (Bonfiglioli 2016). The image of the *partizanka* was also popularised in the post-war era through film and literature as a "Revolutionary Icon" in, for example, Vjekoslav Afrić's *Slavica* (1947) or, only later in Lordan Zafranović's film *Pad Italije* (1981) (see also Batinić 2015). The revolutionary nature of gender equality in socialist Yugoslavia, it appears, has been eschewed by the modern Croatian state in its commemorative practices. If any legacy of the Yugoslav era remains, it is in the narrative of "liberation" against an aggressor, here Serbia, but without the insights of the women who participated – whether willingly or not – in the Homeland War.

It follows, too, that the gendered aspects of this narrative should be more thoroughly investigated in future research; as noted above, from my initial field visits, no monuments bore the feminine form of "defender," *braniteljica*, but a memorial placard at the Ovčara Memorial Centre outside Vukovar noted, "On this place in 1991, Croatian defenders, children, <u>women</u> and the elderly were captured, tortured and killed in Ovčara." On the other hand, the exhibition in the Hrvatski dom Glina did show images of women wearing combat fatigues, but this appears to be a rare exception to the otherwise male-dominant history of warfare. Some exceptions do exist, particularly in the more gender-neutral commemoration of the Yugoslav Partisan fighters, many of whom were women encouraged to participate in battle given the state of total warfare in Yugoslavia during the Second World War (Pantelić 2013).

The role of women in the Croatian commemorative process is relegated to their functions as mothers, widows or daughters, and not as individuals with agency or the right to be remembered as individuals, with former President Grabar-Kitarović in her position as head of state as one of very few exceptions. Women, therefore, are defined in their relationships to men – and to male

defenders – rather than active participants in the mnemonic sphere. Collins (2009) describes the links between hierarchies in family life and their extensions to nations and other large social groups. The presentation of women as dependents of men in the Croatian mnemonic landscape stems from the socialisation of individuals in families, where hierarchical relationships between men and women are viewed as "natural social arrangements, as compared to socially constructed ones" (Collins 2009, 64). The few remaining images of non-combatant women in the Homeland War I documented include the famous weeping mother mural in Vukovar, on the main road linking the town centre with the memorial cemetery near Ovčara, and a monument of a mourning woman holding a dying man in the Dalmatian city of Benkovac. These memorials in many ways mirror the images of the Mothers of Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina mourning over the graves of their family members who died in July 1995 (Figure 4.19). These reinforce the "traditional," that is, hierarchical, image of the family, with mothers, wives, sisters and daughters acting subserviently to men, placing male needs before their own, extending the metaphor of "mothers of the nation" or such similar formulations through abstract visual depictions of women in these memorial sites.

Left: Mural of a weeping mother on Trg slavija, Vukovar, 3 July 2017. Centre: Monument of woman holding a dying man, dedicated to Croatian patriots, Benkovac, 20 March 2018. Right: A family member of a victim of the Srebrenica genocide kneels by a coffin containing recently unearthed remains in preparation for burial, Srebrenica (BiH), 11 July 2014 (from personal archive).

Every other statue or image of a woman built or painted after the dissolution of Yugoslavia I documented featured an abstract, nameless person (Figure 4.20); artists and authors who predated Tito's Yugoslavia, such as Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (1874 – 1938, monument built 2004), the American-French dancer Isadora Duncan (1877 – 1927, monument built 2002), and the Croatian-American ballerina Mia Čorak Slavenska (1916 – 2002, memorial plaque installed

2004); or religious figures like the Virgin Mary, venerated medieval queens, and in an unusual case in Slavonia, Mother Teresa (1910 – 1997, from 1918 to 1948 a Yugoslav subject and citizen, monument built 2017). In total, of 614 monuments I recorded in Croatia between 2016 and 2019, only 32 bore images of women, 22 of just women, and fourteen dedicated to specific historical women (not including the Virgin Mary). Of the six monuments I noted that were dedicated after Croatian independence in 1991, only two – those to Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and to Nevenka Topalušić – remember women whose entire lives were spent in Croatia, and only the latter remembering a female political actor.

Figure 4.20: Nameless women: Đakovo, Vidovec, Split
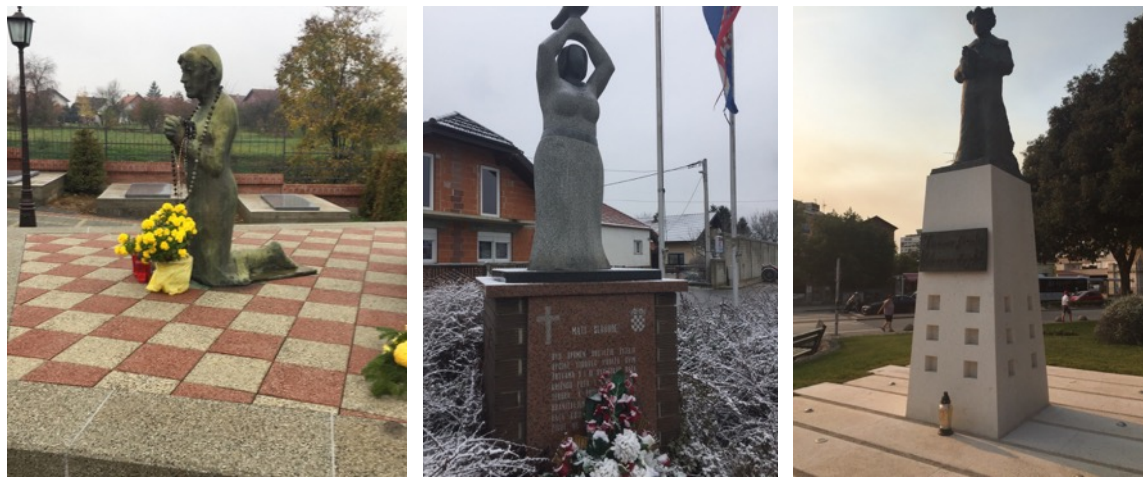
Left: Monument to Croatian defenders depicting a woman kneeling on a *šahovnica*-patterned platform, Đakovo, 17 November 2017. Centre: "*Mati slobode*" monument to all victims of Second World War, the Bleiburg repatriations, communist terror, and fallen defenders of the Homeland War, Vidovec, 18 March 2018. Right: Angel "Lumin," dedicated to victims of Vukovar massacre, Split, 2 August 2017.

All other extant busts or sculptures remembering *individual* women were created during the socialist period from 1943 to 1991 and are dedicated primarily to "national heroes," that is, the *partizanke*, of the Second World War. Other Yugoslav depictions of women in groups are often abstracted, but in some instances feature women as equal citizens and fighters, standing before men or women holding weapons, in line with the abstract artistic style of socialist monuments in Southern and Eastern Europe in the post-Second World War era (Figure 4.21). The greatest number of these, however, are to be found in Istria, a stronghold of Yugoslav memory, in part due to its long history of multi-ethnic cohabitation amongst Croats, Italians and Slovenes, and the lack of violent action during the Homeland War on the peninsula. These monuments remember

"national heroes," "activists" and "fallen fighters," suggesting quite literally the vision of a woman as an individual with agency to act in both her and the national interest.

Top left: Monument to Yugoslav partisan fighters depicting a woman holding a rifle, Dr. Franjo Tuđman Park, Sisak, 24 August 2017. Top right: Bust of Zorica Stipančić. Yugoslav "activist," Buzet, 5 May 2019. Bottom left: Yugoslav monument to Partisan commander Marko Orešković and other fighters in the "People's/National Liberation Struggle," Korenica, 6 August 2017. Bottom right: Monument to fallen fighters and victims of fascist terror, Juricani, 4 May 2019.

The role of gender in forming national identity in Croatia has been overshadowed by the action of men in the defence of Croatia during the Homeland War, and not by the actions of women who may also share in that victory. The public face of memory in Croatia is masculine, it does not cry, it does not suffer, it only sacrifices and is martyred for the good of the nation and of the Croatian state. Women, therefore, are seen as passive carriers of identity, borne in their bodies but not through their actions. In the next chapter, I will briefly discuss the implications of gender, victimhood and memory in Croatia and the use of women's bodies as markers of identity, as there is already a wealth a literature on the intersection of gender and nationalism (see again Collins 2009; Mostov 2012; see also Kaplan et al. 1999; Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989).

Conclusion

The above analysis has shown how the identity of Croatian defenders has been constructed discursively and physically in the many monuments erected in their honour across the country. The near-impossible separation of the HDZ from the survival of the narrative of the *branitelji* has been one of the most important features of domestic policymaking and an ever-recurring element of the debate on who holds the power over memory in Croatia. By looking at the construction of the *branitelji* narrative first, I allow myself to return to this case again and again to show the contrasts and contradictions of Croatian memory politics as they relate to the defenders, the "Other," in the next chapter Serbs, and similarly marginalised groups, including women (above) and civilian victims of the Homeland War.

This chapter examined various concepts that address the intersections of memory, identity, violence and power, including the defenders' construction of their own identity as one of both victor and victim. I argued that the framing of defenders as infallible saviours of the Croatian nation, borrowing from Christian iconography, has provided little room for public critique of the narrative of the Homeland War that has been enforced from the top down. The commemoration of Operation Storm held in Knin every August provides the clearest example of narrative construction through visual means, underpinned by the physical presence of monuments along the former frontlines dedicated almost entirely to the defenders and not the civilian victims of the conflict (see again Figure 4.14). Most importantly, the use of Serbs as the "Other" – more so as the "enemy" – serves as a major identity boundary for Croatian defenders and, following the narrative embodied in memorial spaces and commemorative events, further for the Croatian nation

as an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). The impact of this framing has implications beyond the former Yugoslavia, as the perceived necessity of an "Other," particularly one defined by historic violence, in creating an in-group identity poses serious challenges to mutual acknowledgement of suffering and the possible development of a shared, collective memory of that bloody past in all post-conflict societies. While I focused primarily on the visual manifestations of cultural memory (A. Assmann 1999), I also address how counter-narratives (Y. Zerubavel 1995) or at the very least counter-memories (Foucault 1980) have emerged at sub-, intra- and supranational levels, that is, narratives of resistance or change exist in the communicative (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999) and cultural (J. Assmann 2011) memory spheres, too. By acknowledging the multi-level process of memory- and identity-making, I complexify my rather linear model of the transformation of power over memory into the power to endure, deepening and physically contextualising the links of memory studies to the sociology of identity, whether national or individual. Finally, I have expanded the documentary work on Croatian historial monuments and commemorations similarly undertaken by Donald Niebyl in his Spomenik Database project and by the FRAMNAT research group in Rijeka by linking the patterns of memorialisation such monuments as those presented here and in the following two chapters to wider social dynamics of power and identity. Where these two projects selectively focus on Yugoslav *spomenici* and commemorative events of twentieth-century traumas in Croatia, respectively, I take a more holistic view of memorialisation and identity formation. This allows greater scope to bridge both methodological and theoretical gaps between various complementary disciplines (sociology, history, political science) that often intersect in the field of memory studies.

In this thesis so far, I have focussed more directly on how the past is remembered, but in the next chapter, I will discuss how and why certain social groups are forgotten and the intentionality or lack thereof behind this process. This and the following chapters highlight social processes and political decision-making that emerge in the case study of Croatia as a site of mnemonic conflict, both internal and external, also demonstrating how nationalism and memory intersect in the public performance of memory. Chapter 5 builds from this analysis of the defender narrative and explores how it prevails over victim-centric memory, even in spaces where it might not be expected. ★

Chapter 5: Žrtve
Victims

Memorial sites presented in Chapter 5
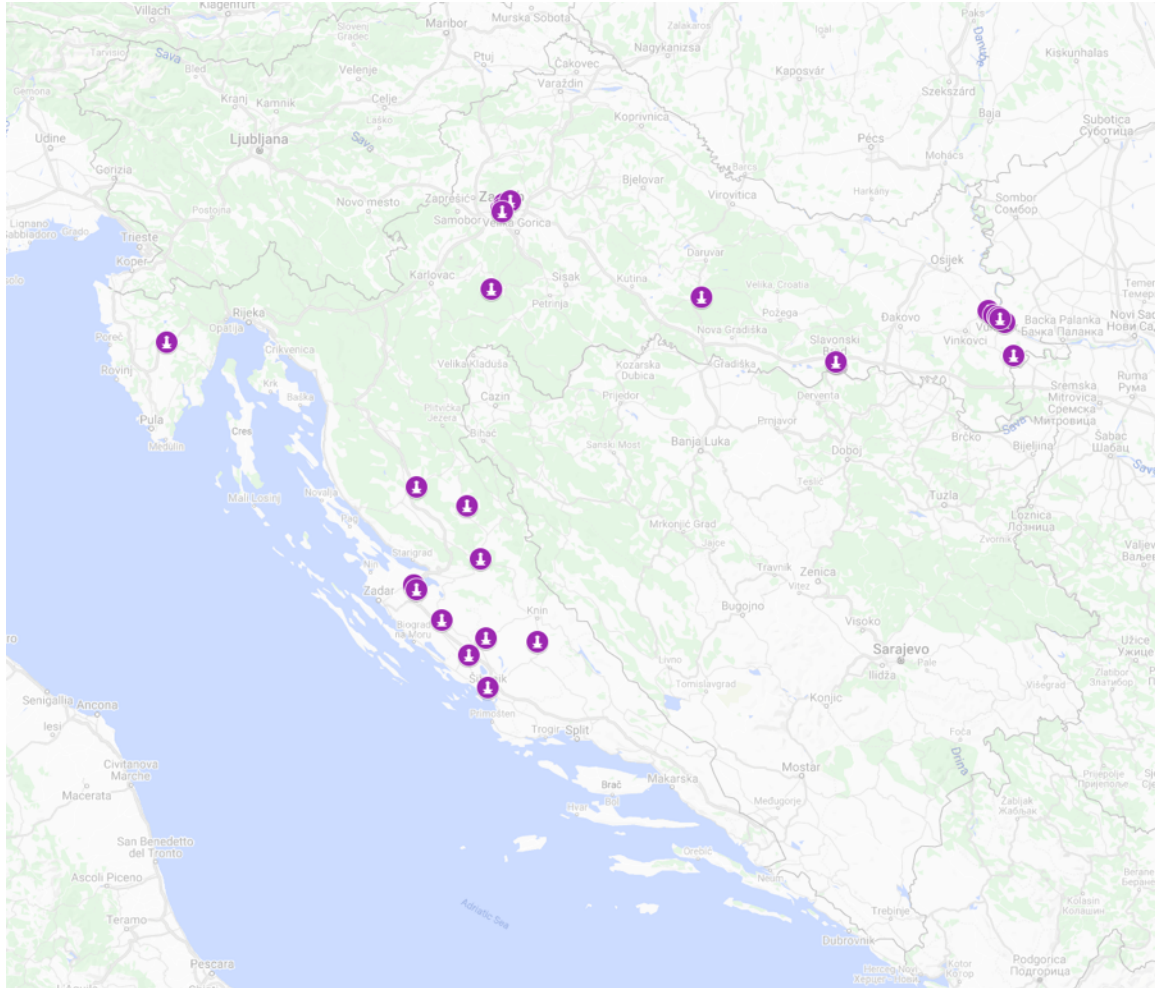
Introduction

This chapter examines how victims of the Homeland War from both sides (Croats and Serbs) are remembered – or forgotten – and how the Yugoslav narratives of the Second World War, which incorporate more thoroughly both victims and fighters, have been modified, challenged or erased in today's Croatia. Specifically, I analyse the commemoration of the 1991 siege of Vukovar and various monuments to civilian victims of the Second World War and Homeland War, retributive violence against Serbs in Dalmatia in 1995 and the 1991 and 1995 rocket attacks on Zagreb. The Vukovar commemoration acts as a point of comparison to the events on Victory Day in Knin presented in Chapter 4, with the added discussion of nominally victim-centric monuments highlighting again the centrality of the Catholic faith to Croatian identity. Here I discuss narratives of victimhood, competitive victimhood, othering, forced amnesia and denial, which demonstrate the difficulties in forming not only a wider collective memory of the Homeland War or of conflict in general but also in the creation of a singular, national identity. In both wars observed here, the memory of the individual victim had been subsumed by state narratives of collective suffering, but remembering both the individual and the collective victims has been overshadowed by the elevation of the combatant hero, as discussed in Chapter 4.

This chapter addresses the following research questions through my observations of memorial events and spaces and by demonstrating the visual elements of the narratives at play:

- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?
- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?
- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?

Further, I ask how the continual divide between Serb and Croat victims harms the process of reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia and what the absence of victims' voices means for the construction of post-conflict identity and particularly in Croatia to the promise of an open, "European" future. My key argument in this chapter is that the predominance of the defender

narrative, in which not only civilians but also fallen soldiers are framed as "victims of Greater Serbian aggression," provides little space for the creation of distinct narratives of civilian victims, both Croat and Serb, and this is reflected in the public face of memory in Croatia today. I also return to the question directly addressed in Chapter 4 on the elevation of the "defender" narrative in contemporary Croatian cultural memory and extend this to include the narrative of the "fighters" in the Yugoslav "National Liberation Struggle," that is, the Second World War. I argue firstly how understandings of victimhood blur the line between victor, victim and vanquished; this is achieved through the commemoration of soldiers in memorial spaces that are otherwise nominally dedicated to civilian victims of war. Secondly, I discuss the resulting complications of historical revisionism (particularly toward the Bleiburg repatriations of May 1945), again discussing "memory abuse" in the context of contemporary clashes over Croatian cultural memory. Finally, I address the collectivisation of guilt toward Croatian Serbs that have arisen since the 1990s, which I argue is a result of conservative and nationalist groups exercising their power over memory to exclude and demonise the "Other."

This chapter is divided into two main sections, the first analysing the commemoration of the fall of Vukovar and the framing of this defeat as "martyrdom," questioning the nature of civilian agency in times of war. The purpose of this first section is to show through ethnographic description how *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989) enter the cultural psyche and how local memories can develop into national or even supranational memories. In the second section, I look at how the narratives of victimhood in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Homeland War were constructed and more carefully at how the use of European anti-totalitarian discourse has allowed modern Croatian politicians to reshape and relativise the history of the "victims" of the Bleiburg repatriations in 1945. This allows me to return to the concept of "memory abuse" I presented in Chapter 1 (see also McConnell 2019) in the context of erasure or denial of victims' narratives of suffering brought about in the pursuit of Croatian independence. In doing so, I expand upon Jelin's conceptualisation of "memory entrepreneurs" (see Jelin 2003) as those opportunists who use memory to advance agendas from which only they, and not Croatian society more widely, profit. A brief insight into how I encountered this sort of disregard for the victimhood of the "Other" in the Memorial Centre for the Rocket Attacks in Zagreb is provided at the end of the chapter. This chapter advances knowledge on Croatian memory politics as a substantive case by applying the exercise of power by privileged groups like the "defenders" to the process of national

identity formation while suppressing marginal voices and marginal memories of those whose experiences clash with the narratives presented in Chapter 4. My analysis here also complements existing documentary work on Homeland War memorialisation by the FRAMNAT research group (i.e. FRAMNAT 2015; 2017) and various authors in the fields of political and social science (i.e. Kardov 2007; Schellenberg 2015; Banjeglav 2019).

Remembering Vukovar: Victims, martyrs and the (selective) memory of war suffering

In this section, I provide a detailed description of the November 2017 commemoration in Vukovar, which serves as a foundation for analysis later in the chapter of "martyrdom," agency and the making of cultural memory. The ethnographic insights here build a case study of one of the three major commemorative events (Bleiburg, Knin, Vukovar) in the Croatian mnemonic calendar, which functions as a moment to record both oral/communicative and visual/cultural manifestations of memory and to show how identity boundaries are performed and contested. I address again the characteristics of cultural memory (see Assmann and Shortt 2012, 3) that allow for the manipulation of certain narratives to fit commemorations and memorial spaces around certain group identities, be they "Yugoslav," "Croatian," or other.

The annual commemoration of the 1991 fall of Vukovar takes place on 18 November, officially *Dan sjećanja na žrtvu Vukovara 1991. godine/* "Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Vukovar 1991," the day on which Croatian fighters surrendered to JNA forces who had besieged the city since that August. Several thousand Croatian civilians and defenders were killed in the three-month siege in Vukovar and in further fighting across eastern Slavonia, with reports of summary executions of Croatian soldiers in the battle's aftermath (Sudetic 1991). On 20 November 1991, over 200 civilians and Croatian prisoners of war were taken from the local hospital by JNA, Serb paramilitary and Territorial Defence soldiers and murdered in the nearby Ovčara farm, the largest death toll of any of the war crimes committed against the Croatian civilian population during the Homeland War. Throughout the siege, the majority of private and commercial property in Vukovar was partially or totally destroyed, including the Eltz Manor (now the Vukovar City Museum), the Hotel Nacional, later the House of Workers, and the *Vodotoranj*, the now pockmarked brick-and-concrete water tower that looms over the Danube (Seeney 2006) (see Figure 5.1).

Source, top row: Images by Ron Haviv. Top left: A father and son fighting in a Serb paramilitary unit smile at the destruction of Vukovar. Top right: Vukovar residents flee the city amongst its rubble. Source, bottom left: Image by Miloš Cvetković (all present in the "up close and personal: war in croatia" exhibition, Image of War Photography Museum Zagreb); destroyed storefront in the centre of Vukovar. Bottom right, Vukovar *Vodotoranj*, 3 July 2017.

Each year in the weeks surrounding the commemoration, especially on All Saint's Day on 1 November, memorial candles are lit and wreaths laid on freshly swept graves and monuments across Croatia; in many towns in Slavonia, candles in the shape of the *Vodotoranj* and the colours of the Croatian flag line the roads heading into Vukovar from Vinkovci, Ilok and Osijek, commercial products that advance the memory of wartime suffering. While other municipalities across the country hold smaller-scale commemorative events on 18 November, the ceremonies in Vukovar continue to draw tens of thousands each year, including a wide array of defenders, their families and friends, public and religious figures, as well as a small collection of peace activists. When I travelled to Vukovar for the commemoration in November 2017, events had been underway for five days, beginning with a two-day conference on "Vukovar 1991: Public Discourses and Positions of Power," hosted by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences. Events on 16 and 17 November included a poetry recital by the Association of Female Defenders of the

Homeland War, prayer ceremonies at the Memorial Cemetery for Victims of the Homeland War in Vukovar (where the main commemoration would take place on the eighteenth) and a symposium on the hospital from which the victims of the Vukovar massacre were taken. Of the nine events preceding the larger ceremonies on 18 November, five were organised by defender or police associations, representing the soldiers who fought and died in the siege. Around the main cathedral in nearby Đakovo, I also noticed a small gathering of motorcycle enthusiasts heading toward Vukovar in time for the commemorations the following morning; many of the men in the crowd sported black leather jackets with the large insignia of the *Gladijatori/*"gladiators" along the backs, a large white-then-red *šahovnica* framed with golden wings and topped with a Croatian flag featuring a cross in the middle. The *Gladijatori* are a motorcycle club founded in 2012 in Vinkovci by former members of the Fifth Guard Brigade ("The Falcons"), a military unit active in eastern Slavonia from October 1992, notably during Operation Flash toward the end of the Homeland War. Other jackets depicted similar nationalist symbols, presumably the insignia of fellow defender groups active in the region during the Homeland War.

On 18 November 2017, I drove to Vukovar from Osijek, Croatia's fourth largest city 45 minutes away, passing through a row of small villages where the *Vodotoranj* candles had been placed meticulously every few metres. The first signs of commemorative activities appeared past Trpinja, a predominantly Serb municipality and member of the Joint Council of Municipalities established in the 1995 Erdut Agreement. Along the main road leading from Trpinja into Vukovar stands the *Spomen dom hrvatskih branitelja na Trpinjskoj cesti/*"Memorial House of Croatian Defenders on Trpinjska cesta [Trpinja Road]," where by 7:30am a large crowd had gathered in advance of the memorial parade to Vukovar. The weather was rather downcast that morning, but despite the rain and mud, I noted a large number of memorial candles had been laid in front of the building before the bust of Blago Zadro, a Croatian general who died midway through the Battle of Vukovar (see Figure 5.2). Several groups had their photos taken by the main feature of the memorial house, a dark green tank with its barrel pointed toward Vukovar, which serves as a monument to the defenders of Trpinjska cesta and the "tank graveyard" that the street colloquially had become during the war. By the time I returned to my car, the parade had left, headed by a man carrying a cross with rows of rather young participants draped in Croatian flags, many wearing camouflage or black clothing, following him and their police escort (Figure 5.3).

Left: Bust of Blago Zadro adorned with memorial candles, Trpinjska cesta, 18 November 2017. Right: Memorial to the "Tank Graveyard," Trpinjska cesta, 18 November 2017.

Figure 5.3: Memorial parade from Trpinjska cesta to Vukovar, 18 November 2017

Upon arrival in Vukovar, I headed toward the bridges over the Vuka River and to the memorial cross on the confluence of the Vuka and the Danube. The cross, installed in October 1998, faces across the river toward Serbia upstream and a sliver of Croatian territory directly downstream. Its inscription, *"Žrtvama za slobodnu Hrvatsku"*/"To the victims for free Croatia," is accompanied by text in the Glagolitic script developed by Saint Cyril in the ninth century CE, which states, *"Navik on živi ki zgine pošteno"*/ "He who dies honourably lives forever," noted in Chapter 2 as a quote attributed to the seventeenth-century noble Petar Zrinski. The cross serves as one of the two central monuments to the 1991 siege in the town centre, the other being the *Vodotoranj,* a fifteen-minute walk south toward the outskirts of Vukovar, and on the day of the commemoration

was a meeting point for many defender groups and their families, who were ceremoniously welcomed at the town hospital at 9:30am. As a participant-observer in the day's events (and an odd one out as a person walking unaccompanied through the town), I helped take photos for some of the groups around the memorial cross, only noticing the controversial phrase "*Za dom spremni"/*"Ready for the Homeland" on some of the flags and T-shirts of the group members after the fact. I had unintentionally photographed members of the Croatian Defence Forces (HOS), an early paramilitary group active in the defence of Vukovar that had adopted symbols and slogans from the quisling Independent State of Croatia (NDH).

Around the town centre, multiple exhibitions were displayed, including a display of images from Vukovar in 1991 and 2017 (there was a sticker placed over "2017" suggesting that this had been used in years past) in the main square, as well as smaller symbolic displays of national pride or mourning. Shop fronts, bars and restaurants, at least those owned by Croats (as those owned by Serbs would not participate in the day's events; see Banjeglav 2019, 197), hung flags or laid out memorial candles (see Figure 5.4 below). Vukovar remains a divided city, though many of the social boundaries are invisible to the untrained eye, and despite widespread demographic shifts during and in the immediate aftermath of the Homeland War, Serbs still make up approximately one-third of the local population (DZS RH 2011c). Their memories of the 1990s, which will be discussed later, come into direct conflict with the Croatian state narratives present at commemorative events like those in Knin and Vukovar, and during the annual processions in Vukovar each November, Serbs are seldom seen or heard. Outside of this week of commemoration, Serb spaces in Vukovar are marked partially by the absence of Croatian symbols but without explicit presentation of Serbian imagery, like the double-headed eagle or the Serbian cross.

Left: Photo exhibition "Vukovar 1991 – 2017" along Vuka River, Vukovar, 18 November 2017. Right: "VUKOVAR" spelled out in *Vodotoranj*-shaped memorial candles, Vukovar, 18 November 2017.

Throughout the morning of the commemoration, I walked around Vukovar, from the bus station where free parking spots were rapidly diminishing, to the town centre and along the main road toward the *Vodotoranj*, where a massive Croatian flag with "Vukovar '91" printed over it was being unfurled, and back toward the hospital from which the victims of the Ovčara massacre were taken. A new monument had been installed next to the police presidium by the hospital that September, remembering the fallen officers who fought against JNA forces and the Serb paramilitaries who had besieged Vukovar twenty-six years earlier. A large crowd gathered along the street by the presidium awaiting the start of the memorial walk to the cemetery five kilometres away. As in Trpinjska cesta and Đakovo, many were wearing black jackets with various insignia, and several men carried large Croatian flags, some with town names written over them. These included Livno and Travnik, two towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina with larger Croat populations that were claimed early on by the wartime Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna; Travnik would later be fought over by Bosnian Croat forces and the ARBiH, ending in Bosniak control over the town by the war's end, creating various obstacles to peaceful reintegration of Croat returnees (ICG 1998). Also gathered were participants in the *Marš mira*/Peace March (separate from the *Kolona mira,* as the main memorial walk in Vukovar is called), a group of peace activists, war survivors and family members, Bosnians and foreigners who walk annually through the woods from Sapla, near Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to the Potočari Memorial Cemetery for the 11 July commemoration of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. As I discuss below, the narrative of victimhood varies across ethnic and state boundaries, but the presence of *Marš mira* activists indicates some degree of solidarity among victim groups in the former Yugoslavia, or at least those who view themselves as victims of "Serbian

aggression."

As the memorial walk slowly started, I decided to drive back to Osijek to follow the procession and coverage of the day's events on the state television and radio networks, Hrvatska Radiotelevizija (HRT) and Hrvatski radio 1 (HR 1). Rather than directly experience the rest of the day's events in the increasingly bitter cold and wind, I chose to see the commemoration through the same media as most Croatians, who would not be attending in person but would certainly have been bombarded by the demand to "Remember Vukovar!," a slogan that has appeared frequently in memorial graffiti throughout Croatia (Figure 5.5).[18]

Figure 5.5: Memorial graffiti with themes from Vukovar: Benkovac, Slavonksi Brod, Zagreb

Top: "VUKOVAR" written in colours of Croatian flag next to image of destroyed *Vodotoranj*, Benkovac, 20 March 2018. Bottom left: *"VUKOVAR NEPOKORENI"/*"Vukovar unconquered," Slavonski Brod, 17 November 2017. Bottom right: Silhouette of cheering football fans in front of the Vukovar *Vodotoranj*, Zagreb, 21 March 2018.

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[18] Commemorative graffiti is a more informal manifestation of visual remembrance and has been documented in the aftermaths of protests (Abaza 2013), assassinations (Klingman and Shalev 2001) and gang violence (Lübbers 2007) or as a way to present counter-narratives (see Moreau and Alderman 2012).

On the short drive back to Osijek, the HR 1 radio channel shared the stories of several people who lived in Vukovar during the siege, including an interview with a nurse who worked at the hospital when it was taken over by "Chetniks" on 20 November 1991, a man who has participated in the *Kolona mira*/Column of Peace memorial walk from the hospital to the victims' cemetery every year since it was initiated, and a defender from Tenja, a village near Osijek Airport, who talked about his experiences fighting in the early stages of the Battle of Vukovar. On the television, dramatic classical music played over a split screen of the memorial walk and commemorative speeches on the left and images of Vukovar from 1991 on the right. The memorial walk was led by various defender groups and soldiers in military uniform, not unlike the more joyous victory parade in Knin I had watched in person that August. Short segments on various aspects of the fall of Vukovar played while the crowd moved toward the memorial cemetery, retelling the forced removal of hospital patients and staff and acts of torture committed by Serb fighters. Selected readings from Siniša Glavašević's *Voices from Vukovar* were followed by cutaways to the memorial walk, now a nearly 2-kilometre trail of people walking past the *Vodotoranj* and a smaller memorial park on the way to the cemetery. Eerie organ music accompanied more scenes from 1991 and live feeds from the walk, showing the large rows of soldiers lining the long, shaded alley leading toward the monument at the centre of the cemetery (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Memorial Cemetery for Victims of the Homeland War, Vukovar, 23 August 2017

By 12:30pm, the crowd had surrounded the memorial cemetery, and the memorial ceremony, officially entitled *"Vukovar: Mjesto posebnog pijeteta"*/"Vukovar: Place of Special Piety" since

2013 (see Banjeglav 2019, 199), began with a prayer "for the victims from the City of Vukovar during the Homeland War." While political figures like President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, and Speaker of the Croatian Sabor Gordan Jandroković were in attendance, the ceremony was of an almost entirely religious nature, with a sermon by Antun Škvorčević, Bishop of Požega. In his sermon, Škvorčević stated,

> *We approach the victim of Vukovar with restraint and affection, with respect and admiration, with gratitude and with love. The sacrifice of Vukovar deserves to be celebrated, just as we celebrate the sacrifice of Vukovar – in this holy mass we unite it with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, entrusting it to His victory of the resurrection* (FRAMNAT 2017).

He continued by calling for social and political reconciliation between Serbs and Croats, above all in Vukovar, through recognition of their shared Christian heritage, hoping

> *that the Catholic Church in Croatia and the Serbian Orthodox Church will find ways to work together for Jesus Christ to destroy evil and division in us so that we will not be against each other, that He may be truly our peace and Croatia as our common home* (FRAMNAT 2017).

Next came a sword display and wreath-laying ceremony by Grabar-Kitarović, Plenković and Jandroković followed by an organisation of injured and missing Croatian defenders, the mayor of Vukovar Ivan Penava (of the ruling HDZ) and various religious figures. Škvorčević's sermon was followed by Holy Mass led by Đuro Hranić, Archbishop of the Đakovo-Osijek Diocese, who recalled the sacrifices of the defenders and the victims of the siege. The ceremony concluded with the reading of small prayers by a local youth group and – to my surprise – the singing of a Croatian version of "My Peace," a Christian praise song I had only previously encountered in the United Methodist church my family attended in Pennsylvania.

While this section describes just one instance of public memorialisation, the wider implications of this case study lie in the following analysis of two main aspects of this commemorative event. The first of these lies in the question of agency in death, that is, whether victims *chose* to die "for Croatia" or if this framing of civilian casualties as martyrs belies a more conflicted nature of the current balance of power over memory in Croatia. The second aspect I evaluate below is the

erasure of victims' voices when their stories would challenge the foundation of Croatian cultural memory, and I provide examples of commemorations of Serb victims of the Homeland War and reactions to them by various social actors.

Victimhood as a chosen fate

This section provides an analysis of the contemporary framing of Croatian civilian victims as "martyrs" who chose to die for the state rather than as unfortunate collateral damage incurred in the course of the Homeland War or, more deliberately, as strategically targeted casualties. I build on the ethnographic detail on the Vukovar commemoration described above with examples of monuments to civilian victims that demonstrate how the martyr narrative is physically constructed in memorial spaces across Croatia. The narrative of victimhood present throughout the commemorative events and memorial spaces in Vukovar conflicts with a juridical understanding of victims as unwilling participants in war entitled to particular legal rights (see de Casadevante Romani 2010) or as losses that have no inherent political, social or religious meaning; victims – primarily civilian – did not choose to die for a cause, and if deliberately targeted by active combatants, they died with little to no control over their fate. As the various events surrounding the Vukovar commemorations show, victims in the Croatian sense were presented as having died *for* something, that is, the emphasis is placed on a choice to die to secure the independence of the Croatian state and/or nation. Kardov notes, "war victims are perceived primarily as sacrifices for the homeland, not as meaningless losses. And hence the symbol of the victim, so characteristic for religious and national narratives, is most often in the articulations of local Croatian memories" (Kardov 2007, 68). While I agree with Kardov's framing of the victim as an abstracted and symbolic loss rather than as a personal tragedy, I contend throughout this thesis, and most clearly in Chapter 4, that is is the image of the defender, especially when framed as a victim, that takes precedence over all other memorialised elements of the Homeland War, including civilian casualties.

The sacrificial imagery of the few monuments dedicated exclusively to civilian victims of the Homeland War is demonstrated in six of these ten monuments in the physical form of the cross or the dove of peace - reinforcing Škvorčević's invocation of Christ's crucifixion and the imagery of wartime sacrifice (Figure 5.7). Three memorial plaques are unadorned, and only one, that to the children killed during the Homeland War installed in a Slavonski Brod playground, features a more

abstract design, a puzzle with one fallen and one missing piece (Figure 5.8).

Left: Memorial to civilian victims with recently laid memorial candles and wreaths, Široka Kula, 6 August 2017. Centre: Monument to victims of "Greater Serbian aggression," Ilača, 16 March 2018. Right: Memorial cross to victims of massacre in Lužac neighbourhood, Vukovar, 18 November 2018.

On this, Kardov continues,

> *The cross, compared to a statue, does not celebrate the bravery or heroism of the*
> *dead but precisely addresses the sacrifice – in this case not some useless sacrifice*
> *but the sacrifice for the homeland [...] Therefore, the local collective memories and*
> *their official articulations are, first of all, mythical in nature – not in the sense that*
> *they testify and represent false memory but [...] that the fundamental cosmological*
> *sense that they are related to an order* (Kardov 2007, 68-70).

This speaks to the "dynamism" and "plasticity" of memory (see Assmann and Shortt 2012, 3), which allow powerful actors to morph or manipulate memory in ways that suit their own purposes

or narratives. By turning Vukovar into a sort of legendary space of victimhood and martyrdom, public figures can stretch the meaning of local memory to fit national and nationalist interpretations of the past by blurring the lines between lived and purported experience. The absence of a narrative unique to Vukovar and its inhabitants was caused by the mass dispersal and forced expulsion of residents in the aftermath of the 1991 siege. This has given room for the dominant, near mythical narratives constructed by Tuđman and the HDZ during the Homeland War of sacrifice and dedication to the Croatian state to fill in that void, rather than narratives of literal defence of one's home, survival in times of war and the mourning of individual losses. The narratives of Croat returnees is also drowned out by the cacophony of conservative and nationalist voices exercising their power and influence over the construction of both local and national identities. While the fates of Vukovar and, for example, Sarajevo share many similarities, it is this absence of a local Vukovar narrative that is most striking. Were any of the 32 monuments I documented in Vukovar that were constructed since 1991 moved anywhere else in Croatia, few would feel out of place. Only the ruined *Vodotoranj* uniquely represents the local suffering of Vukovar, but it has also been appropriated as a national symbol for the victimhood of the Croatian people during the Homeland War. Other local monuments in Croatia employ similar Christian symbols or language of victims' sacrifice that make regional distinctions within Croatia (i.e. linguistic or historical) of little importance, with the exception of Istria, where monuments neither to defenders nor to civilian victims of the Homeland War are markedly present. Such monuments stand in great contrast to other symbolic representations of war loss elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, most notably in the "Sarajevo Roses," an artistic endeavour to fill in all mortar craters throughout the city with a red resin to represent the blood of innocent victims of the 1992-1995 siege (see Lukić 2014).

The forms of formal monuments – crosses, obelisks, busts and undecorated plaques, as opposed to more informal memorials like graffiti or the *Vodotoranj* candles – do little to demonstrate the supposed uniqueness of Vukovar in the history of the Homeland War. It is more the destruction rather than the existence of Vukovar in 1991 that plays a central role in the predominant narrative of the foundation of the Croatian state. Of all the monuments in Vukovar that remember the city's capture by the JNA and Serb paramilitaries, only those that feature the shape of the *Vodotoranj* show some divergence from similar monuments elsewhere in Croatia. Kardov, citing Nora, calls Vukovar "a 'place of memory' within the national space," noting the fixed attachment to memories

of its destruction to the broader context of Croatian cultural memory and its *lieux de mémoire* (Kardov 2007, 26). Vukovar, then, becomes a critically important location and an event around which identities can be and have been moulded. Returning to my earlier arguments on power, however, it appears that the residents of Vukovar who survived the conflict lack much agency to shape those identities, as they are constructed more forcefully by the HDZ, other nationalist parties and defenders' associations, who wield the greatest "power over memory" (Müller 2009) in Croatia post-independence. Rather than individually contributing to or "uploading" its unique narrative into the framework of Croatian memory, the memory of Vukovar was implanted or "downloaded" (see Milošević and Touquet 2018) from above and afar.

The victim narratology that surrounds the myths of Vukovar relates to the centrality of the Catholic faith to contemporary Croatian politics, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. HDZ officials and far-right agents use memory as a tool to advance their conservative vision of the world, whether through the use of Catholicism as a tool of othering against Serbs and Bosniaks, among others, as a set of beliefs to resist progressive policies on abortion, sexual violence and LGBT+ rights, or, in the case of the Homeland War, as a language to frame the horrors of the war and give meaning to the deaths of civilians. By calling these casualties "martyrs," that is, those persecuted for their convictions of faith, memory makers mythologise those who were killed; by calling them "martyrs for Croatia," as in the case of the newly-constructed Church of the Croatian Martyrs in Udbina (Figure 5.9), memory makers appropriate religious symbolism to advance political agendas and a narrative of unique victimhood. In doing so, they brush over the real causes of these deaths and deflect criticism for actions by Croatian forces that lead to the deaths of Serb civilians and others, whose memories do not conform to a Croatian national(ist) imagination.

Left: Statue of Pope John Paul II before the Church of the Croatian Martyrs, Udbina, 6 August 2017. Middle: Memorial cross to "all Croatian martyrs," Udbina, 29 August 2019. Right: Wall containing smaller memorial plaques, including one to "victims of communism," Udbina, 29 August 2019.

Vukovar as a *martyred city*, one *sacrificed* for the casue of Croatian independence, also complicates the remembrance of the dead, as commemorating the destruction of a city has come to supersede commemorating the thousands of civilian deaths, each loss as tragic as the collective destruction left in the wake of the siege. Even among the casualties remembered publicly, there is a hierarchy, beginning with the defenders, who even on the "Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Vukovar 1991" were mentioned in all public speeches before civilian victims, then Croat civilians and at the very lowest rung Serb victims of the Homeland War. The selective remembrance of the privileged few who fought and died *for* Croatia continues to exacerbate already strained relations between Croat and Serb populations within Croatia, most notably in places like Vukovar and Knin, where the recapture of territory from Republika Srpska Krajina forces signalled the symbolic completion of the millennial dream of a united Croatian state.

This section has reviewed briefly the construction of the "martyrdom" narrative around Croatian civilian casualties of the Homeland War and how the power over the memory of victims is not exercised by victims themselves but rather by influential social actors at the national level. These are namely the Catholic Church, the Croatian Democratic Union and various defenders' associations, who have similarly co-opted victim narratives for their own purpose. While the rather conciliatory tone of Škorčević's sermon in Vukovar in 2017 marks some shift toward rapproachement between Croats and Serbs, his reaffirmation of the "sacrificial" nature of Vukovar

as a site of remembrance highlights the more central role of the Catholic Church in contemporary identity making over the potential roles that victims' associations could play. This reflects more widely on the question of victims' agency in post-conflict memory and identity construction, an issue that translates across borders in settings where the forcible creation of a national identity relies on the erasure or silencing of the darker side of victory. The next section discusses more thoroughly the ramifications of the discontinuity of a shared mnemonic community in spaces where Serbs and Croats once lived amicably, caused in part by Croatian nationalists' resistance to rapprochement toward Croatian Serbs. My discussion of the anti-Cyrillic protests of 2013 in eastern Slavonia will demonstrate how this break in a once-shared community continues to threaten attempts to recognise mutual suffering in the aftermath of the Homeland War and Croatian independence.

Threatening conflicting narratives: Anti-Serb sentiments in the aftermath of war

As noted above, the national retelling of the Homeland War has come to subsume any local narrative that would have emerged in different circumstances, as the case of Vukovar has demonstrated and further instances of monuments to civilian victims discussed in this chapter will show. Particularly the continued multi-ethnic character of the city is glossed over in favour of nationalist visions of the "defence" of Vukovar, not its fall. The stories of Siniša Glavašević have entered the national canon as heroic retellings of the continual shelling by the enemy and not reflections of the once *inter*-ethnic way of life the city once enjoyed. While Serbs still make up a large segment of Vukovar's population, their lives are lived parallel to and no longer intersecting with their Croat neighbours (Clark 2013, 1935; Schellenberg 2015, 20; Sokolić 2017). In this section, I discuss the identity of Serbs in Croatia today and how various elements of this identity is challenged or threatened by certain political and civil society actors. Having shown the absence of Serbs in memorial spaces, I briefly show the legal correlary of such absence by giving context to the rather marginal provision of rights to civilian victims of the Homeland War, drawing out the power state bodies exercise in memory-making processes. This in theory covers Croatian Serbs who fled their homes in the late stages of the conflict but in practice has done little to address social, political and economic (let alone mnemonic) divisions between Serbs and Croats since the final reintegration of Croatian territory in 1998. Serbs, I contend, cannot mourn their victims without fear of retribution despite the limited state support given to the Serb minority as outlined in the Erdut Agreement and recent victim-focused legislation.

Kardov wrote of the social divisions in these formerly shared spaces that have perpetuated into the twenty-first century, retelling stories from Vukovar residents who worry about revealing their identities in public, a place he describes as an "undesirable heterogeneity":

> *Whenever you meet someone, you ask yourself, 'Who is he?' What if he asks something, how to answer? Will he recognize that you are a Serb or a Croat? How to behave? (Nikola, a Serb from a mixed marriage)*

> *I'm afraid that someone could object to me about something, or that someone could say something, not necessarily directly to me, by which I could be offended. In such situations I have a feeling that everyone knows who I am [i.e., that everyone knows her* [Nataša's, another Serbian woman's] *nationality]. It is as if I'm marked [...]* (Kardov 2007, 75-76).

These views demonstrate the fear of retribution and widening the already massive social gap between Serbs and Croats (and Serb and Croat victims of the Homeland War more specifically) that have been perpetuated in the aftermath of violence. Kardov notes the similar example of a young boy who wished to join a football tournament but was rejected by the organiser as he was a Serb, and his presence would tarnish the memory of the fallen defenders in whose name the tournament was planned. Others worry about the mass migration of commemoration participants from elsewhere in Croatia to Vukovar each November who light candles in their front yards, turning a private space into a public cemetery (Kardov 2007, 77-81). These patterns witnessed in Vukovar – actively suppressing Serb participation in public life (as further evinced in the 2013 anti-Cyrillic protests across eastern Slavonia, discussed below), replacing complicated local narratives with simpler, more conservative visions of the past and elevating fallen defenders over unwilling civilian victims – are visible across Croatia. Above all, the commemorations of Serb victims of the Homeland War (and, further, of the Second World War) have been ignored, disrupted and muted, either through intimidation by far-right groups and defender organisations, the destruction and desecration of monuments and graves and the public revision of Croatian history to reflect the narratives of power-exercising conservatives. Such erasure is part and parcel of what I term "memory abuse," that is, these acts taken by state and non-state actors are undertaken with an intent to alter narratives that further social divisions and crystallise a destructive vision of the "Other," without regard to individual agency and beliefs that may diverge from that singular vision. As a result, the gap between the cultural memories of Croatian Serbs and

Croats continues to grow and hardens identities that in the past were constructed through and resulted in violence; in this context, however, as I argued in Chapter 1, this muting of critical voices represents a less visible form of social violence that nonetheless harms social cohesion and polarises local communities.

Of the 614 monuments I documented in Croatia, only one was dedicated specifically to Serb civilian victims of the Homeland War, nine elderly residents of the village of Varivode, near Šibenik and Krka National Park, who were killed by Croatian soldiers in an act of retribution in September 1995, soon after the conclusion of Operation Storm. Other monuments to Serbs civilian victims of the Homeland War do exist, as I discuss in the example of Uzdolje below, but the presence of such monuments is all but erased by the volume of Croat-centric memorial spaces. The stone memorial cross and plaque in Varivode, noted in Chapter 2, was actually the second monument installed in its current location, replacing a simpler, wooden, Orthodox cross destroyed in April 2010 by a Croatian defender (Blažević 2010). Varivode lies along a small country road branching from the D59, which links Knin from the southwest with the Adriatic motorway. Several houses along the road sit in decay, and only handful of local residents are to be seen wandering outside. The new monument to the victims of the 1995 massacre lies in the middle of a small intersection and is surrounded by a knee-high fence. Several plants, flowers, and a memorial candle had been placed recently at the base of the monument (Figure 5.10) and in the small niche above the inscriptions, in Latin and Cyrillic, along with a frame photo of one of the elderly victims. The existence of the monument and the lack of any desecration since its reinstallation represents a rare exception to ongoing patterns of removal or destruction of monuments dedicated either to Serbs or the shared Yugoslav past (see Figures 5.13, 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12).

Recently placed plants and a memorial candle at the monument in Varivode, 4 August 2017.

The date of my visit was coincidentally timed around the commemoration of Operation Storm in Knin on 5 August, and elsewhere in the area, monuments to Croatian defenders and civilian victims were adorned similarly with candles, flowers and rosaries, so the presence of such items in Varivode was not unexpected. In the aftermath of Storm, rural Serbs feared retributive violence, as had occurred in Varivode on 28 September 1995. The *Srpsko narodno vijeće/*Serb National Council (SNV), the representative body for Serbs in Croatia founded in 1997 by various associations provided for through the Erdut Agreement, published in October 2018 a summary of various war crimes committed against Serbs during the Homeland War, including the Varivode massacre. The massacre was classified as a "collective execution," with similar characteristics to further assaults in Mokro Polje, Gošić and Uzdolje, all small hamlets surrounding Knin and the rocky hinterlands toward Benkovac (SNV 2018, 4). The bodies of the nine civilians killed in

Varivode were taken to a mass grave in Knin and were not exhumed for identification and reburial until 2001. Legal proceedings against six Croatian defenders accused of the murders led to their eventual acquittal before a retrial was opened by the Croatian Supreme Court in January 2012, in which the Republic of Croatia was declared responsible for the crimes committed in Varivode. The civil lawsuit by the victims' families against the Republic of Croatia ended with a payment of 540,000 kuna (approximately €72,700 or £64,250 as of October 2019) to the children of Radivoj and Marija Berić, the ruling stating that the Republic of Croatia was responsible for "the principles of solidarity, equal bearing of the public burden and fair and prompt compensation" (SNV 2018, 76-77).

The rights of civilian victims of the Homeland War, in comparison with those provided to Croatian defenders and their families, are relatively limited. While a law on defenders' rights has existed in some form since the Homeland War and strengthened in 2017 following the eighteen-month protests in front of the Ministry of Croatian Veterans (discussed in Chapter 4), no comparable law on victims' rights has been promulgated. The first regulations on the rights of returnees were issued in October 1995, one month before the signing of the Erdut Agreement which formally ended the Homeland War in Slavonia, enabling internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees a two-month window to apply for credit to repair or rebuild their properties, if necessary, or to seek temporary accommodation in liberated territory. These regulations also provided returnees the same rights as refugees and IDPs, namely financial, humanitarian, social, health and educational assistance, including tax relief to facilitate the return to their homes to rebuild their communities (Sabor 1995). This was amended in February 1996 to include a 50% reimbursement for hotel costs were alternative arrangements not possible, the money provided by the "King Zvonimir" republic fund (Sabor 1996a), and again that March to extend returnee deadlines in areas affected by operations Flash and Storm in various stages from May to December 1996 (Sabor 1996b).

While these laws did not directly address Serb victims of the Homeland War, they provided some space to allow for their return following the mass exodus of Serbs after Operation Storm in August 1995. In 1997, however, a revised Decree on Returnee Rights made specific mention of Croat refugees who had fled the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as Serbia and Montenegro during the war, providing them the same rights as those who had fled or been

displaced within Croatia (Sabor 1997). The Erdut Agreement, a relatively brief document detailing the plan to gradually reintegrate Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into the Republic of Croatia by 1998, provided more assurances for Serbs who had left the region toward the end of the war. These include, most notably, the provision for a Joint Council of Municipalities (*Zajedničko vijeće općina/Заједничко веће општина* – ZVO) in Eastern Slavonia, representing seven villages and towns that at the conclusion of the war in Croatia had retained a majority-Serb population. Officially founded in 1997, the Council's responsibilities include the representation of Serb communities in the Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Sirmium counties and cooperation with the Croatian government and regional NGOs in the creation of policy affecting the lives of Serbs in Croatia. The ZVO continues to develop educational opportunities for young Serbs in these areas, promoting Serbian language, history and culture instruction for minority students in line with the national minority rights legislation. Among the rights guaranteed in Article 7 of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities are "the use of [minorities'] language and script, private and public, as well as official use," "education in their language and script," "access to the media and public information services [...] in their language and script" and "self-organisation and association in pursuance of their common interests" (Sabor 2002, 3). The Agreement also further secured the rights of return and property restitution for refugees and internally displaced persons – Serb and Croat alike – who had fled the area during the war, established a provisional police force and guaranteed international oversight of local elections.

These legal guarantees, however, have been continuously challenged by both state and civil society actors through today, demonstrating widespread discrimination toward the Serb minority in Croatia beyond the confines of Slavonia (see Djurić 2010). Serb civic institutions have continued to develop despite these challenges and have grown in influence and acceptance amongst the political centre and left in Croatia; such institutions include the Joint Council of Municipalities, the Serb National Council (SNV) and the Serb Democratic Forum (SDF). The gradual silencing of Serb minority voices has resulted in part from actions taken by state and non-state actors against the community but also is a consequence of the relatively successful integration of Serbs in larger urban areas in Croatia, where they constitute a quite miniscule percentage of the population; while Serbs once constituted 15 percent of the Croatian population in the 1953 and 1961 Yugoslav censuses (peak population 626,789 in 1971), the 2011 census recorded a historic low of 186,633 Serbs, 4.36 percent of the total population (DZS RH 2011b). The areas where Serbs

have retained their majority status are more rural, have smaller populations and have not yet attained development parity with other areas of Croatia (Vlada RH 2010, 1). In these areas, traditional elements of Serb identity are more explicitly pronounced. Škiljan (2014) claims Croatian Serbs' traditional identity is founded primarily upon the use of the Cyrillic alphabet, Orthodox Christian faith and a celebration of the Serbs' military traditions as soldiers in the former Habsburg "Military Frontier," with which much of the RSK's territory overlapped. The modern facets of Serb identity Škiljan identifies contrast heavily with the exclusionary nationalist lens many authors on Balkan affairs employ when discussing ethnic minorities in the region. He argues that throughout the twentieth century, Serbs have adopted a quasi-assimilated civic identity partly forced by historical expulsions from Croatia or conversions to Catholicism in the Second World War but to an extent driven by a sense of belonging to the state (2014, 124).

The high degree of intermarriage between Yugoslavia's constituent peoples in urban areas also limited the regeneration of a stronger sense of national identity amongst Croatia's Serb population. This has contributed to a more widespread, multiethnic identity amongst urban Serbs, whom Škiljan describes as generally cooperative with the Croat majority; through the electoral system, Serbs also have a high degree of engagement in politics and civil society (Škiljan 2014, 125-128). The perception of Serbs in Croatia by their Croat neighbours has nonetheless shifted dramatically since the Homeland War. Škiljan notes that, "because of the stigmatisation of Serbs, they [Serbs] hide their national affiliation, which is a consequence of the war in Croatia" (2014, 125). Particularly traditional elements of Serb identity in Croatia have been attacked in recent years. Large scale demonstrations against the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in Vukovar, the site of the largest atrocity committed by the JNA and Serb paramilitaries during the war, erupted in 2013 after bilingual signs had been installed following the 2011 census in accordance with the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. The Law mandates the installation of bilingual signs in locales with an ethnic minority population greater than one-third the total population; by 2011, the Serb population of Vukovar was 34.87 percent of the total (DZS 2011c). Protests in Slavonia and Zagreb were accompanied by anti-Serb chanting and graffiti, including a common motto, "Vukovar а не Вуковар," "Vukovar and not [Cyrillic] Vukovar," with the "u" of "Vukovar" marked with a cross, a nationalist symbol of the Ustaša of the Second World War. As I note particularly in Chapter 6, many monuments from the Yugoslav past written in Cyrillic have been defaced even years after these protests as a sign of indignation toward Serbs in

the spaces where they once lived, most visibly in Dalmatia. Public perceptions of Serbs in Croatia recorded in 2014 and 2015 reflect this resistance by Croats to the introduction of Cyrillic signs in Vukovar, with Sokolić noting various critical if not outright xenophobic remarks by Croat pensioners and veterans on the subject (Sokolić 2017, 808). The net result of this tolerance-with-intimidation is a muted Serb minority, unable to claim reparations for suffering inflicted upon it by the Croatian state and its supporters during the Homeland War, with little recourse to help from the kin state, which also struggles with both its own crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo throughout the 1990s and its claim to victimhood in the 1999 NATO bombings of Milošević's rump Yugoslavia. While civil society support for minorities exists across Croatia, threats to Serb life in Croatia remain.

In 2019, several major incidents sparked a renewed discussion on Serbs and their place in Croatian society. On 24 April 2019, Ilija Glavić, a Croatian veteran suspected of war crimes committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s conflict, attacked Radoje Petković, vice president of the Serb National Minority Council of Kastav, a village in the vicinity of Rijeka, at a café in nearby Viskovo. Petković was beaten to unconsciousness by Glavić and ultimately died of his injuries on 10 June (Matković 2019). Throughout the summer, various attacks on Serbs in Croatia took place, primarily in Dalmatia, including one against water polo players from Red Star Belgrade in Split and another against seasonal workers on Brač, a popular tourist destination across the Brač Channel from Split. In August, a similar attack on Croatian Serbs gathered to watch a Red Star football match at a bar in Uzdolje, near Knin, by masked hooligans left five injured, followed shortly thereafter by another assault in the village of Đevrske. The events were decried as "unfortunately yet another attack on Serbs" and "another hate crime" by SNV President Boris Milošević (Milekić 2019). These attacks reinforce the view of Serbs as the ultimate "Other" among Croatian nationalists, who see the presence of Serbs in Croatia as a threat to the existence of the state. For these nationalists, the continued existence of Serbs in their state has delayed their idealised outcome of the Homeland War with the total removal of Serbs from the Republic's territory. Framing Serbs as enemies perpetuates social – and in these instances physical – violence and transforms the opposition to all things Serb into a fundamental belief of such extreme nationalists. Violence serves here as the transformative force between the power over memory and the power for (Croatian) identity to endure in light of perceived threats against its own existence.

Shortly after the attacks in Split and Brač and the death of Radoje Petković, the SNV's bilingual weekly newspaper *Novosti/Новости* printed an unusually black-and-white cover with the provocative question "Who of you is a Serb?" (Figure 5.11), quoting the Brač hooligans as they passed by the seasonal workers from Vukovar and Varaždin whom they subsequently attacked. The by-line below reads, "The perennial anti-Serb campaign results in an escalation of physical violence," recalling other instances of nationalist rhetoric since the end of the Homeland War that have exacerbated relations between Serbs and Croats in Croatia. The essay, written by Boris Dežulović, a renowned journalist and co-founder of the former satirical weekly magazine *Feral Tribune,* weaves a victim's point of view of the attack with ongoing discussions of the politics of Serb identity in Croatia and questions of belonging to a minority group, continually repeating the refrain, "Who of you is a Serb?" (Dežulović 2019).

Figure 5.11: *Novosti/Нобости* cover page, 14 June 2019

NOVOSTI
НОВОСТИ

#1017
Samostalni
srpski
tjednik

Tko je
od vas
Srbin?

Višegodišnja antisrpska kampanja rezultirala je eskalacijom fizičkog nasilja.
Dan nakon što je Radoje Petković preminuo od posljedica premlaćivanja,
skupina torcidaša u Supetru je krenula u lov na Srbe STR 3-5

Source: Novosti (2019). "Who of you is a Serb?"

That many of these attacks against Serbs appear to take place in Dalmatia is also of great importance to understanding the dynamics of memory, violence and identity, most crucially of the competitive nature of narratives of victimhood amongst Serbs and Croats in Croatia after both the Second World War and the Homeland War. Uzdolje, the site of the 21 August 2019 attack, is also the site of a counter-commemoration of Operation Storm, held annually on 6 August. The commemoration, organised by the SNV, serves as a memorial service for killed and missing victims of Storm, primarily Serb civilians. During the short ceremony (Figure 5.12), a small crowd of family members, elderly villagers and Orthodox clergy gather around a memorial plaque written in Cyrillic dedicated to eight villagers killed on 6 August 1995, the day after Storm's conclusion, to

pray for the victims and lay flowers and memorial wreaths. The monument demands visitors to "forever remember!" the victims, its construction in 2017 funded by the Serb National Minority Council (VSNM) of the Biskupija municipality and the Organisation of Families against Forgetting (Jaramaz 2019).

Figure 5.12: Scenes from Uzdolje commemoration of murdered Serb civilians, 6 August 2019

Source: Jaramaz, D. (2019).

Similar commemorative events take place on 5 August in Belgrade and in the Busije settlement outside the city centre built in response to the influx of Croatian Serb refugees throughout the Homeland War (Pantović 2016). These, however, are more often characterised by an ethnopolitical agenda of the ruling nationalist élites in Serbia. While many of the Croatian Serbs who fled in the aftermath of Operations Flash and Storm ultimately settled in Serbia, the Serbian government has done little to integrate Croatian Serbs, using them rather as pawns in the mnemopolitical arena; commemorations for the "Day of Remembrance of the Suffering and Persecution of Serbs" are held in Busije on 5 August, the same date as the Victory Day celebrations

in Knin (ibid.). Busije and its sister settlement Grmovac, both a short distance from Belgrade, were heavily underdeveloped until the last decade, as they were built as a response to the influx of Croatian Serb refugees, lacking most major infrastructure (water, electricity, paved roads, educational or medical facilities). Even in 2017, no post office, school or clinic had been built despite the presence of a relatively new Orthodox church (Vuković 2017).

In Dalmatia, the prioritisation of rebuilding infrastructure after the Homeland War fell in some instances on ethnic boundaries, as the case of Islam Latinski and Islam Grčki, two villages near Zadar, highlights. The two Islams – Latinski referring to the "Latin" religious tradition of Catholicism and Grčki ("Greek") referring to Orthodox Christianity – lie on a rural stretch of road near former war-time frontlines. Driving from Benkovac near the Dalmatian coast toward Zadar and the island of Pag, one passes through Smilčić and Donji Kašić before an abrupt change (or lack) of asphalt welcomes you to Islam Grčki. Prior to the Homeland War, Islam Grčki's population was predominantly Serb; the village was destroyed in Operation Maslenica in January 1993 and has hardly been rebuilt, despite its proximity to the sea. Collapsed houses and churches lie on either side of the road, overgrown with vegetation. Less than two kilometres down the road, the pavement suddenly improves as one crosses into the municipal boundaries of Islam Latinski, a predominantly Croat village closer to the Maslenica Bridge and the Adriatic Road leading to Zadar (Figure 5.13). Most houses appear to have been recently reconstructed and repainted, with little to no signs of wartime damage, some advertising rooms for tourists heading toward the Adriatic. Keeping in mind the history of the two Islams, the fact that the Croatian state selectively rebuilt all but one of a string of villages along a 9-kilometre stretch of road does indicate a reluctance of the state to invest in areas with a Serb-majority population. Towns in eastern Slavonia with similar pasts, though hundreds of kilometres away, also have seen only slow developmental progress since the end of the war, with Serb Orthodox Churches such as the main church in Vukovar being reconstructed only from the late 2000s.

Left: A ruined home in Islam Grčki, 7 August 2017. Right: A re-paved road with fully reconstructed homes in neighbouring Islam Latinski, 7 August 2017.

All these issues – whether through outright acts of violence or more passive but intentional forms of neglect – contribute to the ongoing process of othering the Serbs in Croatia, a necessary component of my perspective of memory abuse. The decision to preclude Serbs from public spaces and commemorations forces them into a marginal position that leaves little room for the voices of civilian victims to be heard. Again, these narratives counter the prevailing vision of the Croatian state as one fought for through the sacrifice of the defenders and the martyrdom of Croat(ian) civilians. This discussion nevertheless does not absolve other Serbs of crimes that had been committed in line with the vision of a Greater Serbia or defending "Serb soil" or any other form of violence that was enacted upon the civilian population by Serb paramilitaries and JNA forces during the Homeland War. Rather, it brings into question the ways of managing conflicting victimhood narratives to dissuade nationalist interpretations of such violence while ensuring justice for war victims and their families through the individualisation of guilt. In the next section, I discuss how this problem of memorialising past atrocities against civilians was addressed in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and how this past is or is not remembered in the Republic of Croatia today. In doing so, I intend to demonstrate a seeming lack of concern for civilian victims of the Homeland War on the part of the current Croatian state, marking yet another mnemonic turn away from the Yugoslav past. I present monuments built in the aftermath of the Second World War by Yugoslav authorities and modern memorials to the Homeland War, including two museums in Zagreb, to draw out overlaps and contrasts between communist and post-communist

narratives of conflict and victimhood.

Sharing victimhood? Yugoslav memory politics and the modern Croatian response

Yugoslav memory politics differed in their approach to integrating ethnic concerns over competing claims to victimhood by attempting to suppress nationalism as a viable political alternative in the first place. The early Bleiburg repatriations and subsequent murder of thousands of Ustaša prisoners and their families by Yugoslav Partisans in 1946 were followed by subtler and less violent repressions of nationalist outbursts in the later history of the country, while the project of creating a supranational "Yugoslav" identity continued. While the contexts of Bleiburg and later phases of Yugoslav history may differ, the resistance to nationalism stemmed from the experience of a long and bloody war fought along ethnic lines and premised in part on the genocidal ideology of Ante Pavelić and the NDH. The reactions of Belgrade élites to historical events like the Croatian Spring/MASPOK movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, namely the imprisonment and isolation of those calling for greater autonomy of their respective republics, highlighted a disdain for "chauvinistic" political beliefs, which were viewed as a threat against Croatian Serbs (Batović 2009).

Monuments to fallen soldiers and civilian victims of the Second World War, framed in Yugoslavia as the *"Narodnooslobodliačka borba"* / "National/People's Liberation Struggle" (NOB)[19], often avoid explicit mentions of the various constituent peoples in the post-war republic, instead using vague allusions to the collective *narod*/people or nation, or by referring to "Croatian (or Serbian, Bosnian, etc.) people" as "people of Croatia." The modern Croatian interpretation of civilian victims as martyrs who chose to die *for* the country departs, too, from the Yugoslav framing of non-combatant casualties as the "victims of fascism" or of "fascist terror." In many monuments built under Yugoslav rule commemorating those who died in the Second World War, individual names are written, identifying the town's or region's fallen either as *borci/*"fighters" or *žrtve fašističkog terora/*"victims of fascist terror," demonstrating the shared suffering of both groups (Figure 5.14). In some monuments, these lists are separated, with often longer columns of fallen fighters and shorter lists of civilian victims, whereas in others the names are compiled alphabetically, with no distinction made between combatant and non-combatant.

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[19] As noted in Chapter 2, *narod* refers both to "nation" and "people," hence varied translations of the Yugoslav name of the Second World War.

Left: Monument to Yugoslav war dead, showing an attack by firearms, Trepča, 29 August 2019. Right: An unblemished monument to fallen fighters and victims of fascist terror, Šibenik, 4 August 2017.

Socialist realist monuments dating from the first two decades after the Second World War depict fallen soldiers and civilians dramatically, highlighting the anguish and physical stress of war that is not visible on Croatian monuments to fallen defenders from the Homeland War. While monuments became increasingly abstract as time passed, and particularly as the size of memorial sites enlarged, some retained images of Partisan fighters and Yugoslav civilians struggling together for "brotherhood and unity," such as the monument to the National Liberation Struggle in Gračac shown below (Figure 5.15). As in later examples of monuments to civilian victims of the Homeland War, while these victims did not choose their deaths, these deaths were imbued with a particular meaning in line with wider national ambitions.

Top left: "Death to fascism, freedom to the people!" engraved on realist monument, Pazin, 5 May 2019. Top right: Vanja Radauš's "Wounded Fighter" sculpture, Pakrac, 22 August 2017. Bottom: Detail of relief on monument to National Liberation Struggle, Gračac, 31 August 2019.

Monuments constructed in the latter half of socialist Yugoslav history represented an architectural turn away from realism to more abstract forms of modernism, as demonstrated by the large *spomenici* (monuments) across Yugoslavia built from the 1960s onwards. The monument in

Gračac above represents a hybrid of these, casting more abstract images of the Partisans while retaining the older stone and metal building blocks that had come to be replaced by concrete. Many of these monuments were dedicated, as had been older sites, to both the *borci/*fighters and the *žrtve fašističkog terora/*victims of fascist terror, some on sites of former hospitals, battlefields or other strategic locations from the Second World War. One of the largest memorial sites to civilian victims of the war is the Dotrščina Memorial Park on the outskirts of Zagreb, a massive forest park with trails leading over hills and through a winding valley marked with various monuments throughout. The site, first dedicated in 1968, marks the execution and burial sites of thousands of civilians killed by Nazi and Ustaša forces throughout the Second World War, with the *Dolina grobova/*Valley of the Graves featuring small blocks and shiny diamond-like structures that mark where the victims had fallen. The park features large, heavily abstract sculptures (Figure 5.16) along the "Path to Martyrdom," including the "Monument to Those Who Died on the Streets of their City," the "Monument to the Revolutionaries and Patriots Fallen in Zagreb," the aforementioned "Valley of the Graves," and the "Monument to the People of Zagreb Killed in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945" (see Niebyl 2017a). The individual forms of the all but the last of these monuments take on unusual shapes of smoothly polished, crystalline-shaped metal blocks, with the "Monument to Those Who Died on the Streets of their City" also taking on imagery of prison bars and thick, twisted wire. Vojin Bakić, architect and sculptor of many of these and other Yugoslav memorial structures, claimed the nature of such abstraction in the form of the metal crystal "represents for us the same thing as the victims that were executed [in Dotrščina]: purity and permanent, eternal light" (Bakić 2007, quoted in Martinović 2013). The final monument to the "People of Zagreb Killed in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945," in contrast, features a long metal relief on a curved stone frame, depicting various scenes from the occupation of Zagreb in more understandable yet still abstract fashion through the use of human figures whose faces, unlike those of the socialist realist sculptures, are blurred or missing.

Top left: Monument at entrance to Dotrščina Memorial Park, Zagreb, 21 March 2018. Top middle: "Monument to Those Who Died on the Streets of their City," Zagreb, 13 October 2018. Top right: "Monument to the Revolutionaries and Patriots Fallen in Zagreb," Zagreb, 13 October 2018. Bottom left: "Valley of the Graves" crystal monument, Zagreb, 13 October 2018. Bottom right: Sample from relief of "Monument to the People of Zagreb Killed in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945," Zagreb, 13 October 2018.

Among the 614 memorials I documented, however, in both the Yugoslav and Croatian monuments on, respectively, the Second World War and the Homeland War, those dedicated only to civilian victims were outnumbered four times over by monuments exclusively to fighters or defenders; otherwise, as many of the Yugoslav monuments depicted here show, the language of victim narratives has been adopted in monuments to both combatants and non-combatants. The largest difference between these trends in the past (Yugoslavia) and present (Croatia), however, lies in the naming of individual civilian victims in a larger number of Yugoslav monuments than Croatian, an element only noted in monuments to Croatian Serb victims as in Varivode and Uzdolje or at memorial sites dedicated to the victims of the 1991 Vukovar massacre.

Public national commemorations of Yugoslav memorial days effectively ceased with the establishment of the Republic of Croatia, particularly after the end of the Homeland War, with Yugoslav holidays like *Dan republike/*Republic Day (29 November), *Dan narodne ustanke Hrvatske/*Day of the Uprising of the People of Croatia (27 July) and *Dan mladosti/*Youth Day (25 May – Tito's birthday) removed entirely from the Croatian commemorative calendar. In their place, holidays like 5 August as the Day of Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving and the Day of Croatian Defenders, recalling the success of Operation Storm, were established; the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Vukovar (18 November), to this date not an official public holiday, has been proposed by the current HDZ government to be made a national holiday in 2020, officially as the "Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Homeland War and the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Vukovar and Škabrnja" (Lozančić 2019)[20]. Zerubavel notes,

> *By carving socially marked events out of essentially unmarked stretches of history, ritual commemoration helps articulate what groups collectively consider eventful. [...] Perhaps the most spectacular site of collective memory in this regard is the calendar. As a cycle of holidays specifically designed to commemorate socially marked events, the calendar year often encapsulates the* conventional master narratives *[emphasis own] constructed by mnemonic communities from their history* (E. Zerubavel 2003, 317-317).

In the Croatian context, this means that the creation of new public holidays solidifies their importance in the master commemorative narrative of the Croatian state, or in the very least of the Croatian government. Similarly, the removal of older holidays, particularly the Day of the Uprising of the People of Croatia, one on which many Yugoslav monuments to the Second World War were dedicated, signals a clear rejection of the narratives of the Other (here, of a socialist regime at odds with Croatian nationalism). The repurposing of the anti-fascist narrative in Croatia as an anti-totalitarian one, as discussed below, is also reflected in the current government's plan to adopt 9 May as the "Day of Europe and the Day of Victory over Fascism" as a public holiday and 23 August

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[20] The Škabrnja massacre occurred at the same time as the fall of Vukovar to JNA forces and Serb paramilitaries and resulted in the deaths of 67 Croatian civilians and prisoners of war at the hands of the SAO Krajina Territorial Defence and the JNA. Some bodies were later found in a mass grave, and the event is marked by several monuments in the village, including a "cracked bird" monument by Slavomir Drinković.

as a memorial day of lesser status, namely the "European Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes – Nazism, Fascism and Communism" (Lozančić 2019).

Thus far, I have addressed in this chapter how memory, power, violence and identity intersect in the creation or denial of post-war narratives of victimhood, which in some instances has led to the widening of social divides forged through violent means in both the Second World War and the Homeland War. By comparing the construction of monuments and other memorial spaces to Croatian defenders and victims of the wars of the 1940s and 1990s, I demonstrated how visual manifestations of memory can be adapted to suit particular rhetorics, with some representing a potential "abuse" of memory as a tool for further violence. As the next section will show, the celebration of particular historical events can invite accusations of revisionism and a deflection of responsibility toward one set of victims by recasting those who committed the atrocities as those who truly suffered.

"Totalitarianism" and revisionism: Bleiburg and the victims of communism

Among the most controversial turns in Croatian memory politics away from the Yugoslav past recalls the fate of the victims of the Bleiburg repatriations of May 1945, when British armed forces handed over captured NDH soldiers, Ustaša fighters and many other combatant groups and civilians aligned with the Axis powers during the Second World War to the Yugoslav Partisan forces near the village of Bleiburg, Austria. What followed was the imprisonment and execution of tens of thousands of former combatants and civilians along with numerous deaths by disease and mistreatment on the march from Carinthia back over the Yugoslav border, with many mass graves unearthed in the 1990s in Slovenia. Many of those who died were ethnic Croats, the memory of their loss akin to a Croatian "Alamo" for the diaspora who felt forced from or unwelcome in their homeland (Hockenos 2003, 47-48). Discussion of these crimes committed by the Yugoslav state was made taboo throughout its rule and commemorations of the victims banned; it was in these instances where diasporic communities in Australia and the Americas filled in a form of memory gap by holding annual events to remember their dead as victims of communism, deflecting attention from their fascist beliefs (see Starčević 2019).

Since independence, however, the Bleiburg repatriations have been commemorated annually at a mass gathering of descendants of the victims, Croatian nationalists and Croat diasporic groups.

The Communist suppression of open discussions of Bleiburg and other atrocities committed by Partisans during the Second World War created room for a mythology of the fate of the Ustaše fighters to emerge in what was otherwise an information vacuum (Đerić 2009). As had Tuđman and other political figures throughout the Yugoslav period, so too did Yugoslav state authorities inflate victim counts in Jasenovac and elsewhere under NDH rule and deflate them in cases of Partisan crimes to advance its own myths of the war (Karge 2009, 55). This clash of memory also provided leverage for the Croatian Catholic Church, more influential in diasporic communities than in Croatia itself, to contribute to the nationalist narrative of Bleiburg, as discussed above framing the fallen as "martyrs." Kolstø notes, "Their death was expiatory: they died for the Croatian cause, so that the Croatian nation could live. Bleiburg is the Croatian Calvary, but, as all Catholics know, after Good Friday comes Easter Sunday. After half a century in the Yugoslav grave, Croatia has now finally reached Resurrection: the resurrection of the Croatian state" (Kolstø 2010, 1154-1155). Accordingly, the Bleiburg massacres are known in Croatian mnemopolitics as the *križni put/* the "Way of the Cross," and is called such in memorials to that event. While several monuments have been installed in Austria, which were not in the purview of this research, the primary monument to the Bleiburg victims in Croatia is located in a central space at the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb, dedicated on 20 June 1994 (Figure 5.17). The monument, a large metal relief framed in stone, depicts depressed soldiers and civilians, some wearing caps with the Ustaša "U," with the farthest soldier on the right kneeling and his arms crossed in prayer. Atop the stone frame is a Croatian *šahovnica* shield, and though a monotonous metal, the top left square appears to be white, a symbol of nationalism rather than the state. Below the relief to the left stands a memorial cross interwoven with the *pleter/* wattle rope, another symbol of Croatia. The memorial text reads, "To the Croatian victims in Bleiburg and on the Way of the Cross 1945," below, "To the fallen Croats from the Homeland and abroad, 20 June 1994."

Next to the memorial stands a large sculpture to the fallen Croatian soldiers of the First World War, again borrowing religious themes of the *Pietà*, with a mother holding her fallen son; interestingly, this monument is in direct line of sight from the grave of Franjo Tuđman at the cemetery's entrance. Commemorative events held around the Bleiburg anniversary in recent years have been well documented (see Kolstø 2010; Pauković 2019; Pavlaković 2010), and those held in Austria have invited much controversy over the presence of fascist symbols and slogans on the banners and clothing of the participants (A. Vladislavljević 2019). The presence of Croatian state officials at these events has also received criticism from Jewish (BIRN 2008) and anti-fascist community leaders, who lambast "a particularly pathetic and perfidious attempt of equating fascism with communism" on the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism (Antifašistički vjesnik 2019). By framing those responsible for mass murder of Jews, Serbs and Roma, among others, as "martyrs," this narratology erases and ultimately denies the suffering of those who were the focus of the NDH's genocidal regime and constitutes an abject abuse of cultural memory by twisting a dark past into material for a better future at an unspoken human cost. This erasure begets social tensions like those witnessed during the demise of Yugoslavia, and its

continuation well into the twenty-first century has yet to be satisfactorily addressed and rectified by acknowledging the cost of the narrative of Croatian independence.

Similar patterns of reframing memory of combatants have emerged in the contemporary Croatian commemorative process through the elevation of the defender narrative to a near mythological victor-victim status. A result of this is the acceptance and promotion of symbols adopted in the course of the Homeland War that recall imagery and slogans from the NDH. These include the "*Za dom spremni*" chant, and the white-and-red chequerboard featuring a white square in the top-left. Both symbols featured predominantly on the insignia of the Croatian Defence Forces (HOS), a right-wing paramilitary that operated from 1991 to 1992 before merging in to the fledgling Croatian Army, and can be seen at the two largest annual commemorations of the Homeland War in Knin and Vukovar. In 2016, a memorial plaque featuring the HOS insignia was installed near a kindergarten in the town of Jasenovac, the site of the NDH's most notorious concentration camp, sparking immediate controversy among the Serb and Jewish communities (Milekić 2016c). Though ultimately removed to the neighbouring city of Novska, the installation of the plaque and other instances where the "*Za dom spremni*" chant has been used, namely in football matches (see Brentin 2016) and at the 2015 Knin commemoration of Operation Storm, set off a debate on the persistence of fascist symbols in Croatia. This phenomenon has been described as "tolerance of otherwise unconstitutional practices" by constitutional lawyer Sanja Barić (HINA 2018b), a conclusion reached by the government's "Council for Dealing with Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes," established in response to the controversial plaque at Jasenovac. The Council's work ended in February 2018, releasing a 29-page report on the constitutional limits (bans or tolerances) of various symbols of the Yugoslav monarchy, NDH and SFRJ (Kusić 2018). To date, no declaration has been made in the European Parliament or other major EU bodies that challenge the ongoing backsliding of memory politics in Croatia through such acts of historical revisionism. I discuss the impact of the European Union in causing shifts or motivating resistance to change in the Croatian memory landscape in greater detail in Chapter 6.

By ignoring the ideals of the European project, Croatia and its "memory entrepreneurs" (see Jelin 2003) – politicians like Zlatko Hasanbegović, long-time Zagreb mayor Milan Bandić or Franjo Tuđman – have been free to "hijack," in the words of Jelena Subotić (2009), the process of coming to terms with its tumultuous past, whether in the judicial or legislative processes or in their roles

in developing the visual culture of remembrance in post-war Croatia (see Pavlaković 2008c; 2010). Thus, a performative duality emerges in which memory is made palatable for international display but ultimately satisfying the demands of the local electorate, and more importantly nationalist political élites, in ways that remain hidden from the international community, as the troubled balancing act of the commemoration(s) of the atrocities at Jasenovac described in Chapter 2 and the remembrance politics around the Homeland War has shown. While these actions do not strictly represent "memory abuse" in the terms I have set out throughout this thesis, they do nonetheless demonstrate the risks of exploiting memory's malleable properties that give an advantage to those with relatively greater power over memory to shape it as they see fit and not to suit wider social ambitions for peace or reconciliation. Cultural memory, as Jan Assmann argues (2011, 41), is carried by "specialised tradition bearers," in this case, the Croatian state and its national and local representatives with the ability to influence how memory is articulated in public spaces.

Similarly, associations of Croatian defenders and their supporters present themselves those most able to exercise power in the formation of Croatia's cultural memory of the recent past. The identity of the "defenders" is premised on their unique role in defending and liberating Croatia from "Greater Serbian aggression," to which their newly independent country had fallen victim. By categorising Serbs, collectively, as the "Other" and the breakaway Republika Srpska Krajina as a criminal organisation, this constituent element of the post-war Croatian narrative frames Serbs, who had lived in Croatia for hundreds of years, not as neighbours but as enemy combatants who deserved their fate. Any civilian casualties were framed in a way to deflect blame onto the victims, and accusations of war crimes committed by Croatian forces were brushed aside until external pressure from the European Union in Croatia's accession negotiations forced the state reluctantly to hand over those indicted by the ICTY and to pursue domestic prosecutions of war crimes. Instead, the description of both civilians and fallen soldiers as "victims of Greater Serbian aggression" prevents the further development of distinct, civilian-centric narratives of victimhood and their presentation to the public in the form of monuments, museums or other memorial spaces. Advancing the narrative of victimhood – and at that, an exclusive one – problematises any approach to reconcile competing narratives of the defenders, civilian victims, Serbs and other participants in the Homeland War and the related wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. One of Tuđman's largest memory projects upon his election as Croatia's first president involved the

"reconciliation" of the families of fascist and communist fighters for the sake of the Croatian nation. This would involve a forced cultural amnesia of the mass atrocities of the Second World War to secure the groundwork for an independent Croatian state defined rather by an ethnic boundary than a political one, something to achieve without the violence of the past (Hockenos 2003, 46). Such an imagination of a homogenous Croatian state necessarily precluded Serbs from the framework of "national unity," as their status in the new state was downgraded from that of a "constituent people" of Yugoslavia to a "national minority" in the Republic of Croatia. Serbs saw the rise of the HDZ as a potential risk to their personal safety, as the last "independent" Croatian state had shown. Serb media, much of which was disseminated from state-controlled outlets in Slobodan Milošević's rump Yugoslavia, began amplifying the narrative of Serb victimhood in genocidal acts committed by Croats during the Second World War. This was echoed in Croatia by state broadcasters presenting stories of the desire for an independent Croatia, the martyrdom of Bleiburg and the importance of the HDZ in securing a state free of such violence, while advancing the numbers game around Second World War victim counts at places like Jasenovac, as discussed in Chapter 2. The capture of the media environment under the umbrella of HDZ narratology was almost total, with institutions like *Hrvatska radiotelevizija* (HRT), the Croatian cultural institute *Matica hrvatska,* and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU) toeing the HDZ party line throughout Tuđman's rule in the 1990s (Macdonald 2002, 101-102).

During the Homeland War, art came to reflect social and political messages in support of or against violence, presenting another form of mediated elements of cultural memory. One of the most popular pieces to emerge during the conflict was Boris Ljubičić's 1991 "KRVATSKA!" poster, a portmanteau of the Croatian words *krv/*blood and *Hrvatska/*Croatia, the word splattered with drops of blood on a black background (Figure 5.18).

KRVATSKA!, Boris Ljubičić, 1991
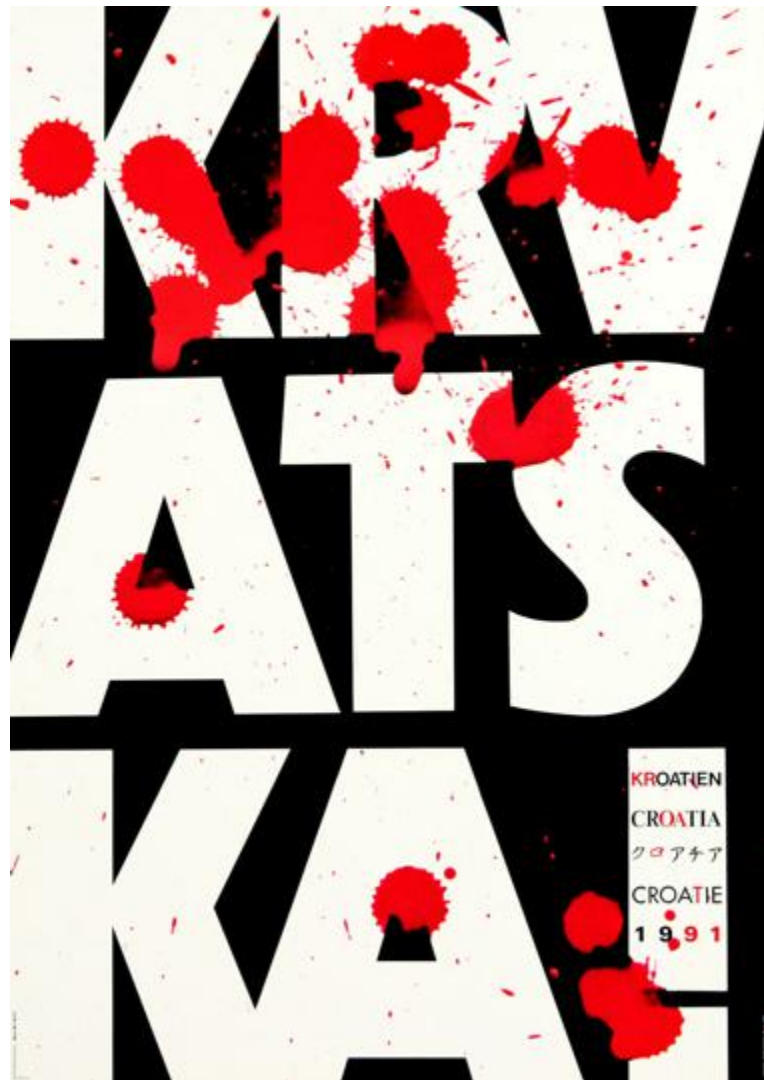
Source: MDC (2019).

The poster has been displayed in many exhibits on the Homeland War, most notably at the Operation Storm memorial centre at the Knin Fortress, the Zagreb City Museum and the Siege of Dubrovnik exhibit at the Fortress Imperijal. The question that first arises in my mind when I see the poster is always, "Whose blood is this?" The answer depends on the setting – if in a museum to military actions like Storm and Flash, then the intent is to show that is it the blood of the Croatian defenders. In victim-centred memorial spaces, then it is the blood of innocent civilians caught up in the war, perhaps even Serbs, but then the secondary questions of whom amongst those victims is and deserves to be remembered remains unanswered.

In Croatia, conflicting narratives of victimhood – Serb or Croat, soldier or civilian, murdered or martyred – lead to mnemonic competitions over who has the right to be remembered in the first place. Nielsen defines "*competitive victimhood* [author's emphasis] as a process in which the in-group is not only focused exclusively on its own real and alleged suffering, but also aspires to demonstrate and assert that this suffering is greater than that of other groups. The in-group will hence tend to deny, question, or belittle the suffering of other groups" (Nielsen 2018, 177). This competition for supreme victimhood, to put it one way, highlights the necessity of examining cultural memory as a tool for political gain and shows us again why the particular case of the clash of Serb(ian) and Croat(ian) narratives is relevant. Roediger et al. describe how the repetitive retrieval or performance of particular memories strengthens their hold in the collective, here cultural, sphere (Roediger et al. 2009, 148). Nielsen warns, however,

> *society does not tolerate 'eternal victims,' particularly if these are seen to be exploiting their status as victims for personal, political, or economic gain. Nor does society generally tolerate victims' claims to exclusivity at the expense of other victims [...] though most people would recognize that victims of violent crimes have suffered more than those of nonviolent crimes. In this sense, it is useful to contrast the acceptable but limited roles of victimhood with the open-ended and rather unlimited space afforded to collective victimhood in the former Yugoslavia* (Nielsen 2018, 180).

The lack of toleration toward narratives of perpetual victimhood is nonetheless a normative expectation established in societies external to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia during the twentieth century, yet the deviation from this norm as it has manifested in Croatia, Serbia and elsewhere has proven non-reconciliatory if not outright destructive. Similar examples can be found in the Palestinian-Israeli and Pakistani-Indian conflicts, which would merit wider comparative work on narrative construction in the Middle East, South Asia and the former Yugoslavia (see i.e. Górska 2016; J. Greenberg 2005). Croatian nationalists' insistence on a supreme sense of victimhood advances the process of othering that has contributed to violence in the past and present. The denial of Serbs' suffering and the rejection of the Yugoslav narrative of a common cause and shared trauma in favour of a nationalist interpretation of the Bleiburg victims as Croatian martyrs erases the political and social contexts of the groups, veiling their fascist beliefs as a minor aberration in the goal of creating a united, independent Croatian state. This othering, as achieved through the neglect or physical destruction of monuments to Croatian Serbs and Yugoslav

Partisans, which I demonstrate more clearly in Chapter 6, prevents the creation of a common, reconciliatory narrative of southeast European history from the early twentieth century to the present day. Instead, these processes exacerbate social frictions that emerged from conflict that otherwise may have been ameliorated through appropriate measures to address national grievances rather than simply silencing them, as had been the approach of the Yugoslav authorities in the aftermath of the Second World War. Nielsen states, "Together with the first decade of intensive Stalinist rule and oppression in Yugoslavia, these massacres came to constitute a kind of original sin," crimes untouchable by critics and opponents of the Communist regime (Nielsen 2018, 182-183). The Republic of Croatia in its early years received considerable support from diaspora communities, including those in Germany, Canada, the United States and Argentina, where the memory of the NDH lived on mostly intact, despite some clashes with earlier émigrés (Winland 2002, 698-702). Fascist collaborators sought asylum during the Cold War as "victims of communist terror," repurposing the Yugoslav terminology of "victims of fascist terror" to suit their needs. This narrative, which can also be seen in other post-communist European states like Poland (see Bucholc 2019) and Hungary (see Rév 2018), has since been elevated in post-independence Croatia, where the European model of remembering victims of totalitarian regimes has been adapted to force an untrue equivalence between the rule Ante Pavelić and the NDH and Tito's socialist Yugoslavia. Such an approach represents yet another attempt to reframe a fascist past as anti-communist, making the state's dark history more palatable for an international audience unfamiliar with the crimes committed by ultranationalists in the name of their imagined nation.

While uncritical narratives of the past demonstrate an unwillingness to accept nuanced and challenging conceptions of the nation as both victim and victor, with all duties, responsibilities and privileges such titles would impose, especially toward the vanquished, some memorial spaces in Croatia are now pushing the boundaries of what victimhood looks like in the Croatian cultural memory sphere. In the following section, I discuss the work of two Zagreb museum, the Image of War Photography Museum, an independently funded initiative to visualise the human cost of violence, and the Memorial Centre to the Rocket Attacks on Zagreb 1991/1995, which takes a middle approach between nationalist narratives of the Homeland War and a more victim-centric view on the conflict. In examining these two cases, I provide room for comparison between established and alternative narratives of the Homeland War demonstrated concretely in the shape

of interactive museum spaces. The next section thus returns to my core research questions on the process of social differentiation – in the former case of the Image of War Photography Museum by blurring the distinction between Serb and Croat victims and in the latter, the Memorial Centre to the Rocket Attacks on Zagreb, by strengthening the image of the "Other" – and how the interrelations most closely between violence and memory manifest in the visual culture of remembrance in Croatia.

Complicating images of victimhood: The tale of two Zagreb museums

Of the many memorial institutions that deal with Croatia's recent past, the Image of War Photography Museum in Zagreb, dedicated in 2018, is the most striking in its deviation from standard narratives of national, collective victimhood. The Museum, itself a result of a massive crowdsourced funding campaign, is located on the ground floor and in the basement of a relatively nondescript house on Hebrangova ulica, a major east-west artery in the heart of Zagreb. The inaugural (and current) exhibition, "*izbliza i osobna: rat u hrvatskoj*" / "up close and personal: war in croatia," features many of the well-known images of the Homeland War, including those by Pavo Urban, the photographer who died while capturing the bombardment of Dubrovnik in December 1991 (see Figure 2.6), Ron Haviv's photograph of the forced expulsion of Croat residents of Vukovar (see Figure 5.1 above), and Mišo Lišanin's image of a woman lying dead on the corner of Vlaška ulica and Šoštarićeva ulica in Zagreb, a casualty of the May 1995 rocket attacks on the city launched by Serb forces in retaliation for Operation Flash (not depicted here for its highly graphic content). Unlike exhibitions like those to Operation Storm in Knin, Dubrovnik and Karlovac, however, the photographs included at the Image of War Museum show the human cost of war and the universality of suffering. Some photos by an array of Croatian, Serbian and international photographers depict bleeding, wounded or dead civilians and soldiers, bridging narrative divides otherwise enforced in such memorial spaces. A graphic depiction of Lipizzaner horses, blown up in bombing raids in western Slavonia is followed in the exhibition book by a series of photos of basement windows lined with sand bags in case of mortar attacks on Zagreb. Other images show the burial of a soldier, a corpse with wire wrapped around its left wrist, nuns loading a car with firewood and a bus full of prisoners-of-war to be exchanged over boundary lines. Each image contributes to a wider visual imagination of the physical and emotional damage of war that less interactive spaces, like a monument or a piece of street art, can show. Accordingly, the museum's goal is "to have an informed dialogue with visitors and educate them about the devastating

consequences of war and the imperative of peace for everyone" (Image of War 2019).

The layout of the museum takes the visitor through a relatively straightforward chronology of the Homeland War and includes some images taken during the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The visit starts with the Log Revolution of August 1990 and follows through Croatia's independence referendum of 19 May 1991 and the gradual outbreak of violence through that period, erupting in the cataclysmic scenes of the JNA sieges of Dubrovnik and Vukovar. Other crimes committed by Serb forces during the war are depicted on the edge of the first room, and as visitors pass the threshold toward the entry hallway, they see a large wall noting the dates of major events during the Homeland War in relation to other world news. A spiral staircase invites visitors to interact with wooden cards hung on pegs, each retelling personal stories of the war, from children, civilians and soldiers alike. Two smaller adjacent spaces feature videos, one a short documentary on the creation of the museum, featuring interviews from the curator and various photographers, the other a silent reel of quotes from first-hand accounts of the war. Before climbing back up the staircase, visitors may fill out five different cards, asking the following questions:

- Is a future without war achievable? What would need to happen for this to occur?
- What was the last war you learned about that truly shook you?
- Which photo had the most profound impact on the way you view war, and why?
- How has this museum affected the way you think about war?
- Do you have your own war-related story? If so, share it with us.

These cards serve in lieu of larger guestbooks that might invite more public displays of controversial thoughts; in both of the guestbooks at Operation Storm exhibitions in Knin and Dubrovnik, I saw a large number of nationalist remarks followed by "ZDS," "*Za dom spremni!*" or the Ustaša's crossed "U," demonstrating a particular lack of restraint in commemorating the fascist past. Rather than archiving these cards for future exhibitions, the Museum anonymises, types and shares curated (and potentially edited) notes on the visitor cards on its social media platforms in Croatian and English (Figure 5.19).

Which photo had the most profound impact on the way you view war, and why?
Koja je fotografija imala najdublji utjecaj na način na koji vidiš rat, i zašto?

▶ Miloš Cvetković, Vukovar 1991. It only takes one crazy, intolerant mind to start a war; to push others to commit atrocities even when these others ignore the aim of it. It only takes one to grow and cultivate hate inside others.

Adriana, Mexico

How has this museum affected the way you think about war?
Na koji je način ovaj muzej utjecao na tvoja razmišljanja o ratu?

▶ It has provided me with the conceptual space to reflect on the severity of war and reinforced the need to have an open discussion around the impact(s) of war!

John V., Australia

IMAGE OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM

IMAGE OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM

Source: Image of War Photography Museum (2019).

The Image of War museum succeeds in breaking past a victim-perpetrator dichotomy and shows instead human stories of violence, its origins, consequences and afterlife. It provides an alternative vision of suffering as one beyond the scope of othering practices that perpetuate social divisions across generations, as has been demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia. In contrast, the Memorial Centre of the Rocket Attacks on Zagreb 1991/1995, opened in 2013, retains a more nationalist interpretation of Croatian victimhood while still giving some voice to the civilian victims of the attacks. The exhibition, located in a converted apartment overlooking Bogovićeva ulica, a major pedestrian thoroughfare full of bars and cafés, features images and artefacts from two attacks on the city by Serb and Yugoslav forces near the beginning and end of the Homeland War. The first attack on 7 October 1991, a direct bombing by the Yugoslav Air Force, hit Banski dvor, then the seat of the Croatian presidency on St. Mark's Square in the Old Town. The bombing allegedly targeted President Franjo Tuđman, who was in the building at the time of the attack, meeting with Stjepan Mesić, at the time President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia (the rotational presidential council that succeeded Tito), thereby Commander in Chief of the Yugoslav armed forces, and later President of Croatia, and Ante Marković, the Yugoslav prime minister. While none of these political figures were injured in the bombing, a civilian passer-by was killed. Zagreb survived the rest of the Homeland War mostly unscathed, but on 2 and 3 May 1995, Serb forces launched a rocket attack on the city from Vojnić, 50 to 60 kilometres to the south, killing seven civilians and injuring over 200 others. The attack was launched in retaliation for Operation Flash, which had

seen the recapture of large swaths of territory by the Croatian military from RSK forces in western Slavonia from 1 to 3 May. The events of 1991 and 1995 are commemorated by memorial plaques at Banski dvor and at the intersection of Vlaška ulica and Šoštarićeva ulica, two major thoroughfares in the city centre (Figure 5.20).

Left: Memorial plaque to bombing of Banski dvor, Zagreb, 27 August 2019. Right: Memorial plaque to 2-3 May 1995 rocket attacks, Zagreb, 21 August 2017.

The Memorial Centre itself was dedicated on the 18th anniversary of the 1995 attacks, and in 2014, the Centre was taken over by the Zagreb City Museum (MGZ 2019). To enter, visitors must ring a private doorbell and are guided through the exhibition by one of two staff members present. The guide details the chain of events that led to the rocket attacks and shows first the couch taken from Banski dvor after its bombardment, a symbol of the attempt to destroy the Croatian state. The couch is placed in front of an illuminated photo of the damage caused to the courtyard and sits atop a glass case of rubble. Various video clips are projected onto three blank books on a large glass table in the centre of the first room, showing news reports from the attacks and personal testimonies of witnesses, not unlike other exhibits on the Homeland War in Knin and Dubrovnik. The room is framed by large cloth prints of images from the bombardments in lieu of window curtains, while the opposite walls show newspaper reports of the events, which follow into the next room. The second room, however, also features seven, black, waist-high, square pillars capped in red, each naming one of the civilian victims of the 1995 attacks. The second room, though

dedicated to civilian casualties, is much smaller than the first, and here the guide explains some of the life stories of the victims. One, Luka Skračić from Zadar, was studying film in Zagreb, while Ana Mutevelić, the woman whose body was photographed dead face-down in the street, was a lawyer from Sarajevo who had fled to Zagreb for medical treatment (see Ginsberg 1995; Starčević 2018). The final room served as an educational space, with rows of chairs facing a small television screen, the walls lined with images of the modern Croatia – bridges, stadiums, parks, nature – while around the corner was a small display of the ICTY proceedings against RSK President Milan Martić and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia Momčilo Perišić. While Perišić was ultimately acquitted of war crimes and crimes against humanity on appeal (ICTY 2013), Martić was sentenced to 35 years imprisonment for his role in the joint criminal enterprise of Slobodan Milošević and his associates (ICTY 2007).

While the content of the Memorial Centre was easily digestible and presented in a straightforward, accessible manner to most visitors, the discussion I had with the staff member who showed me around was much more illuminating on the nature of the exhibition. For about forty-five minutes, Petra[21] and I discussed the Homeland War and the tumultuous history of Yugoslavia, bringing up the role of the NDH, Tito, Tuđman and the Homeland War in forming Croatian identity. On the NDH, she avoided any comment on fascism and figures like Ante Pavelić or the Ustaša fighters, but did state that despite its issues, it was the first "independent" Croatian state in centuries, which in and of itself was important. "Not everyone bought into the idea, but they had to go along with the system just like in the Tito era," she noted. She also expressed distaste for Tito and Yugoslav socialism and brought up the Bleiburg repatriations as support for her belief; Tito was "bad" and he "killed many Croats or made others disappear," here vaguely referring to the prison island of Goli otok, where Stalinists and nationalists were sent by Yugoslav authorities in the early post-war years. When I showed her photos from my recent visits to Vukovar and Knin, she claimed that Serbs never belonged in Croatia and that the Yugoslav Army was just a Serb Army, as all the key military positions had been given to Serbs. To her, people like SDP politician Bojan Glavašević, whose father Siniša was killed in the 1991 Vukovar massacre, did not make sense, saying he sided with people whose family members were "Chetniks."

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[21] Name altered to preserve anonymity.

Much of this conversation made me feel uncomfortable, as her approach to our conversation throughout the visit slowly loosened, first taking me as a tourist before realising I knew more about Croatian history than most of the other visitors. Our discussions shifted as I brought up more events and places from the past, including the Jasenovac concentration camp, which she hardly acknowledged, merely saying, "Oh, you've been there." This represents once again the clash of narratives that are part and parcel of the transition from communicative to cultural memory. We finished our conversation, exchanged pleasant goodbyes and I left to write up my field notes, reflecting on the distinct character of that visit. Entering the Image of War Photography Museum for the first time just over a year later felt like a breath of fresh air, as the absence of such an overt political narrative was profound. This, too, stems from the grassroots effort from various arts collectives, civil society groups and private donors who supported the creation of an independent museum to war. The Memorial Centre, in comparison, receives public (local, national and EU) funds and supplements its income through ticket sales and private donations through the larger Zagreb City Museum body that oversees it (MZG 2019).

The work of these two memorial spaces, and of the many monuments shown in this chapter, highlights the various contentions that exist in remembering the victims of war, no matter how abstract or concrete these victims are represented. Dealing with tumultuous pasts such as Croatia's invariably results in a wide array of insights and critiques of the narratives present on the many sides of these memory conflicts. The presence or absence of human voices in such spaces, particularly in the Memorial Centre above, grounds these perspectives in ways that political infighting over the past cannot. By examining these tensions, I return to the transitions between communicative, cultural and collective memory outlined in my concept model of memory abuse in Chapter 1; the contestations that emerge in the construction of these two memorial spaces reflects most clearly on the diffuse nature of power in the transition from the communicative to the cultural, where a wider array of actors, here the photographers, curators and museum guides, can influence the next set of outcomes in cultural memory.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the narrative of victimhood in Croatia has been employed, modified and abused in memorial spaces and events since independence. At times, the definition of victimhood is made intentionally vague and coupled with religious symbolism to blur the lines

between victor, victim and vanquished. The self-contradictions of nationalist interpretations of the past, namely of those who were killed during the Bleiburg repatriations and of Serb civilian casualties of the Homeland War, become apparent when contrasted with the narrative of Croatian independence at all costs. Croatian remembrances of victims are by all means not standard, as discrepancies in visual representations of the Second World War and the Homeland War in monuments, museums and gravesites highlighted here show. However, the approach taken by the HDZ and its supporters in recent years to vilifying the communist past constitutes a major threat to the anti-fascist narrative of the Yugoslav era, as the framing of the Ustaša dead as "martyrs" for the independence of Croatia and their celebration in events in Croatia, Austria and other diasporic communities immediately contradict the rejection of fascism as a core facet of identity. This analysis has shown how the malleable nature of cultural memory (see A. Assmann and Frevert 1999) allows for its use by various powerful social actors as a tool for social differentiation, addressing one of my core research questions, while also demonstrating the interplays between power, memory, violence and identity in post-conflict settings. This chapter contributed to extant literatures on those various social phenomena (see again Hearn 2018; Müller 2009; A. Assmann 1999) by showing specifically how narratives of victimhood in Croatia can only be constructed through such interplays, most crucially determined by the relative power over memory exercised by certain actors.

My analysis of the various commemorative events, primarily that of Vukovar, and memorial spaces here has shown how the remembrance of civilian victims has been prioritised less by key memory actors in Croatia (as well as in the Yugoslav past) in order to advance the narrative of the "defenders" as the true guarantors of independence. Rather, Croat(ian) victims have been mythologised and abstracted from the overall image of Croatian memory of the Homeland War and have been constructed as "martyrs" who chose to die for their country, while the Serbs who were killed in the aftermath of Operation Storm have been relegated to a memory void. Among the key arguments made here has been that the predominance of the narrative of defender's "martyrdom" has precluded the independent development of a victim-centric retelling of the past, thereby relegating civilian casualties to the bottom rung of the memorial ladder. The absence of victims' voices from memorial spaces has aided a relativisation of the past by various elements of Croatian civil society, which I discuss in greater detail in the following chapter. This chapter has advanced my argument on memory as a tool for violence through the manipulation, or abuse, of historical

narratives around the presence of Serbs in Croatia to fit political aims, much as Bergholz has demonstrated the links between Ustaša violence and the bifurcation of Serb identities in BiH during the Second World War (see Bergholz 2016). Further, this work has demonstrated the methodological importance of the visual in memory studies through observing the "public face of memory" to reveal various iterations of power in both its concentrated, state-centric form in the transition from cultural to collective memory (in the case of the Vukovar commemoration) and in its more diffuse nature in the transition from the communicative to cultural (in the Zagreb museums discussed above).

The next chapter will discuss in greater detail the intricate relationship between fascism and Croatian identity along with eradication of all things Yugoslav from Croatia's past, with the wider aim to present the constituent elements of modern Croatian identity and cultural memory. I argue that the contemporary Croatian identity as documented through the public face of memory is a result of memory abuse on the part of certain conservatives, who blindly follow their nationalist interpretations of the past without consideration of potential negative social consequences. Cultural memory, then, becomes or continues to be the source of struggle for power over identity, a phenomenon that transcends national boundaries. This final chapter will tie together the various strands of Croatian identity that have been present throughout this work to provide an analysis not of whom specifically Croatia remembers, but of how Croatia remembers itself in the process of forming a national identity. This investigation into Croatian self-imagination allows me to address my core research questions on social differentiation (or definition) through the public performance of memory and how resistance to certain memorial norms (here, those determined at the EU level) manifests in visual memorial culture. ★

Chapter 6: Hrvatska
Croatia

Memorial sites presented in Chapter 6
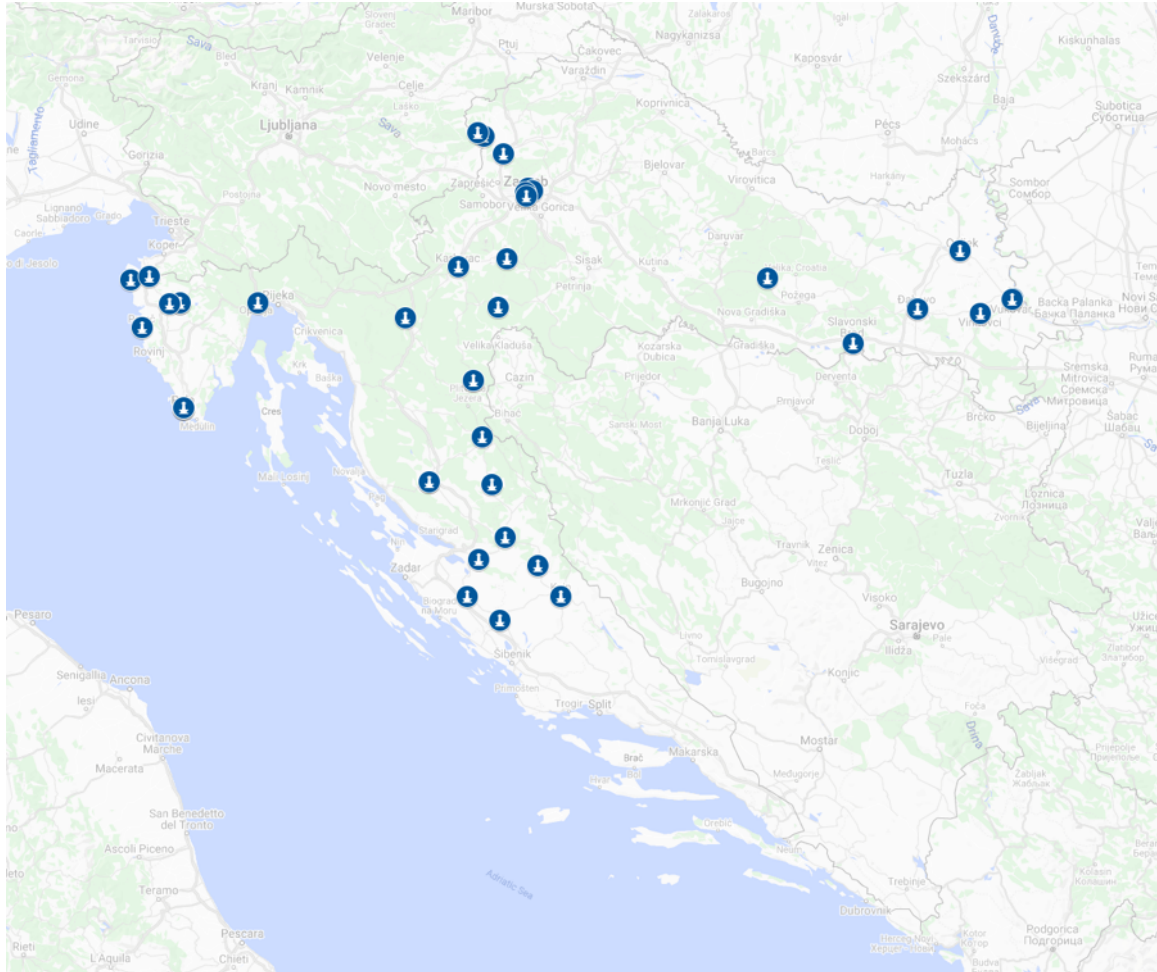
Introduction

This chapter focuses on the various threads that bind Croatian cultural memory and its public performances. Key amongst these are the centrality of religion and national conservatism, the historical continuity of the Croatian state over one-thousand years and the rejection of the Yugoslav past as a disruptive anomaly to this heritage. I aim here to show how the public face of memory in Croatia reflects undercurrents in the process of identity-making, that is, how the state sees itself. Beginning with the foundation of an independent Croatian kingdom in 925 CE, through the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the early twentieth century, the creation and destruction of Yugoslavia, and continuing to the present day, Croatian cultural memory has accumulated various turning points that form critical elements of modern identity in a new-old state "forged in war" (Tanner 2010). How such points are received and handled in the contemporary mnemonic landscape highlights the centrality of Croatian identity as one defined by its opposition to being something else rather than being its own unique phenomenon, a common characteristic of national identity creation (Triandyfillidou 1998, 599-600). Here, I address first and foremost the question, "What is Croatian?" as reflected in memorial spaces and events and to clarify patterns of political and social negotiations that result in a deeply self-contradictory narrative of the nation and how these patterns can be observed in other post-conflict societies.

This chapter returns to three of my five primary research questions, namely:

- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?
- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?
- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

In doing so, I return to the theoretical discussion of how the power *over* memory transforms into power for identities *to* endure and how memories of a distant past return time and time again to affix meaning to constituent elements of Croatian identity. Memory abuse also returns in this

chapter as an analytical lens to assess the role of fascism in the "thousand-year dream" narrative of Croatian independence as rehearsed by the HDZ and other conservative bodies.

I have divided this chapter into four sections, following the traditional wedding rhyme, "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue," each adapted to address core elements of contemporary Croatian self-imagination, followed by a final comment on public memory in Istria. Respectively, these first four sections address the pervasiveness of the millennial narrative of the Croatian state; Croatian independence and the ongoing Europeanisation of cultural memory; the rejection of all (or most) things Yugoslav; and the power of conservatism in shaping Croatian identity, including the controversial manner in which fascism has or has not been dealt with by key memory actors.

The first section, "Something old," discusses the millennial history of the Croatian state and its role in shaping modern Croatian identity, which I demonstrate through monuments recently dedicated to persons, places or events that critically informed that millennial heritage. The second section, "Something new," addresses my research question on the role of resistance to normative expectations of memorialisation vis-à-vis Croatia's 2013 accession to the European Union and the resulting mnemonic debates from the process of "Europeanisation," which is defined more closely below. In "Nothing borrowed?," I question the legacy of the Yugoslav period and how contemporary social actors have sought to eradicate the memory of the period from 1918 to 1991 (but more importantly from 1943 onward) from modern Croatian history, framing it as a sort of "aberration" that forced the removal of "Croatia" from political geography. Though many elements of Croatian identity and patterns of mnemonic behaviour seem to originate in this period, modern Yugosceptics deny that their memorial work is indeed "borrowed" from Croatia's socialist history. This section invokes again the question of how power, violence, memory and identity intersect in memorial spaces and how narratives of conservatism and fascism, which I then discuss in detail in "Something (black and) blue," intertwine through the work of noted wielders of power over memory who employ tactics reminiscent of memory abuse to deny historical wrongdoings. Finally, I end this chapter with a case study of the Istrian peninsula, a refuge of Yugoslav memory that poses a unique challenge to the consistency of a "one-nation" approach to cultural memory in Croatia. This final section builds on my documentation of memorial sites in Istria in May 2019, the only region in all of Croatia that appeared to be freed from the constraints of the hardened,

nationalist rhetoric of the Homeland War and Croatian independence discussed throughout the rest of this thesis.

This chapter demonstrates how difficult the formation of a singular, *collective* memory between various social groups within and outside Croatia appears and reinforces the need for alternative analytical concepts like "transcultural" memory (Erll 2011). As in the two previous chapters, I build on extant documentary work (see i.e. FRAMNAT 2015; Niebyl 2016) of public forms of memory in Croatia by expanding my view toward a rather holistic analysis of the key components of Croatian identity as reflected in various memorial spaces. Envisioning memory as a layered process of back-and-forth exchanges between various groups and determined by similarly varying power relations, as I argue in Chapter 1, is crucial in understanding how the clashes between different approaches to Croatia's past determine the appearance of the Croatian "public face of memory." The omnipresence of violence as a transformative force (see Bergholz 2016) in the varying narratives that do conflict with one another – be they socialist, fascist, Yugoslav, European, Serb, Croat, victor or victim – is also a theme that plays out subtly throughout this chapter, culminating in my discussion of the cognitive dissonance inherent in conservative visions of Croatia's past, present and future.

Something old: The millennial Croatian state

As mentioned variously throughout this work, Croatian identity in many ways is predicated on the existence of some form of a Croatian political entity for the greater part of the past 1,095 years. While Croatian nationalism as it can be observed today has its origins as a nineteenth-century elite literary and political project, the origins of Croatian identity are tied concretely to the existence of the kingdom of Tomislav I, founded in 925 AD, and not in a more mythologised imagination of the past, as in the case of pre-imperial German identity (see Le Gloannec 1994; Vick 2003). The creation of the first Croatian state is remembered in various monuments around the country, the most notable to be found in the *Sokolska mogila/* "falcon's mound" near the entrance to Maksimir Park in Zagreb (Figure 6.1). The *Sokolska mogila* was dedicated in 1925 by the *Hrvatski sokoloski savez/* "Croatian Falcon Association" and refurbished in 1995 by the *Braće hrvatskog zmaja/* "Brethren of the Croatian Dragon," a historical organisation responsible for the installation of many monuments across Zagreb and elsewhere in Croatia. The monument features a large sculpture of a falcon on a base with four plaques recalling the years 925, 1925 (as a

celebration of millennial heritage) and 1995 CE, with the most recently installed plaque noting the "realisation of the dream of the Croats: the free, independent and internationally recognised Croatian state," thereby linking the success of the Homeland War with the foundation of the first Croatian kingdom one millennium earlier. This newest plaque was provided along with reconstruction funds by the Croatian Ministry of Defence. The entire structure sits atop a mound of earth composed of soil samples from 155 historical locations across Croatia relevant to the state's history, and at its dedication, the monument was originally surrounded by ten linden trees to mark each century of the existence some form of a Croatian state. An additional lump of soil, blessed by Pope John Paul II in 1994, was added to the mound before its rededication the following year (Javna Ustanova Maksimir 2020).

Figure 6.1: *Sokolska mogila*, Maksimir Park, Zagreb

Left: The mound of 156 soil samples from across Croatia, atop which stands the *Hrvatski sokol* (Croatian falcon).
Right: Detail of the 1995 addition to the *Sokolska mogila* and the *šahovnica*, both images taken 21 August 2017.

Similar monuments have been built in the aftermath of the Homeland War as a reaffirmation of the restoration of Croatian independence and of the millennial identity, but none so clearly bind the Homeland War with the first Kingdom as the *Sokolska mogila*. The first 900 of the 1,000 years of "Croatian" history are compressed in memorial form, with statues of the early kings installed at

various points in the recent past. These include prominent sculptures of King Tomislav I in the main square of Ogulin in Gorski kotar, installed in 1925 and restored in 1990, and another facing Zagreb's main train station, dedicated in 1947 with a Croatian coat of arms added upon independence in 1991. As well, I documented two monuments to Petar Snačić (commonly known as Petar S_vačić due to an early historical transcription error) in Brištane near Krka National Park, dedicated in 2002, and one in Vojnić, the nearest larger population centre to Petrova Gora and the site of the 1097 Battle of Gvozd Mountain, where Snačić, the last Croatian claimant to the first throne, was killed. Though the Croatian kingdom continued to exist after his death, all future Kings of Croatia through to 1918 would emerge from a personal or dynastic union with Hungary. Even Habsburg rule has been framed as voluntary, as the coronation of Ferdinand I as "King of Croatia" came as a result of an election rather than through forceful means (Bellamy 2003, 39).

The persistence of a Croatian kingdom under Hungarian and later Habsburg rule for the vast majority of the supposed millennial history of the state highlights some of the self-contradictory nature of the modern rejection of the Yugoslav past, given the existence of the relatively autonomous Socialist Republic of Croatia, though primarily under rule from Belgrade and not Budapest. As throughout the later history of Yugoslavia, several attempts were made during Habsburg rule to restore full Croatian independence or to grant some higher degree of self-rule within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, noted in Chapter 2. The push for autonomy and eventual independence over several centuries, however, has served to strengthen the narrative of defending Croatian autonomy at all costs, and in many monuments across the country, the slogan "*Navik on živi ki zgine pošteno*"/"He who dies honourably lives forever," attributed to Petar IV Zrinski, appears as a reminder of the sacrifices made in the name of the state. As noted in Chapters 2 and 5, this text has been inscribed in both the Latin and Glagolitic alphabets, the latter noting the pervasiveness of the Catholic faith in shaping Croatian identity (Figure 6.2).

Top left: Monument to Eugen Kvaternik, nineteenth-century revolutionary, Rakovica, 18 March 2018. Top right: Monument to fallen Croatian soldiers of the Second World War, Lasinja, 29 August 2019. Bottom left: Memorial cross at the Church of the Croatian Martyrs, Udbina, 29 August 2019. Bottom right: Memorial cross for the "Victims for the freedom of Croatia," Vukovar, 2 July 2017.

Most interestingly, however, none of the monuments with this slogan are dedicated to Zrinski and the Zrinski-Frankopan conspiracy in the seventeenth-century but rather to historical events from the late nineteenth century onwards, thus linking the distant past to the present for sake of narrative continuity, a phenomenon Volkan refers to as "transgenerational transmission of shared

traumas" (see Volkan 2001, 85). Of all the monuments I documented, only two plaques directly recall Petar IV Zrinski, the first in Karlovac installed on the 300th anniversary of his marriage to Katarina Frankopan in 1641 and the second in Ogulin on the 320th anniversary of his and co-conspirator Fran Krsto Frankopan's execution. Neither memorial plaque is prominently displayed, the one in Ogulin hidden behind an overgrown tree on the grounds of the old Frankopan castle, indicating a degree of disinterest in more distant events in Croatia's past (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: Monuments to Petar IV Zrinski: Karlovac, Ogulin

Left: Historical plaque to wedding of Petar IV Zrinski and Katarina Frankopan, Karlovac, 26 August 2017. Right: Plaque dedicated on 320th anniversary of the execution of Petar IV Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan, Ogulin, 2 September 2019.

The focus on historical continuity marks a shift away from modern elements of identity toward the creation of a narrative of longevity, past, present and future, forging a "degree of permanence" of the Croatian nation (see Sani et al. 2007, 1120). By presenting different elements of Croatian identity anachronistically, that is, by introducing seventeenth-century text written in ninth-century script to a twenty-first century monument remembering events from the twentieth, powerholders in the context of Croatian cultural memory reinforce the endurance of the nation. This also furthers my argument laid out in Chapter 1 that identities defined by their resistance to external influences (here, Zrinski's opposition to Habsburg rule married with the Croatian struggle for independence in the 1990s) result from seizing the "power over memory" (Müller 2009) to assure the endurance

of these identities. Conversely, cultural identities generate their own power to endure through continual reinforcement, in this instance through the strengthening of historical bonds between various elements of Croatian identity and its creation through resistance to external force.

The subjugation of the Croatian state in its many forms by various external powers over the past millennium stands in contrast to the unique persistence of the Catholic Church (something even older than the state itself) as an institutional marker of identity. The coupling of a political statement like *"Navik on živi..."* to the Glagolitic alphabet on the Homeland War memorials in Vukovar and Udbina, for example, or at least the blending of the cross and the quote as in the case of Lasinja, demonstrates the proximity of the church to the state. Particularly in the context of the Second World War, as will be discussed in the "Everything (black and) blue" section of this chapter, the brushing over of religion's use as a tool for othering and, later, forced conversions as a method of cultural genocide becomes highly problematic, however "necessary" the Catholic faith was in preserving what was then seen as "Croatian" identity.

Religious figureheads also played a role in shaping earlier manifestations of Croatian identity and served as agents of widespread social and political change through their invocations of the uniqueness of Croatian or similar regional identities. Juraj Dobrila in Istria and Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Slavonia, nineteenth-century bishops and benefactors, worked to create a vision of wider Slavic identity in resistance to growing Italian and Hungarian influence in their respective dioceses. Strossmayer most notably aided in the founding of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, as discussed in Chapter 2, using his resources and cultural capital as a religious figure to act in what he perceived as a renewed national interest. The sculpture of Strossmayer facing the Đakovo Cathedral where he worked from 1850 to his death in 1905 recalls his work "[...] for the faith and the homeland." Similarly, the bust of Juraj Dobrila installed in the Istrian town of Poreč in 1982 names him as both a bishop and a *narodni preporoditelj/*"national revivalist" (Figure 6.4).

Left: Monument facing Đakovo Cathedral, Đakovo, 17 November 2017. Right: Bust of Juraj Dobrila, Poreč, 4 May 2019.

Figures like Dobrila and Strossmayer aimed to revive ties between the various kingdoms of Croatia that had been divided and sub-divided under Habsburg rule; Dalmatia in the mid- to late nineteenth century was administered primarily from Vienna, Slavonia and Croatia proper (primarily northern Croatia) from Budapest, and Civil Croatia (around the Zagreb capital region) from the Sabor in Zagreb. Despite the various origins of the national revivalist movements of the nineteenth century, all of these political movements called for the unification of the medieval Croatian kingdom, greater powers for the Sabor and a written constitution asserting "Croatia's historic right to statehood" (Bellamy 2003, 46). The downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the early twentieth century came at a time where matters of national identity became more prevalent as the elite project of nationalism (see Chapter 2) devolved into more commonly shared political and social identities. The absence of the First World War and the end of Habsburg rule in the Croatian self-imagination is reflected in the memorial spaces and practices witnessed across the country. Despite the human toll of the war and of the birth of Croatian nationalism during this period, a sort of selective amnesia presents itself, with only those figures, such as Josip Juraj

Strossmayer, Eugen Kvaternik, Ante Starčević and Stjepan Radić, the "fathers" of the Croatian nation, remembered widely at the national level (see Figure 6.5).

Top left: A book-shaped monument to Ante Starčević, his nephew, linguist Šime Starčević, and philologist Fran Kurelac, Gospić, 6 August 2017. Top right: Statue to "Father of the Homeland" Ante Starčević, dedicated on 13 June 2007, Osijek, 5 July 2017. Bottom: Memorial plaque dedicated to the house where Eugen Kvaternik declared the first independent "Croatian People's Government" on 8 October 1871, marking the beginning of the Rakovica revolt (he was killed three days later), Rakovica, 18 March 2018.

While local memorial sites might address more concretely the Habsburg past in Croatia more notably in northern regions than elsewhere, on the whole, this era is relatively neglected and only tangentially incorporated into contemporary public memory. Of the 614 monuments I documented, only 133, that is just over one-fifth, were dedicated to persons, places or events of the nearly four centuries of the Habsburg era.

More so, it is the cultural figures of the Austro-Hungarian period rather than the myriad local and regional political actors who are remembered, with numerous statues and plaques in prominent urban locations dedicated to authors (Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Antun Gustav Matoš, Janko Polić Kumov, Ivan Gundulić), musicians (Vatroslav Lisinski, Josip Runjanin, Dora Pejačević) and scientists (Nikola Tesla, Leopold Ružička, Vladimir Prelog) (Figure 6.6). It is in these spaces above all that women are remembered for their contributions to the Croatian heritage, in contrast to memorial spaces created post-independence (see Chapter 4). The marked turn toward commemorating politicians and state leaders in the early to mid-twentieth century demonstrates a greater social shift in awareness to matters of national and civic identities, much as the project of national identity making began in marginal cultural spheres, gaining political and intellectual traction throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century (see Hroch 1985, 22-24). Therefore, it would be expected that more attention was given to cultural developments and figures than the politics of the Austro-Hungarian period, which to the inhabitants of smaller urban locations like Đakovo, Vinkovci or Slavonski Brod would have felt more abstract and distant. During the Austro-Hungarian period, several important national symbols emerged, beyond the already extant *šahovnica* and *pleter*. A large obelisk built in 1935 dedicated to poet Antun Mihanović's 1835 publication of what would become the Croatian national anthem, *"Lijepa naša domovino"/*"Our Beautiful Homeland," stands at a junction near Josip Broz Tito's birth village of Kumrovec. In recent years, a "musical fence" has been installed, with each of the thirty-five posts tuned to a note in the national anthem that can be played in order when brushed with an attached hanging mallet; this is the most purposefully interactive, "hands-on" memorial site I documented during my field research (Figure 6.7).

Top left: Historical plaque dedicated to Josip Runjanin, composer of the Croatian national anthem, Vinkovci, 23 August 2017. Top right: Sculpture of author Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Slavonski Brod, 17 November 2017. Bottom: Memorial plaque to author Ivan Gundulić, Zagreb, 28 August 2019.

Left: Plaque describing the interactive Musical Fence, including musical notation for *Lijepa naśa domovino*. Right: Monument dedicated to the Croatian national anthem. Both images 18 March 2018.

The Old Croatia, despite its relevance to the perpetuation of the "millennial history" narrative and by laying many of the foundations for modern Croatian culture, appears nonetheless to be of little critical importance today, as the entire history of those 993 years spanning the founding of the Kingdom of Croatia to the creation of the first Yugoslavia is treated selectively and anachronistically. However, these foundations are essential to enable those actively constructing social identities and cultural memory to build using anachronistic juxtapositions and commemorations of historical events to suit their current objectives. The core elements of identity that have been preserved from this period, beyond the merely symbolic, are the resistance of attempts by foreign powers to absorb Croatia into their cultural sphere (Ottoman, Austrian, Hungarian, Yugoslav, Serb, and so on) and the persistence of Catholicism as a social marker. While the Croatian Catholic Church did not serve as the primary carrier of identity over the past millennium, as had the Serb Orthodox Church in the nearly four centuries of Ottoman occupation of the former medieval Kingdom of Serbia, the Catholic Church adapted its function as a supporter of the state through to the end of the Second World War. The difficult nature of this church-state relationship as embodied in the figure of Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac will be discussed toward the end of the chapter.

Nonetheless, the Church continues to play an important role in informing Croatian self-imagination and its public expression in monumental form. This follows from Smith's ethnosymbolc approach; Smith notes,

> *For ethno-symbolists, what gives nationalism its power are the myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular living past has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias. It is from these elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition that modern national identities are reconstituted in each generation, as the nation becomes more inclusive and as its members cope with new challenges* (Smith 1999, 9).

Hearn summarises: "In the ethnosymbolic approach, the strength of symbols, myths and memories explains the persistence of nations," and this includes "religious sources of national identity" (Hearn 2018, 288). He continues, "In this view, strong cultural identity generates power – the power to endure" (ibid.). In the case of Croatia, cultural identity is reinforced but not strictly defined by Catholicism. The strength of symbols of the Christian faith and their appearance throughout the Croatian mnemonic landscape, especially those containing ethnic or religious symbols like the cross, the *pleter,* the Glagolitic alphabet or the Virgin Mary, demonstrates an effort to prove the material wealth of Croatian culture and the links to its past and lends empirical support to Smith's ethnosymbolic theory of national identity. Returning to the theoretical arguments I made in Chapter 1, the power to endure results from a control over the power over memory – the institutions that make and break memory, perpetuate or destroy it – and an institution as old as the Croatian Catholic Church, coupled with the thousand-year history of Croatian statehood, serves in this function to assure a durable identity.

Something new: Croatia in the European Union

In contrast to the limited scope of the memory of the Old Croatia, the "birth" or "re-birth" of Croatia and its independence in the course of the 1990s represents the core element of Croatian national self-imagination and cultural memory. This is joined by the stories of the *branitelji,* as discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Here, I forward the timeline to the mid- to late 2000s and assess the construction of the independent "Croatia" in light of its process to accede to the European Union in 2013. Most importantly, I address the role of the European Union in making a *New*

Croatia and how recent governments have used the guidelines of European memory to suit their own cultural demands. These guidelines fall in line with the EU's values such as respecting "human dignity, freedom [...] and human rights" (EU 2020), which are handled rather superficially or performatively in Croatian memorial spaces, as I discuss below.

Radaelli defines Europeanisation as the

> *processes of (a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things,' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies* (Radaelli 2003, 30).

The Europeanisation process as it has played out in the context of Croatian memory politics has provided Croatia leverage to reframe its national narratives in ways that are not only amenable to the makers of the European memory framework in Brussels, but also to those in Zagreb who demand a singular, coherent vision of the state. Among the primary elements of contemporary Croatian cultural memory are the celebration of independence and praising of the "defenders," who fought for the "liberation of Croatia" from "Greater Serbian aggression" in the Homeland War, and the eradication of all things Yugoslav from the modern image of the Croatian state in the name of "anti-totalitarianism," which I discuss in the next section. The most controversial element of Croatia's accession process was, as noted in Chapter 4, the demanded handover of various Croatian military officials – that is, the "defenders" – to the ICTY to face criminal prosecution for crimes committed against the Serb civilian population and in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s conflicts.

As part of its accession process, Croatia adopted (or, as viewed by Eurosceptics, was made to adopt) various European standards of rule of law, political and economic reform, and most critically here, memorialisation. Croatia's conformity with the EU's formal conditions for accession, however, represents a superficial act of "dressing up," as the celebratory welcome of disgraced military and political figures also previously discussed shows. Here, however, the EU's formal demands only worked to exacerbate nationalist resentments and further tensions between Croatia and Brussels as the accession process continued. The installation of the defenders as a

central pillar of Croatia's modern vision of its past has come at the cost of the memory of over forty years of Yugoslav history, which conservative forces now seek to erase or deny. Doing so advances nationalist narratives, as noted above including those that brush aside the historical role of fascism in Croatian independence, that create contradictions in the "anti-totalitarian" framework recent governments have adopted to appeal to European policymakers. To a great degree, the removal of Yugoslavia from the retelling of Croatia's past enhances the narrative of Croatia's "millennial dream" of an independent state, a constituent element of President Franjo Tuđman's ideology in the 1990s.

Memory politics and Europeanisation

These elements of Croatia's transition away from the Yugoslav past towards a uniquely Croatian future highlight the contested nature of transition across time and space. The period of Europeanisation and harmonising soft memory laws (that is, informal rules or non-binding resolutions that bring about social behaviours or might induce particular actions without force) in Croatia with norms determined at a supra-national level has given rise to a fervent reconstruction and reframing of the Croatian collective conscience. The use of the European framework of memory at the national level represents a form of "downloading" values and memory content from a supranational, collective conscience, "as a means of aligning and confirming their EU values, and thus European identities" (Milošević and Touquet 2018, 384). The EU strictly defines its core values as "common to the EU countries in a society in which inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination prevail;" these values are namely human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights (EU 2020). While attempting to forge a singular narrative based on these values, the European Union creates a well-defined "Other" as those states outside of the bloc that do not promote inclusion and tolerance and brushes over internal issues in states like Croatia, Hungary or Poland where intolerance and discrimination appear to flourish. If the Balkans is perceived as the ultimate "Other" in the European memory sphere (Todorova 1994; Đerić 2008), then Croatia's gradual erasure of its Yugoslav past, through the destruction, repurposing or construction of monuments, museums and other memorial sites is an act of affirmation of its European identity (see Radonić 2010). Upon Croatia's accession in July 2013, for example, the City of Zagreb installed a new monument in the shape of a star on Europski trg (Europe Square), marking its new orientation toward Brussels and the future and away from Yugoslavia and the past (although the star – red – served as a symbol of the SFRJ that the state now

eschews). In March 2017, the street sign marking the square also received an additional plaque dedicated to the sixtieth anniversary of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community (Grad Zagreb 2017) (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8: Remembering Europe, Europski trg, Zagreb

Left: Monument to Croatia's accession to the European Union, Zagreb, 21 August 2017. Right: Small plaque below red-framed street sign dedicating the square to the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, Zagreb, 21 August 2017.

Conversely, as a new EU member state, Croatia may now "upload" its own memories to the mainstream European narrative (Milošević and Touquet 2018, 384), giving it greater leverage to challenge Serbia as a candidate country to accept its version of the history of 1990s in the former Yugoslavia. Croatia, however, is not alone in transforming its memory politics to align with European expectations in ways that are merely performative but brush aside culpability in its more sinister past. Slovenia, an EU member state since the 2004 enlargement, has also adopted the European anti-totalitarian narrative, which has manifested in the construction of a monument to "Victims of All Wars" in the centre of Ljubljana, which, while depoliticising the deaths of those who died in the various wars of the twentieth century, avoids a condemnation of domestic actors like the *Slovensko domobranstvo/*"Slovene Home Guard," which collaborated with the Axis powers in the Second World War. In his speech at the dedication of the monument in July 2017, Slovenian President Borut Pahor noted,

> *With the creation of its own state, the Slovenian people established itself as*
> *a nation. With the unveiling of this central national memorial to all victims*
> *of wars and war-related violence, it now establishes itself as a mature*

> *nation. [...] This memorial [...] invites all of us, all Slovenian men and women, to pacification and reconciliation* (Pahor 2017).

Serbia, too, dedicated a monument "to the victims of the wars and the defenders of the fatherland from 1990-1999" on Savski trg (Sava Square) outside the former central railway station of Belgrade in 2012, after a decade-long debate on the construction of a memorial to one of the most tumultuous periods in Serbia's recent past. David (2014) notes the contested nature of the monument and how various groups, including survivors, victims' families, veterans, local and national politicians vied to implement their views on the events of the 1990s as manifested in what ultimately became a rather lacklustre and neutered memorial space. The superficially reconciliatory nature of this art of commemoration belies the malleability of memory in the hands of "memory entrepreneurs" who present their memories as truth (Pollak 1993, 30). Jan Assmann has described the "reconstructivity" of cultural memory (J. Assmann and Hölscher 1988, 13), that is those shared memories common to a defined group, whether delineated by language, religion, nation or other. This "reconstructivity" provides those with the ability to form the content of a cultural (national), or further, collective (European), memory room to manipulate the meaning and relevance of a particular person, place or event commemorated (McConnell 2019).

Thus, the twisting of the European anti-totalitarian narrative, detailed more closely in the following section, not only allows states like Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia to conform to the European memory framework of remembrance established by member states of the European Union but also to reframe it in a way that supports nationalist ambitions at home. Here, power asymmetries between established and candidate member states and the East-West divide (not to say that post-Warsaw Pact and post-Yugoslav memory politics greatly overlap) come into play. David describes this phenomenon as a transaction located "in the power gap between local and political forces" (David 2017, 74), wherein Croatia (and, in related contexts, Serbia) treats its "memory content as a trade currency," something that can be exchanged for personal or political gain. Several Croatian politicians, among them most notably former Minister of Culture Zlatko Hasanbegović and current Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandić, have undertaken the initiative to eradicate references to Tito throughout the country, and in 2017 successfully renamed one of Zagreb's main squares, *Trg maršala Tita/*"Marshall Tito Square," to the *Trg republike Hrvatske/*"Republic of Croatia Square." In Karlovac, too, the square named in honour of Tito was

renamed to the Square of Croatian Defenders, in line with the predominant narrative of the liberation of Croatia in the Homeland War by the Croatian *branitelji* (Milekić 2017d). Tito, as head of the socialist state that conservative lawmakers seek to remove from the Croatian memory landscape, is framed as a ruthless, totalitarian dictator who suppressed Croatian national identity in the early years of the SFRJ's existence by sentencing his opponents to lengthy terms at the Goli otok prison camp; by removing him from their picture of Croatia's past, these actors can perpetuate their own narrative of Croatia's perpetual victimhood under the Yugoslav regime(s).

Does Europeanisation of memory politics strictly mean de-nationalising memory? In the case of Croatia, the answer is no. Any quasi-permanent changes in Croatia's mnemonic landscape have come as a result of "dressing up" to appease the powerholders of the European memory project, but domestic applications of European memory norms have been selective and tactical. This has been demonstrated most clearly in recent attempts to relativize the fascist past in places where its consequences were most damaging – Jasenovac and Bleiburg, discussed below. As well, government officials' denial or reluctance to acknowledge crimes committed by Croatian forces during the 1991-1995 Homeland War, an event within the living memory of current EU policymakers, highlights the problematic relationship the Croatian state has with coming to terms with the past. Instead, conservative governments have adapted the Europeanisation of Croatian memory in ways that perpetuate nationalist and anti-reconciliatory narratives. My argument here has been that the Europeanisation process, as it has played out in Croatia, has been more superficial and performative than fundamentally progressive and transformative, and that despite external pressures to conform to standards of remembrance agreed upon in Brussels, these have been resisted at the domestic level by influential actors and institutions who have sought to create or revitalise nationalist narratives of the Croatian past. This examination of the EU's role in forming Croatian memory and identity, which appears quite limited in examination of the public face of memory in Croatia, serves to provide contrast to the greater prevalence of nationalist symbols that I discuss in the following two sections on "anti-totalitarianism" and fascism, which clash with the EU's vision of victim-oriented remembrance and reconciliation.

Nothing borrowed? Rejecting Croatia's Yugoslav past

In this section, I continue to look at identity and memory construction in Croatia in the aftermath of the Homeland War as compared to the construction of cultural memory in Tito's Yugoslavia

after the Second World War. I contend that much of the framework of the post-Homeland War Croatian narrative (independence after a struggle against aggressive [Serb] nationalism, faith in the state as a construct, formation of a cult of personality around a political figurehead) mirrors that of Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s. As well, I discuss how Croatian identity is one defined in its opposition rather than an affirmation of its unique qualities beyond the millennial statehood narrative. This involves a discussion of the origins of Croatian nationalism as a form of resistance against the Napoleonic Empire and later Magyarisation in the nineteenth century and how this resistance is mirrored in the public face of memory today.

Croatian memory politics, "anti-totalitarianism" and the erasure of Yugoslavia

Like other Yugoslav republics, the Croatian experience of single-party socialist government differed in important ways from that of other European communist states. The Tito-Stalin split of 1948 and Yugoslavia's dismissal from Cominform provided the country greater leeway in positioning itself as a space both between East and West and as a centre of the Non-Aligned Movement. Croatia's tourism industry benefitted heavily from the lack of visa requirements for visitors to Yugoslavia, and along with Slovenia and Vojvodina, Croatia qualified as a "More Developed Region (MDR)" (Milanović 1985). Yugoslav citizens had greater freedoms to travel and work abroad, with many participating in the *Gastarbeiter* programmes in Germany and Austria in the 1960s and 1970s (partly due to economic conditions in post-war Yugoslavia), and on the whole enjoyed a greater standard of living than citizens of the Warsaw Pact countries.

However, the repression of the Croatian Spring and of Croatian national identity more widely during the Yugoslav period (see Chapter 2) has been framed today as a form of totalitarianism, and several conservative politicians have attempted to force an equivalence between Yugoslav communism and fascist rule by the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and the Ustaša paramilitaries in the 1940s. While oddly no monuments to the Croatian Spring were found in my fieldwork, new monuments across Croatia have been built to commemorate "victims of communism," often in reference to NDH soldiers and their families killed by Partisans in Bleiburg in May 1945 (see HRT 2011; Rogoz-Šola 2011). These include the "Sinking Head" monument in Đakovo, installed in 2008, and various, privately donated memorial bricks of the wall surrounding the Church of the Croatian Martyrs in Udbina, still seemingly under construction (Figure 6.9).

Left: "Sinking Head" monument to "Victims of Communism of Đakovo and Đakovština [Đakovo Region],"
Đakovo, 17 November 2017. Right: Privately donated stones lining memorial wall at Church of the Croatian
Martyrs, including to "Victims of Communism" or "Communist Terror" of Dubrovnik and the Peršinovec Forest
(near Zagreb), Udbina, 29 August 2019.

During the 2016 commemoration in Knin of Operation Storm, which brought about the end of
the Croatian War of Independence and remains a point of mnemonic contention between Serbia
and Croatia, Ivica Glavota, a representative of the Defenders of the Homeland War, noted, "... we
soldiers are anti-fascist contemporaries opposed to Greater Fascism, but we are certainly not
members of the totalitarian communist regime condemned in contemporary Europe together with
all other totalitarian ideologies and systems" (FRAMNAT 2016). Such commemorations on the
one hand conform to the wider European narrative of anti-totalitarianism and the necessity of
remembering mass crimes committed during the Second World War, but on the other hand they
relativise the communist past as equal or worse than the fascist past. This has the consequence of
either passively or actively framing fascists and fascist sympathisers as the ultimate victims of the
war, despite claims to the contrary. By engaging in the performative nature of European memory
politics, Croatian leaders in recent years have enabled a revision of the Yugoslav past as a
totalitarian one, overlooking the legacy of anti-fascism on which the Partisan movement and
ultimately Tito's Yugoslav state was founded (see Cipek 2017; Radonić 2010). This "anti-anti-
fascism" (see Kuljić 2002), if unintentional, is a result of Croatian memory politics targeting a past
in which Croatian national identity was undermined, and if intentional ultimately contradicts the
European norm of anti-totalitarianism (see Radonić 2013). Indeed, the last "independent"

Croatian state to exist prior to Croatia's declaration of independence from the SFRJ in 1991 was the NDH, a state premised on genocidal anti-Serb and anti-Semitic ideology (Dulić 2006).

Nonetheless, Croatian memory and identity after the Homeland War appear to have borrowed from patterns of memorialisation that emerged in Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the Second World War. The clearest link between Croatian and Yugoslav cultural memory is the installation of charismatic leaders – Tuđman and Tito – as the vanguards of the state, without whom it would not have survived. The cult of Tito that emerged in the 1940s and 1950s was reflected in the renaming of streets, squares and even entire cities (in Croatia, Titova Korenica near Plitvice Lakes), the construction of monuments in his honour, some of which remain visible today (Figure 6.10), and the total eradication of memory of his opponents (fascists and Stalinists).

Figure 6.10: Extant statues of Josip Broz Tito: Pula, Kumrovec

Left: Bust of Tito in "Tito park," Pula, 7 May 2019. Right: Statue of Tito before his birth house, Kumrovec, 18 March 2018. The statue had been previously destroyed with explosives in December 2004 and was quickly restored.

With the death of Tito in 1980 and the destruction of Yugoslavia in the decade thereafter, the image of Tito was rapidly replaced by the image of the new designated leader of the Croatian nation, Franjo Tuđman (whose own cult-like worship I discuss in the next section). Similarly, the

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fall of Yugoslavia meant the fall of its monuments and the removal of its memorial spaces, now seen as foreign to the Croatian narrative of independence and the more exclusive nature of Croatian nationalism as practiced by the HDZ of the Tuđman era. During the existence of the SFRJ, Croatia and other Yugoslav republics saw the construction of massive, elaborately crafted monuments remembering the "National Liberation War." Now known by the Serbo-Croatian term *spomenik* (*spomenici* in plural), these monuments marked major battles – whether victories or defeats – and the sites of NDH concentration camps primarily in the Croatian countryside and Dalmatian hinterlands. Significant work has been undertaken to document the history of these spaces; for example, the Spomenik Database website by Donald Niebyl records in great detail the origins, design, symbolism and ultimate fate of the memorials and provides a valuable resource for contemporary memory and architecture scholars (see i.e. Niebyl 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c). Beyond the grandiose *spomenici* designed by renowned architects like Bogdan Bogdanović, Vojan Bakić and Dušan Džamonja, hundreds, if not thousands, of smaller memorial placards on buildings or along once-important backroads recall smaller skirmishes, massacres or locals who fought and died elsewhere during the Second World War, or authors and artists of renown who entered the public eye during the Yugoslav period (Niebyl 2020).

When the Homeland War erupted in 1991, anything remotely Yugoslav was seen as a target for removal. Guilty by association with the now Serb-centric rump Yugoslav state and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), monuments were destroyed in Kamenska (Niebyl 2017b) (Figure 6.11) and Košute (Niebyl 2017c) in 1992.

Above: The Monument to the Revolutionary Victory of the People of Slavonia in Kamenska, dedicated in 1968, before and after its destruction by the 123rd Požega Brigade (Croatian Army) in February 1992. Source: Niebyl 2017a, "Kamenska."

Throughout the war, smaller memorial placards and monuments faced a similar fate, whether through demolition or vandalism, this trend continuing after the war's end in 1995. Between 1995 and 2008, four more large *spomenici* in Petrova Gora (Figure 6.12), Korenica, Drvar and Knin, the site of Croatia's final victory in "Operation Storm" were destroyed, and several more abandoned to nature. Many have been defaced with fascist graffiti (Figure 6.13), symbolically reversing or erasing the victory of the Partisans over the Independent State of Croatia in 1945.

Left: The Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija, showing external stainless steel panels stolen since its abandonment, Petrova Gora, 29 August 2019. Right: The former recreational area at the base of the monument, with picnic tables still intact, Petrova Gora, 29 August 2019.

Figure 6.13: Fascist graffiti at Yugoslav memorial sites: Petrova Gora, Žažvić, Zrmanja

Left: Ustaša graffiti at the Petrova Gora memorial complex, Petrova Gora, 29 August 2019. Middle: A defaced monument to locals killed by the Ustaša in the Second World War, Žažvić, 20 March 2018. Right: A similarly defaced and bullet-riddled monument to the 6th Dalmatian Brigade, attacked by German soldiers in October 1943, Zrmanja, 19 March 2018.

The purpose of destroying a monument is to condemn what it recalls to oblivion, *damnatio memoriae* (see Whitling 2010). Denying the existence of Croatia's Yugoslav past meant rejecting the values that underpinned post-war Yugoslavia: anti-fascism, anti-nationalism, socialism, workers' self-management, peace, brotherhood and unity. The resurgence of nationalist discourse from the mid-1970s in Croatia and in Serbia from the mid-1980s marked the gradual reshaping of their respective ethnic identities in opposition to the supranational "Yugoslav" identity that had emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War (Godina 2004). Modern Croatian war

narratives do borrow heavily in their structure from Yugoslavia – the Homeland War was seen as a "liberation" and "defence" from "Greater Serbian aggression," much as the Second World War was a "people's liberation struggle" from fascism; Croatian "defenders" receive the same elevated praise as Tito's Partisan fighters; the Yugoslav past was an artifice, as the disunity of the South Slavs was to the originators of the Yugoslav project. These reformulations seek to replace and ultimately eradicate Yugoslavia from the history Croatia has written for itself, in doing so restoring a degree of continuity to the "thousand-year dream" of Croatian independence. The memorial construction boom in Croatia I have documented throughout this thesis, particularly in the aftermath of the Homeland War (see Figures 6.16 and 6.17 below), demonstrates the need to reaffirm Croatian identity in physical form through the removal of errant elements of the past that challenge its supposed infallibility.

The Second World War, Croatian Spring and Homeland War all served to crystallise Croatian identity around the desire for national autonomy and ultimately for continuity of the millennial Croatian state, lost in the creation of the first Yugoslav kingdom in 1918. By framing Yugoslavia, primarily in the form of the SFRJ, as a totalitarian state while overlooking the hypertotalitarianism of the NDH, which I discuss below, Croatian memory makers today can justify the removal of the Yugoslav past from their own view of cultural memory. The extension of this view of all things Yugoslavia to all things Serb in the lead up to the Homeland War through the narrative of liberation from "Greater Serbian aggression" and Serbs as "enemies" also builds from Starčević's anti-Serb rhetoric from the late Austro-Hungarian period (Trbovich 2008, 136), a dark note ignored in the monuments built in his name. As I discussed in Chapter 5, the legacy of this rhetoric has manifested in protest against the use of the Cyrillic alphabet in Vukovar in the aftermath of the 2011 Croatian census, the destruction of socialist monuments to "brotherhood and unity" amongst Yugoslavia's constituent peoples and to the Serb victims of the Homeland War, and the refusal by state and municipal authorities to fund the reconstruction of formerly Serb spaces in Croatia like Islam Grčki. By defining Croatian identity as what it is *not*, that is, by refusing to incorporate various elements of its past and current realities, those with exercising power over memory bolster the need to define the "Other" more clearly than themselves. Rather than presenting its unique features – a rich literary, artistic and culinary heritage, for instance – these expressions of nationalism in memorial spaces has led to the definition of Croatian identity as one

in opposition – against its occupiers, its neighbours, its enemies, and in the case of Yugoslavia, its own past. Thus the question remains: what is Croatia?

Everything (black and) blue: Fascism, conservatism and the modern Croatian state

The proximity of the fascist past to modern conservatism and of nationalists' embrace of various elements of the NDH legacy in Croatia have been some of the greatest sources of political controversy since the country's accession to the European Union. This proximity has manifested, for example, in the presence of HDZ leaders at commemorations of the Bleiburg repatriations, public relativisation of the NDH past at sites like Jasenovac and the installation of monuments and historical plaques that selectively address the "independence" of the Croatian state during the Second World War rather than critically deal with the nature of the state's government at that time. In spite of the inherent polyphony in the creation of a wider cultural conscience, conservative voices continue to crowd the field of Croatia's public mnemonic processes. While this is a result of the decades of Croatian resistance to external rule (namely since the mid-nineteenth century), national conservatism continues to dominate. How this is reflected in contemporary memory practices – for example in the December 2018 dedication of a new memorial to Franjo Tuđman in Zagreb – and in political discourse about Croatia's recent past will be expounded in this section.

The discussion below is divided first into an evaluation of the links between fascism and the current conservative view of Croatian identity, as demonstrated through the controversial figure of Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac and the memorial landscape developed around him in the aftermath of the Second World War. I follow with a parallel example of Franjo Tuđman and how his cult of personality during his presidency from 1990 to 1999 has elevated him in the eyes of the HDZ and its supporters to an infallible demi-god. This portion of the chapter revisits my research question on who has the power to construct divisive memories (as Tuđman himself remains a highly divisive figure in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia today) and how such memorial constructs impact the public performance of memory. I then end this chapter with the problems Istria presents to the conservative narratives of independence and wider of Croatia's twentieth-century history with multiple examples of monuments that represent a clean break from Croatian nationalism.

Fascism and the Croatian conservative narrative

The link between modern conservatism and historical fascism in Croatia is murky, yet the public embrace of certain elements of the fascist past by political and social actors in and around the HDZ and other national conservative parties has become more visible in recent years. Above all, the perceived need to justify the existence of the modern independent Croatian state as one with a nearly unbroken heritage of independence has led to a brushing aside of the darker elements of this legacy. Despite assurances to comply with European memorial norms through membership in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and similar measures to "download" European memory (see Milošević and Touquet 2018), Croatia – through the power of hardened nationalists and conservatives - has resisted a full Europeanisation of its cultural memory vis-à-vis the Second World War.

The challenge to Europe's power over memory in Croatia by conservative actors in politics and society has become increasingly evident through post-accession commemorative practices, mostly stemming from nationalist narratives underpinning the memory of the Homeland War. The gradual removal of all things Yugoslav from the Croatian retelling of its past highlights the power of partial remembrance and the performativity of transnational memory-making. Here, I analyse Croatian deviation from the framework of European memory of the Holocaust after its 2013 accession to the European Union and how the use of nominally European narratives has instead reinforced divisive, nationalist interpretations of the past.

In the years leading up to and following its EU accession, Croatia has made efforts to conform to the European framework of Holocaust remembrance, joining the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2005, and, as illuminated above, celebrating the defeat of totalitarianism in Europe. However, conservative forces in Croatia, who have been in power for the greatest part since the first multi-party elections in 1990, have used the "European memory framework" in a way to advance their own narratives, which have gained wide currency since the end of the Homeland War in 1995. In many ways, the narratives that dominate are highly masculine, defender-centric and exclude the voices of women, victims and minorities – most notably Serbs, as I have argued in Chapter 4 and 5. This begs the question, then, how can Croatia both conform to and ignore the European standardisation of memory simultaneously?

The mnemonic tensions that exist between Serbia and Croatia can be traced to the Second World War, driven primarily by the mass murder of Serb civilians by the Ustaša paramilitaries and in NDH-run concentration camps in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. The most notorious of these camps, Jasenovac, saw the murder of Serbs, Jews, Roma and opponents of the NDH regime, the final tally of victims a source of conflict through present day[22]. Today, three commemorations mark the suffering that occurred in Jasenovac – one hosted by the Croatian government, one by the Serb National Council and anti-fascist organisations in Croatia, and one by the Jewish community in Croatia and Serbia. The latter two have emerged from a boycott of government-sponsored events, which in recent years has funded research that challenges the historical understanding of Jasenovac as an NDH camp, instead seeking "evidence" of the camp's continued operation by the Yugoslav government as a prison after the war, a fact that is not supported by contemporary research (Milekić 2018c; Milošević and Touquet 2018, 390).

The problematic treatment of the fascist past can be illuminated by a closer examination of one of the key figures in the period of NDH rule, Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac, the Archbishop of Zagreb from 1937 until his death while under house arrest in Krašić, a village southwest of the capital, in 1960. Here, I discuss how the mnemonic behaviours regarding Stepinac highlight tensions between historical revisionism and the recognition of the dark side of Croatian history. I demonstrate these behaviours using monuments dedicated both to Stepinac as a religious figure and a symbol of Croatian identity and monuments to the fascist past which represent barriers to a holistic appreciation of the legacy of the Croatian pursuit of independence.

Stepinac, as noted in Chapter 2, maintained a relatively close relationship with the NDH authorities and the leaders of the Ustaše, supporting the notion of Croatian independence though levering some criticism against the regime throughout its rule. While professing loyalty to the NDH, he also lamented the destruction of synagogues and appeared to be aware of the crimes committed against Jews, Serbs and Roma in Croatia during the Second World War (Tanner 2010,

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[22] The relativizing of the fascist past by the HDZ also mirrors recent actions by the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland, whose judicial reforms in the mid- to late 2010s have seen a denial of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, punishing those who call into question the prescribed victim status of all Poles during the Second World War (Bucholc 2019). Despite threats of sanction by the European Union, little has been done at the transnational level to force a reversal of this pattern of erasure and denial.

155-156). Despite his apprehensive nature, Stepinac became a cultural figurehead for his support of Croatian independence and a symbol of the importance of the Catholic faith to Croatian identity. After the war, the majority of church-held property was nationalised and fascist collaborators prosecuted by the Yugoslav authorities, with Stepinac accused of undermining the new state; ultimately, he was sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment for high treason and war crimes, serving all but five years under house arrest (Tanner 2010, 186). Under NDH rule, Serbs and Jews, if they were not immediately killed, tortured or deported, were forcibly converted to the Catholic faith, marking an unwilling break with their personal, religious and ethnic identities. While Stepinac had made attempts to prevent forced conversions from taking place and was credited with saving Jewish lives where he could, his power was limited to the churches in his diocese, if any, given the unruly nature of the NDH's administration. Nevertheless, some 240,000 Serbs, Jews and others had been converted by 1943, including in the Jasenovac camp (Tomasevich 2001, 541). Stepinac remained a symbolic figurehead, particularly in diasporic communities for his prosecution by the Yugoslav authorities, and upon his death, he came to be seen as a martyr, a view confirmed through his beatification by Pope John Paul II in 1997 (Vasović 2016). John Paul II reiterated that Stepinac was indeed a martyr for the Catholic faith, and his wax effigy was installed prominently near the altar of the Zagreb Cathedral. His tomb, designed by renowned Croatian artist Ivan Meštrović, was donated by the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in Detroit, Michigan, USA, again reinforcing the link between the diaspora and the "homeland." I documented several busts of Stepinac in Benkovac, Gospić, and Obrovac, all installed since Croatian independence (Figure 6.14); before the Homeland War, the populations of Benkovac and Obrovac were majority Serb, but now Serbs form a small minority[23]. The installation of monuments to as controversial a figure as Stepinac marks another attempt at othering those who fled their homes during the 1940s and again in the 1990s and signifies a reclaiming not only of Croatian, but specifically of Croat, territory. It, too, demonstrates an uncritical approach to the past that only advances the nationalist interest of independence without acknowledging the human cost incurred in the pursuit of this ideology, exacerbating rather than ameliorating consequent social tensions.

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[23] For example, in 1991, the population of Obrovac was 75.48% Serb and 17.16% Croat, while in 2011, the town's population was 84.0% Croat and 12.8% Serb (DZS RH 2005; 2011).

Top left: Memorial engraving on the sarcophagus around the wax effigy of Stepinac, Zagreb Cathedral, 27 August 2019. Top right: Monument to Stepinac dedicated on 13 May 2017, Benkovac, 20 March 2018. Bottom left: Bust of Stepinac with memorial candles, Gospić, 6 August 2017. Bottom right: Monument to Stepinac, featuring Croatian *pleter* pattern around its base, Obrovac, 6 August 2017.

Again, this pattern of relativizing Croatia's tumultuous past by the Croatian government – headed once more by the Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ, founded by Tuđman in 1989 – fits the attempted "national reconciliation" narrative predominant in the 1990s that sought to rationalise the NDH/Ustaša regime and demonise the Yugoslav Partisans, the most successful resistance force in Europe during the Second World War. Instead of reconciling, however, the government's support of counterfactual research in order to legitimise its own nationalist narrative contradicts the European standard of post-nationalism while simultaneously conforming to a wider condemnation of the communist era common in Central and Eastern European Union member states (see Radonić 2014). The antagonism of Serbs in Croatia by the Croatian government perpetuates divisions that in the European Union are actively rebuked.

A further problem that emerges in the contemporary Croatian commemorative process, particularly in memorial events held in remembrance of 1995's Operation Storm in Knin and the 1991 Siege of Vukovar, through the elevation of the defender narrative is the acceptance and promotion of symbols adopted in the course of the Homeland War that recall imagery and slogans from the NDH, including the use of *Za dom spremni!* and the white-then red *šahovnica* by the HOS paramilitary discussed in the previous chapter. "HOS" was also the acronym of the post-1944 Croatian Armed Forces that existed during NDH rule, its revival during the Homeland War inviting continued controversy over the modern state's relationship to its fascist past. The white-then-red *šahovnica* has also been incorporated into memorials to the victims of the Bleiburg repatriations and soldiers of the NDH in the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb, where they are regularly maintained and cleaned (Figure 6.15).

Left: The white-then-red *šahovnica* prominently featured on the monument to the victims of the Bleiburg repatriations, 28 August 2019. Right: Memorial cross to the "Croatian soldiers fallen for the Homeland, 1941-1945," with similar *šahovnica*, 28 August 2019.

The relativisation of the fascist past initiated by Tuđman and his supporters from the 1980s onward demonstrates the reluctance of Croatia's conservatives to acknowledge the damaging elements of their heritage of independence and continues to challenge European norms of memorialising the totalitarian past.

Tuđman: Demagogue and demigod

The central figure of this conservative identity is undoubtedly former Croatian President Franjo Tuđman. Nearly every town I visited had a street named after him, many statues dotted the main squares of villages and cities across Croatia, and his positioning as not only a spiritual successor but as a total replacement of Josip Broz Tito (military caps and all) is prominently displayed in the public sphere. Upon the opening of the new passenger terminal in 2017, Zagreb Airport, too, was renamed after Tuđman. As the first democratically-elected president of an independent Croatian state, he played a crucial role in revitalising nationalist discourse in spaces where it had been earlier silenced. As discussed in Chapter 5, among his key mnemonic ambitions was the "reconciliation" of the descendants of fascist and partisan fighters from the Second World War for the sake of the

survival of the Croatian nation in the face of "Greater Serbian aggression." While the principle of reconciliation is quintessential to durable peace-making, its implementation in Croatia during and after the Homeland War has primarily served to create greater space for division by reopening painful questions of national, ethnic, political, social and religious identities. This incorporation of the NDH as a "legitimate expression of Croatian statehood" has been seen by the Serb and Jewish communities, in contrast to desires of reconciliation, as a provocation (Bellamy 2003, 52). My analysis of the proximity of fascist memory to conservative identity today has pointed at some of these consequences and their manifestations in memorial form. Here, too, I focus the discussion on the cult-like worship of Franjo Tuđman in conservative circles and its implications for the creation of contemporary identity in Croatia, again highlighting Tuđman's elevated role in the public face of memory.

"Tuđmanism" as a term describes the set of policies put into place in the 1990s under Tuđman's leadership that aimed at reviving Croatian identity through this "reconciliation" – forcing a false equivalence between the totalitarianisms of fascism and communism – and a strong embrace of diasporic communities, many of which grew in the aftermath of the Second World War. As a former high-ranking communist official purged from the KPJ after his involvement in the Croatian Spring movement, Tuđman explored in various texts his vision of Croatian history, in his words a "re-examination" of the past (Macdonald 2002, 100). This involved controversially challenging official victim counts of the Holocaust and the Second World War in Yugoslavia, noted in Chapter 2 (see Kolstø 2011 and Tuđman 1989). More importantly, however, Tuđman's outreach to Croat communities abroad, most successfully in North America, provided valuable funds for the (ultimately partial) realisation of his and the HDZ's ambitions to forge a new sense of national solidarity. The donations proffered by these diasporic communities supported the Croatian war effort throughout the Homeland War, and many young men from places like Canada, the United States and Australia, who had never been to Yugoslavia, left their homes to fight for the independence of their ancestral state. Such émigrés, like Gojko Šušak, an Ottawa pizza shop owner whose father and brother fought for the NDH, also served in key government posts during the war, in Šušak's case as Minister of Defence (Macdonald 2002, 100). This connection between the Croat diaspora and the Republic of Croatia has been maintained through various associations and political linkages today. In 2016, for example, the short-lived Orešković government under President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović was led by Canadian pharmaceutical executive Tihomir

Orešković until his ousting for his deviation from the HDZ's expectations of his policymaking in a vote of no confidence after just under nine months in office.

Franjo Tuđman's role as the key statesman of modern Croatian history has faced challenges from both the HDZ and Social Democrat governments that emerged after his death in December 1999, and many of his nationalist policies were reversed or blocked during a brief wave of "detudjmanisation." In a process that ended quite dissimilarly to destalinisation in the Soviet Union during the 1950s, detudjmanisation represented softer attempts to place agency for the creation and survival of the Croatian state in the hands of other political and social actors than Tuđman alone. The HDZ undertook reforms to move away from its "nationalist authoritarian" position of the 1990s to evolve into a more classical conservative party under the leadership of Ivo Sanader, Croatian Prime Minister from 2003 to 2009 (Bieber 2017, 50). During this time, the HDZ shifted toward a stronger pro-European platform, eschewing the somewhat isolationist nationalism of its early years, and though Croatia's application for EU membership was submitted under the SDP government of Ivica Račan, much of the work taken to meet accession criteria was undertaken by Sanader's governments. Sanader, however, was ultimately arrested on corruption charges upon his resignation from office in 2009, tarnishing the HDZ's reputation and reminding the electorate of the earlier years of privatisation under Tuđman that concentrated much of the state's production in the hands of a small number of his associates. In the end, Sanader was convicted of war profiteering in 2018 and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison (Ilić 2018).

During the Sanader years, a handful of monuments to Franjo Tuđman were installed across the country, yet in the aftermath of Sanader's fall from grace and the revival of Tuđman's legacy under President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović since Croatia's accession to the EU, images of Tuđman have come back to the foreground of the public face of memory. Figure 6.16 below shows the general pattern of monument construction in Croatia from 1990 to 2018, the last year I documented any newly dedicated memorials, while Figure 6.17 zooms in on the construction of monuments that recall events in the same timeframe, noting the frequency at which busts of Tuđman began to appear across the country.

n = 223 monuments with identifiable dedication dates between 1990 and 2018
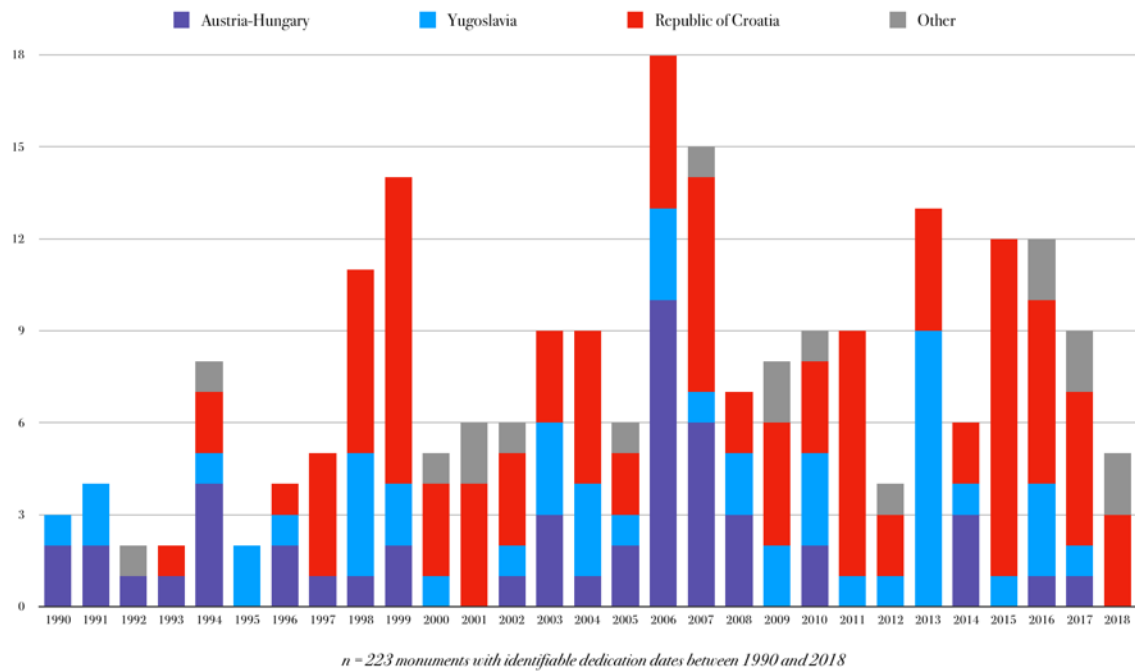
Figure 6.17: Construction of monuments to the era of the Republic of Croatia, 1990 to 2018

n = 106 Republic of Croatia monuments with identifiable dedication dates between 1990 and 2018
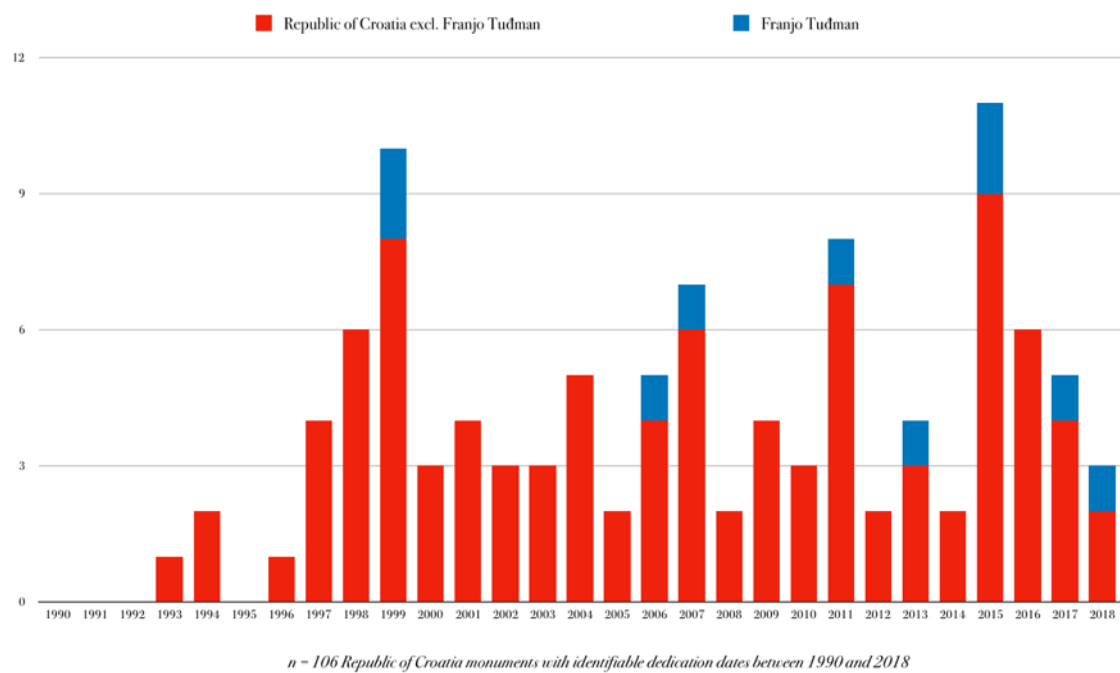
Of the monuments I documented, fifteen were dedicated to Tuđman alone, the most to any one individual and primarily in the form of busts with a generally standard appearance and text, often "Dr. Franjo Tuđman, first Croatian President, 1990-1999" or some small variation thereupon.

The oldest I noted was dedicated in 1999, the year of Tuđman's death from cancer, built in the village of his birth, Veliko Trgovišće. The bust, a simple sculpture of his head on a marble plinth, stands outside a reconstructed version of his birth house and childhood home, now a museum featuring images of Tuđman and his books in various translations (Figure 6.18). The museum, however, is built in an architectural style more reminiscent of the urban bourgeoisie in Zagreb than the home of Zagorje peasants, having been built over the decaying remnants of his real home. Inside, no mention is made of Tuđman or his father Stjepan's roles in the Communist leadership of Croatia during and after the Second World War. The monument to Stjepan Tuđman and Partisan fighters in the main square of Veliko Trgovišće, dedicated in 1965, was added to in 2007 through funds provided by the HDZ by inscribing the names of defenders from the village who "gave their lives for the freedom of Croatia" (Šimičević 2019).

Figure 6.18: Birthplace of Franjo Tuđman, Veliko Trgovišće

Left: Bust of Tuđman. Right: Birth house of Franjo Tuđman, currently housing a small exhibit on his life and publications, Veliko Trgovišće, 18 March 2018.

Tuđman's grave also has become a key memorial site in Zagreb, its central location behind the main entrance to the massive Mirogoj cemetery facilitating access. In his lifetime, Tuđman positioned himself and was viewed by many as a "messianic type of leader" (Drakulić 2004 [2015], 117) and a "demigod" (Jordan 2000), and in death, he has become a mythologised father of the nation, like Starčević, Strossmayer, Dobrila and Kvaternik. During each of my three visits to Mirogoj, flowers had been freshly lain and memorial candles lit by Tuđman's grave, and the black marble tomb always appeared to have been freshly polished. The grave, one of the largest in the massive

cemetery complex, stands in direct line of sight from a memorial sculpture dedicated to the soldiers and victims of the First World War, awkwardly placed next to the Bleiburg monument discussed in the previous chapter. As with other memorials to Tuđman, the grave simply states, "Dr. Franjo Tuđman, 1922-1999, First President of the Republic of Croatia," with his quote, "Always everything for Croatia, and our only and eternal Croatia for nothing [that is, at all cost]!"[24] prominently displayed on the rear in gold block lettering (Figure 6.19).

Figure 6.19: Grave of Franjo Tuđman, Mirogoj cemetery, Zagreb

Left: Grave site with recently lit memorial candles in the colours of the Croatian flag. Right: "Always and everything for Croatia..." quote on rear of tomb, Zagreb, 18 July 2017.

Like his grave, other monuments to Tuđman across Croatia are decorated around key holidays, particularly on 5 August, the Day of Homeland Victory and Thanksgiving and the Day of Croatian Defenders. Some, like the bust in the southern Lika town of Gračac, featured memorial wreaths with ribbons in the colours of the Croatian flag. Other monuments similarly decorated have been placed in central squares or before important public buildings like schools and municipal offices, as in Korenica and Vukovar, and perhaps the most recognisable statue is found atop the Knin Fortress, planted where Tuđman stood as he kissed the Croatian flag in a sign of victory after Operation Storm (Figure 6.20).

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[24] Original text in Croatian: *"Uvijek i sve za Hrvatsku, a našu jedinu i vječnu Hrvatsku ni za što!"*

Top left: Bust of Tuđman with wreaths and memorial candles, dedicated on 16 October 1999, two months before his death, Gračac, 6 August 2017. Top right: Similar bust of Tuđman with fresh flowers, Korenica, 29 August 2019. Bottom left: Larger bust of Tuđman on the eponymous Square of Dr. Franjo Tuđman, Vukovar, 2 July 2017. Bottom right: Statue of Tuđman atop the Knin Fortress, 31 August 2019.

In Zagreb, however, the installation of a sculpture of Tuđman was not possible until December 2018. Zagreb as the capital and most urbanised region in the country has been a space of more progressive politics relative to the more conservative areas in its immediate environs, albeit to a lesser degree than longer held bastions of socialist and later social-democratic policy like Rijeka and Pula. However, the rather sudden reintroduction of Tuđman to conservative, and ultimately national, political and social discourse after the fall of Sanader was mirrored in the local politics of the city despite the leadership of former Social Democrat, now populist mayor Milan Bandić. While the office of the mayor may act independently in promoting various social and infrastructural projects, Bandić's power is checked by the Zagreb Assembly, a multiparty body elected every four years by city residents. While the HDZ represents the third largest voting bloc in the Assembly elected in May 2017, after Bandić's Labour and Solidarity coalition with populists and green councillors, and independents, key conservative figures like Zlatko Hasanbegović (eventually dismissed from the HDZ) have wielded their power to remake the public face of memory across the city. As part of the coalition forged with Bandić (himself a controversial figure for his public behaviour and potential corruption allegations), Hasanbegović and the HDZ only agreed to form an Assembly majority on the condition that the Square of Marshal Tito was renamed the Square of the Republic of Croatia. By removing Tito, space again was created for Tuđman, whose monument was dedicated on the nineteenth anniversary of his death on the space one occupied by the "Zagreb 1094" monument installed on the nine-hundredth anniversary of the city's founding. Bandić himself commissioned the sculpture at a cost of €530,000, including the removal of the Zagreb 1094 monument to a location two-and-a-half kilometres down the main north-south axis between the city centre and Novi Zagreb (Milekić 2018d) (Figure 6.21).

Left: The Zagreb 1094 monument prior to its removal, 21 March 2018. Right: The new statue of Franjo Tuđman installed in its place, 15 June 2019.

Though Tuđman remains a forceful presence in the mnemonic landscape of Croatia, some resistance to his policies and, above all, to his cult of personality remained, particularly in the north-western regions of Istria and Kvarner. These areas most notably were not directly impacted by the Homeland War until the influx of refugees in the midst of the conflict. The following section presents the case of Istria as one that breaks the mould of memorialisation in Croatia, instead showing us a space where Yugoslav memory has remained intact or even flourished in the past three decades.

Istria and the break from Croatian nationalism

Despite the prevalence of conservative images of the Croatian nation in the spaces directly impacted by the Homeland War, Istria presents itself as a clear exception to the patterns of identity making and memorialisation that have been documented elsewhere in the country. When planning this research, I initially resisted conducting fieldwork in Istria, given its exclusion from the violence of the 1990s. While many refugees and internally displaced persons settled in Istria and other regions unscathed by combat, Istria itself was seldom attacked by the JNA or Serb paramilitary forces; only the Vrsar airport on the Adriatic coast was carpet bombed in December 1991, with two deaths reported (La Repubblica 1991). Istria is known, too, as a resilient stronghold for left-wing politics, so adding the peninsula to my initial plans would have deflected my attention from discovering the "big picture" of the public face of memory in the rest of the

country, where visual representation of cultural memory fit neatly into a coherent, national narrative of the past. Ultimately, I decided to travel to Pula in May 2019, initially for a long weekend on the coast, but as the weather turned sour, I piled once more into my rental car and drove around the entire peninsula over four days. As I expected, I discovered many intact monuments and historical plaques installed during the Yugoslav period, but what I did not anticipate was the degree to which these memorial spaces were actively preserved in recent years.

Over that weekend, I documented an additional 130 monuments, arguably the greatest concentration outside of Vukovar or Zagreb and the capital region. Of these, only five were constructed after Croatian independence or recall events from 1991 onward, and none made reference to people, places or events during the Homeland War. This total rupture from what I had seen as standardised memory elsewhere in Croatia was simultaneously bewildering and promising, as it indicated a potential future for Croatian memory free of war. While many of the Yugoslav monuments, matching the pattern of others across Croatia and the region, were dedicated to the fallen fighters and victims of fascist terror from the Second World War, the very fact that no new war monuments had been built in over thirty years was one of the greatest excitements of my fieldwork. Rather than celebrating soldiers and politicians, newer monuments (that is, post-Tito) celebrated famous visitors, artists, authors, race car drivers (Figure 6.22) and charitable grannies who hosted travellers stranded during a festival (Figure 6.23).

Top left: Historical plaque marking the visit of Irish author James Joyce to Pula in 1904-05, Pula, 3 May 2019. Top right: Sculpture of American-French ballerina Isadora Duncan, Opatija, 6 May 2019. Bottom: Plaque marking the birthplace of Formula 1 driver Mario Andretti, Motovun, 4 May 2019.

"Secret history of the Festival" plaque marking the house of Granny Ljubica, the generous host of artists and visitors to Motovun, 4 May 2019. My favourite monument.

Istrian identity, like Croatian, has long been resistant to more dominant groups, such as the Venetians and the Habsburgs, that formerly controlled the region, and the period of Yugoslav rule and the creation of the modern Croatian state have proven little different. Despite the flight of the large Italian-speaking population in the aftermath of the Second World War in the face of violent reprisals from Yugoslav authorities, Istria remains a multilingual region today, and all town signs are printed in Croatian and Italian, with locals sometimes interchanging the names in conversation. The regional identity that has developed in Istria over the past century is a result of the constant movement of people and empires, ultimately one defining itself through its opposition to a "centralizing national core" (Ashbrook 2011, 872). Istrian identity is marked by its "strong sense of multiculturality, hybridity, emotional attachment to the territory, and shared, interethnic cooperation" (ibid.), in a sense presenting itself as a neat microcosm of the Yugoslav ideal without the violence of the past. This multiculturalism, especially when extended to Serbs in Croatia, was the very same attacked by Tuđman and the HDZ in its early years, therefore casting Istria as the antithesis to Croatian nationalist conservatism. By rejecting such exclusivist nationalism that re-emerged in the 1960s and came to the fore in the 1990s, Istrian social and political actors sought

to preserve the remains of a multi-ethnic state without resorting to violence against the central state of which it was nonetheless an integral part. Ashbrook notes, however, that "Istrian regionalism is just another of the myriad dividing lines distinguishing one group from another" (2011, 887), so while this uniqueness appears inclusive, it belies another boundary between the in-group and the "Other." While tensions remain between regionalists who see Istria as a part of Croatia and nationalists seeking either full autonomy (Istrian) or full integration (Croat), as well as the pervasive urban/rural divide found elsewhere in Croatia, the way Istria presents itself and its identity through the public face of memory challenges the creation of a singular, "Croatian" cultural memory.

Yugoslav monuments in Istria, above all, have weathered the past thirty years with little damage, certainly unlike that seen in the memorials described above in Dalmatia, Slavonia and Lika that have been repeatedly vandalised or destroyed, and some even have been rebuilt or renovated in the past decade. More so than in other regions, Istrian monuments to the Yugoslav past (many in Italian and Croatian) have been freshly adorned with flowers and wreaths, and the plaques appear to be recently polished, as evinced by their clear legibility; Tito's name has also been preserved in urban areas, unlike his gradual erasure in Zagreb and elsewhere (Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.24: Yugoslav monuments in Istria: Pula, Umag, Vižindana, Plovanija

Top left: Memorial plaque in Italian and Croatian dedicated to the victims of Italian militarism of 1920, Pula, 3 May 2019. Top right: Bilingual street signs at Josip Broz Tito Quay, Umag, 4 May 2019. Bottom left: Freshly lain wreath at monument to "fallen fighters and victims of fascist terror," Vižindana, 4 May 2019. Bottom right: Monument to Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Fascism, located at a major traffic intersection near the Croatian-Slovene border, Plovanija, 4 May 2019.

The patterns of memorialisation found in Istria suggest greater power of counter-narratives to resist mainstream interpretations of the past found elsewhere in Croatia. The recent wave of "retudjmanisation," however, does appear to limit the potential spread of this sort of Yugonostalgia that has been preserved in Istria, but the January 2020 election of former Prime Minister Zoran Milanović (SDP) as Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović's successor may signal yet another turn away from the virulent nationalism of the past.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented what I suggest are the core elements of contemporary Croatian identity as they are reflected in its public memorial spaces. Each section demonstrated various constituent concepts that have been incorporated into monuments, museums and commemorative events across the country, predominantly under the leadership of Franjo Tuđman and the HDZ from the 1990s onward. This structure also allowed me to address various core research questions through an analysis of various monuments and memorial practices around key historical events or personalities, like Alojzije Cardinal Stepniac and Franjo Tuđman.

"Something old" highlighted the minimal role ascribed to the first nine-hundred of the thousand-years of Croatia's millennial statehood narrative. Though monuments have been built in memory of the early medieval kings and to the cultural figures active during Hungarian rule from the twelfth century onwards, little of the social heritage of that era has been incorporated into contemporary Croatian identity and cultural memory. Here, I addressed my fifth research question, "How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?" by demonstrating how Croatian identity has been one historically defined by its opposition to external forces, whether French, Austro-Hungarian, Yugoslav or ultimately Serb. In doing so, I advance my arguments on the process of "othering" as a compontent of memory and identity formation by providing physical examples of the selective incorporation of particular narratives favourable to holders of the power over memory.

"Something new" similarly suggested that newer elements of Croatian identity, acquired through its accession to the European Union in July 2013, are also downplayed through the power structures over memory in place since the Homeland War, in doing so providing space for the relativisation of past crimes committed in the name of the Croatian nation. The manipulation of the European anti-totalitarian narrative has manifested itself in the memorialisation of the victims of the Bleiburg repatriations by public officials, whose presence at controversial ceremonies exacerbate extant tensions between Serb, Jewish and Croat communities. Such twisting of historical narratives, I argue, represents an abuse of memory as it advances an untruthful image of the fascist past and the institutions of the NDH as preservers of Croatian statehood rather than as perpetrators of a genocide under a totalitarian regime, instead spreading blame to the SFRJ. This addresses my third research question on memory abuse itself and how resistance to certain forms

of memorialisation, in this case European, appear in post-conflict settings like Croatia. I show how the malleable nature of memory, especially in stages of transition, allows memory to be abused in this manner.

The fate of Yugoslav memory discussed in "Nothing borrowed?" reinforces this understanding of the Croatian use of the European anti-totalitarianism narrative. Here, I address my second research question on the interrelations between power, memory, identity and violence and their visual manifestations in Croatia by showing how the memory of the Yugoslav past has been ignored, if not forcefully removed, by those seeking to construct a nationalist past free of the "blemishes" of the socialist period. Nonetheless, much of the framework of contemporary cultural memory in Croatia derives from the patterns of memorialisation that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. Despite best efforts to deny, erase or destroy this legacy, Yugoslavia was as much a part of Croatia as Croatia a part of Yugoslavia, and this is reflected in today's mnemonic landscape.

Finally, in "Everything (black and) blue," I also address this second research question on power and memory and have shown how Croatia's conservatives and nationalists (which represent a near total overlap of political communities) seek to preserve the continuity of the narrative of millennial independence as a means of strengthening the collective national identity (see Sani et al. 2007). This, unfortunately, has forced the relativisation and disarming of the fascist past as a minor aberration rather than a consequence of genocidal manifestations of nationalism that trace their origins in part to nineteenth-century literary-cum-political movements promoting the creation of a Croatian identity defined in opposition to Hungarians, Habsburgs, and ultimately Serbs, Jews and Roma.

The inclusion of Istria as a unique point of contrast to the predominant nationalist interpretations of the past served as an anchor for the conclusion of this thesis. Though Istria remains a bastion of Yugoslav memory, the upkeep of monuments from the mid-twentieth century is not enough to fundamentally challenge the framework of cultural memory that has emerged elsewhere in Croatia since 1991, 1995 or even 2013. Nevertheless, it represents one of a handful of powerful counter-narratives that have developed as a form of resistance to the nationalist discourse of the HDZ and

the *branitelji*, who, as I have argued throughout this work, still hold the most power over memory and its institutions.

While others, including the FRAMNAT research group and Donald Niebyl in his Spomenik Database project, have documented commemorations and monuments in Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia, my work in this chapter as in Chapters 4 and 5 has gone beyond specific commemorative practices toward both the Second World War and the Homeland War to give as holistic an impression of how Croatia's "public face of memory" appears. Here, I have shown how narrative continuities have been forged by groups exercising some degree of power over cultural memory and the construction of Croatian or other identities throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This reinforces the argument I made in Chapter 1 that, at least in Croatia, no common, *collective* memory (as defined by Halbwachs [1941, 1952] 1992) has emerged but rather various iterations of cultural memory, defined by political affiliation, ethnic or religious background, sexuality or any other constructed boundary, exist, clash and overlap. The "public face of memory" is indeed made up of many individual faces, but by taking stock of what all can be and is still remembered through my approach to this thesis, I have demonstrated how power and violence play transformative roles in determining the outward appearance of Croatia's mnemonic landscape.

The conclusion revisits possible alternatives to mainstream memory discourses in Croatia, presents the lingering challenges to resolving mnemonic tensions in the former Yugoslavia and offers a somewhat hopeful - but hesitant - look toward the future of memory and identity in Croatia.

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Conclusion

Source: Flickr user Emily Soljic (2013). Plaque outside Tito's bunker, Konjic, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Forward to the futuristic past

The history of Croatia is a complicated story of the peoples, places, events and ideas that have in one way or another contributed to the creation of a modern state premised on an age-old belief in its millennial independence. How this history is reflected in memorial spaces across the country speaks volumes to the patterns of remembrance – and forgetting – established, adapted or eliminated by various social groups over time. Ultimately, this thesis has been an examination of memory and the consequences of violence on mnemonic communities in one country at one particular time in its long history, but the wider significance of this research can be demonstrated through the application of theories on memory, power, violence and identity to empirical studies of transient objects and spaces, like monuments and commemorations. Here, I revisit the original ambitions of this research and provide answers to the questions that guided my work over the past four years, discuss in greater detail its social and political implications and suggest routes for the afterlife of this project, while acknowledging the various limitations that emerged in the process.

Revisiting the research questions

At the start of my work, I wanted to know if memory could be "abused," as suggested by Todorov (1995), and if so, how, why and by whom. However, answering this question necessitated a wider

exploration of the nature of memory and how it is created by or itself creates identity, power in various forms and, ultimately, violence. The use of Croatia as a case study of living, post-conflict memory allowed me to address the research questions that I posed around the role of memory in shaping identity and effecting social change, for better or worse. These were namely:

- How is memory visualised in public spaces, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?
- How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?
- How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?
- Using a concept of "memory abuse" in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what form does resistance to specific memorialisations take?
- How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?

To put a quick answer to another question that has been in the background of this research since its inception, **"Can memory be abused?"** Yes. But given the subjective nature of memory and its roots in social interactions rather than individual recollections, a more appropriate answer is the German *jein*, more an "it depends" than strictly "yes and no." To give a more thorough answer, I turn to the first inquiry, **"How is memory visualised in public places, and how does the construction of particular monuments or the commemoration of certain events reflect social behaviours toward the past?"** The diverse representations of cultural memory – monuments, museums, street art and commemorative events – I discuss in this thesis demonstrate just some of the many ways how memory is visualised in public settings. That is, the "public face of memory" is a composite image of what is deemed memorable by various actors with some degree of influence over the construction, repurposing or destruction of memorial sites. It is also a dynamic image shaped by competing narratives of the past, each of which leaves its own mark on the ground, on a wall or in a museum when and where possible. This ability to influence visual representations of the past signals the "power over memory" (Müller 2009) that is a crucial piece of the identity-

making process, as noted in Chapter 1. My substantive analyses of the public face of memory in Croatia in Chapters 4 to 6 suggest that the strategic use of religious, ethnic or other group symbols in memorial spaces allows such groups to reaffirm and to legitimise their own identities and to forge narrative links to a remote past, outside the realm of living memory. Certain elements of that past and monuments recalling people or events that have since fallen out of favour may be rejected, revised or erased, as has been the case in Croatia since the 1990s coming to terms with its experience as a sub-state political unit in various iterations of "Yugoslavia" during the twentieth century. The fight for independence during the 1991-1995 Homeland War then marks a turning point away from the rejected Yugoslav past and occupies today the greatest share of the Croatian public face of memory. This is physically reflected in the construction of hundreds of monuments to the "defenders" of the Croatian nation, a new victor celebrated by nationalist and conservative actors who are able to exercise considerable power over the content of public-facing cultural memory.

This leads immediately to my second question, **"How does Croatia's visual culture of remembrance illustrate the relationships between power, violence, memory and identity?"** Memory is dependent on social context for meaning and, as Halbwachs argued (1925; [1941] 1971), individual memory, if it exists, is informed inherently by external forces and values. Gaining power over memory (see Müller 2009) allows social actors – in the case of Croatia, most notably defenders' associations and the HDZ – to mould cultural memory in ways that suit their visions of the world and narratives of the past. In Chapter 1, I suggested how the transitions between various forms or manifestations of memory create spaces for interventions by various actors who may exercise power to "reconstruct" memory in their own ways. These forms of memory include those presented by Aleida Assmann (1999; 2006) and Jan Assmann (2000; with Tonio Hölscher, 1988), namely communicative, cultural and collective. As noted, it is difficult to argue that "collective memory" as a term is suitable to address intergroup forms of memory that depend on the ability to reconcile conflicting visions of the past; rather, "transcultural" memory (see Erll 2011), one that builds from these multiple, co-existing "cultural" memories, serves as a more fitting analytical concept. The "malleable" and "plastic" features of memory (J. Assmann and Hölscher 1988, 13) give way to misappropriations of historical events as fodder for present grievances, as employed by nationalist causes in Serbia, Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia in the build up to its destruction in the 1990s. This, then, necessitated an examination

of how memory can be used in violent ways or how historical narratives are informed by violence. I argued that violence, seen as a scale of "diverse practives" that ultimately inflict harm (Malešević 2017b, 10), can be used by those with relative power over memory as a transformative force to assure the power of the group (in its identity, its memories, and so on) to endure (Hearn 2018). Cultural memory can be used in these instances as a motivating factor to persuade others to act in ways to avenge perceived historical grievances, as my discussion of the links between the memories of the Second World War and the Homeland War, in particular of the mnemonic behaviours around the NDH and the Ustaše, demonstrates. Further, the blurring of lines between victim and victor in the context of the Croatian *branitelji*, as I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, has shown how this interplay of power, memory, violence and identity is manifested in the form of monuments and commemorations.

Legitimising violence temporally distant from the origins of these grievances represents an abuse of memory, as using memory to beget further suffering rather than to preserve stories and spaces from the past is manifestly dangerous and unnecessary. I argue that memory studies ought to represent a form of activism rather than a field of passive observers who only seek to document and rationalise such abuses, although I am aware that this is not a consensus view (see Gutman 2017; Rigney 2018). Nonetheless, it is important to identifty how the exercise of power directly impacts group identity, which in and of itself may be a source of power to be further exercised in the process of memory formation. As Foucault argues and as I demonstrate through the application of my model of memory, identity and violence from Chapter 1 in my empirical analyses in Chapters 4 to 6, power is productive (Foucault 1978). Violence, itself an exercise of power, serves as a transformative, or as Bergholz states, "generative" (Bergholz 2016), force in the formation of national identity. Memorials marking violent pasts also mark mnemonic territories and reinforce the boundaries between the in-group and the "Other," thus perpetuating this cycle.

To address memory abuse empirically, though, is different than doing so theoretically. I proceed here to the fourth research question, which framed much of my documentary work in Croatia of memorial spaces and events, that is, **Using a concept of 'memory abuse' in post-conflict settings, what are the normative expectations of remembrance and what forms does resistance to specific memorialisations take?"** Not all monuments, museums, street art, public commemorations or press outlets are accorded the same value as the other, and this is reflected in

the "public face of memory," an analytical concept I developed to capture the visual elements of Croatian cultural memory. The public face of memory is what we are allowed to see, hear, taste, smell or touch – the text and design of monuments, the layout and content of museums, the flags, shirts and banners participants wear to mass commemorations of the Homeland War, and the tone of their speech as they remember the past. Memory construction itself is a constantly evolving process that depends on relative balances of power between politicians – domestic or international – and civilians, in the case of Croatia, also adding in former combatants as influential gatekeepers of public memory. Through the intentional inclusion of certain voices and the exclusion of others (for example, of civilian war victims, Serbs, Jews, women or LGBT+) in memorial spaces, the potential for memory abuse and the incitement of violence against the outgroup(s) grows. While external influences like European norms of Holocaust remembrance or non-governmental pacifist coalitions can challenge such manipulations from afar, they can just as easily be ignored, as my study of the Croatian adoption of the "anti-totalitarian" narrative in Chapter 6 has demonstrated.

Abuse is in the eye of the beholder. In Chapter 1, I acknowledged the normative positioning of the concept of "memory abuse" but maintained that it is adamant we take steps to mitigate violent uses of the past to justify present and future harm, and this term is one that further widens the perspective of memory studies in the realm of sociology and psychology. Abuse is a process and a spectrum, not just a static injury; in the context of my research, then, I aruge that the wider patterns of behaviour that allow for historical revisionism and fascist apologia by public figures represent a form of "memory abuse." These figures wield great power over memory and use that position to strengthen boundaries of identity between their in-group (Croats, nationalists, patriots) and the "Other" – most clearly in this case study in the form of Serbs. The process of othering, I argued, is itself violence, as violence begins where unity forcibly ends, and this has had injurious results in spaces like Vukovar that continue to the present day.

Resistance was documented in the form of counter-narratives to the prevailing vision of Croatian cultural memory as primarily shaped by the defenders and the HDZ. The case of Istria most clearly demonstrated that wide-spread opposition to more destructive and exclusive forms of nationalism is possible, which challenges to those narratives by civil society groups and even former defenders, like Marko, further underpin. However, resistance to normative expectations of memory can also be seen in the continued commemoration of the victims of the Bleiburg repatriations, mostly

Ustaše soldiers who fought for the establishment of an ethnically pure Croatian state, premised on the eradication of Serbs, Jews, Roma and other minorities. Despite the nature of the NDH as a totalitarian, puppet regime of the Axis powers, much of the dark part is brushed aside for sake of narrative continuity of the "millennial" Croatian state, as espoused by Petra, the museum guide at the Memorial Centre of the Rocket Attacks in Zagreb and, more crucially, demonstrated by the support of state officials for the continued relativisation of the fascist past. This and the historical revision surrounding the nature of the Jasenovac concentration camp as described in Chapters 5 and 6 fly in the face of European norms of Holocaust memory, to which Croatia subscribed as part of its EU accession process.

Again, the struggle between subjective truths and objective facts is blurred where an imbalance of power can lead to a brushing under the rug of those objective facts that threaten the subjective truths. Relevant to this discussion is the relativisation of the fascist past in Croatia as one that, despite its genocidal consequences, was one that "preserved" Croatian independence, one of the core elements of this national identity. This, then, necessitated a more thorough, empirical examination of war memory in Croatia and the development of my third research question, **"How, and by whom, is memory constructed to perpetuate social divisions, based on nationality, ethnicity or religion?"**

In the past, the forced erasure of national identity within Yugoslav spaces acted to solidify a new, Yugoslav identity, in line with socialist ideals of brotherhood and unity, but the manner in which cultural memory was shaped in the aftermath of the Second World War did exacerbate unresolved tensions that emerged in the course of violence. Bergholz (2016) has demonstrated how violence as worked as a "generative force" in dividing and hardening identities in the case of Kulen Vakuf (BiH). I widen my own analyses to incorporate cultural memory of the kinds of violence he described, showing how it is not just violence in the instant but also cultural memories of violence that generate and consolidate identities in this way. The critical factor in constructing divisive memories is to identify one or more "enemies" perceived as a clear and present danger to the existence of the group to be defended. Using first Yugoslavia and later Serbs and Serbia as collective scapegoats for all of Croatia's harms in the past, those with relative power over memory have crafted the content of cultural memory around such a narrative of opposition. While monuments built during the socialist Yugoslav era clearly deflect from such narratives (partly as

those who espoused them were imprisoned in the immediate post-war era), newly dedicated busts and plaques across the country decry the criminal acts of the communist state and, in the case of Croatia after the Homeland War, of "Greater Serbian aggressors." The standardisation of memory since the 1990s to conform to conservative views of the nation and of its long and complicated history (see Chapter 6) has only furthered these tensions by excluding the voices of Serb victims, and of civilian victims more generally (Chapter 5), and by presenting an overtly masculine image of the "Homeland," despite the contributions of women to its survival (Chapter 4).

To answer "who exercises the power," then, I looked at the structure of power in place at the time various monuments were constructed and more directly, where possible, at who funded their construction and designed or sculpted the statues that have come to dot both the physical and mnemonic landscape of Croatia. In the context of Homeland War memory, it was defenders' associations and the HDZ that exercised the greatest power over the construction of Croatian identity through the strategic funding of memorial sites and public commemorations of the 1990s conflicts to assure the perpetuation of their narratives of the past. The matter of memory's public performance, however, was more closely addressed by my case studies of the commemorations of 1995's Operation Storm in Knin and the fall of Vukovar by JNA forces and Serb paramilitaries in 1991. The comparison of these two cases has shown that, despite their difference in tones and speeches, defender groups, the Catholic Church and conservative politicians have done the most to construct the narratives around the Homeland War that continue to be rehearsed in these annual performances of memory. The installation of provocative monuments or the refusal to invest in social infrastructure in spaces formerly (and still marginally) populated by Serbs in Croatia also demonstrates how certain memories can be constructed to perpetuate the social divisions between Serbs and Croats in the post-war era.

This leads finally to the question, **"How do processes of social differentiation elevate or exclude specific historical narratives from commemorative processes?"** In Chapter 5, I discussed how the voices of civilian victims, and of Serbs in particular, were left out of the wider picture of Croatian post-conflict memory, which can be attributed to the desire of those with the power over memory to avoid public contradictions to their narratives. The elevation of the defenders through their symbiotic relationship with the HDZ in the early years of the Republic of Croatia, most crucially under the leadership of Franjo Tuđman, left little room for any form of "counter-memory"

(Foucault 1980) or "counter-narrative" (Y. Zerubavel, 1995) to emerge in the public sphere. The heavy reliance on the process of othering to exclude perceived "enemies" or "traitors," here recalling the extreme reaction of local politicians to the Youth Initiative for Human Rights' #ISPRIKE campaign, has reaffirmed the conservative vision of the Croat(ian) nation as the state's sole source of legitimacy. Other challenges to the defender-centric narrative of the Homeland War, including the EU's demand that the Croatian government ensure the handover of "heroes" indicted by the ICTY for war crimes, were met with severe backlash and intense protests throughout the 2000s and into the last decade, as further evinced by the reaction to Bojan Glavašević's claim that Serb victims of the war be treated on equal terms as their Croat neighbours. As these critical elements of civil society do not conform to the vision of the nation by such powerholders, they are cast aside and excluded from the mainstream commemorative process. Only in recent years has significant work been undertaken by these marginalised groups to demonstrate their exclusion, as the counter-commemorations of the Jasenovac concentration camp and of Operation Storm in Uzdolje and Busije (though the latter is more a project of the Serbian state) show. As I discuss below, however, there is hope that such treatment of marginalised groups, including women, LGBT+, ethnic minorities and reconciliatory voices more widely, will make their mark on the public face of memory in Croatia and carry their messages across state borders.

Contributions

The focus of much of my analysis has been on objects and spaces, rather than people, but these monuments, fortresses, battlefields, museums, train stations, parks and squares have been built by and for people. Their use, abuse, repurposing or destruction illuminate patterns of the past, present and future and demonstrate the critical importance of visual studies of memory to understanding its construction and role in shaping social identities. Memorial spaces, I contend, are equally as important piece of social infrastructure as roads, schools and hospitals, as they reflect who we are and what we believe, but they are often overlooked as they are seldom sought out, at least in the Croatian case. Obscured placards stand above new cinemas, and rural museums must rely on state support to stay alive. This, however, does not mean that their existence is meaningless – these spaces were created for a reason, and it is necessary for those reasons to be documented, as I have tried to show throughout this work.

The two major contributions to the field of memory studies and of sociology more widely I make in this work are the reintroduction of the term "memory abuse" for the theoretical examination of the interactions between power, memory, violence and identity and the methodological concept of the "public face of memory," around which much comparative empirical work can be framed. Memory abuse combines various conceptual elements, most crucially the sociological visions of violence (Foucault 1978; Malešević 2013; 2017b) and memory (A. Assmann 1999; 2006; J. Assmann 2000), to envision a process of manipulating historical narratives to force violence on the present or future. It is also a tool for memory activists to identify and address wrongdoings by those with the power over memory (see Gutman 2017) or those who desire to exercise even more power in order to secure their own identities through harmful means (Hearn 2018). The importance of this term has only become more evident to me throughout the course of my research given the rapid dissolution of political accord in Europe and the United States since I began my studies in 2016. The Trumpian slogan "Make America Great Again" only strengthens the link between memory of the past and action of the present by suggesting to an easily suggestible audience that the present is the "Other" and those progressives who have contributed to the modern world are the "enemy." I witnessed similar rhetoric in the campaign for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union from 2015 onward, where legal guardians of the state were slandered as "enemies of the people," where necessary institutions of functional democracy, however flawed, were also framed as the "Other," the undesirable. The memories of a past empire – one built on oppression and exploitation – were invoked to create a "brighter" future for Britain, but this vision of the world could only be realised through division and violence, and Jo Cox's future was stolen as a result.

The second major contribution of this work, the "public face of memory," presents researchers opportunities to frame analyses of memory around its visual manifestations. The approaches to the public face of memory, however, can be drawn not only from visual sociology, but also from politics (keeping in mind the question of power), psychology (gauging individuals' reactions to the visual), history (tracing the origin and adaptations of monuments) and, perhaps more obviously, the world of art and activism, where my project emerged. The documentation of the public face of memory itself presents new methodological opportunities for a wide range of scholars and activists, either through random acts of "monument hunting" or more systematic investigations of local monuments, museums and commemorations; this project relied on a blend of both approaches,

the former along rural roads and the latter in more urban settings. More importantly, this project has resulted not only in this thesis but also in an interactive map of the 614 monuments I documented and a thorough accompanying database with thousands of cells recording the condition, text, origin and political context of each monument (see Appendix 4). This work, however, was not comprehensive, as to capture the entire public face of memory, an ever-changing entity, would require a much greater project team and visiting every single last village in Croatia to document even the smallest of monuments. In later work, I hope to develop this database into a public resource to preserve these historical sites for posterity lest they disappear forever, something that has been similarly undertaken (and more successfully) on the Yugoslav *spomenici* by Donald Niebyl and his Spomenik Database, an invaluable resource for my own project.

In total, this thesis advances sociological considerations on cultural memory and its construction and destruction by zooming in on a case study of public, post-conflict memory that shares characteristics with other post-conflict settings both in its immediate vicinity and (much) further afield. I have given extensive attention to Müller's concept of "power over memory" (2009), which plays a central role in my vision of memory abuse and its real-world implications on social identities. By combining the visual with the theoretical, I have shed light on the processes of commemoration and identified key actors in determining the content and repercussions of cultural memory, no matter how deleterious, in a defined space or community.

Of course, my work is limited in that I have only looked at the *public* face of memory, as it is the most physically demonstrative form of memory that one can study. However, addressing how public performances of memory reflect other social phenomena like the process of identity formation and the exercise of power in the transitions between forms of memory, is a key area in which sociologists can contribute to the ever-growing field of memory studies. Given the politics of power over memory in shaping its public face, that is, a series of decisions made at an outward-facing level, we have to question what the content of *private* faces of memory is. While private, communicative memory can become public through various negotiations of power and publication, for the most part, what we see in the streets is not wholly representative of personal remembrances of the past. Some of the conversations with museum guides, former combatants or friends I have included in this thesis point at the multidimensional nature of memory and highlight the problem of focusing on just one of its forms. My decision to look at the public face of memory

was in part inspired by the demand for more visual research on the topic but also in part by my limited ability to communicate in *naški*. Incorporating structured or semi-structured interviews into this research would have required additional years of language training or costly translations and transcriptions, which I could not afford during this project.

However, that I could at least read and write Croatian to an intermediate level did allow me to satisfactorily complete the work I set out for myself in documenting memorial spaces and events. This helped me to provide an additional contribution to the preservation of historical memory through the development of an ever-evolving database of monuments and street art in Croatia, which I hope will continue to serve as an archive for others to continue this study of public memory in Croatia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. There is nonetheless great work on communicative memory of the war, even if it is not framed as such, undertaken by native speakers that is published in English to bring attention to the conflicted nature of memory in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia to a wider audience (see, for example, Sokolić 2017).

At the outset of this research, I wanted to conduct more comparative work between Serbia and Croatia to highlight how their respective "Other" is framed in memorial spaces and public commemorations of their shared pasts. This proved untenable given the extent of fieldwork needed in Croatia alone, but the detail I was able to achieve in a single country study of memory has created a solid framework for comparative work within and beyond the region.

Remaining challenges

Combatting memory abuse remains one of the greatest challenges to post-conflict societies still burdened with the legacy of past violence, and future research should aim to develop clear, actionable strategies for the third sector to identity, address and rectify malicious attempts to rewrite history in ways that hinder constructive dialogue. Memory abuse is most visible in contemporary commemorative events, particularly in Croatia, where symbols of the past clash with modern aspirations and the demand to come to terms with historical injustices. As I acknowledge in Chapter 1, memory and memory abuse are two loaded, emotional concepts that demand a thorough examination of their constituent parts, not just of the visual. My work here has just scratched the surface of the issues that manipulations of memory reveal, in one country, at one particular time span. By engaging with a wider array of stakeholders in the commemorative

process, not just the memory entrepreneurs in Zagreb, Belgrade, Brussels or other seats of power, we can try to prevent or mitigate some of the suffering that results from the exclusion of the weak and voiceless.

Throughout my research, I have attempted to document as many historical sites as possible for posterity, lest they disappear in the near future. However, more work could be done on documenting the stories of the witnesses who can still tell them, and several project have already taken action to do so. These include the "Croatian Memories: Unveiling Personal Memories on War and Detention" project by Croatian NGO Documenta, which has developed an extensive video archive of testimonies from detainees and their family members, including personal recollections of the Second World War and the Homeland War; the documentary work of the FRAMNAT research group from 2014 to 2019, which I have cited throughout this thesis; the Post-Conflict Research Center's "Ordinary Heroes" video series and educational outreach programme, retelling tales of rescuers and active bystanders during the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina; anti-war activism of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and the Women in Black; and the cross-community work of the Image of War Photography Museum in Zagreb.

Final word

Balancing the demand to remember with the needs of the present and hopes for the future is a task not to be undertaken lightly. While the current political climate worldwide might lead some to despair, there is always hope that counter-narratives that seek to correct historical injustices and create spaces for mutual recognition of shared, traumatic pasts will prevail, something desperately needed not only in Croatia but in many other post-conflict spaces facing present threats from past harm.

<div align="center">

To remember is to preserve and to persevere.

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"The Story about the Enemies," Siniša Glavašević (1960-1991), *Voices from Vukovar*

Image: Vukovar, July 2017.

Life is full of puzzles, but what is most puzzling is how a friend becomes an enemy. Have you ever thought about how it's easier to make a friend than an enemy? I wanted my whole life long to be surrounded by good, diligent people who are respected and loved. Luck was on my side, at least until now. I stayed in the ruins of Vukovar but with people with their heads held high. Many of these people I have never met in my life. Many of them were unaware of their own strength until yesterday. Believe me – the most beautiful thing that can happen to you in Vukovar is to enter a room full of people who all know you and greet you.

You often don't know it, but it happens that your greetings, your honest and well-intended wishes stay in the shadow of someone's hate. The only thing that you can do is to ask if you have deserved it. On the one hand, that won't impair the existing animosity, but it will lessen your worry, and it can happen that hate erupts into anger and turns itself into ash, into nothing. It can happen that the darkness suffocates every hateful thought.

But that can only happen when there is a little love in this world.

Therefore, if you have love in you, don't use it sparingly. Share it, give a bit of your love to the person nearest you, and there will be fewer enemies. That's enough for the beginning.

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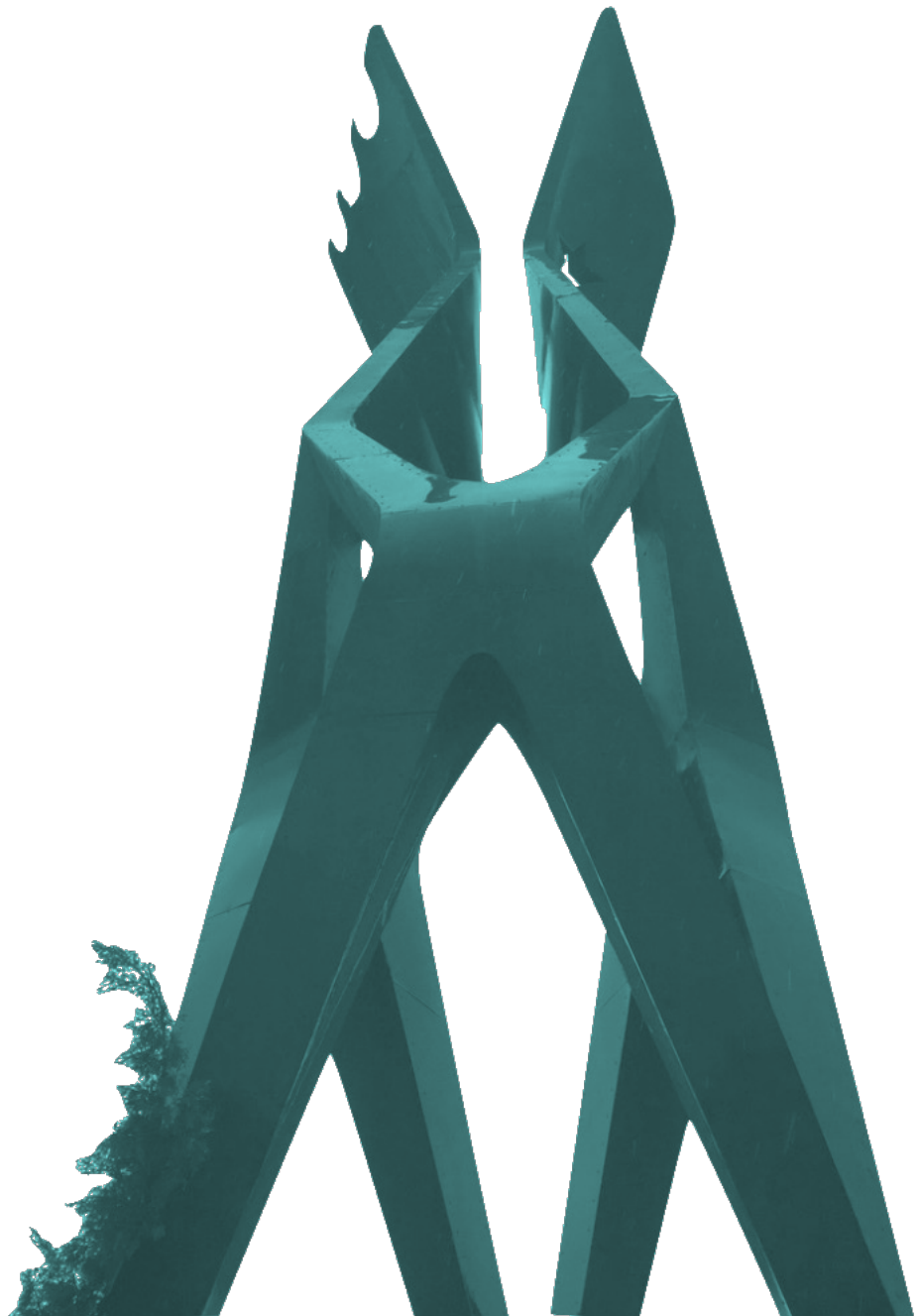
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Field visit itineraries

1. 7 – 14 May 2017
    A. Dubrovnik

2. 2 – 19 July 2017
    A. Vukovar
    B. Osijek
    C. Zagreb
    D. Rijeka
    E. Cres

3. 1 – 11 August 2017
    A. Split
    B. Šibenik/Raslina/Varivode/Central and Nothern Dalmatia
    C. Knin/Biočić/Pakovo Selo
    D. Gospić/Smiljan/Veliki Žitnik/Korenica/Udbina/Gračac/Obrovac/Lika region
    E. Maslenica/Islam Grčki/Islam Latinski
    F. Vis

4. 20 August – 3 September 2017
    A. Zagreb
    B. Jasenovac/Pakrac/Podgarić/Bjelovar
    C. Vinkovci/Vukovar/Eastern Slavonia and Syrmia
    D. Glina/Hrvatska Kostajnica/Kostajnica (BiH)/Sisak
    E. Karlovac
    F. Varaždin
    G. Split
    H. Stari Grad (Hvar)

5. 14 – 23 November 2017
    A. Zagreb
    B. Slavonski Brod
    C. Vukovar
    D. Osijek/Đakovo/Beli Manastir/Našice/Eastern Slavonia and Syrmia

6. 14 – 22 March 2018
    A. Zagreb
    B. Vukovar/Ilok/Eastern Slavonia and Syrmia
    C. Virovitica/Koprivnica/Varaždin/Northern, Western and Central Slavonia
    D. Vidovec/Kumrovec/Karlovac/Rastoke/Rakovica
    E. Knin/Kijevo/Krka National Park

F.   Benkovac

7. 8 – 13 May 2018
   A.   Dubrovnik

8. 12 – 14 October 2018
   A.   Zagreb

9. 3 – 6 May 2019
   A.   Southern Istria: Pula, Barban, Kanfanar
   B.   Western Istria: Buje, Umag, Poreč, Rovinj
   C.   Northern Istria: Plovanija, Motovun, Buzet, Pazin
   D.   Eastern Istria: Labin, Opatija

10. 13 – 17 June 2019
   A.   Zagreb

11. 27 August – 3 September 2019
   A.   Zagreb
   B.   Lasinja/Vojnić/Petrova Gora/Vojnić/Udbina
   C.   Vir/Nin
   D.   Islam Latinski/Islam Grčki/Benkovac
   E.   Gračac/Knin
   F.   Ogulin/Lukovdol/Samobor

Appendix 2: Museum visits, May 2017 to August 2019

1. Srđ Fortress, Dubrovnik, exhibit on Homeland War in Dubrovnik – May 2017
2. Memorial Centre for the Homeland War, Vukovar – July 2017
3. Croatian History Museum, Zagreb, exhibit on Homeland War in Dubrovnik (truncated version of display in Srđ Fortress) – July 2017
4. St. Michael's Fortress, Šibenik – August 2017
5. Museum of Yugoslavia, Belgrade – August 2017
6. Vukovar City Museum – August 2017
7. Jasenovac Memorial Museum – August 2017
8. Hrvatski dom Glina – August 2017
9. Sisak City Museum – August 2017
10. Karlovac City Museum – August 2017
11. Memorial Centre for the Rocket Attacks in Zagreb – August 2017
12. Zagreb City Museum – August 2017
13. Ovčara Memorial Centre – August 2017
14. Nikola Tesla Memorial Centre, Smiljan – August 2017
15. Mimara, Zagreb – November 2017
16. Croatian Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb – November 2017
17. Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb – November 2017
18. Museum of Slavonia, Osijek – November 2017
19. Nikola Tesla: Mind from the Future, Meštrovićev paviljon, Zagreb – March 2018
20. Ilok City Museum – March 2018
21. Muzej Staro Selo Kumrovec – March 2018
22. Birth House of Dr. Franjo Tuđman, Veliko Trgovišće – March 2018
23. Collection of Weapons and Military Vehicles of the Homeland War (Future Museum of the Homeland War), Turanj/Karlovac – March 2018
24. Image of War Photography Museum, Zagreb – October 2018
25. Croatian Museum of Naïve Art, Zagreb – October 2018
26. Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters, Zagreb – October 2018
27. Operation Storm exhibition, Knin Fortress – August 2019

Appendix 3: Newspapers

Knin commemoration, 05.08.2017 – Croatia
1. *Globus* (weekly political newspaper, owned by same company as *Jutarnji list* and *Slobodna Dalmacija* – Europapress Holding d.o.o., circ. 28,000 in 2009)
2. *7dnevno* (weekly political newspaper founded 2013, circ. 40,000 in Oct. 2014)
3. *Slobodna Dalmacija* (centre-left/regional, circ. 37,000 in 2010)
4. *24sata* (tabloid, aimed at younger audience, circ. 116,000 in 2013)
5. *Jutarnji list* (liberal/social-democratic, circ. 66,000 in 2014)

Knin commemoration, 05.08.2017 – Serbia
1. *Informer* (pro-government/SNS tabloid, circ. 100,000)
2. *Politika* (centre/centre-right, often pro-government newspaper of record, circ. 45,000 in 2016)
3. *Večernje novosti* (right-wing, daily tabloid, circ. 68,000 in 2016)
4. *Blic* (middle-market, centre-left tabloid, circ. 58,000 in 2016)
5. *Srpski telegraf* (presumably pro-government tabloid)

Vukovar commemoration, 18.11.2017
1. *Glas Slavonije* (regional, circ. 9,303 in 2011)
2. *Jutarnji list*
3. *Večernji list* (conservative, circ. 60,579 in 2014)
4. *24sata*
5. *7dnevno*

Mladić sentencing reactions, 23.11.2017
1. *24sata*
2. *Večernji list*
3. *Slobodna Dalmacija*
4. *Jutarnji list*

Appendix 4: Monument and memorial database coding legend

Each data point receives a two- to four-letter code with alternating numbers and letters, which together signify a particular focus (or multiple foci) of the monument or memorial. For example, the code **1A3-A**, arguably the most common signifier, refers to soldiers or fighters in the Croatian War of Independence.

The code **1A3-A** breaks down as:
1 – Person/People
A – War
3 – 1990s wars
A – Soldiers

Most monuments only feature a three-letter code, such as **1B3** (person – arts and sciences – science), and the -A/-B/-C qualifier is only used in reference to people involved in war and commemorated as soldiers or civilians (with -C referring to a monument that recalls both).

First Level
1. Person
2. Place
3. Thing
4. Abstract

Second and Third Level
A. War
    1. WW1
    2. WW2/Yugoslav "National Liberation War"
    3. 1990s wars
    4. Other
B. Arts and Science
    1. Visual arts
    2. Literature
    3. Science
    4. Music
    5. Other (including media)
C. Religion
    1. Catholicism
    2. Orthodox Christianity
    3. Islam
    4. Other
D. Politics
    1. Socialism

    2. Independence/Croatian millennial identity

    3. European Union

    4. Other

  E. Other

Fourth Level

Note: only for war memorials and only when specified on monument/corroborating evidence

  A. Soldiers (defenders, fighters, knights, etc.)

  B. Victims (civilians)

  C. Both

Coding for Dates

Numerical codes have been assigned to particular eras in Croatian history, from ancient times to today.

The codes are as follows:

1. Ancient (Greco-Roman era)
2. Kingdom of Croatia (925 – 1102 CE)
3. Union with Hungary and/or Venice (1102 – 1527 CE)
4. Austria-Hungary/Habsburg (1527 – 1918 CE)
5. Kingdom of Yugoslavia or Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918 – 1941 CE)
6. Second World War/Independent State of Croatia (1941 – 1945 CE)
7. Socialist Yugoslavia, FNRJ/SFRJ (1945 – 1991 CE)
8. Croatia in the Homeland War (1991 – 1995 CE)
9. Post-war Croatia (1995 – 2013 CE)
10. Croatia in the European Union (2013 CE to present)

These codes feature in the columns signifying when the monument or memorial was built and which era is remembered.

Još Hrvatska ni propala dok mi živimo,
visoko se bude stala kad ju zbudimo.
Ak je dugo tvrdo spala, jača hoće bit,
ak je sada u snu mala, će se prostranit.

Hura! nek se ori i hrvatski govori!

Ni li skoro skrajnje vrijeme da nju zvisimo,
ter da stransko teško breme iz nas bacimo?
Stari smo i mi Hrvati, nismo zabili
da smo vaši pravi brati, zlo prebavili.

Hura! nek se ori i hrvatski govori!

Oj, Hrvati braćo mila, čujte našu riječ,
razdružit nas neće sila baš nikakva već!
Nas je nekad jedna majka draga rodila,
hrvatskim nas, Bog joj plati, mlijekom dojila.

Hura! nek se ori i hrvatski govori!

Croatia has not yet fallen while we live,
it will rise high when we revive it.
If it's slept this hard and long, it will grow stronger,
if it's so small in its sleep, it will expand.

Hurrah! Let it resound, spoken in Croatian!

Isn't it high time to uplift her,
and throw away the heavy foreign burden?
We Croats, we are old too, we did not forget
that we are your true brethren, regardless of the evil.

Hurrah! Let it resound, spoken in Croatian!

Oh, Croats, dear brothers, hear us when we say,
there is no force that will separate us now!
One dear mother gave birth to us once,
breastfed us Croatian milk, thank God for that.

Hurrah! Let it resound, spoken in Croatian!

"Još Hrvatska ni propala"
Ljudevit Gaj, 1809-1872