NETWORKED MEMORIALIZATION:

VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIALS IN GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND THE U.S.

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DEDICATION

For my parents, Garry and Laura Oliver, whose love, support, and encouragement over the years has made all of this possible.

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ABSTRACT

NETWORKED MEMORIALIZATION: VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIALS IN GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND THE U.S.

Samantha Oliver

Barbie Zelizer

This dissertation examines victims of communism memorials in Germany, Russia, and the U.S. to shed light on the current state of Cold War collective memory. Drawing on literature in communication and memory studies, I articulate a key set of taken for question assumptions about the nature of war memory, and examine how such premises are problematized by an unconventional conflict like the Cold War. Then, I turn to a series of case studies – the Berlin Wall Memorial in Germany, the Wall of Grief monument and Last Address Project in Russia, and the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington D.C. - to examine how the Cold War is being made meaningful within these contexts, and to consider what each project contributes to our understanding of the Cold War and collective memory more generally. My methodological approach centers the institutions and organizations that develop, execute, and maintain these sites. I explore these case studies through interviews with stakeholders, site analysis of the memorial spaces, and a textual analysis of organizational and planning documents, project websites and social media, and media coverage.

I find that the Cold War is not a universal signifier, and that each of these sites disaggregates and re-aggregates “the Cold War” in a way that attends to localized concerns. I find uneven support for existing premises of war memory, and articulate the need for new ways of understanding contemporary memorial projects. I develop the concept on networked memorialization as a framework for understanding the relational nature of contemporary memorial projects. Networked memorialization is the idea that memorial projects are made meaningful within a complex network of institutions, projects, and actors, and that those networked relationships play a role in shaping commemorative work. Memorials are networked internally and externally, formally and informally, collaboratively or antagonistically, and are subject a variety of

power dynamics, including issues of funding and visibility. This dissertation thus contributes to our understanding of Cold War collective memory by revealing its partial, unstable signification, and to our understanding of contemporary memorial projects by offering networked memorialization as both a heuristic and analytical tool.

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction: Collective Memory's Cold War Problem

Adjacent to a Washington D.C. traffic circle, a bronze lady keeps a vigilant eye over perceived and symbolic threats from abroad as the daily goings on of the U.S. capital pass her by. In the heart of Berlin, an ever-expanding series of sites seeks to reconcile the complicated legacies of two authoritarian regimes while preserving the remains of what used to be the most famous wall in the world. Across Russia, thousands of small, window-like plaques have sprung up on buildings throughout the country, their presence drawing attention to a long-felt absence of recognition. They stand in stark contrast to another towering wall in Moscow, a dark, looming structure meant to distract and detract from horrors of the past. These four memorial sites – the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington D.C., the Berlin Wall Memorial in Berlin, and the Last Address and Wall of Grief projects in Russia – reveal insights into the legacy of the Cold War, an unprecedented and still readily felt conflict that continues to impact contemporary political and cultural life. Though these sites may appear as complete, standalone projects, they are embedded within complex internal and external networks of mnemonic actors, institutions, sites, and policies, and are shaped by often unarticulated exigencies that reflect the changing world around them.

As a conflict, the Cold War is characterized by a prolonged period of global upheaval that failed to conform to common understandings of what war is. As a result, the Cold War represents an event without the traditional commemorative markers that are typically used to make sense of such conflicts. Such an unusual event disrupts the typical mnemonic patterning that crucially structures commemorative practices, unsettling taken-for-granted assumptions about the role that such practices play in shaping collective memory of the past. Despite these difficulties, the Cold War is being commemorated in a variety of contexts and forms, including but not limited to the sites mentioned above. The study of such Cold War commemoration can thus provide insight into the dynamics of contemporary collective memory practices, as well as identify potential holes or

ruptures in how we understand the possibilities and boundaries of traditional commemorative forms.

In this dissertation, I illuminate the effects of the Cold War on contemporary war commemoration through a comparative study of Cold War memorial sites across Germany, Russia, and the U.S. I seek to answer what contemporary Cold War commemoration looks like. How does it manifest differently in different national contexts? Is its commemoration informed by the existing mnemonic practices that typically shape such war commemoration? If not, how can we better make sense of the mnemonic work being carried out at these sites? Finally, what can the study of these memorial sites tell us about our understandings of the Cold War and collective memory more broadly?

This introduction lays the foundation for a comparative study of Cold War memorial sites across Germany, Russia, and the U.S. First, I locate and situate the Cold War within the field of memory studies, illustrating how the Cold War both problematizes and energizes the study of collective memory and war memory. Next, I draw on this existing literature on collective memory and war memory to articulate four underlying, yet often unarticulated, premises that shape and inform our understanding of the commemoration of war, including the scale, temporality, materiality, and scope of memory. Within each, I consider the kinds of questions or problematics involved in applying such premises to the Cold War context. Finally, I introduce the case studies and methods used to interrogate how Cold War memory is taking shape across these sites.

The Cold War in Memory

The difficulties associated with Cold War memory are linked to its deviation from more traditional hot conflicts. The Cold War's decession via détente makes it difficult for many to recognize the need for remembrance at all, suggesting that

> if the Cold War is defined as a sustained period in which political and military tensions between the two superpower-led blocs always simmered but never reached a boiling point, then what is there left to remember? Indeed, is it even

> possible to *remember* something that, viewed a particular way, never actually happened? (Lowe and Joel, 2014, p. 1)

Yet remembrance of the Cold War persists at the personal, local, national, and international level. We can see evidence of the Cold War's vibrant mnemonic life in the proliferation of Cold War-themed media (such as movies, television shows, video games, and documentaries), the development of museums, monuments, and memorials that commemorate significant events from the era, the popularity of its historical sites as tourist attractions, and the recurring celebrations of its key events and moments (Lowe and Joel, 2012). Such examples suggest that Cold War collective memory not only exists, but it is growing in scope and relevance.

While the study of war memory and commemoration has a long, rich intellectual history, remarkably few studies have attended to the relevance of this work for understanding remembrance of the Cold War. This is in large part due to the unconventional nature of Cold War "warfare," which shapes many of the observations memory scholars have offered about the conflict:

> One reason might simply be that unlike hot wars, the Cold War does not lend itself to memorialization and, at least in the West, to the tales of suffering and mourning which are familiar from the world wars. Moreover, since the Cold War often blurred the line between war and peace, it became very difficult to define the beginnings and endings of conflicts which are central to the emergence of topographical and temporal sites of memory. (Mueller, 2002, p. 11)

Several underlying concerns emerge from this particular formulation of the Cold War, and these concerns are echoed elsewhere within the memory studies literature. First is that, on the surface, the Cold War does not seem to lend itself to the particular practices of memory as we know them. This suggests that the Cold War contributes to "shifts in the forms and location of memory" that we traditionally associate with war (Gillis, 1994, 13). Second is the idea that these traditional forms are insufficient because the Cold War itself was a new kind of warfare, in part because the conflict blurred many of the existing dichotomies upon which such memory work depends . Traditional categories such as beginnings and endings, war and peace, and soldier and civilian appeared to unravel under the looming specter of total warfare. Further complicating matters is

the “lingering contemporaneity” of the Cold War (Lowe and Joel, 2012) which leaves us wondering how we can begin to remember an event that still feels so present and timely.

Additionally, it’s possible that the Cold War resists easy commemoration because there is little public interest in remembering the Cold War in the first place. This seems particularly true within the American context, and the American public has exhibited great reluctance to participate in the usual activities associated with war remembrance (Piehler, 1995, 5). Despite a concerted effort by the Republican right to advance conservative and triumphalist narratives of an American Cold War victory, these arguments failed to gain saliency amongst the public (Weiner, 2010). Such ambivalence towards the Cold War is characteristic of other nations as well, with individuals simultaneously situated as both participants and observers of the conflict in a way that leaves them unsure of their commemorative roles or obligations (Ashplant et al, 2000; Lowe and Joel, 2012).

The Cold War is a vital yet uninterrogated case study that can help us understand and reevaluate existing understandings about war memory and commemoration in the contemporary era. With this dissertation, I seek to rectify this gap. Before turning to the specific case studies at hand, it is necessary to map the landscape of the Cold Was as currently situated within collective memory studies. This introduction does this by first examining the presumptions that underlie our conceptualizations of war commemoration; second, considering the way in which the Cold War both reflects standard war commemoration and deviates from it; and third, discussing the implications this problematic has for contemporary understandings of both war commemoration and memory studies. It examines how Cold War memory manifests in the politics, rhetoric, and circulation of post-Cold War monuments and memorials across different national contexts, and contributes to the growing body of work that seeks to evaluate how the legacy of the Cold War continues to impact contemporary political and cultural life.

Practices of War Commemoration and the Memory Boom

The recent preoccupation with war memory and commemoration both drives and is symptomatic of the growth of memory studies as a whole. The memory boom saw a proliferation of memory practices, as well as the growth of scholarly inquiry into those practices. While scholars disagree about whether this boom represents an unprecedented shift in mnemonic activity or is simply the latest in a long line of boom and bust preoccupations with memory, advocates on both side of this debate agree that war is a key animating feature of contemporary memory practice. Those arguing for the uniqueness of this contemporary boom tend to link this recent focus on memory to a more general sense of rupture and instability created by modern society (e.g. Huyssen, 1995), while those that view this ebb and flow as a cyclical process instead emphasize how conflict and trauma have repeatedly emerged as energizing features of memory practice over time (e.g. Whitehead, 2009). Either way, discussions of war and conflict permeate all levels of memory scholarship, albeit in distinct and differing ways.

Other scholars orient more explicitly to war's centrality in memory. For Winter, war becomes not just a constitutive aspect of the memory boom, but rather a driving force behind its ascendance in both academic scholarship and everyday life. War commemoration becomes motivated by "the need to attend to, to acknowledge the victims of war and the ravages it causes" (Winter, 2006, p. 1). Two memory booms are highlighted, with the first dating roughly from the mid 1890s until the 1920s and emphasizing the role that collective remembrance played in establishing and strengthening national identities. War memory here is depicted at "the level of mass production and consumption" as official commemorations and other cultural products were conscripted into the project of post-war nation building (Winter, 2006, p. 25). A second generation of memory emerges in the 1960s and 1970s and was driven by remembrances of the Second World War and the increased visibility of Holocaust survivors and their stories (Winter, 2006, 26) privileging "a new group of people and their memories" outside of state officials and cultural elites (Winter, 2006, p. 28).

But what became of war memory after this so-called second generation? Scholars have added to Winter's framework by grappling with the state of war memory after the 1970s.

Although war remains one of memory studies' "most productive and compelling subjects," at least four new factors have fueled contemporary interest in war memory, including the increased public visibility of Holocaust remembrance, the growing desire of social groups to seek recognition for past injustices and traumas, the transformation of many commemorative activities into media events due to technological developments, and the end of the Cold War world order that led to a proliferation of new kinds of 'ethnic' warfare (Ashplant et. al, 2000). While the impact of these changes extends beyond just the study of memory and war, it has been through war remembrance and commemoration that such factors have gained cultural salience. What this means is the Cold War fits integrally into contemporary interest in war memory, despite its significant deviations from war's traditionally recognized form.

Hoskins and O'Loughlin add a distinct "third generation of memory" to Winter's framework, arguing that the onset of diffused warfare in the wake of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan has resulted in a similarly diffused form of memory that is enabled by digital technology (2010, 116). War commemoration in particular is conceived as an open and ongoing process in which memorialization occurs alongside the conflict itself, rather than after its conclusion. Such concerns echo a growing body of scholarship that emphasizes how the changing digital technology can impact war remembrance (e.g. Garde-Hansen, 2011; Maltby, 2016), as well as the potential for these technologies to facilitate the remediation of previous conflicts. Key here is the integration of new digital forms with existing, non-digital commemorative practices, and the way in which these traditional forms might be augmented, transformed, or eclipsed. Such additions will prove crucial to contemporary understandings of Cold War memory.

While discussions of generations of memory and the contemporary boom are useful for thinking about the generative nature of war remembrance, none of the categories offered directly accommodate or address Cold War commemoration. While "hot" conflicts feature prominently within war memory literature, conflicts that deviate from these traditional forms are absent. Although the Cold War is frequently presented as an important pivot point or factor in transitioning

between different kinds of memory practices and concerns, the commemoration of the Cold War itself is seldom, if ever, considered.

Why does war memory and commemoration resonate so strongly within this contemporary memory boom? What is it about war that animates the study of mnemonic practice? A review of existing scholarship suggests four key reasons. First, at its most basic level, war memory matters because it is increasingly everywhere. War generates a whole range of commemorative activities, including memorials, monuments, parades, anniversary days, commemorative news content, documentaries, television shows, songs, and movies, amongst other forms (Ashplant et. al, 2000; Sturken, 1997; Piehler, 1995). War is on our screens, in our papers, on the shelves of our libraries, in our headphones, in the speeches of our politicians, in the curriculum of our schools, marching along our streets, and in our personal recollections. Remembrance of war plays a fundamental role in structuring public life, and acts as a key benchmark for making sense of national history and identity. That is not to say that war commemoration is static. While the continued presence and relevance of war memory persists over time, which wars are remembered in which ways changes with the ebb and flow of contemporary cultural and political needs. However, the omnipresence of war memory as a key component of both past and present cannot be denied.

Second, this proliferation of memory practices during times of war is tied to the intensity of the war experience. This is frequently linked to the overwhelming loss of life that accompanies times of war, often described as “the most basic war experience [that] stands at the center” of war commemoration (Mosse, 1991, p. 3). How we remember war is thus inherently shaped and framed by this forced confrontation with death. In his analysis of British literary responses to World War I, Fussell (1975) illustrates how soldiers’ letters, diaries, novels and more documented the massive destabilizing changes felt across society. These works not only memorialized the experience of World War I; they also captured a significant generational shift from the Romanticized ideals that drove men to war to the use of the hardships of war as a metaphor for life more generally. Emphasized here are the repercussions and transformations both individuals

and societies go through as they experience modern warfare (particularly trench warfare and battlefield combat), as well as the function of these writings as important sites of memory that mediate between the soldier and the public.

A variety of communicative mediums and processes play a key role in shaping the intensity of the war experience for the broader public. Photography has long been heralded as one such medium (e.g. Brothers, 1997; Butler, 2010; Sontag, 2003). For example, Zelizer illustrates how news images of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps "helped turn collective disbelief into the horror of recognition. One did not need to be at the camps; the power of the of the image made everyone who saw the photos into a witness" (1998, p. 14). She goes on to show that the memory of such atrocity photographs permeated and shaped coverage of subsequent conflicts, albeit in a way that potentially undermines the potency and communicative power of such images (1998, p. 15). Other important platforms for communicating the intensity of the war experience include television (e.g. Hoskins, 2004; O'Loughlin and Hoskins, 2010), movies and documentaries (e.g. Sturken, 1997; Rollins, 2008), literary material such as books and comics (e.g. Fussell, 1975), popular culture (e.g. Turner, 1996; Keren and Herwig, 2009), social media (e.g. Alper, 2013), and more. These platforms provide the raw materials for commemorative activities, as well as serve as mnemonic practices in their own right.

Third, war affects not only those who fight, and the effects of war and conflict permeate all levels of a given society. For example, Winter argues that "…war has moved out of the battlefield and into every corner of civilian life," widening what it means to experience conflict, and by extension, to remember it (2006, p. 6-7). War memory scholarship must increasingly account for the ways in which "…war catalyzes, disrupts and reconstructs relationships between people and the memories, places, and practices that define them" (Gegner and Ziino, 2012, p. 1). The "everyman" quality of the war experience turns every member of a society at war into a potential and inevitable mnemonic actor, transforming war into a critical event that shapes and frames political, cultural, and societal issues beyond the scope of just war itself. As such, war memory scholarship must also attend to how such remembrance is shaped by larger mnemonic and

cultural practices. War works in tandem with existing memory frameworks across a spectrum raging from personal and private experiences on the one hand to national narratives, myths, tropes, and symbols on the other. In other words, memories and commemorations of war are "informed by – and enter into dialogue with – specific debates and practices [of] cultural practice" that extend beyond just war itself (Ashplant et. al, 2000, 6).

The diffuse nature of both war itself and war remembrance means that manifestations of war memory occur across a wide range of official and unofficial capacities. The state often represents the "prime arena for the articulation of war memories and the mobilization of commemoration, since war has been central to its identity and symbolic continuity" (Ashplant et. al, 2000, p. 22). However, the state must also contend with a variety of local and individual memories as well, which seek to refract national memory narratives through the lens of personal experience and vernacular language (Bodnar, 1992). Central here is the interaction between these different groups, which requires us to understand war memory practices as multifaceted and layered.

Fourth and finally, war has the potential to change how other instances of war and conflict are understood, with war remembrance shaping both how future conflicts are imagined and how past conflicts are reconfigured over time. Sturken argues that, "the way a nation remembers a war and constructs its history is directly related to how that nation propagates future war" (1997, p. 122); to study war memory is thus also to study the ways in which war might be carried out in the future and what effects and understandings might be produced. War remembrance plays a key role in shaping the possibilities and boundaries for future conflict, and can go on to shape how future conflicts are remembered and commemorated (Winter, 2006). Commemoration can be seen as a political project that is inevitably geared towards the future. Savage critiques these self-aggrandizing monuments and memorials as "militarized landscapes" that "sustain the inevitability of war's repetition" through narratives of success, justice, and heroism (Savage, 2009, p. 301). He suggests, playfully, that if we close the National Mall to new

construction (thus preventing the commemoration of wars yet to be fought), perhaps there will be no need to fight those wars at all (2009, p. 312).

This forward-looking orientation of war memory becomes particularly significant when new conflicts arise. References to previous wars serve as cognitive shortcuts to frame contemporary issues in specific, sometimes surprising ways, such as when George W. Bush drew upon World War II to justify US involvement in the 1991 Persian Gulf War (Zelizer, 1998, p. 4) or when invocations of World War II played a surprisingly major role in the 1988 American presidential election, with Robert Dole, George Bush, and Lloyd Bentsen utilizing popular remembrance of the war to frame and aggrandize their own war experiences (Roeder, 1993, 3). Such comparisons can also work through negation, such as when the War on Terror is presented as an indefinite, perpetual conflict that diverges from how wars of the past have been carried out. That the War on Terror has also been framed as a "good war" by drawing on World War II illustrates that these benchmark references can also be used in contradictory and conflicting ways.

War memory can also work backward, reconfiguring and reconstructing past conflicts to suit present day concerns and contexts. Several scholars have focused on how memories of the two World Wars were reconfigured in the Cold War era in ways that are still reverberating throughout contemporary international politics. During the Cold War, "memories of the two world wars become over-determined by the newly hegemonic transnational frame of the Cold War" as memories of World War II were "reworked around the trope of totalitarianism v. democracy" in the West (Ashplant et. al, 2000, p. 61). This has proven to be a remarkably durable mnemonic framework, with both past and future events reduced to Manichean binaries that were maintained by and reflected in subsequent commemorative activities. Additionally, national commemoration of both World Wars during the Cold War era became platforms from which to generate political consensus and support, with "Veteran's Day ceremonies emphasiz[ing] the need to meet the threat posed by the communist bloc" rather than speaking directly to soldier's experiences (Piehler, 1995, p. 166).

These new understandings of war and conflict can also prompt shifts that may lead to new forms of mnemonic practice. One such watershed moment was the development of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The memorial was initially criticized for failing to conform to the usual war commemoration tropes – it was dark, not light; abstract, not literal; horizontal, not vertical; subtle, not demonstrably patriotic. Over time, however, the public embraced this renegade memorial, and it remains a popular site for engagement and reflection. The memorial is seen as embracing and reflecting the continued ambivalence and uncertainty that the public has about the Vietnam War itself, as well as concerns over the appropriate commemorative response to what was largely seen as a loss for the United States (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991; Senie, 2016).

Underlying these reactions to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is an understanding that the Vietnam War necessitated new forms of commemoration because the war itself was a new kind of conflict. The Cold War is poised to become a similarly critical event in the study of war commemoration. Several scholars of memory have suggested that the Cold War fundamentally altered what we understand about memory and war more broadly. The blurring of war and peace did away with the clear demarcations between conflict and amity, generating what Gillis has called “shifts in the forms and location of memory…that had previously been the focus of commemorative practices” (1994, p. 13). Cold War frameworks additionally played a key role in reconfiguring commemorations of past wars in the service of Manichean world views that remain highly influential (Ashplant et. al, 2004; Piehler, 1995), positioning the Cold War as a key background actor in today’s understanding of war memory (Lowe and Joel, 2014). However, to date memory studies has done little more than identify the Cold War as an influential turning point for the mnemonics of war. This leaves the specifics of Cold War commemoration and memorialization remarkably uninterrogated, and the implications of such changing memory dynamics largely unconsidered.

The Cold War as Exemplary War Commemoration

While memory studies has yet to fully explore the intricacies and specifics of Cold War commemoration, it's clear that the Cold War resonates strongly within the memory boom. While the Cold War rarely takes center stage in studies of war memory, it is frequently invoked as a key turning point or critical incident that represents a significant, though as yet unarticulated, shift in mnemonic practice. What little work has been done in this area suggests that issues of omnipresence, intensity, affectedness, and transformation are also at work within the sphere of Cold War commemorative practices. As such, Cold War memory is animated by many of the same factors that make war such a compelling subject within memory studies, albeit in ways that can challenge and complicate how these characteristics are traditionally understood. These complex, yet overlapping connections continue to suggest that a more detailed study of Cold War mnemonics is key to understanding how memory practice has shifted in the post-Cold War era, and how these shifts can contribute to our understanding of war memory more broadly.

Like traditional warfare, Cold War remembrance is increasingly everywhere. Part of this is due to the fact that the Cold War itself was, indeed, everywhere. The sheer scope of the conflict, which left few corners of the globe untouched, meant the citizens around the world were exposed to Cold War politics, though in very different and often conflicting ways. In the first attempt to tackle Cold War memory on a global scale, Lowe and Joel argue that "the Cold War has engendered dynamic and diverse memory cultures in virtually every corner of the globe that experienced this contest in a significant manner" (2016, p. 4). Even when not specifically articulated as such, the "Cold War remains an unremarked constant" in everyday life, subtly shaping the way in which contemporary political cultural life is understood and carried out (Lowe and Joel, 2016, p. 224). Cold War memory manifests unevenly, and while many places "still have the Cold War woven into the fabric of their contemporary identities in such a way that makes it virtually impossible for residents and visitors alike not to remember this era" (2016, p. 209), these remembrances are not often articulated as public or official forms of commemoration. Rather, the Cold War's influence on the cultural, political, and physical landscape tends to be taken for granted and unquestioned.

Additionally, the Cold War continues to energize different modes of cultural production, and is often the topic of documentaries, entertainment television, movies, novels, video games, news media, and more. Recently, for example, there has been a proliferation of Cold War themed entertainment media, and the popularity of these programs illustrates that interest in this period remains high (Stanley, 2014). Additionally, Cold War frames remain present in American news media, with many Cold War heuristics invoked to help make sense of contemporary political events, such as the spread and rise of ISIS and the 2016 U.S. presidential election (c.f Zelizer, 2017; Zelizer, 2018). Such frameworks are also present in the German and Russian popular and news media landscapes. While such popular depictions play an important role in representing and circulating remembrance of the Cold War, these platforms tend to emphasize consumption more than interaction. As such, it is difficult to tell if and how such media prompt interaction or engagement with the Cold War by the public.

Despite the overwhelming presence of the Cold War within different types of media, some of the more traditional forms of mnemonic activity – such as the construction of monuments, memorials, memory institutions, and other "official" forms of memory – have been largely absent from Cold War commemorative work. While the Cold War led to a proliferation of sites in the United States that would typically be transformed into sites of memory, such as the research lab at Los Alamos, the nuclear extraction facility at Oakridge, Tennessee, and the Congressional nuclear bunker in Northern Virginia, research has shown that these locations have largely been decontextualized from their Cold War past (Wiener, 2012). Cold War policies and practices take a backseat as other tangential issues are played up at these sites (such as a decommissioned Cold War nuclear plant in Colorado that has been reframed as a mediation on the environmental impact of nuclear power).

Similar patterns recur throughout Russia and Germany, and both nations have sidelined rather than embraced the Cold War in their remembrances of that era. Germany tends to be hyper-focused on the GDR era while divorcing that divide from the broader Cold War context that gave rise to this division (Busch, personal communication, 2017), while Russia spent much of the

post-Cold War era trying to segregate remembrance of the Soviet period from Russian public life (Dietrich, 2011). The scattered nature of this commemoration has been linked to a reluctance on the part of both government officials and the general public to reckon with the Cold War past (Wiener, 2012; Lowe and Joel, 2014). While the public seems content to consume a wide array of Cold War themed media, it seems less interested in producing or advocating for other types of mnemonic activities.

This dearth of interest may be linked to issues of experience and intensity, with the Cold War failing to energize mnemonic activity in the same way that other forms of conflict seem to. Commemoration depends on involvement from individuals, as creators, participants, and audiences. There seems to be a reluctance to engage in Cold War mnemonic activity, making it difficult to generate support for more formal commemorative undertakings. This seems to be tied, at least in part, to the unconventional nature of a "cold" war conflict, with individuals seemingly unsure of who or what should be remembered and how. Lowe and Joel (2013) note that while "remembering hot wars is remarkably popular," public attitude towards cold wars appears markedly chillier. How, then, does public attitude towards the Cold War shape the forms that Cold War commemoration takes? What actors undertake this kind of work, and under what motivations, conditions, and constraints?

While numerous scholars have documented the varied ways in which the Cold War dominated and permeated the cultural and political landscape for decades (e.g. Whitfield, 1996; Schrecker, 2004), it is less clear how the intensity of this particular "cold" experience translates into mnemonic activity. While the end of the Cold War had no shortage of cultural icons marking its official conclusion, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall (Sonnevend, 2016) and the toppling of communist statues throughout Eastern Europe, the era lacked a traditional period of de-escalation that typically marks the resumption of normal political and cultural life. This is especially significant given that, unlike more traditional wars, many individuals (especially in the West) experienced the Cold War in a more removed way that did not necessarily impact their material or physical well-being. Even those who felt the consequences of the conflict more

directly, such as those in Eastern Europe or in satellite regions such as Central Asia, experienced the material realties of the conflict as something other than traditional warfare. Therefore, while the Cold War is recognized as a highly disruptive conflict, it's clear that these disruptions take a very different form than in traditional warfare, which may yield important consequences for the study of Cold War memory.

As discussed above, the Cold War was widely experienced around the world, exemplifying the idea that war reaches and affects more than just those individuals who fight on the battlefield. However, what makes the Cold War an interesting case study is the absence of those who did experience hot conflict. Absent from the Cold War is the tension or dynamic that plays out between the experiences of soldiers and the experiences of the society that supports and maintains the associated war effort. This tension is often at the heart of commemorative practice, with commemoration seeking to make different experiences of war legible to others. For example, commemoration of the Vietnam War through the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was driven by a discontinuity between how the public understood the plight of veterans and the actual experiences of the veterans themselves (Senie, 2016).

If the Cold War is instead experienced in a more general, abstract sense, how do these new experiences structure remembrance of that era in different ways? What sort of mnemonic practice emerges if both official and vernacular actors seem reluctant to take on this kind of memory work? Research suggests that the category of Cold War victims has emerged as a concern towards which both this official and grassroots mnemonic activity has become oriented (Lowe and Joel, 2014). Different definitions of victimhood populate the Cold War commemorative landscape, as different nations select, define, and represent victims in distinct and often competing, nationally bounded ways. Each of the three case studies examined here define and mobilize the category of victim in distinct ways, and for distinct purposes.

The transformative potential of the Cold War is also complicated by the increasingly blurred distinction between war and peace that defines the post-Cold War era. If war is

understood as a transformative period that clearly demarcates “before” and “after,” it is equally true that demarcating times of war and times of peace is a clear mnemonic project. War commemoration is intended to mark, remember, and remind us of periods of conflict during periods of peace, in theory to prevent future periods of conflict. Such understandings depend on identifiable periods of “hot” warfare, which were largely absent from the Cold War era. Complicating this new sense of temporality is the distinct impression that the Cold War continues to linger on in a variety of ways, and several scholars have recognized the need to consider the Cold War as an ongoing phenomenon that continues to reverberate in a variety of forms (Zelizer, 2016; Lowe and Joel, 2013). Furthermore, we can already see that the Cold War has impacted subsequent instances of warfare, with Cold War frameworks and ideologies heavily influencing conflicts such as the perpetual war on terror, engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, recent confrontations with the Islamic State, and our so-called “cyberwars” with Russia and China.

Underlying Premises of Commemoration and the Cold War

While the commemorative practices of war memory can seem vast and varied, the above literature suggests that there exist several basic premises that underlie conventional assumptions about how war memory operates, each of which shows how problematic Cold War memory is. These assumptions shape contemporary understandings about what drives contemporary commemoration, what such commemorative practices look like, and how these practices circulate ideas and values. Key premises underlying war memory include an emphasis on national frameworks of understanding that construct and maintain the boundaries of the nation, the centrality of dates and timelines in constructing a distinct sense of historical temporality, a focus on reverence for the military through tropes of both heroism and sacrifice, and the enduring popularity of sites of memory such as monuments and memorials as physical manifestations of war memory. These categories form the different axes along which we can discuss and evaluate the commemoration of war, and can be loosely divided into concerns of scale, temporality, scope, and materiality (respectively). While these tenets have proven relevant for the study of memory of “hot” wars and conflicts, it is less clear how such principles hold up in the context of the Cold War.

The unconventional nature of the Cold War period necessitates a serious reconsideration of these assumptions.

Scale of Memory

A recurrent theme throughout the study of war memory is the importance of national mnemonic frameworks in shaping commemorative practice. While commemorative practices are shaped and produced by a variety of actors across a range of platforms, scholars of memory have repeatedly pointed to the nation as the critical entity towards which such practices are oriented. It is increasingly popular to dismiss the nation as an outdated frame of analysis, with critics arguing that we need to either zoom in on more localized practices or zoom out to consider more globalized processes. However, to dismiss the role of the nation in shaping commemoration is to misunderstand the fundamental ways in which commemoration at all levels tends to respond to, refract, or reflect the kind of mnemonic work taking place at the national level. As such, "…it is important to remember that although memory discourses [can] appear to be global in one register, at their core they remained tied to the histories of specific nations and states" (Huyssen, 2003, p. 16), and that more local memory discourses are likewise shaped by similar histories. Disregarding the nation in war commemoration is analytically and methodologically dangerous, and can lead to commemorative practices becoming "abstracted, decontextualized and robbed of [their] potent connection" to national narratives (Ashplant et. al, 2000, p. 16).

Comparative work in memory studies has repeatedly shown that the nation remains central to commemorative practice even when those practices recur across different contexts. Key to these studies is the interplay within different scales of commemoration, and the way in which the nation is a central point of interaction for these different levels. While it is tempting to think of international commemorative phenomena (such as Tombs of the Unknown Soldier, victory monuments, and Holocaust memorials) as universal in nature, manifestations of these tropes tend to be heavily nationally bounded (Blair, Balthrop and Michel, 2011; Young, 1993; Mosse, 1995). The same is true of more bottom-up forms of commemoration as well, with

national tropes bleeding into localized mnemonic practices (Doss, 2010; Bodnar, 1994). Winter (1995) illustrates how such levels interact with each other in a way that privileges the nation in his study of post-WWI mourning, which finds a common vocabulary of loss that crosses national boundaries yet manifests mainly through the promotion of national symbols at the local level. The nation thus remains fundamentally important across different scales of war commemoration, and remains a key point of analysis for the study of mnemonic practice.

These issues of scale manifest in the literature as tensions between different forms of memory. Whether termed official v. vernacular memory (Bodnar, 1992), official v. sectional memory (Ashplant et. al, 2000), or national v. individual memory (Schwartz, 2000), key here is the idea that commemoration is not just the purview of the state or the nation, and local and private commemorations frequently arise that seek to challenge, complicate, or correct more official narratives. However, within this tension, there is an explicit acknowledgement that the state or nation has an outsized influence on mnemonic practice. While vernacular and sectional practices have the potential to challenge official narratives, narratives that highlight the national show themselves to be durable and resistant to change. Work in this area highlights that the power to shape commemorative discourse is not only diffuse, but highly unequal. Commemoration looks a certain way because certain groups or individuals have more power to shape the past than others, and while the end result may be an amalgamation of "local, regional, class and ethnic interests…the dominant meaning is usually nationalistic" (Bodnar, 1992, p. 17). Memories, and by extension mnemonic practices, that are incongruent with national narratives often struggle to gain commemorative currency, and receive much less attention and circulation than narratives that complement and reinforce dominant and national narratives.

This emphasis on national frameworks makes sense given the potent role commemoration plays in building national memory and national identity. As Gillis states, "National memory is shared by people who have never seen or heard of one another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history" (1994, p. 1). A similar sentiment is echoed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1982). Gillis goes on to argue that memory and identity are

two sides of the same coin, stating that "the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa…The core meaning of any group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering, and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity" (1994, p. 3). Commemoration is one way in which this sense of sameness is maintained over time, with groups and communities acknowledging, celebrating, and reinforcing the memories that they have in common.

This is especially significant for nations, which require such ritualized behavior to maintain their "civic religion" and national coherence (Marvin and Ingle, 1999). Elsewhere such mechanisms have been called "invented traditions" that help to structure national life and develop a sense of national history (Hobswam and Ranger, 1983). National memory is the product of political, social, and historical processes, though its constructed nature is often masked or hidden (Schwartz, 2000) as the "results [of commemoration] may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and in some cases, annihilation" (Gillis, 1994, p. 5). The commemoration of war is especially significant, and attempts to bridge and make sense of such a rupture in society politicizes the memorial landscape is an especially charged and urgent way (Ashplant et al, 2000; Winter, 2006).

That binary thinking pervades war commemoration should come as no surprise. Understandings of identity and nationalism that drive and justify war and conflict have long been linked to the establishment and perpetuation of binaries that differentiate between "us" and "them." While that which is "other" changes overtime, the way in which war commemoration marks and constructs the "other" remains quite consistent. War memory is constantly worked and re-worked to both construct and accommodate binary thinking in a way that is always politically useful. Ideas of "us v. them" act as shortcuts for good v. evil that are then imported or mapped onto the relevant conflict. For example, throughout World War II this binary was translated into freedom v. fascism, which was then re-worked into a binary of democracy v. totalitarianism during the Cold War (Ashplant et. al, 2000). Commemoration plays a key role in reinforcing and perpetuating these binaries over time. Monuments and memorials cast these differences in stone,

while anniversary celebrations bring annual reminders and movies, shows, and documentaries continually replay and re-present them to new audiences.

A study of Cold War commemoration complements, complicates, and extends this existing work on national frameworks in important ways. In the above examples, the nation as a significant frame of reference is largely contingent on a nationally mobilized war effort, such as the deployment of troops and declarations of war. Does the centrality of the nation in commemorative activities hold up in less traditional conflicts that lack an explicit war effort? Binary thinking dominated the Cold War era, but are these same binaries present in Cold War commemorative projects? Relatedly, the tensions between official and vernacular memories discussed above are premised on citizens and individuals having upfront, personal, and lived experiences that conflict with dominant official narratives of war and conflict. What kind of vernacular interests manifest in a conflict such as the Cold War, in which these lived experiences of conflict are so fundamentally different from those of hot wars? Finally, we don't yet know what role Cold War commemoration plays in structuring and informing national identities in the post-Cold War era. An examination of Cold War commemoration can thus shed light on the current status of the nation in war remembrance, as well as provide insight into the importance of the Cold War for ongoing national identity politics at the official and vernacular levels.

Temporality of Memory

At the most basic level, commemorative activities involve marking and ascribing meaning to the passing of time; as such, it makes sense that dates and timelines play a significant role in structuring these mnemonic practices. Anniversaries are perhaps the most readily available example of this. Significant historical occasions, be they celebratory reminders of victory or mournful reminders of loss, are frequently marked by anniversary events that recur every year on a specific date. These anniversary events are particularly important for national unity, with such events "contribut[ing] to a civic or secular religion with a calendar of honoring foundation myths, legends, national heroes and personifications, victories, and sacrifices" (Elegenius, 2011, p. 2).

Anniversaries related to war and conflict have an outsized influence on this national civic calendar. Ashplant et. al point to “the increasing number and enhanced profile of anniversary commemorations to mark the beginning and ending of wars, and their key episodes” (2000, p. 4) as a key feature of modern war memory. They situate these celebrations within “a wider anniversary boom, fuelled by amplification by public communications media, which seize upon forthcoming commemorative dates to stimulate cultural production of all kinds” (2000, p. 4). In this view, anniversary celebrations are significant not just because they ritually mark the passage of time, but because such events are particularly generative and meaningful for mnemonic practice.

While the annual recurrence of such anniversaries may make their meaning appear stable over time, this is far from the case. The seemingly fixed nature of these events frames contemporary issues by providing a recurring benchmark that can be reassessed and evaluated in light of contemporary political and cultural events. Anniversaries of past wars and conflicts become occasions to regularly revisit the past, and update its significance for the future. The 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 thus becomes an occasion to use the Wall as a proxy to discuss ongoing conflict in Ukraine in 2014, and the centennial celebrations of the end of World War I was also an opportunity to assess the contemporary military might of the United States. While remembrances of the past are always interpreted in the context of the present, recurring anniversaries provide an opportunity to engage with these events at regularly scheduled intervals.

Dates and timelines are significant to the commemoration of war in other ways. War monuments and memorials are often explicitly or implicitly structured by representations of time. The inclusion of start and end dates for the conflict are almost mandatory, and some monuments and memorials include more specific timeline motifs. For example, the National World War II Memorial explicitly sets out to chronicle the efforts Americans undertook to win the war through the inclusion of, amongst other visual cues, descriptions and dates of battles and bas reliefs that illustrate the American war experience. Such components give the illusion of presenting a comprehensive timeline of World War II by allowing the viewer to visually experience the

chronology of the war as they move throughout the memorial space. In another example, the names of those declared killed or missing in action on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are organized chronologically by date of death, starting at the apex of the wall and extending outward until the end of the eastern panels is reached. The timeline starts again on the outer panel of the western side of the wall, and moves inward until the apex is reached. While the Vietnam Veterans Memorial takes a more unconventional approach to incorporating the passing of time during the conflict, it is clear that dates and timelines nonetheless play an important role in structuring the aesthetics and experience of the memorial.

War commemoration also plays a more general role in establishing and filling in national timelines. In addition to the civic calendar constructed from national anniversary celebrations, physical commemorative landscapes also center timelines and dates in their construction. Spaces such as national malls and monumental complexes can be viewed as material manifestations of national historical timelines, with different structures populating the timeline with those events deemed most relevant and important. Speaking of the National Mall in Washington D.C., Savage describes how “clustered together in one place, these monuments to heroes of all different time periods create a memorial landscape” that presents an historical overview of key moments from American history. Disparate events are given a sense of unity and narrativity through this shared monumental space (Savage, 2009). Similarly, Osborne (2001) illustrates that there was a concerted effort during the 1920s and 30s in Ottawa to re-design the capital area with monuments and memorials that would better capture the so-called “Canadian national character.” Aggregating national monuments and memorials in one place helped to place different events along a shared national timeline, allowing viewers to move from one time period to another as they physically progress through the space (Osborne, 1998). Both Savage and Osborne acknowledge that the commemoration of war dominates these spaces, suggesting the outsized influence that such events have in structuring national landscapes.

While this emphasis on dates and timelines is important, existing scholarship fails to interrogate what happens when the events that usually populate a war, and by extension give

shape to its commemorative forms, fail to manifest. Anniversary days are largely contingent on formal acts of war – its declaration, its cessation, and the major losses, victories, campaigns, and other maneuvers that occur in between. Do anniversary dates continue to be an important form of commemoration without these kind of key moments? If so, what kind of incidents are drawn on instead? Similarly, to date scholars have focused on wars and conflicts that, at most, last for several years. What happens when a conflict stretches beyond these usual boundaries? How do you mark a conflict that lasts for decades? Long, drawn out conflicts also present a problem for the national timelines that war commemoration tends to construct. Are traditional commemorative forms, such as monuments and memorials, enough to "fill in" such a large expanse of time? How do such forms account for the other other events that will inevitably occur alongside and within such an extended conflict? This project helps to explore some of these lingering questions because the Cold War complicates the conventional notions of temporality associated with war commemoration.

First and foremost, the temporal margins of the Cold War remain both fuzzy and fluid. Absent are both the formal declaration of war and the eventual negotiated armistice that usually bookend traditional wars, leading to conflicting interpretations of when the Cold War began and when it ended. Second, and relatedly, the sheer duration of the conflict itself poses additional problems. War commemoration usually demarcates a set period of disruption from normal life that is bounded, identifiable, and relatively short. The decades-long Cold War, on the other hand, essentially became a way of life for the several generations who lived through it, and additionally encompassed a wide range of significant national events that occurred alongside and within these Cold War frameworks. The Cold War thus interacts with a whole host of other commemorative events in a way that significantly deviates from shorter, more traditional conflicts. Finally, Cold War mentalities have proven to be remarkably durable. In fact, several scholars have made the case that the Cold War, and its ensuing logics and frameworks, never really went away (Lowe and Joel, 2012; Zelizer, 2016). All of this suggests that the Cold War produces a distinct sense of temporality whose commemorative implications have yet to be unpacked.

Scope of Memory

Complementing this idea of scale (who is shaping remembrance and at what level) is the idea of scope, which shifts the focus to who or what is included and remembered. Traditionally, war memory practices have focused on the key themes of military heroism and sacrifice. War commemoration can be viewed as "attempts to make good the psychological and physical damages of war" through an engagement with mourning and reparation (Ashplant et. al, 2000, 9). Not all casualties factor into war commemoration in the same way, and military heroism and sacrifice remain privileged with war remembrance. Heroism and sacrifice become twinned together, with the commemoration of war functioning as assertions of military victory and dominance, displays of gratitude to the individuals who fought the conflict, and expressions of grief and mourning to those that lost their lives in the process. Commemoration of war thus involves the maintenance and repetition of gratitude and sacrifice in a way that reminds citizens of past victories and continually renews patriotic faith in the nation. War remains a fundamental part of, in particular, American nationalism, which depends on military sacrifice to legitimize a shared civic religion that unifies the nation (Marvin and Ingle, 1999).

The centrality of military sacrifice and heroism to war memory has been traced back to the commemorative practices of World War I, which focused heavily on naming and remembering the missing war dead. Recording the names of soldiers on monuments, memorials, placards, and in other public, commemorative spaces became a stand in for the absent bodies of fallen soldiers (Laqueur, 1994). This emphasis on naming produced mnemonic practices that were at once both specific and generic, identifying individual soldiers in such a way that still communicated the massive loss of life that took place. Such practices coalesced into the development of Tombs to the Unknown, which simultaneously craft a personal connection ("this could be your husband, father, brother, and son") within a national narrative that positions the unknown soldier as "a hero of the Great War with no known identity except nationality" (Blair, et. al, 2011, p. 460). This focus on the war dead was seen as intrinsic to the development of "war myths" that facilitated continued support for future war efforts (Mosse, 1991), and was a significant source of national unity in the

aftermath of war (Winter, 2006). Scope thus also manifests as a mediation between the individual and the collective, the personal and the national.

These naming and representational practices have carried over into subsequent commemorations of war, oftentimes in a way that combines tropes of both heroism and sacrifice. This is especially true of war monuments and memorials, which have utilized a range of aesthetic practices to communicate themes such as reverence, honor, sacrifice, gratitude and mourning. Such practices can be explicit, such as at the American National World War II Memorial, which features a wide array of classical and symbolic images such as military stars, flags, military stars meant to count the war dead, representations of each U.S. state and bas-reliefs depicting the war effort. On the other side of the spectrum is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which takes a subtler approach that is no less indebted to the aesthetics of sacrifice and mourning. Less explicitly triumphalist, the memorial appears as a "ephemeral civic grave," drawing its potency from its funereal appearance, dark color, and tombstone-like engravings naming the war dead (Senie, 2016, p. 17). This expected scope of national commemoration is, in many ways, intrinsic to the kinds of commemorative norms and expectations that give shape to the war memory landscape.

Numerous scholars suggest that this focus on military loss, which is almost always nested within a national framework, narrows the scope of those groups that become eligible for commemoration and remembrance. Commemorative practices transform war dead into "our war dead," reinforcing binary constructions that privilege the loss of our citizens while erasing causalities experienced by the other side. Nationalism places limits on commemorative practices by dictating who is or is not worthy of mourning and remembrance; for example, commemoration of the Vietnam War problematically excludes the hundred of thousands of Vietnamese citizens who lost their lives in service to the American war effort. An emphasis on scope raises interesting questions about what it means first to contribute to a war effort, and second, what it means to endure violence, suffering and oppression at the hands of that war effort. The current emphasis on military heroism and sacrifice erases the experiences of those who fall outside traditional military roles, and minimizes the damage and destruction that paves a path to victory. Who is

represented within commemorative practices becomes a fundamentally political question about what meanings a society assigns to suffering and trauma.

However, the historically limited scope of war commemoration has, in recent years, prompted interesting commemorative interventions as different groups and actors seek to rectify this perceived imbalance in the monumental and memorial landscape. One of the repercussions of this limited interpretation of sacrifice and heroism is a sense of "anger...in today's memorial culture, particularly in response to conflicted claims over American war memory, hero worship, and foundational histories" (Doss, 2010, p. 316). While contestation has always been a crucial part of commemorative practice, challenges to the scope of mnemonic practice seem particularly energized and visible in the contemporary era. Indeed, one only needs to look at the recent controversy over monuments to the American confederacy to note the way in which such issues remain not only politically salient, but highly charged and culturally relevant.

A manifestation of the ongoing conflict between official and vernacular memory, this dissatisfaction has led different groups to seek out alternative forms of remembrance and commemoration in recent years to fill in these perceived holes in national memory. They are driven by "an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts" (Doss, 2010, p. 2). Issues of identity and the politics of representation remain central as anxieties about being forgotten and the need to be included in national public life "mobilize[s] social groups and activate[s] cultural and political modes of production" as those that feel marginalized seek to mark their place in history (Doss, 2010, p. 15). Cold War commemoration thus emerges at a time in which these vernacular movements are challenging the existing scope of war commemoration in new and interesting ways.

These studies fail to account for unconventional conflicts that are not characterized by explicit military engagement. How do themes of heroism and sacrifice hold up without the battles and engagements that produce both victors and casualties? This is especially important for the study of monuments and memorials, whose aesthetic qualities tend to rely heavily on military

symbolism and traditional representations of mourning and gratitude. What do monuments and memorials look like when they no longer celebrate the victorious or name and honor the dead? Even Tombs of the Unknown, which are designed specifically to exclude naming individuals, are premised on the idea that soldiers, somewhere, lost their lives in service to their country. What resources are left when traditional engagement with these tropes of celebration and sacrifice are off the table? If we accept Doss's premise that commemoration remains more important than ever for the production of both group and national identity, then it makes sense that we need to interrogate how such an unusual, overarching conflict like the Cold War is being remembered.

Again, the nature of the Cold War as a new type of warfare complicates traditional notions of military heroism and sacrifice. In the absence of acknowledged, hot military engagement, how are narratives of both heroism and loss complicated or reconfigured? By extension, how are the traditional trappings of war commemoration, such as stock national imagery, symbols, forms, and other representation tools, imported, transformed, and adapted, if at all? What other new commemorative symbols gain salience in light of this new kind of conflict? Major hot moments of the Cold War era tend to be pulled out of a general Cold War framework and evaluated on their own terms, rarely acknowledging the broader political and cultural contexts at work. For example, though the Vietnam and Korean Wars co-occur with and within the Cold War, they are rarely addressed as Cold War conflicts and are instead considered hot wars in their own right. The Cold War thus becomes tangential to, but not constitutive of, these conflicts. What commemorative connections, if any, occur between these different types of Cold War conflicts?

Further complicating this reliance on military tropes is the way in which Cold War narratives cast all of humankind as Cold War actors. The all-encompassing nature of the conflict emphasized how the Cold War could become hot at any given moment, conscripting citizens of all nations into a battle for survival in the face of a potential nuclear holocaust. The very real threat of nuclear annihilation broadened the scope of who was considered an active participant in the conflict, complicating the usual division between soldier and citizen. How do we make such distinctions when, as dominant political frameworks tell us, our very existence is on the line? How

do we remember a nominally cold conflict that occurred in the long shadow of the most potentially devastating threat to the world?

This dynamic is especially interesting given that, as several scholars have pointed out, the concept of victimhood appears central to understanding the dynamics of post-Cold War mnemonics. Lowe and Joel argue that "victimhood often serves as the glue that binds together the history-memory-identity nexus for Cold War commemorative politics" (2013, p. 6), with narratives of the victors, the vanquished, and the victims running throughout Cold War commemoration. Ashplant et. al situate this emphasis within the broader "transnational discourse of trauma, victimhood, and human rights" that emerged in the mid-1970s and has gained prominence after 1989 (2000, p. 9). What remains to be seen is how Cold War victimhood is defined, contextualized, represented, and made politically useful. Who is a victim? Who is not? How do we represent victimhood in commemorative form, and how might such practices draw on or interact with competing ideas about victimhood, both within and between nations?

Materiality of Memory

While manifestations of war memory are diverse and varied, physical representations of the past in the form of monuments and memorials continue to serve as critical sites of mnemonic practice. Musil's famous declaration that "There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument" (1936 [1987], p. 61) can be taken as both tongue in cheek and as a serious call to arms for scholarship on these commemorative forms. On the one hand, it seems laughable that structures explicitly labeled as monumental could ever be thought of as "invisible." On the other hand, monuments tend to fade into the background over time, appearing as fixed unchanging points in the mnemonic landscape. Yet it is precisely this "invisibility" that scholarship on monuments must complicate.

Key work in this area comes from Nora, who laments that modern society has resorted to establishing physical sites of memory because contemporary life no longer accommodates or promotes memory as a lived experience. Rather, memory has become archival, housed and

segmented into various commemorative trappings that are meant to prompt remembrance in specific ways. Through an examination of monuments, memorials, and other institutional sites of memory in contemporary France, Nora finds that these sites of memory are more likely to promote forgetting by standardizing and naturalizing narratives that call to mind certain details and experiences at the expense of others (1989). National memory thus gains a sense of unity and coherence through the homogenization of more localized memories through their inclusion in these "official" sites and symbols. This understanding suggests that the dominance of official memory over vernacular remembrances persists at the level of monuments, memorials, museums, and other memory institutions as well.

Nor is Nora alone in emphasizing what is lost in an attempt to fix historical narratives in monumental or memorial form. These physical sites of memory have long been viewed as key sites for the formation of national identity, and by extension are a crucial mechanism for building a sense of national identity. Monuments and memorials represent an attempt to "centralize, specify, and impose explicit social messages on public spaces" (Burke, 2006, p. 915). These spaces tend to "naturalize the values, ideals, and laws of the land" (Young, 1993, p. 270), validating a highly constructed version of the past and providing legitimization and justification for the state's actions in the future. These sites also help citizens order and make sense of the nation "by affixing certain words and images to particular places" (Savage, 1991, p. 6). They become conscripted into wider networks of symbols, images, stories, and other commemorative practices that help give citizens a sense of shared national history, which in turn helps to structure contemporary public life. Monuments and memorials thus become important tools for facilitating national historical consensus that can be used by those in power in important and critical ways.

Monuments and memorials present an interesting conundrum for the study of war memory and its materiality. From the outset, it's clear that such forms are a critical form of mnemonic practice. War monuments and memorials are so central to the project of nation building that Piehler is prompted to ask, "Can a modern nation state exist without national rituals and monuments, particularly those memorializing its wars?" (1995, p. 183). Why do monuments

and memorials resonate so strongly? On the one hand, such forms draw much of their presumed power from their ability to represent the past as fixed and stable. On the other hand, the discipline of memory studies has shown that any representation of the past is always in flux, subject to contemporary concerns and challenges. Studies of war memory illustrate that, in reality, this conundrum is really two sides of the same coin. Commemoration draws its strength from appearing to offer a powerful useful interpretation of the past that at the same time attends to present day concerns and contexts. Monuments and memorials in particular embody this kind of mnemonic tension, with their physicality and materiality contributing to their seemingly fixed nature.

This tension between the fixed and the fluid is at the heart of the study of monuments and memorials. This fluidity manifests not only in how monuments and memorials gain new interpretations over time, but also in how these sites can be used and interpreted in unpredictable and unexpected ways. Scholars caution against dismissing monuments and memorials solely as sites that promote official and national narratives and prompt selective forgetting. While it is increasingly popular for critics to dismiss monuments and memorials as being too traditional and discouraging engagement with the past, it is more productive to study how these sites can "invite more interaction" between memory and the public, and can potentially "challenge the status of memory as a knowable object through such engagement" (Gillis, 1994, p. 16). Scholars also need to consider how these official memory sites can "support [alternative] public narratives rather that just simply freezing[ing] the past" (Huyssen, 1995, p 4). In reality, then, monuments and memorials can acquire vibrant public lives through their interactions with different publics and contexts. The study of monuments and memorials involves more than just an examination of what is and is not represented, and the meaning and status of these structures can and do change over time. While monuments and memorials draw much of their power from from their perceived durability and stability overtime, in reality their meaning, reception, circulation, and aesthetics are shifting and fluid.

Even with the advent of new media technologies and mnemonic practices, monuments and memorials continue to resonate strongly within the war memory landscape. In fact, several scholars argue that such technological developments have only increased the relevancy and importance of such memorial forms. Media coverage of monuments and memorials can increase their visibility and allow the public to feel like they are witnessing and participating in commemorative events by viewing dedications and ceremonies and engaging in public dialogue about the past. Monuments and memorials are also increasingly invoked within and by the media to make various political and rhetorical arguments – in other words, they become things that actors and institutions use to speak with.

We can see this in a variety of contexts, such as the toppling of select Lenin and Stalin statues throughout Eastern Europe after 1989, the downing of the Saddam Hussein statue in Firdos Square in 2003, and the recent protests against Confederate monuments and memorials throughout the United States. Second, media increasingly provide the images and symbols that make up the war memorial landscape. Images such as “Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima” by Joe Rosenthal and photographs of the Goddess of Democracy in Tiananmen Square have been translated into monumental form, in large part due to the symbolic status gained through their circulation in the media. Third, monuments and memorials are increasingly constructed with contemporary media practices in mind, featuring components like QR codes and associated hashtags and geolocation identifiers to help visitors share and circulate their memorial experiences. This suggests that monuments and memorials will continue to serve as communicative platforms in ways that extend beyond just their physical form and presence.

Given the centrality of monuments and memorials to war commemoration, an examination of how these forms are being used to remember the Cold War is clearly warranted. In many ways, the central premises of war memory become fused together in the monumental and memorial form. National frameworks, dates, timelines, and other forms of temporal structuring, and a focus on military loss and sacrifice figure heavily into the production of war monuments and memorials, with these premises guiding the commemorative process from start

to finish. If, as I have already established, we need to critically reflect on these premises in order to consider how Cold War mnemonics operate, then, by extension, we need to trouble the various forms that such premises give shape to. An analysis of Cold War monuments and memorials thus provides an ideal window into unsettling these other premises of war memory as well. Furthermore, analyzing such a traditional commemorative form provides insight into the current political and cultural status of monuments and memorials in the contemporary era. Are these forms still suitable for commemoration contemporary conflicts? What, if any, kinds of corrections, additions, or other reconfigurations must the monumental and memorial form undergo to render it suitable for remembering the Cold War? The messiness of the Cold War forces us to grapple with complexities and expectations of war memory that may be glossed over or ignored in studies of more traditional conflict.

Research Design

I take up this call to arms by critically examining what Cold War monuments and memorials can contribute to our understanding of how the Cold War is being commemorated, and what insight this conflict has for understanding the shifting nature of collective memory and commemoration. I examine the practices and patterns of Cold War commemoration in three different national contexts in order to understand the driving impulses, stakes, and outcomes of memorializing such a complicated and contentious era. I utilize an array of qualitative methodologies that allow me to construct the contemporary Cold War commemorative landscape, as well as analyze how, when, by whom and why this landscape is made meaningful.

This dissertation uses a grounded theory approach, which emphasizes using data and analysis to inductively generate theoretical frameworks (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 [2008]). Constitutive of the qualitative turn in the social sciences, Glaser and Strauss argue that the true aim of qualitative research is to generate new concepts and theories through rigorous systematic analysis that is “grounded” in an empirical reality. Charmaz (2006) notes that these theories can often be presented as a story or narrative that emphasizes understanding social and cultural

processes. Grounded theory thus complements “life world” research that seeks to understand practices and experiences in their totality (Hallberg, 2006, p. 141), and as such advocates for the use of multiple sources of data that can be compared and triangulated.

My project is premised on the idea that existing theoretical frameworks of war memory may be insufficient for understanding Cold War mnemonics. Using a grounded theory approach allows me to develop an understanding of Cold War memory that is not necessarily dependent on existing constructs or theories, but is instead grounded in the specifics of the case studies at hand. Drawing on Glaser and Strauss, I see comparative analysis as a “strategic method for generating theory” (1967/2008, 21) in which “every part of data…are constantly compared with all other parts of the data to explore variations similarities, and differences in data” (Hallberg, 2006, p. 143). This approach is “strict enough to be helpful…in exploring the content and meaning of the data” in a systematic way without imposing fixed constraints on the researcher (Hallberg, 2006, p. 143). I utilize comparative analysis at two different levels of this project, including comparison between different national cases studies and comparisons between different types of data. Finally, I extend grounded theory’s focus on life world research to commemoration and memorialization by viewing these processes as ongoing, shifting phenomena that can be traced and analyzed over time. phenomena that can be traced and analyzed over time.

This dissertation applies the principals of grounded theory by triangulating several different methodological tools, including 1) site analysis, 2) semi-structured interviews with commemorative stakeholders and organizations, and 3) the textual analysis of a range of documents produced by organizations and governments associated with the memorials’ development, construction, and maintenance, as well as media coverage of the memorials. Using multiple approaches allows me to gain a comprehensive look at how the Cold War is being commemorated in monumental and memorial form.

Case Selection

This project is comparative in nature, and draws on case studies of three different Cold War memorial projects in three different nations. These sites are the Berlin Wall Memorial in Berlin, Germany, sponsored by the Berlin Wall Foundation; the Last Address Project, implemented by the Memorial Society and located at sites throughout Russia and the Wall of Grief, a memorial sponsored by the Russian government and located in Moscow; and the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington D.C., developed by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. I selected these cases through a series of pilot research projects, and each proved to be a productive site of inquiry into the ebb and flow of Cold War commemorative practices. Taken together, these countries represent a spectrum of Cold War involvement and experiences, with the U.S. representing itself as the pinnacle of democracy and liberalism, while Russia deals with the legacy of Soviet dissolution and the often unacknowledged violence of its past, and Germany attempts to reconcile its divided past and former allegiance to both the winning and losing powers. While these memorials have long legacies and checkered past, all three of these projects gained momentum over the past 15 years, suggesting that there is something about the contemporary era that is adding fuel to the Cold War commemorative fire.

These nations have a major characteristic in common that makes them well suited to this comparative analysis. Germany, Russia, and the U.S. each chose to construct Cold War monuments and memorials that specifically invoke the “victims of communism” as their distinguishing feature. That this trope recurs in so many different commemorative settings suggests that the problematic of victimhood is key to understanding mnemonic practices related to the Cold War. Indeed, Lowe and Joel identify “victimhood” as a key construct in the Cold War memory landscape, and argue that more research is needed to fully understand the dynamic shifts that have characterized the politics of Cold War victimhood since the so-called end of the conflict. Issues such as, who is a victim? What does it mean to be a victim? Who gets to declare who is or is not a victim? How is the concept of victimhood made politically useful? What does it mean to represent victimhood? Who is guilty of inflicting violence on the victim? are all reflected within Cold War commemoration. Each memorial project deploys a different politics of victimhood

that heavily influences the commemorative process itself, as well the memorial's final design and eventual place and circulation in public life.

There are some key differences between these cases that make for a particularly productive for comparative analysis. While the Cold War constituted a major political event for each nation, their respective relationships to the conflict varied greatly. After positioning itself as the de facto leader of free, democratic, and capitalist nations, the U.S. leveraged its self-proclaimed Cold War "victory" to become the primary global superpower, filling a vacuum in international leadership left by the dissolution of a previous bi-polar world. American national Cold War commemoration thus began as a concerted effort by the conservative right to advance the idea that U.S. intervention abroad was prudent and necessary for the maintenance of a free and peaceful world. However, this Cold War triumphalism was met with outcry at home in the U.S. and abroad, complicating the straightforward narrative of victory that such commemorative activities were meant to construct. Russia, on the other hand, has been forced to reckon with its legacy of state violence during the Soviet period, as well as its political, economic, and cultural decline in the post Cold War era. Complicating remembrance of the Soviet Cold War period is the growing popular support for a return to more "traditional" Russian values and politics in an attempt to regain the nation's standing as a leading international player, as evidenced through the rise and continued popularity of Cold Warriors such as Vladimir Putin. Germany, in many ways considered the epicenter of the Cold War, was forced to grapple with both the reconciliation of a divided nation as well as the lingering, unaddressed legacy of the Holocaust in public space and public life. Here, national Cold War remembrance is complicated by the need to balance remembrance of both the National Socialist and GDR eras. Taken together, these nations represent a spectrum of Cold War winners, losers, and those nations stuck in between.

While each memorial project generated significant controversy, the scope and stakes of those controversies were diverse in nature, and manifested in different ways and at different points in the commemorative process. The U.S., Russia, and Germany also have different traditions and cultural practices that drive commemoration in each nation. These differences

allowed me to see how different proximities to the conflict are reflected in the kinds of concerns and issues that each nation emphasizes throughout the commemorative process. Through these cases, I asked, how do such different contexts, traditions, politics, and cultures, lead to the production of memorials that coalesce around the shared trope of victims of communism?

A series of commonalities run throughout each of these case studies. All three of these memorial projects are national in scope, and were developed through a series of partnerships or relationships between each federal government and a non-profit civil society group. Each memorial project is also entwined with other commemorative projects. This entanglement ranges from projects that are envisioned as a "starting point" for future commemorative work, with groups hoping to expand their Cold War work to include museums, special events, and the development of educational resources, to more explicit responses or challenges to other existing commemorative narratives and projects. Each memorial, therefore, provides an entry point into a larger commemorative landscape within each of these countries. All of these memorial projects were controversial, and were covered heavily by the media. Finally, each memorial continued to be used as a rhetorical tool and point of reference by political and civil society actors as well as the media, particularly in discussions of national identity and national memory.

Methodology

While studies of memorials and monuments tend to heavily focus on aesthetics (the artistic, symbolic, and physical qualities of the site) or reception (how such sites are received and perceived), I instead take an institutional approach, centering the organizations, foundations, and institutions that conceptualize, execute, and maintain these sites. By positioning such organizations as explicitly mnemonic actors, I am able to tease out the role that they play in giving shape to this commemorative work. Such a focus reveals the details and decisions, large and small, that ultimately impact the final memorial project. These details can be grand and explicit, such as the establishing of mission statements, open design competitions, and public debates, or small and otherwise invisible – hidden issues of funding, the practicalities of realizing a large

project, requests from governments, or changes in plans. It allows me to track how such sites are evolving in real time to accommodate the shifting needs of the present, and reinvests the study of monuments with something that is too often left out – a focus on the people who conceive them, build them, maintain them, and, sometimes, change them. Reflecting the nature of this mnemonic work, as well as the contemporary need to make their work accessible to audiences beyond national borders, this work drew primarily from English-language source material produced and translated by the foundations under study.

This methodological focus on the organization and foundations further shaped my use of semi-structured interviews and the selection of my corpus of documents for textual analysis. Between 2017 and 2019, I conducted a series of interviews with those who have been involved with these project, including individuals from the organizations tasked with the planning and execution of these memorial projects, as well as academic sources that have consulted on these projects. These contacts were largely obtained through cold-calling or cold-emailing based on information available on each memorial organization's website, as well as through some existing academic connections. Interviews were conducted in-person, over the phone, and via Skype. Interviews were conducted in English, with the exception of one of the interviews with a Russian contact, in which a translator was used. These contacts have proven extremely useful in providing background context and behind-the-scenes information that was otherwise not publically available, and have provided additional contacts for me to pursue. Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, so that they could be tailored to each interviewees expertise and the project they are associated with. These interviews were used to gather more information about these projects and to discuss, verify, and supplement my own reading of the organization's material and the memorials themselves, as well as to solicit opinions and insights about the individual commemorative processes from those directly involved in their development.

I turned to textual analysis as a way to qualitatively and inductively analyze documents produced by the memorial foundations and organizations themselves, planning, regulation, and design documents produced by government entities involved in the oversight or execution of

these project, and media coverage of these various sites. As mentioned earlier, each of these sites is maintained by an organization or foundation. These organizations produce a wide range of documents that seek to raise awareness for the project, raise funds, advance their specific understanding of the event that is to be memorialized, and give the public updates throughout the process. Again, I see this as a reflection of the contemporary needs of commemorative projects, which ask such organization to interact with and respond to, a wide array of other actors and institutions both within and beyond their traditional national boundaries. As will be discussed further in the individual case studies, this ability to extend the reach of this work is seen as a crucial component of modern memorial projects. The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and the Berlin Wall Foundation maintain English versions of their websites, and all offer English versions of these documents and texts. Memorial also offers a decently large amount of their materials in English, but when necessary I used translation tools and services and checked my work with a native speaker. These texts include: press releases, newsletters, online articles, social media profiles, and the organization websites themselves, which host the majority of this public material. Additionally, the websites provide background information and other educational resources about the Cold War, often in highly selective and strategic ways. I also turn to media coverage, both domestic and international, to understand how the public has been receiving these projects, and what kinds of discussions, controversies, and debates they have been provoking. Such coverage was located using key word searches from news databases, as well as from the archive of news stories that I've been building throughout my time working on this project.

This is complemented by reviewing government and organization documents related to the planning, design, and execution of the memorial projects. Such materials are widely accessible online through government databases, as well as through the memorial organizations themselves. These documents include: government authorizations for the memorials; records of government debates and discussion about the memorial projects; funding, location, and design requirements for the memorials; formal calls for design submissions; and designs and submission

narratives for the memorials. Federal documents provide insight into the procedural logistical concerns that underpin the memorializing process, as well as discuss the initial motivation and intended purpose for the memorial. The design calls document how these directives should be interpreted, and the submitted designs show the myriad of ways in which these directives were interpreted by artists and design teams. The written narratives accompanying the visual designs elaborate on the key themes and concerns represented in the memorial submissions, and capture the different threads of discourse that run throughout the memorial project. The U.S. and German government both publish English language versions of these documents through government websites and databases. The Russian government publishes English language versions of official government statements, but it is important to note that unlike the U.S. and Germany, the Russian government has not publically released planning documents associated with the Wall of Grief, in either Russian or English. As such, my corpus of planning documents is smaller for Russia than those of the U.S. and Germany.

I place this textual and interview material in conversation with the sites themselves through the use of site analysis. Blair (2001) has highlighted how important it is for scholars of physical sites of memory to visit these spaces in situ, noting how monuments and memorials are envisioned as bodily experiences. I made three trips to the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington DC during summer and fall of 2017, and spent several weeks in Germany in fall 2017 and summer 2018 visiting the Berlin Wall Memorial, conducting interviews, and visiting related sites. The Wall of Grief and Last Address project were experienced virtually, through the use of images, videos, and mapping sites. By visiting these sites, whether physically or virtually, I was able to assess the material outcomes of the memorializing process, as well as determine to what extent the final product reflects or deviates from different conceptualizations of the project. Which ideas hold up, and which do not? How do the physical elements of these sites reinforce, or, oftentimes, complicate and counter, the explicit and implicit goals laid out in these planning documents and interviews? How do what the sites show us line up with what their planners, designers, and researchers tell us?

Through this research, the different functions of Cold War commemoration in each country begin to take shape. German Cold War memory must grapple with the distinct experiences of east and west, and seeks to order the past in highly structured ways that are rooted in a sense of physical place. In Russia, two competing projects memorialize the victims of political repression in opposing ways, with one seeking openness and transparency and the other seeking to foreclose debate once and for all. Finally, in the U.S., the underdeveloped nature of Cold War memory leads to the dominance of a singular narrative that allows for a self-aggrandizing understanding of the Cold War that poses a serious threat to contemporary politics.

Overview of Chapters

In this introduction, I established the central, yet fraught, relationship that the Cold War has to the study of collective memory, and called for a critical examination of how the Cold War is made manifest at memorial sites. I also articulated the underlying premises of war commemoration that tend to inform such mnemonic work: scale, temporality, scope, and materiality. Finally, I outlined a plan for the analysis of three case studies in Germany, the U.S., and Russia, drawing on site analysis, semi-structured, interviews, and textual analysis, with the goal of understanding the nature of Cold War commemoration today.

The next three chapters look at my three case studies in turn, providing deep background and a close reading of each site that places these memorials in their proper context. Chapter 2 takes up the case of the Berlin Wall Memorial, a project that is carefully navigating the nuanced needs of Germany's mnemonic culture while at the same time seeking to establish itself as the central site for Cold War remembrance in Berlin. Chapter 3 examines dueling memorial projects in Russia, the national Wall of Grief and the scrappy, grassroots Last Address project. By explicitly contrasting these two projects, I illustrate the complicated dynamics of Russia's memorial landscape as local organizers use their memory work as a way to promote greater transparency about the past and the Russian government mobilizes it's own, national forms of commemoration in an attempt to regain control. Chapter 4 turns to the U.S. and the Victims of

Communism Memorial as a site of failed memory, where an organization is so radically preoccupied with the present that it skips the step of commemorating the past in favor of making the Cold War presently and politically useful. I examine how the dearth of Cold War memory in the United States has provided a ripe opportunity for right-wing populist movements to appropriate the Cold War era for their own purposes.

Finally, my conclusion looks comprehensively across these case studies to determine what we know about the current landscape of Cold War commemoration and how it helps us understand commemoration more broadly. It revisits the four premises of war commemoration, assessing how such elements do, or do not, hold up in the present moment. After finding such premises unevenly represented in my case studies, I develop an alternative framework for making sense of the contemporary Cold War memorial landscape, which I call networked memorialization. Using the physical memorial site as a starting point, I offer networked memorialization as a way to think about the complex, interconnected ties that exist within and between these sites. Such networked connections, I argue, are emblematic of the contemporary needs of war commemoration, and made explicitly visible through understandings of Cold War remembrance. I conclude by considering the contributions and limitations of this project by outlining what it adds to the study of collective memory, the Cold War, and memorial sites, as well as considering areas of future research and inquiry.

CHAPTER 2 The Long Shadow of the Wall: The Berlin Wall Memorial and Berlin's Cold War Mnemonic Landscape

Reflecting on the ongoing memory politics of Berlin's cityscape after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Andreas Huyssen describes Berlin as a

> …palimpsest, a disparate city text that is being rewritten while previous text is preserved, traces are restored, erasures documented, all of it resulting in a complex web of historical markers that point to the continuing heterogeneous life of a vital city that is as ambivalent of its built past as it is of its urban future" (Huyssen, 2003, p. 103).

Huyssen offers the concept of the palimpsest as a way to capture the layered, fractured nature of Berlin's mnemonic landscape, and how the city's physical, built environment is inextricably intertwined with its memory politics. Palimpsest calls to mind a city engaged in an ongoing struggle to reconcile a series of prolonged traumatic events, the National Socialist Era and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) dictatorship, with the ongoing needs of a growing and vibrant urban city.

The notion of Berlin as a palimpsest of memory is more than just an analytical term – it manifests as a felt reality built into the city's landscape. Walking around Berlin, one encounters an almost overwhelming excess of memory – at every turn, a new memorial, monument, or memory marker presents itself, confronting visitors and residents alike with symbols and images of Berlin's past. Contributing to this excess of memory is the fact that the same landscape has played host to multiple moments of societal rupture and change, with the same spaces and places representative of multiple moments of upheaval and trauma. Moving throughout the city thus leads to a certain sense of historical whiplash, as one moves between between different events and eras at lightning speed.

On the one hand, this excess of memory has proven extremely useful. More so than many other countries, Germany in general and Berlin in particular have made a real effort to reckon with the traumas of its past, at least when it comes to the legacies of the Nazi and GDR

eras. While this doesn't mean that Germans are willing to take on all aspects of their pasts equally (for example, Germany's colonial legacy is largely left unaddressed in its commemorative culture), there has been a concerted effort to promote public scholarship and public history around these two events in ways that educate the public, provide a space for reflective commemoration, take on complicated understandings of perpetrators, victims, and complicity, and make sense of the long-lasting legacy such traumas have on Germany as a nation.

On the other hand, this excess of memory presents a real problem for Berlin's Cold War commemorative community, comprised of a series of organizations, foundations, and actors who seek to memorialize and document the city's divided past. Questions of how best to reckon with both the Nazi and Cold War eras have led to complicated, ongoing discussions of how the mnemonic landscape of Berlin could be most productively and authentically organized, categorized, and prioritized. Which events are most important? Which locations are most impactful? How should different sites relate to each other? Should the National Socialist and GDR eras be brought into conversation with each other? Mnemonic actors must navigate a tension between making room for as much memory as possible while at the same time organizing that memory in an accessible, logical, and useful way. Making Berlin's landscape legible is more than just an issue of negotiating the past – it's also an issue of economics, with historically-themed tourism motivating the vast majority of tourists who visit the city (Hochmuth, 2017).

In order to resolve this tension, I argue that actors engaged in Cold War commemoration in Berlin repair to a set of key commemorative principles that emerged from attempts to answer these questions in the context of how best to remember the National Socialist era. In particular, I look at how the Beutelsbach Consensus, a series of guidelines that shape how information is conveyed at sites of public memory, and site-specificity, the practice of integrating commemorative projects into authentic locations, emerged as key components of German commemorative culture writ large. These principles were carried over into commemoration of a divided Germany, in ways that remain largely unarticulated but are nevertheless extremely impactful. While the goal of these principles is to maintain control of Berlin's excess of memory by

providing a sense of logic and order to the city's various Cold War sites, in practice what emerges is a decentralized, fractured memory landscape that privileges certain sites and narratives over others, and masks the constructed nature of commemorative work.

In this chapter, I use the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse, considered the most central node in Berlin's Cold War landscape, as a case study to examine what the implementation of these commemorative principles looks like in practice. This analysis is based on interviews with actors working at various memorial sites in Berlin, site visits to the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse and other key sites in Berlin, and an analysis of written material published in print and online by the Berlin Wall Foundation. First, I begin by outlining the general topography of Berlin's post-1989 mnemonic landscape to introduce how the Beutelsbach Consensus and the site specificity came to shape the development of memorial sites across the city. Next, I introduce the contemporary museal context of Berlin by offering an overview of the Cold War memorial landscape in Berlin as it currently stands, highlighting how attempts have been made to organize this excess of memory. I then introduce the specific site of the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse, before illustrating how the tenets of site specificity and the Beutelsbach Consensus manifest within the memorial organization and the site itself, and how such principles enable the kinds of stories the site can and can't tell. Finally, I zoom out by considering what implications such tenets have on the overall representation of Cold War memory in Berlin.

The Commemorative Context: Berlin's Post-1989 Mnemonic Landscape

The immediate onset of the Cold War and the subsequent division of Germany following the end of World War II in 1945 put a hold on memorial projects and official remembrances of the National Socialist era as both West and East Germany dealt with the fallout of these two major back to back societal shifts (Shüler-Springorum, 2018). Though memories of the NS era were strategically mobilized by political actors in a variety of ways, the development of official commemorative memorial and museum spaces largely stalled. As the Cold War continued and Germany remained divided, civil society actors began having burgeoning conversations about

making initial plans for the development of memorial sites throughout the city. Projects such as the ongoing expansion and development of the Checkpoint Charlie Museum and nascent planning for the Topography of Terror began in earnest as mnemonic actors struggled to translate, shape, and make sense of the complicated German mnemonic landscape. Such debates were bound up in the larger educational project of accurately and adequately communicating the past to future generations.

Many of these ongoing concerns are best codified in the controversial Historikerstreit ("historian's quarrel"), a series of heated debates amongst West German German intellectuals during the late 1980s about how best to interpret and represent the National Socialist era. This conflict played out in a variety of forums, including media op-eds, academic publications, and political speeches, and pitted right and left wing intellectuals and politicians against each other. Throughout this dispute, the relationship between the Nazi era and the then-contemporaneous GDR regime remained paramount (Kansteiner, 2006, p. 260). Proponents on the right felt that it was time for Germany to move on from the guilt it felt for the Nazi past. They believed that sufficient time had passed, and that the crimes of the Nazis were no different than those being carried out by the Soviet Union – meaning that the Holocaust was not uniquely atrocious or devastating enough to merit continued guilt and reflection. Opponents on the left, however, argued that Germans needed to actively work against the normalization of the Holocaust, and cautioned against turning the National Socialist era into a point of national pride and identity. Intimately tied to this discussion were concerns about what role commemorating the past serves in contemporary society. Advocates on the right argued that Germany's rich history still deserved to be remembered and glorified, while those on the left felt commemoration should serve as a form of education and be used to reckon with the crimes of the past. While the debate was never concretely resolved, the consistent back and forth in the press significantly raised public consciousness about these issues in a way that is still reverberating throughout German society today (Kansteiner, 2006, p. 258).

The relationship between the National Socialist and Cold War eras remains highly contested, particularly within the commemorative community. From a commemoration standpoint, the influence of the Historikerstreit is most readily seen in the Faulenbach formula, which grappled with similar issues and concerns. The Faulenbach formula has become the governing principal for mediating between what are commonly thought of as "the two dictatorships" of fascism and totalitarianism. The formula was the outcome of a 1991 committee led by historical Bernd Faulenbach that sought to determine how to balance remembrance of the Nazi and Stalinist eras as Sachsenhausen, a site that served both as a concentration camp and a Soviet special camp. The formula argues that "Neither must the Nazi crimes be relativized by the crimes of Stalinism nor the crimes of Stalinism be minimized/trivialized by hinting at the Nazi crimes," defining the relationship as a "permanent balancing act" that must equally respect the victims of each era while also making clear the obvious differences and distinctions between the two dictatorships (Lindenberger, 2011). Though developed in the specific context of Sachsenhausen, the formula remains a definitive component of German memory politics and continues to inform how sites, even those that seek to address only one of these eras, mediate between the two.

In practice, however, there remains a deep ambivalence between the National Socialist and Cold War eras within Berlin's commemorative spaces. For example, while there is almost no attempt within Cold War memorial sites to connect that period with the Nazi era, the curators of such spaces are quick to insist in interviews that they see common threads of democracy, freedom, and "never again" running across both kinds of sites. However, this ambivalence also manifests unevenly, with the National Socialist era granted clear priority. This makes sense given that dealing with the National Socialist era was considered the immediate commemorative priority during the lead up to 1989.

From the mnemonic debates of the late 1970s-early 1990s emerged a series of informal and implicit guidelines that continue to influence the development of commemorative spaces in Berlin to this day. Post-1989, German mnemonic actors such as the federal, state, and city governments and a wide variety of civil society groups were anxious to begin the difficult work of

documenting and memorializing the massive upheavals of late-20th century Germany. The fact that these debates focused on reckoning with the legacy of the National Socialist era means that remembrance of the Cold War in Berlin is, in many ways, heavily shaped by this earlier conflict. These two guidelines, the tradition of site specific commemoration and the Beutelsbach Consensus, continue to play a significant role in shaping Berlin's mnemonic activity.

Synthesizing History: The Beutelsbach Consensus

Developed in response to concerns over how to best educate German schoolchildren about the National Socialist period, the Beutelsbach Consensus (hereafter referred to as "the Consensus") was originally developed in 1976 to guide the teaching of history and civics in the classroom. Given the fractured and contentious nature of the Nationalist Socialist era, parents and administrators wanted to ensure that the period was discussed in a way that was objective, free of partisan or political judgments, and did not cause undue emotional distress (Reinhardt, 2017). Though developed at a West German educational conference held by the Baden-Wurttemberg Agency for Civic Education, the three main tenets of the Consensus were quickly adopted by East German educational institutions as well.

The Consensus outlined three key principles to guide the teaching of history, civics, and politics in the classroom. First is the "prohibition against overwhelming the student," which stated that students should not be ambushed or caught off guard by potentially troubling or difficult information (Reinhardt, 2017, p. 26). Second, the Consensus established that "matters that are controversial in scholarship and political affairs should be presented as controversial in the classroom." In other words, different debates, angles, and opinions should be presented in a way that is fair and equitable. Third and finally, students should "be put in a position to analyze a political situation" from multiple perspectives, including their own (Reinhardt, 2017, p. 26). Building on the first two, this last tenet argues that the goal of engaging with history, politics, and civics should be to provide students with the tools to analyze and form judgments for themselves (Reinhardt, 2017, p. 26). In sum, the Consensus dictates that historical and political information

should be communicated in a way that is fair and objective, presents multiple angles and arguments, and allows students to analyze and form their own opinions.

While the Consensus remains a key educational policy in Germany to this day, it has also been extensively applied outside of the classroom as well. The Consensus has "come to be recognized as the minimum standard for historical and political education in Germany" (Gabowtitsch and Heitzer, 2014), with memorials, museums, and other public historical and political sites falling under that umbrella. The use of the Consensus in this way suggests that memorial and museum spaces are seen, if not exclusively then at least primarily, as educational sites – a suggestion that is very much in line with many of the commemorative practitioners I met with in Germany (Muhle, personal communication, 2018; Busch, personal communication, 2018). This is reiterated by the fact that many practitioners refer to these sites in English as memorial museums, suggesting a seemingly natural twinning between these two concepts.

However, how the Consensus is interpreted within these distinct spaces is the subject of much debate. For example, it's unclear how the Consensus shapes what each memorial site decides to include or exclude – what is considered a fact by one person could easily be considered a slanted or skewed opinion by another. Fulfilling the mandate of the Consensus thus often means including vast amounts of information at a site in order to provide not only the key facts of a situation, but the appropriate context and counterarguments needed to form independent opinions and judgments as well. The logic of using the Consensus to rein in excess is thus turned on its head, as the desire not to overwhelm visitors instead leads to what is often an overwhelming amount of information.

Additionally, the implementation of the Consensus in commemorative spaces has led to the development of hybrid sites that have both memorial and documentary functions. There is a fundamental tension between the tenor of a memorial site, which often features explicit visual and rhetorical cues designed to provoke emotional reactions, and the supposedly objective nature of evidence and documentation. This, too, works against the mandate to not overwhelm as these

sites struggle to accommodate these dual roles. Here, excess of memory is present in the different mnemonic functions the past is meant to perform, as the sites attempt to balance memory's memorial and educational functions. What kind of knowledge and engagement, then, is produced by the interplay between these two goals? As will be explored later, these tensions and ambiguities in the implementation of the Consensus at the Berlin Wall Memorial give rise to a distinct commemorative pattern that shapes the overall representation of the Cold War throughout the site.

Making Use of Place: Site Specific Commemoration

A second, less formal, commemorative tenet to emerge from these debates is a focus on site specific commemoration. This dictates that, when possible, it is preferable to commemorate historical moments at sites that are significantly and appropriately connected to those events, rather than at a neutral or unconnected location. Unlike the Consensus, which was purposefully developed within a distinct institutional context, this tendency towards site specific commemoration was never explicitly codified. Rather, it materialized out of ongoing discussions of how, first, to best represent difficult and contested events that happened in Berlin, and second, how best to make use of the city's historically significant landscape.

The general argument asserts that since so much of Berlin's history is physically manifested throughout the city, commemorative actors should integrate and embed their mnemonic work within these already existing, important locations. It is only when an event cannot be reconciled within Berlin's landscape that alternative sites are considered - though given Berlin's rich history, this is a rare occurrence. Implicit here is that these sites possess a kind of power that can be harnessed in a way that increases the authenticity and gravitas of commemorative projects. In other words, site specificity becomes a way to concretize memory when there is too much of it to go around. It allows for memory to be sorted into distinct locations, based on certain criteria related to place and authenticity. In reality, however, what this leads to is an excess of commemorative sites for visitors to navigate.

A commonality that site specificity shares with the Consensus is that both arose as a way of reckoning with remembrance of the National Socialist era. An early institution in this debate was the Topography of Terror, a memorial museum documenting the crimes of the Nazi regime that is built on the site of the former SS Main Security Offices. Starting in 1978, architectural historian Dieter Hoffman-Axthelm began to advocate for the reclamation of the site, whose original buildings had been razed to the ground beginning in the 1950s. He argued that neglecting the site did a disservice to those who had fallen victim to Nazi terror, and demanded a "confrontation with history" that would make visible the crimes of the Nazi regime by situating them within the physical location from which they were carried out (Wüstenberg, 2017, p. 103). Though the project took several decades to complete and was complicated by ongoing design and financial issues, this commitment to making use of the actual location of the Gestapo headquarters never wavered. As a result, the topography of the current Topography of Terror remains integral to its commemorative function. The site is fully integrated into the project, featuring an open air self-guided tour that invites visitors to reimagine the site as it was during the Nazi era, as well as several preserved ruins.

A similar logic guides many of Berlin's commemorative spaces. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe sits in what used to be the administrative center of the Nazi Regime, while the Allied Museum is currently housed in former army facilities in the American sector (the museum will soon be moved to Templehof, an abandoned airport that served as West Berlin's main lifeline to the rest of the Allied world). Gunter Demnig's Stumbling Stones project has placed over 70,000 plaques to date commemorating the last known residences of victims of Nazi terror throughout Germany, resulting in the world's largest decentralized memorial – one that is concretely tied to the power of place memory. Berlin has long been considered one of the leading cities to engage in dark tourism, where visitors seek out locations and attractions attached to death, suffering, and other misfortunes (Hochmuth, 2018), and such experiences depend on the authenticity of a given site, perceived or otherwise. All of these examples highlight how the city's

urban landscape, its memory politics, and issues of authenticity are seen as inherently intertwined.

A cursory look at Berlin's Cold War memorial landscape makes clear that this preference for site specificity has carried over into the remembrance of a divided Germany. The Checkpoint Charlie Museum is steps from where the infamous border crossing of the same name once stood. The Tränenpalast, a museum documenting border crossings between East and West Germany, is located in the re-purposed arrivals hall of the infamous Fredrichstrase railway station. The Stasi museum can be found on the site of the former grounds of the GDR Ministry for State Security. And of course, the Berlin Wall Memorial stands at Bernauer Strasse, long considered to be the site that best emblematizes the divided Germany.

However, what's not clear is the extent to which this site specificity shapes mnemonic activity. The implementation of site specificity is not without its inherent tensions. Due to the vast scope of the activities of the National Socialist and GDR regimes, there are often several physical locations that could be persuasively seen as "appropriate" for commemorating a given event. This often means that commemorative actors must actively construct their chosen site as the best, most authentic location to remember a given event. Despite this, the practitioners I interviewed often took the relevance and appropriateness of their sites for granted. When asked why Berlin lacked a comprehensive Holocaust museum (a hallmark of many major cities regardless of location), Thomas Lutz, head of the Topography of Terror's Memorial Museums Department, stated that it didn't make sense to build such a museum because "we have so many sites to use" that can tell that story in other, more creative ways (Lutz, personal communication, 2017). Dora Busch, an associate with the Cold War Museum project, similarly asserted that it "makes sense" to locate their new Cold War museum next to Checkpoint Charlie, as the checkpoint represents the most well known international symbol of the era in Berlin (Busch, personal communication, 2018).

Further complicating this approach is the fact that 20th century Berlin was dominated by not one but two events that caused significant social, political, and cultural upheaval. The result is the mnemonic palimpsest referenced by Huyssen (2003) at the outset of this chapter, with many sites playing host to significant events or moments from both the Nationalist Socialist era and the period of German division. Commemorative actors are thus constantly negotiating between two overlapping and related histories, with mixed results. For example, the memorial at Sachsenhausen, a former concentration camp that was later used as a Soviet special camp for political prisoners under the GDR, embraces both of these histories in a way that thoughtfully examines the genesis of the site over time (Heitzer, 2015). On the other end of the spectrum lies the Topography of Terror, whose site is also home to the largest extant strip of the Berlin Wall. The exhibit purposefully declines to integrate the Wall and connections between the National Socialist and GDR eras into its narrative, instead using it primarily as a dramatic backdrop for the Topography's outdoor exhibit (Leoni, 2014).

How, then, do these influential, yet often unarticulated commemorative principles manifest within the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse? The remainder of this chapter directly analyzes the Berlin Wall Memorial and its role as the central node in Berlin's larger General Concept to Remember the Berlin Wall, a commemorative master plan that seeks to memorialize German division across a series of decentralized sites throughout the city. Given that the Berlin Wall Memorial is at the heart of this plan, analyzing the role that the Consensus and site specificity played in shaping its development allows us to consider how, by extension, they fundamentally shape how the Cold War is being commemorated and remembered across Berlin. This case study illustrates how the Consensus and the tradition of site specific commemoration work with and against each other, and articulates a key tension in which the former calls for complete knowledge and documentation while the latter disperses such data across dozens of sites. This ultimately leads to an understanding of Cold War Berlin that is highly fragmented and and that privileges the Berlin Wall in general and the experiences at Bernauer Strasse in particular.

The Museal Context: "The Masterplan to Preserve the Memory of the Berlin Wall"

Before diving into the specificities of the Bernauer Strasse memorial site, it's useful to provide an overview of the larger museal context within which the memorial complex is situated. By museal context, I refer to the formal museum and memorial sites that have been developed as official spaces at which to expressly document and remember the Cold War. These sites perform a commemorative function in that they serve as official spaces at which to engage in remembrance and reflect on the past. While not all sites end up being used in this intended way, such spaces nonetheless represent a formalized attempt to remember, construct, and circulate understandings of the past.

The Cold War mnemonic landscape in Berlin is both rich and complex, with a variety of actors carrying out different kinds of memory work across a variety of themes and platforms. This landscape can be roughly divided into two primary groups – a handful of privately operated museums that tend to focus on daily life and material culture, and a series of public memorial projects that are guided by foundations and focused more on memorialization and the communication of objective historical information. The work of the latter category is largely shaped by a master plan designed to harmonize these Cold War sites in a way that creates a coherent understanding of Berlin's divided past. As described above, this division of labor largely maps onto the ways in which different actors engaged with different aspects of remembering the National Socialist era.

In the early 2000s, the Berlin federal government and the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation held a series of conversations about how best to preserve and make visible the legacy of the Berlin Wall. The outcome of these discussion was the drafting and subsequent approval of the "General Concept for Commemorating the Berlin Wall" by the Berlin Senate in 2006, which marked a significant turning point for the Berlin Wall Memorial specifically and Berlin's Cold War museal landscape more broadly. Authored by Berlin's cultural senator Thomas Flierl in conjunction with a working group, this master plan sought to conceptualize commemoration of the Berlin Wall as a decentralized network of memorial sites located

throughout the city. As detailed by Frank (2016), “three conceptual pillars” formed the basis of Flierl’s plan. These pillars included the preservation of remaining traces of the wall and the avoidance of reconstructions or reenactments; the establishment of a foundation tasked with “strengthening the topographical contexts of meaning” between the decentralized sites while at the same time curating exhibits that communicate the specific details, themes and history of each location, and the expansion of the already existing Berlin Wall Memorial to better meet the concept’s emphasis on preservation, information, and connection between sites (p. 236-237).

Though the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse is by far the largest node within the master plan, the commemorative network laid out in the Master Plan is also comprised of several complementary sites that are designed to speak to different themes and elements of the Wall and the GDR era. In addition to the expansion of the Bernauer Strasse site, the plan sought to preserve existing remains of the Wall elsewhere in the city, curate a series of complementary exhibitions across the city, install memory markers at significant locations related to the Wall, and develop new sites. The ultimate goal is to “make it easier for people to learn about the history of the Berlin Wall by developing sites, websites…and tour routes” (Harrison, 2014).

Though the expansion of Bernauer Strasse was unveiled in 2014, many of the other components of the master plan are still in the process of being designed and executed. Berlin’s official tourism website, visitberlin.de, identifies the following major sites for engaging with memory of the Berlin Wall: The Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse (the central node of the network), the Tränenpalast, the East Side Gallery, the Allied Museum, Checkpoint Charlie, the Ghost Station Exhibition at Nordbahnoff, the Stasi Museum, and the DDR Museum. A review of these projects demonstrates how each individual site fulfills a certain role within the broader master plan. It also reveals some interesting differences in the ownership and execution of these sites.

Several of these sites take the form of more traditional museum spaces, with some operating as public institutions and others as private enterprises. One of the more prominent public sites is the Tränenpalast, a museum focused on border crossing and immigration between East and West Germany. Located in the former border checkpoint at Friedrichstrase train station,

the site was previously used as a nightclub before being repurposed into a museum as a result of the master plan. Such a shift demonstrates the ability of the master plan to bestow legitimacy and authority on a given space. Opened in 2011, the Tränenpalast has been designated a federal memorial site, and contains documents, exhibitions, and oral histories related to the checkpoint and movement between the two Germanys. Similar to the Tränenpalast, the Stasi Museum is focused on telling the story of East Germany's secret police. Described as a memorial and research center, the Stasi Museum is located at the former headquarters for the East German Ministry for State Security. The museum focuses on telling the story of East Germany's repressive political system, with an emphasis on the activities of the Stasi and more the general surveillance of East German society. Common to both of these sites is the elaboration of a specific theme largely though the use of image, narrative, and oral history, as opposed as through physical objects.

Other privately run museums, however, place a greater emphasis on material culture, and are more likely to offer items and artifacts than curated information or primary resources. The Allied Museum focuses instead on the political history of the Allied occupation of Berlin. It contains artifacts related to the Allied experience of occupying Berlin, and focuses heavily on the day-to-day life of Allied forces. Major components of the museum include an old movie theater and an open air exhibition showcasing Allied planes, tanks, and trains. In many ways these major pieces act as stand-ins for each Allied power, with each country being represented by one main object: an American checkpoint tower, a British transport plan, a French train car. Rounding out the museum is a collection of military items and propaganda posters, which are curated around various themes. The DDR Museum and Checkpoint Charlie Museum place a similar emphasis on material culture. The DDR Museum offers an interactive glimpse into the everyday life of East German citizens, providing visitors with the opportunity to take a simulated drive in an original Trabant, tour a recreated East German apartment block, and physically touch a wide range of East German artifacts. The physical museum is complemented by an online object database, which allows anyone with an internet connection to explore the museum's catalogue. In many ways, the DDR Museumberdahl capitalizes on the phenomenon of olstagie, or an increased

nostalgia for East Germany's socialist past. Less about political ideology, this is often seen as a way for East Germans to hold on to their unique lived experiences under the GDR during a time when a reintegrated Germany seeks to minimize or fetishize these experiences (Berdahl, 1999).

Unlike the carefully curated DDR Museum, the Checkpoint Charlie Museum presents a much more haphazard material and cultural history of German division. Formally known as the Mauermuseum, this private collection was one of the only museum sites to become operational during the GDR era. Opened in 1963, the museum relies heavily on objects and relics to tell the story of German division. Particularly popular are the different apparatuses that individuals tried to use to scale the Wall, including a hot air balloon, a chair lift, a mini U-boat, and various getaway cars. These items are accompanied by almost wall to wall text panels that describe the various items and provide and overview of German division. One of the most visited museums in Berlin, the Mauermuseum has recently expanded its work to document other international struggles for human rights. When I visited in 2018, roughly half of the museum focused on the GDR era, and the other half focused on ongoing conflicts in places as diverse as Syria, Russia, and North Korea. One room that stuck out in particular was dedicated to U.S. Republican presidents that held office during the Cold War era, largely though the lens of their physical campaign materials. The result is a confusing mix of past and present, and I left feeling overwhelmed by the sheer quantity and range of information presented.

Other sites offer more abstract takes on the Berlin Wall, eschewing the traditional museum format in favor of alternative platforms. The East Side Gallery, for example, is an open air stretch of the former Wall that has been repurposed into an artistic space meant to celebrate art and freedom of expression during and after the fall of the Wall. It features over 100 murals by different artists, with the murals provide different takes and perspectives on the fall of the Wall, reunification, and the peaceful overcoming of boundaries. Another unconventional site, the Ghost Station exhibition at the Nordbanhoff station at Bernauer Strasse, makes use of an abandoned subway stop to discuss some of the more surreal manifestations of German division. This exhibit documents the stories of "ghost stations," underground subway stations located in East Germany that West German trains would bypass en route to locations in the West Side of the city. In other

words, West German subway trains would often travel under East Germany while on their way to other parts of the city. The exhibit, which was completed in conjunction with the expanded Bernauer Strasse complex, tells the story of these deserted stations, and how these sites both provided West Germans with glimpses into the East and served as popular sites for escape attempts.

These sites and more are brought together under the umbrella of the Berlin Wall Trail, a 160km path that traces the former path of the Wall throughout Berlin. Divided into 14 sections to facilitate trip planning, the Trail is dotted with informational signs, markers, and images that are designed to help visitors better understand how the Wall impacted the city. These informational markers take several forms, including 29 memorial markers detailing locations where individuals died at the Wall, Berlin Mile Markers that help orient your trip, and placards identifying significant events and moments in the Wall's history ("Berlin Wall Trail", 2018). Within the city center the Wall's footprint has been embedded into the ground as a series of parallel lines, making its path even more explicit and noticeable. The Trail also incorporates the various commemorative sites detailed in the master plan. The Trail was designed to complement existing memorial markers and sites, and encourages visitors to explore Berlin's broader cityscape through an engagement with Berlin Wall. However, it's unclear how much the Berlin Wall Trail is used, or how visitors navigate this complex network of sites. Its integration into the busy streets of Berlin make it hard to tell who sets out to purposefully engage with the Trail, and who encounters it as a matter of course in their commute and daily travels.

While the master plan seeks to offer visitors a way to navigate the large variety of Cold War sites in Berlin, what instead emerges is a confusing pastiche of sites that vary in topic, quality, and relevance. Carefully curated public museums such as the Tranenpalast are listed alongside more gameified spaces like the DDR Museum and the overwhelmingly sensory overload of the Mauermuseum. While many of the private museums are more focused on material culture and interactive engagement, the public projects are more likely to combine documentary and memorial functions within the same commemorative space.

While both the pubic and private sites follow the general principle of site specificity, the private sites are less likely to adhere to the tenets of the Consensus. Their focus on material culture seems to present a workaround to the provision that visitors should not be overwhelmed by information. The Allied Museum, the DDR Museum, and the Mauermuseum all feature a large amount of artifacts as their primary way of communicating themes and information. There are two possibilities for these different levels of implementation. First, as private institutions, these sites may feel less beholden to doctrines developed largely for public sites and institutions that make use of government funding. Alternatively, "information" could be primarily thought of as applying to written text. In other words, these sites may consider items of material culture to fall outside the parameters outlined in the Consensus.

At the same time, these principles remain fundamentally important for understanding both the organization of Berlin's memorial landscape as a whole, as well as the information and exhibits that are located within the sites themselves. As will be discussed in further detail, this hodgepodge of sites makes it difficult to ascertain which stories and narratives of the Wall visitors are exposed to, and whether or not they are drawing the intended connections across various sites. And while these different Wall sites across Berlin may vary in terms of content, location, ownership, and scope, it's clear that the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse remains the largest site around which the rest of museal spaces are oriented.

Site Context: The Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse

Site History of the Berlin Wall Memorial

Like many commemorative projects in Berlin, the nascent conceptualization of what is now the Berlin Wall Memorial began as a grassroots effort by individuals with a vested interest in preserving the past. In the wake of its initial breaching on November 9, 1989, Berliners found themselves divided on how to address the remains of the Wall. Some groups "wanted to demolish the wall once and for all…while the other [side] desired its historical preservation for social remembrance" (Sonnevend, 2016, p. 132). Members of the latter camp formed a working group (largely comprised of individuals associated with the Deutsches Historisches Museum), and

targeted the preservation of the stretch of wall remaining at Bernauer Strasse for development. Bernauer Strasse is a location that looms large in the collective memory of Berlin's division. This section of the wall, which ran directly in front of a stretch of residential buildings on the East Berlin side, was the "location of many iconic images" during German division, "such as a defecting border guard bounding over the barbed wire, people jumping from windows to the West, and the dramatic 1985 demolition of the Church of Reconciliation to expand the death strip" (Bach, 2016, p. 52). It also became the location of the first fatality at the hands of the new border regime when Ida Siekermann, a resident on the East Berlin side of the wall, died in an attempt to jump to freedom on August 22, 1961 – a mere eleven days after the first fortifications went up. The Berlin Wall Memorial would later summarize the site as "a focal point of German post-war history" that "illustrates what impact the Berlin Wall had on Berlin, how it destroyed urban space and human lives, and separated family and friends."

Knischewski and Spittler (2006) point out that Bernauer Strasse was by no means the only iconic wall location, and argue that the site was "not the most natural or only possible location" for the memorial (p. 283). They point to other equally prominent wall locations as potential commemorative sites, such the location of the shooting of 18-year-old Peter Fechter at Zimmerstrasse. After being shot in the death strip during an escape attempt, Fechter remained in full view of West German onlookers as he bled out over the course of an hour. That other locations related to the wall loom large in German collective memory problematizes the idea that Bernauer Strasse automatically represents the most "appropriate" location for the memorial – a viewpoint carefully cultivated by the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation. A combination of factors, including sustained activism by a key cast of advocates, diligent outreach and fundraising efforts, and significant buy in by both the German Bundestag and the Berlin Senate contributed to the designation of Bernauer Strasse as the key commemorative site for remembrance of the Berlin Wall (Bach, 2016). The Berlin Wall Memorial would later emerge as the central node in Berlin's memorial landscape, becoming a key site for not only remembering German division, but for articulating and framing broader remembrance of the Cold War era.

The Berlin Senate passed a resolution in 1991 officially establishing the wall at Bernauer Strasse as a memorial site, though it would take until 1998 for a monument to be formally dedicated. The controversial interim between these two events illustrates how Bernauer Strasse remains a particularly potent site of memory. From the outset, the memorial faced opposition on several fronts. The strongest challenge to the memorial came from the Sophien Parish, a Protestant church whose cemetery was confiscated by the East Berlin government to facilitate the building of the death strip. Additional push back came from nearby Lazarus Mental Hospital, which argued that preserving the wall would cause sustained anguish to their patients, and local residents who worried about the impact of a major tourist site in their backyards (Knischewski and Spittler, 2006, p. 283). Parish priest Pfaffer Hildebrandt went so far as to independently arrange for the removal of dozens of remaining sections of the wall in 1997, claiming that mass graves from a WWII bombing campaign continued to be desecrated by their presence. Hildebrandt's position was significantly weakened after a commission determined that no such mass graves existed, and his controversial actions had the opposite effect of convincing many anti-preservationists that a memorial was indeed necessary (Sonnevend, 2016, p. 132). In contrast, another local priest, Pfaffer Mandred Fischer, became one of the memorial's most vocal proponents. Fischer had significant credibility and respect within the local community, as it was his Reconciliation Parish church that had been demolished by the East German government in 1985 – the GDR cited security, order, and cleanliness concerns as justification for the demolition. His adamant opinion that a place for commemoration and reflection was needed was particularly persuasive in convincing local residents that the memorial was necessary.

A compromise was reached with the community, and in 1998 the Berlin Senate passed a new resolution that offered a refined vision for the Berlin Wall Memorial, specifying that the ensemble site would include a monument dedicated to victims of the border regime, a documentation center, and a Chapel of Reconciliation that would memorialize the destroyed Church of Reconciliation and provide a space for spiritual reflection and contemplation. The informal working group coalesced into the official Berlin Wall Association, which was established to oversee the development of the site. Development continued apace through an open designed

competition held in 1994, when ensuing debates about the appropriateness of the design, as well as ongoing land disputes with the Hildebrandt and Sophien parish, stalled initial construction. After much debate, a contract was awarded to the design firm Kohllhoff&Kohllhoff, whose “design called for the integration of the remaining evidence of the original border fortifications at Bernauer Strasse, and sought to reinforce and embellish them through artistic means.” The first component of the site to be completed was the monument, which opened the following year.

Dedicated on August 13, 1998, the monument component of the memorial preserves an original 70-meter long section of the original wall fortification. From the front only a strip of the wall and the top of a guard tower is visible. As visitors approach the monument from the back, they can peer through slots in a wall for a more complete, yet still limited, view of the inner workings of the death strip. An inscription located on the exterior side wall reads, “In memory of the division of the city from August 13, 1961 to November 9, 1989 and in commemoration of the victims of communist tyranny.” In 1999, a documentation center was opened across the street, featuring a curated exhibit about the history of Berlin’s division, and the Chapel of Reconciliation was dedicated in 2000 on the block next to the monument. The final component of this first phase of development was the construction of the viewing platform at the Documentation Center, which gives visitors a bird’s eye view of the monument. The memorial would remain largely unchanged for the next several years until a rival exhibit challenged the efficacy of this initial project.

The installation of Alexandra Hildebrandt’s controversial “Freedom Memorial” next to the private Checkpoint Charlie museum in 2004 demonstrated that the monument at the Berlin Wall Memorial alone could not satisfy the public’s need for official commemoration and remembrance of German division. Comprised of a series of black crosses meant to symbolize all those killed by the communist regime, the memorial drew attention to the continuing and ongoing need to address the legacy of the Berlin Wall in public space. While the memorial was popular with the public, Berlin officials were highly uncomfortable with the unsanctioned memorial, leading to its eventual removal by court order in 2005 after Hildebrandt’s refusal to move the crosses after her lease ran out in 2005. The controversy over the Freedom Memorial indicated that the public had found existing official attempts to be lacking in some way, and suggested that what was missing

from the original monument was an explicit acknowledgment of victims who lost their lives at the wall. By explicitly centering victims in her installation, Hildebrandt drew attention to a key gap in Berlin's museal landscape. The public relations fallout from the controversial memorial led the city government to drastically rethink its official approach to remembering the wall, and its new approach would orient towards remembering the people whose lives were fundamentally altered by the wall.

Site Description: Encountering the Memorial at Bernauer Strasse

Such was the goal of the new master plan. Following the plan's adoption in 2006, an open design competition was held to facilitate the redesign of the memorial at Bernauer Strasse. This was accompanied by the establishment of the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation in 2008, which was tasked with both conceptualizing the Berlin Wall Memorial and facilitating the implementation of the master plan by beginning to form a network of memorial sites throughout the city. This led to a dramatic expansion of the Berlin Wall Memorial. Presently, the memorial complex now totals 1.4km in length, and includes four distinct areas, as well as a Visitor's Center and a Documentation Center. Each area considers a different element of the wall and the border regime, and are designated by different letters. Area A includes the victims' memorial and the physical remains of the Wall, while Area B highlights the destruction of the city, Area C zooms in on building and surveillance of the Wall, and Area D focuses on everyday life and the Wall. The Monument death strip is located between Areas A and B.

Given the length of the Berlin Wall Memorial, it's possible to encounter the complex from a variety of vantage points and approaches. The most conventional entry point, and the one envisioned by the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation, has visitors beginning their experience at the Berlin Wall Visitor's Center at the corner of Bernauer Strasse and Gartenstrasse. At the Visitor's Center, visitors can engage in a variety of orientation activities designed to provide them with the necessary information to productively navigate the sites. Visitors can join regular tours, offered in a variety of languages, or opt for a self guided exploration. Given that the space is completely open to the public, still others opt for tours conducted by private guides. Those touring the complex on their own are offered various maps and brochures and an optional audio tour, again

presented in multiple languages. The Center is also home to a small gift shop featuring trinkets and postcards, as well as printed materials and books about the history of the Berlin Wall and German division.

Once back outside, visitors approach Area A, the main memorial section of the complex. Walking along Bernauer Strasse towards the memorial, visitors encounter a series of thin, evenly spaced, weathered bronze poles lining the street. The poles get progressively taller in height, until they eventually fade into one of the largest remaining outer stretches of the Berlin Wall in the city. The side facing the street remains blank concrete, while the interior is decorated with colorful graffiti. Beyond these poles lies a large, green space that looks almost like a park. Situated within this space are several different components. At the entrance to the complex lies a large replica of a map of Berlin during the 1980s, used to illustrate to visitors how the Wall intersected the cityscape. Running through the middle of the park space is a series of parallel lines and remains, the last remnants of the interior section of the Berlin Wall. This is the visitor's first clue that the area between the outer and inner wall that comprises most of the park is a repurposed death strip, a former no-man's land that has since been reclaimed.

Moving away from the entrance, there lies a series of wall remnants, housed in large wooden beds that make them appear as if part of an archeological dig. These remains include sections of the border defense mechanisms, potential escape tunnels, and other physical vestiges of the Wall. But perhaps the most dominant feature of this first area is the Window of Remembrance, the main memorial component of the complex. A large, rectangular bronze box (the same color as the poles), the Window of Remembrance is dedicated to those who lost their lives at the Wall. It features semi-transparent windows that contain images of the deceased, totaling 140 faces in all. The panes are clear enough to see both the faces of those that died, as well as the preserved, graffiti-covered section of the remaining Wall, creating a particularly powerful visual where the images of the dead appear trapped within the former death strip.

Progressing along the memorial, the visitor next encounters the complex's official monument - the replica death strip. From the front, visitors can only see the preserved outer Wall, with the top of a guard tower barely visible above it. Once they turn the corner, however, they find

themselves behind the inner wall of East Germany's barricades, a desolate, sand covered expanse. Slits in the inner wall allow the visitor to peer into the West German side of the inner wall and death strip, creating a surreal vantage point. Across the street from the monument lies the Documentation Center, a more formal museum space that provides a timeline of East German division and contains a series of primary documents and oral histories related to the Wall. Brightly lit, the space is strikingly curated in whites, reds, and blacks. Visitors can also journey to a roof deck at the top of the Center, which provides them with a bird's eye view of the monument. From this perspective, visitors can gain a comprehensive view of the physical barriers of the border regime. The monument is particularly striking when viewed in conjunction with the surrounding modern cityscape of Berlin. The goal is to have visitors reflect on past and present together, and to consider how the visual landscape has dramatically changed since 1989.

As visitors move along to Area B, the remains of the Wall fade away but the symbolic bronze poles return, marking the Wall's former path along the remainder of the memorial. This next section houses the Chapel of Reconciliation, which was constructed in 2000 as an homage to a church that was demolished during the construction of the Wall. The stated goal of the chapel is to offer a place of commemoration and spiritual reflection. Along the outer stretches of this section, visitors are encouraged to learn the stories of families who had their homes and lives destroyed by the Wall's construction. Markers detailing former addresses correspond to informational placards that describe the houses and their former residents. As in other areas of the site, additional markers identify important physical remains, such as known escape routes and tunnels. This section also contains larger curated exhibits focused on The Reconciliation Church, The Suffering of the People, and Escaping to the West – such exhibits often contain a combination of dense texts and images.

Containing fewer physical structures than other areas, Area C focuses on the mechanics of building the Wall. It features two different exhibition stations, one of which focuses on the development of East German border fortifications from 1961 until 1989 and another that addresses surveillance along the border. These stations are complemented by outlines on the ground showing the location of these various fortifications, as well as another archeological

window showcasing the anti-vehicle obstacles utilized by East Germans. Unlike other areas of the memorial, Area D is embedded in the ongoing redevelopment of Bernauer Strasse, and as such the exhibition is restricted to the Wall's former patrol area and several stations along the sidewalk. Informational stations cover various themes related to everyday life at the Wall, including "The Wall and West Berlin" and "Escape Agents and Tunnel Builders," "The Wall in Politics," "The Cold War and the Media," and "The Western View of the Wall." While these themes seem broad in nature, the large, blown up photographs pasted on the side of buildings as a backdrop betray the continued emphasis on Bernauer Strasse by sharing visuals of the people and buildings that used to fill the area. Moving through the various stations, visitors again encounter stories focused on Bernauer Strasse, interpreting the various themes in the context of the memorial's location. That being said, this newest section is by far more thematically scattered than the others.

And then the memorial ends. Rather than offering a defined end point, Area D transitions somewhat abruptly into a regular, lived in neighborhood. The informational stations, bronze poles, archeological windows, and more disappear as visitors find themselves surrounded by houses, apartment buildings, and a subway stop. Leaving behind the carefully curated spaces, the physical remains, and the overwhelming amount of memory of the memorial complex, visitors are able to leave the past and move back into Berlin's bustling present with shocking ease.

The current iteration of the Berlin Wall Memorial is thus the product of extensive debate and controversy within Berlin's broader memorial landscape. The effect of these debates, including those focused specifically on the Berlin Wall memorial itself as well as those shaping the more general commemorative norms, can be traced within the Memorial site and the vast amounts of information and literature produced by the Foundation that maintains it. Next, I articulate how the traditions of site specific commemoration and the Consensus intertwine with the development of the Berlin Wall memorial to produce a distinct understanding of Berlin's Cold War past.

The Centrality of Bernauer Strasse and Site Specific Commemoration

Complicating this focus on site specific commemoration is the overwhelming size, scope, and omnipresence of the Wall within Berlin. Maintaining fidelity to site specificity while also instituting one place as the largest node in a decentralized mnemonic network necessitates privileging certain Wall locations over others. Establishing the Berlin Wall Memorial as the central site for remembering and commemorating the Cold War in Berlin thus required fashioning a series of underlying premises to justify its selection. First, the Berlin Wall needed to be seen as emblematic of the Cold War conflict more generally. Second, the Wall had to be seen as the primary symbol of a divided Germany, and the main mechanism by which the SED maintained its power. Finally, the site at Bernauer Strasse had to be established as the most appropriate physical location at which to memorialize this division. Throughout their website, press releases, brochures, and other publically available material, the Berlin Wall Memorial takes great care to construct Bernauer Strasse as *the* critical site for understanding the Wall, German division, and the broader Cold War politics of the era.

The Berlin Wall Foundation frames its work as representative of the Cold War era from the outset. According to its mission statement, the Foundation states that its goal is "to document and inform about the history of the Berlin Wall and the exodus from the German Democratic Republic that occurred as part of and under the impact of Germany's division and the East-West conflict in the 20th century." ("Foundation," 2018). This statement suggests that not only is the Berlin Wall a key component of the Cold War, it is also an appropriate case study through which to analyze and consider the conflict as a whole. This orientation is made more explicit in the primary tourist brochure produced by the foundation, which states that the Memorial "tells the history of division for Berlin, Germany, and Europe at an historical site" ("Berlin Wall Memorial," 2017). The importance of the Berlin Wall Memorial is thus in part predicated on situating remembrance and documentation of the the Berlin Wall as an integral part of understanding the Cold War. The foundation retains its specific focus on the wall itself while at the same time broadening its utility as a larger interpretive tool.

This framing is in part successful precisely because the Berlin Wall is one of the most readily identifiable images associated with the Cold War. The construction of the wall transformed the rhetorical Iron Curtain into a material reality, concretizing the narrative construct famously put forth by Winston Churchill in 1946 by replacing words and images with brick and mortar. The Berlin Wall has long served as both a physical platform and a rhetorical, narrative tool from which to advance political agendas. It has been used by not just political leaders, but also by the media and the general public to crafted certain narratives about Germany, division, and the Cold War (Sonnevend, 2016). Events as varied as the Berlin Airlift, speeches by U.S. presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, mass political protests and rallies, and the close coverage of the Wall's fall in 1989 kept the world's attention laser focused on Berlin and the Berlin Wall throughout the Cold War. This point is emphasized nicely by the Foundation's director in "Twenty-Eight Years With and Without the Wall," a publication released in 2008 which contains 56 images of the Wall, one per year for each of the 28 years the Wall stood and the 28 years it's been gone. Foundation Director Axel Klausmeier calls the Wall "the most visible symbol of the Cold War," and highlights how while the Wall shifted and changed overtime, its durability as a Cold War symbol remains constant ("Twenty Eight Years," 2018). The use of a readily familiar trope further elevates the status of the Wall as a key commemorative marker of the Cold War in Berlin.

Beyond framing the Berlin Wall as one of the most important Cold War sites, the Berlin Wall Foundation actively portrays the Wall as the lynchpin of the former East German government and the key to understanding German division. Despite the fact that East Germany was established in 1949, over a decade before the first iteration of the Wall would be built, the Memorial rhetorically resets the moment of division to coincide with the Wall's construction. According to the Memorial's online homepage, "The events that took place here [at Bernauer Strasse], together with the preserved historical remnants and traces of border obstacles on display help to make the history of Germany's division comprehensible to visitors" ("Welcome," 2018). Such language suggests that true division did not begin until the construction of the Wall in 1961, and that the events that follow are most productively understood through the lens of the

Wall. More specifically, Bernauer Strasse is represented as the epicenter of the border regime, establishing the site as the most logical and appropriate location for the Memorial.

Much of this argument is tied to the authentic remains of the border regime that are preserved at the site. In many ways, the Berlin Wall Foundation gains authority and authenticity by rejecting the use of reconstructions on its memorial grounds. Klausmeier links this emphasis on authenticity to notions of trust, stating that

> With a dictum of no reconstruction, we avoid any breaking of the visitor's trust in the authenticity of the place. Should the material witnesses proves to be a fake, this would destroy the credibility of the entire place, and put in question the truth of the place and the truth of its history. (qtd. In Bach, 2016).

However, as Bach later emphasizes, such a perspective masks how such remains are specifically selected, highlighted and preserved. For Bach, then, "the decisive aspect of authenticity is not material fidelity but what that fidelity indexes." He usefully links this to Huyssen's (1997) discussion of the voids of Berlin – urban voids created by war and division, and architectural voids designed to aesthetically echo those urban gaps. As Bach (2016) points out, the memorial at Bernauer Strasse presents "many different versions of the Wall – ruin, abstract representation, hulking realist restoration, subtle archeological trace, [and] spaces between buildings." However, the Foundation attempts to group all of these different versions of the wall under the category of "authentic remains," constructing the memorial's legitimacy as much from these remains as its physical location. Of course, the fact that vestiges of the border remain at Bernauer Strasse is no accident – once the location was approved a memorial site in 1991, a purposeful effort was made to preserve the area as the Wall continued to be deconstructed throughout the rest of the city. The remains may be authentic, but they are by no means naturally occurring.

Other materials shared by the Foundation position engagement with these authentic remains as affording visitors a unique understanding of the SED regime that cannot be replicated elsewhere. For example, the Foundation argues that the Memorial illustrates "how the Berlin Wall functioned as the central element used by the SED dictatorship to secure its power" ("Area A: The Wall", 2018), and offers the site as a place "where school classes and extra-curricular groups can

learn about the Berlin Wall and the history of German division in many different ways" ("Education", 2017). In a different example, The Twenty-Eight Years brochure mentioned above frames itself as presenting "perspectives on German-German identity in the shadow of the Wall…focus[ing] not on political events of history, but instead on largely unknown views and unusual details" ("Twenty-Eight Years", 2018). The Wall thus becomes not just emblematic of the GDR and its effects on German society writ large, but also serves as a lens through which to interpret those experiences. The brochure, and by extension the Foundation, situate the Wall as offering something different than other sites or memorial spaces. The implication is that directly connecting with the physical remains of the past is transformative in a way that other engagements with history, and by extension sites other than this one, are not.

The idea of the Berlin Wall as an interpretive lens becomes even more narrow, with the Foundation describing how it "…uses the situation at Bernauer Strasse to explain the history of division." ("The Memorial," 2017). These two premises thus become intimately intertwined; it is not the just the Berlin Wall, but the Berlin Wall at Bernauer Strasse, that allows for the most productive engagement with Berlin's Cold War past and the history of German division. The introduction to the Memorial's educational materials state that "between 1961 and 1989, Bernauer Strasse was a focal point of Germany's division" ("Education," 2017), and the rest of the Foundation's materials, as well as the site itself, continually reinforce this notion. This involves repeatedly reaffirming the centrality of Bernauer Strasse, as well as continuing to highlight the authentic remains at the memorial site.

The suitability of Bernauer Strasse for commemorating the Cold War is often tied to the presence of the Wall's physical remains at the site. This connection is actively cultivated by the literature produced by the Foundation, as well as in the narratives presented on informational placards throughout the site. For example, when discussing the development of the Memorial within the context of the Masterplan, the Foundation writes that

> "…very few meaningful places were left to convey the history. For this reason in 2006 a "Masterplan to Preserve the Memory of the Berlin Wall" was passed by the Berlin Senate,

> calling for the reinforcement and linking of the various Wall sites in Berlin. Consequently, the memorial on Bernauer Strasse has been established as the central site of commemoration for the victims of the Berlin Wall." ("History of the Memorial," 2017)

The Foundation attempts to do two things with this statement. First, suggesting a dearth of Wall remains throughout the city elevates the authenticity and uniqueness of the remains present at their site. Second, it attempts to naturalize the selection of Bernauer Strasse as the main Wall-related site in Berlin by suggesting that there was no other suitable alternative.

These remains have played a key role in the promotional materials produced by the Foundation. When the expanded complex was opened to the public, the Foundation highlighted that "[t]he newly designed memorial grounds, containing the preserved border fortifications, form the core of the memorial design on Bernauer Strasse," and described how "[t]he permanent exhibition on the former border strip is using the large amounts of original historical remnants as well as the events of Bernauer Strasse to provide information at a historical site about the purpose and function of the Berlin Wall" ("The New Memorial Grounds", 2018). While some of the remains had been featured in the earlier iteration of the memorial, namely those in the preserved death strip that comprises the monument, the preservation of additional remains was seen as an important highlight of the expanded memorial space. "The permanent exhibition on the former border strip uses the large amount of original historical remnants," states an introduction to the new grounds ("The New Memorial Grounds," 2018), while a historical overview of the memorial's development over the years describes how in the latest incarnation, "the existing remains and traces of the Berlin Wall have been preserved, helping to make the dramatic historical events come alive" ("History of the Memorial," 2017).

This emphasis on authentic remains is also evident within the physical layout of the site itself. The first section of the memorial complex, which features the Victims memorial, is dominated by large pieces of the Berlin Wall. Located directly across from the Visitor's Center, this section preserves the remains of the Wall in a variety of different ways. For example, the site is bordered by a large stretch of the outer wall, and the outlines of the various fortifications of the inner wall run directly through the center of the site. Additional aspects of the Wall's fortification

system remain preserved like archeological digs, with raised beds framing the left behind traces of the Wall's presence. In another area of the memorial, large, graffiti-ed sections of the inner wall that have been fenced off are now overgrown with weeds and other wildlife, adding an additional air of untouched authenticity to the site. While the other areas of the memorial feature less physical remains, the authentic ties to the site are still marked and emphasized. For example, Area D, which focuses on everyday life at the Wall, indicates the former locations of escape tunnels, and memorial markers showing the locations where individuals lost their lives at the Wall pepper the site.

This radical focus on the actual site of Bernauer Strasse has an outsized influence on the narratives told throughout the memorial. While there is a general consensus that the Berlin Wall Memorial "explicitly focuses on the victims' perspectives and experiences, [which] it does by personalizing the victims and other contemporary witnesses to the hardships of life in a divided city" (Frank, 2016, p. 250), often ignored is the narrow way in which these stories are told. The story of German division is told almost exclusivity through the lens of Bernauer Strasse, with the people and events that took place along this 1.4km strip coming to stand in for all experiences, encounters, and engagements with the Wall and the border regime across Berlin and across the decades. This is true across a variety of topics and exhibits within the memorial.

From the outset, the memorial is described as "us[ing] the situation at Bernauer Strasse to explain the history of division" ("Berlin Wall Memorial", 2017). For example, a section of the memorial entitled Area B: The Destruction of the City attempts to explain the effect of the Wall on Berlin and the people who lived there. Despite being framed as a focus on the city as a whole, the exhibition instead "specifically tells the story of the people who made Bernauer Strasse famous" through very visual escape attempts and other subversive activities ("Area B: The Destruction," 2017). A similar dynamic is at work in a section labeled Area D: Everyday Life at the Wall, which explicitly states that shows "life at the Wall as told through the lens of Bernauer Strasse" ("Area D: Everyday Life," 2017). Though this focus on Bernauer Strasse seems explicit when laid out here, when combined with how the Foundation constructs the Memorial complex as the key Cold War

site it Berlin, it's clear how visitors could be left with the impression that Bernauer Strasse tells the most important and vital part of Berlin's Cold War story.

In sum, the Foundation prides itself on offering an authentic and accurate representation of Berlin's division and the legacy of the Cold War at Bernauer Strasse, which often stands in for Berlin's Cold War experience as a whole. According to Susannah Muhle, an important member of the memorial's research and curatorial team, the Foundation actively resists reconstructing elements of the Wall, and states that "[w]e don't do reconstruction here, we just show what was left behind" (Muhle, personal communication, 2018). However, the depiction of the Berlin Wall as a "true and authentic" site obscures the highly curated, constructed nature of commemoration, which inevitably involves privileging some stories, artifacts, and spaces over others. As will be illustrated in the next section, this claim to authenticity and this resistance to reconstruction are intimately connected to the core tenets of the Consensus, and are seen as an important way of maintaining objectivity.

Presenting the Past: The Beutelsbach Consensus

In addition to the effects of site specific commemoration, the lingering impact of the Beutelsbach Consensus also affects how the Berlin Wall Memorial has taken shape. Each of the tenets of the Consensus manifests within the memorial in different ways. First, the Foundation tries not to overwhelm visitors by purposefully creating a welcoming, opening space that can be interacted with and used in multiple ways. Second, the idea that there are different debates, angles, and perspectives for an event is most concretely represented in the Documentation Center. Third, the idea that individuals should be able to make up their own minds about historical events can be seen in how an excessive amount of information is embedded within the site itself, as well as in the educational programming offered by the Foundation. However, this emphasis on factual, objective, and desensationalized information does not stop the Foundation or the Memorial from advocating for very specific understandings of the Berlin Wall and its legacy.

First, the Berlin Wall Memorial is purposefully designed to be an opening, welcome place that doesn't overwhelm visitors or provide too stark or controversial a message. Muhle attributes the success of the memorial to its open-ended design, sharing that

> …it's really, it's not such a hammer…'Oooh, that's the Wall and it's pretty bad!' It's like a park, you can walk throughout, and you can get some information if you want to, or you can just take a look at the wall, and speak about it…it's no dominant, so you can do what you want and you can into history as deep as you want. (Muhle, personal communication, 2018)

As a result, the memorial complex is seen as more than just a memorial or a commemorative space – Berliners also use it as an open public space, or a place to read, or a place to hang out. Visitors can self-select the level of engagement they with to have with the materials presented at the site, or they can have no engagement at all. While Muhle stops short of calling the complex a park – she mentions that the commemorative nature of the space dictates that certain 'disrespectful activities' such as playing football or selling wares would be an issue – it's clear that the complex has been at least minimally incorporated into the daily life of the surrounding area. "It's a place that is used by [Berliners]," shares Muhle. "They find the place interesting and they want to use it and work with it." This suggests that the complex is not seen as a particularly somber or reverent place, and that the space is not seen as overwhelming or necessarily emotionally difficult or traumatizing.

This open-ended nature is present throughout the actual curation of the site as well. By offering up different areas that focus on different themes or aspects of the Wall, visitors are able to pick and choose which aspects of the memorial, and by extension the Berlin Wall and the Cold War, that they want to engage with. For example, visitors who want to learn more about the daily lives of the people who lived with the Wall can do so without necessarily confronting the destruction of the city or the numerous deaths that took place there – all this would entail is visiting Area D and skipping Areas B and C. Those that would like to pay their respects to the victims can likewise seek out the Window of Remembrance in Area A without encountering the harshness of the Death Strip featured in the complex's monument. Someone who wants a deep dive into the historical context of the Cold War could spend all of their time at the Documentation

Center without ever visiting the rest of the complex. In the absence of obligatory guided tours or a mandated way of moving through the space, it is up to visitors to decide how they want to engage with the complex and what kind of information they wish to consume. This means that each visitor has a unique encounter with the complex.

The dispersed nature of the memorial complex is not without its drawbacks. Muhle readily admits that the large size of the memorial represents a curatorial problem for the Foundation. Calling it a "challenge for an exhibition," she shares that while visitors can move through the space however they'd like, the Foundation does have an "idealized" experience in mind. This would involve visitors beginning at the visitor's center and moving through Areas A through D in a chronological fashion. However, she acknowledges that

> …visitors can start anywhere. There is no visible starting point or ending point…and it's also a problem, I must confess, because speaking about the orientation of the Memorial grounds, that's a problem. Because not every visitor starts at the visitor's center. If you do so, you get some information, you get a map, you get some information about how to walk and where the central points in the memorial are. The visitor who starts at the memorial grounds and just reads along, they miss some information. (Muhle, personal communication, 2018).

This suggests a tension between the desire of allowing visitors to curate their own experiences and the kind of experience that the Foundation hopes visitors come away with. While the memorial complex is open and flexible in how it can be used, there are lingering concerns that this openness could prevent visitors with engaging with the information they need to make sense of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War – a stated goal of the 2006 Master Plan.

Second, the Berlin Wall Memorial attempts to offer different sides, perspectives, and debates by including a Documentation Center that "is dedicated to the history of Berlin's division…[and] explains the political and historical situation that led to the Wall's construction, its fall, and the reunification of Germany" ("The Documentation Center," 2017). The presence of the Documentation Center within the memorial site itself builds on an interesting tradition within German commemorative culture, where significant sites of memory are transformed into hybrid memorial-museum spaces that serve both a commemorative and informational function. The

Memorial becomes not just a place to commemorate and remember – it is also a place to engage with historical facts and data.

The Documentation Center offers a combination of curated exhibitions and primary source material. In line with the philosophy of the Foundation, the Documentation Center focuses on facts and different perspectives, rather than presenting a distinct argument or interpretation. The permanent exhibition, which is offered in both German and English with interpretative guides available for a dozen other languages, consists primarily of a timeline describing key events from 1945 to 1989. This timeline is complimented by different stations that offer primary sources from that era, usually in the form of original documents or radio or television broadcasts. Unlike the memorial complex, the site is designed in such a way that invites visitors to move through the Documentation Center by following the chronological timeline of events. This implies an attempt to make sure that the visitor is exposed to the relevant historical context needed to make sense of and draw conclusions about the era. However, the presentation of the Documentation Center as objective and factual once again masks the constructed nature of memorial and museum spaces in general. Every exhibition involves selection and omission, and the highlighting of certain aspects at the expense of others. The location of the Documentation Center also complicates this goal of highlighting multiple perspectives. Documentation Center is located across the street from the monument death strip in Area B of the memorial complex. Were visitors to move through each section of the memorial in the order preferred by the Foundation (from A to D), they would have already engaged with several different aspects of the site before encountering the contextual and background information presented in the Documentation Center.

The Foundation also actively seeks to incorporate different ideas and perspectives into its exhibitions through a robust research program that specifically seeks to identify previously unheard voices or experiences concerning the Berlin Wall and a divided Germany. For example, the Foundation supports a Contemporary Witnesses project, arguing that “The experiences of everyone who saw the Berlin Wall go up and who suffered from the division make the history vivid and easier to understand…their memories are preserved in the oral history archive and made

accessible to the public" ("Contemporary Witnesses", 2017). These stories, which include the voices of GDR officials and border guards in addition to those of who lived in proximity to the Wall, are shared through commemorative events, exhibitions and educational workshops, and in various publications. Muhle indicates that the Foundation is trying to grow this project in new and interesting ways, stating that "[the Foundation] can improve a bit, to show different perspectives in history" (Muhle, personal communication, 2018). For example, the Foundation is trying to expand the non-native German voices in its archive, and recently began an effort to document the experiences of Turkish migrants who lived in the Bernauer Strasse neighborhood during the 1970s and 80s. By including a multitude of voices, including those often labeled as perpetrators as well as those that are often left out of other historical narratives, the Foundation presents multiple sides to the history of the Berlin Wall. Additional research projects are focused on collaborating with different institutions across Germany to bring in different perspectives and understandings, particularly of those who lived outside of Berlin and had less routine encounters with the wall.

Finally, building on these two previous tenets, the Foundation makes space for visitors to draw their own conclusions about the history and legacy of the Berlin Wall, both through the information offered at the memorial complex and through its educational programming. One of the most striking features of Areas B through D of the memorial grounds is the overwhelming amount of information that is embedded within the different areas of the site. Each of these areas feature tall placards offering up an abundance of relevant information in accordance with the area's theme. Small, closely space text is used, and each placard offers several long paragraphs of information. While the Foundation describes the Documentation Center as the primary hub for information about the historical and political conditions that that led to the construction and deconstruction of the Wall, these placards re-focus attention once again onto Bernauer Strasse by offering detailed information events that occurred along this stretch of the Wall. The implication here is that visitors are provided opportunities to engage with different types of information, with the goal of drawing their own conclusions about the meaning of the site. As with the rest of the

memorial, the placards are not presented in any specific order, and they are not numbered. Visitors are thus able to consume information at their leisure, and to engage with this information in the way that they best see fit.

The Foundation rounds out its core offerings by providing a slate of educational programming for both children and adults. While the Foundation wants to make sure that groups are exposed to certain aspects of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War, they also make clear that the goal of this programming is to get people thinking about the historical past in a critically engaged way. They advertise using "analytical, creative, and critical methods to address history in [their] seminars" ("Education", 2017). For example, the youth program entitled "Tracing the Past with Cameras" asks students to engage with the Berlin Wall through the lens of a digital camera, where they are encouraged to explore the memorial complex in an attempt to understand the legacy and consequences of the Berlin Wall. Rather than channeling students towards one set of conclusions or understandings, the program argues that it "aims to help the students develop their own perspective on the history of division and its consequences" ("Tracing the Past," 2017).

However, despite this emphasis on critical thinking, objectivity, and open-ended interpretation, the Foundation and the memorial complex place boundaries on the kinds of interpretations and outcomes they'd like visitors to embrace. For example, the Foundation views its work as advancing the tenets of freedom and democracy. This can be seen in a press release announcing the opening of the permanent exhibition at the Documentation Center concludes that the legacy of the Wall shows that "A peaceful, non-violent revolution really is possible!" (Klausmeier and Kufeke, 2014). Klausmeier, the Foundation's director, continues by stating that "We can only hope that the many mostly young visitors to the memorial internalize this message and take it with them when they return home."

When asked about the overall message of the memorial complex, Muhle offered a similar perspective:

> When the Wall came down in the 1990s, I think there was a really big will in society not to do the same mistakes…[the GDR] was a dictatorship, and people were oppressed, and didn't live in freedom. And, I think that's the influence of the message of the memorial…The value of freedom, the value of democracy, the message of take care, take care of humanity. (Muhle, personal communication, 2018)

Like Klausmeier, she leaves some room for interpretation while still advocating for an overarching narrative of peace and freedom. In other words, she hopes that they've provided enough relevant information for visitors to draw these desirable conclusions, stating that "[s]o, we are showing on the one hand, the dictatorship in the east, and the Wall as a consequence of that dictatorship, and on the other hand, we show that this Wall was torn down by the people and that they gained freedom and democracy, and that we have to defend it" (Muhle, personal communication, 2018). She points to an interactive component of the Documentation Center as suggesting that this is the key message that resonates. Muhle describes how the Documentation Center "ha[s] this pilot exhibition, [where] people can write down their messages or scribble little pictures….you can see that these visitors often refer to other borders in the world, or to the values of freedom, so yeah, I think they understand the value of the exhibition."

Conclusion: The Long Shadow of the Wall

While the tenets of the Consensus attempt to shape commemoration in a way that presents multiple perspectives and objective facts, the selective, curated nature of commemorative spaces places a limit on the kinds of interpretations that are likely to be drawn. When combined with the radical specificity of site-specific commemoration, these two unarticulated commemorative norms frame and channel Cold War remembrance in Germany in distinctly bounded ways. Commemorative actors embrace these principles as a way to reckon with the excess of memory in Berlin, and the Consensus and site specificity work together in a way that allows memorials, museums, and similar institutions to systematically bound the memory work performed at these sites.

Site specificity acts as an external organization tool, which allows sites to be sorted and assigned significance in relation to other sites within the commemorative landscape, while the

Consensus works as an internal metric by which organization is presented and organized within the individual sites itself. As illustrated above, these principles are not independent of one another. The information presented at a specific site is heavily dependent on where the site is positioned within this broader network of sites, and what mnemonic role that site is assigned to play. Relatedly, sites are selected in part by considering what information could best be conveyed at that location, and the kinds of stories that can be told there. In the case of the Berlin Wall Memorial, then, the selection of Bernauer Strasse and the ongoing development of the site was dependent on putting the authenticity of the site's location, both in Berlin and within its mnemonic landscape, in conversation with the kinds of narratives that could then be reasonably told based on the history of the site. Such attempts at containment work against the innately messy, malleable nature of memory, where the richness of engagement comes from negotiating the nuances, tangents, and contradictions that emerge as we collectively try to make sense of the past.

We can thus see how these two principles reverberate throughout the broader Cold War landscape in Berlin. Both tenets are also represented in the decentralized, nodal nature of the Masterplan that continues to govern the development of Cold War development in Berlin. At its core, the Masterplan serves to decentralize commemoration of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War by housing information and remembrance activities within different, place-specific sites. While the main goal of this plan is to make sure that different aspects of the era are remembered at the sites deemed most appropriate, this segmentation has the added effect of dispersing information throughout the city. This prevents visitors from being overwhelmed by too much information at any given site, and theoretically allows for visitors to obtain the necessary context for understanding these sites and their history. This allows for a greater array of perspectives and insights, and seemingly should encourage visitors to draw connections and interpretations within and between sites in a way that promotes critical engagement and thinking. However, how this network is actually navigated by visitors remains up for grabs.

At the same time, the Berlin Wall Memorial also fails to entirely contain the excess of memory that permeates its subject matter; in other words, while the goal of the memorial is to contain, categorize, and organize memory of the Berlin Wall, it's not wholly successful in realizing its ambition, and memory continues to runneth over. Issues of excess run throughout the memorial complex – the Wall is presented in a dazzling number of forms: as architectural remains, as a symbolic aesthetic art object, as a preserved structure, as a recreation. The complex contains a diverse array of structures and features, including a visitor's center, a documentation center, viewing platform, several memorials, a chapel, an art installation, a monument, and numerous exhibitions, as well as dozens of additional commemorative markers. The exhibitions themselves contain a dizzying array of information, both textual and visual. These diverse offerings prompt visitors to shift between a variety of physical and emotional states, and asks them to engage with the past in different ways: as educational, as memorial, as visual, as aesthetic. All of this is represented in the sheer size and scope of the complex, which has ballooned to almost 1.5 km in size in an attempt to encompass the many varied aspects of remembering the Berlin Wall at Bernauer Strasse.

This privileging of the Wall and its "authentic" remains exposes and exacerbates a larger issue with the decentralized nature of the Masterplan. Just as the Berlin Wall Memorial does not know exactly how visitors to the site move throughout the various areas and spaces, it is impossible to know how individuals encounter (or not) the various memorial sites that make up the Masterplan. There is an almost infinite number of ways that one could move within and through the different components of Berlin's Cold War landscape. Furthermore, there is no indication that visitors understand how or when to draw connections between different sites and events, almost always ensuring an incomplete picture of the historical circumstances and contexts that shaped the era.

Thus lies the fundamental tension between site specific commemoration and the kind of comprehensive, factual approach enshrined within the Beutelsbach Consensus. The Consensus argues that true understanding and engagement with the past comes through an encounter with

necessary facts, information, and debates. This suggests that a comprehensive picture of the Berlin Wall and its relationship to German division as well as Cold War politics is both desired and necessary. Meanwhile, the decentralized nature of the Masterplan assigns different themes and events related to the Berlin Wall and Cold War to specific sites, essentially segmenting and housing information in separate locations. As a result, obtaining the kind of knowledge envisioned by the Beutelsbach Consensus requires that an individual encounter all the different nodes of the memorial network – an extraordinarily time consuming and potentially expensive endeavor. Furthermore, simply visiting the sites is not enough – visitors would need to engage with all aspects of each site, as well as draw important connections within and between different exhibitions. Finally, neither accomplishes its task of reining in Berlin's excess of memory. Instead, efforts to fulfill these two tenets has left the Berlin Wall Memorial overcrowded as the site attempts to, first, remain neutral through the provision of large amounts of information, and, second, to craft itself as the authoritative site for remembering the Wall by trying to encompass all its different structures and meanings.

While a discussion of exactly how different visitors encounter the various components of the Berlin Wall Masterplan is beyond the scope of this chapter, we can get an idea of the scope and scale of undertaking a trek through this dispersed network. Available throughout Berlin are brochures labeled "The Berlin Mauer Guide," which compiles information about the various ways one can encounter the Berlin Wall throughout the city. The most recent incarnation of this guide features no fewer than 12 attractions, including an espionage museum, the DDR Museum, underground tours that take you "beneath the Wall," the Transenpalast, and a large, surreal panorama of the border area ("Berliner Mauer Guide," 2018). This combination of professionally curated sites and campy, less serious experiences are assigned numbers to correspond with their location on a provided map. The order and selection of the attractions seems to follow no discernible logic or reason – the Berlin Wall Memorial itself, nominally the largest and most vibrant Berlin Wall site, only ranks as number five on the list.

However, the Berlin Wall Memorial complex casts a long shadow as the largest and most visible node within the Masterplan, complicating this desire for spreading information and experiences throughout the city. As illustrated above, the Foundation has made a concerted effort to situate the Memorial as the key site in Berlin for understanding German division, the Cold War, and the Berlin Wall. Data collected by Berlin's tourism office supports this assertion, showing that both domestic and international visitors to Berlin are more likely to visit the Berlin Wall Memorial than any other Cold War site in Berlin. As a result, the perspectives and orientations offered at this site tend to dominate the rest of this decentralized network, privileging the events at Bernauer Strasse over those dotted throughout other parts of the city. This makes sense when we take into account the other remains of the Wall that dominate Berlin's physical landscape. The Wall plays an outsized role in Cold War remembrance largely because, taken together, its remains constitute the largest physical historical site in Berlin.

The development of Cold War memory sites in Berlin is therefore the product of a complex series of negotiations that are guided by a series of interrelated external and internal logics. Taken together, these logics give shape to Berlin's broader Cold War mnemonic landscape. On the surface, the implementation of the principles presents as a useful tool to organize the overwhelming excess of memory that permeates the city by making memory easier to encounter and navigate. However, as this case study has shown, repairing to both the Consensus and the principle of site specificity constructs limitations and boundaries on how the story of a divided Germany can be told. In favoring an approach aimed at making different sites legible in clearly categorized ways, visitors encountering these sites are presented with a neat and orderly understanding of history that fails to represent the messy, overlapping, and complicated realities that characterize contemporary Berlin. Underlying this work is an implicit assumption about how the foundations and organizations tasked with producing and maintaining these sites see their role in Germany's ongoing memory scape. Their role becomes one of sorting through the excess of memory within Berlin, and packaging up that memory into easily digestible, easily locatable segments that can be encountered in an organized and logical way.

In other words, by focusing on making the Cold War mnemonic landscape legible through the organization, categorization, and prioritization of sites, commemorative actors essentially seek to undo the mnemonic palimpsest that so clearly dominates Berlin's cityscape. Rather than embracing the complexity and interconnectedness of Berlin's past traumas, the memorial landscape of Berlin instead tries to round out the bumpy, unpredictable nature of memory by segmenting out the past. This approach forecloses consideration of key questions – about the relationship between the Nazi and GDR eras, about the complex everyday politics of negotiating a divided Berlin, about the relationship between Berlin and the rest of the Cold War conflict, about how key characteristics of the GDR era are related to each other – that remain vital to understanding the complexities of the era. What is ultimately lost, then, is how different components of Berlin's past are related to each other, and how the relationships between different events and eras continue to shape the ongoing development of the city and its memory politics.

In conclusion, the centrality of site-specific commemoration and the importance of the Beutelsbach Consensus that emerged during discussions of addressing the National Socialist era continue to shape Cold War commemoration in Berlin to this day. This manifests most concretely in the commemorative dominance of the Berlin Wall Memorial, whose centrality within Berlin's Cold War mnemonic landscapes prompts many of Berlin's visitors to understand a divided Germany, as well as the Cold War more broadly, through a lens shaped by engagement with the Berlin Wall itself. Narratives and remembrance of the Berlin Wall thus come to overwhelm Cold War memory in Berlin. While this is by no means an attempt to downplay the overwhelming and traumatic impact the Wall had on Berlin, it is a call to consider whether remembering via encounters with the Wall represents the most productive way of engaging with Berlin's complicated past.

So what exactly is left out by this radical focus on the Berlin Wall? For starters, while the impact of the Wall was most readily felt by Berliners, the larger divide between East and West that it represents reverberated far beyond just the city. Emphasizing the Wall thus masks

important events and influences outside of Berlin that came to bear on a divided Germany. Focusing on the Wall also naturally privileges narratives related to security, enforcement, and the division of families, leaving out alternative ways of thinking about the impact of division on the city – for example, through the lens of cultural production, changing economic circumstances, or shifting gender roles and identity politics. This radical focus on the Wall thus allows for a presentation of unity in understanding, masking the messiness of the on-the-ground realities that many Berliners experienced. While the Berlin Wall did indeed serve as one of the main physical and visual symbols of the Cold War, the grand geopolitical scale at which the Cold War unfolded means that much of its impact and continued impact
cannot be tied to one physical space or site, making it hard to integrate these larger international narratives into Berlin's mnemonic spaces. Finally, as much as the Foundation hopes that visitors will come away with a larger message about the power of freedom, democracy, and the power of the people, the radical specificity of the Berlin Wall can make its destruction seem highly idiosyncratic in nature, and difficult to connect to other events and contexts. This can make it hard to see important continuities between past and present events that could both inform and be informed by understandings of the Berlin Wall. For example, tracing the impact of the National Socialist era on the rise of the GDR, or drawing connections between reunification and the reemergence of nationalist political parties in Germany.

That isn't to say that this mnemonic landscape remains static or concrete. A new Cold War museum project is currently underway that may disrupt business as usual within Berlin's commemorative culture. This museum, which will be located next to the Mauerhaus at Checkpoint Charlie and is currently being shown as a small proto-type black box exhibit, is presented as a way of filing in perceived gaps in Berlin's Cold War memory. The museum is meant to zoom out of Berlin's local context, and the goal of the exhibition is to connect the events in Berlin to the national and international dynamics of the broader Cold War conflict (Busch, personal communication, 2018). Dora Busch, an associate with this new museum project, states that they want to curate an exhibit that allows people to understand how events in Berlin, long seen as the center of the Cold War, spiral outward into international conflicts in the Middle East,

Latin America, and beyond. “One of the main ideas”, she shares, “is to connect it all…to promote a greater understanding of our larger part in the Cold War.” The museum thus takes an opposite approach to that of other Cold War projects in Berlin by crafting an overarching project that is not tied to a specific space or event and that has a distinct objective and point of view. How such a project can come up against the long shadow of the Berlin Wall remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 3 The Wall and the Window: Remembering the Victims of Political Repression in Russia

Reflecting on the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Katherine Verdery writes that the transition from post socialist societies "is a problem of reorganization on a cosmic scale, and it involves the redefinition of virtually everything, including morality, social relations, and basic meanings. It means a reordering of people's entire meaningful worlds" (1999, p. 35). In post-Soviet Russia, memory and history have emerged as two key sites for the battle of Russia's future as political leaders have sought to reorganize the past in a way that consolidates political power and cultivates a strong sense of Russian national identity and patriotism (Khazanov, 2008). However, political leaders have often chosen to distance themselves from remembrance of the Cold War era, reaching further back into Russia's past as they seek to establish the nation's future. This represents an attempt to move on from both the failures of the Soviet system and its perceived "loss" of the Cold War (Koposov, 2017).

The bypassing of the Cold War era, and the repressions that occurred in support of maintaining Soviet power, was not necessarily a given. When Gorbachev initiated a policy of glasnost ("openness") near the end of the 1980s, "one of the topics of greatest interest to both the media and the intelligentsia turned out to be recent national history" and "[r]evelations about Stalinist purges and the brutality of collectivization" came to dominate public discourse (Smith, 2002). The Gorbachev administration began efforts to make more information about the actions of the Soviet government readily available, and it is within this era of intense interest that organizations focused on commemorating the victims of the repressions began to form. For the first time, emboldened by new laws promising freedom of expression, victims and their families began to tell their stories, and the actions of the Soviet regime in service of its Cold War politics began to be questioned (Khazanov, 2008).

However, this policy of governmental openness proved to be short lived. As the Yeltsin regime took power after the Soviet Union's formal dissolution in 1991, it developed a very different kind of memory politics designed to bypass the Cold War era altogether. This shift in focus was an attempt to delegitimize the last remnants of the communist regime by reaching

further back to Russia's pre-Soviet history as a source of strength and validation. Instead of reckoning with decades of complicated Soviet history, then, Yeltsin and his administration instead developed an ambitious series of commemorative activities that glorified the pre-Soviet past. These activities included reshaping the national commemorative calendar to include days celebrating the Bolshevik Revolution and victory in WWII and recasting Moscow's monumental landscape in a way that emphasized Russia's military and cultural achievements (Smith, 2002).

Kathleen Smith describes Yeltsin's overall approach as one that attempted to depoliticize the recent past; although he could not ignore the information that came to light during Gorbachev's period of glasnost, Yeltsin instead "urged a nonpartisan reckoning with painfully divisive episodes" that encouraged the public to move on from the traumatic events of the past by refocusing the state's historical lens (Smith, 2002). This was largely an attempt to promote social consensus through selective amnesia; as Michael Kammen notes, "amnesia [has often] emerged as a bonding agent far preferable to memory" (1991, p.44). If Yeltsin favored depoliticizing controversial aspects of the past, his successor Vladimir Putin instead elected to avoid such divisive memories altogether, as will be explored in greater detail below.

This failure to engage with memory of the Cold War and the Soviet era is by no means unique. As Jan Werner-Muller notes in 2002, "it almost appears as if now for us the entire period had become a frozen bloc between the end of the Second World War and the 'return of history', a meaningless distraction or even a communist tale told by an idiot" (2002, 11). He argues that with the end of the Cold War, which for so long had been the dominant framework through which both past and present were viewed, the pre-Cold War past was freed up for reevaluation, reconsideration, and reintegration into national memory cultures. As such, many nations looked backward, beyond the Cold War era, as a resource for rethinking and reorganizing their new post-Cold War existence. Muller further mused that "whether or not this period, and its memories, can be unfrozen remains to be seen – it might take another generational interval of forty years before our present returns as a past both present and unfrozen" (2002, 12).

In Russia, this unfreezing is underway in large part due to the work of actors seeking recognition for the victims of Soviet political repressions. Despite efforts by both the Yeltsin and

Putin administrations to redirect Russia's historical attentions away from the Soviet era, the devastating revelations from Gorbachev's glasnost never really went away. The political repressions represent one of the most concrete ways in which the larger politics of the Cold War trickled down into Russian society (Forest, Johnson, and Till, 2006), with the repressions largely justified as being "in the service of the state" and the broader ideological goals of the Soviet Union. For Soviet citizens, then, the Cold War as a conflict has been largely presented as a battle for the well-being, maintenance, and expansion of the Soviet way of life. Any evaluation of Russian memory of the Cold War is therefore inextricably bound up with remembrance of the Soviet era as a whole, which has come to be dominated by remembrance of Soviet political repressions. As such, the primary way in which the Russian public has come to engage with Cold War memory has been through the lens of the Soviet political repressions that came to dominate the lived experiences of those who lived through the Cold War era.

In this chapter, I outline how two very different memorial projects represent opposing ideas about the scope and scale of mnemonic work in Russia. This analysis is drawn from interviews with actors involved in both projects, an analysis of written and digital materials produced by the Memory Fund and Memorial as well as a discussion of the memorial sites' aesthetic qualities, and it draws insight from additional sources such as polling data and media coverage. The Wall of Grief, a large national monument in Moscow, attempts to foreclose conversation by offering an official, state-centric narrative that focuses on telling a large-scale, macro-level story that forgoes individual experiences in order to foster shared, nationalistic understandings of the past. This stands in stark relief to the Last Address project, a grassroots memorialization effort which instead uses a highly personalized and individualized approach designed to create mnemonic communities that critically and reflectively engage with the past and add nuance and texture to the legacy of Soviet repressions. These two approaches coexist within a contemporary Russian cultural and political climate that is still trying to reconcile Putin's nationalistic and propagandistic uses of history with lived experiences.

I begin by offering an overview of the Russian mnemonic landscape, focusing on how remembrance of the Cold War era in Russia is dominated by a struggle between the big

geopolitical realities of the time and the trauma of the violence brought about by the Soviet political repressions. Next, I introduce and detail the histories of the Last Address Project and the Wall of Grief, before comparing and contrasting these different approaches to commemorating political repression in Russia. I conclude by considering what these two projects can tell us about Russia's fractured mnemonic landscape, and how, rather than working in opposition, the two projects coexist in ways that occupy different but complementary commemorative roles.

The Russian Mnemonic Landscape

In the absence of official state recognition and commemoration of the victims of Soviet political repression and state-sponsored violence, grassroots organizations and artists have played a major role in creating and maintaining memorial and monumental spaces that attempt to grapple with this legacy. Perhaps the most visible and influential organization doing work in this space is Memorial, an international historical and civil rights society whose national chapter is based in Russia. Founded in 1989, Memorial works across Russia and the former Soviet states to achieve three major goals, including 1) promoting civil society and democratic development to prevent a return to totalitarianism; 2) raising awareness about the value of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; and 3) preserving, documenting, and sharing the truth about Russia's totalitarian past and perpetuating the memory of the victims of political repression ("What is Memorial", 2018). These activities were geared towards helping survivors the Gulag and political violence move forward and rebuild their lives. In terms of creating a site of memory, Memorial's initial goal was to create a museum and public archive space, this idea was ultimately shelved due to a lack of funding and the logistical difficulties of working with the Russian state. Today, its mission is carried out through a variety of activities, including maintaining archives related to the Soviet era, working with museums and other sites to create exhibits, developing educational materials, and monitoring and publicizing ongoing human rights violations in Russia. It often partners with other domestic and international human rights groups, as well as with historians and journalists, to help advance its goals.

Memorial has a long, contentious relationship with the Russian government, and is often subjected to government surveillance crackdowns, intimidation, and arrests. The government has repeatedly accused Memorial of trying to destabilize Russia's political regime and influence public opinion, and in 2014 declared the organization a "foreign agent" ("Russia Censures Memorial", 2015). Such a label is often used to undermine the work of organizations that have international funding and support, and to foment suspicion of such groups amongst the Russian public. Foreign agents are required to submit to federal audits, and are often charged with large fines for failing to comply with official orders or for engaging in "suspect" political work. In some cases, the government has explicitly targeted Memorial's mnemonic work. For example, in December 2008, Russian officials conducted an armed search of the organization's St. Petersburg office, confiscating documents, oral histories, digitized transcripts and more (Harding, 2008). The documents were to be used to create an online database related to the Soviet repressions (a project Memorial would continue to engage in, and ultimately successfully realize).

Similar raids have occurred on and off over the years, as has the repeated vandalism and intimidation of Memorial offices tasked with overseeing human rights abuses – a local observer associated with Memorial's work in Chechnya was murdered under suspicious circumstances (Lokshina, 2018), and its North Caucuses office was torched in a still unsolved act of arson in 2018 ("Arsonists Torch Memorial," 2018). Several Memorial officials have also been charged with what the organization claims are trumped up charges designed to discredit its influence and leadership. For example, Oyub Titiyev, head of the Chechnyan office, was arrested on drug charges in early 2018 (Vasilyeva, 2019), and Yuri Dmitriev, head of the Karelia chapter, spent almost two years in prison before pornography charges brought against him by the government were eventually dismissed (Coynash, 2018).

Memorial has also played an active role in establishing local memorials to the victims of political repression across Russia, with local chapters working within different communities to erect an assortment of commemorative markers. This work dates back to the founding of local Memorial chapters across Russia beginning in 1988, and is a natural extension of its focus on assisting victims of political repressions in rebuilding their lives. While each chapter approaches

memorialization in ways that are best suited to the local context, there was an overarching belief that victims' monuments were a crucial component of documenting and remembering Soviet crimes (White, 1995). Other sources of grassroots memorials included crosses erected by the Russian Orthodox Church, which often featured the names of victims as well as engraved symbols and signs that captured the history of Soviet repression (Bogumil et. al, 2015).

Smaller artistic and museum projects have also stepped in to acknowledge the victims of the repressions. One of the most striking and well-known of these public art pieces is the Mikhail Shemyakin's sphinx in St. Petersburg. Himself a victim of the repressions, Shemyakin's monument features a large, dark-colored sphinx along the banks of the Robespierre River. Its face is divided into two parts – the side that faces the city is a normal human face, while the other side features a decomposing, skull like visage. The decomposing side faces Kresty Prison, which was infamously where many prisoners bound for the Gulag began their journeys. In a more contemporary example, in 2019 Russian street artist Zoom created an interactive exhibit next to the Gulag History Museum in Moscow featuring the portraits of ten famous Russian artists who were victims of the repressions ("10 Artists Who Were Victims," 2019). The portraits appear hidden until they are wet, and visitors are invited to spray the apparently empty wall with water to reveal the portraits. This interactive experience gestures towards the role that current generations play in either masking or revealing the events of the past.

Long before a state-sponsored monument was established, Memorial continued to lobby for a more formal commemorative space to remember the victims of political repression. It made inroads towards this goal in 1990 with the installation of the Solovetsky Stone in Moscow's Lubyanka Square. The stone was taken from the Solovetsky Islands, home to the Solovki prison camp – one of the most notorious sites in the Soviet Gulag Prison system. Memorial activists shepherded the stone across Russia, eventually depositing it in a park facing the former headquarters of the NKDV internal ministry and the KGB state security forces. The park itself has been a site of controversy, and formerly housed a monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Soviet secret police. While the statue was pulled down by a crowd of citizens in 1991, there is occasional talk of reinstating it (Maynes, 2020). The Solovetsky monument was officially opened

on October 30, 1990 – a date that would later be repurposed for the official Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Political Repression in 1991. A second Solovetsky Stone was installed in St. Petersburg in 2002.

For many years, the Solovetsky Stone played a central role in the commemoration of the victims of political repression, with Memorial partnering with like-minded organizations to orient a series of mnemonic activities around the Stone. For the past 12 years, Memorial has hosted an annual "Returning of the Names" ceremony on October 29th, in which members of the public read aloud the names of victims from 10am until 10pm. This powerful ceremony is purposefully held the day before the official Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repression in order to draw attention to the Russian government's lack of acknowledgement for victims. The event has since grown to incorporate the reading of names in other cities around the world (Gershkovich, 2018).

While not an officially sanctioned event, the Reading of Names has largely been ignored by the Russian government until 2018. In the past, Memorial would obtain an official permit for the event that allowed them to hold such a gathering, but otherwise held the event independent of any official state involvement. However, in 2018, officials initially refused to issue a permit, claiming ongoing "repair and construction work that is threatening to daily life activities" in the area (Kishkovsky, 2018), instead suggesting that Memorial move its ceremony to the recently opened, state-sponsored Wall of Grief monument nearby. After several meetings with federal officials and a public outcry, in which the state was accused of trying to coopt the event for its own purposes by drawing attention to its new monument and new interest in commemorating the repressions, a permit for the event to remain at the Solovetsky Stone location was eventually issued (Gerskovich, 2018).

As the above anecdote illustrates, the Russian government has recently attempted to play a larger role in shaping Russia's mnemonic landscape around the remembrance of victims of Soviet repression. This has been accomplished through the coordination of the State Policy Concept for Perpetuating the Memory of the Victims of Political Repression in August 2015 (hereafter referred to as the "State Concept"). The State Concept came on the heels of Russia's

new “Foundations for a New State Cultural Policy” in 2014, which aimed to codify Putin’s conservative cultural turn into official government guidelines. This new policy established three key tenets. First, it positioned Russia as a unique civilization and people, arguing that state cultural policy should advance and preserve “Russian ideas and values”; second, state cultural policy was established as instrumentalist and educational in nature; and third, because of the two points listed above, the state needed to play an active role in the cultural sphere (Jonson, 2019, 18-19) – including those issues related to memory.

The announcement of the State Concept came somewhat as a surprise, given the state’s historical reluctance to engage with the issue of political repressions. The policy stated that “Russia cannot fully become a state where there is the rule of law and occupy a leading role in the world community without immortalizing the memory of many millions of our people who were the victims of mass repressions,” and thus “the denunciation of the ideology of political terror” was listed as one of its primary objectives (Nechepurenko, 2015). Many interpreted this language as the Russian state using memory of the repressions to advance its own political agenda – for example, seeking to create firmer distinctions between the repressions of the past and ongoing government attempts to limit civil rights and liberties by visibly and publicly denouncing the former.

Somewhat ironically, the state turned to Memorial, which worked alongside Russia’s Human Rights Council to help shape the State Policy Concept, although this collaboration does not seem to have quelled tensions between the state and the organization. The goal of the Concept is to it is planned to create museum-memorial complexes and thematic expositions on the history of political repression, develop textbooks and educational programs, create databases, publish books, magazines and audiovisual products, carry out a number of research projects, hold conferences, seminars” and more by 2017, a year that corresponds to the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the 80th anniversary of 1937, when Stalin’s repressions are assumed to have reached their peak (“On the approval of the concept,” 2015). Much of the work was coordinated through the Gulag History Museum, an institution originally

founded by historian Anton Vladimirovich Antonov-Ovseenko in 2001 and re-opened in October 2015 after a large state-supported expansion ("History and Mission," 2019). The Foundation "Perpetuating the Memory of Victims of Political Repressions" was founded through the Gulag Museum the following year to fund and implement the Concept. Known colloquially as the Memory Fund, both the Wall of Grief and Last Address would go on to benefit from funds raised by the group.

While the Memory Fund's first project was to support the construction of the Wall of Grief, it continues to support other projects related to commemorating the repressions. It does so through the financial support of Russian corporations and individual giving, as well as limited support from the state. In particular, the Fund launched a massive fundraising and awareness campaign in 2016 to solicit funds for the development of the Wall of Grief. The campaign featured online ads, billboards, several press conferences, and a text-to-donate campaign that allowed the public to donate via text message. The Fund continues to collect individual donations via its website. The corporate and state funds for the organization are much harder to trace, as the organization does not publicly share a donor list or annual budget. It does, however, list partnerships with a wide selection of organizations and business on its website, although it remains unclear whether these companies provide outright financial support in addition to services and collaboration.

The Fund lists several levels of partnership, including general partners, official partners, information partners, and partners. Its main general partner is Sberbank, a state-owned Russian banking and financial services company and the largest bank in Russia and Eastern Europe. Sberbank has always maintained a close relationship with the federal government, and in recent years has faced backlash over accusations of money laundering and illegally funding Ukrainian rebels during the Crimean conflict. The fund's official partners are the Cultural Initiatives Foundation, a charity founded by Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov to fund cultural projects in Russia, and Norlisk Nickel, a Russian mining company famous for its poor environmental practices. Prokhorov supports many causes linked to the liberal Russian opposition, and his work,

as well as that of his foundation, is considered an “acceptably” liberal activity. They also partner with other organizations, such as Memorial, who are engaged in mnemonic and cultural work.

Its information partners include several Russian newspapers and news aggregators, as well as research institutions such as the Higher School of Economics and a public polling firm. Its general partners, the communications firm Cros and accountants Grant Thorton, provide media and operational services for the organization. In sum, a wide array of organizations and companies partner with the Fund, presumably for a variety of reasons. Some, like Sberbank and Norlisk, may be hoping to rehabilitate their images in the wake of well-publicized scandals. For others, such as the Cultural Initiative Fund, the work of the Fund is very much in line with the kind of work already being done. Still others, particularly the information partners, are more likely to act as collaborators than direct funders, collaborating with the Fund on a variety of media and research projects.

Other ongoing projects by the Fund include the Studio of Visual Anthropology at the Gulag Museum, which features archival materials related to the repressions; a volunteer center that provides resources for those who lived through the repressions; the creation of the Association of Russian Museums of Memory, which links together institutions around Russia to help preserve historical memory of the repressions; and the creation of a documentation center and virtual historical materials (“Projects, 2019”). The Memory Fund has also been involved in sponsoring speaker and film events at a variety of Russian museums through the Association of Russian Museums of Memory, and has worked with universities and other academic institutions to hold workshops and meetings on topics related to the repressions. The Fund seeks to bring a sense of coherence to Russia’s otherwise fractured mnemonic landscape, although, as the diversity of projects and undertakings listed above illustrates, a clear picture of its work and direction has yet to emerge. In addition to the aforementioned opaqueness surrounding its financing, other questions continue to linger about the political motivations behind the establishment of the fund, and what kinds of relationships it will continue to negotiate with the state, local organizations, and transnational partners.

As it currently stands, the work of the Fund seems focused on signal boosting work being done by other organizations, and the construction of the Wall of Grief remains one of the few projects it conceptualized from start to finish. Aside from the revamped Gulag Museum, the Wall of Grief is also the only Fund-related project to be explicitly national in scope and focus. Reception to the State Concept and the Memory Fund has so far been mixed. While some supporters enthusiastically support state contributions to commemorating the victims of Soviet repressions, critics are concerned that this is simply a move to placate the public and other organizations that spent years agitating for historical truth and recognition (Parkhomenko, 2019). The Fund has been established as an independent entity not strictly under state control, and its board is comprised of a mix of government officials and representatives of prominent historical and civil society groups – including Memorial ("About the Fund", 2019). It will be interesting to see how the work of the Fund continues to shape Russia's mnemonic landscape, whether or not the influence of the state will be more readily felt, and what role the Fund might play in structuring how Russians relate to their past. For example, it remains to be seen whether or not the state is content to let the Fund support the ongoing efforts of these smaller organizations, or whether it will use this new commemorative platform to assert its own interpretations of the past.

Polling conducted by the Levada Center, an independent, non-governmental Russian research organization that routinely measures public opinion in Russia across a variety of topics, helps to chart the uneven relationship the Russian public has to its Soviet past, and in particular its relationship to Stalin and political repressions. The Center was more recently in the news for its April 2019 poll on perceptions of Stalin, which found that 70% of the Russian public had either entirely or mostly positive opinions of Stalin's role in Russian history ("Stalin's Perception", 2019). Despite these positive opinions, however, the poll illustrated that Russians remain heavily divided on whether the rapid development brought about during the Stalinist era justifies the "human cost borne by the Soviet people," with 46% believing that the the suffering was definitely or to some extent justified, 45% stating that it cannot be justified in any way, and 9% displaying mixed or uncertain feelings ("Stalin's Perception", 2019). This suggests that for

many people, respect for Stalin as a leader does not necessarily translate into approval of his actions or policies.

The picture gets even more complicated when these findings are put in conversation with two other recent surveys, one from January 2019 focused on "National Identity and Pride" and another from February 2018 centered on "Pride and Patriotism." In both polls, Russians identified "Russia's past/history" as a key source of national pride, and over half of all Russian citizens think of the past when asked what they think of first when asked about Russia – and numbers in both cases are strongest amongst ethnic Russians. Not surprisingly, WWII (known as the Great Patriotic War) dominates as the event of which Russians are proudest, with 87% of Russians indicating as such ("National Identity and Pride", 2019). When asked what events they are most ashamed of, the two top responses were ongoing poverty and disorder (61%), and the collapse of the USSR (45%). The Soviet political repressions ranked low on the list at number six, with only one-fifth of Russians identifying the repressions as particularly shameful.

That the past looms so large in Russian formulations of national identity and pride is no accident, as "Russian state leaders and the country's military and bureaucratic classes have [sought to] become the main drivers of the country's national discourse and policy about its past" (Kolesnikov, 2017, 1). Over the past decade, and building on the work of his predecessor Yeltsin, Putin has sought to introduce what he has called a "thousand-year history" of Russia, which takes a long view of Russia's historical development and emphasizes "glorious" victories above all else – up to and including the annexation of Crimea (Kolesnikov, 2017). However, Putin has primarily focused his attentions on one key event –the Great Patriotic War. This "cult of war" myth was carefully cultivated by Putin and his associates as a mnemonic strategy to lessen the memory of suffering under the Soviet system by instead crafting a narrative focused on the Soviet Union's victory over fascism and Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union is portrayed as a savior that rescued the Western world from an evil regime, and as such "any crimes committed in the name of this global victory are considered justified" (Khapaeva, 2016). The myth has the added effect of minimizing the trauma of the victims of political repressions by positioning them as a necessary, if unfortunate, consequence of Stalin's policies that ultimately led the country to victory. The state

has advanced this understanding of the past in everything from political speeches to state-produced textbooks.

Longitudinal data show that the recent uptick in feelings of Russian nationalism and patriotism, as well as increased approval of its Stalinist past, represent a significant shift in attitudes over the past decade. Beginning in 2011 and lasting until approximately 2013, Russian attitudes towards the Stalinist past, as well as feelings of national pride and patriotism, actually reached historic lows. For example, only 21% of respondents indicated respect for Stalin in 2012, a full 20 points lower than today ("Stalin's Perception", 2019). In 2013, only 70% of Russians stated that they were proud to live in Russia, which is especially striking given that this number had otherwise hovered in the mid-80s since 2006 ("Pride and Patriotism", 2018). Such feelings corresponded with a skepticism towards Russia's role in the world. In 2011, the number of Russians who felt Russia was a superpower dropped to just 47%, the lowest percentage since 2006 and a far cry from today, when 75% of the Russian public consider their nation to be a superpower ("Pride and Patriotism", 2018).

The period from 2011 to 2013 can be seen as a critical demarcation point in Russian public opinion, where feelings of Russian pride and nationalism were steadily declining, and skepticism towards the Stalinist past was at its highest. This period represents a particularly volatile time in contemporary Russia, with Russians experiencing a high level of political and economic instability coupled with the implementation of more hardline, conservative cultural policies. Like much of the rest of the world, Russia was still reeling from the fallout of the 2008-2009 economic recession, with its dependence on oil and gas making it particularly vulnerable (Gaddy and Ickes, 2013). Both the 2011 legislative election and 2012 presidential election were marred by controversy and accusations of fraud, tampering, foreign interference, and political intimidation (Schwirtz and Herszenhorn, 2011). Dissatisfaction with the electoral process, as well as harsh crackdowns on protest activities and political freedoms by newly-reelected president Vladimir Putin, led to some of the largest protests Russia had seen since the early 1990s (Barry, 2011; Barry, 2013). Putin's return to the presidential office also marked a turn towards more hardline conservative cultural policies (Koposov, 2017). High profile events such as the arrests

and subsequent prosecution of the activist punk group Pussy Riot in 2012 and the ongoing debate over Russian history textbooks (which were accused of revising and aggrandizing Russian history in an overtly nationalistic and propagandistic way) continued to damage perceptions of the Russian government both at home and abroad (i.e. Denber, 2012).

However, beginning in 2014, these trends in public opinion began to reverse, with Russia's past being increasingly seen in a positive light as feelings of patriotism and national pride continue to grow to the record highs documented today. On the heels of ongoing political protests in Ukraine following its 2013 elections, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in a move that was widely condemned by the international community. The annexation was largely seen as a way to quell the ongoing protests at home by leveraging this international criticism to rally the Russian people against Western interference (Khrushcheva, 2019). In doing so, the Putin government put forth the concept of the "Russian World," an old Soviet idea that emphasized the shared cultural and political community to which all Russians, no matter where they were, belonged. Part of Putin's call to make patriotism the "consolidating base" of his government policy, this approach saw the Kremlin mobilize around neo-imperialist ideals and the continued threat of Western overreach to unify the Russian people (Zevelev, 2016).

That the past can be mobilized in the service of national unity and cohesion after periods of unrest is nothing new. Indeed, much has been written on how shared memory is a fundamental component of nation building. Benedict Anderson argues that nations are built on a shared sense of history and identity (Anderson, 1983), while Ernst Renan noted that a nation is shaped both by what it remembers and what it forgets (Renan, 1882). Furthermore, war and conflict have been identified as a particularly powerful way to reenergize these shared memories, and channel them into feelings of patriotism and national pride (Marvin and Ingle, 1999). In other words, Putin's invocation of remembrance of Western overreach and interference during the Cold War has far less potency without the concrete example of Crimea to concretize it. By drawing attention to shared feelings of victimization and persecution, he helps to obscure other attendant concerns from that era, such as political repression and economic strife. Collective memory can thus be mobilized and anchored in a multiplicity of ways. While not a new phenomenon, this example

illustrates how state actors and official narratives continue to have an outsized influence on how the past is made meaningful.

As global outrage about the annexation mounted, support for Putin, as well as positive attitudes towards Stalinism and Russian nationalism, grew. While Putin's approval ratings waned in the 60s throughout 2012 and 2013, they skyrocketed to a high of 89% in 2015 ("Indicators", 2019). Immediately after the annexation of Crimea, the percentage of Russians who stated they were proud to live in Russia jumped an astounding 16 points from the previous year, from 70% to 86%, a record high ("Pride and Patriotism," 2018). This was accompanied by an eighteen-point increase in those who feel Russia is a global super power, from 47% to 65% ("National Identity and Pride", 2019), and gradually increasing positive opinions about Russia's past. When asked about the fairness of Western critique towards Russia's actions in Ukraine, a whopping 79% appraised these views negatively, stating that the shared "commonality of Western countries' opinions on Russia's policies towards Ukraine" testified to the "aspirations of the USA and the West to suppress Russia and to weaken its influence in the world."

One factor that remains consistent across the years is the salience of the Russian past in making sense of Russian identity. When asked, "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about your people," the response "Our past, our history" is routinely the most popular answer – most recently, 53% of Russians identified this as their top response ("National Identity and Pride", 2019). The only time this response has not taken the top spot was in 2012, during the period of aforementioned turmoil, and in 2015, immediately after the annexation of Crimea. In 2012, most respondents selected that they were most likely to think of "The place where I was born and grew up," suggesting that during this period, respondents were most likely to think about their personal experiences rather than the experiences of the nation. While one might expect that a focus on "our history and our past" to explode in the wake of the annexation, it's important to note that one of the potential responses was "Our land, the territory on which we live." Given the territorial nature of the Crimean conflict, it is less surprising that it was this response that dominated in 2015 – with "our history, our past" following closely behind.

The annexation of Crimea quickly came to be seen as a significant event in Russia's historical trajectory. Crimea's annexation was first included in the Levada Center's question about "Which events and phenomenon [in Russian history] make you proud" in 2017, and quickly became the third most popular response, trailing only the Great Patriotic War and Russia's role in space exploration. Far and away, Russia's contributions to World War II remain the most significant historical event in Russian collective memory, with 87% of respondents selecting "Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945" as the event in Russian History of which they are proudest, suggesting that the Putin administration's reframing of the event as a landmark even in Russian history has been at least somewhat successful.

While history remains a key source of national identity and pride, the events of the Soviet era and the Cold War in particular are not often identified as sources of national pride. Only two responses related to that era made the list in 2018 – 32% of respondents take pride in the Soviet Union as a leading industrial power, while 14% indicated that the classless social system of the USSR merited recognition ("Pride and Patriotism", 2018). Nothing related to the Stalinist era in particular makes the list. In a separate survey from 2017 focused on the Stalinist purges of the mid to late 1930s, the proportion of people who unequivocally identified the period as "a time of mass terror" dropped to just 41%, down from 53% in 2007 and 58% in 2000 ("Great Terror", 2017). While the number of people who had somewhat positive views of the purges, identifying them as either being over exaggerated or as dealing primarily with enemies of the people, has stayed relatively constant (18% and 17% in 2000 and 2017, respectively), the number of individuals with ambivalent feelings about the era has steadily increased, with 20% of respondents stating it is "difficult to say" how they view the purges, up from 11% in 2000 and 16% in 2007 ("Great Terror", 2017). This uptick in ambivalence suggests that while people are less likely to outright condemn the era of Great Terror, they are not necessarily ready to see it in a positive light either.

Corresponding to this shift in attitudes about the Stalinist era is a steady decline in support for commemorating the purges and its victims in Russia. While support for creating victims' monuments and memorials has remained relatively stable (with 70% support in 2011 and

68% support in 2017), approval of other kinds of commemorative activities has decreased dramatically. For example, the number of people in favor of recognizing Stalin's purges as a governmental crime has dropped a full 12 points, from 52% in 2011 to 52% in 2017, and endorsement of a law prohibiting the naming of streets and buildings after perpetrators of the repressions dropped from 53% in 2011 to 45% in 2017. This suggests that while the Russian public is broadly in favor of remembering Stalin's victims in some form, it stops short of supporting actions that seek to criminalize or otherwise acknowledge governmental complicity in the repressions. Such responses are very much in line with the stance taken by the state, which has historically avoided assigning individual blame for the repressions or taking formal responsibility for the actions of the Soviet government.

Not surprisingly, such opinions vary heavily according to whether the respondent does or does not have family members who were victims of the Stalinist repressions. Those who have family members who were victims were more likely to label the era as a time of mass terror than those without victims in their family (54% and 41% respectively) ("Great Terror", 2017). Those with victims in their family also exhibited the lowest level of ambivalence, while those who were unsure if they had victims in their family were more likely to be ambivalent or unsure of how they viewed the era (13% and 30%, respectively). The question of victimhood also heavily impacts how respondents orient towards commemorative activities designed to mark or acknowledge Stalin's victims. While 80% of victims' families support the creation of monuments and memorials in their honor, only 66% of those without victims in their family and 62% of those who are unsure of their family's status do so ("Great Terror", 2017). Victims' families also showed far more support for recognizing the purges as a governmental crime, providing support for survivors, declassifying records related to the repressions, and renaming streets and buildings that bear the names of perpetrators of the repressions.

As the above data suggests, Russia's relationship to its Cold War and Stalinist pasts is fluid, changing in response to a variety of contemporary political, economic, and cultural shifts. Perceptions of the past also impact and are impacted by shifting feelings of patriotism, nationalism, and national identity. While internal political, cultural, and economic turmoil led to

less positive perceptions of Russia and the past from 2011-2013, an upswing in Russian national identity and pride followed the annexation of Crimea in 2014. This was coupled with attempts by the Putin regime to foster patriotic sentiments by reintroducing the concept of "the Russian World" – the idea, developed in the early 2000s, that the Russian people, no matter where they are, are a unique group eternally bound by a shared sense of history and culture (Arutunyan, 2016; Gorham, 2019). While history continues to be one of the most salient components of Russian national identity, feelings towards the Cold War and Stalinist eras in particular are far from constant, with surveys suggesting that attitudes towards the repression and violence of the era are gradually becoming less negative. Finally, and not surprisingly, how Russians feel about the Stalinist era, as well as their attitudes towards commemorating that period, are heavily affected by their proximity to the events and whether they consider their family to have been victimized.

It is within this complicated milieu that the Last Address Project and the Wall of Grief were conceived and executed. Both represent attempts to intervene in and give shape to Russia's memorial landscape, with Last Address seeking to carve out space for the individual victims of the repression to be acknowledged and understood, and the Wall of Grief representing the Russian state's first official monumental engagement with that era. Next, I introduce the origins and genesis of each project, before more explicitly contrasting the different approaches each takes to commemorating the victims of political repressions.

Background: Last Address

The Last Address project was originally conceived by Sergei Parkhomenko, a Russian journalist and civic activist, in 2013. Parkhomenko had long been preoccupied by what he saw as collective apathy towards remembering the Soviet repressions. He describes how

> …for most Russians, those millions of victims are nothing but cold statistics. Few people care to pore over the difficult and unpleasant questions. The state doesn't need to make any special effort to perpetuate this. All it needs to do is…make sure they aren't helped in trying to understand how it came about, or in coming to terms with unspoken feelings of collective guilt. This is how a totalitarian mindset can reproduce itself. (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019).

For Parkhomenko, thoughtful commemoration and remembrance of the repressions are intimately tied to the ongoing project of civic and democratic activism in Russia. He sees engaging with this past as an important intervention in Russia's contemporary political climate, where the government has waffled in its official acknowledgement and engagement with this aspect of Russia's past.

After spending time in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, Parkhomenko drew inspiration from Gunter Demnig's Stumbling Stones, widely considered to be the largest decentralized memorial in the world. Developed in 1992, the Stumbling Stones (known as Stolpersteine in German) are small bronze plaques that are engraved with the name, date of birth, and date of death of victims of the Nazi regime. The plaques are attached to concrete cobblestones and inserted into the pavement at the last known location of the deceased individual. Initially, the project faced backlash on several fronts. Criticisms included residents who were reluctant to have stones installed near their properties (Apel, 2014), concerns that the Stones might attract neo-Nazi activity (Vorrath, 2009), and protestations from those who felt it was sacrilege to walk across the names of the deceased. (Goebel, 2010). These days, however, the Stumbling Stones are seen as largely uncontroversial, and the laying of new stones is frequently accompanied by local media attention and acclaim. To date more than 70,000 stones have been placed across more than 1,200 cities and towns across Europe and Russia (Apperly, 2019).

After returning from a trip to the Frankfurt Book Fair, Parkhomenko convened a workshop of likeminded journalists, activists, and artists in December 2013 to discuss the possibility of adapting the premise of the Stumbling Stones for the Russian context. At this workshop, approximately 50 participants developed an outline for what would become the Last Address project, sketching out a preliminary organizational structure and application process. A quick design competition was also held at this time, with the workshop unanimously selecting a metal, rectangular design with an inset window by renowned Russian designer and architect Aleksander Brodsky. The next few months were devoted to setting up the infrastructure needed to accept and review applications, publicizing the project, and producing the first set of plaques. The inaugural

Last Address plaques were placed in Moscow on December 10, 2014, with the launch of the project designed to coincide with International Human Rights Day.

While initial funding for the project was raised via the Russian crowdfunding platform Planeta, the Last Address foundation has since stabilized its funding through a variety of revenue streams. In addition to the 4000 ruble ($60) application fee, Last Address accepts small, individual donations from the public. It has also received several large gifts from major donors, many of whom wish to remain anonymous. The organization has also received support from a handful of Russian foundations, including the Foundation of National Memory; ironically, though this foundation was initially formed to provide private financing for the Wall of Grief, it later shifted to supporting Last Address after the competition of that project. Last Address receives no government funding. The organization's operating budget remains relatively small, with an annual budget of approximately 10 million rubles ($150,000) a year. While a small portion of the budget is dedicated to administrative costs such as application processing and website maintenance, the majority of funds are directed towards supporting the research process to verify victims and providing small stipends for activists who work to obtain permission to install the plaques at various locations.

The adaptation of the Stumbling Stones to the Russian mnemonic context exemplifies some of the key tenets of transnational memory culture, which posits that national memory projects are linked to the flows of transnational debates about how traumatic events should be remembered (Huyssen, 2003). Mnemonic actors do not work in isolation from one another; rather, they are constantly working within these transnational flows, and the forms and content of Holocaust commemoration have emerged as arguably the most visible and most replicated mnemonic tropes within this system. However, Huyssen cautions that the transference of such tropes is not without consequences, reminding us that "the emergence of the Holocaust as a universal trope allows [it] to latch on to to specific local situations that are historically distant and politically distant from the original event" (Huyssen, 2003, p. 24). In other words, while there is a tendency to use the Holocaust as the primary lens through which to interpret traumatic events, a reliance on such tropes can also work to block out other important, more localized memories.

While articulating how transnational memory culture intersects with local projects is necessary to understand how these projects take shape, it is equally important to chart how local actors are adapting, updating, and rethinking such forms to meet their unique needs and contexts.

The Last Address project shares many commonalities with Denmig's Stumbling Stones, although the projects are not officially affiliated and Last Address is not an exact copy of this earlier work. Both projects rely on the public to generate new names for commemoration, and applicants must pay a fee that helps cover the cost of producing the final product. Each project seeks to be international in scope, drawing connections between shared traumas across national borders. On a commemorative level, both make use of space and place to make visible a sense of absence. By placing markers for individual victims at their last known residences, the Stumbling Stones and Last Address disrupt daily life to bring attention to a person who is no longer there. By integrating these markers into the lived environments of cities and town, these projects try to make commemoration accessible and personal by connecting contemporary residents with the people of the past. The goal is to prompt reflection and curiosity about the events that led to such an absence in the first place. Finally, the decentralized nature of these projects means that people can repeatedly encounter these markers, gesturing towards the overall scale of the atrocities. The markers become an omnipresent part of the landscape, allowing for personal encounters both intentional and unintentional, exceptional and mundane.

While there are clear echoes of Denmig's project in the approach of Last Address, Parkhomenko takes care to articulate some important differences. These key distinctions reflect both the need to adapt memorial practices for the Russian commemorative landscape and the contested nature of remembrance of the Soviet repressions. For example, Stumbling Stones are sponsored by groups and individuals who research micro-histories of the victims, gathering information about their lives and deaths from sources such as the victim registry at Yad Vashem and local German records and archives. Sponsors are asked to provide full names, dates of birth and death, and, if applicable, dates and details of arrest and/or internment ("Steps", 2019). Sometimes this information is made available via local websites or registries, but there is no

official database of information on the stories of victims – though Denmig's site does maintain a bare-bones list of names, dates, and locations of the Stones.

In contrast, Last Address professionalizes this process by utilizing its own researchers. It works with the historians and archivists of Memorial to gather information about the person being commemorated, which usually involves working with local and state archives. While sponsors are asked to provide as much information about the victim as possible, the information is not considered accurate until it has been verified by Last Address researchers. According to Parkhomenko, this is to maintain integrity and accuracy in the memorialization process. The contested status of the repressions in Russian history dictates that Last Address must adhere to the strictest standards of accuracy and authenticity in its work. A secondary goal of the project is therefore to grow Memorial's existing databases of victims of repression, which seeks to document the scope and scale of the repressions and was formed in response to the historical suppression of this information by the Soviet and Russian governments. "If someone can see a difference between the facts and our [plaque]," describes Parkhomenko, "it's not good for our reputation and the reputation of this project. We need to be precise, we want to be credible" (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019).

At the same time, with this process comes the potential for conflict and contestation between Last Address and both the memorial sponsors and the state authorities. Though Last Address has denied only a handful of applications due to an inability to verify information about a given victim, there is also the possibility that the archivists discover information that was previously unknown to the victims' families, or that directly contradicts what they thought they knew about the past. While uncovering the truth about the political repressions is a stated goal of the project, it can be difficult for families whose collective understanding of their personal pasts is challenged. And while there has yet to be a case where family members visibly or publically contest the findings of Last Address researchers, it is easy to imagine a scenario where such a challenge takes place, and it would be curious to see how the project engages with individuals who are unsatisfied with the information it uncovers.

This dynamic highlights the varying, overlapping frameworks within which collective memory is constructed. While the family has long been identified as an important mechanism for which memory is passed down across and between generations (Halbwachs, 1950), these transmissions happen within the context of broader societal and political frameworks. In the absence of official modes of remembering and ways to specifically detail and document the past, family memories become the dominant way in which individuals engage with the past. The unveiling of official state records that undermine or contradict such family memories has the potential to fundamentally alter the way in which families see with their pasts, and how they remember. Given that Last Address places such a premium on the correctness of its information, a sustained challenge over the accuracy of its findings from a victim's family could potentially threaten its legitimacy or discourage other families from applying for plaques.

Another potential source of contestation and conflict comes from Memorial's use of state archives. The verification process depends on the researchers' ability to access documents about victims of repressions, which the Russian state has historically made difficult to access. While the establishment of the State Concept was accompanied by loosened restrictions on this archival data, it can still be a challenge for researchers to gain access to the documents they need, especially in more remote areas or in parts of the country that the organization has not previously worked (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019). Given that Last Address does not officially partner with state or local governments, it depends largely on the personal relationships researchers maintain with state archivists, as well as on any gains made by legal challenges pushing for more open archives.

Secondly, while sponsorship of the Stumbling Stones is often undertaken by grassroots organizations, production and placement of the stones remains centralized under Denmig's supervision. All stones are exclusively made by an artist in accordance with Denmig's requirements, and Denmig attempts to install as many stones as possible personally. At a minimum, Denmig places the first stone in each new location, and those seeking to place subsequent stones in these places need Denmig's approval and assistance in obtaining a stone ("Technical", 2019). Last Address, on the other hand, explicitly favors a decentralized approach.

When an organization in a new country expresses an interest in producing Last Address plaques, the central Last Address organization assists it in setting up processes and procedures in place to facilitate its work. However, Last Address leaves many of the decisions about the work to these satellite organizations. For example, while Last Address provides a template for the plaques, the information, language of inscription, and process for application and installation are left up to these satellite projects. This allows for an approach to commemorating the repressions that remains similar enough to draw connections across countries, while at the same time providing flexibility to accommodate the different ways in which the repressions played out in different Soviet states.

A third and final key difference is the relationship that each project has with the local authorities. Part of the sponsorship process for a stumbling stone involves obtaining permission from local authorities to place the stone at a designated location. Given that the stones are set into public roads and walk ways, it makes sense that official permission would be required. Denmig's organization likewise suggests that residents living near where the stone will be located be notified of its installation. However, given that the streets and sidewalks are almost always public property, such a notification is more a courtesy than anything else. By extension, then, the Stumbling Stones project has always benefitted from an official veneer of approval from various local and state administrators.

Last Address neither presumes nor requires this kind of official cooperation. While the project initially sought to partner with local governments, repeated attempts at collaboration led nowhere. While Last Address was prepared to install the plaques as an unofficial act of guerilla commemoration, Memorial lawyers located a loophole in Russian property law that negated the need for official permission. The loophole states that modifications undertaken to private property, even those that are visible from public streets and sidewalks, only need approval from the owners and residents of the building. As such, Last Address shifted its work from negotiating with the government to working directly with the Russian public. So far, the Russian government has not contested the plaques, and Parkhomenko describes the relationship between the organization and the authorities as one of "mutual inattention."

It is this last difference – the work with local residents – that offers just one example of how Last Address enacts its commitment to “One name, one life, one sign.” The primary goal of Last Address is build and energize the individual connections that can be drawn between the victims of repression and the contemporary individuals who generate and host the memorial plaque, and the process is designed to be personal from the start. Last Address does not independently generate memorial plaques – not even for famous Russian dissidents – and instead relies solely on public applications to dictate the installation of the memorials. The individual applications and nominal fee are meant to generate a sense of ownership over the commemorative process. According to the organization, “it's not a question of financing, it's a question of building a relationship, it's a question of a responsibility. We need to create a situation where this person can tell, ‘[This] is my small monument - I created it.’ It's a mental thing.’ I am the owner, I financed it, I supported it’” (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019).

This orientation is especially powerful when considered in the context of Russia’s historical emphasis on collectivization, a policy explicitly pursued by the Soviet regime across its political, economic, and cultural policies. The emphasis on the well-being of the nation and the subservience of the individual for the good of the whole was often explicitly contrasted by Soviet political leaders with the ills of Western individualism, which was portrayed as selfish, capitalistic, and exploitative (Arutunyan, 2016). However, such an approach makes sense as the idea of a united Russian nation has been repeatedly challenged in recent years, with the public continuing to push back against the aforementioned restrictive policies put in place by the Putin government.

That work of cultivating personal connections continues with the work done by activists to have the plaques installed at various locations. They see Last Address as an individualized starting point for a conversation about the Russian past, and believe that the true legacy of the project lies in creating mnemonic communities that work to share and preserve the memories of the victims. These communities, they argue, make small, incremental shifts in how Russians understand the past. Last Address recruits volunteer activists to make and sustain contact with residents of targeted buildings, and activists often cultivate support for the plaques via multiple

encounters and visitors. More often than not, residents are unaware that their building has a connection to one of the missing or disappeared. Activists often find that as support for a plaque within a residence grows, those living there begin to take on the work of talking to their neighbors and persuading them of the importance of the plaque. Parkhomenko sees this as an important step in combatting the ongoing conservative propaganda of the Russian state. In his view, the political repressions are too often presented by the state at the macro level, with a focus on statistics and "big problems, big issues, industrialization, geopolitical issues, the clash of civilizations," an approach that Last Address feels does little to educate people about the realities of the era and the lived experiences of the Russian people. Last Address seeks to shift opinions by focusing on the micro level

> on the level of one single life, one single destiny, one single name…what about the person living in your house, living here, killed here, accused here? Not a big statesman or a well known writer or a member of the army – just a plumber, just a worker, just a school teacher, just and accountant? (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019).

Background: Wall of Grief

While there have long been calls for a state-sponsored monument to the victims of Soviet repression in Russia, it wasn't until 2015 that the Russian government began to take formal steps to commemorate the era. A victims' monument had previously been proposed under the Khrushchev regime as part of its de-Stalinization campaign, but was ultimately never realized. Prominent dissident groups such as the Solzhenitsyn Center and Memorial continued to lobby for official recognition for victims of the repression, with little success. In the interim, smaller scale, grassroots efforts attempted to fill in the gap – with the most prominent and wide-ranging being the efforts of Last Address described above. Although a definitive casual relationship between these grassroots projects and an official monument can't be drawn, the public and media attention received by the likes of Last Address only served to highlight the continued lack of official commemoration. Coupled with increased calls by the international community for Russia

to grapple with its complicated past (Elder, 2012), there was mounting pressure on the Putin administration to issue some kind of recognition or statement.

The 2015 announcement came at a time when the Russian government was sending complicated, mixed-messages about its stance on past political violence and repressions. As detailed above, public opinion about the Stalinist era has steadily become more favorable since Putin took office in 2012. Similarly, recent years have seen an increased crackdown on political liberties that many feel parallel some of the crackdowns seen under Stalin. It was within this environment that in October 2015, Putin's government announced the State Policy Concept for Perpetuating the Memory of the Victims of Political Repression, a "wide-ranging government plan…to commemorate the victims of political purges and bolster instruction on them in schools, museums, and state media" ("Putin's Russia sends mixed signals," 2015). While many of the specifics of the plan were left purposefully vague, the announcement of the forthcoming Wall of Grief monument in November 2015 represented the first tangible, official recognition of the repressions. The monument would be funded through a combination of state support and private fundraising, overseen by the Memory Foundation – a charity created explicitly to support commemorative activities around the repressions ("About the Fund", 2019).

Accompanying the announcement were further details about the planned memorial, including the selection via open competition of Georgy Frangulyan, an Armenian sculptor who spent much of his life living, working, and studying in Moscow. Frangulyan specializes in monumental sculptures, with many of his works focusing on famous Russian political and cultural figures. His previous installations have included monuments to figures such as the tsar Peter the Great (Belgium, 1998), the novelist Aleksander Pushkin (Belgium, 1999), Russia's first president Boris Yeltsin (Russia, 2011), the poet Joseph Brodsky (Russia, 2011), the composer Dmitry Shostakovich (Russia, 2015), and the famous hockey coach Anatoliy Tarasov (Russia, 2018); he also designed the monument placed at Yeltsin's gravesite in Moscow.

While several of these works were constructed in collaboration with local and state officials, Frangulyan states that he tries to keep his distance from the political climate. Instead, he

hopes visitors view his works as “aesthetic forms” that have the power to provoke feeling, emotion, and reflection (Frangulyan, 2019, personal communication). In other words, he would prefer that viewers see the monument as an “art object” as opposed to a political statement, and focus on its design and craftsmanship. Frangulyan makes an attempt to distance himself from the political dimensions of his work by designing his works solo, without input from those commissioning the work – he described the design for the Wall as coming to him “immediately, all at once.” He chooses to focus on how to best use size and scale to capture the emotions he wants the audience to feel, rather than focusing on how his work might shape political understandings. Similarly, he declines to “check in” on his work after it’s been completed in an attempt to not let its reviews or reception influence his future or ongoing projects.

However, the inevitable political dimensions of any memorial project are evident in Frangulyan’s work. Frangulyan was selected from an international pool of 336 competitors, who were invited to submit their designs by Russian officials. The open competition was administered by the Gulag History Museum, and the judging panel was composed of prominent Russian cultural figures, including human rights advocates, journalists, film directors, artists, and architects (“A monument to the victims”, 2019). As someone who grew up witnessing Soviet political violence first hand, Frangulyan wanted to bring attention to the “many talented people who were never heard from again,” and to highlight the immense suffering felt by communities all over Russia (Frangulyan, 2019, personal communication). Such a statement proposes an approach to the project that is not as apolitical as Frangulyan might otherwise suggest. Most important to him was that visitors to the memorial be able to see the perspectives of the victims. He set out to create a monument that forces visitors to “dive in emotionally, to cultivate a sense of empathy” (Frangulyan, 2019, personal communication). According to Frangulyan, artists were not given any explicit instructions or guidelines for crafting their submissions, and no edits were made to his design after its selection.

The end result was a tall, two-sided, curving bronze relief, standing 20 feet tall and approximately 100 feet wide. Embedded in both sides of the monument are sculpted, faceless

human forms designed to look as if they are moving upward. Gaps in the figures are embedded at different points across the monument, allowing visitors to “become” part of the Wall themselves. Visitors are invited to weave in and out of the spaces, “put[ting] themselves in the place of those who became a part of this wall of sorrow, feel[ing] the fragility of human life against the backdrop of a multi-toned ruthless system” (“Wall of Grief”, 2017). According to Frangulyan,

> The shape of the monument should convey to the viewer the very sensation of the "roar of terror ", the grinding of evil. I want to show that all of us living today are also victims of repression. Our lives could have been different: better or worse, but different. All of us have a splinter of this wall in our hearts. Nobody knows how long it will take it to go away (“A monument to the victims”, 2019).

Complementing the wall are two towers of “Weeping Rocks,” comprised of stones taken from different Russian regions and engraved with the words “Know, Remember, Condemn, Forgive,” drawn from a quote by Natalia Solzhenitsyn, daughter of prominent Russian dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The monument took two years to design and install, and was formally dedicated on October 30, 2017. The dedication was designed to coincide with Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions, a formal holiday in Russia since 1991.

From its announcement to its dedication, the monument has received mixed reviews from the Russian public, with some heralding the monument as an official gesture long in the making and others calling it a hypocritical smokescreen designed to distract from mounting political tensions. In the former camp, individuals celebrated what they saw as a key turning point in government acknowledgement of the repressions. Countless news stories covering the opening of the memorial in 2017 featured tearful interviews with individuals whose families suffered under the repressions. A women named Zoya Puchkina who attended the dedication and saw her father arrested during the repressions and later released under Kruschev stated, “I am crying but at the same time, thank God they opened this memorial” (Merz, 2017). The head of Moscow’s gulag museum, one of the few state sanctioned institutional spaces in Russia that documents the atrocities of the era, likewise sees the monument as a breakthrough. “They couldn’t make it happen under Kruschev, they couldn’t make it happen during perestroika, but now it’s

happening…to me, it's clear progress," declared museum director Roman Romanov ("Putin's Russia sends mixed signals," 2015)

Frangulyan also falls into this camp, arguing that his monument is particularly significant precisely because it represents the first state-sponsored attempt to commemorate the victims of the repressions. When asked if he felt his work was in conversation with other memorial projects, he replied that it was not related to or inspired by any of these other works. Calling other memorial projects "rather insignificant in terms of size and location," Frangulyan maintains that his work should be considered Frangulyan Frangulyan, personal communication, 2018). For Frangulyan, the relationship to the state affords his monument a reach and legitimacy that exceeds that of other such projects. Speaking to the press on the occasion of the announcement of the memorial in 2015, Frangulyan "invit[ed] those who deny the purges to come stand near the wall and 'feel themselves among the victims'" ("Putin's Russia sends mixed signals," 2015) – an ironic statement, given that many would finger the government as most likely to deny the effect of the repressions.

The monument was also heavily criticized by many Russian political dissidents and former Soviet prisoners, who saw the monument as being both hypocritical and too little, too late. Critics pointed to the Russian government's continued refusal to open up the archives of the Soviet state security services, as well as the mounting accusations that the Russian government continues to engage regularly in human rights violations (Petrov, 2018). Several dozen prominent Soviet-era dissidents published an open letter critiquing the monument, which was published on the day of its dedication. They wrote that they

> consider the opening in Moscow of a monument to victims of political repression untimely and cynical…It's impossible to take part memorial events organized by the authorities who say they are sorry about the victims of the Soviet regime, but in practice continue political repression and crush civil freedoms (Osborn, 2017).

There is also precedent for the Russian regime appropriating grassroots commemorative efforts for its own means. In 2011, a group of Russian journalists began a local effort to commemorate those who lost their lives in World War II, in an attempt to push back against the aggrandizing narratives of the era put forth by state. They began what came to be known as the Immortal

Regiment, an annual march where relatives of the deceased walk with portraits of their loved ones who fought in WWII. The state sought to incorporate this practice into its official commemorative rituals, with "Putin [starting] to participate in the marches, and pseudo-civic and Kremlin controlled organizations like the Civic Chamber and the All-Russia People's Front" attempting to wrest control from the local organizers (Kolesnikov, 2017, p. 5).

As this divided reception illustrates, the Wall of Grief raises questions about the contemporary status of the state-sponsored monument in Russia. For many victims' groups, the opening of a state sponsored monument related to their cause represents an official acknowledgement of their pain and suffering. National monuments are attributed with a special kind of commemorative power, and are often seen as official entries in a physical historical record that acknowledges and stabilizes certain events and narratives. However, the Wall of Grief also shows how these national monuments can continue to be rich sites of mnemonic conflict. The criticism leveraged at the monument and its sponsors demonstrates that this official recognition, however, only goes so far.

Indeed, Putin's remarks at the 2017 dedication ceremony seemed to reflect both the celebrations and concerns of supporters and detractors alike. In many ways, his comments represented some of the harshest official language towards the repressions to date. He shared that

> It is very important that we all and future generations – this is of great significance – know about, and remember this tragic period in our history when entire social groups and entire peoples were cruelly persecuted… Millions of people were declared 'enemies of the people', shot or mutilated, or suffered in prisons, labour camps or exile. This terrifying past cannot be deleted from national memory or, all the more so, be justified by any references to the so-called best interests of the people. (Putin, 2017)

These comments represent a significant departure from how government officials had discussed the repressions in the past. Generally speaking, administrators would speak in generalities rather than absolutes, and avoid quantifying or passing judgment on the extent of the repressions. For many, hearing Putin acknowledge that Russia was "still feeling consequences" of the repressions in contemporary society was an important validation of the trauma felt by them and their families.

Assuming office for the first time in 2000, Putin set the tone for his new administration by articulating that "there have been both tragic and brilliant pegs in our history," a line that the state has maintained ever since and that eschews specificity about what those tragic pegs are and accountability for who might be responsible for them (Petrov, 2018). In line with this approach, for over a decade the state declined to participate in commemorative activities relating to the repressions, declined to open state archives, and abstained from confirming the scope or scale of the repressions. These refusals were coupled with complicated appraisals of the Soviet past that positioned Stalin and his actions in a largely favorable light, portraying them as necessary for the success of the Soviet Union and its victory in the Great Patriotic War.

There are several possible explanations for why this shift occurred. For one, it could be that the sustained work of Russian memory activists has finally paid off. After all, organizations such as Memorial have been lobbying for official recognition and commemoration of the repressions since 1989 – even before the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, given the ongoing tensions between the state and these organizations, it is unlikely that it was solely the pressure they applied that led to this change. Another, perhaps more likely, factor is the influence of transnational memory culture. State recognition of trauma has long been seen as a key aspect of contemporary human rights work, and over the years there has been increased pressure from the international community for Russia to take responsibility in this area. Finally, while the state has not offered a clear explanation for the sudden interest in formalizing commemoration of the repressions, its current rhetoric relies heavily on the idea that it was "simply time" to acknowledge the repressions in an attempt to move forward – though what "move forward means" in this context is not without concern.

Putin's words were couched in language that seemed to encourage people to move on from the past, playing into critics' concerns that the monument was the government's attempt to stem the tide of controversies related to the repressions. Putin closed the substantive portion of his remarks by cautioning the public against drawing on Russia's past to "settle scores," arguing that "[w]e cannot push society to a dangerous line of confrontation yet again" (Putin, 2017). He continued to call for national unity, stating that "…it is important for all of us to build on the values

of trust and stability. Only on this basis will we be able to achieve the goals our society and our country, which is one for us all" (Putin, 2017). By suggesting that the repressions should no longer be a source of contestation or conflict, Putin is simultaneously suggesting that the public share a unified interpretation and acknowledgment of the repressions, and that, while the nation should never forget the repressions, moving on from the past is necessary for a strong and stable Russia.

Such comments build on Putin's Russian World concept by drawing on the past as a way to push for stronger national ties amongst the Russian people. Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2013) has described such use of the past as collective prospective memory, which "refers to the collective remembrance of what still needs to be done, based on past commitments and past promises" (92). Prospective functions as a kind of collective "to-do" list by drawing on the past to articulate what needs to be done in the future – in this instance, Putin is signaling that Russia needs to move on from the past and come together in order to successfully navigate the future. Put another way, Putin is engaging in collective future thought, which involves "the act of imagining an event that has yet to transpire on behalf of, or by, a group" (Szpunar and Szpunar, 2016). In doing so, he helps to appropriately position remembrance of the political repressions in a way that furthers his regime's agenda of fostering a stronger, more stable sense of Russian national identity. In both cases, engagement with the past is drawn on to shape an agenda of what is needed for the future of the Russian state and people.

Competing Commemorative Forms

Although Last Address and the Wall of Grief were conceived of and executed around the same time, they represent two very different approaches to commemorating the victims of the repression. Last Address represents a grassroots effort to bring attention to victims of political repressions by directly involving the public in a highly personalized way, using its memorial plaques as a jumping off point to stimulate remembrance through engagement, reflection, and conversation. In contrast, the Wall of Grief relies on the more traditional form of the state-sponsored monument, giving an official veneer to remembrance of the repressions and focusing

more on the acknowledgement and recognition of trauma without necessarily offering new insights or reflections. This next section compares the mnemonic work performed by Last Address and the Wall of Grief across a variety of factors, including size, location, temporality, design, approach, and reception.

Perhaps the most readily apparent difference between these two projects is their physical size. While the Wall of Grief is comprised of several tons of bronze and stands an impressive 20 feet tall, Last Address instead uses small stainless steel plaques 11x19cm in size. This difference in size is related to the stated goals of the each of each project, and similarly reflects the different motivations and practicalities each project faced. While there are exceptions to every rule, we tend to think of national monuments and memorials as large, impressive structures; size is often thought as correlating with how important a given event or instance is within a nation's past (Savage, 2009). In other words, there are implicit biases and understandings of national monuments that dictate a preference for oversized structures, and scale is seen as conferring legitimacy and importance. Constructing a smaller or less noticeable monument may have been construed as not being sufficiently commemorative. There was a concerted effort to make the Wall of Grief stand out amidst Moscow's busy urban landscape (Frangulyan, personal communication, 2019), and to create something that would serve as a real focal point – a challenge, given Russia's preexisting orientation towards monumental architecture.

The success of Last Address, however, is in many ways dependent on the smaller scale of the plaques. The plaques need to be large enough to fit a certain amount of text and to be noticeable, yet small enough that they do not draw overt attention from the authorities or inconvenience the tenants of the buildings on which they are placed. Production costs are also a factor – the plaques need to be made relatively cheaply in order to fulfill the backlog of applications, of which there are currently about 2,000. Larger or more complicated memorials would be more expensive to make and harder to install. The plaques instead draw their power from their aggregated form: Plaques are featured all over Russia, as well as in other countries, and given that each plaque represents just one victim, many buildings that were home to

persecuted families feature collections of multiple plaques. Viewers thus gain an appreciation of the size and scope of the project from encountering multiple plaques over time.

This highlights another key difference between the two projects, that of location. For Last Address, location remains a fundamental component of its commemorative practice – after all, the emphasis on "address" is right in its name. By choosing to place the plaques at the last verifiable location at which a victim was known to have lived, Last Address seeks to highlight how widespread and embedded the political repressions were in everyday life. By anchoring its memorials to a sense of place, it is crafting a decentralized form of commemoration that people can encounter as they move about their regular lives. Last Address resists the notion that memorials are special, sacred, closed-off spaces that are readily identified as such. Instead, it pushes the public to make reflection about the repressions a regular part of its routine. The success of Last Address is thus premised on the small, replicable nature of its plaques, which together create a dispersed memorial project that can be imported to a variety of locations and contexts.

The Wall of Grief, on the other hand, is centrally located in Moscow, Russia's largest city and capital. The location was selected as a way to confer importance on the topic being commemorated, and fulfills some additional basic tenets of national monuments and memorials. Capital spaces are popular locations for these structures, as their proximity to the national government helps to confer seriousness and legitimacy (Savage, 2011). When national monuments are not located in capital cities, it tends to be because the events being remembered are strongly associated with another location, and a decision is made that the event is best remembered in the most "appropriate" place. However, events such as the Soviet repressions are so widespread that it is difficult to associate them with just one location. People from all over the USSR were removed from their homes and sent to any number of locations. Placing the monument in Moscow might also draw attention to the state-sponsored nature of the repressions by drawing a tangible connection from the victims being commemorated to those in power.

In addition to differences in physical location, the two projects also engage differently with concepts of temporality. The power of Last Address comes from repeated engagement with

multiple memorial plaques – the strength of its commemorative message grows as individuals' experience multiple instances of encounter. It's only through this sustained viewing that the true scope and scale of the repressions is made visible. This is somewhat of a risky gamble – is the commemorative message as powerful if a person only comes across a singular plaque? While Last Address feels like it's reached a critical mass, both in terms of the number of plaques and the amount of media attention received, for the plaques to be intelligible even on an individual basis, it's hard to imagine that encountering a singular plaque has the same potential resonance. Describing more traditional, singular memorials, Erika Doss describes how "people sort of pay their respects and then they go away, they feel like they are done" (qtd in Paperny, 2015). Memorials are often seen as an ending point, a final stopping point to honor the past and then move on. Rather than offering a sense of completeness and closure, Last Address instead provokes repeated confrontation with the past. Its memorials instead offer a starting point, with repeated exposures to additional plaques building and expanding existing understandings of the past.

Temporality is also a factor in the choice to anchor the memorials to last known addresses. Installing the plaques on contemporary residences plays with a sense of temporality to draw an explicitly connection between past and present, and it is this connection that is often utilized by activists when meeting with these communities – getting residents to identify and empathize with the victims is often a key turning point in the negotiation process. This replicates the highly personalized and individualized approach that is so central to Last Address. Activists work to connect residents and communities to specific victims and specific stories, and in doing so they share details not only of the repressions, but about the specific individuals and lives that will be commemorated at their address. This sense of connection is made more complete with the addition of specific dates on the plaque, which allows the viewer to more concretely place the victim within a historical timeline.

The Wall of Grief is differently situated temporally, favoring a more timeless approach. The Wall does not feature any dates, and its location in the center of Moscow requires visitors to seek it out in a way that Last Address does not. It becomes more a site of pilgrimage than an

integrated act of remembering. Though activities surrounding the monument may change, the actual monumental form itself is designed to be aesthetically static. While Last Address grows and shifts with each new additional plaque, the Wall of Grief, as with many national monuments, is imagined to be eternal and readily identifiable. Such is the nature of national monuments in general. In his evaluation of Washington D.C.'s National Mall, Kirk Savage muses on the cultural function of national monuments more broadly. He argues that

> if the nation is ordinarily experienced in a diffuse, ever-shifting circulation of words and images, national monuments acquire authority by affixing certain words and images to particular places meant to be distinctive and permeant. Thus, monuments stand apart from everyday experience and seem to promise something eternal, akin to the sacred. (Savage, 2011, p 6-7)

The national monument is thus ascribed a certain type of atemporality, and while its meaning and circulation may change over time, the actual monument itself does not.

However, that does not mean that the monument remains static in its use, and one key exception to this usual atemporality are annual remembrance events related to the repressions, where the site becomes more explicitly activated for a short period of time. In 2018, for example, many families of victims came to lay wreaths and flowers at the memorial, and the Memory Foundation initiated the "Bell of Memory," a new annual event that centers the Wall on the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions. Throughout the day on October 30th, visitors were invited to the monument to leave tokens of remembrance, and to honor the memory of the victims by ringing a specially constructed bell ("Russia Honors Victims", 2018). This action was replicated in cities across Russia, where local organizers erected similar Bells of Memory at local memorials or cemeteries. In this way, the Memory Foundation attempted to link the Wall of Grief to these other local sites, if only for the day. These activities also mobilize the Wall of Grief as a focus for mnemonic activity that differs greatly from the more passive way in which it is usually encountered. The Bell of Memory was covered widely, positing the Wall of Grief as a central and authoritative site at which to commemorate the victims.

Though each memorial sets out to commemorate victims of the repressions, how they interpret that remembrance aesthetically also varies greatly. While neither project utilizes realistic human forms, each nonetheless seeks to represent the victims in distinctly different ways. Last

Address approaches this commemoration through the lens of absence. Its plaques, which are stainless steel rectangles featuring an empty square window alongside bare-bones text, avoid images or photos in order to draw attention to a person who is no longer there. While there are practical reasons for not using images or pictures (for one, the plaques would be much more expensive and difficult to produce), this focus on absence is more than just convenient. Parkhomenko describes the plaque as "very, very simple, very primitive, but very arresting, with this…window as the sign of absence," and states that the organization wanted a design that could be replicated by hand to evoke the "sentiment of something primitive, something warm, something personal, something handmade, and something personal… not an industrial production of the same thing over again… it's an absolutely individual thing for every single person, every single plate," (Parhomenko, personal communication, 2019). Last Address sees its design as highly personal, and this is reflected in the details featured on the plaques – specific names, as well as dates of birth, death, arrest and profession. Furthermore, plaques are unique to the person they are commemorating, with each individual getting their own small memorial. In this way, Last Address manages to be an individualized form of commemoration, despite never actually showing or illustrating the victims, and viewers encounter the victims through individual plaques.

The Wall of Grief similarly does not make use of realistic representations of people, and instead features abstract human forms without faces. Intentional on the part of the artist, the Wall of Grief was designed to be highly personal to viewers, albeit in a very different way from Last Address. The forms were made faceless to represent that there are too many victims to individually recognize, and their uneven shapes and forms create heightened senses of tragedy, anxiety, and sorrow ("A monument to the victims", 2019). Frangulyan wanted individuals to be able to "feel the emotions of catastrophe" by mimicking the sense of chaos, horror, and confusion felt by those who lived through the repressions (Frangulyan, personal communication, 2019). The Wall is designed so that as visitors move through the spaces in the structure, they continue to be confronted by the Wall, and are unable to escape its shadow. The forms are also general enough that anyone can see themselves, family members, or any other victims embedded within the

bronze, with the Wall providing a canvas upon which visitors can project. The lack of individual features is also fitting, given that the identities of many victims remained closed off, or even destroyed, in state archives. While Last Address seeks to form personal connections between visitors and victims on a one-on-one basis, the Wall of Grief instead connects visitors to the victims by asking them to take on the perspective of the victim through shared communion with the monument. While the former provokes connection through facts and details, the latter prompts connection by attempting to replicate the emotions felt by those who suffered.

Finally, both projects differ dramatically in how they were received by both the public and the media. As mentioned above, the Wall of Grief received mixed reviews from both the media and the public. Prominent dissidents of the era claimed that the monument was hypocritical, given the ongoing political violence and repression that continues to characterize Russian public life. Others saw the monument as the first step in a move by the Russian state to appropriate memory of the repressions for its own uses. The monument was seen as an attempt to limit remembrance and understanding of the political repressions by assigning them a designated meaning and place within the official state narrative. As one activist describes in an essay for Open Democracy

> As soon as a self-satisfied bureaucrat (or even President Putin himself) begins the opening ceremony with feigned solemnity…you can forget about historical justice, and the possibility of dialogue between society and the authorities on the place of political repressions in Russian history will vanish forever." (Kaluzhsky, 2015)

However, many saw the monument as a real victory for the civil society groups that had been lobbying for a monument for so long. They saw it as both a victory and an opportunity to further engage with the state on the issue, and many were heartened to see that the Memory Fund would live on beyond the dedication of the monument (Rainsford, 2017). The ongoing involvement of Memorial is likewise a palliative, although relations between the organization and the state remain contentious. The foreign media in particular extensively covered the opening of the memorial, and many framed their stories in a way that captured the ongoing tensions between the state and the public over remembrances of the repressions. Most outlets situated the opening of the monument within the ongoing rehabilitation of Stalin, with many expressing reservations that the monument would counter the increasingly positive perspectives of Stalin expressed by

the Putin regime and the Russian public. For example, DW notes that “As some worry that Josef Stalin is being rehabilitated in Russia’s collective memory, a new monument to his victims has opened in Moscow. Survivors of his reign of terror are not convinced that it’s enough” (Chapman, 2017), while Reuters opens its article with “President Vladimir Putin inaugurated a monument to the victims of Stalinist purges on Monday, but Soviet-era dissidents accused him of cynicism at a time when they say authorities are riding roughshod over civil freedoms” (Osborn, 2017). Overall, the press acknowledged that while the monument represented an important step forward, it was too soon to tell how truly committed the government was to engaging with remembering the repressions (c.f. Chapman, 2017; “Wall of Grief”, 2017).

Last Address, on the other hand, has received almost universal acclaim from the moment it laid its first plaque. The organization documents over 350 positive news stories about the project from around the world (“News”, 2019), and a LexisNexis search about the organization returned only an overwhelming amount of praise. This acclaim is visible in the ongoing recognition that the project and its founders continues to receive. For example, in July 2019 Last Address was invited to join the prestigious International Coalition of Sites of Consciousness, a European-based network of sites, museums, and memory projects that focus on periods of struggle (“Who We Are,” 2019). The project was also the inaugural recipient of the Carl Wilhelm Fricke Prize from the German Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED Dictatorship, which recognizes the work of organizations seeing to better understand and commemorate victims of repressive regimes (“Last Address received an award”, 2018). At the domestic level, Memorial sees its main success in the perpetuation of the project: it receives a continuous flow of applications despite doing no advertising beyond its website and media interviews. Parkhomenko sees this media acclaim as a key success for the organization, arguing that it relies on this kind of coverage as a way to signal boost the stories being told through its plaques. He also states that this attention makes its work easier – as the profile of the organization rises, it becomes easier for its activists to explain the importance of the plaques to local residents; to date, only two residences have refused to install Last Address plaques (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2019).

Conclusion: Commemoration in Tandem

There is an almost natural tendency within memory studies literature to assume that grassroots and official state sponsored commemorative projects exist in an antagonistic relationship. For example, one of the classic formulations of public memory from Bodnar (1992) explicitly pits official and grassroots, or what he calls vernacular, memory in opposition to one another. Bodnar suggests that power lies with the state, who uses official memory to shape a "dogmatic formalism" that allows them to present an idealized version of both the past and the future, while vernacular memory forms are developed through grassroots efforts when these official narratives fail to speak to the lived experiences of the public, who are then mobilized to create their own forms of commemoration (Bodnar, 1992, p. 14). For Bodnar, it is official memory that has the most staying power, with vernacular memory either fading away or being reshaped in ways that better fit or accommodate the party line.

However, the almost-simultaneous development of Last Address and the Wall of Grief shows that, in practice, the relationship between grassroots and official forms of memory is much more complicated. While Last Address and the Wall of Grief seem to fit neatly into these categories, the development of both projects were in many ways dependent on the existence of the other, and they respond to the same kind of complicated political and cultural factors. Last Address was developed in response to a perceived lack of official acknowledgement by the Russian state of the victims of repression. It sought to both fill a commemorative void and provide a venue by which ordinary people could participate in documenting and sharing the experiences of these victims. This was seen as an important counterpoint to the ongoing memory work of the Russian government, and particularly the Putin regime, which vacillated between disinterest in the matter and the outright manipulation of information. The high profile nature of Last Address, as well as other smaller memorial projects and the ongoing work of Memorial, created an environment in which it became more and more difficult for the Russian state to ignore demands for official recognition and, in particular, a national memorial.

And even as the work of Last Address was spreading, and gaining popularity and participation, it's important to note that the calls for an official, state sponsored monument never ceased. This is best exemplified by the involvement of Memorial in both projects, suggesting that neither project was ever intended to satisfy all of the commemorative concerns of the Russian people. Indeed, the differences in size, scope, and scale of these respective memorial projects illustrate the different forms commemoration can take. With the Wall of Grief, victims and their families gain the official recognition and acknowledgement that they have long been denied, as well as a central monument around which they can organize their mnemonic labor, if they so choose. Additionally, the establishment of the Memory Fund shows how this official recognition has opened up the possibility of greater support for other important historical and memory based projects around Russia – including the work of Last Address.

Last Address, on the other hand, offers people a way to individually honor the victims in a highly personalized way. Given that most applications come from family members and friends, engaging in the work of Last Address gives them an opportunity to learn more about their past and to situate that past within the broader Russian historic landscape. Furthermore, the process of negotiation that ensues during the placement of the plaques ensures that those stories can be passed on and shared with other people and communities.

All of this is to suggest that scholars of collective memory need to remain attuned to how commemorative projects are situated in tandem with one another. Analyzing Last Address and the Wall of Grief alongside one another allows for comparisons across a variety of axes that illuminate different facets of commemorative work. Such a comparison reveals insights into the planning, execution, and reception of these memorials, as well as observations of how such processes reflect different uses of aesthetics and temporality to realize their missions. Analyzing either of these projects in isolation would leave out the rich connections that populate the Russian mnemonic landscape.

It remains to be seen how this fledgling, official memorial landscape will continue to develop in Russia, and what role the state will play in the ongoing commemoration of the victims of political repression. Tensions between long-standing grassroots efforts and new state-

sponsored activities are already emerging, as demonstrated by last year's clash over the Returning of the Names ceremony. The attempts by the government to move the event to its official monument, as well as the development of its own similar Ringing of the Bells event, suggest that officials are not necessarily content to let these efforts peacefully coexist. As the mnemonic actors doing work in this era continue to become increasingly entangled, primarily through the efforts of the Memory Fund, organizations will increasingly have to negotiate between working in the bounds of official, state-sanctioned activities and sustaining the grassroots projects that they've long nurtured.

CHAPTER 4 Thin Commemoration: The Victims of Communism Memorial and U.S Cold War Memory

On the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the eve of his first presidential trip to China in 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump made a surprising announcement: he was declaring November 7 as the National Day for the Victims of Communism. Though similar remembrance days have long existed in other nations, this was the first time the U.S. had officially commemorated the victims of communism in such a way. A statement released through the White House Press Office highlighted the "more than 100 million people" who were killed under communist totalitarian governments, contrasting such regimes with the democratic politics of the United States that hold "liberty, prosperity, and the dignity of human life" sacrosanct (White House Press Office, 2017). The statement concluded by reiterating America's commitment to "shine the light of liberty for all those who yearn for a brighter future," positioning the U.S. as a nation that is unafraid to do battle with dangerous ideologies that threaten its dominance in the world. Reactions were mixed, with many critics chastising Trump for dredging up old Cold War sentiments and others calling the statement hypocritical, given Trump's close ties to Putin. The administration doubled down on its rhetoric for the 2018 remembrance day, declaring it an "undeniable fact that communism, and the pursuit of it, will forever be destructive to the human spirit and to the prosperity of mankind" (White House Press Office, 2018).

Nearly one year later, another group would attract headlines for a very different event designed around the condemnation of communism. On October 12, 2018, the Metropolitan Republic of New York hosted Gavin McInnes, a co-founder of Vice Media who went on to establish the Proud Boys, a far-right men's group who identify as "Western chauvinists who refuse to apologize for creating the modern world" and advocate for the use of violence to achieve political aims (Coaston, 2018). A flyer for the talk billed McInnes as "one of Liberty's Loudest Voices," and described him as having "taken on and exposed the Deep State Socialists and stood up up for Western Values" (Coaston, 2018). The highlight of the engagement was a reenactment of the 1960 assassination of popular Japanese socialist leader Inejiro Asanuma by far-right extremist Otaya Yamaguchie, played by McInnes. The assassination had recently become a popular meme amongst online alt-right groups, who describe the killing as the "moment

Japan was saved from communism" (Schaeffer, 2018). The event gained media attention after Proud Boys leaving the event clashed with counter protesters, resulting in a violent brawl that led to the arrest of several counter protestors and an ongoing investigation into "persons of interest" associated with the Proud Boys.

It should come as no surprise that this renewed interest in the ongoing war against communism has accompanied the sweeping advance of right wing populism in the United States during the lead up to and following the 2016 presidential election. As the above examples illustrate, remembrance of the Cold War era has been given a new political life as right wing groups and politicians strategically deploy specific understandings of the recent past to justify their political outlook. With his remembrance day statements, Trump both condemns communism and preaches against its ever-impending creep – especially poignant given that Trump, members of his administration, other Republicans and numerous alt-right groups frequently describe left-wing groups, the media, and Democratic politicians as dangerous communists and socialists who are a threat to political order. Similarly, the Proud Boys call on the triumph of the West to justify their sense of dominance and superiority. McInnes's reenactment can be seen as a micro-version of an imagined, contemporary Cold War where far right actors like the Proud Boys violently do away with these consistent threats from the left.

Though these examples are particularly vivid, the U.S. has a long history of invoking triumphant remembrance of the Cold War as a way to promote certain conservative political agendas. Emblematic of these invocations is the Victims of Communism Memorial, conceived of in 1993 and dedicated in 2007 by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOCMF) in conjunction with the U.S. government. The VOCMF, which played a key role in lobbying for the creation of the remembrance day, was formed by a group of conservative political actors with the goal of passing on the lessons of the Cold War to future generations. In reality, this has meant perpetuating conservative narratives of a U.S. Cold War victory to justify continued American dominance in the international sphere. As the above vignettes illustrate, these narratives of U.S. Cold War triumphalism are not just being used to shape grand international political strategies –

they have distilled down into the very core of U.S. contemporary right-wing populism, giving these movements a historical basis from which to justify their political attitudes and beliefs.

What is it about the nature of Cold War memory in the U.S. that makes it particularly vulnerable to co-optation by these groups? The Cold War is by far not the only conflict that could be reinterpreted to suit the needs and whims of populist movements in the United States, yet it plays an outsized role in many of the popular narratives favored by the likes of Trump, McInnes, and other such leaders. The persistent presence of the Cold War as this kind of reference point suggests that there is something worth interrogating about how the Cold War is being remembered and understood. As such, I use the VOCMF as a starting point for thinking about the nature of Cold War commemoration in the United States, and how the underdeveloped nature of such commemoration prevents all but the most basic engagement with the era. The kind of thin commemoration practiced by the VOCMF, which focuses on rote, surface-level understandings of the Cold War and fails to problematize many of the common assumptions about the era, readily lends itself to uncomplicated, triumphalist narratives that are ripe for co-optation.

I begin by laying out the scope of Cold War commemoration in the U.S., highlighting the underdeveloped and disparate nature of many Cold War commemorative sites. Next, I introduce the VOCMF, positioning the organization within a larger tradition of U.S. right-wing conservative memory politics. Such projects and politics have made a concerted commemorative effort to perpetuate lingering Cold War ideologies after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. I then turn to the specific activities of the VOCMF, focus on the creation and dedication of the Victims of Communism Memorial, the organization's social media and online presence, and their future plans for, amongst other things, building a museum. Drawing on these activities, I articulate how the activities undertaken by the VOCMF help to cultivate a series of specific premises about the legacy of the Cold War. Finally, I turn to how the lack of robust Cold War memory work in the U.S. creates an opportunity for the era to be successfully co-opted by contemporary populist movements.

The U.S. Cold War Commemorative Landscape

Far less attention has been paid to Cold War commemorative activities in the U.S. than has been paid to other major military conflicts, such as World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, and even the Civil and Revolutionary Wars. This is, in many ways, because the Cold War seemingly generates less explicit mnemonic activity than these other events, especially at the official or national level. No national days of remembrance related to the Cold War existed prior to 2009, when Congress created the Cold War Patriots National Remembrance Day to honor citizens working in U.S. nuclear industries, and knowledge of such a day remains largely unknown to most Americans. The U.S. has neither a national Cold War history museum nor a designated national Cold War monument, and the U.S. does not regularly celebrate or acknowledge anniversaries related to the conflict at the national level. In many ways, this lack of traditional commemorative trappings reflects some of the larger ambiguities and ambivalences that characterize the Cold War as a whole – the contested nature of the timing, scope, and scale of the Cold War (in addition to its framing as a war that never actually occurred) all complicate the use of traditional tropes related to war commemoration.

However, it's clear that remembrance of the Cold War continues to play an important role in shaping American political and cultural life. In addition to the aforementioned Cold War frameworks being mobilized by the "new right," several other incidents over the past few years have highlighted the legacy and relevance of the Cold War for understanding contemporary events. Tensions generated by Russia's 2014 intervention in Crimea led to calls that the US was entering a "new Cold War" (e.g. Conant, 2014; Schindler, 2014), sentiments that continued to echo throughout allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 elections and beyond (Cohen, 2018). Cold War interpretive frameworks continue to dominate news coverage of contemporary issues, albeit in a less explicit way. Such "Cold War mindedness" operates underground, subtly shifting how coverage of issues such as the rise of ISIS unfold and illustrating how durable and pervasive this "deep memory" is within the media (Zelizer, 2016). Accompanying this Cold War mindedness in the news media is a renewed interest in the Cold War era in entertainment media,

with a whole host of Cold War themed movies and television shows garnering millions of viewers and a healthy dose of critical attention (e.g., Stanley, 2014; Departures Magazine, 2015; Keveney, 2014). The success of recent shows and movies such as *The Americans, Allegiance, The Last Ship, Bridge of Spies,* and *Atomic Blonde* illustrate that audiences continue to be engaged and entertained by Cold War stories, themes, and symbols. Yet despite this persistence of Cold War narratives and content in these areas, formal commemoration of the Cold War in the United States has been thin.

The sparse national Cold War commemoration that has been undertaken in the U.S. has developed along two major trajectories, with the first emphasizing the preservation of heritage sites and the second focusing on the curation and display of private collections and objects. Since 1991, responsibility for Cold War heritage sites has fallen to the Department of Defense (DoD), which maintains a task force that seeks to "inventory, protect, and conserve the physical and literary property and relics …connected with the origins of the Cold War" (Salmon, 2011). Largely conducted on an ad hoc basis, the DoD's work in this area has historically emphasized preserving and curating important military and nuclear sites. Recognizing the need for a more systematic approach to documenting Cold War heritage sites, Congress authorized a "theme study" in 2009 to explore more in depths the sites that may be worthy of official recognition. The outcome of this study, which was led by military historian John S. Salmon, was a report entitled "Protecting America: Cold War Defensive Sites – A National Historical Landmark Theme Study," published by the National Historic Landmarks Program under the auspices of the National Park Service in 2011. The report outlines guidelines and properties that could be used to define sites as relevant to the Cold War, and contains an inventory of more than 500 potential sites that should be considered for national landmark status and further development as historical sites.

Though the report recognizes that "the Cold War touched virtually every aspect of life in the United States and abroad," the majority of the inventoried sites focused on those sites primarily related to national defense, military activities, and nuclear developments (Salmon, 2011). This narrow definition of Cold War heritage frames the Cold War as primarily a military engagement, despite the abundance of rhetoric that emphasizes the "cold" nature of the conflict.

Visitors to these sites are thus presented with an interesting contradiction as they encounter a supposed non-war through the lens of military engagement. This contradiction could be compounded further if, as one member of the theme study's committee suggested to me, the registry coalesces into an official "Cold War Heritage Trail" (Powers Jr., personal communication, 2018). This trail would allow visitors to journey through "Cold War America" along a designated path that would take them to those Cold War sites deemed most significant and relevant to understanding the conflict. If the fourteen Cold War sites currently listed on the National Historic Registry are any indication, the trail will primarily consist of former missile bases, nuclear plants, radar facilities, and civilian bunkers. The use of these sites further complicates the long-held representational trope that the Cold War approached, but never reached, the level of military conflict. It remains unclear whether or not proponents of the Heritage Trail have reckoned with this tension, or how it might be resolved within the scope of the Heritage Trail.

Many of these sites were studied by Wiener (2012), who suggests that these Cold War sites do not necessarily focus on telling the story of the Cold War. While many of the sites he documents often begin by telling the standard conservative narrative of the Cold War as a good and victorious war, Weiner points to the low attendance figures at many sites as evidence that this narrative has failed to compellingly capture public interest. Alternatively, it could be that such sites lack a sense of contextual coherence or congruence necessary to make them compelling and resonant to contemporary audiences. In an attempt to attract more visitors and remain financially solvent, then, many Cold War sites have had to pivot, revamping their site narratives to more broadly appealing, contemporary topics. For example, a former nuclear weapons factory in Colorado shifted its focus from national defense and weapons production to emphasizing the success of nuclear clean up in the post-war era and lobbying for the safety and success of nuclear power (Wiener, 2012, p. 7-8). In other words, despite this plethora of so-called Cold War sites, few of these sites throughout the U.S. actually seek to critically engage explicitly with the Cold War and its legacy. These new narratives, with their focus on more contemporary issues and causes, gloss over the need to understand, situate, and engage with the Cold War in a

meaningful way. It is this void that the VOCMF seeks to fill through its memorial and museum projects.

While these heritage sites emphasize the place of memory of the Cold War by drawing attention to the physical remnants of military conflict within the built American landscape, private collections and museums instead focus on the material trappings of everyday life by focusing on Cold War objects and memorabilia. Such projects feature catalogs acquired through private collecting and donations, and vary in terms of their success. Perhaps the most successful is the Wende, a private museum in Culver City, CA. The Wende catalog focuses not on the U.S. Cold War experience, but instead on material artifacts "that record life, expression, and political developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union" from 1945 to 1991. The Wende seems to have escaped a key problem that characterizes many Cold War memory sites – a lack of interest from the public (Wiener, 2012). It captures public interest by creating a compelling, recognizable framework within which it can position the Cold War.

The material objects are a crucial component of this success, given that the major ideological differences between East and West are often distilled down into a handful of readily identifiable symbolic objects. For example, Sonnevend (2016) describes how the media emblematized the fall of the Berlin Wall through images of Trabants and piles of bananas, with the Trabants standing in for the planned economies of the East and the bananas (notoriously hard to obtain beyond the so-called Iron Curtain) representing the excess of the West. Additionally, the lack of trade between East and West meant that consumer goods from one side were virtually unknown to the other beyond these few emblematized images, leading to a Western fetish with the material culture of communism. This suggests that while Americans may be reluctant to confront their own Cold War past, they are more than willing to engage with a Cold War narrative that focuses on the "communist other." The Wende thus shifts focus to the Cold War as a conflict that happened somewhere else, with the omission of the American Cold War experience implicitly reinforcing a representation of the Cold War as an external conflict. This successful externalization of the Cold War, which frames the conflict as something that happens "over there, but not here," is also a crucial component of the VOCMF's success.

The Wende can be contrasted with the Cold War Museum, a grassroots museum project that instead focuses on U.S. Cold War material culture, but with markedly less success. The Cold War Museum was founded by Gary Powers Jr. in 1996 as a series of traveling exhibitions aimed at generating support for a larger museum project. The project was conceived of by Powers Jr. as a way to honor "Cold War veterans" like his father, the POW Francis Gary Powers. An American pilot who was shot down over the Soviet Union during the famed U-2 incident, Powers Sr. was held prisoner in the Soviet Union for over two years before being released during a prisoner exchange in 1960.

Over the past two and half decades, the museum has amassed thousands of artifacts, most of which are currently in storage and awaiting curation. While Powers maintains that there has always been interest in the project, difficulties surrounding fundraising and securing a site suggest a less than enthusiastic reception from major donors and commemorative stakeholders. Although the museum was finally able to procure a space in Warrenton, VA and stage a "soft opening" in 2011, it is currently only open on weekends and by appointment, and features sparse curation with only a small fraction of the museum's holdings on display – the rest is currently in storage. Powers, who has since stepped down as head of the museum, states that the project has struggled to maintain the strategic partnerships and funding commitments it needs to grow in scale and scope (Powers Jr., personal communication, 2018). Such problems are, in many ways, similar to those faced by the VOCMF during its initial years. However, while the VOCMF has leaned heavily on its ties to key political figures and its federal mandate to build a memorial, the Cold War Museum instead operates independently, often to its detriment (Powers Jr., personal communication, 2018).

Additional snippets of the Cold War run throughout smaller museum projects and exhibits, such as corners of presidential libraries, parts of the Smithsonian, and other standard American history museums. Situated within the larger narratives of these broader projects, actual commemoration of the Cold War takes a back seat to the broader institutional goals and narratives. For example, while the Kennedy Presidential Library features a permanent exhibition on his 1963 visit to Berlin, its larger purpose is to document and pay tribute to Kennedy's foreign

policy acumen during his presidency, rather than to critically engage with the U.S. Cold War experience ("Section of the Berlin Wall", 2019). Similarly, Washington D.C.'s Newseum, which unfortunately shuttered its doors in 2019, displayed large chunks of the Berlin Wall as a platform to think about the role of the press in international relations and foreign policy (Mellen, 2019).

In sum, the Cold War commemorative landscape in the U.S. remains both fractured and narrow, housed in an array of smaller sites with an emphasis on military activity, national defense, and material culture. The sites often present mixed narratives that combine Cold War frameworks with other concerns or themes, and public reception towards such sites remains tepid, with many of them recording low attendance and financial struggles (Wiener, 2012). In contrast, the VOCMF positions itself as an organization that can fill a critical hole in U.S. Cold War memory by generating many of the national commemorative practices typical of other conflicts and offering a clear, coherent narrative of America's Cold War past. While the VOCMF initially focused on the construction of a victims memorial and a brick and mortar Cold War museum, its mission has since expanded to include a virtual museum, an oral history project, the development of educational materials, and an active social media and online presence. Though couched in a rhetoric of memorializing Cold War victimhood, the VOCMF positions itself as the nation's key mnemonic actor in facilitating Cold War remembrance as a whole.

Background: The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

In 1993, then-President Bill Clinton signed an Act of Congress that called for the construction of "an International Memorial to the Victims of Communism" and "the appointment of a commission to oversee the design, construction and all other pertinent details of the memorial" (Bill Summary and Status, 1994). Co-sponsored by Representatives Dana Rohrabacher and Tim Lantos and Senators Claiborne Pell and Jesse Helms, the act was part of a larger call by the conservative right to acknowledge and reinforce the "terrors of communism" inflicted on populations around the globe. However, as has been customary over the past several decades, Congress prohibited the use of federal funds for the creation of the memorial. As a result, the VOCMF was created in 1993 to facilitate fundraising efforts and planning logistics, and was

initially chaired by conservative historian and Heritage Foundation fellow Lee Edwards. President George W. Bush serves as honorary chairman, and the foundation boasts an advisory council made up of conservative heavyweights and prominent anti-communist dissidents.

The original vision of the VCOMF was to raise $100 million for the construction of a Victims of Communism museum and memorial in Washington D.C. While the memorial (which we will return to later) was dedicated by George W. Bush in 2007, the brick-and-mortar Victims of Communism Museum remains just a vision. During its first six years (1993-1999), the VCOMF raised less than half a million dollars towards its goal, forcing it to scale back its mission to a $25-million-dollar museum project. After just barely meeting the $825,000 needed to build the memorial, the VCOMF turned to other activities while continuing to advocate for a more permanent museum space. These alternative projects include the curation of an online museum website, the annual awarding of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, and the publication of working papers and educational curriculum.

The guiding ideology of the VOCMF is very much in line with the broader conservative project of fostering a triumphalist narrative after the end of the Cold War. Initially developed by conservative politicians in the post-Cold War era to retroactively legitimate certain policy initiatives under the Reagan administration (Wiener, 2012), triumphalism soon became the dominant frame within which America's role in the Cold War was interpreted. Triumphalism promotes the idea that the United States won an unconditional victory in the Cold War, and asserts that the world is better off when the U.S. takes an active role in shaping the international sphere. The supposed triumph of capitalism over communism was also used to legitimize a specific version of neoliberalism as a political and economic ideology.

This turn towards triumphalism represented a marked departure from the fear and anxiety that had previously characterized Cold War America. Beginning with the unexpected fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and up through the gradual dissolution of the Soviet Union, Cold War narratives in the U.S. began to move away from communist threats from abroad, mutually assured nuclear destruction, and proxy wars in the global south. Triumphalism made the legacy of the Cold War useful for the West, and in particular, U.S. conservatives who asserted that

“Communism’s loss was America’s success” (Schrecker,2004, p. 2). Viewed another way, the triumphalist narrative functioned as a kind of internal and external propaganda. Internally, it was used to rationalize and justify certain policies to the American public, while externally it asserted that the United States was the the world’s most powerful hegemon, and that this was a beneficial arrangement for the world in general.

The triumphalist narrative is significant not only for what it includes, but for what it excludes as well. Triumphalism purposefully leaves out many of the more problematic aspects of the Cold War’s legacy, rendering many of the effects of the conflict invisible (Schrecker, 2004). It created an uncritical view of the United States, and completely ignored negative repercussions stemming from U.S. actions during the conflict. The rise of the national security state, the explosion of nuclear proliferation around the world, and lingering economic repercussions resulting from the massive Cold War military buildup were either dismissed or absent from the conversation. Triumphalism created a singular winner, the United States, meaning everyone else was either a loser or a victim. This dichotomy between winners and losers, ever-present in contemporary right-wing U.S. populist discourse, is readily apparent in the foundation’s Victims of Communism Memorial.

The Memorial

From the outset, the Victims of Communism Memorial faced heavy criticism on a variety of fronts, especially from foreign actors who felt the memorial was both overtly propagandistic and antagonistic in nature. The Chinese embassy felt the design was “an attempt to defame China” by explicitly invoking the events of Tiananmen Square and casting the Chinese government in an unfavorable light. A Chinese foreign minister further accused the U.S. of “pushing a Cold War mentality” and attempting to meddle in China’s internal affairs. The Russian academic Tsygankov (2009) describes the memorial as an example of what he calls Washington’s “Russophobia”, pointing to the memorial as a revival of Cold War symbolism that holds a distinctly anti-Russian slant. Other critics argued that the memorial was inherently hypocritical. When asked about the memorial during a press conference in 2007, Vladimir Putin famously responded to the Russian press that "We have not used nuclear weapons against a civilian population. We have not

sprayed thousands of kilometers with chemicals, or dropped on a small country seven times more bombs than in all the Great Patriotic War" (qtd in Semin, 2007). Such hypocrisy was also noted by Chinese scholar Shi Yinhong, who argued that "In the capitalist countries, many bad things have also happened, but we do not erect monuments to the victims of capitalism" (qtd in Semin, 2007). Other political leaders from China, Russia, and several Eastern European countries lodged similar criticisms.

Such tensions, as well as the larger context of the Bush Administration and ongoing war in Iraq, made the memorial's dedication a politically charged affair. One rhetorical strategy dominated the remarks made by various political leaders: the repeated linking of communism to other extremist ideologies, such as fascism and radical Islam. These linkages created a sense of historical continuity that brings all past conflicts under an umbrella narrative of combatting extremist ideologies abroad, which allows for the continual validation of the past and provides pre-emptive legitimation for action in the future. Twinned with this narrative is the implied absence of homegrown extremism here in the U.S., erasing or obscuring the decades of dangerous ideologies that have flourished here. More specifically, the monument was dedicated at a time in which Republicans needed to not only reinvigorate waning enthusiasm for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also generate ongoing support for a perpetual war on terror with no clear end date in sight.

This is reflected in the inscription on the memorial itself, which reads, "To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty…To the freedom and independence of all captive nations and peoples." By drawing attention to the idea that there are still victims of communism to be saved around the world, the memorial primes its audience to believe that the U.S. might be needed to intervene – just as it did during the Cold War. Of course, it's undeniable that communist regimes do still exist in parts of the world, with various levels of stability and influence. However, the memorial's message leaves no room for complexity or the considerations of individual nations and peoples. All nations and individuals living under communism are aggregated into one indistinguishable mass, and ascribed the same overarching

characteristics. This leaves little room for a discussion of alternative ways of addressing the issue of communism abroad: the Cold War context hits the audience over the head.

At the time of the dedication, communism was not seen as the primary threat to the well-being of the United States. However, this did not stop the VOCMF, or the politicians helping to dedicate the memorial, from using the historical understanding and fear of communism to their advantage. They argued that Nazi fascism during World War II and Soviet communism during the Cold War have since given way to radical Islam and a perpetual war on terror, exemplified by the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Coming on the heels of the Cold War, political elites as well as the news media attempted to import a Cold War frame and ideology onto this new conflict. The "us v. them" mentality that dominated the Cold War was repurposed against radical Islam, to great effect. For this frame to be accepted, however, the public needed to see the linkages and similarities between the two. This was done in large part through politically charged speeches and statements from a wide array of political elites. The dedication of the memorial provided one such rhetorical opportunity for conservative politicians and then-President George W. Bush to use the Cold War to frame the present. The Cold War became a useful mnemonic shorthand for understanding contemporary political realities of the 2000s and beyond. Such shorthand also works backwards, reshaping the conflicts that came before it through their repeated association.

In his headlining dedication remarks, Bush states that the memorial is a reminder to the nation that evil still exists in the world, and goes on to draw specific parallels between communism and radical Islam:

> Like the Communists, the terrorists and radicals who attacked our nation are followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom, crushes all dissent, has expansionist ambitions and pursues totalitarian aims. Like the Communists, our new enemies believe the innocent can be murdered to serve a radical vision. Like the Communists, our new enemies are dismissive of free peoples, claiming that those of us who live in liberty are weak and lack the resolve to defend our free way of life. And like the Communists, the followers of violent Islamic radicalism are doomed to fail. (Bush, 2007).

Rhetorically, Bush accomplishes a lot in just a few sentences. He links communism and Islam, re-asserts core American values, reminds Americans of who they are as a people, and reminds

them that the United States always emerges victorious. It's a rhetoric that is familiar, as the use of wars past to justify wars in the present is nothing new (Winter, 2006).

Representative Dana Rohrabacher echoed many of Bush's remarks, drawing together past and present in his own way. He begins by referencing Ronald Reagan and the "tear down that wall" speech the former president gave in Berlin in 2007, arguing that Reagan's brave "commitment to confronting evil" was a crucial aspect of communism's defeat (Rohrabacher, 2007). Additionally, "Americans [and] American leaders played a pivotal role in that historic battle" against a "scourge of an ideology that has been relegated to the dust bins of history" (Rohrabacher, 2007). This advanced the narrative that the end of communism could not have come about without American involvement, despite much evidence that the Soviet regime was already beginning to crumble.

Rohrabacher goes on to use this past to make more general statements on the role of the U.S. in the world. He states, "So it comes to [Americans] to take a stand and lead the way in those battles that determine the fate of mankind" (Rohrabacher, 2007). This is accompanied by more historical linkages, with references to Japanese militarism, Nazism, and communism coming fast and furious. Rohrabacher then moved forward into the present, reminding us that we need to "deal" with China, Laos, Cuba and other nations in a way that only America can. Finally, after that buildup, he introduces the "new scourge threatening the free people of this world…and that is scourge and the form and the threat in the form of radical terror and radical Islam" (Rohrabacher, 2007). Like Bush, Rohrabacher reiterates that radical Islam will not win, just like communism and all other ideologies failed to win against the power of the U.S.

Representative Tom Lantos, another keynote speaker at the dedication, deployed a similar framework of understanding. Lantos reminds us that communism was not the only threat to free people in the world, proceeding to then connect communism to Nazism as well. He concludes in a similar fashion to both Bush and Rohrabacher, drawing attention to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and proclaiming that it is up to the U.S. to make sure that "no communism, no Nazism, no Ahmadinejad-ism will prevail on this planet" (Lantos, 2007). A Holocaust survivor who actively fought against the Nazi regime, Lantos's experience lent an

additional air of authenticity and validation to his remarks, as well as to the overall event as a whole.

While these remarks specifically addressed the present by emphasizing radical Islam and justifying American action against it, it's important to note that the speaker's comments also referenced the future more generally. They give a blanket mandate to the United States to intervene in any conflict or ideology that can be successfully seen as linked to or an extension of any of the aforementioned "evil ideologies." This sets a dangerous premise by dictating or demanding future action on an undefined and unforeseeable enemy.

Social Media and Online Presence

In addition to its physical memorial site, the VOCMF maintains an active online and social media presence, primarily though its Twitter feed and Facebook page. The VOCMF is prolific, posting several times a day to each platform. There is significant overlap between content, with all of VOCMF's content posting simultaneously to Twitter and Facebook. While its Facebook page shares upcoming in-person engagements through the platform's "Events" feature and it will occasionally share photos or videos from these events, the vast majority of content generated by VOCMF is in the form of sharing news stories from other sources. These stories, which almost exclusively focus on the sinister goings on in communist or socialist countries and the dangerous actions of far-left political parties and actors in non-communist countries, are accompanied by captions and commentary that amplify the role of communist ideologies in the linked stories. When appropriate, the VOCMF will also highlight relevant activities it's undertaken or materials it's produced that are pertinent to the story at hand. Based on a qualitative analysis of over 3000 VOCMF tweets from the past three years, three major thematic categories emerge. These include 1) sharing stories about the dangers of communism, 2) providing further education about the dangers of communism, and 3) connecting communism to broader societal, cultural, and political problems. These categories are by no means mutually exclusive, and several themes are often present within individual tweets and stories

Underpinning the invocation of each of these themes is the use of relevant anniversaries of historical events in an attempt to draw comparisons between the past and the ongoing fight

against communism. Some seek to correct the historical record, drawing on the beliefs of the VOCMF to highlight what they think is a gap or a misunderstanding of past events. Other tweets include popular #OTD (On This Day) posts, as well as drawing attention to things like Holodomor Remembrance Day and their own Victims of Communism Remembrance Day. Many of these tweets also focus on making comparisons between fascism and communism, reinforcing the historical continuity between the two events that paints them as similarly dangerous. For example, a November 2017 tweet features a graphic of a cartoon Hitler and Stalin side by side, accompanied by text stating “Different in theory, identical in practice: Time to put both of these genocidal ideologies on the ash heap of history! #KnowTheTruth” (VoCommunism, 2017b). This strategic conflation between communism and fascism mirrors the rhetoric of the memorial dedication ceremony. Drawing on such dates and anniversaries provides an easily identifiable and logical opportunity for the VOCMF to offer commentary on the contemporary state of the world.

The primary use of the VOCMF Twitter feed is to share stories of hardship, violence, and loss from communist regimes around the world. These tweets tend to follow a similar format, featuring brief commentary on the story with an emphasis on negative outcomes, a link to a story from a news outlet or, more occasionally, the VOCMF blog, and a hashtag. For example, one such tweet might read “Venezuelan dictator @Nicolas Maduro claimed victory in Sunday's presidential election, despite record-low turnout and widespread reports of fraud and coercion. #SOSVenezuela.” (VoCommunism, 2018c). Absent from these tweets are any explanations or contexts, outside of communism, that may be related to the stories shared. The VOCMF does away with the political, cultural, economic, and individual differences present across these countries, instead choosing to solely focus on a constructed communist other as the main cause of strife. These tweets are thus meant to serve as both cautionary tales of the dangers of communism, as well as a reminder of the consistent present danger it still poses.

Another significant subset of tweets is dedicated to providing further education on the dangers of communism, as well as highlighting the lack of existing knowledge on this topic. For example, an October 2017 tweet asks tweeters to “RT if you think we should educate millennials

on the history of communism instead of whitewashing and glorifying it #CommunismKills," with an appended graphic that claims one-third of millennials believe George W. Bush was responsible for more deaths than Joseph Stalin (VoCommunism, 2017a). However, as is typical of many VOCMF tweets, the statement is left purposefully vague. It's not clear where this one-third statistic comes from, and there is no elaboration on how or why communism is being glorified, or by whom. A very conservative vein runs through these tweets, and implicit in its commentary is a fear of the rise of socialist or communist ideals amongst American youth. The VOCFM portrays communism as completely irreconcilable with U.S. democracy, despite the sharp increase in far-left leaning ideologies over the past several elections. This was particularly evident during the 2020 Democratic primary, where the VOCMF explicitly linked increased support for Bernie Sanders by Gen Z and millennial voters to "the historical amnesia about the dangers of communism and socialism" (VoCommunism, 2019a). Citing its own survey on US Attitudes towards socialism as evidence, the VOCMF's stated "need to redouble [its] efforts to educate America's youth about the history of communist regimes and the dangers of socialism today" Is an attempt to influence young voters ("2019 Annual Poll", 2019).

A final category focuses on making the fights against communism relevant to broader political and cultural themes, or otherwise positioning them as a threat to traditional "American" values, as, for example, using Christmas as an occasion to discuss religious persecution under many communist regimes. This extends to events and holidays that are seemingly unconnected to communism or the Cold War. For example, on Earth Day 2018 the VOCMF tweeted that "Earth is a pretty major victim of communism, so we're spending Earth Day explaining all the ways communism is terrible for the environment. You're welcome. #GoGreenNotRed #EarthDay2018," with a link to a VOCMF blog providing further explanation (VoCommunism, 2018a). With these tenuous (at best) claims, the VOCMF implies that the environmental ills of the world can be primarily attributed to communism. Left out of this analysis is that all of the activities highlighted in the post – including nuclear testing, over-farming, large industrial and military projects, and more – have also been undertaken by capitalist societies for decades. Also left out is any mention of the Industrial Revolution, considered by many to be a key contributing factor to the climate crisis

that was primarily driven by Western nations. No holiday is immune – even International Star Wars Day merited a tweet comparing the U.S.S.R. to the Galactic "Evil Empire" (VoCommunism, 2018b).

The common thread that ties these tweets together is the framing of communism (and/or socialism, as the two are often conflated throughout VOCMF materials) as the key explanatory factor for the ills of the world. Communism becomes the primary way to explain a whole host of issues and problems – social, political, cultural, and more. By selectively sharing and interpreting current events through the lens of a communist threat, the VOCMF also continually justifies its educational efforts about the Cold War. VCOMF's Executive Director Marion Smith argues that "we [as a nation] didn't take quite seriously enough the need to educate about the totalitarian experiences, phenomenon of the 20th century, with the view to making it less likely in the 21st that they would be held captive from those dangerous ideologies and dangerous governments" (Smith, personal communication, 2018). This focus on contemporary iterations of communism and socialism allows the VOCMF to continually position communism as an ongoing, pressing threat to the contemporary political, social and economic order. Accordingly, education about communism becomes a way to fix the vast majority of the world's ills.

Ongoing Initiatives and Projects

In addition to the construction of the memorial, several other key projects drive the initial work of the VOCMF. These include obtaining official recognition for the victims of communism in the form of a national remembrance day, and the construction of a physical brick and mortar museum. It would later develop two additional initiatives as bridges to these bigger works, including a virtual online museum and an annual award ceremony that also serves as its largest annual fundraiser. While not as prominent as the memorial or the public online presence maintained by the foundation, these secondary projects work in tandem with the larger goals of the foundation to shape and propagate a distinct understanding of the history and legacy of the Cold War.

The establishment of the National Day for the Victims of Communism resulted from years of lobbying by the VOCMF. Attempts had been made to persuade both the Bush and Obama

administrations to create such a remembrance day, but Smith declined to speculate why the idea resonated with the Trump government. However, he believes that there is a growing recognition of the lingering threat that communism still poses to the world at large, citing the continued existence of communist regimes in South America and South East Asia, as well as the continued rise of China as examples (Smith, personal communication, 2018). Establishing a national day of remembrance was seen as an important step in increasing awareness of the foundation and validating its work, with an eye towards increasing donations that could fund other projects. This national day of remembrance was also seen as important validation of the work the foundation has already done, with Smith stating that the victims of "almost every other conflict" are honored through such commemorative action. This was thus seen as both an important step in legitimizing the Cold War as a conflict, and in equating the victims of the Cold War with those of other, more conventional conflicts. It also served as a way to legitimize the VOCMF as a major mnemonic actor with influence.

As an intermediate step between the construction of the memorial and the building of the museum, the VOCMF developed the "Global Museum on Communism, an entirely virtual museum that launched in 2009 (and went offline four years later). Originally seen as a way to "honor the victim's memory…through its stated mission to educate the public about communism's crimes against humanity and the heroes who successfully resisted it" (Lowe and Joel, 2013), the site featured educational material (such as 15 different country profiles that document communist regimes in national contexts), quizzes designed to test visitors' knowledge about the crimes of communism, and five major curated exhibits. These exhibits include an interactive timeline about the spread of communism, beginning from 1848 and extending through present day; an interactive map highlighting nations that have experienced communist rule; a 3D, online replica of a Gulag; a Hall of Heroes; and a Gallery of Infamy – with the latter two highlighting prominent players on either side of the conflict. Overall, the virtual museum framed the Cold War primarily as a conflict external to the U.S. by focusing on events that happened abroad. No significant attention is paid to the effects of the Cold War here at home – a common omission that runs throughout the foundation's work. According to Smith, the museum went offline in order to

reallocate foundation resources to other projects (Smith, personal communication, 2018), though their digital materials can still be accessed through the Internet's miraculous Way Back machine.

The physical museum, however, has been by far the hardest to realize. Smith reiterates that the construction of a museum remains a long-standing goal of the foundation, and that they are "closer than ever" to fulfilling that goal – though he declined to disclose exactly what time frame the foundation is working with. For Smith and VOCMF, the museum represents a crucial step towards the institutionalization of Cold War history, and they see it as an opportunity to bring together their various goals and initiatives together into one dedicated site. Smith equates the lack of a museum with a lack of reckoning and understanding about the legacy and impact of the Cold War, stating that "…to not have a historical record, to not honor the victims, to not have a moral reckoning, to not educate future generations about this very difficult complex history, you know, it's not going to help us have a brighter future, it's not what we should accept" (Smith, personal communication, 2018). The VOCMF understands the museum as a mnemonic form and historic institution that bestows legitimacy on a given event or era, in part drawing on commemorative templates developed by other communities, such as Holocaust survivors. According to Smith,

> …we have a lot to learn from our Jewish friends, who did excellent work in telling their story, and helping us feel apart of it. And understanding that ideas have consequences, and we need to understand the rise of fascism, we need to understand the structure and goals and operations of the Nazi party, we need to understand the Holocaust, and we need to educate future generations with at least one purpose of that being that it never happens again. (Smith, personal communication, 2018)

In drawing this comparison between the Holocaust and the Cold War, Smith mimics the conflation of fascism and communism that ran throughout the dedication remarks for the memorial. These comments also suggest that the museum is seen as privileged space, and that its mere existence would represent an important victory for the foundation.

That's not to say that the foundation hasn't given serious consideration to the kinds of exhibits and narratives that would fill its proposed museum space. Unlike the Cold War Museum or the Wende, the VOCMF plans to deemphasize historical objects and instead focus on facts,

narratives, and reconstructions (Smith, personal communication, 2018). While the focus on Cold War victimhood remains, the foundation plans to focus less on the daily experiences of those who lived under communism by instead focusing on what the experiences of those victims can tell us about the larger geopolitical contexts. Additionally, the museum would replicate many of the exhibits previously featured in the Global Museum on Communism. For example, museum plans include physical reconstructions of sites such as Vietnamese prisons and Soviet Gulags, as well as more standard exhibits detailing the history of dangers of communism. The Gallery of Heroes and the Hall of Infamy would be a focal point, with the former highlighting prominent dissidents and Western allies and the latter focusing on "mass murderers and tyrants" (Lowe and Joel, 2013).

The Gallery of Heroes is directly connected to another major initiative of the VOCMF. A highlight of the foundation's annual fundraising gala is the awarding of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, awarded since 1999 to "those individuals and institutions that have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to freedom and democracy and opposition to communism and all other forms of tyranny" ("Medal of Freedom", 2018). The medal has been awarded to a wide array of actors and organizations, including U.S. politicians Steny Hoyer and Dana Rohrabacher, an assortment of U.S. military leaders, prominent academics and dissidents from current and former communist nations, the Lockheed Martin Corporation, and Pope John Paul II. These diverse awardees suggest a broad understanding of what it means to oppose communism and tyranny, and the inclusion of U.S. military leaders, politicians, and corporations suggests that the award functions, at least in part, to congratulate the U.S. on a job well done. Also interesting is that awardees must demonstrate not only an opposition to communism, but a commitment to democracy as well. It is not enough, then, to combat tyranny – one must also subscribe to the idea that a Western, U.S.-centric form of democracy is the best way to govern. It is this overarching narrative of American dominance that continues to fuel populist conceptualizations of U.S. history.

Populism and the Politics of the Past

Looking at both populism and the Cold War alongside one another helps to clarify the ways in which populism draws on the state of memory work regarding the Cold War. As a concept, populism remains relatively difficult to pin down. Of interest to scholars in fields as varied as political science, sociology, political economy, and media studies, as well as to political players, the media, and the general public, the term is invoked by a variety of actors in different contexts and oriented to different ends. This makes the Cold War a relevant pivot for those invested in populist ideologies, as well as those scholars that are seeking to understand populist movements. Despite living in what some have called "The Age of Populism" (Krastev, 2011), for many what populism looks like, who qualifies as a populist, and how populism gains traction and unfolds remain highly contested. Populism has been "described variously as a pathology, a style, a syndrome, and a doctrine," and is often considered a thin ideology that "conveys a distinct set of ideas about the political which interact with the established ideational traditions of full ideologies" (Stanley, 2008). Accordingly, despite these definitional difficulties, different attempts have been made to identify the key characteristics or commonalities that seem broadly applicable to populist movements, parties, and regimes. These attempts range from suggesting broad conceptual categories and themes to detailing specific tactics and strategies and articulating core debates and tensions. A key theme that emerges from these frameworks is the centrality of the past in general, and the Cold War in particular, to understanding the contemporary dynamics of right wing populism.

The absence of concrete definitions of populism enhances the relevance of the Cold War for populist agendas, with many scholars opting to develop frameworks or categories like the Cold War within which populism can be broadly understood. For example, Müller (2016) articulates that the common trope of anti-elitism can often apply equally to a wide assortment of political actors and parties – not just populists. He proposes adding to additional criteria for recognizing populist movements, including thinking of populism as explicitly anti-pluralist and as a form of identity politics. Key for Muller across these categories is the construction of a moral legitimacy to rule. Within these broad themes, more specific characteristics and tactics of

populism can be identified. Synthesizing a variety of scholarly work on populism, Finchelstein lists nine hallmarks of contemporary populism, including the sacralization of politics; an emphasis on one group as the "true people" led by a "true ruler"; narratives of anti-elitism; the construction of the opposition as the enemy; charismatic leaders who are seen as the voice of the people; a dominant executive branch that cripples the other branches of power; attacks on journalism; radical nationalism and an emphasis on celebrity culture; and anti liberal elections (2017, p. 20). Many of these elements mirror key features that characterized the U.S. Cold War political landscape, as extraordinary measures were justified in the name of maintaining American dominance. Positioning the U.S. and its leader as the true defenders of liberty, the portrayal of the Eastern bloc as the communist enemy, calls for national unity and displays of overt nationalism, and the overwhelming power granted to the U.S. presidency to act unilaterally during the Cold War are but a few examples that highlight these similarities.

The binary oppositions that drove the Cold War are also represented in contemporary conceptualizations of populism. Rather than focusing on the different characteristics of populist movements, Wodak (2015) instead opts to distill these features down into a core debate that can be transferred between different populist case studies. She argues that at its core, populism is dependent on setting up "the good fight" between the true, chosen people ("we"), and identifiable, ongoing threats from above, below, and beyond ("others"). The more detailed characteristics identified by other scholars thus become ways of marshalling control and preparation in the service of defending us from them. Within these characteristics is an inherent tension between the politics of fear and the politics of hope, with populist movements strategically constructing both the threat and the solution to the threat in a way that further legitimizes their claim to rule. In a similar fashion, Krasteva (2017) favors a macro perspective that defines populism as a series of key transitions that transform the political landscape. These transitions include shifts from class politics to value politics; party politics to symbolic politics; ideological politics to identity politics; and socio-economic cleavages to cultural cleavages. Such shifts can be at least partially linked to

either Cold War politics, or the political and social upheaval that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Populists are known to revise history in the service of their political aims and outcomes, and the Cold War serves them well in this regard – particularly in the United States. Rather than serving as its own distinct characteristic, historical revisionism can be thought of as a mechanism that contributes to and complements the development of these factors. The highly malleable nature of the past means that it can be shaped, mobilized, and utilized in unexpected ways – and of course, the malleable mobilization of the past is not limited just to populist movements. However, there is a growing recognition that these uses and misuses of history remain especially foundational to populist movements, and that the manipulation of history both enables and mediates other key characteristics. Populism "creates or re-writes its own concepts of history, charging them with nationalist ides of homogeneity, and is able to fuel political conflicts between states and groups by using arguments…which appeal to past collective experiences and or common sense narratives" in ways that are often misleading, simplistic, and fallacious (Wodak, 2015, p. 39). By positioning themselves as true and faithful interpreters of the past, populists construct a moral framework in which they are seen as legitimate representatives of "the people" (Müller, 2016). As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the Cold War requires fewer revisions to satisfy populist notions of the past than one might think.

Many of the themes, characteristics, and categories featured in these frameworks map onto the political and cultural changes that came to a head during the Cold War era and continue to dominate the post-Cold War world - albeit in more underground, less explicit ways (Zelizer, 2016). Much of this can be attributed to the overwhelming consensus that the Cold War fundamentally centered and altered a new kind of identity politics that would go on to permeate society at all levels. The four transitions in political life identified by Krasteva (towards value politics, symbolic politics, identify politics, and cultural cleavages) similarly characterized the Cold War era, where Americans were called to overcome class, party, and socio-economic differences in order to band together in defense of democratic values and the American way of life. The "us v.

them" binary identified by Wodak as a central motivation for populist movements, while by no means new, nevertheless reached its apex during the Cold War era. The division of the world into Western and Eastern power blocs remains unprecedented in both scope and scale, and the lingering effects of that form of enemy formation are still being felt in a variety of ways – both politically and otherwise.

Finchelstein takes these comparisons one step further by explicitly arguing that the Cold War and post-Cold War era are crucial to understanding modern manifestations of populism. He situates populism within the legacy of fascism, arguing that "as post fascism, populism emerges as a form of authoritarian democracy for the Cold War world – one that could adapt the totalitarian version of politics to the postwar hegemony of democratic representation" (2017, p. 22). Populism thus develops out of the recognition that explicit fascism was no longer a viable option for authoritarian rule after the World War II, and that it works within the dominant framework of liberal democracy that developed in opposition to the spread of communist regimes during the Cold War. As will be detailed further on, the denial of such a connection hinders our ability to draw connections between these authoritarian regimes of the past and their contemporary counterparts.

Acknowledging that the Cold War era was foundational to the development of contemporary populist movements means that we need to seriously interrogate both the enduring appeal of the Cold War as a popular reference point for populists, and, by extension, the continued relevance of Cold War remembrance for understanding why the use of the past matters, particularly in the American context. This is especially true given the outsized role that the Cold War continues to play in shaping American political and cultural life more broadly.

The Commemorative Priorities of the VOCMF

The activities of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation help to actively construct a legacy of the Cold War that maps onto the understandings of history that have been strategically mobilized by contemporary right wing-populist groups in the United States. In

claiming this, I am by no means suggesting that the VOCMF is a right-wing populist group, or that that it is responsible for actions undertaken by these groups. Rather, I am arguing that in order to better understand these groups, we need to interrogate where the historical frameworks that underpin these dangerous ideologies come from. This means we need to pay attention to the narratives and frameworks that emerge from contemporary commemorative activities.

Contemporary commemorative practices around the Cold War have given rise to three key premises that inform or align with the historical framework mobilized by the likes of Donald Trump and the Proud Boys. These include 1) The U.S. "won" the Cold War in an unconditional victory for democracy and Western values; 2) Even though the U.S. was victorious, the threat of and battle against communism is perpetual and ongoing, requiring constant vigilance; and 3) The Cold War was but one instantiation of the U.S. necessarily intervening to stop the halt of dangerous ideological threats. Mapping onto these themes is a set of ensuing commemorative priorities that elucidate how the VOCMF makes the Cold War matter, including solidifying the Cold War's legacy, linking the Cold War's legacy, and extending the Cold War's legacy. Each of these themes and commemorative priorities offers ensuing implications for understanding U.S. contemporary right wing populism.

The U.S. won the Cold War: Solidifying the Cold War's legacy

Underlying each of the VOCMF's commemorative activities is the idea that the U.S. "won" the Cold War, and that this victory represents the validation of capitalism, democracy, and neoliberal values. This priority can be seen as **solidifying** the Cold War's legacy by selecting and presenting evidence that supports a U.S. victory, and obscures or ignores contradictory claims. This is most concretely represented in the remarks from the memorial dedication ceremony. While much of the work done by the VOCMF focuses on the ongoing threat of communism today, the dedication ceremony balances this focus with a resolute commitment to the idea that despite this ongoing struggle, the U.S. still achieved victory in the Cold War. This is done through historical comparison to other similar victories, as well as out-and-out declarations about the might and success of the U.S. Smith also emphasizes the pivotal role played by the U.S. during the Cold War, while simultaneously cautioning against complacency. He argues that while the

U.S. won a major victory in the Cold War, initial complacency brought on by Cold War weariness has allowed communism to flourish in other corners of the world (Smith, personal communication, 2018). Thus, it's time for the U.S. to reengage with this threat at all levels, with the VOCMF spearheading such educational and remembrance efforts.

In many ways, the VOCMF tries to bury this assertion of victory by framing its work through the lens of memorialization and education. However, it's clear that each of these goals is couched in the language of U.S. victory. This is clear in the dedication remarks to the memorial, which continually reassert U.S. dominance despite the supposed focus on memorializing the past and present victims of communism. Likewise, the Global Museum on Communism's focus on education was built on a foundation of U.S. victory by externalizing the Cold War as something that happened somewhere else, but not "here." Finally, the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom cites a commitment to democracy as an award criteria, explicitly framing the battle against communism as a battle for U.S. democracy ("Medal of Freedom," 2018). All aspects of the foundation's work, then, are premised on the idea that the U.S. won the Cold War, and that such a victory is right, proper, and beneficial to all.

This sentiment is echoed in calls by right wing populist movements for the U.S. to reassert its leadership across the board. They recall a time when the U.S. reigned supreme, and never second guessed its actions or asked for permission. While such an "ideal" past never actually existed, popular connotations of the Cold War perpetuated by organizations like the VOCFM help keep this dream of a dominant U.S., acting unilaterally as it sees fit, alive. Such ideas are buoyed by the retroactive justification provided by an irrefutable Cold War victory.

This premise also manifests in the rhetoric and actions of Trump, who throughout his rise to the U.S. presidency has exhibited populist leanings and embraced groups that explicitly embrace populist notions. While he may seem to be an "unlikely populist" (Kazin, 2016), Trump's appeal to working class disillusionment and the cultural backlash of the Obama years is seen as foundational to his appeal (Skonieczny, 2018). While such conceptualizations dramatically downplay the role of the wealthy and educated classes in Trump's ascendency, the identification of Trump as a populist president persists. As detailed at the outset of this chapter, Trump's

embrace of populist political tactics has involved invoking, among other things, elements of the Cold War as a significant frame of reference.

A key rhetorical tactic of Trump is to declare victory at all costs, regardless of all evidence to the contrary – whether in regards to winning the election, saving the economy, or beating Covid-19, just to name a few. Such a strategy can be linked to Roy Cohn, a key architect of McCarthyism who would later form a close personal and working relationship with the future president. In many ways a quintessential Cold War warrior, Cohn's influence on Trump, and its ties to Cold War rhetoric, have been widely noted. Sam Roberts, a *New York Times* journalist and acclaimed author, has remarked that Cohn shared with Trump his "…three dimensional strategy [of] 1. Never settle, never surrender. 2. Counter-attack, counter-sue immediately. 3. No matter what happens, no matter how deeply into the muck you get, claim victory and never admit defeat" (Miller, 2019). Such a formulation is remarkably similar to the Cold War mindsets outlined here. It's perhaps no surprise that Cohn would also introduce Trump to Roger Stone, a political operative of both the Nixon and Reagan administrations who brought his Cold War-esque mantras of "attack, attack, attack" and "Admit nothing, deny everything, and launch counterattack" (Toobin, 2008) to Trump's campaign. He would later be convicted of several charges related to interfering in the 2016 election. This alignment with several prominent Cold War-era political operatives has no doubt made a sustained impact on the tactics and narratives deployed by Trump and his administration.

Communism as a perpetual threat: Linking the Cold War's legacy

The ongoing work of the VOCMF is positioned to frame communism as posing real, perpetual threats to not only the U.S., but to the dominant world order and international stability. Smith cites "the geopolitical revenge of history" as one of the main motivations for the work undertaken by the VOCMF (Smith, 2018). He argues that politicians and the public are increasingly aware that the Cold War is an ongoing conflict, and he explicitly frames this conflict in terms of its implications for the U.S. and its international standing:

> North Korea, People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Laos, sort of backsliding in Cambodia, Russia, Ukraine, Crimea, Belarus, the countries of central Asia, Cuba, and now Venezuela, Nicaragua…these are all countries that are a threat to the order that the US has built and maintained post-WWII, especially post '89 (Smith, personal communication, 2018).

The organization thus prioritizes **linking** their understandings of the Cold War to ongoing contemporary issues and debates.

This perspective is echoed in both the memorial itself, which highlights those still living in "captive nations," and in the foundation's social media and online presence, which focuses heavily on how communism continues to threaten people and places around the world. Such narratives are a continuation of the Cold War mindset that there exists a constant, perpetual, existential threat that could strike at any time or place (Wiener, 2012). This threat coalesces more broadly into an "us v. them" framework that positions the U.S. on the right side of both history and the present, and all those who threaten that peace and order on the opposing side. While such rigid binaries run throughout the work of the VOCMF, they are perhaps most apparent in the proposed parallel of the Hall of Heroes and Hall of Villains that will highlight the VOCMF museum.

U.S. right wing populism invokes this same framework of understanding to advance its dangerous political agenda, and it draws on lingering Cold War mindsets to do so. At its most basic level, this mindset cultivates an "us v. them" mentality that justifies action against any "them" that might do harm to "us." While groups like the Proud Boys specifically use a "West v. the Rest" perspective that's ripped straight from Cold War headlines, we can also see this mentality at work even when communism is not explicitly at work (Zelizer, 2016). For example, conservative arguments of the so-called "migrant caravan" draw on fears of outsiders and the potential, imaginative threat that they may pose to the United States. Rather than being grounded in actual events or experiences, conservatives conjure up a perpetual, existential danger from the outside that, they claim, threatens U.S. citizens and the current political order (Blitzer, 2018). The migrants are seen as subversive, violent infiltrators that will upset the American way of life – much in the same way potential communist infiltrators were characterized during the Cold War. In other words, the Cold War provides a useful, readily understandable mnemonic shorthand that

can be used to perpetuate narratives of “us v. them” that can then be populated with different groups or ideas as necessary.

Trump has engaged in similar rhetorical moves, and not only with regard to his many comments on immigration and migration. Trump and his administration have repeatedly invoked the specter of communism as a way to garner political support. For example, throughout the Republican National Convention, different speakers cautioned against a leftist threat. In a speech that sounded very similar to the remarks offered by George W. Bush at the 2007 VOCM dedication ceremony, Donald Trump Jr. asked listeners to “Imagine a world where the evils of communism and radical Islamic terrorism are not given a chance to spread — where heroes are celebrated and the good guys win” (Ganeva, 2020). RNC speaker and Cuban immigrant Maximo Alvarez, reflecting on statements made by Joe Biden, compared the newly nominated Democratic presidential candidate to Fidel Castro, suggesting that his supporters had all “swallowed the communist poison pill” (Ganeva, 2020). Trump himself has repeatedly tried to discredit the Democratic platform by linking it to communism. Speaking at a campaign rally in Ohio, he declared that, “There's never been a time when there's been such a difference [between platforms]. One is probably communism. I don't know. They keep saying socialism. I think they've gone over that one. That one's passed already” (Martin, 2020). In a final example, we can see both the xenophobic tendencies described above and his derogatory use of communism in Trump’s labeling of Covid-19 as the “China virus,” ascribing blame for the pandemic to China’s communist government.

Justification of U.S. intervention abroad: Extending the Cold War’s legacy

Finally, both of these premises lead to the idea that it is the duty and responsibility of the U.S. to intervene in the world as it sees fit, both because the U.S. has already successfully defeated a number of evil ideologies around the world, and because the ongoing threats to the U.S. and the world require it. This final theme illustrates how the VOCMF prioritizes **extending** the legacy of the Cold War in a way that influences actions in the present and future. This is most readily apparent in the dedication remarks, which positions U.S. Cold War actions within a continuum of

dangerous ideologies that have required U.S. intervention abroad. This narrative helps retroactively justify the past actions of the U.S. and gives it carte blanche to continue to act as it sees fit. Similarly, both the memorial and the VOCMF social media and online presence serve to construct an understanding where this kind of intervention is not only proper, but required.

For example, the repeated emphasis on education about the Cold War era can be seen not only as warning the public about the dangerous of communism, but also as teaching it about the power of the U.S. to overcome and correct those dangers. Smith articulates this lack of education primarily as a lack of appreciation for U.S. values, stating that "There's no understanding of that, there's no appreciation of that, so polls are indicating that this generation is least appreciating of free enterprise, least appreciative of free speech, least appreciative of democracy even than any previous generation" (Smith, personal communication, 2018). VOCMF educational efforts thus give a frame of reference for understanding the might and success of the U.S. in its interventions abroad, and may prepare them to support the U.S. in similar, future endeavors. The memorial likewise portrays the U.S. as exceptional in its relationship to communism, first by externalizing communism as something that occurred outside the bounds of the U.S. by dedicating it to "victims of communism worldwide" and second by implying a commitment to freeing those still living under captive nations.

At its core, this premise suggests that, thanks to its Cold War victory, the U.S. has the right and the obligation to unilaterally act as it sees fit – a mentality very much in line with the historical understanding advanced by right-wing populist groups. One of the foundational premises of the Proud Boys emphasizes being unapologetic about the role that the U.S. played in civilizing and developing the rest of the world, and that, accordingly, we should be unafraid to make such interventions in the future (Schaeffer, 2018). A similar implication runs throughout Trump's Victims of Communism Day statement. All of these examples echo calls from right-wing populist groups that position the well-being of the United States, however understood, above that of any other group or nation. This overtly nationalist, ethnocentric perspective holds that the U.S. has a right to act as it chooses, and that, historically, the nation has been better off when it acts according to its own whims.

This is the sentiment that informs the “Make American Great Again” slogan, which implies that the secret to American success lies in the past, when we didn’t ask for permission and didn’t care what others thought. Summing up his approach to foreign affairs for the New York Times as “America First,” Trump stated that he first started to see signs of a decline in America’s reputation abroad during the late 1980s – not coincidentally corresponding to the beginning of the de-escalation of Cold War tensions (Sanger and Haberman, 2016a). In the unedited transcript of that same interview, Trump gets even more specific, pointing to the late 1940s and 1950s as the last time America was truly great (Sanger and Haberman, 2016b). Trump’s use of the slogan indicates a desire to return to an “unrivalled US leadership of the West afforded by the Cold War” (Zelizer, 2018). The slogan has also been used by Ronald Reagan, a quintessential Cold Warrior favored by the modern American right. This sense of U.S. exceptionalism and unilateralism is also represented in many of Trump’s remarks on foreign policy and international relations, where he has repeated sought to position the U.S. as a nation that does not need to engage in collaboration. Arguing that such ties weaken the U.S.’s ability to act as it chooses, Trump has withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord (Trump, 2017), announced his intention to pull out of the WHO (Wolfson, 2020), and suggested that the U.S. may withdraw from the Paris Climate Accords (Trump, 2017). Reflecting on Trump’s latter speech at the U.N. in September 2020, one senior policy fellow suggested that his remarks “only made sense if you see the world as Trump does – a world where he can do no wrong” (Fuchs, 2020).

Conclusion: Cultivating Cold War History

So what do these overarching themes, as well as their relevance for understanding the uses of history by contemporary right-wing populist movements, tell us about the current state of Cold War commemoration in the U.S. more broadly? An examination of the narratives that emerge from organizations like the VOCMF illustrates that the Cold War is such an attractive frame of reference for these populist movements precisely because its content doesn’t require the extensive revisionism that many assume to be inherent to populist uses of the past. That isn’t to say that populists never engage in historical revisionism. Evidence exists that such manipulations

of the past are readily available and, indeed, important. However, recognizing that the narrative of the Cold War seems to require less of this revisionist work provides an opportunity to examine what happens when groups we largely associate with the abuse of history can instead make use of commonly agreed upon facts and narratives.

At the same time, there is similarity in the form of the narratives about both the Cold War and populism, and it manifests particularly in the relative thinness of the U.S. Cold War mnemonic landscape. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, memorial and commemorative sites are key avenues through which the public is exposed to information about the past. Such sites and organizations are often subject to reconsideration as new or conflicting information comes to light that change or extend our understanding. This case study illustrates what happens when memory of a certain event remains underdeveloped and narratives remain unchallenged. Helped along by the lack of a critical engagement with the Cold War, American Cold War memory has become so naturalized that it no longer needs formal articulation – it is taken for granted that it must be true.

Such thinness can be made sense of by returning to the meager offerings of existing U.S. Cold War sites. Sites that originally sought to highlight diverse aspects of the Cold War experience in the U.S. found themselves shifting their focus to emphasize military engagement and conflict, topics far more in line with dominant perspectives on the Cold War. Fledgling organizations like the Cold War Museum, which attempts to complicate these current understood assumptions, have struggled to sustain public interest and funding sources. The dominance of triumphalist understandings of the Cold War thus appear as both cause and symptom of the underdeveloped nature of American Cold War memory. This earlier lack of interest in commemorating the Cold War has allowed certain narratives to become so entrenched that any sites that don't conform fail to flourish. As such, the dominant narrative becomes so entrenched that it no longer accommodates difference, as its interpretations evolve into facts, which prove more durable to contestation or challenge.

This doesn't mean that populist uses of Cold War memory and history by these movements is accurate; in fact, accuracy is almost besides the point. What is more important here, and where the role of the VOCMF comes in, is that these populist Cold War narratives are effective and useful precisely because they are similar enough to the already existing conceptualizations of the Cold War that circulate in U.S. collective memory. Returning to Wodak's claim that that most successful uses of history by populists craft common-sense narratives that play on tropes, ideas, and values already present in society, it makes sense that the narratives with the highest potential for success are those that deviate from the commonly accepted historical understandings as little as possible. The Cold War thus offers contemporary U.S. right wing populists the opportunity to legitimize their politics and beliefs by drawing on a shared understanding of the Cold War that was, and continues to be, made legible by the kinds of commemorative activities undertaken by organizations like the VOCMF.

All of this suggests that while on the surface, the Cold War commemorative landscape appears fractured and contested, in reality, the majority of the mnemonic work being done in this area doesn't deviate from more general, already existing understandings of the Cold War. Rather than attempting to complicate or deepen our knowledge of the era by bringing us new insights, artifacts, or exhibits, the VOCMF's orientation towards the future instead shifts its emphasis to the way in which the Cold War holds a useful, explanatory power for explaining the present political moment, albeit in a strategically narrow way. This forgoes a deeper engagement with the Cold War in favor of reducing the conflict to a mnemonic shorthand that can be readily deployed as a political justification as needed. Mnemonic shorthand provide easily identifiable and understandable interpretations of contemporary events that rely on understandings of the past that feel consensual and absolute. Events can only be meaningful within the context of other events and experiences, and mnemonic shorthand reduce the cognitive work that goes in to making those connections by offering them up, ready-made. In other words, the power of the Cold War as a mnemonic shorthand comes from its oversimplified, easily understood and familiar narratives about heroes and villains, good and evil, right and wrong.

Strategically invoking the Cold War as a point of reference mobilizes specific understandings of the conflict, and connects that understanding to other events through their association. By focusing on solidifying, linking, and extending the legacy of the Cold War, the VOCMF continually makes the case for its own relevancy and significance as those who not only safeguard Cold War memory but properly connect it to other ongoing, relevant issues. This connection, though, is unidirectional. While the VOCMF continually calls upon the Cold War to contextualize the present, its entirely forward-looking orientation forecloses any opportunity for contemporary events or understandings to impact how the Cold War is being made meaningful. The result is a static, repetitive interpretation of the past that fails to advance or complicate our existing understanding of the Cold War. Without a more robustly developed Cold War memorial landscape, there are few opportunities to counter or challenge these prominent narratives.

The thinness of these narratives, and of the VOCMF's engagement with Cold War memory in the U.S., is further articulated by what is excluded from these commemorative activities. As articulated by Schrecker (2004), "During the course of the [Cold War], both sides built empires, developed weapons of mass destruction, and fought proxy wars that killed millions of people. Then, suddenly, it was over" (p. 1). Focusing only on the so-called victorious aftermath downplays the dramatic shifts and upheavals brought about by the end of this decades-long conflict, and neglects the very real, often very fraught lived experiences of American citizens. While, unlike other nations, the U.S. did not experience mass death during the Cold War, the effects of the conflict were still readily felt across American society. The threat of nuclear destruction, fear of infiltration by foreign agents, the scope and impact of McCarthyism and the Red Scare, anxiety over decolonization movements abroad, and more are all rendered invisible. A richer engagement with U.S. cold War memory would entail grappling with these complicated realities, and address the experiences of the average citizens who lived through the Cold War. Instead, the VOCMF favors the narrative of conservative political elites that sought to package the Cold War into a neat, politically useful narrative.

Despite its emphasis on temporally and spatially extending the reach of the Cold War, the otherwise narrow interpretation of the Cold War by the VOCMF exposes the limits of mnemonic

shorthand and prohibits the VOCMF from deep engagement with contemporary events. For it is exactly at this moment—when what started as a populist creep with the election of Trump in 2016 has emerged into an authoritarian state in 2020, following the disruptions of Covid-19 and repeated incidents of police brutality—that the U.S. government most resembles the very regimes that the VOCMF proclaims to revile and oppose. And so far, they've said nothing. Mnemonic actors are by no means obligated to comment on each and every major event. However, as established earlier, using one's platform to reflect on contemporary events is one of the impulses behind memory work. It is also one of the key pillars of the VOCMF. There are many related factors that could contribute to this inability or unwillingness to speak on these vents– the close relationship between the VOCMF and conservative political elites, the way in which many of these movements are informed by socialist and collectivist principles, and the unwillingness to problematize or complicate the oversimplified premises about the Cold War that drive their work all contribute to limiting their ability to thoughtfully engage with the changing political fortunes of 2020.

The first potential explanation is perhaps also the most crude. In general, mnemonic actors of all stripes are hesitant to bite the hand that feeds, and the VOCMF has historically relied on Republican support to boost and fulfill its mission. This is especially true under the current administration, whose adoption of the National Day for the Victims of Communism gave the foundation its most public accomplishment since the dedication of the memorial in 2007. It's understandable that it would be reluctant to openly risk such a relationship. For example, as much of the public was expressing outrage over the killing of George Floyd by four Minneapolis police offices, the VOCMF was gearing up to commemorate the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests. Despite many of the obvious correlates between these historic and contemporary protests, the VOCMF focused on using the anniversary as a way to criticize the Chinese government, as it had always done. This is especially puzzling given the renewed interest in comments made by Trump in 1990, which have been given new contemporary relevance in light of his administration's response to the protests. In a 1990 interview with *Playboy Magazine*, Trump criticized the Soviet Union for not taking a heavy enough hand with

protestors calling for regime change, while at the same time praising China for its “power of strength” in shutting down the Tiananmen Square protests (Haltiwanger, 2020). Traditionally, the VOCMF has harshly criticized shows of state strength against its own citizens, and the lack of comment here is notable.

Second, the goals of many of these protestors may be too well informed by the principles of socialism and collectivism for the VOCMF’s taste. The onset of Covid-19 and the lack of a coordinated government response left many calling for a complete over-haul of US state healthcare and social welfare systems, with an emphasis on universal healthcare (Scott, 2020). The shutdown of the economy and disruption in “business as usual” saw mega conglomerates like Amazon, Google, Instacart, and other retailers exponentially profit at the expense of minimum wage and gig economy workers, leading to widespread questioning of the current neoliberal, capitalist system (Horgan, 2020). Left on their own, communities drew on mutual aid organizations, which were informed by collectivist organizing principles, as a way to care for their own – both during Covid-19 and during the uprisings in response to the murder of George Floyd. Such protests depended on collective organizing and community support: In addition to organizing physical protests, activists organized mutual aid stations, bail relief funds, and after-protest support systems across multiple states and community groups. After spending decades using communism as the primary explanatory factor for the problems of the world, the idea that some of these very principles, more properly understood and enacted, could act as solutions to the great problems of the day is incongruent with their core beliefs.

Finally, and perhaps most influential of all, is the foundation’s unwillingness (or inability) to interrogate or problematize the major premises about the Cold War that inform all levels of tits work. Its externalization of the Cold War, where the conflict is seen as an event that the U.S. fought and won “over there”, makes it ill-disposed to comment on contemporary events at home unless they can be concretely linked to the foreign creep of communism.

This is reinforced by its cultivation of an “us vs. them” mentality in which the “us” is always the U.S. government – not the U.S. people themselves. Premises like an unconditional U.S. victory that retroactively justifies any action taken by the state in the service of that victory, as well as the

indefinite right and obligation of the U.S. to act as it sees fit to counter any thing threatening "us," map quite clearly onto the actions taken by the Trump administration in response to Covid-19 but especially the protests against police brutality. Act first, ask questions later, and the state is always right – a mentality that is reinforced by Trump's frequent threats that he has the power to act as his pleases due to the status afforded him by the office of the presidency. At the end of the day, then, these foundational premises work together to produce an idea about U.S. state power that is not unlike the regimes that the VOCMF purports to oppose. By refusing to more deeply engage with widespread understandings of the Cold War, the VOCMF misses the opportunity to truly use its mnemonic platform to contribute to ongoing issues and conversations in the U.S.

In conclusion, understanding contemporary right-wing populist movements in the United States requires understanding how such groups deploy understandings of the past to garner support for their claims. Such understandings do not arise out of nowhere. Rather, the historical frameworks mobilized by these groups draw on collectively understood and accepted frameworks for understanding the past that are already present in our mnemonic landscape. This examination of the VOCMF illustrates how many of the historical premises cultivated by its commemorative work on the Cold War are remarkably similar to those that inform the historical understandings used and demonstrated by contemporary U.S. populist movements. This suggests that many of the ideological and political claims made by these groups are rooted in lingering Cold War mindsets and perpetuated by how the legacy of the Cold War is constructed and presented in the U.S. This mindset, which is inherently narrow and limiting, prevents the VOCMF from fully realizing the role it could play as a commemorative actor in commenting on ongoing events in the here and now.

CHAPTER 5 Conclusion: Networked Memorialization

The VOCM, the Berlin Wall Memorial, the Wall of Grief, and Last Address demonstrate the multitude of ways that the Cold War is being memorialized across the U.S., Germany, and Russia. These case studies illustrate how a rich engagement with local contexts of a memorial site can provide vital insight into how memorial practices are manifesting and evolving. Each site grapples with the complex legacy of the Cold War in ways that best reflect both the broader memorial landscape of each country, and the individualized experiences that make the Cold War meaningful to their citizens. Though the deep background presented in these case studies is useful in and of itself, this conclusion draws these three case studies together to think through how existing premises of the study of war commemoration hold up in the Cold War context. How do issues of scale, temporality, scope, and materiality manifest within these sites, and are there any overarching patterns among them that can advance our understanding of collective memory more broadly?

In terms of the scale of memorialization, these case studies show that the focus on the national as a key frame of reference and a site of meaning-making remains largely intact. The four memorials examined here all demonstrate a commitment to using national experiences and frames as the starting point of the mnemonic work. However, not all of the memorials remain just at this national level. In fact, perhaps only the VOCM remains primarily engaged with national level narratives and symbols. This makes sense, given its overwhelming focus on the master narrative of the Cold War as a conflict between East and West, the United States v. the Soviet Union. However, the Berlin Wall Memorial, the Wall of Grief, and Last Address all take this national framework and seek out ways to make it more individualized by focusing on real people and their stories. The Berlin Wall Memorial and Last Address do so by highlighting specific stories of victims and their lived experience – the former does so through its Window of Remembrance, while the micro-monuments of the latter are premised on the idea that individual stories are the best way to engage with the past. Though the Wall of Grief takes a much more abstract

approach, its aesthetic emphasis on representing bodies, and of cultivating a personal, disorienting experience for visitors, speaks to a similar concern for embedding the personal within these broader national concerns. As such, these individual experiences are still primarily made legible through their relationship to the nation, and their ability to reflect, refract, and concretize these broader frameworks and concerns.

This focus on the individual similarly helps some of these memorial sites navigate the complicated temporality of the Cold War. It is difficult to concretely date the Cold War, as it defies all attempts to neatly bound the conflict, and there exists much disagreement about when it began and when it ended, if indeed we can consider the Cold War to be concluded. The Berlin Wall Memorial and Last Address circumvent this complicated temporality by instead rooting their work in the kinds of concrete dates and materials that are available to them. In the case of the Berlin Wall Memorial, this is done through the careful incorporation of various timelines throughout the site, most notably in the detailed timeline featured in the documentation center. By examining the era through these individual events, the Memorial does not have to grapple with the sense of continuity that many have identified between the National Socialist and GDR eras that complicates the onset of the Cold War. Instead, they can carry on this more individualized focus, and instead make the era meaningful through the engagement with these smaller, more specific stories. Last Address, in a similar vein, bases the entirety of its mnemonic work on the importance of detailed dates, locations, and names. This is because it believes the true commemorative work comes from the ability to locate, verify, and share these stories that have been forgotten. Per founder Parkhomenko, Last Address's legitimacy comes from the accuracy of its information, and if any of the proposed information for a plaque is in doubt, it is not installed until the facts can be independently verified. Its sense of temporality thus becomes rooted in the dates associated with individuals, as opposed to the more general conflict itself, with the plaques focusing on dates of birth and dates of disappearance or death. The era is thus again made meaningful through the personal.

At the other end of the spectrum, both the VOCM and the Wall of Grief are purposefully designed to distance the sites from concrete dates and events, albeit for different reasons. The VOCM eschews a traditional focus on dates in the service of presenting the Cold War as an ongoing conflict and communism as a continued threat to liberal democracies. Neatly bracketing the conflict and suggesting that the main tensions of the Cold War have been resolved would work against their goal of addressing these perceived threats. Such a mission is literally carved into the base of the memorial, stating in part that it is dedicated "….to the freedom and independence of all captive nations and people." Similarly, the Wall of Grief makes no attempt to temporally situate the monument. No dates are featured throughout the site itself, echoing the preference of the Russian government to deal in generalities, rather than specifics. As has been detailed in Chapter 3, the Russian government has long resisted calls to provide more concrete and detailed information about the repressions and its victims. This has resulted in a commemorative style that favors the abstract, and has prompted other commemorative actors to counter this work by dealing explicitly in details – as demonstrated by both the Reading of the Names ceremony and the work of Last Address. In all four memorials, we can explain the specific manifestations of temporality by looking at how such choices reflect and refract the broader context of these sites. In other words, the Cold War's malleable sense of temporality allows these various sites to construct a sense of time that most closely aligns with their other aesthetic and narrative goals.

Reflections on the scope of these memorial sites suggest that, despite the colloquial descriptions and understandings of the Cold War as a military conflict, most do not make sense of the Cold War as primarily a military conflict. Again, this ties into other related decisions to privilege individual localized experiences. While much of war commemoration relies on classic military iconography and reverence for those killed in action, the VOCM, the Berlin Wall Memorial, the Wall of Grief, and Last Address instead focus on civilian victims, those that lost their lives due to the fallout of the Cold War. The "hot" conflict of the Cold War – the nuclear arms race, proxy wars, sustained military tensions – informs the backdrop within which these commemorative

activities are situated, but the sites themselves rarely draw explicitly on this context. This allows each memorial project to again shift its focus in a way that takes what is useful of the Cold War context for its purposes, and leave behind those aspects that are not. In this case, it means redefining the scope of the Cold War in a way that both attends to national needs and concerns.

For example, while the VOCMF draws on the urgency of potential armed conflict to animate its work, in practice it tends to focus more on dangerous manifestations of the communist ideology in other ways. Its victims, then, are largely ideological ones – they suffer at the hands of these problematic regimes, but due to internal acts of violence as opposed to larger military conflict between nations. Similarly, while broader Cold War military concerns heavily contributed to the political repressions carried out in the Soviet Union, Last Address and the Wall of Grief maintain distance from those larger processes, though for very different reasons. For the Wall of Grief, it's a way to continue to avoid dealing with specifics; for Last Address, it's a way of furthering its mission to hold the Russian government, in particular, accountable for its actions and continued denial of the events that took place. Finally, the Berlin Wall Memorial's commitment to site specificity means that the larger Cold War processes would always take somewhat of a backseat to more specific stories of German division and the events of Bernauer Strasse. Though the Berlin Wall Memorial takes care to position such events as emblematic of the Cold War, this is again done in such a way that does not emphasize military conflict. Rather, the focus is on how such Cold War politics manifested locally within Germany more generally and Berlin in particular.

Materially speaking, these sites largely make use of the traditional form of the monument or memorial, while at the same time seeking to augment this monumental work through a variety of means – some physical, such as through the development of more diverse sites, and some more ephemeral, through the use of digital and other tools. The Wall of Grief is perhaps the most traditional monument of the four. A sizeable, permanent structure located in the center of a major city, it largely conforms to our expectations for a public memorial space. It is designed to stand alone, without much, if any, supporting material to help contextualize, explain, and expand its

influence. THE VOCM similarly draws on very traditional understandings of the monument, going so far as to copy a previous monument, Tiananmen Square Goddess of Democracy, which in and of itself draws inspiration from the Statue of Liberty. However, unlike the Wall of Grief, the VOCM is complemented by a whole roster of other activities, designed to extend the meaning of the memorial site in a variety of ways. As detailed in earlier chapters, this is primarily done through the VOCMF's use of social media, its production of educational materials, and its eventual goal of opening up a brick and mortar museum.

The Berlin Wall Memorial and Last Address similarly take the idea of a memorial site and extend in different ways by creating large, dispersed sites that feature a variety of ways to engage in mnemonic activity. Drawing inspiration from the Stumbling Stones project, Last Address creates micro-monuments that are made meaningful through repeated engagement and repetition of form. Its one plaque, one person ethos helps to concretize the widespread reach of the terror, something that only emerges when one encounters these smaller monuments again and again and again. Rather than relying on one central site, Last Address turns entire cities into sites of potential encounter. This work is complemented by the documentary work carried out by its database of victims and the educational work involved in seeking permission to place the plaques. Though the Berlin Wall Memorial maintains a slightly more traditional memorial site, its commitment to providing detailed information and maintaining a sense of site authenticity similarly extends our understanding of the materiality of such projects. In addition to maintaining what they designate as a monument (the recreated death strip) and a memorial (the Window of Remembrance), the Berlin Wall Memorial curates three other major sections that seek to help better inform and contextualize the events of the era in ways that help visitors best understand the significance of said monument and memorial. This is complemented by its production of academic materials and sponsorship of research projects that can help advance knowledge. All of this is to suggest that the standalone, physical memorial site no longer suits the commemorative needs of our rapidly changing political and cultural landscape.

The extent to which these Cold War sites conform to the dominant premises of war commemoration varies, and none of the premises can be wholly imported into our understandings of Cold War memorial sites. While some premises, such as those associated with scale and materiality, remain relatively intact, others, such as issues of temporality and scope, have developed beyond the original scope of these premises. In fact, none of these premises hold up entirely in the context of the Cold War, and perhaps with good reason: as these case studies reveal, most of these memorial sites choose to engage with the Cold War era not as a war at all. Of the three, only the VOCM hews closely to our existing understandings of war commemoration – perhaps not surprisingly, considering that it is by far the most traditional monument and most thoroughly embraces the Janus-faced master narrative of the Cold War as a conflict between East and West. However, the Berlin Wall Memorial, the Wall of Grief, and Last Address eschew this framework of global conflict, instead favoring a more localized one that places the Cold War in an influential, but still tangential, role.

Looking across these cases, what emerges is a sense of the Cold War not as an actual war or an isolated event, but rather a decades-long structure or framework that is made meaningful in different ways. In other words, what constitutes "The Cold War" in the U.S. is not necessarily the same as what constitutes the Cold War in Germany, or Russia, or other parts of the world. Ultimately, each of these memorial projects seeks to disaggregate the monolith that is the Cold War, and to offer a partial view of events that reinscribes certain narratives at the expense of others. These partial views are highly politicized, and, as explored across the case studies, reflect localized needs that attend to present day concerns. Such insights remain vitally important as the Cold War continues to be uncritically invoked as if it is a universal signifier. However, what these cases also reveal are the absences that mark contemporary Cold War memory, and that require recognition and repair.

In Germany, this involves looking beyond West German experiences to those of its East German neighbors, whose memories are often separated or treated as distinct from their fellow citizens. East German experiences become othered or set apart from a more generally accepted

West German memory landscape. Also silenced are non-native German perspectives, as well as those narratives that seek to branch out from the context of a divided Germany to look at larger, more macro factors. In the Russian case study, the fight to remember the victims of political repressions was itself an attempt to shed light on a long-silenced community. However, while there has been some success in this area, other stories remain to be told, such as those who faced repression in the more remote parts of the Soviet Union, those who continue to face repression today under the legacy of Soviet-era laws (such as those against queerness), and those who suffered under the long reach of the Soviet empire throughout the Global South. For the U.S., this means turning inward to recognize and engage with the lived experiences of Americans during the Cold War era, as well as looking outward to acknowledge the long legacy of U.S. political and military interference in Latin America, Afghanistan, and other regions in the service of restraining Soviet expansion and dominance. Finally, a gaping silence across all three of these studies is the positive legacy of socialist ideologies, which manifest in different ways across these countries. For example, Germany's current system of social safety nets owes much to this model, and the reinvigorated far left movement in the U.S. is likewise committed to bringing socialist principles into the political mainstream. A nostalgia for a socialist past has also taken root in both Germany and Russia over the past several years, indicating that perhaps contemporary conditions, vis a vis those of the recent past, may not be quite as appealing as these forward-oriented narratives might imply (c.f. Boym, 2001; Platt, 2019).

At the end of the day, perhaps the question is not, "How do existing premises of war commemoration hold up in the Cold War context," but rather, "How can we update our approaches to studying war commemoration so that they accommodate increasingly nuanced and complicated conflicts?" Ultimately, what this study suggests is that the messiness of the Cold War memorial landscape reveals that we need new frameworks of understanding, ones that are not necessarily dependent on these dominant premises and tropes of the study of war commemoration. In other words, the contemporary study of Cold War commemoration suggests that we need to update our analytical toolkit to reflect the multifaceted nature that is contemporary war memory.

Contemporary Memorials and Networked Memorialization

Contemporary memorials exist not as isolated, standalone sites, but as part of a larger matrix of sites and mnemonic activities that shape their overall memory work – a concept I call networked memorialization. Networked memorialization refers to the growing recognition by commemorative actors that memorials are made meaningful within a complex network of institutions, projects, and actors, and that as such, the standalone memorial is insufficient for communicating the scope and scale of a given event in today contemporary mnemonic environment. Memorials thus become networked internally, through the development of additional initiatives designed to augment and extend the reach of the memorial, and externally, vis-a-vis other commemorative projects, actors, funders, and policymakers. This networked collaboration can be both formally and informally organized, collaborative or antagonistic in nature, and is marked by constantly shifting power dynamics along a variety of axes. Rather than starting with existing assumptions about the nature of war commemoration, networked memorialization instead engages with the memorial as it is coming into being.

The terms “networked” and “memorialization” have been discussed elsewhere in memory and media studies, though primarily in the context of how digital networking platforms facilitate practices of mourning and individual memorialization. Such work has examined how traditional mourning and funereal processes are increasingly mediated through social networking sites (Gibbs et. al, 2014) and the ways in which digital memorials facilitate grief during ongoing traumatic events (Noonan, 2015). Some approaches look at online memorialization as being mediated by computer networks and other online infrastructures (Foot et. al, 2017), while others are more concerned with how new online processes are changing the cultural practices around bereavement (Lowe et. al, 2019). Taking a broader look at the impact of the digital on collective memory, Hoskins has pushed for understanding how digital media presents opportunities to both “reimagine” and “ensnare” acts of memory (Hoskins, 2018). In all of these instances, “networked” is used specifically to refer to digital, online networks, while memorialization is used more generally to refer to remembrance of the deceased.

My focus here is different. I instead use network in the more general sense, to describe the identifiable and interconnected ways that different actors are connected to one another, in a way that is more indebted to the concepts of intertextuality and dialogism than it is to computing networks. Dialogism posits that the meaning of a given text is the product of the interaction between the text, the author, and the audience (Bhaktin,1984), while intertextuality highlights that texts are made meaningful in relation to other texts, and through an audience's recognition of those relationships (Kristeva, 1980 [1977]). Intertextuality highlights how meaning is not transmitted directly from the text to the reader, but is instead placed in dialogue with other texts and forms. With networked memorialization, I seek to build on these understandings of meaning production as relational by first, explicitly considering what it means to translate these more general observations about texts, authors, and audiences in the context of memorial projects, and second, by providing a concrete analytical framework within which to map or assert those connections. Networked memorialization also stops short of making claims about the reception of these sites by audiences or "readers," focusing primarily on the institutions ("authors") and the sites ("texts"), and how they understand their audiences. Networked memorialization thus offers a tool to render these kind of interconnected, interdependent, and intertextual relationships visible, and to think about how such relationships shape mnemonic work.

I use memorialization in the more specific sense, to describe official efforts to create memorial sites. While the extension of memorializing practices into digital spaces is a component of my conceptualization of networked memorialization, my understanding is rooted in the maintenance and significance of the traditional, physical, offline memorial site as a key component in contemporary memorial projects. Instead of focusing on individual memorial efforts, many of which are grassroots or ad hoc in nature, I instead concentrate on formal memorial efforts, undertaken by professionalized mnemonic actors, primarily through foundations, museums, and non-profit organizations. Such an understanding shows how the traditional mnemonic form of the memorial has been expanded to include a variety of other activities that extend the memorial's reach and impact. While memorialization is, in many ways, always

networked, what networked memorialization does as a concept is give us a framework for articulating what those relationships looks like, what factors give shape to those relationships, and how those relationships are subject to revision and change.

The concept of networked memorialization builds on, but is distinct from, other works that seek to capture how memory is complicated, tangled, and relational. Rothberg (2009) coins multidirectional memory as a way to capture how memories of violent conflicts confront each other in the public sphere, and to push back against public memory as a zero-sum game. Different memories are not in direct competition, argues Rothberg, but instead productively feed off of one another. Networked memorialization builds of of this concept by offering a way to map how those different memories bump up against one another, and to what effect, specifically within the context of memorial sites and projects. Another key difference is that while Rothberg tends to focus more on the productive potential of these clashes, networked memorialization instead draws attention to the potential for competition and power asymmetries, and serves to highlight what gets left out or downplayed. In an interview revisiting his work on multidirectional memory ten years on, Rothberg concedes the need to "…stress other factors as well. Among those factors are the question of power: memories are surely shaped by relations of power that are asymmetrical and contoured by political and economic factors, among other things" ("Multidirectional Memory In Focus," 2019). Networked memorialization helps us think through these other factors more explicitly by highlighting the different characteristics that give shape to these networked relationships, and brings additional focus to the domestic political and cultural factors that come into play.

Another related concept is that of entangled memory, developed by Feindt et. al. (2014) to capture how acts of remembering become entangled across synchronic and diachronic dimensions. Synchronic entanglements refer to influences on the act of remembering at a given moment of time and the ensuing entanglement with different social frames, while diachronic entanglements relate to mnemonic signifiers across different periods of time. Feindt et. al argue that we have too long been preoccupied with "tak[ing] such artifacts as memorials, museums, or

novels to be manifestations of memory," and that memory is too often treated as a tangible phenomenon rather than an interpretive process. In many ways, networked memorialization helps to address both synchronic and diachronic concerns by offering a way to contextualize memorial projects at their moment of coming into being, as well as to trace how they both shape and are shaped by shifting diachronic circumstances. It accommodates and tracks mnemonic shifts over space and time, and heeds Feindt et. al's call to begin with an inductive approach that privileges interpretation over artifact. The institutional and organizational focus of networked memorialization helps us to understand how interpretation shapes artifact (in this case, the memorial site and its attendant and adjacent projects), and reveals that simply starting with the site itself as a point of analysis leaves out much of the story.

Networked memorialization also makes visible the intentionality of networking in contemporary memorial projects. Despite their appearance as fixed points in the physical landscape, memorial sites have never been static. Such sites shift in meaning over time, and in response to contemporary events and evolving understandings of the past. At times, these sites can be more passive or active. However, networked memorialization explicitly situates the traditional form of the memorial at the center of a broad network of commemorative practices, that in turn sustain the physical memorial site as a central node for mobilizing additional commemorative activities that extend the memorial's reach. In this way, the traditional form of the standalone memorial is repeatedly updated and activated to better suit the contemporary memory landscape, which must attend to more than just a physical site.

I do not presume to claim that previous memorial projects were not aware of other projects working within the same space. Rather, I offer networked memorialization as a way to better understand and articulate how those relationships are made more explicit, and how how such sites are intentionally and specifically networked with and against adjacent projects. In particular, I believe networked memorialization is particularly productive for thinking through the contemporary demands of commemorative projects, which must balance a whole host of platforms, projects, and partnerships in order to achieve and maintain visibility and awareness for

their work. It connotes a fluidity across both space and time, which allows for memorial projects to span different spaces (both physical and virtual) and take advantage of different senses of temporality.

As a result, these memorial sites come to be seen as a starting point for mnemonic engagement – one that can be stretched and extended across a variety of forms – rather than an ending point. Historically, memorials have often been seen as a coda to a movement for acknowledgement and recognition. The dedication of a memorial was the culmination of efforts to legitimize a given event or trauma, with the designation of a formal space for remembrance a sufficient way of documenting and memorializing the past. However, with the memory boom of recent decades and a growing recognition by mnemonic actors of alternative ways of engaging with the past, what it means to memorialize the past has grown in form and meaning. The stewardship of a memorial site, mostly undertaken by foundations who are tasked with missions to not only memorialize the past but to make it a useful heuristic for understanding the present, now entails curating a complementary set of mnemonic activities that help make the memorial meaningful and impactful in different contexts. In many ways, networked memorialization expands what we come to consider as "the memorial site," and affords memorial organizations and institutions the opportunity to invite more vibrant engagement with their projects across a whole host of different platforms. A key component of that is the cultivation of the digital and virtual appendages of these projects, which not only provide new points of access for audiences, but also allow for organizations to approach their work in new and interesting ways, and with the assistance of digital tools and platforms.

While there is evidence of networked memorialization in memorials past, and indeed, I do think this concept can be productively used to understand how other events have been memorialized, it makes sense that such networked memorialization would be readily visible in an examination of Cold War memorials. It should be no surprise that an unconventional and in many ways ongoing conflict would give way to more elastic, complex forms of memorialization. While the concept of networked memorialization can be used to understand the memorialization of other

events and conflicts, I believe that this form of commemoration is particularly apparent in Cold War memorials for two key reasons. First, networked memorialization allows for more flexibility in updating the narratives of memorial projects, and second, the new mediatized environment in which contemporary Cold War commemoration developed has necessitated new understandings of the memorial form.

Networked memorialization allows for more elasticity in the mnemonic work performed by these sites. While understandings of the past have always (and necessarily) been open to reinterpretation in response to changing political and cultural circumstances, the physical nature of memorial sites has been amongst the hardest to change as the meanings ascribed to those sites have evolved. We only need to look as far as the movement to remove colonial, Confederate, and other similar statues as proof that it is extremely hard to update memorial sites to meet contemporary needs. These contemporary networked memorial sites, however, become much more malleable when much of their meaning comes from related activities that ARE much easier to change and update – for example, recontextualizing the meaning of the memorial by updating the curated exhibit that accompanies it or drawing new connections between the memorial and contemporary events via social media or in educational materials. These digital extensions of the memorial site are particularly important – such elements help institutions and organizations respond to present concerns and events quickly, and often with minimal effort. Networked memorialization allows for the fact that these connections and relationships to other memorial sites continue to influence how these projects evolve over time, that they are impactful beyond just the initial conceptualization of the project.

Such elasticity is particularly important when it comes to engaging with remembrance of the Cold War, a conflict whose contemporary relevance is continually evolving and whose interpretation is deeply rooted in the particularities of national experiences. Though it is popular to tie the “official end” of the Cold War to dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, both scholarly research and popular discourse illustrate that Cold War frames of understanding continue to reverberate throughout contemporary political, economic, and cultural life. While such

manifestations have been detailed in this dissertation, it is worth noting again that these contemporary uses and references to the Cold War continue to play a key role in making its events meaningful and useful, and that as such, projects centered around remembering the Cold War must continually navigate these evolving understandings and reference points.

Finally, there is the fact that Cold War commemoration has assumed much of its shape in a very different commemorative and media environment than the memorial projects that came before it. Each of the case studies examined here is relatively new – all were completed within the last 15 years, and all have continued to grow and expand in interesting ways. Because of this, these projects are conceived of as existing beyond just the memorial sites themselves, and were purposefully developed to take advantages of the new affordances that would take the work of these organizations online. As will be expanded upon below, they have become more explicitly internally networked from the get-go. While many older, existing memorial sites have done an admirable job of building out their work in ways that take advantage of the internet as a space to expand their mnemonic activities (see, for example, the Auschwitz Twitter account, which often offers commentary on contemporary issues related to its mandate), the fact that these Cold War memorials are relatively recent projects means that they were conceived of as having online and digital components from the outset. This pushes us to reconsider the historic focus on the physical historic site, and instead position those sites as just one node in a more complicated memorial network.

There are various characteristics that give shape to what networked memorialization looks like. While many of these initially present as binary in nature, it is more productive to think of them as a spectrum of possibilities, with various sites situated between two axes. Additionally, such locations are by no means static – the evolving and shifting nature of memorial projects, as well as the attendant power dynamics at play, can lead to significant shifts in how a memorial is networked over time. I identify four key characteristics that impact networked memorialization, all of which were previewed above:

1) Networked memorialization is both internal, within a given memorial project, and external, necessarily situated against other memorial projects.
2) Networked memorialization can be organized formally, through purposeful arrangement and development, or informally, through the implicit understanding of where a memorial project is situated vis-à-vis other memorial projects.
3) Networked memorialization can be either collaborative, a mutual effort to create meaningful connections between sites, or antagonistic, with memorial projects specifically developed to offer competing interpretations of the past.
4) Networked memorialization is fluid, and shaped by shifting power dynamics relating to factors such as funding, visibility, state intervention, and the emergence of new memorial projects.

My examination of Cold War memorials in the U.S., Germany, and Russia documents this networked memorialization in action. Each of these main memorial projects prioritizes physical memorial sites, while at the same time aspires to make these memorials meaningful and impactful beyond just the sites themselves. This extension of mnemonic activity is accomplished in a variety of ways, and with various degrees of success. While it is true that memorial projects are never just about the site themselves, networked memorialization captures the necessity and intentionality of these networks to contemporary commemorative efforts. It acknowledges that the broader impact of these sites, as well as their relationship to one another, is more than just a taken-for-granted byproduct of mnemonic activity. Instead, the actors involved in producing and maintaining these sites are actively cognizant of their positionality within these networks, and seek to cultivate and relate to these networks in a way that is ultimately beneficial to their commemorative goals and principles. Next, I examine each of the characteristics of networked memorialization in the context of these Cold War memorial projects to illustrate how such characteristics actively shape contemporary mnemonic activity.

Internal and External

Networked memorialization is both internal and external in nature. Externally, memorial sites must be attentive to other memorial projects that are working within the same mnemonic landscape, and many characteristics here highlight the factors that give shape to such external connections. Some of these contours and connections are more identifiable than others, and these external connections can be more or less formal in nature, as will be discussed further below. For example, the Berlin Wall Memorial is externally networked with other sites in Berlin that focus on the Cold War and German division, with each of these sites exerting an influence on the others. Similarly, the Wall of Grief and Last Address are specifically networked against one another, with each project staking out its own section of Russia's memorial landscape. Last Address is additionally externally networked through its exportation of its plaques and mission to chapters in other countries, as well as tied to predecessor projects like Denmig's Stumbling Stones. The Wall of Grief, though less explicitly networked, carries with it the influences of other state-sponsored monuments, both within and without Russia.

However, what is newer in regards to contemporary memorial sites are the ways in which they are networked internally, through the development of related projects and initiatives that are designed to complement and extend the mnemonic work of the physical site. It is such internal networks that I will expand upon here by discussing how each of the Cold War memorial sites analyzed exists not just as a physical site, but as a network of activities that both depend upon the traditional memorial form and make the site relevant in new and significant ways. These complex matrices of memorial practices can take many forms, including online and offline activities, and serve a variety of functions and purposes. For example, the Last Address Project explicitly links its mini-monuments to the identification, verification, and educational work carried out by its volunteers and researchers. According to Last Address, its physical memorials are only made meaningful in conjunction with these other activities, which are primarily centered around documenting and disseminating historical information to families and the public.

Key to both the internal and external networking of contemporary memorial sites is their embrace of, and engagement with, digital sites and structures. As mentioned above, our

relationships to memorial sites has changed, and memorial projects have thus been required to think more concretely about how to extend and strengthen the reach of their work. For most, this takes the form of digital components that take up the mnemonic work of the physical sites and transform it for new and extended audiences. This can involve both taking more traditional extensions of the site, such as publications and research reports, and making them available digitally, as well as embracing new affordances such as social media and other virtual spaces. This focus on the digital is both internal and external. Internally, these components become another tool of the memorial project to expand upon and reinforce its existing mnemonic work. Externally, it provides a platform for new kinds of engagement and collaboration with other memorial projects and activities.

For singular sites like the Victims of Communism Memorial, which consists of just one small memorial site, these complementary activities are crucial for their mission. As highlighted in chapter 4, the VOCMF extends its reach through its social media presence, which draws on the resonance of its physical site and memorial mission to connect and extend the Cold War's interpretive power to contemporary events and issues. Other digital activities include the development of educational curriculums that can be used in primary schools, as well as blog posts and their witness project, which collects testimony from those who have lived under communist regimes. We can group its now defunct online museum with these initiatives. Offline, it draws on its memorial site to animate a variety of commemorative activities, such as holding remembrance days and ceremonies at the memorial, hosting educational seminars and workshops, and presenting its annual Victims of Communism Memorial fundraising dinner, where it awards its Truman- Reagan Medal of Freedom.

However, despite this variety of initiatives, the physical memorial site remains paramount. This was seen through the VOCMF's reaction to the recent graffiti-ing of the memorial during the ongoing protests against police violence, in which Director Marion Smith argued that "You do not advance justice by defacing our country's memorial dedicated to one of the largest victim's groups in human history – those killed by communist parties in power" (Smith, 2020). The

VOCMF's plan to extend its memorial site through the construction of a museum additionally supports the notion that these physical memorial spaces bestow a sense of legitimacy on these commemorative organizations and their work.

In addition to its extensive external network, the Berlin Wall Memorial builds upon its mnemonic work through a wide network of other activities and materials. Though it does not maintain much of a social media presence, the Berlin Wall Memorial has a detailed website that allows visitors to remotely view and learn about the site. The site also serves as a gateway to the ongoing research conducted by the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation, which employs a team of researchers to document and curate remembrance of the Berlin Wall for the broader public. This research is shared through the publication of books and brochures, as well as through public lectures both at the Berlin Wall Memorial and at other institutions within Berlin and beyond. Regular events are also held at the Wall throughout the year to mark various anniversaries related to German division, using the site as physical nexus from which to extend its work.

Formal v. Informal

While to some extent all memorials are networked both internally and externally, they vary in the extent to which they are networked formally and informally. By formally, I mean that there is some attempt to codify or make explicit the shape of the memorialized network, either by those who develop the memorial sites themselves or by some sort of outside authority or policy. By informally, I refer to the inevitable awareness and consideration of other memorial sites working in the same thematic areas, and how those sites reflect and refract one another even in the absence of a formalized plan or agreement. In the middle of the spectrum are attempts to formalize a memorial network that may be incomplete or unrealized in some way. The Berlin Wall Memorial is enmeshed in the most formalized memorial network of these three case studies, while the Victims of Communism Memorial is more informally networked, and the Wall of Grief and the Last Address project reside somewhere in the middle.

As articulated in Chapter 2, Berlin's Cold War memorial network is shaped by the Masterplan to Preserve the Memory of the Berlin Wall, an initiative developed by the Berlin Senate that would explicitly organize the various Wall-related sites in the city. Each site would thematically emphasize different elements of the Berlin Wall, with each site making use of its resonant place memory in conjunction with this theme. For example, the Tranenpalast at Frederichstrasse Station would tell the story of border crossings and immigration, while the East Side Gallery would focus on artistic interpretations of the fall of the wall. This formal organization placed the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse at the center of this network. It is both the largest and most developed of the sites, and its steward, the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation, takes a lead role in interfacing with other sites within the Masterplan. In fact, over the past few years the Foundation has come to oversee several additional sites within the network, including the East Side Gallery, the Gunter Liften Memorial (a preserved command station where a GDR soldier was shot while trying to escape his post), and the Marienfelde Refugee Center (a museum and memorial site dedicated to telling the history of flight and emigration during the GDR era). The Masterplan is given the added weight of the Berlin Senate, which contributes significant resources to developing and maintaining these sites.

On the other side of the spectrum is the Cold War memorial landscape in the U.S., which remains weakly and informally networked. The VOCMF does not officially work with other sites within the U.S., nor does the Foundation mention collaborations with other projects or institutions abroad. Unlike many foundations who do memory work, the VOCMF does not list any formal partners on its website, nor are any collaborators listed in its various social media and blog posts. This lack of a formal network mirrors the overall shape of Cold War memorialization in the U.S. more generally. There is no formal plan or policy in place that attempts to organize or connect Cold War sites. As mentioned earlier, the Cold War mnemonic landscape in the U.S. is incredibly fractured, with individual projects working primarily in isolation from one another. While there is an awareness of what others are doing at other sites, there are few, if any, formal attempts to draw connections between them. Each interview is conducted with professionals working on these

projects showed an awareness of the kind of work that was being done elsewhere, despite never having established formal collaborations with these related sites. In fact, many of these relationships are outright antagonistic, a point that will be further developed in the next section. This doesn't mean that the U.S. Cold War memorial may not become more formalized in the future. As mentioned earlier, the Department of Defense and the Natural Historic Registry still have ambitions to bring the various U.S. Cold War sites together as a "Cold War Heritage Trail," which would more explicitly link these different projects together in a more cohesive network with a clearer, unified narrative.

Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum sit the Wall of Grief and the Last Address Project. Despite attempts by the Russian government to formalize this network of memorials through the State Policy Concept for Perpetuating the Memory of the Victims of Political Repression, much of the work being done in the space through projects like Last Address fall outside that formal sphere of influence. This may be a case of too little, too late – the State Concept was announced in 2015, despite the fact that the grassroots commemoration of these victims through sites such as the Solotvesky Stone, smaller local memorial, and eventually Last Address had been ongoing for many years. This suggests that it can be very difficult to formalize an already established memorial space unless such sites and actors are already working together. The antagonistic relationship between the Russian government and these smaller organizations, which will be elaborated in further detail below, also makes formalizing this network a more contentious endeavor. Last Address is also more formally networked with other memorial sites outside of Russia, in particular through its branches in countries such as Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Moldova, Georgia, and Germany, and with international partners through the International Coalition of Sites of Consciousness. There is also a chance that these projects will become more formally networked in the future through the Memory Fund. Originally established to fund and develop the Wall of the Grief, the Memory Fund has since gone on to contribute to other memorial activities – including those of Memorial and Last Address.

Collaborative v. Antagonistic

As alluded to above, these networks can also be collaborative or antagonistic in nature. More collaborative networks work in conjunction with one another in an attempt to productively and purposefully link memorial sites together, while more antagonistic networks can feature memorial projects developed under hostile conditions or in direct opposition to one another. While it makes sense that the more formal a network is, the more likely it is to be collaborative, it is also possible to imagine a scenario where different sites are required to come together under some kind of policy action, but remain highly resistant to working alongside one another. Alternatively, a more formalized network could influence the organization and development of a set of sites without explicitly dictating that they work together or collaborate. Along this spectrum, the Berlin Wall Memorial exists within the most collaborative memorial network, while Last Address and the Wall of Grief appear to be the most antagonistic – although such a dynamic may be changing. The Victims of Communism Memorial is situated somewhere in the middle, though closer to antagonism than collaboration.

The work being done in Berlin tends to be highly collaborative in nature. Within this formal network, the different sites often work together to shape the overall remembrance of the Berlin Wall, and to make sure that different elements are being considered at the appropriate sites. In fact, it is common for researchers and curators to contribute to multiple projects and memorial sites across the city. Such cooperation was addressed during discussions with Susannah Muhle and Dora Busch, who work for the Berlin Wall Memorial and the Cold War Museum projects, respectively. Muhle, who is a key researcher at the Berlin Wall Memorial, is also working with the Cold War Museum to develop its new permanent exhibition, which will be located near Checkpoint Charlie. Both interviewees emphasized that a key priority in developing the Cold War Museum was to make sure that it was contributing something new to Berlin. When asked about how the Cold War Museum would first in with these other sites, Muhle responded that

> …we don't need another museum to show the history of the Berlin Wall and the consequences of the division. So the museum…would deal with another aspect, and that's the international dimension of the wall, [and] the Cold War. So that's the challenge

> of this new project, because we have now to consider and decide which aspects, which topics of the Cold War we want to show there. What do we think is necessary to show there? And which aspects are connected to the checkpoint and the Berlin Wall? That's the challenge we are in right now. (Muhle, personal communication, 2018)

We can already see how the Cold War Museum is being shaped by its location within this formalized network as its developers consider what stories are already being told through other sites, and which aspects of the Berlin Wall are best addressed within this new project.

On the other end of the spectrum is the Wall of Grief and Last Address, two projects that exist very much in opposition to one another. Last Address was specifically developed to fill the commemorative void left by the refusal of the Russian government to formally acknowledge and recognize the victims of political repression. And indeed, there is no lost love between these two projects. Last Address founder Parkhomenko was very dismissive of the Wall of Grief, describing the project as completely separate from the work of the foundation. He stated that "[the Wall of Grief] does not disrupt our project at all…we don't participate in any competition with the state, the state can do what it wants…we don't share anything with them" (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2018). He sees the Wall of Grief and Last Address occupying two distinct spheres, and sees no reason why they would need to come together. This is largely due to both Last Address and Memorial's aversion to working with the Russian government. When asked about his personal views on the Wall of Grief, Parkhomenko expressed a distaste for the project. He shared, "No, personally, I don't like it. It's very impersonal. It's not a human thing, it's a big piece of bronze, and that's all. It's thousands and thousands of tons, but not one name, not one person" (Parkhomenko, personal communication, 2018). For his part, Frangulyan also sees the projects as distinct. While Parkhomenko emphasized the impersonal nature of the Wall of Grief as the main point of contrast, Frangulyan instead focused on the legitimacy of his project through its association with the national government. He stated that, despite these antagonistic origins, we can begin to see a bit more of a collaborative overlap between the progenitors of these two projects, primarily through the Memory Fund's support of Memorial and Last Address. While this collaboration is primarily financial at the moment, this involvement speaks to the possibility of reconfiguration between the various actors within Russia's memorial network.

In between is the VOCMF, which sits in a kind of no-man's land when it comes to the U.S. Cold War commemorative landscape. As discussed previously, the lack of a formalized memorial network, or, indeed, any kind of robust commemorative work around the Cold War, leaves the VOCMF as really the sole player on the US national Cold War memorial scene. As a result, many of the other smaller Cold War sites that are still in development seem to be off the VOCMF's radar. While it hasn't engaged with any particular clashes, it also hasn't received much in the way of collaboration or support from other mnemonic actors in the area. As outlined in chapter 4, the more fledging Cold War projects, such as the Cold War museum, are struggling to make much of an impact at all. The other successful Cold War memory project, the Wende, exists in almost diametric opposition to the goals of the VOCMF. However, because the sites work in such distinct spaces, they tend not to cross paths or come up against one another.

Power Dynamics

Any engagement with the past necessitates the consideration of power – what constitutes power in the memorial space, who yields it, and with what consequences. There are assorted power dynamics at play that dictate the hierarchy of a given memorial network. The locations of the various sites within a memorial network are not rigidly fixed, and are always subject to reorganization based on the reconfiguration of power within the network. In other words, just because a site is currently situated as the most visible, more well resourced, or most influential site within a memorial network, doesn't mean it will always occupy that spot. Furthermore, certain sites come to be privileged over others through the careful and strategic cultivation of power. If we translate this into the language of networks, if one node in the network is larger than others, it is because certain power dynamics have constructed that node in a certain way. Key axes of power that give shape to networked memorialization include funding, legitimacy, visibility, and competition.

Issues of funding include both who is providing the funding and the quantity of said funding. For example, the VOCMF relies primarily on individual donations, which has limited its

ability to realize some of is more ambitious goals, such as a brick and mortar museum. The Wall of Grief received funding from both foundations and the Russian government, with the latter association limiting the kinds of aesthetic, narrative, and locational choices available to the artist. Last Address plaques are self-funded, meaning that individuals who nominate persons to receive plaques are responsible for covering the fee associated with the research and construction of the micro-monument. While it receives a small amount of foundation funding, this funding structure gives Last Address a lot of freedom in how it carries out its mnemonic activities, as it isn't beholden to any higher funding powers. Finally, the Berlin Wall Memorial benefits heavily from funds provided by the Berlin Senate, though its explicit centering as the largest node within the Senate's Master Plan means that the site is given a lot of latitude in shaping not just its own work but by extension the work of other key sites in Berlin.

What bestows legitimacy on a memorial site varies according to the specific context within which it is produced. For the VOCMF, this legitimacy largely comes from its Congressional mandate, which in 1993 authorized the forming of the foundation and tasked it with carrying out its memorial work. While the Berlin Wall Memorial similarly gains legitimacy from its association with the Berlin Senate and its Master Plan for the commemoration of the Berlin Wall, it also views its emphasis on authentic remains and site specificity as a way to validate and legitimize itself as an appropriate site of remembrance. As essentially the only officially sanctioned memorial project related to the repressions, the Wall of Grief carries with it the stamp of approval of the Russian government. On the other hand, given that the Russian government has historically denied or downplayed the extent of the repressions, Last Address actually gains its legitimacy through its contentious relationship to the authorities. By positioning themselves as a grassroots organization that seems to counter these larger governmental narratives, Last Address legitimizes its work through its rigorous attention to detail and its willingness to work outside official channels.

Finally, issues of visibility and competition go hand in hand in these networks. Visibility refers to how prominent a given memorial site is within a network, while competition suggests how this relational visibility is subject to change as additional sites are developed or existing sites

gain prominence. Within this study, only Last Address and the Wall of Grief are in direct competition with one another. Currently, the almost universal international acclaim of Last Address suggests that it is a more visible project than the static Wall of Grief. However, as mentioned in chapter 3, it remains to be seen how the competition between these two sites will continue to evolve as the Russian memorial landscape continues to further develop. The Berlin Wall Memorial and the VOCM are currently the most visible memorial sites within their respective networks, though for very different reasons. The VOCM occupies this prominent location because there is a dearth of competition within the American Cold War commemorative landscape – in other words, it's the only horse in the race. However, as fledging projects continue to develop, there is always the chance that the prominence of the VOCMF could decrease, especially if these news sites present alternatives, less triumphalist narratives that more clearly resonate with the public. On the other hand, the Berlin Wall Memorial is the most visible by design, and is relatively inoculated by changes in the competition. Since the Master Plan assigns each memorial site to a specific location within the network, while at the same time centering the Berlin Wall Memorial as its crown jewel, the site at Bernauer Strasse seems relatively secure.

Taken together, these four characteristics of networked memorialization are designed to help us better understand the contemporary conditions in which memorial sites are produced and made meaningful. Though more broadly applicable, they emerge from a distinct engagement with the Cold War and the complications it presents for traditional understandings of war memory. Such characteristics conceptualize memorial sites as embedded within assorted networks that are relational in nature and always subject to reconfiguration, allowing for an elasticity in our analysis and the ability to chart key changes in memorial sites over time.

The Contributions of Networked Memorialization

In addition to offering a framework for making sense of the production and maintenance of commemorative sites, this project offers additional contributions to our study and understanding of collective memory, memorials, and the Cold War. These contributions range

from the methodological to the conceptual, and suggest that networked memorialization has the potential to shape future thinking on the development of memorialization. At the center of these contributions is a reinvestment in two key sites of mnemonic production: at the level of the nation, and at the foundational and institutional level.

This project reveals several key methodological insights for the study of Cold War memory and memorial sites more generally. First, it suggests that we return to the nation as a unit of analysis for the study of collective memory. As the initial memory boom of the 20th century rolled over into the 21st, it became increasingly popular to eschew the nation as a methodological frame in favor of looking at broader understandings of collective memory that traverse international boundaries. Stemming largely from a collection of European memory scholars, such work attempts to make sense of the emergence of transnational memory cultures, and suggests that the production and circulation of collective memory is not necessarily rigidly bound by national borders or cultures. Much, though not all, of this work places the Holocaust at its center, using its events and commemoration as a case study for understanding contemporary collective memory.

To name but a few, Astrid Erll describes transnational memory as understanding "mnemonic processes unfolding across and beyond cultures. It means transcending the borders of traditional 'cultural memory studies' by looking beyond established research assumptions, objects and methodologies" (2011, p. 9), while Michael Rothberg' aforementioned multidirectional memory is meant to capture how collective memories of seemingly distinct events exist dialogically, and that "memory works productively through negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing" across such events (2014, p. 119). Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider similarly focused on how understandings of the Holocaust have been "scaled up" in a way that allows it to serve as a contemporary framework for understanding contemporary human rights atrocities (2006), and Anna Reading has used globital memory as a way to capture the synergistic relationship between the globalizing and digitizing processes that facilitate contemporary collective memory (2011).

Memory studies has undoubtedly benefitted from this work, which helps us better understand how collective memory travels and intersects with other spaces, places, and events in ways both predictable and not. However, what this project suggests is that even when such flows are present, even when such events lend themselves to the kinds of transnational boundary crossing suggested by this work, the nation remains one the primary sites at which collective memory is shaped and disseminated. As will be explored later in this conclusion, this is largely due to the fact that the physical production of memorial sites is still primarily undertaken by national-level organizations and institutions. Though these groups may solicit input from or form connections with organizations doing similar work or focused around similar events, the mnemonic work that they undertake is still largely developed with a national audience, and a specific national experience, in mind. The funding, planning, execution, and maintenance of many of these projects falls to these largely national institutions. As such, while this is by no means a call to dismiss the transnational elements of the contemporary mnemonic work, it is a reminder that much of that work still is still fundamentally shaped by national processes and concerns.

Conceptually, this helps us understand the Cold War as one that is still primarily made meaningful through the lens of the national experience – at least at the level of formal commemoration. This suggests that, despite the paradigm shifting nature of the Cold War as an all-encompassing global conflict, commemorative projects still tend to hew closely to the traditional elements of war commemoration that privilege the local and the national over the international. Though each of the case studies presented here seeks to connect the national Cold War experience to other events and processes, each does so in a way that is ultimately designed to serve and reify their own national projects. For example, the VOCMF seeks to connect its mnemonic work to the wider international community not as a way to develop a transnational understanding of the Cold War, but as a way to further refine its existing, triumphalist understanding of the dangers of communism and the propriety of American international leadership. The Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation is considering incorporating the perspectives of

immigrant communities into its work, but in a way that is very much focused on bringing such groups into the German Cold War community rather than reaching across national divides.

Networked memorialization thus becomes a way to understand how these projects can remain rooted in national narratives and frameworks, while at the same time at least nominally reach beyond circumscribed boundaries to gesture towards a more international view of memory work. Networking with other projects in this way allows for individual sites to retain enough autonomy to continue to develop largely national perspectives, and additionally presents them with an opportunity to advance and develop those narratives beyond the individual sites and projects. This is especially true in remembering the Cold War, a conflict that, despite the grand narratives of global conflict that tend to dominate its colloquial usage, has been primarily filtered through the lens of national experience. As illustrated above, even when these sites seek to reach beyond this national scope, it is often still in the service of the nation. As repeated calls for a more global approach to memory work continue to persist, networked memorialization helps to illustrate the boundaries and limitations of these approaches. This does not necessarily preempt the idea that there may exist a truly international approach to memory work. Rather, it suggests that as sites and organizations respond to such calls, they continue to make use of national experiences as their main point of entry and inquiry.

Secondly, this project demonstrates the utility of framing the organizations and foundations that construct such memorial spaces as sites of mnemonic production in and of themselves. It moves us beyond simply understanding a memorial through the aesthetics of the final project and its reception, and pushes us to understand the complex, oftentimes bureaucratic, decisions and process that go into producing and maintaining a memorial site. Rather than making these organizations tangential to the analysis of memorials, this project shows how a deep engagement with these actors and organizations can offer a rich analysis of the not only the finished product, but the nuts and bolts that built it, the roads not taken along the way, and the ongoing maintenance work that sustains it. For example, undervaluing the organization aspect of the Wall of Grief and the Last Address project would have downplayed the overlapping financial

ties that bind these two projects, while looking at the VOCM in isolation from the other work of the VOCMF would have presented the memorial itself as simply a static statue, rather than one that has been actively conscripted into an ongoing Cold War project.

Relatedly, networked memorialization calls for us to consider memorial sites as a starting point for mnemonic engagement, rather than an ending point. Though memorial sites have long been considered active sites where meaning is continually produced and reproduced, much of this meaning-making is made sense of at the level of the individual. By focusing on the level of the organization, and recognizing the level of intentional work that goes into the maintenance of a memorial site, we are granted a new perspective into how the meaning of such a site can not just change but BE changed overtime. This can occur through the physical changes of the site, such as in the case of the Berlin Wall Memorial expansion, or through the alteration or augmentation of the ancillary materials that frame the site, such as the events, social media stories, and other related activities produced by the VOCMF. It allows us to move beyond the idea that our relationship to memorial sites changes as political, economic, and cultural circumstances change by recognizing that such shifts in understanding both produce and are produced by changes to the memorial sites themselves, through these actors and organizations. It reinvests these memorial sites with a sense of intentionality that tends to fall out of our scope of analysis once the main construction of a site has been completed.

Conclusion: The Future of Networked Memorialization

This project has examined a series of case studies designed to help us better understand first, how the Cold War is being commemorated across memorial sites in the U.S., Germany, and Russia and second, what Cold War commemoration can tell us about the contemporary study of collective memory and memorial sites more generally. What emerges from this work is the need to reconceptualize the contemporary study of memorial sites in a way that accounts for not only the commemorative needs of the unconventional nature of the Cold War, but the changing mnemonic practices and affordances in which Cold War memorial sites are produced. Networked

memorialization advances our understanding of memorial sites by conceptualizing them within a larger network of institutions, sites, and practices that influences how these individual sites are developed, produced, and maintained. It reflects the fluid and shifting nature of memorial projects, and allows us to understand how these sites are continually made, and remade, meaningful. It also allows us to think about the increasingly decentralized nature of memorial sites, as memorials expand across platforms both physical and virtual and make use of the affordances of digital technology to advance their work. This project has demonstrated the need to center the national and foundational/organizational elements of a memorial site by casting a greater light on the process of memorials coming into being. A focus on these institutions critically engages with the intentionality and impact of these sites, and allows for the tracing of how such intentions get translated, or not, into the memorial itself. Memorial sites thus represent the beginning of mnemonic activity, not its natural conclusion.

Despite the contributions of this project, there remain several limitations and, accordingly, potential avenues for future research in this area. First, this project centers on what are arguably the largest national actors of the Cold War – the United States, Russia, and Germany. While such nations play an outsize role in how we imagine the Cold War, the effects of the conflict reached far beyond these three countries – through proxy wars, alliances, trade agreements, and more. A natural extension of this project would be to apply the concept of networked memorialization, and its attendant implications for Cold War memory, in other, relatively less or differently prominent, settings.

In addition to focusing on the three most visible Cold War countries, this project also privileges the most visible Cold War memorial sites within those countries. While each chapter sets out to at least somewhat map the Cold War mnemonic landscape in each location, it would also be fruitful to more concretely apply the concept of networked memorialization to smaller, less visible memorial projects to see how its characteristics might play out differently at different scales of memorialization. This would provide insight into how the less visible nodes in memorial

networks operate vis a vis more central projects and reveal how differential power dynamics may shape how these sites develop.

Each country under study in this project is facing significant societal upheaval that could dramatically reshape how the Cold War is being understood. As Russia continues its conservative political turn in attempt to recapture some of the nation's perceived patriotic glory, Germany and the U.S. face mounting threats from right-wing authoritarian groups and political parties. As alluded to throughout these chapters, understandings (and misunderstandings) of the past in general, and the Cold War in particular, have been central to how such groups formulate and maintain their sense of identify and purpose. We are already seeing some of these tensions reflected in the evolution of the VOCM and the Wall of Grief, and it remains to be seen what effect this sense of both creeping and outright authoritarian tactics may have on the memorial landscape. Networked memorialization offers an opportunity to track changes in mnemonic cultures over time, by recognizing the different axes and spectrums that give shape to these sites. While this study captures the network of each of these memorials during the current moment, networked memorialization may prove to be a useful tool for documenting and assessing how these ongoing political changes are reflected in national memorial sites and activities.

As long as the Cold War continues to be a significant frame of reference for making sense of the contemporary political and cultural landscape, these memorial sites will continue to shift and evolve in significant ways, both predictable and unpredictable. The concept of networked memorialization allows us to continue to make sense of the physical memorial site in an increasingly digital world that continues to push the traditional boundaries of commemorative practices. Memorial sites may represent just one node in the broader matrix of Cold War collective memory, but as this project has demonstrated, they remain a crucial marker of national recognition and engagement with the past. While it is unlikely that we will ever reach a consensus on the meaning of the Cold War, we can continue to document how its mercurial nature continues to reflect existing tensions and understandings in a rapidly changing world.

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