Monumental Battles:

Disputed Memorials, Contentious Memory, and Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies

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"Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark." – Deuteronomy 27:17

On June 28, 1989, one million Serbs made the pilgrimage to Kosovo Polje, outside of Pristina, to mark the six hundredth anniversary of the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo.[1] The crowd had assembled to commemorate their ancestors' loss to the Ottomans, which they believed led to five centuries of Turkish rule in Serbia.[2] The battle, which had been fought on the plain where they congregated, was marked by a stone tower on the alleged site where the Turks beheaded the Serbian leader, Prince Lazar. Inscribed on the monument are the apocryphal words of Lazar: "Let him who fails to join the battle of Kosovo / Fail in all he undertakes in his fields."[3]

At this commemorative rally Slobodan Milosevic, then the president of Serbia, gave a speech which solidified his place as a "first-class nationalist leader."[4] He arrived by helicopter and then, followed by a phalanx of bodyguards, took his place on the stage overlooking the throng of people, many of whom were waving pictures of Milosevic and Lazar.[5] On display behind him were the symbols of Serbian nationalism, including images of peonies, a flower that represents Lazar's blood, and a large Orthodox cross studded with four Cyrillic C's, which stand for "Only Unity Saves the Serbs."[6] Beside him on the stage sat other other dignitaries, including the entire federal leadership of Yugoslavia. Milosevic used the emotionally charged occasion and

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[1] Richard Bassett, Gazi Mestan, and Dessa Trevisan, "Serbs Mass to Recall Battle," *Times* (London), June 29, 1989; and Barney Petrovic, "Serbia Recalls an Epic Defeat," *Guardian* (London), June 29, 1989.

[2] In actuality this was not the case; Turkish rule began as a result of a later battle. This tension between history and myth/memory will be an important point throughout the paper.

[3] Quoted in Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 184.

[4] Jacques Semelin, "Analysis of a Mass Crime: Ethnic Cleansing in the Former Yugoslavia, 1991-1999," in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 360.

[5] Michael Sells, "Kosovo Mythology and the Bosnian Genocide", in Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, eds., *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2001), p. 181.

[6] R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 70.

setting to whip the crowd into a nationalist frenzy. "Serbia has been exploited," he cried. "Disunity has retarded the Serbian nature while the inferiority of Serbian leaders has humiliated the Serbian people," he proclaimed, positioning himself as the man to turn the tide of Serbian history.[7] The crowd responded enthusiastically to his message, chanting "Kosovo is Serb" and "We love you, Slobodan, because you hate the Muslims."[8] The symbolism and emotions stirred by the environment amplified the force of his foreboding proclamation: "We are now again facing battles... They are not conducted with arms, although it cannot be excluded. Whatever they are, these battles cannot be won without determination, courage and sacrifices."[9]

Nineteen years earlier, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt used a monument for a very different political purpose. Brandt was visiting Warsaw to sign a historic treaty recognizing Poland's annexation of German territory after World War II. However, the treaty was overshadowed by Brandt's morning visit to Warsaw Ghetto Monument, the memorial to the Jews killed during the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Brandt, "sober and expressionless," placed a wreath at the base of the memorial and then fell to his knees where remained in silence for one minute. He "bowed his head slightly and then rose heavily. When he turned, the edge of his mouth was trembling."[10] Photographs of the *Warschauer Kniefall* graced the front pages of newspapers worldwide.[11] Because it so powerfully symbolized the remorse and shame felt by Germany about its past, Brandt's emotional genuflection "became perhaps the most famous act of contrition in the world."[12]

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[7] Bassett, Mestan, and Trevisan, "Serbs Mass to Recall Battle."
[8] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, p. 70.
[9] Petrovic, "Serbia Recalls an Epic Defeat."
[10] "Brandt Moved by Visit to Warsaw Ghetto Site," *New York Times*, December 8, 1970.
[11] For example, *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1970; "Bonn, Warsaw Sign Pact," *Washington Post*, December 8, 1970; and James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 180.
[12] Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 128.

These two episodes demonstrate the power and scope of memory and monuments in politics. Both Milosevic and Brandt appealed to people's images of the past in order to further their political aims of the present. These two episodes also show the range of uses that sites of memory have in politics. While Milosovic used the monument to the Battle of Kosovo to stir up an orgy of hatred, Brandy used the Warsaw Ghetto Monument to further reconciliation between Germany and its victims. In fact, what allowed both Milosovic and Brandt to convey their messages so clearly and powerfully was these sites themselves. Brandt's action, in particular, would have been meaningless had it not been at the foot of the memorial. A man falling to his knees on the sidewalk is likely an accident; the German chancellor falling to his knees at a Holocaust memorial is deeply imbued with meaning. These leaders clearly understood their contexts and used them strategically to send a clear political message to an intended audience.

Brandt and Milosevic are not the only leaders to use monuments politically. In fact, it is a common practice. Martin Luther King Jr. undoubtedly understood the power of monuments when he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. More recently, George W. Bush tapped into the power of sites of memory when three days after the attacks of September 11 he climbed atop a charred fire truck that lay amidst the rubble of the World Trade Center and shouted through a bullhorn: "I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you, and the people who knocked down these buildings will hear all of us soon."[13]

Monuments are also commonly used to mark the rise and fall of political regimes. When new regimes take power often some of their earliest actions often involve altering the symbolic geography of the state, such as destroying monuments of the *ancien régime*, renaming streets and

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[13] Robert D. McFadden, "After the Attacks: The President," *New York Times*, September 15, 2001.

cities, and erecting monuments of their own. When the Berlin Wall fell so too did the statues of

Marx, Engels, and Lenin that dotted the Eastern Bloc. Throughout nineteenth century France,

statues were torn down and re-erected with every change from monarchy to republic and back

again.[14] And one of the most recognizable images of the Iraq War is of a statue of Saddam

Hussein being torn down and dragged through the streets of Baghdad where gleeful Iraqis beat it

with their shoes. Nevertheless, even when not being used explicitly for some political endeavor,

monuments are potent political tools, which is why states and interest groups spend financial and

political capital to erect them.

In the rest of this paper I will give a systematic explanation of why and how monuments

matter in politics, specifically ethnic conflict. I begin by surveying the broader literature on

memory and politics. I glean insights from other disciplines and consider the shortcomings of the

political science literature. Second, I take a interpretivist approach to sites of memory, exploring

what they mean and why they matter for members of the intended audience. I show that

monuments operate on multiple levels, each of which has important implications for politics. In

short, I argue that monuments matter in ethnic politics because of aspects of the monuments

themselves. Third, I propose a theory to explain when monuments are likely to spark ethnic

conflict. I hypothesize that when certain conditions are present in a society (ethnic fears) and a

monument possesses a specific feature (it symbolizes a "central memory") then threats to the

monument create a very volatile situation where ethnic conflict is likely. When the two

conditions are combined, threats to monuments are perceived as signals from the government of

possible future maltreatment of ethnic group in question. The ethnic group turns to violence to

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[14] William Cohen, "Symbols of Power: Statues in Nineteenth-Century Provincial France," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 1989), pp. 491-513.

communicate clearly to the government that they will not accept future abuse. When only one of the conditions is present I expect to see non-violent mobilization. When neither of the conditions are in place, I predict that monuments will play no role in inciting ethnic mobilization of any kind.

Fourth, I test this hypothesis on two cases from post-communist Europe: Cluj, Romania, where an impassioned dispute over the statue of King Mattias remained peaceful and Tallinn, Estonia, where violence erupted over the fate of Bronze Solider monument. I show that in Tallinn violence resulted from the combined centrality of the memory of World War II to ethnic Russians and prevailing uncertainty about their future in Estonia. Whereas in Cluj, even though the statue represented an key memory for the Hungarians, political mobilization remained peaceful because the community was not afraid for their future in Romania. I conclude by briefly exploring the role of monuments in promoting ethnic reconciliation and transitional justice.

Memorializing Politics and Politicizing Memories: A Brief Review

The humanities and social sciences are engrossed in the "memory boom," an intense and sustained interest in the causes and consequences of collective memory at all levels of society.[15] Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists, neurologists, cultural theorists, and scholars of literature, art, and music have all approached the issue from a myriad of angles and approaches. The field is so vast and disjointed there is not even consensus among scholars on what to call the phenomenon they all study. Undertaking a

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[15] Jay Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the 'Memory Boom' in Contemporary Historical Studies," *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, No. 27 (Fall 2000).

truly comprehensive survey of the field would be an exceedingly daunting task.[16] Nevertheless,

most would agree that the place to start is with Maurice Halbwachs, an early twentieth century

French sociologist and student of Durkheim, who argued that memory is a social phenomenon.

Halbwachs famously stated that "it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It

is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories."[17] Our memories, then,

are embedded within our social context.

Typically, students of memory and politics point the causal arrow from politics to

collective memory—though the bulk would never use such language. Some examine how

political actors and institutions shape a society's memories. For example, Jeffrey Herf argues that

the particular domestic politics of West and East Germany created divergent public memories of

Nazism in the two states.[18] And Yael Zerubavel shows how the Zionist movement recast Jewish

history to suit their political vision.[19] Other scholars are more interested in how political events,

such as wars, determine the character of collective memory. For example, Jay Winter argues that

the intense trauma of World War I itself guided the particular way in which Europeans

remembered and mourned.[20] But in either approach the main interest is the causes of collective

memory. Much less research has been done on collective memory's consequences.

Recently, however, political scientists have begun to consider memory as an independent

variable which can affect political outcomes. Though the study of memory in political science is

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[16] The best review, though by now slightly dated, is Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24 (1998), pp. 105-140.

[17] Maurice Halbswachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed., Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 38.

[18] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[19] Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[20] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

still in its infancy, there as been progress since Markovits and Reich's 1997 declaration that "the study of collective memory is virtually unknown to the discipline."[21] Political theorists have analyzed issues such as the role of memory in defining the boundaries of the political community and in creating transitional justice.[22] In the subfields of American and comparative politics, scholars have examined the effects of memory on a variety of facets of political life. Cruz argues that collective memory shapes national political and economic development by creating a "collective field of imagined possibilities" which restrict the "array of plausible scenarios of how the world can or cannot be changed and how the future ought to look." By defining a nation's identity, collective memory helps determine a nation's trajectory. [23] Similarly, Art shows that the divergent ways that Germany and Austria coped with their histories of Nazism led to contrasting political outcomes. In Germany, public recognition of guilt restricted the rise of right-wing political parties after reunification; in Austria, however, a public culture of victimization allowed for the success of far-right populist parties.[24] Finally, Harris demonstrates that memory of key political events, particularly the Emmett Till murder, facilitated collective action during the Civil Right movement. He writes: "the development of group-based memories can assist cooperative action by operating as a retrospective lens where insurgents can articulate grievances, cement

[21] Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 18.

[22] See, for example, W. James Booth, "Communities of Memory: On Identity, Memory, and Debt," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (June 1999), pp. 249-263; Elezar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Jon Elster, "Memory and Transitional Justice," paper presented at the Memory of War Workshop, MIT, January 2003.

[23] Consuelo Cruz, "Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures," *World Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (April 2000), pp. 275-312, quotes from p. 277.

[24] David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

group loyalties, establish goals, evaluate new events, and reflect on the possibility for successful cooperation."[25]

Memory has garnered the most attention the international relations literature, where it is generally approached in one of two ways. The first approach analyzes how the way in which individual leaders understand the "lessons of history" and draw historical analogies influences the foreign policy decisions they make.[26] These theories, however, do not fully account for *collective* memory. As Mendeloff writes, "They fail to capture the full impact of societal views of history on leaders' perceptions of their strategic interests, and the interests and intentions of others."[27] The second approach studies how collective memory enables or constrains foreign policy. The majority of scholarship from this approach focuses on the foreign policies of the ex-belligerents of World War II, particularly Germany and Japan. A number of scholars argue that memory of World War II, both domestically and internationally, has constrained Germany and Japan from asserting themselves militarily to the extent that befits political and economic powerhouses of their stature.[28] Other scholars demonstrate that contested memories of World

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[25] Fredrick C. Harris, "It Takes a Tragedy to Arouse Them: Collective Action during the Civil Rights Movement," *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (May 2006), p. 22.

[26] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), ch. 6, "How Decision-Makers Learn From History;" Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Ernest May, *Lessons of History: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[27] David Mendeloff, "'Pernicious History' as a Cause of National Misperceptions: Russia and the 1999 Kosovo War," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 32.

[28] For example, Markovits and Reich, *The German Predicament*; Thomas U. Berger, "Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan," in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 317-356; and Thomas Berger, "The Power of Memory and Memories of Power: The Cultural Parameters of German Foreign Policy-Making since 1945," in Jan-Werner Müller, ed., *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 76-99.

War II still strongly influence the bilateral relations of former foes.[29] For example, Lind argues

that the way in which a state publicly remembers its own wartime behavior can either inhibit or

facilitate inter-state reconciliation.[30]

One area scholars of international relations and comparative politics have not explored

sufficiently is the role of collective memory in ethnic conflict. This is an important gap in the

literature because many scholars have pointed broadly to the importance of memory for the

creation and maintenance of ethnic identity.[31] Furthermore, memory plays an untested role in

many of the most influential theories of ethnic conflict. Horowitz, though he does not believe

that memory can generally explain ethnic conflict, states that "History can be a weapon."[32] Lake

and Rothchild specify historical memories as a "non-rational" factor which can exacerbate the

collective fears of the future to cause ethnic conflict.[33] Similarly, Snyder and Jervis note that

"rational calculations about the high cost of misplaced trust" are complemented by "mythic

views of the perfidy of out-group adversaries, which establish a biased baseline for judging the

likelihood of defection."[34] At least five of Van Evera's twenty-one hypotheses on nationalism and

war cite the importance of collective memory. For instance, he hypothesizes that "The better

[past crimes committed by nationalities toward one another] are remembered by the victims, the

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[29] Yinan He, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Yinan He, "Ripe for Cooperation or Rivalry? Commerce, Realpolitik, and War Memory in Contemporary Sino-Japanese Relations," *Asian Security*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2008), pp. 162-197; and Paul Ian Midford, "Making the Best of a Bad Reputation: Japanese and Russian Grand Strategies in East Asia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2001).
[30] Lind, *Sorry States*.
[31] For example, Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1986); and Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[32] The full quote is: "History can be a weapon, and tradition can fuel ethnic conflict, but a current conflict cannot generally be explained by simply calling it a revived form of an earlier conflict." Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 99.
[33] David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing the Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996), p. 55.
[34] Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis, "Civil War and the Security Dilemma," in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 25-26.

greater the risk of war" and that "The more divergent are the beliefs of nationalities about their mutual history..., the greater the risk of war."[35] Gagnon argues that the main causes of current ethnic conflicts are "the purposeful actions of political actors who actively create conflict, selectively drawing on history in order to portray it as historically inevitable."[36] And Mearsheimer writes that "the teaching of false chauvinist history is the main vehicle for spreading virulent nationalism."[37]

Finally, Posen rests his theory heavily on the role of memory.[38] He argues that in the anarchy that emerges in collapsed states ethnic groups enter the security dilemma. There are two factors which intensify the security dilemma and make conflict more likely, one of which is the indistinguishability of offense and defense. Since the offensive or defensive intent of a military is difficult to gauge, ethnic groups will rely on their memories of past interactions with the other group to assess the other's military intentions. This type of historical analysis is likely to lead the ethnic group to conclude that the other group is a threat for four reasons. First, before it collapsed, the state probably manipulated the historical truth. Second, groups preserve their own memories in oral histories. Third, groups have a hard time discerning the other group's view of its past because they too use oral history. And fourth, elites will disseminate their group's oral history in emotionally charged speeches aimed at domestic mobilization.[39] Posen's explanation, however, ends there. Neither he nor any of the other authors I mentioned explore memory any

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[35] Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," in Michael E. Brown, et al., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001), p. 30. The other three hypotheses are: "The greater the past crimes committed towards one another, the greater the risk of war." "The more that responsibility for past crimes can be attached to groups still on the scene, the greater the risk of war." "The less contrition and repentance shown by the guilty groups, the greater the risk of war." Ibid.
[36] V.P. Gagnon, Jr., "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), p. 164.
[37] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), p. 56.
[38] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 1993), pp. 27-47.
[39] Ibid., pp. 29-31.

further. I aim to take their analyses to the next step by critically analyzing the role of collective

memory in causing ethnic conflict.

Monuments and Memory

To narrow down the broad concept of collective memory, I focus my study on

monuments and memorials. The study of monuments and commemoration comprises an

important subset of the general literature on collective memory; although as of yet, it has not

been applied to theories of ethnic conflict.[40] They are one aspect of what French historian Pierre

Nora calls "*lieux de mémoire*," or "sites of memory."[41] Though Nora and others use the term to

refer to a broad range of symbols (such as the French tricolor flag and *Dictionnaire Larousse*), I

will use the term at its most literal meaning to refer to physical places. Also, though some

scholars distinguish between memorials, monuments, and sites of memory, I will use the terms

interchangeably.[42]

Three major functions of monuments emerge from the literature. First, monuments are

closely tied to national identity and nationalism, and, therefore, play an important *identity

formation role*. Mosse, for example, shows that since the French Revolutionary wars, war

memorials in Europe were the central focus of "cult of the fallen soldier" and national self-

representation.[43] Similarly, Smith argues that "The very conception of the nation in the public

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[40] For a useful review of this literature, see Kirk Savage, "History, Memory, and Monuments: An Overview of the Scholarly Literature on Commemoration," National Park Service, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/resedu/savage.htm.

[41] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, Vol. 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 7-25. Also, the massive seven-volume project led and edited by Nora published in France between 1984 and 1992 as *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard) and in three volumes in English edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman and translated by Arthur Goldhammer under the title *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998).

[42] For a clear, nuanced distinction, see Young, *The Texture of Memory*, pp. 3-4.

[43] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

imagination is often shaped by state-sponsored public art that commemorates some aspect of the shared past."[44]

Second, memorials have an important *functional role* as locations for commemorative events. For example, Winter demonstrates that the war memorials built after World War I played a vital role in the personal and public rituals of mourning and the search for meaning after the devastation.[45] These commemorative events can be highly staged national ceremonies, such as the changing of the guard at the Arlington's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, or much more private and personal, such as leaving notes and objects at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Ignatieff describes how in the USSR even non-commemorative ceremonies took place at memorials: "All the rituals of Soviet institutions—the army parades, the presentation of civilian awards and decorations, trade union march-pasts, seem to take the war memorial as their focal point. Soviet brides and bridegrooms lay bouquets on the tomb of the unknown soldier on their way to the state marriage office. After a busy week-end, the war memorials are piled high with marriage bouquets."[46]

Third, monuments legitimize and propogate a certain view of the past and, consequently, the present—a *legitimizing role*. As Young states, memorials "tend to concretiz[e] particular historical interpretations."[47] Cohen finds that even in literate societies, monuments are often the most effective way to spread political ideas. "Statues were an immediate and apparently unmediated way of communicating political values" and erecting them was "an attempt to establish hegemony of the ideas represented by the monument."[48]

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[44] Kathleen E. Smith, *Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory during the Yeltsin Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 177.
[45] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, ch. 4, "War Memorials and the Mourning Process."
[46] Michael Ignatieff, "Soviet War Memorials," *History Workshop*, No. 17 (Spring 1984), p. 159.
[47] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 2.
[48] Cohen, "Symbols of Power," p. 495.

Though sites of memory have not been adequately studied by political scientists, they are related to other symbolic sites which have recently been offered as a source of indivisibility that can lead rational actors to war.[49] Hassner argues that sacred spaces can become the cause of conflict because for the faithful they are absolutely indivisible.[50] Conversely, Goddard argues that indivisibility is not a characteristic of the symbolic territory, but rather a social fact dependent on the legitimation claims that actors make during the bargaining process.[51] For Toft, an ethnic group's homeland is "often a defining attribute of a group's identity, inseparable from its past and vital to its continued existence as a distinct group." For this reason, "ethnic groups rationally view the right to control their homeland as a survival issue, regardless of a territory's objective value in terms of natural or man-made resources."[52] Finally, the contributors to a volume on recent territorial disputes find that even as increased economic and cultural integration have rendered borders more porous, people and groups still cling to, and are willing to fight over, symbolic territories because they are crucial aspects of their identities and sense of belonging.[53]

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[49] See James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 379-414.

[50] Ron E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); and Ron E. Hassner, "'To Halve and to Hold': Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility," *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Summer 2003), pp. 1-33.

[51] Stacie E. Goddard, *Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy: Jerusalem and Northern Ireland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Stacie E. Goddard, "Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy," *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 35-68.

[52] Monica Duffy Toft, "Indivisible Territory, Geographic Concentration, and Ethnic War," *Security Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 86, 87.

[53] Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter, eds., *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Taking Monuments Seriously

In this section I will explain what monuments provide for members of "their" national or ethnic group. I hope to show that political scientists should take monuments seriously because people and groups take them so seriously and this has significant political consequences. The key point in this section is that monuments serve the three roles just enumerated (identity formation, functional, and legitimizing) for all layers of society: individuals (the masses), elites, and the society as a whole. Many of the functions I will describe overlap, are closely linked, or operate on more than one level of society, but for brevity's sake I only list them once.

To understand what monuments mean for actors, I approach the matter from an interpretivist perspective.[54] Interpretivism allows me to study the meanings and beliefs held by agents by means of "empathetic imagination," attempting to observe the world from the vantage point of the subject.[55] This approach is appropriate because I am interested in understanding how sites of memory are subjectively perceived by actors. It is subjective perceptions that give these material sites their meanings and that shape how actors understand and interact with them.[56] After elucidating the subjective preferences of the actors, I also adopt a rationalist framework to explain how monuments are useful for ethnic leaders and group coordination. With these tool kits in hand, I now suggest how actors view and use monuments.

For individual members of the memory community, monuments provide a tangible link to one's group identity and heritage and a location for commemorative acts. Monuments can foster

[54] See Hassner, *War on Sacred Ground*, p. 7.
[55] Max Weber, *Weber: Selections in Translation*, trans. Eric Matthews, and ed. W.G. Ranciman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 8-9. Hollis and Smith term this approach "understanding" and juxtapose it with more traditional positive social science, which they label "explaining." Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 87.
[56] Cf. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); also, John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

an individual's group identity by tying them to the shared past of the group. Regularly seeing a statue of a historic leader or memorial to the war dead reminds people that they share a common history with their co-ethnics.[57] This reinforces the "imagined community."[58] Exposure to national symbols stimulates individuals' identities even if it is subconscious.[59] In two experimental studies, Kemmelmeier and Winter found that the mere presence of an American flag increased nationalist sentiments.[60] A prominent monument can give an individual a sense of pride in their group. Knowing that the glory of their community is on public display can produce a satisfying feeling.

Monuments can also validate one's view of history. There is a sense that since there is a public monument about it, it must be true—or, at the very least other people share your view, a gratifying feeling itself. Beyond their cognitive role, monuments provide a place for commemorative rituals. These could be joyous events (e.g., national holidays), but more often they are somber events (e.g., visiting a site that commemorates a loved one), since sites of memory tend to be sites of trauma.[61]

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[57] This can stimulate humans' deep psychological need to belong to groups. For a review of this substantial literature, see Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 117, No. 3 (1995), pp. 497-529.
[58] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); also Cohen, "Symbols of Power."
[59] Michael Billig calls this "banal nationalism" and argues that national symbols pervade modern states to such an extent that they fade into the background but are embedded in the minds of the citizenry and therefore work on a unconscious level. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
[60] Markus Kemmelmeier and David G. Winter, "Sowing Patriotism, But Reaping Nationalism? Consequences of Exposure to the American Flag," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 29, No. 6 (2008), pp. 859-879. A number of other recent experimental studies have also found that subtle exposure to national symbols can have significant effects on individuals. For example, Ran R. Hassin, et al., "Subliminal Exposure to National Flags Affects Political Thought and Behavior," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 104, No. 50 (December 2007), pp. 19757-19761; and Natan B. Sachs, "Experimenting with Identity: Islam, Nationalism and Ethnicity," unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, September 2009. For a review, see David A. Butz, "National Symbols as Agents of Psychological and Social Change," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (2009), pp. 779-804.
[61] Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 10.

For national elites (and the state, if the group is in power), monuments provide a cohesive group and legitimacy. As I just described, monuments increase individuals' group identities, which, in the aggregate, creates a cohesive group. This is beneficial for elites because group solidarity facilitates collective action and social control.[62] By helping to shape collective memory, memorials also enhance elites' power. Controlling memory is a form of agenda-setting power because, as Cruz rightly notes, "*how* we remember shapes *what* we can imagine as possible."[63] Finally, sites of memory give elites and the state legitimacy.[64] For example, official state trips to Israel include a visit to *Yad Vashem*, the national Holocaust memorial.[65] One of the major points of this history lesson is to remind foreign leaders that the annihilation of European Jewry was the basis of the state's founding and still is a source of its current claim to legitimacy.

For the group as a whole, monuments provide both another kind of legitimacy and focal points which aid group coordination. Whereas monuments legitimate elites' power, for ethnic groups monuments can legitimate their very presence in a territory. In divided societies, ethnic groups often claim that other groups have no right to live in "their" territory. In extreme cases, such as Kosovo and Rwanda, groups act on this notion and try to remove other groups from the territory through genocide or ethnic cleansing. Monuments provide concrete evidence that a group has historic roots, and, consequently, a legitimate right, to live where they do. This search for legitimacy often explains the enthusiasm surrounding archeological expeditions. Battlefields

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[62] In this sense, monuments can help Olson's "latent" groups become "privileged" groups. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). For an example, see Harris, "It Takes a Tragedy to Arouse Them."

[63] Cruz, "Identity and Persuasion," p. 311. Emphasis in the original. Consequently, control over memory is a dimension of the second face of power. See Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (December 1962), pp. 947-952.

[64] Cf. Jan-Werner Müller, "The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory," introduction to Müller, ed., *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*, p. 26.

[65] Office of the President of the State of Israel, "Presidential Ceremonies and Protocol," http://www.president.gov.il/chapters/chap_3/file_3_4_5_en.asp.

and military cemeteries are particularly powerful sources of legitimacy because they are sites where sons of the nation gave their lives or now rest. As Lincoln observed at Gettysburg, men at battle consecrate the ground upon which they fight.

Monuments also play a more instrumental role for groups. Prominent symbols in the landscape are focal points that can solve group coordination problems. Focal points are some clue for coordinating behavior in a given situation that is based on "each person's expectation of what the other expects him to expect to be expected to do."[66] There is no one "correct" answer to this type of coordination puzzles. Rather, as Schelling notes, "any solution is 'correct' if enough people think so."[67] Symbols such as monuments often are such "solutions" upon which people's expectations of others' expectations converge. Petersen finds that in the absence of elite manipulation, symbolic sites were crucial in coordinating action in East European opposition movements. For example, "Czechs knew to show up at Wenceslas Square without any direction [and] East Germans went to Nikolai Church on Mondays without direct leadership."[68] In the event of perceived danger to an ethnic group, the symbolic prominence of sites of memory such as monuments or historic churches can make them the natural places to for individuals to gather to defend themselves or strategize, even without prior instructions to do so. Such places are vital to the group since they provide a focal function that is important for coordinating collective action, including collective defense.

Monuments can additionally promote group cohesion and coordination by aligning the preferences of members. In a series of experiments in Israel, Hassin et al. find that subliminally

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[66] Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 57; also Barry O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), ch. 4, "Focal Symbols."
[67] Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, p. 55.
[68] Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 299.

priming citizens with an image of an Israeli flag led to moderated opinions. Individuals on both the left and right shifted their opinions on Israeli nationalism, Jewish settlers, and an upcoming election to the political center after receiving the treatment.[69] The potential for symbols to narrow the range of political preferences lowers the potential for internal disputes and raises the potential for collective coordination.

One ethnic group's monuments can also have meaning for other groups in the same territory. Individuals from another group might find the ideas and interpretation of history represented by the monuments deeply offensive or a sign of impending danger. For instance, there are many cases of political controversies over statues of historical figures considered freedom fighters by one group and terrorists by another. Monuments to perceived oppressors could even help solidify the identity of the other group by building a narrative based on victimhood. Changing borders and regimes that reorder the ethnic status hierarchy often create a situation where these emotions are likely. The new regime is likely to erect new monuments that only serve to remind member of the out-group of their recent loss of power and diminished status position. Monuments can, therefore, fuel resentment among members of the group whose position in the pecking order has fallen.[70]

For elites of other ethnic groups (including the state, if appropriate), monuments can pose a threat to their power and legitimacy. For the same reasons why monuments are instrumental for the in-group and its elites, monuments also threaten out-group elites. These elites do not want other groups to have strong identities or short-cuts for collective action since these factors could

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[69] Hassin, et al., "Subliminal Exposure to National Flags."
[70] Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. ch. 3, "Resentment."

ease the path to increased political power or future rebellion. For all of these reasons, memory

sites are often destroyed after regime changes and purposefully targeted during war.[71]

Conflicting Memories: Why Disputes over Monuments Turn Violent

Building on the interpretivist and rationalist insights of the last section, I now present a

theory of when and why conflicts erupt over sites of memory. I hypothesize that ethnic fears and

the monument's centrality in the group's collective memory are jointly necessary conditions for

violence to break out. Under these conditions, threats to the monument are interpreted by the

ethnic group as a hostile signal about their future. They resort to violence in order to signal back

that they will resist further changes. This theory does not claim to explain the deep, underlying

causes of ethnic violence. Rather, I seek to explain the source of one potential spark that can help

us to understand why violence starts precisely when and where it does. This theory seeks to

complement theories that use mechanisms such as grievances or the security dilemma to explain

ethnic conflict. Even if two groups are engaged in a security spiral, someone has to fire the first

bullet for the violence to start. This theory presents one reason why that first trigger gets pulled.

The story begins in a ethnically heterogeneous society and most probably a "nationalizing

state" aiming to bolster the interests of its "core nation."[72] The state decides to remove or destroy

a monument identified with a minority group. As described earlier, there are a number of reasons

why a state would pursue this, but, for the theory, the state's actual intentions are insignificant.

The next move belongs to the minority. There are three main ways in which they can react to this

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[71] There are many scholarly and journalistic accounts of both these phenomena. On regime change, see Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); on targeting during war, see Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion, 2006).

[72] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

affront on their memory site. They can do nothing or something minimal like make a statement

condemning the government's action. They can actively mobilize to protest the government. This

includes collective behavior such as protests, strikes, or civil disobedience. Or they can protest

violently, most likely by rioting or committing acts of terrorism. I argue that this outcome is

largely determined by conditions in the society and attributes of the monument itself.

The first condition which affects the minority group's decision calculus is fear. Ethnic

fears about the future are a common explanation for ethnic conflict.[73] Unlike many theories,

however, I do not presuppose "emerging anarchy."[74] In fact, nationalizing states are often fully

functioning—perhaps a bit shaky, but nothing like a failed state. So if the ethnic groups in

question do not exist in a Hobbesian state of nature, what are the sources of fear? I argue that an

ethnic minority's fears about the future are derived from the state's capabilities and intentions.

Capabilities are increased by military and policing power, but decreased by institutional

restraints, such as rule of law. Intentions are judged by the rhetoric of the elites, behavior of the

masses, societal remembrance, and government policies toward the minority such as language

and education policies.[75] Hostile and hateful elite rhetoric, threatening behavior by the masses

such as hate crimes, "unapologetic remembrance" such glorifying past abuses, and

discriminatory state policies all increase the belief that the state holds malicious intentions.[76]

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[73] Lake and Rothchild, "Containing Fear;" Rui J.P. de Figueiredo, Jr., and Barry R. Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 261-302; and Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*.

[74] Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," p. 27.

[75] Presumably minority access to government (in particular, inclusion in the governing coalition), would decrease both capabilities and intentions. Johanna Kristin Birnir, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[76] On remembrance and threat perception, see Lind, *Sorry States*.

Fear can be intensified by minority elites who spread fear mongering myths and a collective memory which emphasizes historic victimhood at the hand of the other ethnic group.

A secondary societal condition which increases the likelihood of conflict is support for the minority from a "external national homeland."[77] While the ethnic group is a minority in one state, they may be the ruling majority in another. External homelands often claim the right to protect the rights and welfare of "their" kin who are minorities in other states and sometimes even promote violent insurrection by their co-ethnics. This support, though neither necessary nor sufficient for violence, can increase its likelihood if fear is already present.

The second important condition is not a societal trait, but a property of the monument itself. Specifically, I am interested in the centrality of the memory symbolized by the monument to the ethnic minority. Some past events and personalities are central to a group's historic memory, others are not. Centrality can be a product of myths promoted by elites through the media and schools.[78] Time does not necessarily diminish centrality, so the memory of an event far back in history can be just as salient as more recent events.[79] As discussed in the introduction to this essay, the memory of 1389 was quite central to Serbian nationalism in 1989.

For a monument and the memory it represents to be central it must be able to fulfill the three role discussed in the previous section: identity formation, functional, and legitimizing. If

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[77] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*.

[78] On the role of the media, see Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 5-40; and Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Violence* (New York: Norton, 2000). On the role of education, see, among many others, Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Collapse of Communism," *World Politics,* Vol. 59 (October 2006), pp. 83-115; David A. Mendeloff, "Truth-Telling and Mythmaking in Post-Soviet Russia: Pernicious Historical Ideas, Mass Education, and Interstate Conflict," (Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001); and Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (December 2008), pp. 783-806.

[79] Even Elster, who argues that memories and the emotions they trigger fade with time, claims that "visible physical reminders of the wrongdoing" can retard the decay of memory. Elster, *Closing the Books*, p. 223.

the memory represented by the monument is not important to the nation's self-conception, the

monument is unlikely to perform those tasks. Only monument representing a central memory can

play a role in identity formation. Only a monument representing a central memory will provide

the location for ethnic rituals. And only a monument representing a central memory will be seen

as legitimizing the presence or power of an ethnic community.

Elite manipulation certainly plays a role in determining centrality, but the past is not clay

in the hands of a potter. As Müller notes, "present politicians have power over memory, [but]

memory also has power over them."[80] Elites can try as hard as they like but some memories and

the sites that embody them are resistant to change, particularly in the short term. For example, no

amount of politicking or media coverage is likely to increase the centrality of the monument of

Gilded Age New York governor and Democratic presidential nominee Samuel J. Tilden on

Riverside Drive at West 112th Street in Manhattan. Despite his highly controversial loss in the

1876 presidential election, Tilden simply holds no place in the historical memory of Americans,

New Yorkers, or even diehard Democrats. Conversely, there is little anyone could do to decrease

the centrality of Ground Zero in lower Manhattan, currently among the most central *lieux de*

mémoire in American society. Though they are only miles apart, changes to, or even removing

the Tilden statue are unlikely to stir a mere letter to the editor, while even proposed slight

modifications to Ground Zero have sparked very emotional political controversies.[81] Of course,

most monuments fall somewhere between the irrelevance of the Tilden statue and the open

wound that is Ground Zero. For this class of sites, agency can play a role in altering centrality.

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[80] Müller, "The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory," p. 30.
[81] For example, Anthony Ramirez, " At Ground Zero Rally, Anger Over a Planned Museum," *New York Times*, September 11, 2005.

The two major conditions, ethnic fears and monumental centrality, are jointly necessary for a violent reaction to threats to a memory site. This is because when both conditions are met the ethnic minority is likely to interpret the government's actions as a signal of the government's future treatment of the minority. Violent outbursts are a way to credibly signal back to the government that the minority will not accept future abuse. In the absence of preexisting fear, the minority has no reason to believe that harm to a monument means that the government has worse plans in store for them. There is likely to be ethnic mobilization in defense of monuments of high centrality because there is still an interest in preserving their cultural heritage, but violence is unlikely. For violence to occur the group must perceive a threat to the monument as a threat to the group. This is only likely if, to use Barry O'Neill's formulation, the group recognizes the conceptual metaphor of the form MONUMENT-AS-THE-GROUP, which is only likely if the monument is highly central to the group's self-conception and self-representation.[82] If ethnic fears do exist, the group is likely to mobilize to protect even their less central monuments, because they do not want to send the signal that they will let the government push them around. But, these protests are unlikely to turn violent. In cases where fear is low or absent and the threatened monument has low significance, the minority is unlike to do anything. Elites might try to mobilize the group, but the issue is unlikely to resonate with the masses.

Figure 1. Predicted outcomes when a government threatens a minority's monument

	high fear	low fear
high centrality	violent conflict	non-violent mobilization
low centrality	non-violent mobilization	no significant protest

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[82] O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War*, pp. 33-34; also, Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds*, pp. 62-65.

It is important to briefly mention the relationships between the threat, fear, and centrality. When the government threatens a very central monument, that action in and of itself can heighten minority fears. By destroying a monument, the government shows that it both desires to erase the minority's memory and has the ability to do so—in other words, intentions and capabilities, the basis of fear.[83] The threat can also increase the monument's centrality. A monument's political salience is often the product of it coming under fire. Lastly, monuments have an effect on fear. Monuments that maintain memories of past crimes can themselves be a source of ethnic fear. So these three factors are highly interrelated and I am obliged to recognize the unavoidable possible problems of endogeneity.

Case Studies: Cluj and Tallinn

In this section I test the plausibility of my hypotheses on two cases of threatened monuments in divided societies.[84] First, I examine the threats to the statue of King Matthias in Cluj, Romania in 1992 and 1994 and the reaction of the local Hungarian community. I show that despite the monument's centrality, the absence of ethnic fears lead the Hungarians to mobilized peacefully. Second, I examine the threats to the Bronze Solider in Tallinn, Estonia in 2007 and the reaction of the Estonian Russian minority. I argue that in Tallinn the presence of both ethnic fear and the monument's centrality led to the riots of late April 2007.

Interestingly, if asked to guess beforehand which case would turn violent, many observers would likely have predicted violence in Cluj, not Tallinn. Most objective measures according to

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[83] Cf. Verdery, *Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, p. 5.
[84] A forthcoming dataset of all "monuments and memorials that were constructed, proposed, or transformed between 1985 and 2010 in capital cities of the former Soviet empire" could open the possibility for large-N tests of my claims as well. Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, "The Power of Symbolic Capital: Public Participation in Post-Communist Memorialization," paper present at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Ontario, September 2-6, 2009; and personal correspondence with Juliet Johnson, March 2010.

prevailing theories of ethnic conflict stack the cards in favor of Cluj. First, Romania in the early

1990s was much poorer and had a much more volatile economy than Estonia in the mid-2000s.

Second, Romania was still far from politically stable, having experienced a bloody revolution in

December 1989. Indeed, Romania was the only Eastern Bloc country to execute its former

leader. Estonia, in contrast, transitioned from Soviet Communism to independence and

democracy peacefully and smoothly. Third, Estonia's broader region was much more stable than

Romania's. In the early 1990s, the Balkans epitomized violence and instability. Beginning in

1991, Romania's neighbor, Yugoslavia, broke apart in a series of devastating ethnic wars, which

raised the prospect of bloody contagion effects or spillover across borders. In contrast, the Baltic

states were considered among the most successful post-communist states and all three joined

NATO and the European Union in 2004. Fourth, in 1990 Romania itself had experienced ethnic

violence between Hungarians and Romanians in the town of Târgu-Mureş, a mere sixty miles

from Cluj. Before the 2007 riot, post-Soviet Estonia had not witnessed any serious organized

violence. Finally, the Hungarian community has a much longer history in Transylvania than does

the Russian community in Estonia. Transylvania was an integral part of Hungary until World War

I, and ethnic Hungarians have lived there for centuries. The ethnic Russians in Estonia, however,

mainly moved there as a result of Soviet policies after World War II. Nevertheless, Cluj's

monument controversy ended peacefully; Tallinn's did not.

KING MATTHIAS AND THE PEACEFUL PROTESTS OF CLUJ

The Transylvanian city of Cluj-Napoca has a long history, though how long depends on

whom you ask.[85] Romanians claim the present day city sits on a site that has been continuously

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[85] My account comes from Rogers Brubaker, et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), ch. 3, "From Kolozsvár to Cluj-Napoca."

inhabited since it was first settled in pre-Roman times by Dacians, from whom they claim

descent. Hungarians claim that the site was uninhabited for centuries before the medieval town

of Kolozsvár was founded in the kingdom of Hungary. Over the course of several centuries the

town's German speaking population (which called the town Klausenburg) assimilated into the

Hungarian-speaking population and Kolozsvár became a predominantly Hungarian town. After

the Compromise of 1867 established the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary and Kolozsvár was

incorporated into Hungary, the town experienced rapid population growth and economic and

infrastructural modernization. By 1910 Kolozsvár was 83 percent Hungarian even though

Transylvania as a whole was 54 percent Romanian. The next major change came in 1918 when

Romania conquered the city. Cluj, as it was now called, became a target of Romanian

nationalizing policies, and by 1930 the Hungarian-speaking proportion of the population had

dropped to 54 percent.

Romanian rule ended in 1940 when, with permission from Germany, Hungary annexed

Kolozsvár, as it was once again called. Local Romanians fled across the border to Romania, and

Hungarians who were not annexed poured into the town, so that in 1941 86.5 percent of the town

was ethnically Hungarian. Then, in 1944, Soviet and Romanian forces captured the city and by

1945 Cluj became part of the new Communist Romania. As a result of Romanianization and

industrialization policies, ethnic Romanians flooded Cluj and by the post-communist period they

comprised three-quarters of the population.

Along with every change of the border or regime came changes to the city's symbolic

geography. New leaders renamed streets and squares after their nationality's heroes and erected

statues in their likeness. One of these statues commemorated Matthias Corvinus, a Hungarian

king who was born in Kolozsvár in 1443. King Matthias is held by many Hungarians to be one

of their greatest rulers and accordingly the statue depicted him triumphantly on a horse

surrounded by four warriors holding the flags of four states he defeated in battle as trophies.

Since its completion in 1902, the statue has felt all the political changes of twentieth century

Cluj. In 1932, the Romanian government fixed a plaque on the base of the statue which

highlighted the king's Romanian father and his defeat by Moldavia, a Romanian principality.

During the Hungarian reign of World War II, however, this plaque was removed. Once the

Romanians regained control after the war the authorities did not restore the plaque but did

change the king's name on the statue from the Hungarian *Mátyás Király* to the Latin *Matthias*

Rex.

The loudest fracases regarding the statue began with the election of Gheorghe Funar as

mayor in 1992. Funar was an ultranationalist Romanian and virulently anti-Hungarian.

According to Brubaker et al.:

> [Funar] described Hungarians as the descendants of a barbarian people, for whom
> a thousand years in the region had been insufficient to become civilized. He called
> for the organization of an 'exchange of population' between Hungary and
> Romania... He sought to ban the public celebration of the March 15 Hungarian
> national holiday, and he called for the punishment of persons displaying the
> Hungarian flag or singing the Hungarian anthem. ... Funar accused Hungary, and
> DAHR [Democratic Alliance of Hungarians of Romania] leaders, of harboring
> irredentist designs on Transylvania; called the DAHR a Budapest-directed
> 'terrorist organization'; and claimed Transylvanian Hungarians were secretly
> collecting weapons, forming paramilitary detachments, and planning an attack on
> Romanians.[86]

Nevertheless, as mayor, Funar's power to enforce his radical views was minimal. The one realm

in which he was able to enact change was the city's symbolic geography. He erected new

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[86] Ibid., pp. 136-137.

monuments, hung Romanian flags everywhere, and painted anything he could the national colors—not even even public trash bins were spared. His goal was to show that "Cluj-Napoca was, is, and always will be a Romanian town."[87] One of his main tactics was to reduce the "Hungarian-ness" of the the city's main square, home to the statue of Matthias Corvinus.

Funar threatened the statue on two main occasions, first in 1992 and again in 1994. Both threats sparked major mobilization by Cluj's Hungarian population who rallied to protect "their" monument, but the demonstrations were always peaceful. The first threat to the monument came on December 1, 1992, when Funar reinstalled the plaque that had hung on the statue from 1932 to 1940.[88] Most Hungarians found the plaque offensive and felt it violated the statue. The protests began the afternoon of November 28, when Hungarian students surrounded the statue with a human chain to protect it from the workers who had come to hang the plaque. Demonstrations continued for several days including at the unveiling ceremony on December 1, where Hungarians stood in silent protest. The demonstrators occasionally engaged in verbal disputes with Romanian counter-protesters, but for the most part the Hungarians in the square held candle vigils, sung hymns, and passed out flyers expressing their dismay.

The Hungarians organized the largest demonstration on December 6. The day began at Cluj's main Catholic church, St. Michael's, where at least 3,000 people filled the fourteenth-century building which sits on the square. After the service, the parishioners, led by the clergy

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[87] Quoted in ibid., p. 139.

[88] My accounts of the two controversies come from: Sherrill Stroschein, *Contention and Coexistence: Ethnic Struggle and Democratization in Eastern Europe* (forthcoming), ch. 5, "Romanians, Hungarians, and King Mathias in Cluj;" Sherrill Stroschein, "Your Hero Is My Enemy: Statues, Symbols, and the Politics of Border Shifts in Transylvania, Version II," paper presented at the annual convention of International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada, March 17-20, 2004; Brubaker, et al, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity*, pp. 142-144; Michael Shafir, "Ethnic Tension Runs High in Romania," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 32, 19 August 1994, pp. 24-32; Tom Gallagher, "Ethnic Tension in Cluj," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 9, 26 February 1993, pp. 27-33; and Mordechai Tamarkin, "Space War: Romanians, Hungarians and the Struggle for the Symbolic Space of Cluj/Kolozsvar, Transylvania," unpublished manuscript, Tel Aviv University, no date.

and DAHR leadership, silently surrounded the statue and church. Soon the square was filled with 10,000 people, with Hungarians gathered in the center around the statue and Romanians, some of whom chanted provocative slogans, gathered at the edges. The day was tense, but passed absolutely peacefully. Despite an order from the Romanian Historical Monuments and Sites Commission to remove the plaque, Funar kept it up and even surrounded the statue with Romanian flags. Hungarian demonstrations eventually petered out and Cluj moved on.

The next major contention came in the spring of 1994, when Funar decided to support archeological digs in the square with the statue.[89] The Hungarian community saw this as an attempt by Funar to undermine the legitimacy of their presence by showing that "we were here first" and to remove the King Matthias statue from the square. Their suspicions were confirmed when the county vice-prefect announced that the statue might soon be removed from the square. The Hungarians were not allayed by Funar's comment that the statue was safe "for the time being."[90] There were also fears that the digging would weaken the foundation of St. Michael's Church and possibly damage the structure. Several thousand people protested in the square and the digs were postponed.

On the morning of July 7, Cluj's Hungarian churches rang their bells to alert the community that the excavations were about to begin. Very shortly Hungarians began pouring into the square to sit right where the workers were supposed to dig. The police used some force to remove protesters, including elderly women, but as the situation reached a crescendo an order from the national government called off the excavations. Protesters occupied the square for several more days, but events never escalated to violence. A commission from the Ministry of

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[89] In the intervening months, Funar continued to threaten the statue, but these proposed modifications only evoked minor protests from the Hungarians.
[90] Shafir, "Ethnic Tensions Run High in Romania," pp. 27, 28.

Culture investigated the matter and decided that the digs could begin, but only in the planned sites furthest from the statue and church. When the excavations finally began on August 2, DAHR officials announced to the small crowd which had gathered that, while they did not agree with the digs, the excavators should be allowed to do their jobs. In the end, the excavations did not uncover Roman ruins and the pits were eventually fenced off to prevent people from falling in.

I argue that even though the statue of Matthias was extremely important for the Hungarians of Cluj, they protested the government's actions peacefully rather than violently because they did not have fears about the future. Firstly, the statue had high centrality for the Hungarian community. As Brubaker et al. write: "For many Hungarians, [St. Michael's] church and statue jointly comprise the town's central *lieu de mémoire* and are deeply invested with ethnonational significance."[91] The monument was a prominent visual representation of the community's deep roots in the city and it harkened back to a golden age when the city was predominantly Hungarian and an important center of culture and learning. As such, it could not help but evoke the pain of the Hungarians' loss of power and status in the city. The statue had also come to symbolize the Hungarian community of Cluj. For example, a Budapest-based cartography firm printed two versions of a city map in 1996: one in Romanian and one in Hungarian. On the Romanian cover was a photograph of the National Theater; the statue of Matthias, however, graces the cover of the Hungarian version.[92] Hungarian wedding parties pose for portraits in front of the statue. Tourists from Hungary often pose for photographs in front of the statue as well.[93] The statue also provided a focal point for the Hungarian community. For

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[91] Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity*, p. 138.
[92] Ibid., Plate 8.
[93] Ibid., Plate 16a and 16b.

example, when Funar held a ceremony dedicating a major new Romanian statue in the city, the Hungarians held their counter-demonstration at the foot of King Matthias.

Importantly, the Hungarian community did not have fears about their collective future in Cluj. Despite all of Funar's incendiary rhetoric and symbolic manipulation, the Hungarians were not afraid of him. If anything, they saw him as a farce. Although Funar's intentions may have been malicious, there were at least three reasons why he lacked the capabilities which are also required to provoke fear. First, as mayor Funar did not have jurisdiction over the police. This is a crucial point since extreme ethnonationalists controlling the men with guns is a recipe for anything from harassment to genocide. Second, Funar was not actually interested in fomenting ethnic instability or violence. The ultranationalist vote alone was not large enough to get him elected, and violence would not help him win the votes of more moderate Romanians. Third, the national government seemed willing to take a much more reasonable position. On several occasions national commissions disputed Funar's decisions and had some luck in reversing a few. Also, the central government did not support violence against the Hungarian minority. So while Funar and his antics did inspire "contempt, derision, disgust, annoyance, and, not uncommonly, amusement," he did not inspire "fear, anxiety, or concern."[94]

Two concluding points support other claims I have made earlier. First, the Hungarian mobilizations in defense of the statue were not the result of elite manipulation. The statue was very important for ordinary Hungarians, and they mobilized to its defense spontaneously. Indeed, Stroschein finds that "Hungarian party elites became involved *after* they realized the salience of the statue issue for ordinary Hungarians."[95] Similarly, all of Funar's agitation was unable to

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[94] Ibid., p. 339.
[95] Emphasis is mine. Stroschein, *Contention and Coexistence*.

inspire much Romanian mobilization. Some attempts at elite manipulation of sites of memory do not resonate with the masses. Since the Matthias statue did not provoke strong feelings among the Romanian community, they were disinclined to act collectively. Second, the risk of violence in Cluj was further reduced because the Hungarians' "external national homeland," Hungary, did not support armed resistance. Budapest did stand up for their conationals' rights, and in fact Hungarian-Romanian bilateral relations were marked by disputes over Romania's treatment of native Hungarians.[96] Nevertheless, Hungary did not promote or show any willingness to condone violence in Transylvania.

THE BRONZE SOLDIER AND THE 2007 RIOTS OF TALLINN

On August 20, 1991, the Republic of Estonia declared its independence from the Soviet Union and regained the sovereignty it had lost during World War II.[97] Estonia's independence was first established in 1918 and though it got off to a rocky start—both Germany and Russia invaded in its first year—it soon established itself as an independent democracy. The democracy eventually degenerated into an authoritarian regime, but Estonia maintained its independence for over two decades. This period of Estonian history ended when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact essentially gave Estonia to the Soviets. In 1939-40, the USSR occupied and then annexed Estonia—an act which the Soviet Union always insisted was the will of the Estonian people. The Soviets quickly went to work and in twelve months it is estimated that the government executed 2,000 Estonian citizens and sent 18-19,000 to labor camps or forced internal exile. As a result of this terror, many Estonians greeted the Nazis as liberators when they invaded and occupied the

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[96] Steven D. Roper, *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), pp. 110-114.
[97] My summary of Estonian history is gleaned from David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence and European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2001).

country in 1941. They were, however, quickly disappointed, as the Nazis proved to be no gentler than the Soviets. The USSR reconquered Estonia in 1944 and Estonia remained a Soviet Republic until 1991.

At the end of World War II, due to wartime deaths and a border shift, Estonia's population was 93 percent ethnically Estonian. Soviet authorities, however, set about to change that, and over several decades of internal migration the ethnic Estonian population had fallen to 62 percent.[98] The majority of these migrants were ethnic Russians who had moved there to work in the industrialized urban centers. In post-independence Estonia, Russian-speakers comprise roughly one-third of the total population and nearly one-half of the population of Tallinn.[99]

In addition to the demographic legacy, the USSR left Estonia a legacy of monuments. Most prominent among them was the Liberators' Monument on Tõnismägi Hill in central Tallinn. Dedicated in 1947 to the Soviet soldiers who died "liberating" Tallinn from Germany, the Bronze Soldier, as it is universally known, is a six-and-one-half foot bronze sculpture of an anonymous Soviet soldier with his helmet clutched at his side and his head solemnly bowed. In the earth beneath the statue, the authorities buried in unmarked graves twelve unidentified Soviet soldiers who had fallen in the fight for Tallinn. The memorial was erected to serve as the city's principal site of memory and mourning and the location of official commemorations held every May 9 and September 22 (the anniversaries of the end of the war and Soviet liberation of Tallinn, respectively).

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[98] Karsten Brüggemann and Andres Kasekamp, "The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 429.
[99] Maria Mälksoo, "Liminality and Contested Europeanness: Conflicting Memory Politics in the Baltic Space," in Elki Berg and Piret Ehin, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 65-84; and Stuart Burch and David J. Smith, "Empty Spaces and the Value of Symbols: Estonia's 'War of Monuments' from Another Angle," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 6 (Sept. 2007), p. 914.

For the ethnic Estonians, however, the statue carried a very different meaning. Most Estonians saw the USSR as an occupier, not a liberator. Whereas the Nazi occupation lasted three years, the Soviet occupation lasted nearly five decades and entailed far more suffering. Nevertheless, upon regaining independence Estonia did not alter the monument very much. The authorities removed an eternal flame that had been added in the 1960s and changed the monument's inscription, erasing any mention of "liberation" and replacing it with a more neutral dedication: "For those who were killed in World War II."

The Bronze Soldier became the subject of intense controversy in 2005, when a heated national debate began over its fate. Memory issues were particularly salient that year because after months of national agonizing Estonia's president declined Vladmir Putin's invitation to attend the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the Soviet victory in World War II. The debate intensified when on May 9, 2006, the police escorted a flag-bearing Estonian nationalist away from a hostile crowd of Russians celebrating Victory Day at the Bronze Soldier. This caused an uproar, and the following days saw an Estonian nationalist publicly threaten to bomb the memorial if it was still there next May 9; 200 Estonian protesters gather at the monument; the monument defaced with paint; and a small physical fight between Russians and Estonians near the site—the first episode of public violence in post-Soviet Estonia. To prevent further disturbances, the police cordoned off the area and kept continuous guard of the site.

The monument officially fell under the jurisdiction of the Tallinn city government, but Prime Minister Andrus Ansip wanted to control the situation, leading him to pass legislation shifting responsibility for the statue to the national government. In the March 2007 parliamentary elections, Ansip's party won a surprise victory in part because of his promise to remove the

Bronze Soldier. Ansip then dropped his former coalition partner whose electoral base was the Russian community and formed a new government with two nationalist parties.

The morning of April 26, Tallinn awoke to discover that workers had fenced off the statue and were preparing to move it to a military cemetery in the outskirts of the city. Over the course of the day ethnic Russians gathered in the square to protest the action. By the evening, the crowd turned violent and two days of riots erupted in central Tallinn. Thousands of rioters smashed windows, lit fires, overturned cars, looted shops, and fought the police, who responded with tear gas and water cannons. The rioters chanted "*Rossija! Rossija!*" ("Russia! Russia!") and carried banners that read "USSR forever [sic]."[100] By the time the police restored order, at least three-hundred people were arrested, forty-four rioters and thirteen police officers were injured, and one man, a Russian citizen, was stabbed to death.[101]

In addition to sparking Estonia's worst domestic crisis since independence, the statue's removal also provoked the country's worst international crisis as well. In the weeks preceding and following the removal, the Russian government strongly condemned the Estonian government. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called Estonia's actions "inhuman," "disgusting," and "blasphemous," and warned that it "will have serious consequences for our relations with Estonia."[102] Both houses of the Russian Duma called on Putin to impose economic sanctions or cut off diplomatic ties. In Moscow, local authorities allowed the Kremlin-backed nationalistic youth group Nashi to surround the Estonian embassy, where they tried to attack the ambassador. As the riots transpired in Tallinn, Russian hackers coordinated a cyber assault on

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[100] Mälksoo, "Liminality and Contested Europeanness."
[101] Steven Lee Myers, "Russia Rebukes Estonia for Moving Soviet Statue," *New York Times*, April 27, 2007.
[102] Ibid; and Peter Finn, "Statue's Removal Sparks Violent Protest in Estonia," *Washington Post*, April 27, 2007.

Estonia's digital infrastructure—termed by one analyst "the first-ever, real Internet war."[103] This denial of service attack flooded Estonian networks, causing key government, media, and financial websites to shut down. The aftershocks of the Bronze Soldier's removal are still reverberating in Estonia. According to one study, the action cost Estonia three to four percent of its GDP due to unofficial Russian boycotts of Estonian products and Russia's consequent decision to export oil using its own ports, rather than Estonia's.[104]

Why did Estonia's Russians protest the government's action violently? I argue that the highly central place the Bronze Soldier holds in the Russian collective memory and the Russians' communal fears about their future in Estonia combined to create the conditions under which ethnic violence can break out. For many ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet states, World War II, or the "Great Patriotic War" as it is called in Russian, is the most important memory in their historical consciousness. There are three reasons why this is the case. First, the USSR suffered a tremendous loss of human life during the war. The massive military and civilian casualties left almost no families untouched by the trauma. Second, the memory of the war has been officially venerated by the Soviet regime and then the Russian government, and Putin has recently intensified this process. Third, for many Russians, World War II was the only good or moral event in Soviet history. By intensely focusing on the sacrifices Russians made to save the world from fascism, they are able to ignore, whitewash, or justify the criminal nature of the Soviet Union. As the official Soviet war memorial of Tallinn, the Bronze Soldier symbolized, housed, and indeed became this sacred memory. It was the central *lieu de mémoire* for the ethnic Russian community.

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[103] Gadi Evron, "Battling Botnets and Online Mobs: Estonia's Defense Efforts during the Internet War," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2008), p. 121.
[104] Kaja Koovit, "Russian Oil Transit Switch to Cost Estonia 4 Pct GDP," *Balticbusinessnews.com*, May 16, 2008.

Beyond representing their past, the Bronze Soldier legitimated their presence. The Russian community's roots were not deep and they knew many Estonians regarded them as colonizers. The Russians believed, however, that the blood they shed to push the Germans out of Estonia justified their presence. The monument also provided a place for commemorative rituals. Every year the Russian community gathered at the statue on May 9 to celebrate their victory and remember those who died to achieve it.

The key difference with Cluj was that unlike the Hungarians, the Russian community was afraid for their future in Estonia. When Estonia gained independence nearly all ethnic Estonians living there were automatically given citizenship; most Russians were not. And while it is possible for Russians to achieve citizenship, the process is difficult by design. According to the 2000 census, only 40 percent of ethnic Russians living in Estonia were Estonian citizens while 38 percent were stateless, lacking citizenship from any country. Unsurprisingly, 80 percent of non-ethnic Estonians believe that citizenship policy is unfairly harsh.[105] Although non-citizens are permitted to vote in local elections, they cannot vote in national ones. This means that 60 percent of Russians have no say in national politics. This made the Prime Minister's decision to take power away from the local government during the Bronze Soldier crisis, especially contentious from the Russian perspective.

Despite integration policies of the later 1990s, ethnic relations remained troubled. In 1999, 63 percent of Estonians considered ethnic Russians a national threat.[106] In a recent survey conducted in thirty-six European countries, Estonia had the lowest percentage of respondents

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[105] Klara Hallik, "Nationalising Policies and Integration Challenges," in Marju Lauristin and Mati Heidmets, eds., *The Challenge of the Russian Minority: Emerging Multicultural Democracy in Estonia* (Tartu, Estonia: Tartu University Press, 2002), p. 73 and 77.
[106] Martin Ehala, "The Birth of the Russian-Speaking Minority in Estonia," *Eurozine*, September 11, 2008.

believing that the city they live in is a good place for racial and ethnic minorities to live.[107] A poll

from summer 2006 showed that 50 percent of ethnic Russians are unsatisfied with Estonia's

efforts to lower prejudice against them.[108] Van Elsuwege argues that Russians "fear a further

isolation and marginalisation as a result of EU enlargement."[109] And, lastly, Aasland and Fløtten

find that compared to Estonians, Russians in Estonia are less likely to be employed, more likely

to be excluded from the labor market, and far more likely to be afraid of losing their jobs, even

when controlling for citizenship.[110]

In spite of the clear risks and costs to rioting, thousands of Russian-speaking Estonians

took to the streets to violently express their opposition to the government's decision to remove

the Bronze Soldier from the city. The combination of social fear and the statue's centrality

created the conditions under which violence was possible. That the Russians' "external national

homeland" provided at minimum moral support (some claim that the Kremlin orchestrated the

entire conflagration) only inflamed the conditions. The main difference between Cluj and Tallinn

was the absence of fear in Cluj and its presence in Tallinn. In both cases the government made

threats against an ethnic minority's most central site of memory. However, without such fear in

Cluj to alter the Hungarians' preferred resistance strategy to violence, the collective action in

which they engaged was a series of large but peaceful protests. Had the monument Funar chosen

to disturb not been such a central one, the Hungarian community would not have been able to

organize the largely spontaneous demonstrations that they did. In Tallinn, on the other hand, the

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[107] Zsolt Nyiri and Cynthia English, "Is Europe a Good Place for Racial and Ethnic Minorities?" Gallup.com, December 14, 2007.

[108] Zsolt Nyiri, "Russians in Estonia: Upbeat on Economy, Dissatisfied with Prejudice," Gallup.com, April 10, 2007.

[109] Peter Van Elsewege, *Russian-Speaking Minorities in Estonia and Latvia: Problems of Integration at the Threshold of the European Union*, ECMI Working Paper #20 (Flensburg, Germany: European Center for Minority Issues, April 2004), p. 31.

[110] Aadne Aasland and Tone Fløtten, "Ethnicity and Social Exclusion in Estonia and Latvia," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 7 (Nov. 2001), pp. 1030-1035.

Russians' fear shifted their preferred resistance strategy to violence. Had the Estonian government removed a statue that was less central to their collective memory and identity the community would have been unlikely to achieve the violence they did. The theory presented in this paper explains the variation in outcomes between the two cases as well as the basic question of how two statues were able to provoke such massive ethnic mobilization in the first place. By approaching monuments from the point of view of member of its relevant memory community, we see just how central sites of memory are to creating, maintaining, and representing ethnic identities. The intimate connection between memory and identity explains why a public statue with little economic and no objective strategic value succeeds in evoking such serious and spontaneous reactions, and the currently perceived political circumstances then influence whether those reactions will be peaceful or violent.

Monuments that Hurt, Monuments that Heal: Memory, Reconciliation, and Justice

If the paper thus far has promoted a view that monuments are a source of ethnonational hatred and instability, it should also be noted that they need not be this way. Monuments can also be a source of personal and societal healing after trauma. A well designed monument can represent remorse and contrition to the victims and force the perpetrators to recognize and come to terms with their crimes. A well designed memorial can even instill justice where it once was absent.

No society has grappled with its past more than Germany. One of the major ways Germans have done so is by erecting memorials to the victims of their genocidal fury. From small local plaques marking the former site of a destroyed synagogue to the national Memorial to the

Murdered Jews of Europe in central Berlin, Germany's many memorials confront the nation's past atrocities and remember and mourn its victims. Willy Brandt's notable gesture at the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial is an example of one of the many ways in which the German state and society have expressed their guilt and regret.

In other countries as well skilled entrepreneurs have used memory sites to promote healing, justice, and democracy. Countries emerging from regimes that abused the human rights of its own citizens, such as South Africa and Chile, have used memorials as part of a multi-pronged strategy (also generally including trials, truth-commission, apologies, and amnesties[111]) to move toward a more just future. Monuments have even been mandated by international courts as part of the reparations package to victims of state abuse.[112]

Memorials are often framed as a type of symbolic reparations, but Brett et al. claim that memorials are actually more powerful and multidimensional than that notion implies. They write, "This classification does not adequately capture memorials' potential to provide spaces for civic engagement that can support a wide-range of democracy-building strategies over the long term."[113] They point to a number of cases worldwide where the goal of "Never Again" is actively promoted by cultivating a civically engaged population dedicated to tolerance and the prevention future abuses. For example, a school in Italy that was built on the site of a massacre committed by the SS in 1944 hosts a camp for children from conflicting societies, such as Israelis and Palestinians or Albanians and Serbs. Similarly, in 1994 the prison in South Africa that once held Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela was chosen to house the new democracy's Constitutional

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[111] See Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri, "Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Winter 2003/2004), pp. 5-44; and Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[112] For example, Barrios Altos v. Peru, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judgment of November 30, 2001.
[113] Sebastian Brett, et al., *Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action* (New York: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007), p. 7.

Court. And the Lorraine Motel in Memphis where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated is preserved as the National Civil Rights Museum. Beyond serving as memorials to the victims of violence and oppression, these sites serve as tools for legitimizing and mobilizing social reforms aimed at achieving a better future.

Monuments are polysemic and therein lies their trouble. Since meaning is inextricably tied to context, the meaning of a monument can vary across groups and over time. That variation is enough for a single monument to evoke feelings as disparate as glee and grief, pride and revulsion. As such, monuments have the power to promote in individuals and societies both great good and great ills. Whether their net effect on humanity is positive or negative is still unknown; but, either way, monuments have been around for a long time and are not disappearing anytime soon from political life. It is, therefore, crucial that scholars and policy-makers pay them due heed. This paper has provided the beginnings of a framework for understanding the complex role of memory and monuments in politics and offered observable criteria with which we can better anticipate outbreaks of conflict surrounding sites of memory. Much work, however, is left to be done.